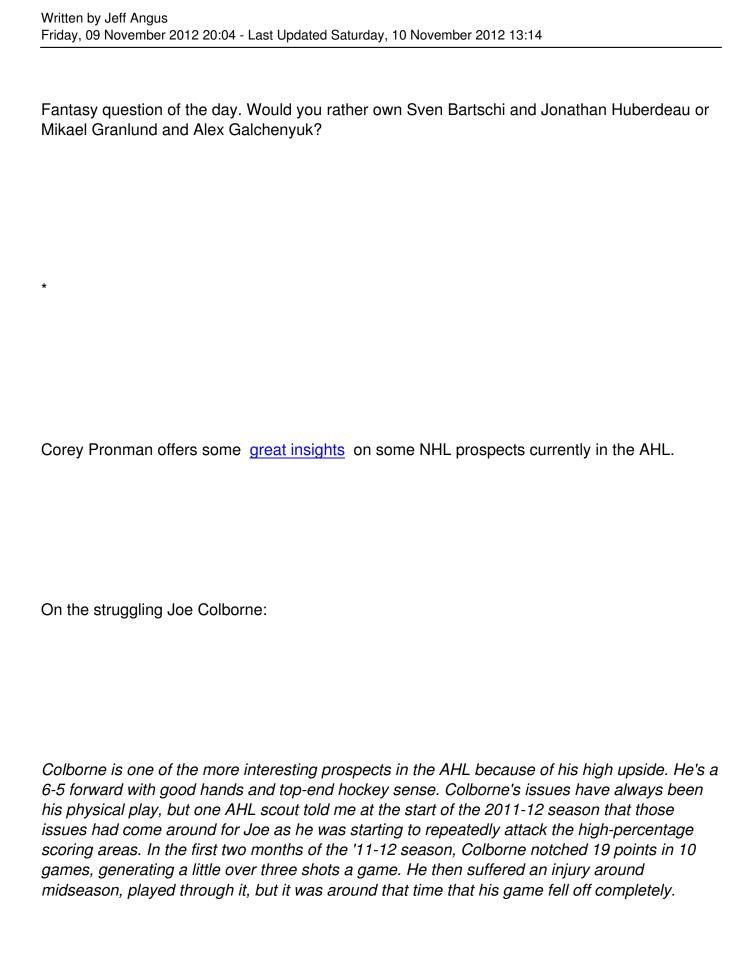
Written by Jeff Angus Friday, 09 November 2012 20:04 - Last Updated Saturday, 10 November 2012 13:14
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A scary thought for the rest of the league - will Ovechkin be better with an improved fitness commitment? It sounds like his current girlfriend has been a great influence on his lifestyle choices.
Ovechkin:
Since Maria [Kirilenko] played at the London Olympics and prepared for them accordingly, I supported her the whole way. It helped me to stay in shape. It's safe to say that I had a workout regimen all summer long.
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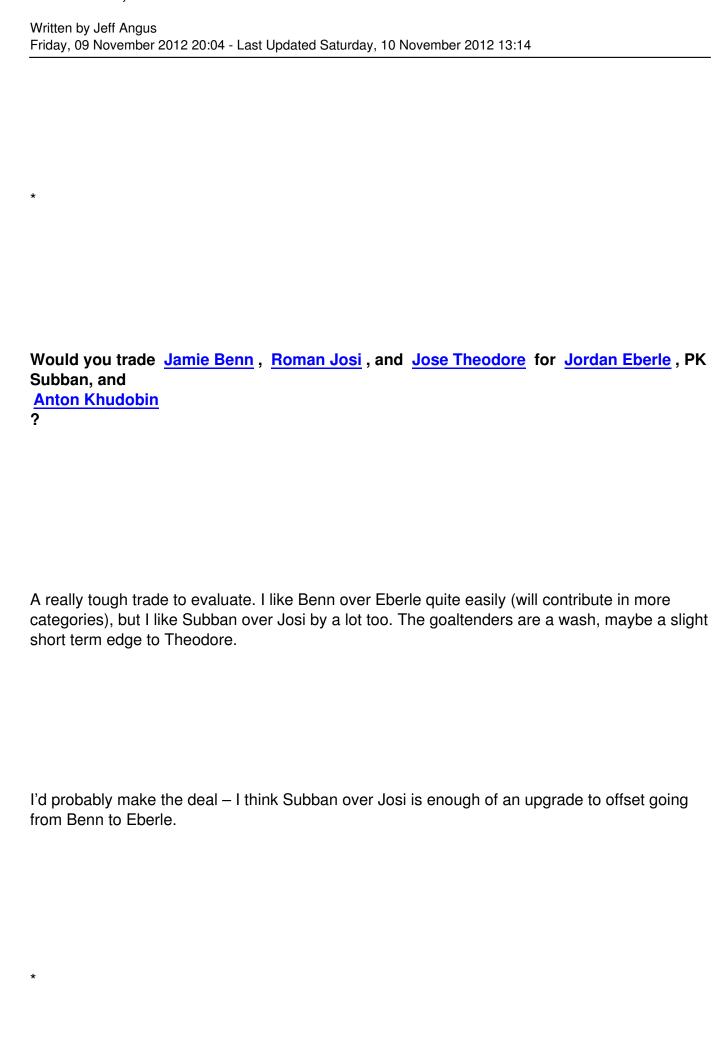
The same AHL scout told me, "From last season until now, since the injury, he's gone back to a perimeter game. You see the skill and the fancy plays he can make, but he stays on the outside too much." Colborne remains a very interesting prospect to watch because his upside, but the uncertainty on his projection is quite notable.

