In this week's letters, I rank some defensemen, rank some goalies, look at a couple of trades, explain my "ratings" in my Top 300 Fantasy Player list, and give you the full scoop on Zigmund Palffy...

This was posted on the old site on December 11th and re-posted here as an FYI.

This will also be the place where you can ask your questions in the comments section over the next few days.

I heard a rumor that Ziggy Palffy has been practicing and is trying to make a comeback. If I am correct, he is not available to come back until January sometime. What have you heard about this, and what do you think about it? Will the Pens try to dish him off for a solid scorer, or take their chances on him? Thanks,
Joe

Extremely doubtful. Palffy played a non-competitive exhibition game in Slovakia in October and the rumors began to roar from there. His shoulder is still bothering him, however. He can't put his hand under his head when he lays down. Palffy's plan is to consult with doctors in April (i.e. after the season). If things look good, he hopes to return to hockey. In Europe. His wife just had a baby, and the NHL is out of the question. At 35 in the fall, he may get back into hockey - but only in a European league. One more point - NHL rules stipulate that when a player retires, he must stay out of the league for a minimum of one year. That makes him out until February anyway.

I just made a trade.

I dealt Pominville, Fedotenko and Zubov for Gagne, Barnaby and Zhitnik. I'm in 6th place and desperately needed some pims and figured gagne was as good an upgrade on pominville as zubov was on zhitnik.

Now I have another problem, I'm weak on D, I was to begin with but I have exacerbated this fact now.

I'm very strong up front C: Spezza, B. Richards, Boyes, Marleau, P. Stastny, Pavelski RW: A. Radulov, Afinogenov, Hemsky, Barnaby, Vrbata LW: Kariya, Nagy, Kovalchuk, Gagne, B. Pouliot D: Bouwmeester, Rafalski, Leopold, Van Ryn, Zhitnik G: Ward, Lundqvist, Nittymaki, Kolzig

I get to keep 10 players at years end, altho I can trade anybody during the off-season (keepers are submitted end of August. I really don't want to trade Radulov, especially now that he's actually playing.

My question then is, which forward do you think is at peak value now and should be traded for a d-man or combo of d-men? The only d-man i my squad I intend on keeping is bouwmeester. I know you said Redden would have groin problems all year but given my sad set of d-men is he worth a shot at?

If you are going for it next year, Redden is certainly worth it. As for forwards that are peaking, I don't see one. If Kariya ends up with 85 or 90 points you may want to see what the market has to offer on him. I'm not a big fan of Pouliot, so if there is any interest there, he is tradable.

What's up with Biron? I had money on him going to Phoenix. Bryan.

My favorite question. Short. Biron will be traded by the deadline, but probably not before the New Year. Phoenix probably feels that Tellqvist is their answer right now. We shall see.

Hi Dobber! What do you think is Salmelainen upside and how long will he take to reach his upside? PJ

His upside is 65 points, and I don't know if he will ever reach it. If he does, it will be next year...or he will be out of the NHL. His inconsistent play and defensive lapses will not be carried in the NHL if he doesn't produce at the other end.

Hey which of these D men would you pick up if you were me, Points only non keeper

Mike Commodore Shane Obrien Ryan Suter Daniel Tjarqvist Duncan Keith Anton Babchuk Lasse Kukkonen Jordan Leopold Ben Clymer (Dual D and Winger interesting)

Also what are your thoughts on this trade in my keeper league, points only

Kyle Wellwood and my first round pick

Ryan Smyth and his 3rd round pick

Just going forward with this season, I think Suter is your best bet, followed by Leopold. As for your deal there - it sucks. I like Wellwood's upside, and his health. Smyth will always be a 65-point player. To top it off, you are giving up the better pick. Expect Wellwood to clear 60 this year, and approach 70 in years to come.

Mr D

Not sure if you've covered this, but I'm wondering what a rating "point" actually means and how we might compare relative values. Say Crosby's rated 370 -- does he have twice as much value as Hossa at 185? All else being equal, could we evaluate a trade on this basis (ie Crosby's worth two 185-level guys)?

thanks

john

I cover it every couple of months, but as new readers jump on board the Dobberwagon, I have to repeat myself. No big deal though. Yes, it would take two Hossa's to get a Crosby. But these ratings are "all things being equal". If you are rebuilding, you would be stressing youth more. If you are going for the title this year, you would rate older guys with lots of points more. If you are going for the playoffs, you would rate players on those teams differently. These are just rankings without those factors.

First of all, what a great site!

