

**March 14, 2013**

Written by Jeff Angus

Wednesday, 13 March 2013 17:48 - Last Updated Thursday, 14 March 2013 13:52

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The Canucks need to add a center at the deadline - [here are a few of the options.](#)

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My fantasy hockey mailbag is open for business until Saturday. [Ask all of your questions here.](#)

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An important read on the concussion epidemic that we are slowly finding more and more about, [from Ross Bonander over at the Hockey Writers.](#)

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[Ilya Bryzgalov](#) stunk last night, and after a strong January and early February his play has regressed in a huge way. Oh, and [Sergei Bobrovsky](#) was just named NHL player of the week in Columbus.

Briere and Gagne were a combined minus-6 in a combined 20 minutes of ice time. Not good, in case you were wondering.

Jake Voracek had two points and was a lone bright spot for the Flyers – he isn't showing any signs of slowing down.

[Andrei Loktionov](#) scored a beauty of a goal, and he was great for the most part outside of that,

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too. For a 5<sup>th</sup> round pick, the Devils landed what looks like a future top six center. And you wonder about the other NHL teams looking for more scoring? A 5<sup>th</sup>

round pick – I don't have the numbers handy, but I'd wager getting a player who suits up for even one game in the NHL is somewhere around 10-15% (at the best).

[Adam Henrique](#) was dominant with two goals and a helper – his game is really rounding into form as he was clearly still dealing with lingering wrist issues after coming back from the injury.

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In case you were waiting for the Canadiens to crash back to earth, don't get your hopes up. Montreal is the real deal – great goaltending, balanced offense, and a solid mix of skill and physicality on the back end.

Oh, and they have arguably the best goalie in the game manning the net.

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PK Subban played 30 minutes and had two points, and he is starting to emerge as one of the top defensemen in the league – how quickly his contract dispute gets forgotten. Good on Montreal for keeping him – he is a game-changing defenseman in so many ways.

[Lars Eller](#) added a goal as well as a team-leading seven shots on goal. He adds an important element up the middle for Montreal – size and grit.

[Patrick Wiercioch](#) is a player I'd be looking to target in all keeper leagues – tons of skill, plays with poise, doesn't make rookie mistakes. For a 6-4 defenseman he moves really well. Tons of offensive upside.

Silfverberg and Zibanejad were both very good last night as well – two terrific young talents who don't look overmatched in the NHL.

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Jordan Schroeder had two points last night in his first game back in the AHL. He played well in Vancouver but hit a bit of a rookie wall. He'll be back.

The Canucks will be calling up Steve Pinizzotto soon. He makes for a solid depth option for hits and PIM – he has had a very successful AHL career as a grinder/agitator. And he can throw 'em, too:

{youtube}dz8mCcRpsol{/youtube}

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A good read on the ailing Vancouver power play – [time to change things up, according to Thomas Drance](#).

*The issue at hand appears to be a combination of luck and the club's offensive zone execution, which hasn't been that good. The team's systems are fine to my eyes and are especially potent*

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*in transition, even against really good penalty-killing teams like the Kings, Blue Jackets and Sharks. It looks to me like far from being "figured out" by the rest of the league, the Canucks are still able to toy with the opposition when entering the zone, use the drop-pass as an effective decoy, and generate scoring opportunities using a variety of different looks on the rush.*

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Here are [10 overage OHL free agents](#) to keep an eye on after the season wraps up.

### **Ryan O'Connor - Barrie Colts**

*At the beginning of the year, O'Connor was my pick for overage player of the year, and he's certainly staking a claim to that. He currently leads all OHL defenseman in scoring (including goal scoring with 14) with 42 points. He also captains one of the East's best teams and provides a terrific effort at both ends of the ice. In particular, his defensive play has grown a lot during his time in the league. He's not the biggest (5'10), but he's gotten stronger to the point where he can do some pushing around. He has also learned how to anticipate in the defensive end and has become a quality one on one defender off the rush.*

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*Obviously, it'll be his booming shot and ability to move the puck that will get him a look at the next level though. It's not too often that NHL teams take a look at undersized defenseman, but I think O'Connor is worth the gamble.*

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Free [Jake Gardiner](#) ? [Really, Mr. Agent?](#)

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[A look at the best "power forwards" in hockey](#) . I use the quotation marks as people tend to differ on their definitions of a power forward.

**David Clarkson , New Jersey**

*Long seen primarily as a grinder, the undrafted Clarkson forced the NHL to take notice with a 30-goal, 138-penalty minute campaign in 2011-12. He has now hit double digits in goals in five consecutive seasons, and has always been a reasonable shooter in terms of volume despite limited minutes early in his career. One of the toughest physical players on this list in terms of hitting and fighting, Clarkson is also enjoying a very strong possession season after years of middling play in that category, with the Devils leading their opposition by 22 shot attempts per hour in 5-on-5 play with him on the ice, and barely breaking even with him off it.*

\*

A big reason for the lack of production from Grabovski and Kulemin – their role with the team this season. [The duo have been the shutdown line for Toronto](#) , freeing up scoring chances for the Kadri and Bozak lines.

*If Carlyle wants Grabovski and Kulemin to start scoring more, then he needs to put them in a position to score more. Because right now, even with their exceeding huge defensive burden, they're driving play and scoring at the same even strength pace as their counterparts on the top line whose point totals are inflated by massive amounts of powerplay time.*

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A good read on advanced stats – there are definitely some merits to using them in analysis. Some think they are useless, and some people think they are the be all and end all. [The answer lies somewhere in the middle.](#)

*All of the little things that lead to goals and wins over the long-term, lead to shots in the short-term. It's not that shots matter more than goals — they absolutely don't — but the things that make a team good at scoring and preventing goals also happen to make them good at taking and preventing shots.*

*As a by-product of trying to score goals, you'll produce all sorts of shots — on goal, missed, and blocked. And we'll add them, subtract them, and use them to analyse how well you did in the aggregate at all those things hockey traditionalists love.*

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[Time to eat a bit of crow](#) – I was way off on my preseason prediction regarding [Brendan Smith](#) (my sleeper of the season). He's been pretty good overall, but his offense has been nonexistent. I was early by a year or two on him.

Smith is averaging top-four minutes, but 22 shots on goal through 15 games (and only one assist) won't cut it. Apologies to those who I led astray (including myself). Smith is averaging 1:53 of PP time per game, behind Kronwall, White, Colaiacovo, and Kindl. None of those guys getting more man advantage time surprise me (save for Kindl).

Now is a great time to try and trade for Smith in keeper leagues. His production is very poor, but he is adjusting well to the NHL from an overall perspective. And once Colaiacovo and White are out of the way, he should see a huge spike on PP ice time. This is a guy who put up 52 points in his final NCAA season at Wisconsin.

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Ryan Ma and I have developed an App for [Android](#) and [Apple](#) – [FantasyHockeyPP](#). We aren't aiming to compete with ESPN, TSN, or RotoWorld in terms of scope or volume of coverage and updates, but we want to provide top-notch analysis on the breaking news in the hockey world. All other hockey Apps on the market give you an update on an injury or a player's performance, but they don't dig deep at all. We want to do that.

We are also rolling out a Midseason Guide in the next few days... stay tuned for an update. [Here is some more info on FantasyHockeyPP.](#)

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[Here are some nutrition tips for the month of March](#) - coffee, muscle-building foods, and more.

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