

June 21, 2012

Written by Jeff Angus

Wednesday, 20 June 2012 23:41 - Last Updated Thursday, 21 June 2012 15:22

Justin Goldman with a stellar piece on [Dallas prospect Josh Robinson](#) (yes, he is a goaltender if you were wondering).

[My latest for the Canucks Army](#) - five prospects for the team to eye at 26 overall. Henrik Samuelsson is one of them.

"The Good: The big and gritty Swede has adjusted seamlessly to life in the WHL. Born in Alexander Radulov's favorite place on earth, Scottsdale, Arizona, Samuelsson is also the son of noted career killer Ulf Samuelsson. The younger Samuelsson had an impressive WHL season in Edmonton, helping the Oil Kings win the WHL Championship. He only turned 18 back in February, and is already 6-2 and over 210 pounds. He has a hard shot and is tough to play against for opposing defensemen."

NHL Awards were last night. In case you missed the show (along wit B-List celebrities making terrible jokes) here are your winners:

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Norris - Erik Karlsson

Vezina - Henrik Lundqvist

Hart - Evgeni Malkin

Masterton - Max Pacioretty

Calder - Gabriel Landeskog

Selke - Patrice Bergeron

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GM of the Year - Doug Armstrong

Jack Adams - Ken Hitchcock

Lady Byng - Brian Campbell

One day until the draft. Will it be busy? Some say yes, and some say no, pointing to CBA uncertainty.

Who will win the [Fabian Brunstrom](#) sweepstakes this time around? The forward is set to hit the open market in a little over a week.

Next week I will profile some under-the-radar UFAs and how they could impact your fantasy squad in 2012-13 and beyond.

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Canucks 2011 1st round pick [Nicklas Jensen](#) played this past season in the OHL with Oshawa. However, if he doesn't make the Canucks at training camp he is going to play in the SEL next year. He possesses top line upside, and it will be interesting to see what happens at camp.

I'd place his chances at making the team at 50/50. He looked great at camp last year against NHL competition, and coach Alain Vigneault is a big fan of his. The SEL would be good experience playing against men compared to the OHL.

The Canucks are supportive of his decision, and it is likely that Jensen would go to play for MoDo, where [Markus Naslund](#) is the GM.

Another caveat – Jensen is too young for the AHL, but the SEL season wraps up in March typically, earlier than the OHL season. This would give Jensen more time to play in the AHL down the stretch and in the playoffs (assuming the Chicago Wolves qualify).

Sounds like Florida prospect [Michal Repik](#) is off to the KHL next season. He was a solid junior

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player in the WHL, but failed to translate his game to the NHL level. He had some solid numbers in his three AHL seasons, though.

Fantasy sleeper for the next few years – Dallas prospect [Matt Fraser](#) . The power forward was second in the AHL with 37 goals as a rookie. He has a great shot and good hands around the net. His play away from the puck and in the defensive zone needs some work, but he had a really, really impressive showing for an undrafted free agent last year.

We strive to add more and more useful content to our Fantasy Guide each year, and I'm going to work in several important and very relevant advanced statistics this time around. A great way to identify sleepers, players who are due for a regression, and so on. As always, expect the best!

[A hilarious season-in-review](#) on [Alex Semin](#) in Washington.

'Postseason Performance: Semin had a good first round, tallying three goals against the Bruins in a tight, low-scoring series. Then, in the second round, he had just one assist. We're almost glad the Caps didn't make it into the third round, he might have vanished from sight altogether.'

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Some interesting news on Mikhail Grigorenko. Some scouts are questioning his age (the questions surrounding his age date back many years). Grigorenko's mother works in Russian Government and the conspiracy theory is that they found a way to doctor his birth certificate. I wouldn't read much into this, but who knows.

He's a top five talent who has been sliding down various charts and rankings, and this issue only hurts his stock more. It will be interesting to see which team steps up to the plate to take him.

Surprise, surprise – Dale Hunter will be back behind the London Knights bench next season.

The \$1.9 million deal with [Josh Harding](#) and the Wild is an interesting one. I expanded on it a bit in today's Prime Cuts, but it is a great low risk move by the Wild, and a great way for them to hedge against Backstrom declining/not returning.

It is an interesting move by Harding, too. He obviously likes it in Minnesota.

[Jaromir Jagr](#) may test free agency. Where does he go? Pittsburgh? Like burned too many

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bridges burned there. How about Detroit? I don't see Jagr coming to the Western Conference (or the Western part of it, at least), as the travel is quite a lot compared to what he is used to. Players who play their entire careers in the East often have a tough time adapting to the amount of travel teams like Vancouver, Los Angeles, and Dallas have to undertake each season.

With free agency only a week or so away, I am going to profile a few each day in the ramblings.

[Ryan Suter](#) – defenseman

The favorites – Detroit, Carolina, Minnesota

The dark horses – Colorado, St. Louis

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Those who know Suter well think he is going to stay in the American Midwest. He isn't one to chase the spotlight and likes the laid back culture in Nashville. Which begs the question – why isn't he re-signing? Perhaps Suter wants to get to July 1 and test the market out before negotiating with the Predators, but the fact that he hasn't shown much of an inclination to re-sign may say something.

Detroit has ample cap space and a huge need for a steady two-way defenseman like Suter. Carolina as well – they don't have the profile of the Wings, but they have a lot of cap space. Minnesota is a team stuck in the middle right now – not really rebuilding, but not really good enough to contend. Suter and a few smart signings/trades could change that.

