With the end of the 2010-11 season in sight, it's time to gauge who's going to be amongst your keeper selections heading into next season. Of course which players end up staying on your rosters depends greatly on your league make up, number of keepers and your own personal risk tolerance. I've compiled a list of players that may have some question marks as protectable players in limited keeper leagues heading into next season. This is part one of two, with the second one coming tomorrow.

Let me get this out of the way right now, I hate fishing. The score card is simple here; Fish means I find the player in a favourable light as a keeper for next season. Cut Bait means I'd rather throw this one back into the water and hope for a bigger catch. Be aware that I tend to be quite conservative with my protected players, preferring the vast majority of my keepers to come down on the proven side of the ledger.

Atlanta

Blake Wheeler

Gut Feel: Fish

The Big Wheel has 13 points in his 17 games with the Thrashers, ten of them coming within the last 11 contests. Since the trade from the Bruins, he is receiving over four minutes more overall ice time and about one minute more per game on the man advantage. Only Andrew Ladd spends more time on the ice amongst forwards still employed by Atlanta. This is a tough one to start out with, but I lean towards the keep side for this pending restricted free agent. Big guys typically take longer to hit their stride.

Anthony Stewart

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

Stewart began the year with 25 points in 41 games (a 50 point pace), but when the calendar turned to 2011, Stewart's game took a turn south. He recorded 13 points in the next 33 games, only a 32 point pace. On a positive note, he has four points in the last six games. What gives me reason to pause is that he is 26-years-old and he spent the entire year in the AHL last season, recording only 31 points in 77 games. He had 67 points in 62 games in his last season of junior. I'm not convinced he is legit.

Zach Bogosian

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

With Byfuglien and Enstrom in the fold for Atlanta, Bogosian's offensive contributions from the backend will be muted. I love his talent and potential, but don't get seduced by that and keep him over a veteran 40 point defenseman.

Boston

Brad Marchand

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

I'm guilty of writing off Marchand’s upside as that of a third liner, but he did have 80 points in 57 games in junior and he posted a 59 point rookie season in the AHL. Last year, he recorded 32 points in 34 AHL games. He is on pace for 40 points this year, but during a 21 game stretch from January 8, Marchand notched 20 points. That said, I just couldn't bring myself to protect 60 point potential over a 60 point veteran.

Tyler Seguin

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

One of the things I mostly avoid early in my hockey drafts is rookie players. The only thing I dislike more are sophomores! I have little doubt Seguin will become a very good player, but on a deep, veteran-laden team I'd look elsewhere for scoring.

Marc Savard

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

For those of you not paying attention to the news, Savard may have played his final game in the NHL. It's sad that his career may have ended prematurely on such an ugly play. It still doesn't sit well with me that Matt Cooke went unpunished for such an obvious attempt to injure. I wonder if Colin Campbell still thinks Savard is a "big faker"?

Tuukka Rask

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

Many of us thought that Rask would take over from 37-year-old veteran Tim Thomas in the Bruins crease this season. That didn't happen, but will next year be the one in which a 24-year-old Rask gets enough starts to be fantasy relevant? I really like Rask, but with Thomas having another two seasons at $5 million dollars per, I see a 50/50 split at best next year.

Buffalo

Nathan Gerbe

Gut Feel: Cut Bait on this small fry for next year

With Tim Connolly about to become an unrestricted free agent and Drew Stafford restricted, will the Sabres forego re-signing one of their veterans and go with the pint-sized warrior? The problem is that if they even sign one of them, Gerbe is still not a lock for a top six role. He has six points in his last seven games.

Jordan Leopold

Gut Feel: Fish

The 30-year-old defenseman logged the most average ice time for Buffalo and was in the mix for top power play minutes. He is under contract for two more seasons. Leopold only has 507 NHL career games to his credit, so he doesn't have the mileage issues many players his age have, although he does have a bit of an injury history. In his last year of college hockey, he recorded 48 points in 44 games and as a sophomore with Calgary, he scored 33 points. This was not a fluke, just a long time coming.