I've been in many hockey pools through the year, but I have joined my first Keeper League this year. Due to injuries and slow starts, this season is already a write-off and I'm almost guarantied to finish last (out of 12). So I am looking to built for the future and already think that I have to many good young prospect. Should I try to trade a few for more established players (if so which ones), or should I just try to keep my current core, as it should pay off in the long run. On our roster we have 9F, 6D, 2G and 5 Spares and can protect 6F, 3D, 1G and additional 3 others for fantasy money (note that each team must cut of there top 4 and top 10 point leaders). Here is

my current roster:

Forwards: Iginla J, Gaborik M, Bertuzzi T, Radulov A, Horton N, Perry C, Wolski W, Carter J, Brule G, Lupul J, Parrish M

Defense: Phaneuf D, Whitney R, Barker C, Smid L, Johnson Jack, Norstrom M, Baumgartner N

Goalies: Emery R, Bryzgalov I, Esche R

Also, the goalies aren't that great in my pool, so I was thinking of possibly trading Emery (highest current value) and protecting Bryzgalov hoping that he will be the #1 in Anaheim next year, would this be smart? Is there some injured players that I should target for trade, since I'm not in the running this year? Please let me know what you think as I don't want to be loosing every year.

Thanks, Sylvain

First, you have to improve your goaltending. Try and get Biron for cheap - especially for next year. If you had him instead of Esche you would have a good trio for next year. Go after Redden for next year. Also, your forwards look great for next year, you could probably replace Parrish with a draft pick.

Howdy! Would Leetch, Berard, F. Kaberle and/or Westcott be solid contributors when they return or are there any other injured or unsigned players you might recommend to add to my roster?

Thank you, Jen

No, Yes, Yes, No for these guys. Berard hopefully has solved his back problems once and for all, so if he comes back he will hopefully play to his ability. No hidden gems for you on the IR or UFA list Jen. Everyone knows all the good ones.

I'll keep this one simple and sweet: Ray Whitney for Martin Havlat. Keeper league but we keep only two players for three years, and i wouldn't keep any of these two. Goose

Definitely grab Havlat - too bad I didn't get this answer to you before his five-point weekend, eh? Whitney will slow, and Havlat has had his injury for the year.

Hey Dobber,

I know you are a busy man but I thought I'd ask anyway. If you don't have time to respond itz cool. A guy in my league has really soured on zetterberg and I am interested in obtaining him, but usually this owner is pretty tight about trading so I gotta be quick I think (zett seems to be getting on a role). Still he likes bouwmeester and I was hoping to package him and someone for zetts.

1. PM Bouchard and Bouwmeester for Zetts

2. Bouwmeester, J. Staal, and M. Koivu for Zetts

3. Bouwmeester, C. Armstrong, and M. Koivu for zetts

Or even 4 for 1...

4. Bouwmeester, J. Staal, Armstrong, M. Koivu for zetts

I really like bouchard but I would think he is worth giving up for zetts. What do you think? This is of course a keeper where we keep 17 (but right now none of these guys will be keepers on my team but bouchard).

Again don't worry about it if your busy! Thanx for all the great work ya do!

J

It would depend on the type of pool you are in, but I am assuming it is a keeper league where a certain amount of defensemen are musts. Option THREE is the best one here, followed by option ONE. I wouldn't do the other ones.

Hey Dobber,

I have written to you before about my dilemma of having 3 quality fantasy starters, in Luongo, GIguere, and Lehtonen. I have been offered Miller for Giguere, and realizing that I would still be left with 3 tenders, only being able to protect 2, I ask you...would you make that Miller deal? and if so, which 2 of Luongo, Miller, and Lehtonen would you move? Keeping in mind that Luongo may give me my biggest return.

Rob

I would move Luongo, and here's why - you would get the most value for him, and he does not offer playoff value. I would trade him for Miller for sure. I would also trade Giguere or Lehtonen for Miller. Get Miller! Lehtonen is the least valuable on your team, with his injury history and the way he wears down as the season goes on...however, that will be reflected in your trade return. Which is why I say Luongo.

Hey Dobber,

i'm in a dynasty league, and i have phaneuf, pitkanen, campbell, carle and bouwmeester. which one should i trade as i only need 4. Bouwmeester is one of my favorite players so i would prefer not to trade him. Also if you have time would you be able to tell me these guys maximum potential for points.

thanks, Ryan

Point potential, in order: 65, 70, 65, 65, 65. I would trade Pitkanen because of his injury history. He will always get hurt.

The following comment section is for questions - ask them right here, and I will answer them for the five days or so that this link stays on the main screen. This will have to do until I get a forum up and running.