Pick up the Fantasy Guide here, if you haven't yet. Dobber and I will update it until the puck drops, even if it's January.

Over the next few weeks, I am helping to profile the Top 20 Canucks Prospects for the Canucks Army. Yesterday was number 18 – Colgate defenseman Jeremy Price.

"Price has been in Ontario this summer training with Vancouver Director of Player Development Dave Gagner (along with several other Canucks players and prospects, including Chris Tanev , Brendan Gaunce, Frankie Corrado, and Steve Pinizzotto). He was a noted offensive threat in junior hockey (he scored 12 goals in his final year with the Nepean Raiders of the CJHL), but he has settled in as more of a two-way defenseman at the NCAA level. The fact that he is training with Gagner bodes well, since it allows the Canucks to keep closer taps on his offseason training and to provide guidance on proper recovery and nutrition.

For a puck-moving defenseman with an excellent first pass, Price possesses solid size at 6-1 and weighing close to 200 pounds. He led Colgate's defensive group in scoring in 2011-12, and he has seen his production increase each season as a Raider - from 14 points, to 19, to 23. He credits the college schedule for a lot of his improvement."

My weekly piece for Defending Big D – a look at the defense in Dallas . The Stars need to add a top four defenseman more than most NHL clubs – they will miss Sheldon Souray 's defensive ability (yes, you read that right).

"The Dallas defensive group may not be a lot better in 2012-13, but the pieces are in place for significant improvement over the next few years. Dillon, Nemeth, and Oleksiak, in particular, all have top-four upside. Nemeth could be playing in the NHL this season if he is able to adjust quickly to the North American game."

My latest piece for my CBA debate series – the Entry Level Contract.

"It will be interesting to see how hard the PA fights on this issue. The NFL recently cut back significantly on what rookies can earn. It seems in many sports (and many industries) that you have to "earn your way" so to speak. Perhaps the PA is willing to hurt their young players a bit as long as it doesn't negatively impact more experienced NHL players?"

Attitude may be Wings prospect Tomas Jurco's greatest attribute.

Jurco:

“I want to impress everybody, maybe surprise some people. Let them know I can do it. They might not give me chance right away, but during the season when there are some injuries I’ll be playing well in AHL and they will know they can call me up any time.”

Rumors that the Canucks and King have expressed interest in Cristobal Huet came out yesterday. Do the Canucks need Huet, or are they better off giving Eddie Lack a shot? Thomas Drance takes a look.

" Eddie Lack looks pretty damn ready and excelled against NHL shooters at the AHL level last season... Let's take a step back and pretend that Eddie Lack isn't quite clearly better than Cristobal Huet, because once Luongo is traded (if it ever happens) it will makes sense for the Canucks to acquire a "steady veteran backup" as a counter to Cory Schneider. The eloquent Schneider has never been a full-time NHL starter, and as good as he's been his promotion isn't without risk. Obviously having a proven goaler who can caddy for Schneider should he struggle for a stretch does strike me as useful.”

I am a huge Jeff Skinner fan, but that contract is awfully large. The 'Canes are paying for two years of UFA (for now, that could change with the new CBA), but Skinner is coming off of a terrible season. $5.7 really sets the bar high for the likes of Jamie Benn in Dallas and Tyler Ennis in Buffalo, too.

Hal Gill played in the postseason with a broken leg. Um… wow.

"How the hell do you not know your leg is broken?

Your don't know your leg is broken if you have a set of normal x-rays. Here's the thing about broken bones. They're sneaky little buggers. That's why when you have x-rays for a suspected fracture they'll generally do at least two views of the area in question – what looks normal from one angle may look pretty obviously messed up from another. And sometimes despite the radiologist's best efforts, particularly sneaky fractures may not show up on x-ray until a week or two later. The sneakiest of the sneaks are the fractures that are closed (no bone poking through the skin) and non-displaced (as in all the bone is still lined up where it belongs)."

OHL prospect guru Brock Otten is taking a look at all 30 NHL clubs and their OHL prospects. San Jose was his most recent team:

" Freddie Hamilton - Niagara IceDogs

Hamilton had another good year, posting back to back 80 point seasons. Truthfully, I'm not really sure he progressed much this year, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. His big leap came two years ago when he became a more active player away from the puck, got stronger, and improved his consistency from shift to shift. Hamilton is just a very versatile player. He can play pretty much any role you ask him to, at any forward position. He can provide offense by driving hard to the net and is excellent along the boards. He can provide energy as a solid forechecker.

