Welcome once again to “An Expert’s Audit”. This audit will be posted here as well as on my fantasy hockey blog
. During the season I do weekly reviews of teams for people who email in to me for a look-see, they’re less indepth but just as much fun. Dobber audits will continue to appear here monthly and if you’re interested in having your keeper team “worked over” then you can begin by emailing Dobber about it.

You like poker right? Who doesn't? My wife can't get why anyone would sit and watch it on tv but I do … and Jess Hagarty does. He deals cards for a living and occasionally he gets on the other side of the table too. By what I can tell he's pretty good. I don't like getting sharked so I think I'll keep him away from the local game, if I ever get around to setting it up.

Jess plays in a 16 team H2H with the following categories: G, A, +/-, PIM, PPP, SHP, W, GAA, SV, and SV%. It's a pretty good setup if you ask me although SHP is hard to find for a lineup and I just don't get why you would need both SV and SV% since that just duplicates stats in my mind … but no matter they lessen the value of SV by forcing everyone to start 3 G's each. That's a lot of tending in a 16 teamer. It's extra interesting to me that they only start 2 options at each of the forward positions, 4 D's and a util; essentially they minimize skater stats and pump up goalie stats. I don't see how anyone can win this league without great goaltending.

Let's take a look at not2bdfeated.

C Jason Spezza OTW – if he ever puts in a string of 82 game seasons he'll be considered as good as the brightest lights in the game.
C Brad Richards DAL – one of the best things that can happen to your +/- is a trade to the Dallas Stars, they don't tolerate lax defensive play (check out Ribeiro's +/- in Montreal and then in Dallas). Richards top tier scoring will continue but the +/- will increase making him a better fantasy commodity.
LW Brendan Morrow DAL – he's turned the page on his PIMy ways. It's funny, I still hear guys talking about his PIM output even though I expect he'll NEVER return to that sort of game. Right now his best value is in flat-out offense with conscientious defensive play.
LW Daniel Carcillo PHX – I wonder if the shoulder tap and the send to the minors near the end of last season got his attention enough that he doesn't go as snaky this season as he did last year. I'm not expecting as much PIM production from him now although the points may go up a bit.
RW Nathan Horton FLA – I'd be worried about his +/- this season. He's a steady 30 goal guy, I've just expected 40 out of him for several seasons now without success.
RW Erik Cole EDM – another 30 goal guy that I'd love to see jump up to the next level. That neck injury a couple seasons back still downgrades him a bit on my lists, I'm just worried about sustainability.
D Dion "PIMy D" Phaneuf CAL – I still keep throwing that nickname out there in the hopes it catches on, so far not much luck. Phaneuf is the most valuable fantasy defenseman in hockey right now, yes even more valuable than Lidstrom.
D Sergei Zubov DAL – due back in late October from a hip injury. Well, that makes sense, Zubov IS pretty old. Oh no, he's fallen and he doesn't have one of those emergency thingies! He'll still get up close to 40 pts this season. Long live the AARP.
D Wade Redden NYR – I can certainly see a return to 50 pt status, particularly because there are so few options for him to battle for PP time.
D Andrei Markov MON – Montreal's PP won't miss a step this season and Markov is a really big reason why. They didn't miss Souray and now they won't miss Streit.
Util Brian Gionta NJ – well he's the best option at RW in Jersey, that'll get him ice time, and the fact that Zach Parise lines up with him increases his value more. I don't think he'll ever return to 48 goal status he put up a couple years back but 30 would be just fine in my books. I

think he's Milan Hejduk with less talent.
G Evgeni Nabokov SJ – started 77 games last year because they didn't have a backup they thought could do the job. They have a backup now so I'd expect about 65 starts this year. He's still a top 5 goalie option in my books.
G Pascal Leclaire CBJ – I think his season last year was a product of a solid Hitchcock system and I don't see that changing this season. He may not come close to leading the league in shutties ever again but still he's more than decent. As a G2 in a 16 team league starting three goalies each though? He's a goldmine.
G Brian Boucher SJ – he'll get the 17 starts that Nabby doesn't get and he'll end up with 12 wins or so. I'd certainly take that from a backup.
BN Brian Elliot OTW – this guy is a wildcard on your team. I think the goalie situation in OTW is pretty volatile and there's a chance that Elliot is the guy for them by season's end. That'd be SWEET.
BN Cam "Bob" Barker CHI – if you prorate Barker's season last year over a full 82 games you end up with 11 goals and 33 points. It's too bad he got sent down, eventually I think he'll be better than either Keith or Seabrook.

