

Written by Chris Nichols Sunday, 17 February 2013 00:01 - Last Updated Sunday, 17 February 2013 09:23

find great enjoyment from scouting players outside the NHL and have spent countless hours just going through league stats and scouting profiles from around the world. I can't tell you how many gems I've found combing through Elitserien or SM-liiga or wherever. This is why my family wonders why I never contact them. I just get lost in stats for ridiculous amounts of time. Entire afternoons disappear.

Anyway, long story short is that when Fasth was a month or so into what would become the first of his back-to-back MVP seasons in the SEL, I had added him to my farm system. Didn't know he'd be THAT successful immediately, of course, but I liked what I was seeing and the early reviews were quite favourable. I bought a lottery ticket, wrote down his numbers and look at the road on which he's started down. It's been a fun journey to watch from both a poolie perspective and one of a fan.

Viktor Fasth is 3rd goaltender in NHL history to win his first eight or more career decisions (Ray Emery of OTT and and Bob Froese of PHI).

— Anaheim Ducks (@AnaheimDucks) February 17, 2013

February 17, 2013 Written by Chris Nichols Sunday, 17 February 2013 00:01 - Last Updated Sunday, 17 February 2013 09:23 My particular fantasy fetish (easy.. I'm still talking hockey here) has always been scouting goaltenders. My farm systems trend goalie-heavy and aside from the fact that I love the position (again, shut up) netminders are always a high-quality, constantly-sought trade chip. With how far Twitter has come in the past year or so in particular, it's SO DAMN EASY to find quality information from overseas and if you're not making regular efforts to do so then you're only going to fall further and further behind your competition. Keeper league or not, more information is always better. Soak it up. Learn it. Live it. Love it.

Henrik Zetterberg has been fantastic. Pavel Datsyuk is, well, Pavel Datsyuk. Niklas Kronwall has stepped up offensively with Nicklas Lidstrom retired. Damien Brunner has generally fared well since entering the NHL.

February 17, 2013 Written by Chris Nichols Sunday, 17 February 2013 00:01 - Last Updated Sunday, 17 February 2013 09:23 One Wing who hasn't done as well as expected has been Valtteri Filppula though. 3-5-8 in 14 GP isn't horrible, but Mike Babcock called him out Saturday after Friday's 5-2 loss to Anaheim. "Fil wasn't good enough last night, wasn't competitive enough, and he's got to be way better than that," Babcock said. "We need him. He's a significant player for us and he's got to play better than this." It'll always depend on the options in your league, but in this shortened season scenario we could see Filppula dropped more quickly than he otherwise might be at this stage. We should see his point pace trend upward before too long, so keep an eye out.

John Tavares was interviewed in the second intermission of the Devils outing and noted that while Lubomir Visnovsky has clearly helped the power play, the veteran defenceman has also given a boost to the Isles' transition game. It's not all on Mark Streit to lug the puck up the ice. Visnovsky is averaging a point-per-game and has made for a really effective addition for those who snagged him when he finally came back to North America.

Written by Chris Nichols Sunday, 17 February 2013 00:01 - Last Updated Sunday, 17 February 2013 09:23