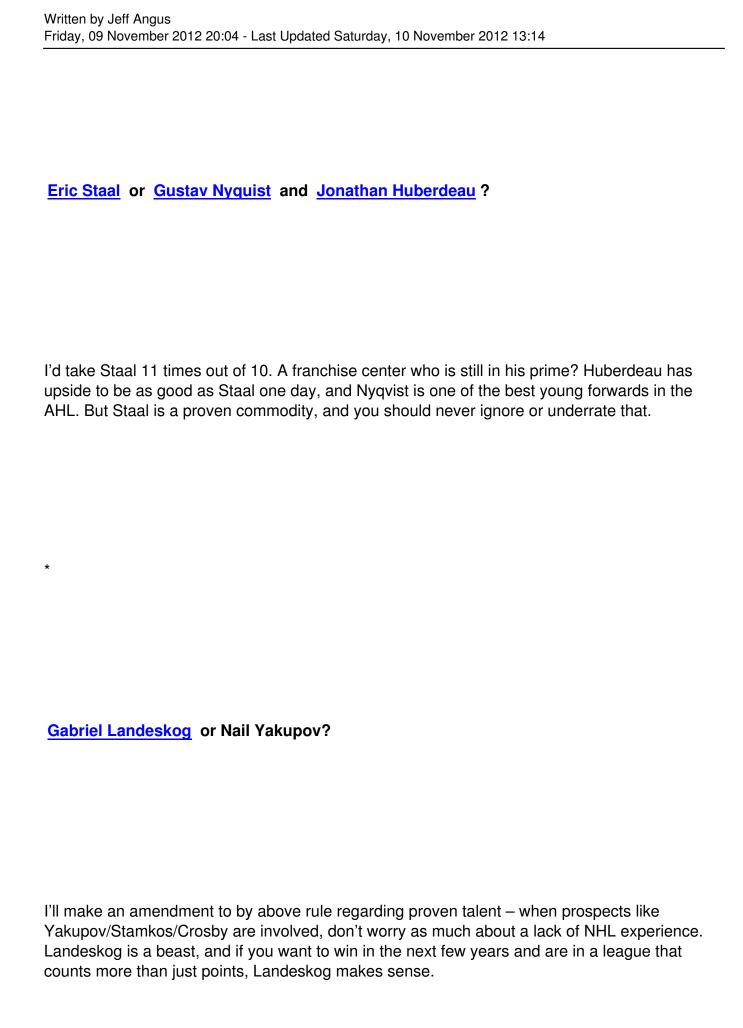
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I didn't feel like writing more about CBA discussions for another day beyond a few sentences, so I decided to pull a few questions from the forum for today's ramblings.

