Started my work on the DobberHockey Fantasy Guide - lots of new stuff this year (not to sound like EA Sports regarding NHL, but I think this year has the most radical and innovative additions yet).

Three posts to read from me today:

The Underutilization of Mike Green - I will re-post this at DobberHockey over the weekend.

The future Legion of Doom in Vancouver? I take a look at a potentially large and skilled line the Canucks could ice in a few years.

I am starting a weekly CBA column with Mike Colligan - our first post - debating revenue sharing.

Weber details - 14 years, $110 million offer sheet.

Apparently the Preds had been negotiating with a few teams on a trade for Weber's rights, but the Flyers grew tired of waiting.

Weber's cap hit on this deal would be $7.8 million, and the contract would take him to the age of 40. Apparently the deal would be very frontloaded (up to $26 million paid out in the first calendar year).

With all of that being said... can the Preds really *not* match this?

The Flyers would give up four 1st round draft picks to Nashville - likely all low picks (as the Flyers will probably be a good team for at least the next four years).

Maybe this is Weber's way of saying to Nashville - "if you want to keep me, this is what it is going to cost." The cap hit is quite reasonable for one of the best defensemen in the league - the contract term, however, is not.

If the Preds match and keep Weber, they won't be able to trade him for a calendar year. However, they could move him next summer, and likely for a lot more than four late 1st round picks.

My latest for the Hockey Writers – a profile of Max Pacioretty. His rapid development in the past two years has to excite Habs fans a lot.

"March 8th, 2011 could have defined Pacioretty's career as a hockey player. It could have ended his life. Whatever you want to believe, it is impossible to argue that he isn't a stronger player – and a person – for it."

Devils top prospect Jon Merrill hasn't indicated if he is going to turn pro or return to Michigan for another year.

Merrill has top pairing upside, but he is still a bit raw. I think the Devils would like him to turn pro and spend a year at the AHL level.

The Red Wings signed Kyle Quincey to a two-year extension. A cap hit of $3.55 million is very reasonable for a solid second pairing defenseman.

Quincey will be a huge part of Detroit's rebuilt defense next year. He struggled after being traded to Detroit, but settled down as the season went on. He's not a Lidstrom, or a Suter (or even close), but he is a solid second pairing guy who can play on the PK and PP.

We never did a fantasy analysis for Nick Lidstrom retiring, and I'd imagine most people would be on the same page – an across the board drop for all Detroit players (save potentially for Brendan Smith). Ian White benefitted from playing alongside Lidstrom – Tomas Holmstrom and the other forwards benefitted from playing in front of him, and Jimmy Howard benefitted from playing behind him.

Elliotte Friedman's final 30 thoughts of the year is right here . My thoughts:

On Edmonton's new coach:

"He explained that he liked Jordan Eberle with Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Sam Gagner with Ales Hemsky. That not only allows him to move Hall around the lineup, but also rotate others depending on the situation -- Ryan Smyth, Ryan Jones, Ben Eager and potentially even Shawn Horcoff on the wing. I'm really curious to see this. This stuff fascinates me."

Lots of teams like the "pairs" scenario with a rotating winger. Interesting idea.

"*Let's look at some player situations. First, Roberto Luongo. It's not exactly a state secret that he wants to go to Florida and in a perfect world, the Canucks would send him there. There's a bit of a stalemate now, as the Panthers feel Vancouver is asking too much and the Canucks feel Florida is squeezing too hard. One of the issues is prospects. Florida, which has done a great job stocking the system, is understandably unwilling to move Jacob Markstrom, Erik Gudbranson*

or Jonathan Huberdeau . An educated guess is that Vancouver has inquired about the "next level" of talented youth, like a Nick Bjugstad or Quinton Howden . Don't think Florida likes that, either. So, between that and the fact the Canucks don't want to take bad salary in return, things aren't really moving at this time."

I believe Florida has an offer on the table that the Canucks have rejected, and things are sitting there. Vancouver really likes Bjugstad, but I don't think they'd be able to land him. They also really like Kris Versteeg , who is an RFA without a contract. It will be interesting to see how this progresses – neither side appears to be in much of a rush to make a trade.

" Rick Nash : MLive's Ansar Khan reported Tuesday night that Detroit made a run at the Columbus captain, speculating that Johan Franzen and/or Valtteri Filppula would be the centrepiece. For what it's worth, I'd heard the latter but not the former (although Khan is much closer to it than I am). Scott Howson's getting critiqued for his stubbornness, but what if the trade proves that to be the right play?"

Not really sure why the Jackets would have interest in Franzen. He's got a few years left, at most. Filppula as a centerpiece makes more sense. I wonder what prospects the Wings were dangling Columbus's way?

THN's Rory Boylen doesn't think Steve Yzerman deserves a lot of the credit he is getting in

Tampa Bay. Your thoughts?

"I'm tired of hearing about how great the management and coaching is in Tampa Bay. I'm not about to argue GM Steve Yzerman and coach Guy Boucher aren't capable of doing those jobs well, but ever since both arrived in 2010 they've been called a super-team. Sure, they caught magic and made it to the conference final in 2011, but they fell way back in 2012."

I am working on a piece profiling Mike Green – what went wrong the past few years, how the Capitals can get him back on track, and more. To summarize, his role changed from an offensive specialist to a two-way defenseman. He needs to be put in a role where his talents are maximized. Green on the coaching change:

"What Dale expected was kind of a grinder, chip-in, chip-out kind of game," Green said. "I respect him as a coach and I played that way and played hard for him. But at the same time I'm excited that Adam is here – actually, really excited. From what I heard, how he likes to coach fits my style of play and hopefully a lot of the other guys."

The Sabres agreed to terms on a new contract with Mikhail Grigorenko.

From Die by the Blade:

"What Buffalo got at a discount thanks to Grigorenko's slide is a pure playmaker and a big body at the center position. Grigorenko showed off his quick hands and hockey sense at development camp, and wowed the audience with an impressive shootout performance. He has as good a shot as any young player does at making the Sabres roster, and I'd be surprised if he didn't at least get the 9-game tryout before the team decides whether to send him to Quebec or not, similar to what happened with Tyler Myers in 2009.

With the two first round selections in the fold, the Sabres center position is starting to fall into place. Do you think Grigorenko will impress enough in training camp to make a run at a top-9 center role?"

According to ESPN's John Buccigross, a Marian Gaborik for Dan Boyle swap almost occurred a few months back. The only hold up was Gaborik's shoulder surgery, which will keep him on the shelf for six months.

Boyle has two years left with a $6.6 million cap hit, while Gaborik has two years left with a $7.5 million cap hit.

Imagine Gaborik and Havlat on the same line? San Jose's training staff shudders at the thought….

Canes Country takes an extended look at Cam Ward 's 2011-12 campaign.

Outside of a horrendous November and December, Ward had a very solid season.

Month	Sv	SA	Sv%
October	245		

264

0.928

November

365

410

0.89

December

295

336

0.878

January

339

359

0.944

February

205

222

0.923

March

444

482

0.921

April
68
70
0.971

"This season was quite a roller coaster for Cam Ward , although it wasn't too different from the ups and downs he has gone through over his career. There is no doubt that Kirk Muller was one of the reasons for the Canes' turnaround in the second half but Ward regaining his footing once the calendar turned 2012 was another huge reason. Ward is likely going to be in Carolina for the next few years, so he will continue to have a major impact in the team's performance during that time. Let's hope that his peaks and valleys aren't nearly as extreme as they were this season."