In two of my keeper leagues, the draft pick is pretty important. In one of them, a team has already traded their 2014 first rounder. The 2012 first rounder has been moved in each of them. But there could be an NHL Entry Draft coming very soon that will be so weak that a first round pick in your keeper league will be the equivalent of a late second rounder this past summer.

You see, the NHL is considering pushing the age of draft eligibility back until a player is 19. Naturally, they can't do something so drastic without the permission of the NHLPA. That permission won't happen out of the goodness of their heart. No, it will need to be negotiated as part of the next collective bargaining agreement (CBA). The CBA expires in July of 2011, meaning the earliest the rule gets implemented is 2012. The NHLPA also has the right to extend the current agreement until July of 2012, which would push this change back a year. In addition to that, the two parties could agree to give it a two-year waiting period, or they could phase it in six-month increments, in which case 19-year-olds won't be the age needed for prospects until 2014.

What this means is that there will be an incredibly weak Entry Draft. Or, if they decide on pushing the age of eligibility back six months one year and the other six the following year, it could mean a “fairly” weak Entry Draft for two years. Either way, in trade discussions I am not quite as interested in 2012 or 2013 draft picks. I don’t discount them, I just tone their value down a tad.

Do I believe the NHL and NHLPA will come to an agreement on this? No. If they were to come to such an agreement, it opens the door to lawsuits. After all, can an organization legally not give an 18-year-old – legally an adult - employment because of his age? In 1977 Ken Linseman didn’t think so and he sued the league. The suit was later dropped when he signed to play in the WHA, but it opened the door for 18-year-olds in the NHL Draft. So will the NHL want this headache? I’m sure they have enough lawyers to word the rule properly and make it work, but it still seems highly unlikely.

That being said, even a slim possibility is enough to bring down the value of any draft picks in those two summers slightly in my books. Just something to keep an eye on…

Meanwhile…

With the Vancouver Olympics just around the corner, the Canucks embarked on a 14-game

road trip Saturday. Naturally, as a fantasy enthusiast my first instinct would be take a look at some of the home/road stats of the players and adjust/prepare my roster accordingly for the long road trip ahead. Thankfully, they began the trip in Toronto, which is good for padding the stats of a lot players. That game aside, here is what you can expect if trends continue:

- For Henrik Sedin, his points-per-game at home is 1.58, whereas on the road it “slips” to 1.26. This trip will be when Alexander Ovechkin passes him and takes over the NHL scoring lead. To maintain the lead, Henrik would need to continue in that 1.40-1.50 range.

- Ryan Kesler goes M.I.A.. He has over a point-per-game at home, but just 13 in 23 on the road.

- Ditto for Mason Raymond and Mikael Samuelsson.

- So who does better on the road than at home on Vancouver? Nobody. Team scoring will go down over the next 13 contests.