On the topic of the CBA discussions – both sides still have a ways to go. Both sides are starting to show signs of frustration with leaked information, but that is to be expected in negotiations with so much at stake. Don't get too high with the good news, and don't get too low with the bad news.

These are smart businessmen and they recognize that a full season lockout would be catastrophic. Following every single Darren Dreger tweet is no way to enjoy one's self (especially with Dreger essentially acting as a mouthpiece for the owners). There will be breakthroughs and setbacks. The NHL isn't up against Bob Goodenow this time.





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But in the long run, Yakupov is going to be a superstar. Landeskog should be a very good two-way leader and his production will be very solid, but Yakupov is going to be a special talent. I think he's the best of the kids in Edmonton (maybe not right now, but he will emerge as the top dog in the future).
*
A massive hit from Jets 2012 1st round pick Jacob Trouba:
{youtube}C7VSXS0Gir4{/youtube}
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Pick three for a points-only keeper:

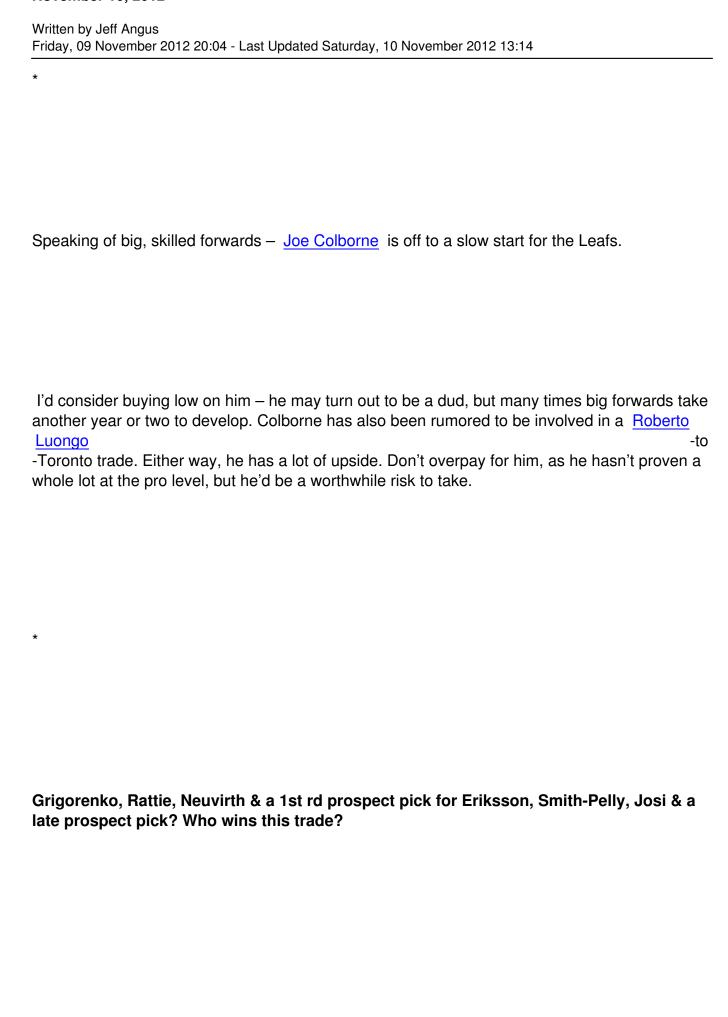
- Gustav Nyquist
- Chris Kreider
- Jakob Silfverberg
- Nick Bjugstad
- Jaden Schwartz
- Filip Forsberg

