

**August 31, 2012**

Written by Jeff Angus

Thursday, 30 August 2012 11:58 - Last Updated Friday, 31 August 2012 15:04

---

I hopped on the Canucks Army podcast today to discuss Luongo, Schneider, Connauton, Edler, and more. [Listen here.](#)

And the top prospect in the Canucks organization is... Zack Kassian. [I profiled him today.](#)

Jordan Eberle has signed a massive six-year, \$36 million extension. Why yes, I'd love to share my thoughts!

Before my rant begins... [a good read on Eberle from Cam Charron.](#)

I am not for or against this contract. The timing does confuse me, however. What is stopping Edmonton from waiting a year and signing it next summer? The cap, if it drops to \$58 million, would mean that a \$6 million player would be an \$8 million player (roughly) under the current \$70 million cap.

**August 31, 2012**

Written by Jeff Angus

Thursday, 30 August 2012 11:58 - Last Updated Friday, 31 August 2012 15:04

---

Eberle is a phenomenal player, but he was given really easy minutes last year (as most young scorers are). Why not see how he handles tough minutes first?

The Hall contract makes sense - I think the Oilers "bought low" on him coming off of the injuries. However, I'm not sure about this one. And it ties in nicely to the poll at the bottom of the page - in a standard keeper, which if the four would you take? Eberle, Nugent-Hopkins, Hall, or Yakupov?

I have claimed all along that Yakupov is the best prospect since Stamkos. I won't back track on that now. After him, I'd go with either Nugent-Hopkins or Hall, with Eberle last. That isn't to say I don't like Eberle - a great story of a player who teams passed over, and a legend for Canada on the international ice.

I guess my beef with this deal is the timing of it. I'll gladly eat crow if Eberle scores 30+ again next year.

I bet most NHL teams would take Eberle for \$6 million per season, but I think the Oilers could have either gotten him for less, or waited to see how he fares playing tougher minutes. And what happens in a few years when Yakupov and the others need new contracts? I guess that is one of those "good" problems.

Zach Bogosian hurt his wrist training and is out for four-to-six months. Huge opportunity for Paul Postma, who I saw a lot of in the WHL. Not a great skater, but a very cerebral and offensively talented defenseman. He's almost a lock for the Winnipeg back end now.

Apparently Detroit has offered [Carlo Colaiacovo](#) a one or two-year contract, but the injury-prone defenseman is holding out for a third year. I wonder if a team will get desperate enough – he is by far the best UFA defenseman still available.

What are your thoughts on [Simon Gagne](#) ? Is he done as a productive NHLer? Can he overcome another concussion to be a productive forward for the Kings?

[NHL.com takes a look:](#)

*"After about three weeks after the injury, I knew it wasn't really similar to what I had in the past. It wasn't that bad. Because of my [history] with this injury, we took double caution with the doctors and made sure that I got the right rest, the right exam, to make sure everything was fine. That's what we did, and now I have to say I give total credit to our doctors here in L.A., the medical staff -- they really put me in the best situation for me to get back and be 100 percent. The more we kept playing and the more we kept winning in the playoffs, I was like, 'Oh, maybe there is going to be a chance for me to come back and test it before next season.'*

[John Tortorella is a fan of New York's young players.](#) And yelling. He is also a fan of yelling.

Ryan McDonagh is one of those players who has received some praise from Tortorella, and I'd say he has a good reason to – McDonagh was the top defenseman on one of the better defensive clubs in the league last season.

*“He's mentally mature,” the Rangers' bench boss said of McDonagh. Even when he makes a mistake, Ryan is ready for the next shift. And he's going to get better and better offensively.”*

*Tortorella brings up an interesting point about McDonagh when it comes to his offensive game. Although McDonagh was a superb shutdown defenseman last year, and did provide some offense from the back end (he was 2nd among Rangers defensemen in goals, assists, and points in 2011-12), the reason "Mac-Truck" was selected by Montreal with the 12th overall pick in 2007 was his offensive upside.*

*If McDonagh can provide even more offense this season and continue to thrive in his own zone, the sky is the limit for him. But while McDonagh looks to add to his offensive game, the Ranger who led all defensemen on the club in goals, assists, and points was only 21 years old last*

**August 31, 2012**

Written by Jeff Angus

Thursday, 30 August 2012 11:58 - Last Updated Friday, 31 August 2012 15:04

---

*season."*

Tortorella goes on to heap praises on Kreider and Hagelin. I like both – I snagged Hagelin off the waiver wire last season in my H2H keeper league, and Kreider should be the favorite for the Calder Trophy – he is already physically dominant against NHL forwards as a rookie.

A great read from The Hockey Writers | Overtime – [problem athletes, not problem hockey players.](#)

*"The sensationalism of the media could be to blame for several aspects of these high-maintenance players– nobody really should be defined by their every action, especially if that action is televised. But then again, star athletes are highly paid and should find a way to curtail their egos or emotions and spit out a cliché answer in the worst of times. They should also find a way to work well with others considering the high stakes of their salaries. And if they don't, it really isn't unacceptable to be known as scapegoats or be blackballed from the major sports altogether, but that just shows how high the stakes continue to be."*

We have finished counting down the top 20 Canucks prospects over at the Army. The top five – today's prospect will be released shortly:

**August 31, 2012**

Written by Jeff Angus

Thursday, 30 August 2012 11:58 - Last Updated Friday, 31 August 2012 15:04

---

[#5 – Jordan Schroeder](#)

[#4 – Brendan Gaunce](#)

[#3 – Nicklas Jensen](#)

[#2 – Eddie Lack](#)

#1 - ?