Andrej Sekera

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

A restricted free agent following the season, Sekera will need to put himself in a situation where he can play an offensive role to be a useful fantasy asset. He has 17 points in the last 17 games. Sekera had 55 points in 51 games in his last season of junior, but hasn't been very prolific as a pro, hitting a high of 19 points before breaking out this year. I'll treat him like a sophomore and hope to get him back in the draft.

Carolina

Tuomo Ruutu/Jussi Jokinen

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

I'll avoid this pair of Finnish floppers mainly due to their inconsistent numbers. Ruutu's on pace for 56 points this year and in his previous three seasons, he scored 35 points, 54 and 32. Jokinen is on pace for 52 points and recorded seasons of 65 points, 27 and 42 points. Take a chance that you'll get them back in your draft.

Erik Cole

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

Back on a line with Staal and Stillman and the chemistry is still there. Since the calendar turned to 2011, Cole has 33 points in 41 games. All that said, I'm not comfortable protecting a 32-year-old who is very reliant on his line-mates.

Jamie McBain

Gut Feel: Fish

Much was expected from the rookie blueliner this season after exploding onto the scene with 10 points in the final 14 games last year. When the Canes brought back Joe Corvo and Anton Babchuk, it was a sign that the team thought McBain wasn't quite ready for prime time this season. Next year however, is another story. The 23-year-old recorded 40 points in 68 AHL games last season and in his final year of college; he had 37 points in 40 contests. I might ignore my no sophomore tenet and keep this guy if my league had a minimum defenseman criterion.

Florida

Dmitry Kulikov

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

Kulikov averages 19:43 ice time per game. With Wideman and McCabe shipped out of town, the young Russian inherits the top defenseman spot on the power play. He improved on his 16 point rookie season and will finish in the mid-twenties for points this year. Kulikov recorded 62 points in 57 games in his only season of major junior. I really think he's going to be a good fantasy defenseman eventually. He'll post better totals again next year, but not enough to warrant a coveted protected billet on my fantasy squad.

Stephen Weiss

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

Big bag of average here. Weiss is a good player stuck on a bad team. He was coming off back-to-back 60 point seasons and will finish just north of 50 points this season. Not bad considering much of the talent that he played with in those two 60 point seasons have been dealt away. Weiss recorded 23 points in 27 games during December and January combined. I like him as a player, but until he gets some talent to help out, I'll find my keeper somewhere else.

David Booth

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

Booth had 60 points back in 2008-09, but he hasn't been the same player since his concussion (courtesy of Mike Richards). This season, he bolted from the gates with eight points in his first nine games, but has scored at a 37 point pace since (31 points in 68 games). The 26-year-old may yet find his form from two seasons ago, but he won't be spending the summer on my keeper roster.

Niclas Bergfors

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

The young Swede has seven points in 15 games since coming to Florida. He is receiving 17 minutes of ice time per game and second unit power play minutes. That's nice. Wears a Panther uniform...pass.

Montreal

Andrei Kostitsyn

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

The elder Kostitsyn started the season on fire with 18 points in the opening 24 contests. In his last 18 games, he has 13 points. His career high is 53 points, set three seasons ago. Kostitsyn

gets top six ice time (15:48) and second unit power play duties, but you never get the feeling that he's money in the bank. The 26-year-old is scheduled to become a restricted free agent this summer, but realistically the demand for an enigmatic forward of his ilk can't be all that high.

James Wisniewski

Gut Feel: Fish

No one except maybe his immediate family expected the Wiz to threaten 50 points after recording 30 points in 69 games last season with Anaheim. He scored at a 54 point pace with the Islanders earlier this season and has scored at a 59 point pace while in Montreal. In his last year of junior, he had 70 points in 50 games. This late blooming 27-year-old is an unrestricted free agent at the end of the season, but he has confidence now. Count on 50 points next season.

