

August 04, 2012

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 03 August 2012 11:26 - Last Updated Saturday, 04 August 2012 06:27

Hope everyone has a great weekend (and a great long weekend for the lucky ones, like me).

Not much going on in hockey right now, but the ramblings are lengthy today – the hockey blogosphere never rests. Lots of good stuff on our Guide, prospects around the league, Jagr in Dallas, and more.

Mike Colligan and I offer our latest debate in the CBA Series – [this time on the Entry Level Contract](#).

“COLLIGAN: I think you hit the nail on the head earlier. The younger players (and the ones who haven't even been drafted yet) have very little representation in the PA. Donald Fehr will do his best to protect the earning power of all current and future players, but if he has to squeeze his troops somewhere, entry-level contracts might be the easiest to swallow.”

[I firmly guarantee that you will absolutely love our 2012-13 Fantasy Guide](#) . Why? Several

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reasons:

We have built a fantastic team of writers here who all bring unique talents and insights to the table.

This year is the first time advanced stats have been used in a Fantasy Guide... anywhere. Dobber tackles PDO, while I introduce terms like Qual Comp, Corsi, and Zone Starts. The fantasy relevance of these statistics is tremendous – both for evaluation and projections.

Our guide, unlike the ones on sale at the grocery stores, is updated. A lot. We don't have a June deadline to get our work in. We update the guide almost daily right up until the puck drops. Late summer signings, trades, and so on can dramatically impact your fantasy squad.

Lighthouse Hockey has taken the time to profile the top 25 Islanders prospects and young players over the past few weeks. Here are a few of my favorite profiles:

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[Josh Bailey](#) , who could play wing on the [top line next year](#):

“Remember the outcry when the Islanders first moved Bailey to wing a few seasons ago, and complaints of “they’re ruining him” emerged? We’re reaching the point where if he’s fit to be an NHL center, it should start to show by now. Wing may, in the end, be the way to go.

It’s possible Bailey’s defensive instincts have long been overrated by Islanders fans. Certainly there are some own-zone decisions that make you wonder. But his passing and underused shot are perhaps underrated, and it was from the wing that he was better able to utilize both. We’ll see what 2012-13 brings.

Regardless, at 22 Bailey is still very much in the conversation to be an offensive contributor, and with nearly 300 games already he possesses experience no one else in the Top 25 has. Whether that much-debated experience will ultimately serve him well, we’re about to find out.”

[Ryan Strome](#) , who is the [ideal long term number two center](#) behind Tavares:

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“For now, Strome was drafted as a center and should be considered one. All of that can change as evidence mounts, and if he jumps to the NHL for his age 19 season (a topic hotly debated among Islanders fans already). But we look at him now as quite possibly the second-most talented forward in the entire Islanders organization.

Strome's production with OHL Niagara dropped off ever so slightly this season, but that's colored by a delayed start while with the Islanders and an injury that robbed him of several weeks. In reality, he had 1.6+ points per game in 2010-11 and 1.5+ points per game in 2011-12. He has still been over a point-per-game player in both OHL seasons, in the 2011-12 playoffs, and with Team Canada at the WJC too.

This after a reported concentration on shoring up the defensive side of his game as a homework assignment from the Islanders when he was returned to juniors soon after training camp in October.”

And finally, the [likely checking center of the future](#) , [Casey Cizikas](#) (who I am a big fan of):

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"It's not quite flashy, it's not quite physically overpowering, but if you throw the puck into the corner or advance it through the neutral zone, you just get the impression [Casey Cizikas](#) knows how to retrieve it.

He adapted immediately in the AHL, earning a trip to the All-Star game. He was quick study in the NHL, giving some of us hope he'll pencil into the lineup and upgrade the bottom six next season. It's not that anyone expects him to be anything like a star, it's that some of us expect him to be a mighty solid NHLer.

Some see a little John Tonelli in him, and that's probably because his dogged work ethic is contagious:"

The Canucks inked 2nd round pick Alexander Mallet to an ELC yesterday. He's a dark horse to make the roster, but should be a solid 15-20 goal, 125+ PIM third line center at the peak of his career. Check out his fights on Youtube – big, strong center who can chuck fists.

