

## Boston, Buffalo off-season report

Written by Dobber

Thursday, 26 June 2008 13:19 -

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As the number of keeper league hockey pools increase each year, fantasy junkies are becoming more active in the off-season as they prepare their teams for the coming year. Rebuild? Retool? Tweak? Whatever your intentions, it helps to get all the information you can about your players. FPL will look at a pair of teams each week and give you the fantasy lowdown. This week we'll look through our fantasy hockey goggles at the outlooks for Boston

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and Buffalo.

(Originally posted by [The Hockey News](#) on May 23)

### **BOSTON BRUINS**

*Potential UFAs* – Bobby Allen, Alex Auld, Glen Metropolit

*Potential RFAs* – Petteri Nokelainen, Mark Stuart, Dennis Wideman

*Looking to Add* – Boston is set up the middle with Patrice Bergeron, Marc Savard, David Krejci and Nokelainen, as well as Carl Soderberg and Zach Hamill on the way. The team is also deep between the pipes now that Manny Fernandez has recovered from knee surgery. So all that is urgently needed is an upgrade on the wings and perhaps a defenseman or two.

*Ready for full time* – Krejci is now a lock to be on the team, it's just too bad he will be buried on the third line. But, already knowing he plays over his head, he should be just fine there. If Soderberg crosses the pond from Sweden next year, he will get a long look. Defenseman Matt Lashoff is an excellent offensive rearguard ready to take the next step. While Wideman tends to be in and out of the doghouse, there could be an opportunity for some big points out of Lashoff.

*Fantasy Outlook* – Coach Claude Julien really got a lot out of his team this season and there is no reason why they can't repeat that performance next year. Getting Bergeron back will boost the offense, but that may be at the expense of Krejci. The team was 25th in offense and under a defense-first Julien I don't see that number improving into the top 20 in 2008-09.

**Fantasy Grade: C- (last year was D+)**

### **BUFFALO SABRES**

*Potential UFAs* – Dmitri Kalinin, Teppo Numminen, Nolan Pratt, Michael Ryan, Jocelyn Thibault

*Potential RFAs* – Steve Bernier, Paul Gaustad, Dan Paille, Clarke MacArthur

*Looking to Add* – I'll write this here once again: a power play quarterback. The Sabres finally found a great one from their own system this season in Brian Campbell, but economics put them back to square one. They'll probably find one within their system again next season, though (see below). The team will also need a backup goaltender if they fail to re-sign Thibault.

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*Ready for full time* – Andrej Sekera could be Buffalo's answer for a power play quarterback. Normally, offensive rearguards take several years to get into the groove at the NHL level (see Campbell), but Sekera could surprise with 35 points right away. He should stick with the big club for full-time duty now. Ditto for Clarke MacArthur, who has been at or better than a point per game in the American League for the past two years. There is a lot of hype over 5-foot-5 prospect Nathan Gerbe, who recently signed an entry-level contract with the club. However, as much as I love the little guys (and Gerbe has no shortage of talent), I just don't see him getting a fair shot next season. Maybe the following year.

*Fantasy Outlook* – Sure they didn't make the playoffs, but the Sabres finished fourth in the league in offense. Buffalo has been a top-scoring team for a few years now and that will not change next season. They will once again contend for the playoffs, score lots of goals and remain young. Not a bad team to build a keeper league roster around.

**Fantasy Grade: B (last year was B+)**