

Draft Reviews and Another Mailbag

Written by Justin Goldman

Monday, 27 September 2010 14:35 - Last Updated Tuesday, 28 September 2010 16:54



Over the weekend, all three live drafts in the third-annual Guild Fantasy Challenge took place. As you would expect, goaltending was at the forefront of each draft, as our Yahoo! Fantasy head-to-head setup had the rare three starting goalie slots this year. Why the crazy change from the normal two-goalie setup that you'll see in 99.9% of other leagues?

Simply put, why not?

Now instead of going through the minutia of each and every goalie I chose, I'll just list the goalies I have for all three leagues and then go a little more in-depth on the top-tiered Dobber Pro League. I'll also post some of the quick thoughts on the draft's theme, along with a few

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pertinent fantasy tidbits.

For the past three years, I've written a number of informational pieces, but they were all long-winded and only broached one or two topics. It brought the insight that you won't find anywhere else on a hardcore fantasy website, but I think the time has come to close that chapter of my fantasy goalie analysis on Dobber Hockey and focus more on what makes this website so great – the readers.

Every Monday, regardless of my topics, there will be a fantasy mailbag. This makes my life a little easier, since I have to record another season of Avalanche Weekly shows on Mile High Sports Radio on Mondays at 1pm. It also brings more of a user-centric approach to my fantasy analysis and helps make you a better fantasy manager in the world of goalies.

[Fantasy Mailbag – September 27](#)

Dobber Pro League – Goalies went fast and furious. Luongo went 2nd, Brodeur went 3rd, Miller went 6th

and Lundqvist went 11th

overall. I drew the last pick in this draft, so I took Daniel Sedin 12th

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overall and then chose Miikka Kiprusoff 13

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overall. Howard, Bryzgalov and Halak went in the second round. Round three resulted in half of the picks going to goalies, as Anderson went first, then Ward, Rinne and Fleury went one after the other. Rask was next and then I closed out the third round by taking Marty Turco. Hiller, Varlamov, Vokoun, Backstrom and Quick went in the fourth round. No goalie was chosen in the fifth round and then Mason and Price were selected in the sixth round. I closed out my goalie lineup with Neuvirth to start the 10

th

round and then Pavelec to start the 16

th

round.

My goalies – Kiprusoff, Turco, Neuvirth and Pavelec

Guild Elite League Goalies – Turco, Ward, Bernier, Pavelec

Guild Pro League Goalies – Luongo, Lundqvist, Neuvirth, Schneider

I feel that my goalies in the Guild Pro League are the strongest. My team name is The Great Deceivers so I worked very hard to draft Michal Neuvirth on that team, as I have been dubbing him The Great Deceiver for almost two years. I am really excited about him and feel that his steady and consistent play, along with his poise, will go a long way in getting him a few more starts than Semyon Varlamov.

The first thing I'll point out is how low Pavelec has been falling in drafts. Remember, this guy is going to start the season as Atlanta's starter. He's not the most experienced or consistent goaltender, but the elite talent is there. I feel he's very similar in fantasy value to where Pekka Rinne was last season. He has great size, great skill and is an active goalie that has the potential to be a long-term starter. His stats were not great last season, but neither was the team in front of him. He is a risk if you take him in the 10th round or above, but in the 16th round he's a total steal. This could be the season he breaks out of the mold and shows more maturity and consistency. He's a fiery guy with a bit of an attitude, but rarely is that such a negative thing that his entire fantasy value is destroyed. And again, getting him in the 16

th

round is low-risk and high-reward.

Don't pass up one of the stud workhorses. Guys like Luongo and Miller are going to be snagged in the first round, unless your league setup is mainly scoring categories. After that, guys like Brodeur, Lundqvist, Bryzgalov, Howard will probably go next. Even though I've been touting Rask as one of the best goalies to own in a one-year league, it looks like he'll slip to the late-second round or early-third round. Rinne, Anderson, Halak, Howard and Vokoun are a little bit lower than expected, so keep an eye on those goalies, as they are top-flight starters that will get a ton of starts and play well.

Halak is a goalie to be careful with. There is a clear-cut adjustment that he will have to make playing on a new team in a new conference with a new workhorse role. Even though his talent is legitimate and worthy of being drafted in the 3-5th round, I won't be surprised if he struggles for the first 8-10 games of the season. By the time December rolls around, however, I expect him to be in full flight and playing at the top of his game.

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Nikolai Khabibulin looked very good in his first full pre-season game. It was a lop-sided 8-2 affair against the Oilers, but he played at the top of his crease and did not show much rust or timing issues. It was a surprise, so do not be afraid to snag Khabibulin after the 10th round of your draft. We might all be pleasantly surprised how many games he plays this year.

Marty Turco was outstanding in both pre-season games he's played so far. He already has a high comfort level in the crease and is already making an impact with his transition and puck movement. I expect him to see a lot of games where he faces 23-to-26 shots per game and allows a couple of goals. He will rack up the wins and probably have close to a .915 save percentage. But he will be timely and he will be a major part of this team's success. He definitely deserves to be drafted anywhere from the 3rd to 5th round in my opinion.

Every day that goes by, I'm more confident in Jon Bernier's chances of making the team out of pre-season. With Josh Harding on the shelf again and Michael Leighton suffering from back issues, a few options have opened up. I have no insight on where Erik Ersberg could end up, but the fact remains that Bernier and Jon Quick are the two best goalies on the Kings. I drafted him way too early in Dobber's three-tiered league, but he's still a viable sleeper goalie to snag in rounds 12-15.

Even though Cory Schneider got lit up against the Oilers on Sunday night, do not be afraid to draft him late. If you own Luongo, pull a traditional Red Wings move and secure both Canucks goalies. I watched the Oilers/Canucks game twice and watched Schneider closely. He didn't have a good game and was rattled early, but his composure and stick-to-itiveness was easy to see and I really liked how he didn't get flustered or sulk or give up in the game. It showed me that no matter what kind of game he has, Schneider is going to execute to the best of his ability and stay mentally tough. I think he will have a great season and continue to develop into a quality NHL goaltender. The loss was a learning experience and it will go a long way in getting him prepared for October and that's what the pre-season is all about.

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Goalies like Chris Osgood, Jeff Deslauriers, Mike Smith, Rick DiPietro, Pascal Leclaire, Jason LaBarbera, Thomas Greiss and Brian Boucher are nice little sleeper picks for the final five rounds. These are the guys that could come out of nowhere and surprise us all and have the experience or the talent to win games.

There you go, Dobber Nation! Let me know your thoughts on my plan to start a new chapter in my fantasy goalie coverage on Dobber Hockey. And of course, [check out the fantasy mailbag](#) for today and leave your questions in the School of Block forums!