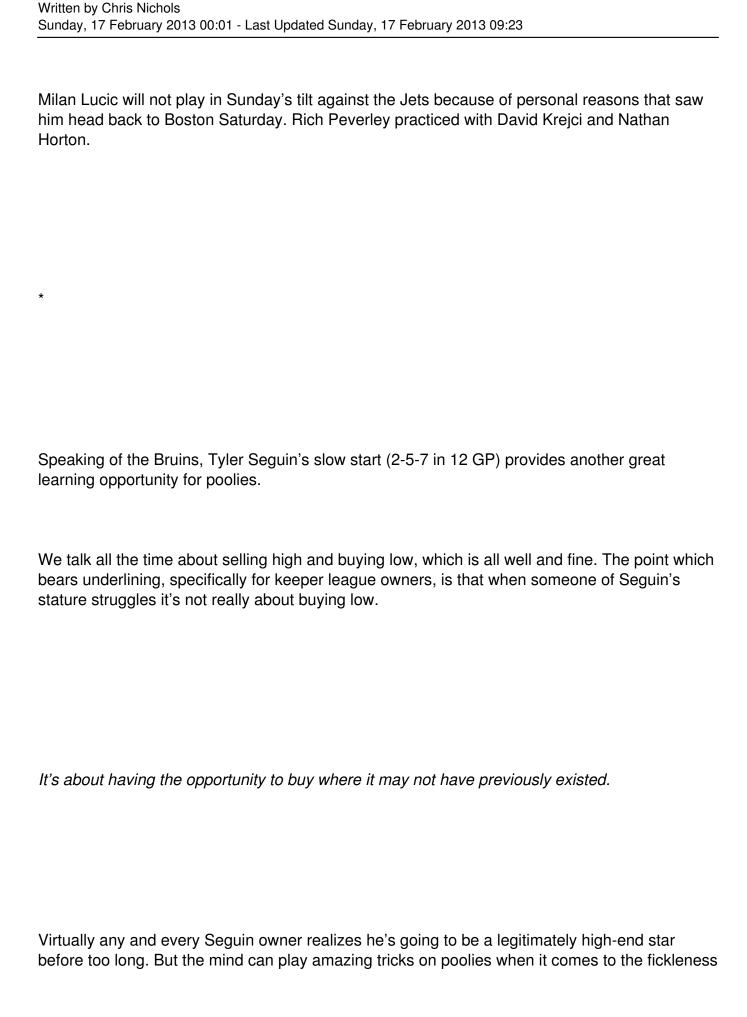
How about Tavares, incidentally? He has managed to take his game to a level beyond what he showed us last year, when he recorded 31-50-81 in a full campaign. He finished with a 3.49 shot-per-game pace, and after Saturday's contest against the Devils he has taken that up a notch this season to just shy of 4.1. He has eight straight games of at least four shots per night. His current goal streak is at five straight games and after this hat trick he has 11 markers in his past 10 starts.

Linemate Brad Boyes has points in four straight and five of six and continues to see first power play time with Tavares and Matt Moulson.

*

Marek Zidlicky had an ugly six-game pointless streak rolling along, but now has points in three of four. He's not a high-end option on the back end, but as mid-level guys go he's in a pretty sweet spot. Almost always on PP1 alongside Ilya Kovalchuk and the gang.

*





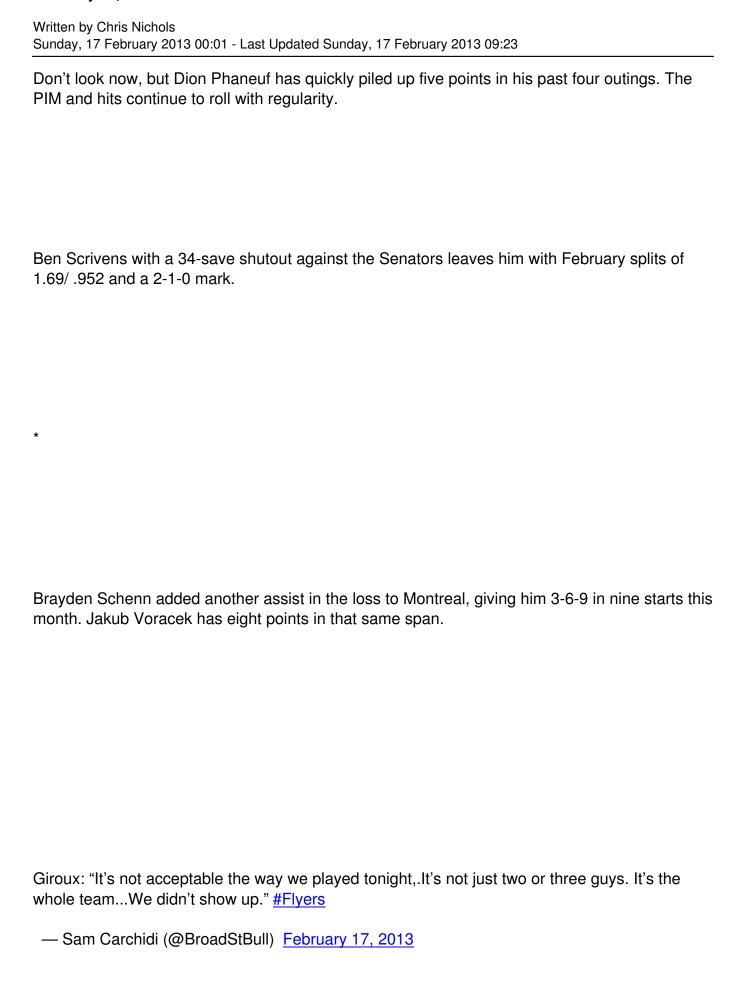
Written by Chris Nichols Sunday, 17 February 2013 00:01 - Last Updated Sunday, 17 February 2013 09:23