Will the Canucks benefit from a potential lockout? I think they would – provided the season did start, at some point in time.

[Brandon Worley from DefendingBigD](#) takes a look at the potential of [Ray Whitney](#) and [Jaromir Jagr](#) this season. How will one/both of them click with [Jamie Benn](#)?

*“One of the issues last season was that Benn would fall into the trap of trying to do too much on his own, likely because of the issues he faced with his wingers being able to finish plays or create them. While [Steve Ott](#) certainly showed good ability to move the puck at times, he's far from the dynamic offensive talent that Jagr is -- even in this advanced stage of his career.*

*With Whitney, Benn has a speedy forward who was one of the more creative playmakers from the wing the NHL had last season. He's defensively responsible and more than capable of moving the puck quickly and smartly in transition and once again, has above-average puck possession skills, something the Stars struggled mightily with last season. Whitney is capable of putting the puck in the net as well but it's his ability to dish the puck that is going to be most valuable for the Stars and have the biggest impact on a center like Benn.”*

[The Score asks the question](#) – what is going to happen with [Brian Elliott](#) this season?

*“Elliott just turned 27 and should be entering the prime of his career. He and the Blues, who signed him to a 2-year extension, are hoping that his breakout season means the same for him that it did for Roloson. There are plenty of non-statistical arguments for this to be the case. In St. Louis, he’s playing behind a much stronger defence than he did in Ottawa or Colorado. He’s been credited with making numerous adjustments to his playing style that have made him more reliable. He’s toughened mentally to avoid losing his confidence. He isn’t relied upon to be the sole starter in St. Louis, making it easier to manage his streakiness.”*

Elliott’s play has ranged between awful and amazing over the past two years. No doubt playing behind a stingy defensive club (compared to Ottawa or Colorado) has helped, but can he be counted on to repeat his stellar 2011-12 performance?

[Jordan Staal](#) is [the top young player in the Carolina organization](#). One reason why he has so much value – he makes things easier for his teammates.

*“The other thing that makes a player like Staal valuable is the advantage he can create for other teammates. Him being able to win the battle at even strength while playing tough minutes frees up easier zone starts for the likes of [Eric Staal](#), [Tuomo Ruutu](#), [Alex Semin](#) and [Jeff Skinner](#), which could possibly lead to higher offensive outputs from those players. Just look at the results*



**August 31, 2012**

Written by Jeff Angus

Thursday, 30 August 2012 11:58 - Last Updated Friday, 31 August 2012 15:04

---

[James Neal](#)

and

[Evgeni Malkin](#)

had last season.

*Now, the Hurricanes don't have anyone as talented as those two, so their numbers may not be as gaudy, but I think [Eric Staal](#) and Skinner could do some significant damage with a zone start push. Skinner has been getting that for his first two years in the NHL and Staal could possibly help continue this trend if he continues to do what he did in Pittsburgh."*

[Corey Pronman takes a look at Florida's top prospects.](#) The Panthers have the best prospect pool in the NHL.

Here are some DobberProspects profiles:

[Huberdeau](#)

**August 31, 2012**

Written by Jeff Angus

Thursday, 30 August 2012 11:58 - Last Updated Friday, 31 August 2012 15:04

---

[Shore](#)

[Bjugstad](#)

{youtube}dquWcH-DWSM{/youtube}

[Robak](#)

[Rene Bourque](#) is out for at least two months, and maybe three, after undergoing abdominal surgery recently.

Does [Kyle Turris](#) deserve more money than [Sam Gagner](#) ? [The Edmonton Journal takes a look.](#)

*"I'm a Gagner fan. He plays hard, he hates losing, doesn't make excuses and he produces points without a lot of powerplay time. He should have a letter on his jersey. But, I don't think the Oilers value him as I do. If they did, he would be getting a long-term deal wouldn't he? Not one year.*

*There is no comparison between Turris and Gagner as of now except for their ages and position, but Turris (6'1", 185 pounds) can easily slide into a No. 2 slot behind the 6'3", 216-pound Spezza in Ottawa. They see him as a core guy going forward even with his minimal production at the NHL level after getting him from Phoenix last season for defenceman [David Rundblad](#)*

.

*Gagner? Until he gets his long-term deal as [Taylor Hall](#) just got, as [Jordan Eberle](#) will get soon, he will continue to fight the perception that he is part of today, but not tomorrow in their organizational plans."*

Ottawa used Turris as the "checking center" last season, which may come as a surprise to a few people. He won't be an elite point producer so long as he is playing second fiddle to Spezza (and taking a lot of defensive zone faceoffs), but he should prove to be worth every penny of his new five-year extension.

**August 31, 2012**

Written by Jeff Angus

Thursday, 30 August 2012 11:58 - Last Updated Friday, 31 August 2012 15:04

---

Dobber breaks down the [fantasy winger situation](#) in a gem of a piece for Puck Daddy. One sleeper:

“ [Magnus Paajarvi](#) , *Edmonton Oilers*

*Use the term "surging" very loosely here. All this means is that Paajarvi got the short end of the stick last year, and should be a candidate to get 35 points or more in the season ahead. From my fantasy guide:*

*"He didn't get the bounces he needed in order to maintain his position on the roster. Team shot percentage when he was on the ice was almost the lowest in the league at 3.56%. A couple of those pucks go in, ice time doesn't get reduced...positive domino effect that would have changed everything. Point is — don't give up on him."*

{youtube}ssmnMjOhxhk{/youtube}