I'm a week late, but below are my choices of players to avoid (if you can) on draft day. This is written after the DobberHockey Experts Draft, which was one of the more challenging drafts I've participated in, and some of the players who I would rather have not touched with a ten-foot pole…well, I had to take one or two. If you can avoid them, here's who I think you should steer clear of and why.

Tim Thomas – Goalie – Boston

Much like Ryan Ma described Corey Perry's situation, it's not that I don't want Tim Thomas on

my team. It's that I know he is going to have nearly an impossible time replicating last year's Vezina-winning (and just about every other trophy-winning) performance. In 57 games played, Thomas had a .938 save percentage. Sit back and think about that for a second. It's superhuman! Thomas will almost certainly be drafted much earlier than I'm willing to take him and as a fantasy GM, I'd be very uncomfortable having the more-than-capable Tuukka Rask waiting to take over as well.

Jordan Leopold – Defense – Buffalo

Leopold had his best NHL season last year with Buffalo, but he still only scored 35 points. This year he will have a much harder time replicating that success with the budding Marc-Andre Gragnani in the lineup. Gragnani is a much more lethal offensive weapon and should emerge as one of Buffalo's top scoring defensemen in 2011-12.

Shawn Matthias – Center – Florida

Although Matthias was once a promising prospect, it's hard to ignore the facts. Matthias has not scored more than 20 points for the same team in a single year of professional hockey. In all fairness, he had a respectable 13 points in 27 AHL games in 2009-10, but all in all, the production has simply not been there. It's clear the team is looking to Santorelli as their number-two center and Matthias, still without a contract, is not likely to reward fantasy owners any time soon.

Scottie Upshall – Right Wing – Florida

Although Upshall is Florida's third-highest paid forward, his 34-point year in 2010-11 was a career high. This is coming from a guy who was drafted sixth overall in 2002. It is likely that the Panthers have a stronger offense in the upcoming season, but don't expect much coming from Upshall. He is a streaky player that could lose a spot in the top-six for extended periods of time if he cannot find the back of the net.

Ed Jovanovski – Defense – Florida

Since the lockout, Ed Jovanovski has averaged only 62 games played per season. In those six years, he's only scored higher than 36 points once. Last year, Jovocop dressed for 50 games and scored a paltry 14 points. If you're looking for a Panther defenseman to draft, go for the emerging Dmitry Kulikov, who is in a contract year and is adored by Panthers coaching staff and management.

Scott Gomez – Center – Montreal

It's hard to put Scott Gomez on this list, considering last year's output of 38 points was the lowest total of his NHL career. He's still only 31 years old so you have to think he will rebound better this year, but he has a firecracker in David Desharnais ready to take over. Personally, I'd rather find a center elsewhere.

P.A. Parenteau – Right Wing – New York Islanders

Parenteau really broke out last year, skating on John Tavares' line. That opportunity can be directly traced to the preseason injury of Kyle Okposo. Even when Okposo returned, the Isles elected to keep Parenteau on the top line, but as the new season begins, it will be difficult for the coaching staff to keep Parenteau in that role. P.A. is the third-best Islanders' right wing behind Okposo and Grabner, and he should be looking at a decline in points rather than an increase.

New York Islanders goaltending –

Here's the thing. If Rick DiPietro is healthy, he is going to play the majority of the games. He'll lose quite a bit too. If he gets injured, then who plays? Does Evgeni Nabokov get traded or do the Islanders try to actually use him for a strong run? Does Al Montoya continue to play the way he did at the end of last season (when the pressure was mostly off)? Or does Kevin Poulin emerge as the next James Reimer? There are WAY too many question marks to worry about. The only player remotely interesting is Nabokov because he might be traded, but who knows when that will happen or what kind of situation his new home will be like?

Marc Staal – Defense – New York Rangers

While the addition of Brad Richards to the Rangers might have you considering a bump in production for Marc Staal, don't expect him to be the top defensive scorer on his team. Michael Del Zotto is a powerplay specialist and will be pushing hard for the PP1 job. If MDZ falls short, look for Tim Erixon to make a splash. Although Staal filled in well when needed, he is less of an offensive defenseman as MDZ, Erixon, and Girardi.