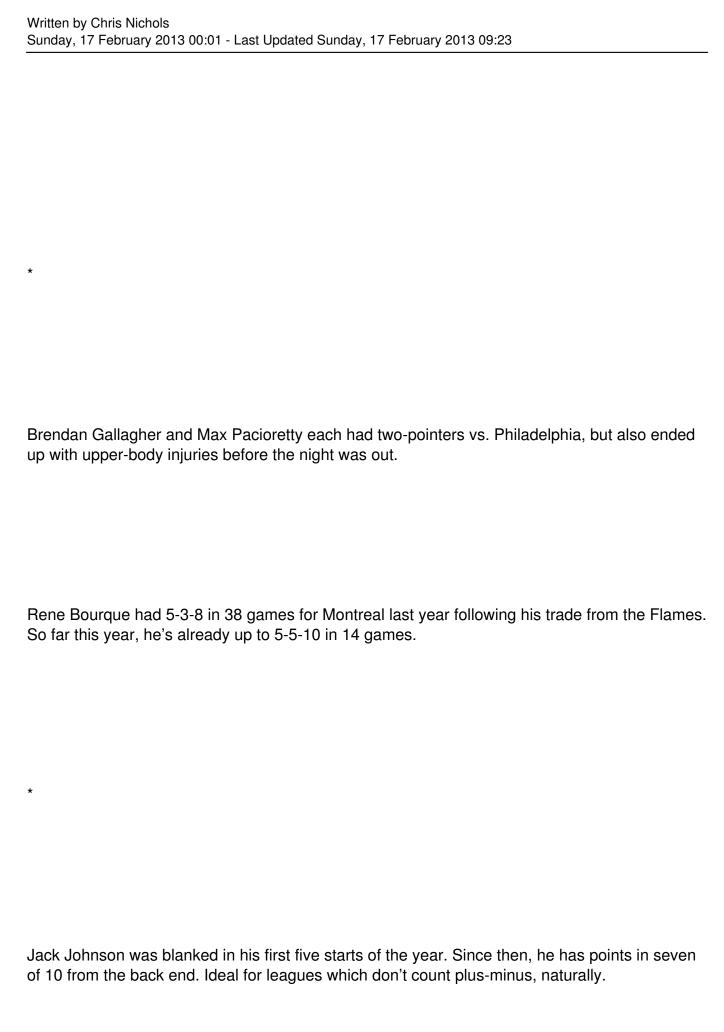
I tweeted the same thing after Erik Karlsson's unfortunate Achilles injury. If his owner in your keeper league is a contender this year, this may be your window to acquire one of the most electrifying players in the game today to save for next season. That one incident took Karlsson from a stud performer who would otherwise be untouchable to a sidelined stud performer who may be on the market for what'll still be a high-dollar price, but who is still worth every penny.