He plays both ends of the ice and is an excellent penalty killer. The one thing I will say about this year is that I felt like he was a bit more physical. If he can continue to build off that, it would add another dimension to his game. This coming season, he'll be in Worcester. The Sharks look like they have some solid veteran depth at forward, but there may be a chance for Hamilton to earn a top 6 spot. Even if he's playing 3rd line minutes, I'd expect him to still have a good year. I think he's built well for the professional game. I could see him having a 20-20 year in his freshman pro campaign."

Not only did the Flyers lose Matt Carle to free agency. Not only did they miss out on both She a Weber
and
Ryan Suter
… but now they have tocontend with the loss of
Andrej Meszaros
for the entire seeason.

Meszaros was slated to play a very big role for the Flyers, likely a 22-24 minute-a-night defenseman in all situations (similar to his role with Ottawa). Without Meszaros, the Flyers defense really drops off after Timonen, Coburn, and Grossman.

Marc-Andre Bourdon, Erik Gustafsson , and Brandon Manning are all in the mix, but the Flyers will need to add a veteran to the group.
Dan Boyle
is a trade target, as is
Jay Bouwmeester
.

NHL.com's Pete Jensen takes a look at 15 combo players (points and PIM). No earth-shattering discoveries, but a nice list of some players who have more fantasy value than you may think.

Copper & Blue's countdown continues – the #3 young player Nail Yakupov was profiled yesterday. Yakupov is my favorite of the four young Oilers from a fantasy hockey perspective.

"So how can you possibly justify having Yakupov ahead of a player like Jordan Eberle , Ryan Nugent-Hopkins or Taylor Hall ? A lot depends on that question about injury. If you think that Yakupov's established level is close to his performance before being injured, his OHL performance compares favorably to anyone, and expecting a dynamic goal-scoring superstar seems reasonable. If you think that Yakupov's established level is close to his performance after being injured, his OHL performance last season is actually pretty disappointing for a first overall pick (note: it's still really good)."

Justin Bourne is jumping on the Alex Ovechkin bandwagon. Why? Read this.

"In the early days of Ovechkin's career, he somehow managed to be at the same time electric and carefree (I wish he spoke better English in those days), but the latter trait has taken a beating with each season the Caps don't win the Stanley Cup. In a way, he reminds me of Lebron James – a fun-loving guy who's had life beaten out of him by the media and his inability to reach own expectations for the Caps.

People have said that since Lebron helped the Heat capture an NBA title, he's rediscovered his former, lighter self. He never liked being the villain, and he's put the bad days behind him.

I think a Cup would do the same for Ovy."

I have never been a huge Ovechkin fan (always been Team Crosby, if the debate still exists), but as a fan of hockey I hope he gets back to his highlight reel ways this season. He is way too talented and too passionate about hockey to simply be a star.

Anaheim 2011 2nd round pick William Karlsson is playing well for the Swedes at the U20 Evaluation Camps in the US. I'll be keeping tabs on Karlsson this season in the SEL and at the WJC.

"He has matured a lot as a guy and I think it reflects on the ice," Sweden coach Roger Ronnberg told NHL.com. "He's more of a man now. He was a young boy a year ago and now he looks more like a man."

Karlsson, 19, said he feels like he's gotten stronger physically and emotionally, and it's starting to show on the ice. He centered the team's top line Tuesday, flanked by Nashville Predators prospect Pontus Aberg and Forsberg, the Washington Capitals' top pick in June.

Canes Country projects Alex Semin 's season – who will he line up with? How will he do? Those questions, and more, are answered.

"Semin was acquired mainly for one reason, to give Eric Staal a top-tier winger to play with. While there is still a chance he plays with someone else, the better-than-average odds are that he will spend most of his time playing alongside Eric. Now the question of who the other linemate will be is a much more complex issue. If Eric stays at center, then the top line LW position will be open. Jussi Jokinen could slide in that slot."

Gates here - The 2012-13 DobberHockey Banner polls are down the final two for each position. Giroux vs. Stamkos, Quick vs. Price and Pietrangelo vs. Karlsson. The winners will be featured on the main page banner for this upcoming season. Vote now!