Milan Michalek – Left Wing – Ottawa

It's no secret that Milan Michalek has struggled in Ottawa. After three straight seasons of 55 or more points in San Jose, Michalek has averaged 33.5 points per year in the two seasons as a Senator. He'll be relied upon as a mentor in the locker room for sure, but his ice time could be shrinking even more with the recent emergence of players like Butler, Condra, and Greening, and of course the acquisition of Nikita Filatov.

Brayden Schenn – Center – Philadelphia

While Brayden Schenn has had poolies drooling and waiting for a full time NHL job for what seems like forever, the opportunity he has in Philadelphia isn't exactly what everyone had hoped for. Schenn has two All-Star-caliber centers ahead of him on the depth chart and will likely have Wayne Simmonds and one of Talbot or Nodl on his line. Expect the path to fantasy returns to take longer than originally expected.

Sidney Crosby – Center – Pittsburgh

Nine months later and Sidney Crosby still is not 100% recovered from a concussion. If you're picking 11th overall (I'm looking at you Ryan Ma), definitely roll the dice. If you're drafting in the top five picks, Crosby is just not worth the gamble. He could play 70 games or he could play 30. Heck, he could play 15. None of us know. If you told me with 100% certainty that Crosby was going to play 60 games this season, I'd erase this whole paragraph because he's literally that good. But none of us know what's going to happen with him and if sitting out nine months doesn't allow you to recover 100% from a concussion, I worry.

Dwayne Roloson – Goalie – Tampa Bay

Roloson is a very good goaltender, even at age 41. But there's another very capable goaltender in Tampa Bay by the name of Mathieu Garon. Garon typically plays around 35 games a season, so there's a strong chance Roloson will start less than 50 this year. Did I mention he is 41?

Matt Lombardi – Center – Toronto

Lombardi was held to only two games last season and is still suffering from concussion symptoms to start the year. If healthy, he actually might have a shot at the number one center position in Toronto thanks to the band-aid status of Tim Connolly, but if that day ever comes, just use a waiver wire pickup, rather than wasting a draft spot.

Jonas Gustavsson – Goalie – Toronto

Gustavsson sure was hyped when he crossed the pond, but a bit of a slump and some unfortunate heart problems had Jonas on the outside looking in. James Reimer has since emerged as the savior in Toronto and his performance last year was no fluke. It's going to be an uphill battle for Gustavsson to try to win the starter's role back. If you're looking for a backup who might take over, Gustavsson isn't exactly the goalie you want to gamble on at the draft.

Mike Knuble – Right Wing – Washington

The aging Knuble is almost certain to start the year with his familiar linemate Alex Ovechkin, but it's clear the team is preparing for someone to take over that spot. The Capitals have brought in Joel Ward and Troy Brouwer, both essentially younger versions of Knuble. Mike's in a contract year and this is likely his last season in Washington.

John Carlson – Defense – Washington

Carlson had a very respectable 37 points last season – and don't get me wrong, I love Carlson for the future – but he now has Green and Dennis Wideman in front of him on the depth chart, which will likely mean reduced minutes. Carlson is still third on the Caps' depth chart at the blue line, but last season provided more opportunity (injuries to Green and Poti) than this year will if Green and Wideman remain healthy.

Dustin Byfuglien – Defense – Winnipeg

I was not an advocate of Byfuglien last summer and big Dusty proved me wrong. But this year he is 40 lbs. heavier? I realize the type of player he is (a linebacker), but there is absolutely no way I want one of my defenseman adding an extra 40 lbs. in the offseason. If Byfuglien was entering the season in the same shape as last season, I'd have no doubts. That isn't the case though and I'll let someone else roll the dice on him.

Interesting RFA's still unsigned: Zach Bogosian and Josh Bailey. Both are solid up-and-coming players who don't seem to fit into their current teams' future plans. I expect both to be traded this year and make impacts fairly quickly in their new homes. A change of scenery will only rejuvenate the disgruntled skaters. Both are top 10 picks from the 2008 draft with plenty left to prove.