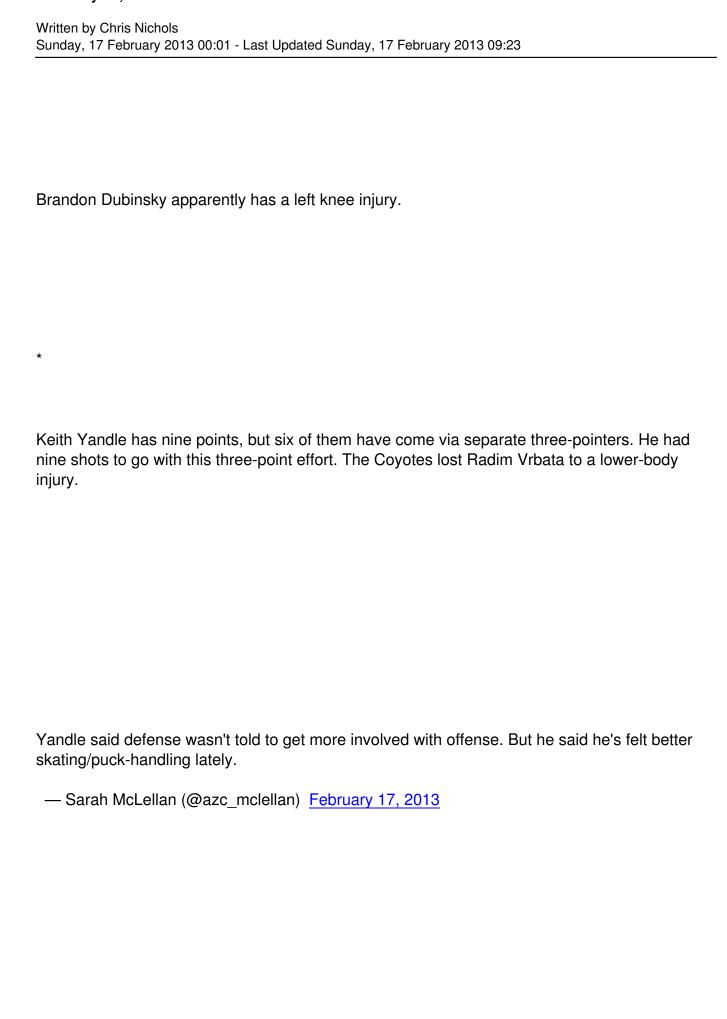
Another target that fits this bill, just because? Ryan Nugent-Hopkins. Land this kid in those deeper keeper leagues while people are still worried about his shoulder. I can't promise you there won't be further issues this year, but I am 100 percent convinced this guy is on track to become a dominant producer in the NHL and the early recurrence of shoulder problems in his career so far doesn't deter that thought in the least. Use the current concerns and the fact that he's been fairly dormant offensively in the early going to throw a little dirt in the eyes of his owner and get him while you can.

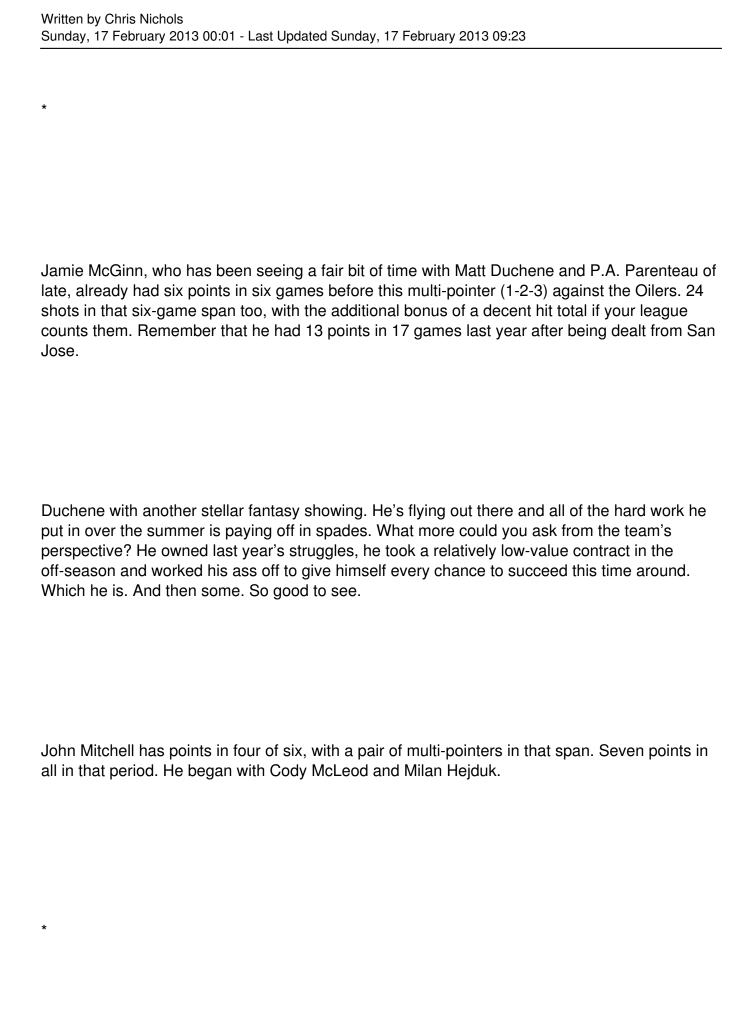
*

Tyler Bozak has added five points in his past five affairs and although he's generally a player about whom nobody tends to get too excited in pools, he's been a constant L1 presence who is still chipping in decent totals.











Written by Chris Nichols Sunday, 17 February 2013 00:01 - Last Updated Sunday, 17 February 2013 09:23

Fresh Ramblings each Sunday.