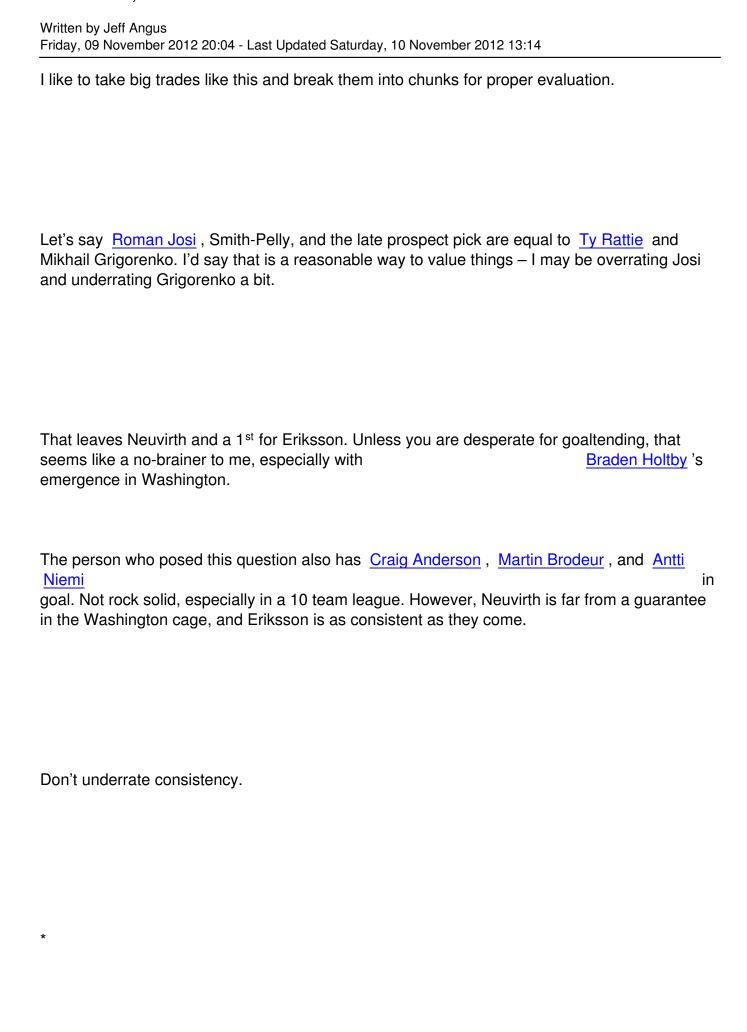
I'd go for Nyquist, Silfverberg, and Bjugstad. For different reasons.

Nyquist is proving himself against men in the AHL. Silfverberg did so last season in the SEL, where he was absolutely dominant. Now SEL production isn't the be-all end-all (just look at \underline{Da} vid Rundblad

, he wasn't NHL ready last year), but it is hard to ignore in this case.

And Bjugstad – he simply has the most upside of anyone on this list. 6-5 skill forwards don't come around very often.





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<u>Congrats to BowlerCoaster</u> for winning the "Why I Love Fantasy Hockey" contest. He will receive the signed <u>Dustin Byfuglien</u> 8x10 – as for the other finalists (mounD and Axeman – you will receive fantasy team audits from myself or Dobber).

Great work by everyone who entered submissions – I hope the contest was enjoyable, as I wanted to provide a bit of a distraction from the CBA news we are inundated with every day.

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My latest for the CanucksArmy – I take a look at Joseph LaBate's play this season with Wisconsin. The big winger has been skating on the top line with the Badgers, but he has gotten off to a slow start offensively.

LaBate has the skill set and the frame to develop into a top-six forward at the NHL level. Two things are holding him back at the moment – quickness and strength. LaBate is a great skater once he gets going, but like many young prospects, he needs to improve on his first few steps. He also needs to bulk up a bit, which isn't uncommon when you're a lanky 19-year-old. Both issues, thankfully, are quite correctable. What LaBate possesses on the other hand, can't be taught: height (6-4) and hockey sense.

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