The NHL Draft is NOW - join me (Dobber), as well as Brendan Ross, Jeff Angus and other DobberProspects writers for our **live chat beginning NOW**. Ask your questions, leave comments - get heard! That's over at
DobberProspects
. And pick up my
Fantasy Prospects Report
while you're at it!

Heading out for a few hours. If any trades come through, the analysis will be up when I get back.

Darren Dreger is reporting that Columbus has acquired goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky from the Flyers for draft picks. I'll have the fantasy break down up soon (and once it is confirmed).

Some AM updates:

Sounds like the Sens are still in pursuit of Rick Nash. San Jose doesn't have as much interest, at this point. Ottawa's offer is rumored to include Mika Zibanejad.

The Coyotes aren't shopping Keith Yandle, but rumor has it he is available for trade. I imagine they would only move him if a young top line forward was coming back in return. Trading from a positition of strength. Yandle had a bit of a down year in 2011-12, but he is still one of the best young defensemen in the league.

Sounds like there could be some activity on Friday. The ramblings will be updated accordingly.

Apparently Jordan Staal turned down a 10-year contract offer from the Penguins. If he doesn't want to sign in Pittsburgh, where does he want to go? Carolina leads the speculation, as his brother Eric is there.

A potential trade I mentioned a few weeks ago – Staal for Jamie McBain, Brandon Sutter , and a prospect. Thoughts?

It would be a risk for the 'Canes if Staal wouldn't re-sign, as he is a UFA next summer. However, I'd hazard a guess wherever he ends up getting traded to, he will sign an extension there.

As mentioned before, Staal does a lot of heavy lifting for the Penguins. This will put more pressure on Malkin and Crosby (of course it depends who they get back in a trade, as someone like Sutter could fill in quite well in a defensive role).

A great profile of the Sabres roster , using advanced stats to break down what they need. The suggestions:

Let Brad Boyes walk.

Move one of the offensive centers in a trade, or move Ennis back to wing and bring in a two-way center. The Sabres have three centers who all excel offensively, but Lindy Ruff can't give them all offensive minutes (and he isn't a coach who tends to do that's sort of thing anyway).

Ryan Kennedy from THN on why goaltenders are the ultimate assets.

"It's true, goaltenders are notoriously hard to peg when they're still developing, but that's where teams with track records such as San Jose and Nashville come in. During their draft year, many of the most talented aren't even starters on their junior teams and the same goes for players in Europe. Projection is huge and scouts often look for factors such as frame (Nashville is quite fond of 6-foot-5 and up northern Europeans, if you hadn't noticed), compete level and even how the player performs in practice. But there's also a measure of reassurance needed for the future, which is what San Jose director of scouting Tim Burke told me for an article in THN's goalie issue this year: You want to make sure the kid has a crease to call his own the next season."

No diagnosis on Ilya Kovalchuk 's injury yet – I had heard that it was a bulging/herniated disc in his low back, but obviously the team hasn't confirmed that yet.

Surgery hasn't been discussed so far, but of course that would depend on what the injury is, no? "Well, we don't know what it is, but why don't we cut you open to get a look and see?"

The negative venom that Kovalchuk endured from the CBC was ridiculous. Not sure what their bias against him was, but it was painfully obvious. Even playing at 50 or 60%, he was still a positive factor against the Kings. Los Angeles was simply a much better team than New Jersey in all facets of the game.

The Bruins hope that Dougie Hamilton is ready to step in to their top six next season. In my limited viewings of him, I'd say he is.

Imagine pairing him with Chara – who better to learn from? The 6-6 Hamilton and the 6-9 Chara would be a monster pairing, to say the least. Hamilton put up 72 points in 50 OHL games, and he clearly has the offensive side of things figured out at that level.

Three more UFA profiles, continuing from yesterday:

PA Parenteau – right wing

Is Parenteau a product of who he plays with (Tavares and Moulson)? Maybe, but it doesn't fully explain why he has become a legitimate top six NHL forward. According to Behind the Net, he had the sixth best primary assists per 60 minutes of ice time in the league. He wasn't merely riding shotgun with two more talented linemates. He has a lot of offensive talent, he sees the ice well, and he has made the most of the opportunity given to him. The Islanders don't seem like they are willing to meet his salary demands, which says something considering they have like $50 million in cap space.

He is likely seeing a similar contract to the one signed by Tomas Fleischmann in Florida last season – long term, cap hit north of $4 million. I didn't list favorites or a dark horse for Parenteau because he will get at least nine or 10 solid contract offers. Many teams could use a secondary scorer, it just depends on term and contract length.

He'll be in tough to repeat 67 points regardless of where he goes, but some situations (Detroit) would give him a really good shot to do it. He is a great playmaker, and there aren't many of those on the wing. Think of teams with goal scoring centers (Ryan Kesler in Vancouver could use a set up man).

Olli Jokinen – center

The favorite – Anaheim Ducks

The dark horse – Dallas Stars

It doesn't bode well for Jokinen that the Calgary Flames had no interest in bringing him back. They went over to the KHL to solve their hole at center, bringing Roman Cervenka back to Calgary. Jokinen is at the top of a paper-thin crop of UFA centers. He had a great season in Calgary in 2011-12, but teams may be scared off by the fact that he was playing for a contract. However, there is such little talent available that Jokinen is going to fetch himself a nice contract this summer.

To see what teams would be interested, look around the league at center depth charts. Then take a look at cap space. Then decide how desperate those teams may be. The few that emerge will likely be bidding on Jokinen. Anaheim could use a center and they have some Finns to surround Jokinen with. Dallas has a huge need for a center, but I don't see them giving Jokinen more than a year or two as a stop gap until they find a long term solution for their top six.

Dennis Wideman – defenseman

The favorites – Detroit, Tampa Bay, Minnesota

The dark horse – Long Island

There may not be many 'favorites' for Wideman right now, as he isn't going to be as highly pursued as Suter or other available UFAs. He had a very inconsistent 2011-12 season in Washington (could be a microcosm for his career). Wideman is a great skater with a rocket slap shot, but he is below average defensively and doesn't make great decisions with the puck. That being said, he'd be a top four defenseman on most teams.

Detroit wouldn't bring him in as a replacement for Lidstrom (that's like buying a Kia to replace a dinged up Bugatti), but he would be more of a 3/4/5 defenseman capable of moving the puck. A Wideman- Jonathan Ericsson pairing would give Mike Babcock nightmares, though.

Tampa, Minnesota, and Long Island all need a puck moving defensemen (you could argue that the Lightning need two). Long Island could give Wideman a lot of money, and they may have to lure him there. Minnesota has a hole on their back end after the Marek Zidlicky trade, and the two players are very similar.

Probably not new information, but wanted to share what a qualifying offer does. As July 1st approaches, this stuff is useful and good to know:

'Qualifying offers fall into three categories:

1. A player whose prior year salary was equal or less than $660,000 must receive a qualifying offer of 110% of their prior year's salary.

2. A player whose prior year salary was more than $660,000 and up to $1 million must receive a qualifying offer of 105% of their prior year's salary (but in no event shall such qualifying offer exceed $1 million).

3. A player whose prior year salary was more than $1 million must receive a qualifying offer at 100% of their prior year's salary.

If a team does not give a qualifying offer to a restricted free agent, he is eligible to become an unrestricted free agent on July 1, and can sign with any team with no compensation required to the player's former club.'

Anze Kopitar returns home to Slovenia:

{youtube}7WKFgR9M3WU{/youtube}