Copper & Blue [takes a look](#) at Swedish defenseman Oscar Klefbom:

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“Comparing Klefbom to his teammate (and draft year rival) Jonas Brodin is interesting. Brodin had eight assists and no goals this season but played far more than Klefbom because of greater health. Come playoff time, Brodin was getting less than a minute more icetime than Klefbom every game. Obviously Brodin is ahead, but it's not a bad indication if Klefbom is keeping pace with the highly-touted eighth overall pick in his draft class.”

With an Edmonton Oilers contract in his hand, Klefbom will be heading to the AHL this coming season. He's got experience in quality professional hockey already; his learning curve won't be as steep as some of the junior or NCAA types we see heading that way. The holes remaining in his game are mostly matters of timing and training: he certainly has the physical assets and the intelligence to succeed already, meaning the AHL apprenticeship should do wonders for him.”

[Evander Kane](#) and his agents have been giving Winnipeg [the silent treatment](#) , which is never a good thing...

“The Jets offered restricted free agent winger [Evander Kane](#) a six-year deal worth \$29 million. That comes out to an average annual value of \$4.83 million per year. Here's the interesting part: Kane and his agents have done nothing with the offer. No rejection, no counter-offer, no response.”

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As a negotiating tactic, it isn't a move that makes much sense. While Kane is coming off of a career year (30G, 27A), his previous two (19G, 24A, minus-12 and 14G, 12A) leave plenty to be desired. A six-year commitment to a player with a resume short on quality is a pretty impressive move, and demonstrates just how highly the Jets organization thinks of him--but does he think as highly of the organization?"

[Trevor Daley](#) is now a part of the new core in Dallas. [But can he live up to expectations?](#)

"The place where Daley could make up some ground is the power play. He averaged 2:10 last season, which was a significant boost in the percentage of power play time he had been out on the ice the previous season. Goligoski averaged 3:09 and Robidas averaged 2:35. You wonder if the coaches would give Daley first unit minutes this season and really see if he can use his skill to create points. The guy can clearly skate, and he has done a great job of taking the puck coast to coast when the opportunity has presented itself. It seems he's much better at recovering now, too, when a rush doesn't go the way he would like. He just seems to be making better decisions all-around."

Is [Jason Garrison](#) [the right fit](#) for Alex Edler?

"Here is the rub in all of this: I think there's good reason to suspect that, permanently playing the

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right-side point at even-strength will be a significant adjustment for [Jason Garrison](#) . Getting a feel for gap-control on the opposite side of the rink, and effectively playing the puck off of the boards in the offensive end (which, if you play the opposite side point requires a good deal of skill, since you often need to receive and control the puck on your backhand) can be very difficult, even for NHL caliber defenseman."

According to his agent, [Ryan Kesler](#) won't be back before December. The Canucks won't rush him, after Kesler came back too early last season from hip surgery.

[Jaromir Jagr](#) is one athlete who I enjoy reading and listening to – [here is his latest interview with Puck Daddy](#).

"Asked if the move to the Stars was simply a case of money — Jagr would play only where he is getting paid more — he replied: "What does money have to do with it? Other NHL clubs offered more! It's just Dallas is ready to rely on me, promised me a spot on the top line."

Matt Reitz, one of my fellow writers at Overtime, put together a fantastic piece on the Calgary Flames, who seem stuck in a [perpetual state of mediocrity](#).

“All teams fall on hard times. That’s just the cyclical nature of professional sports. There are going to be good times and bad times—it’s the job of the general manager to extend the good times as long as possible and minimize the bad times to the bare minimum. Hell, even the Detroit Red Wings struggled before they rattled off two decades of playoff success. We try to make it sound more complicated than it really is by overanalyzing every trivial position of every single decision. When it comes down to it, that’s the entire job description: “be good as long as possible and try not to suck that often.”

It is BC Day this weekend... what better way than to check some awesome highlights of three of BC's best?

{youtube}phAVtBFUikY{/youtube}

{youtube}SA7gfd9CqA4{/youtube}

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