Andrei Markov

Gut Feel: Fish

The Marian Gaborik of the defence corps. Over the course of the last two seasons, Markov has played in only 52 of a possible 164 games. In the three seasons before last year, he averaged

79 games played and 57 points. The 32-year-old is slated to become an unrestricted free agent on July 1st. This one is all about your risk tolerance.

David Desharnais

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

Hard to argue with the numbers. Desharnais has 22 points in 39 games this season, but 17 of those have come within the last 24 games. The problem is and always will be his lack of size. He'll have to prove himself against bigger players for his entire career. I always cheer for the "real-sized" players, but it's definitely an uphill battle in the NHL. Keep putting up the points little guy!

New Jersey

Martin Brodeur

Gut Feel: Fish for one more season

The first ballot Hall of Famer will be 39-years-old when next season begins. He will be in the last year of his contract. His numbers in 2011 (not including last night's game) to date have been stellar; a 16-6-2 record, 1.79 goals-against-average and a 0.929 save percentage. I could see him playing another two or even three seasons. I would feel safe heading into next season with him on my roster.

Mattias Tedenby

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

The 21-year-old Swedish rookie has looked good at times this year. He opened with six points in his first seven NHL games after being recalled from the AHL back in November. In his last nine games he has six points. In between, he had eight points in 36 games. I don't see him cracking the top six next season.

NY Islanders

Michael Grabner

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

It's like two different seasons. In the first three months of the season, Grabner recorded 11 points in 32 games. Turn the page to 2011 and he lights it up to the tune of 37 points in 40 games. On the season he is averaging just under 15 minutes of ice time per game, but he hasn't played less than 15 minutes in a game since February 17 (19 games ago). He averages less than one minute per game on the power play. In his last year of junior he had 55 points in 55 games. He has 120 points in 180 career AHL games. Last season, he had 11 points in 20 games with Vancouver. Can the 23-year-old Austrian repeat next season? I'm leery, but if I didn't have many other options, I might take my chances here.

P.A. Parenteau

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

A nice feel good story here. Here is a 28-year-old career minor-leaguer, who had racked up 255 points in 252 games over his last four AHL seasons and is currently on pace to finish north of 50 points in the NHL this season. Parenteau receives 18:10 in ice time per game and is on the first power play unit. He was a huge point producer in his final two seasons of junior, recording 221 points in 127 games. The problem for me is the team he plays for. I have no confidence that he will repeat the feat, although I hope he does.

Matt Moulson

Gut Feel: Fish

This guy gets no respect. He's now recorded back-to-back 30 goal seasons and I still have reservations about putting him on my keeper list. Moulson has been spending the vast majority of his shifts lately next to John Tavares and that bodes well for the 27-year-old. He plays nearly 19 minutes per game and also gets top power play minutes. I might regret this, but the numbers and his situation suggest that he is a good risk for next season.

Frans Nielsen

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

The 26-year-old Dane's point totals have improved each of the last three seasons, 33, 38 and 44 points (to date). He gets 18 minutes of ice time per contest and second power play duties. Nielsen has 23 points in his last 26 games and yet despite all that I still have reservations about this guy.

Andrew MacDonald

Gut Feel: Cut Bait

During a 20 game stretch that started December 18, MacDonald hit for 16 points. Overall, he'll finish with 27 points in 60 games this season, a 37 point pace. Is he for real? Not likely, although he did record 58 points in 65 games in his final junior season. With Mark Streit back next season, MacDonald is not a lock to man the point on the top power play unit.

Tomorrow - special edition of Eastern Edge brings you the Rangers, Sens, Flyers, Pens, Leafs, Lightning, Caps

As I said in the opening paragraph, leagues and roster requirements are so varied that it's difficult to nail each scenario without knowing all the details. If you want my opinion, feel free to leave your league set up and keeper dilemma below or create a post in the Comish's Corner and I'll give you my take.