

August 25, 2012

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 24 August 2012 10:47 - Last Updated Friday, 24 August 2012 20:15

Since the news is fairly light, I have pulled some questions from the DobberHockey forums and will answer them today. Read on – if you asked a question in the past 24 hours there, it could be answered below.

From “The Whale” – [Anze Kopitar](#) or [Jamie Benn](#) ?

I say this as one of the biggest Benn fans around – Kopitar. Let me give the main reason as to why:

He has better players around him (less pressure to produce, easier match ups), Both are going to be (or already are) dominant two-way centers. Benn is big, physical, and skilled. Kopitar isn't as physical, but he is almost Jagr-like with his puck protection ability.

Both are also good defensive players as well. Kopitar will get more assists, while Benn should be the more prolific goal scorer.

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If your league counts salaries, Benn may make a smarter play, but he will likely be signing a big contract soon as he is currently an RFA.

From “Gel Flow” – Mikhail Grigorenko or [Jakob Silfverberg](#) ?

Almost all of the respondents over on the forum opted for Grigorenko, but I will offer a different tune of advice. I'd take the young Swede. My reasoning:

He has proven himself against men already. The SEL is not the NHL, but it is a lot closer than the QMJHL is. Don't discount proven production, ever. And Grigorenko has upside and opportunity in Buffalo, but there is a reason he slipped in the draft (yes, I am aware Kopitar slipped in his year too). Silfverberg was the regular season SEL MVP, the postseason SEL MVP, and he set a record for postseason goals in the SEL, too.

From “Thunder” – [Ryan Strome](#) and [Colin Wilson](#) or [Blake Wheeler](#) ?

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Strome could be a really good player one day. We are all aware of his exploits for Canada recently, and his Youtube highlight reel is sensational. That being said, he has a ways to go if he wants to be a productive NHL player.

The jury is still out on Wilson – I think he has 25/25 upside in a year or two, but I'd still take Wheeler over the two young talents.

Last season was Wheeler's breakout in Winnipeg – he was the club's best forward most nights, dominating with his skating, size, and vision. There are few – if any – 6-5 forwards who can move around the ice like he can. And his hockey sense and anticipation seems to be catching up to his skating and skill level.

It doesn't always click right away for project picks – Wheeler was drafted a long, long time ago. And many had written him off as a bust, or a guy who would never put it together, like [Benoit Pouliot](#). Well, Wheeler has arrived, and he will continue his offensive development. Don't be surprised to see 70-75 points from him this season.

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The Red Wings have apparently made a two-year contract offer to [Carlo Colaiacovo](#) . He would likely supplant (or at least provide some competition) to one of Kindl or Smith on the back end. Colaiacovo had a terrific season last year, but most of that was due to playing with [Alex Pietrangelo](#)

He's a solid two-way defenseman (when healthy). A poor man's [Matt Carle](#) , perhaps. In Detroit, he would get along fine as long as he was put in the proper role and not given responsibilities outside of his skill level.

We have a new [Shane Doan](#) deadline.

According to Doan's agent, Terry Bross, Doan is going to sign a contract before the CBA expires on September 15th.

An interesting look at [Erik Karlsson](#) 's assists [from last season](#).

[The Detroit Free Press takes a look](#) at Swiss forward Damien Brunner.

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“Brunner, 26, will have to get used to the smaller ice surface, but others have adapted. The Wings can afford to give him time because he has a two-way deal, so at worst, possibly he makes the transition in the minors for a bit. Maybe he ultimately pushes for a spot among the top-six grouping -- Babcock said Brunner's got potential to do so, but the same thing was said of [Fabian Brunnstrom](#) last year, and that didn't pan out.

The beauty of Brunner is that he's practically a no-risk situation for the Wings financially, and their history of fostering small Europeans puts the odds in favor of Brunner being a success.”

It is a low risk move, I agree. The fact that he shoots right helps (as does [Mikael Samuelsson](#) , who the Wings brought back this summer).

[The #7 prospect for the Canucks](#) is rugged two-way defenseman [Frank Corrado](#) . Don't let his stats last year fool you – there is some offensive upside there.

Canucks assistant GM Laurence Gilman on Corrado:

"[Frank Corrado](#) is the first guy that comes to my mind [as a sleeper prospect], and you're always hesitant making these kinds of statements because you don't want to put too much pressure on the player. [Corrado is] quite a dynamic player and we think his ascension is far more advanced than it should be for a player picked in the fifth round, and there are those in our organization that think this guy will challenge to make the National Hockey League a lot sooner than most people think he will."

How do the top six forwards in the Atlantic Division stack up? [In Lou We Trust finds out.](#)

"In comparing each team, the Devils measure up to much of the Atlantic Division equally. They finished behind the Penguins and Rangers in goals scored (tied with the Flyers at 139), while coming just behind the Penguins in assists. In total points, the Devils came in second (346) behind only the dominant Penguins (457). It is worth noting that these numbers are without both Parise's 31 goals and Sykora's 21 goals from last season. The team was able to keep up with a majority of the competition without over 50 goals while the other teams did not face as major losses. For example, the Flyers lost only the 19 goals Jagr scored last season while the Rangers are gaining 30-goal scorer, Nash."

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With Zajac returning, it will be interesting to see what happens to [Adam Henrique](#) and [Patrik Elias](#) in terms of position and role. Kovalchuk-Zajac will be two-thirds of the top line, likely flanked by Zubrus. I wonder if the Devils have thought of putting a prospect like [Mattias Tedenby](#) there (provided he has a strong camp)?

We interrupt these ramblings to bring you some Datsyuk magic:

{youtube}UPA6UGZxeml{/youtube}

[Lighthouse Hockey looks](#) at the recent second contracts for 1st overall picks, including [Taylor Hall](#) and [John Tavares](#).

“On that note, it's interesting that Tavares and Hall have both come in at lower average salaries than the peers who came before them -- even though the cap has actually been higher in the years Hall and Tavares signed. The massive second deals signed by [Alex Ovechkin](#) and [Sidney Crosby](#) have been followed by smaller rather than bigger salaries for other #1s.

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Player agents and Larry Brooks (but I repeat myself) can openly wonder why such players accept "below market" compensation on their lengthy deals -- and some might even say it's a gullible concession to billionaire owners.

But the reason players do this is intuitively obvious for anyone with a pulse: Six years is still fantastic security, \$30+ million is still an incomprehensible amount of money for any one man, and most players generally like the team they're on and want that team to be able to afford its best chance at team success.

When you're already talking about tens of millions of dollars in the bank, what's a fraction less if it means a better crack at the Stanley Cup?"

The trade off between term and amount is always an interesting one, and I really think it is tough to analyze without putting yourself in the shoes of the player. Obviously the agent has incentive to maximize the overall amount (and thus his commission or cut), but the player may want to go shorter to get a bigger pay day sooner (but this is also a risk with injuries and the uncertainty of pro sports).

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NHL 13 is out soon, and I am very interested to give the [GM Connected mode](#) a try.

Ottawa signed recent 1st round pick Cody Ceci to an ELC. Ceci is a hometown boy through and through – he was born in Ottawa and currently plays his junior hockey for the OHL's Ottawa 67's.