Colorado is a dark horse. They have cap space and the need for a defenseman, and a really good young core of players (Varlamov, [Matt Duchene](#) , [Gabriel Landeskog](#) , Ryan O'Reilly, and so on). Suter would be a great veteran to mentor the likes of [Tyson Barrie](#) and [Stefan Elliott](#) , too.

The Blues have cap space, a need for a top four defenseman (and a partner for [Alex Pietrangelo](#)), and very good (and very young) team.

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Zach Parise – left wing

The favorites – New Jersey, Minnesota, New York, Los Angeles

The dark horse – Dallas

The Devils probably earned a leg up in the Parise sweepstakes with their cup run. He is a competitive guy and the fact that the team showed a lot helps their chances. Minnesota is going to open the bank up for Parise, and the chance to play at home may sway him too. Los Angeles and New York are similar – big market teams with cap space, great goaltenders, and a great group of gritty forwards and defensemen. Parise has gone on record saying there is “no chance” he signs with the Rangers, but until the fat lady sings...

Dallas is an intriguing option. They are working to get back to the level of reputation that the Stars name used to carry at the end of the 1990s. With new ownership and ample cap space, they can pursue any players they want with a green light. The team may look to trade [Brenden Morrow](#) and/or [Steve Ott](#)

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to shake things up, and Parise would fit in great with other two-way stars/Stars like

[Jamie Benn](#)

and

[Loui Eriksson](#)

. Parise doesn't answer the long term need for a center in Dallas, but he would give their offensive attack a lot of options.

Justin Schultz – defenseman

The Favorites – Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton

The dark horse – Calgary

Schultz will be offered a contract by close to all 30 NHL teams once July 1st comes around. He isn't just another overhyped prospect (

[Fabian Brunnstrom](#)

,

[Matt Gilroy](#)

). If Schultz was draft-eligible, he'd go in the top five. Pretty nice to get that level of prospect for

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free, no?

Rumor has it he wants to sign somewhere in Canada. Edmonton makes the most sense if he wants to have the best opportunity to play a lot right away. The Leafs too, and his former college d-partner [Jake Gardiner](#) is there. Vancouver's blue line isn't as deep as it once was, and they have a huge need for a right side puck moving defenseman. Schultz is from Kelowna, about a three or four hour drive from Vancouver. Several American teams are likely in the chase too, including the Rangers, Flyers, and Red Wings. However, it sounds like Canada is where Schultz wants to play.

The Buffalo Sabres appear to be [open for business](#) as the draft fast approaches. [Derek Roy](#) has been on the trade block for the past while, and I imagine he will be shopped again. Sabres GM Darcy Regier is notorious for demanding the world for his players, though.

[Drew Stafford](#) is another Sabre who could be on the move. He had a very disappointing 2011-12 season.

Speaking of the Sabres, winger [Brad Boyes](#) is a UFA. Boyes is four seasons removed from a 43 goal campaign with the Blues (and three seasons removed from a 33 goal campaign).

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For numerous reasons, Boyes has been awful offensively in recent years. He has only 13 goals in 86 games with the Sabres. Could be a great low risk option for a team looking to add a second line winger with 20+ goal upside.

Apparently the Ottawa Senators are in the [Rick Nash](#) sweepstakes. Who could the Sens move to get Columbus interested? Does [Milan Michalek](#) get traded for another disgruntled Canadian star winger?

I would guess that one of [Mika Zibanejad](#) , [Mark Stone](#) , or Jakub Silfverberg would have to be involved. Maybe two. The Sens have some decent roster pieces ([Nick Foligno](#) is a good player), but nothing that really jumps out. How about [Robin Lehner](#) ? The Jackets would love to add a goalie to build around for the next decade. Not sure the Sens would be willing to move Lehner, though.

With [Brad Stuart](#) signing in San Jose, I would expect [Douglas Murray](#) to be shopped. They are very similar defensemen. Burns, Boyle, Stuart, and Vlasic is a very solid top four. [Justin Braun](#) looks to be on his way to becoming a good one, too. The jury is still out on [Jason Demers](#) , who had a forgettable 2011-12 season.

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Stuart will go a long way in helping the league's second worst PK in San Jose. He blocks a lot of shots and led the Detroit defense in PK ice time this past season.

2011 draft pick (38th overall in the second round) Magnus Hellberg was signed by the Preds. As it stands right now, he will battle [Jeremy Smith](#) for the backup gig behind [Pekka Rinne](#) next season.

The Preds may also decide to bring in a veteran behind Rinne, as [Anders Lindback](#) struggled a bit with limited duty. Young goalies need to play a lot, and that won't happen behind a stud like Rinne.

[Chet Pickard](#) is on his last legs in the Nashville organization – another reason why picking goaltenders early in drafts isn't a good idea. Such a crap shoot.

Will be interesting to see where Malcolm Subban goes. Late first round?

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Another example of picking goalies early – [Cory Schneider](#) . Drafted in the 1st round in 2004, you could say his development has gone as well as could have been expected. For the last year he's been held back a bit, but assuming he is a starter this fall, it would be almost a full decade after he was drafted. A long, long time to wait.

And the guy behind him, [Eddie Lack](#) , was signed as a free agent. And he's looking every bit as good as Schneider did during his time in the AHL.

The first six words are something we all hope to hear often this weekend... "We have a trade to announce."

{youtube}JLARiM9t1eY{/youtube}

[Claude Giroux](#) with a beauty open ice check on [Thomas Vanek](#) :

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{youtube}wiXn_dNq3yc{/youtube}