A Potent Threat – Mikhail Grabovski - A season ago, NHL fans were introduced to the lethal synergistic line combination of Mikhail Grabovski, Clarke MacArthur, and Nikolai Kulemin. While expectations were high in 2011-12, Joffrey Lupul and Phil Kessel began to steal the spotlight. After a rocky first half of the season, the secondary scoring in Toronto is once again flourishing, thanks largely in part to the efforts of a pending unrestricted free agent – Mikhail Grabovski.

Since joining the Maple Leafs, Grabovski has been a valuable asset who just won't quit. He's developed into one of the premier number-two centers in the game, evidenced by his most recent run of 10 points in his last five games (18 points in his last 14 games). From a fantasy standpoint, the good news about Grabovski is that when he gets hot, he stays hot for a lengthy

period of time. Just last season Grabovski scored 18 points in 16 games on one stretch and 10 points in eight games on another stretch.

While Grabovski's wingers, mainly Nikolai Kulemin, have mightily struggled to live up to last season's output, we are starting to see a market correction. MacArthur is starting to get in a rhythm and Kulemin – well he's hanging in there.

Toronto has won five of their last seven games and currently sits in eighth place with 60 points. They can expect a lot of pressure in the race to the postseason though, as the organization that captured the top seed in the Eastern Conference the last two seasons and finished second in the East the year before that, Washington, trails by only two points. Teams like Winnipeg and Tampa Bay may also work their way into the playoff fight.

So what does that mean for Grabovski? From Brian Burke's standpoint, his second line is comprised of one player signed through next season (MacArthur), one pending UFA (Grabovski), and one pending RFA (Kulemin). All three have been linked to trade rumors and there has been a lot of speculation that Burke wants to make a significant move before the trade deadline, which is three weeks from today.

When the Grabovski line is clicking, all three players are valuable to the team. What we have seen however, is that they are much less consistent this season as they were a year ago and with the top line fairly secure, Burke may be less interested in keeping his second line intact. If

that truly is the case, Grabovski's recent success may be exactly the leverage that Burke needs to pull off a big trade. It should be noted, however, that Brian Burke is typically quiet on trade deadline day, so if he plans to make a move, it will likely happen prior to the final 24-hour countdown.

The Leafs would probably be better off keeping Grabovski, but if they cannot re-sign him prior to the trade deadline, his days in Toronto may just be numbered. Whatever city Grabovski ends up skating for, he would make a great addition to any fantasy owner making a championship push.