BN Guillaume Latendresse MON – he has to fight other young guys for ice time, and off the top of the season it looks like he's won. He'll start the season among the top 6 … apparently.
BN Martin Hanzal PHX – I don't know if he'll EVER put up the 85 pt upside that some project for him. Things look pretty crowded for C's in PHX.
BN Steve Ott DAL – I like PIMy players as much as the next guy … ok, more than the next guy but still, the amount of PIMs on your team is getting ridonkulous.
BN Francois Beauchemin ANA – before Niedermayer returned last year he carried a pretty large load on their blueline. For a good part at the beginning of the season last year he led the entire league in ice time if I remember correctly. If things like that continue then other stats will creep up also.
BN Kyle Chipchura MON – wait on this guy, he might end up as John Madden one day … or he could end up as Kyle Wellwood. That's a pretty big difference actually.
BN Alex Burrows VAN – Burrows will be the next guy to jump up and say, "hi, I'm Alex and I'm an NHL pest". Ok, now everybody, "HI ALEX!".
BN Fredrik Modin CBJ – he's pegged for the 2nd line this season. He's a 20 goal guy who gets to line up with some underrated guys in Chimera and Malhotra. Malhotra is actually pretty excellent on the draw and if Modin can just go to the net then he'll get his share of rebound goals.
BN Christoph Schubert OTW – you consider him your worst D option but I want to point out that the Sens need someone on D to step up, Schu's minutes increased after Corvo got dealt last year and there's even a chance that he'll get to play upfront for them. He could be a gold mine for you.
BN Teddy Purcell LA – I was blown away when he got cut, I had him pegged for regular duty and maybe even 50 pts.
BN Alex Goligoski PIT – there's all this chatter about how he'll man the point on the PP in Pitt but let me just quell that now, that job will go to Letang and Malkin. He's still got really good value this season though, Gonchar won't be around and Whitney won't be heard from before

Christmas or so.
BN Maxim Mayorov CBJ – he won't break your lineup at all this season but it's still good to keep depth on your bench in a keeper with no farm options. He'll contribute next year I expect.

I sure hope I hit the flop

Your league's bench is huge and actually you were still filling out your bench when I came on the scene. You were in the midst of a prospect draft during which you added Francois Bouchard, Zach Boychuk and Patrick Hornqvist to your squad. We had some discussion about whether to select Horny during this draft or during waivers and I still believe that you wouldn't have been able to draft a better option than him at the time. Eventually you had to drop a couple guys off your roster to make room for him, those drops turned out to be Schubert and Beauchemin.

Your bench is really young with not enough upside for my taste and you have WAY too many PIMs, you'll need to move some. The good news is that you can move someone like Carcillo for something extra special if you target other categories where you're weak.

Never fold when it's free to check

I know I'm a poker novice but even I know not to be an idiot and throw in the cards when there's nothing on the line. Waiver wire selections are like that, you can get something for nothing (seemingly).

Teemu Selanne ANA – during entry draft time there was no word that he was returning but by the time your waiver draft came along he was already skating with the Ducks. He went 1st overall in your waiver draft and you didn't have a shot with the 3rd pick. It still makes me angry that you didn't get him, he was what your team needed at the time.
Scott Niedermayer ANA – you had the 3rd waiver pick and you snagged Nieds. Your D didn't need the boost but you also couldn't leave him sitting there. Now you can shop some D depth for some help up front.
Olaf Kolzig TB – Mike Smith will probably get the most starts for the Lightning but at the same time you don't sign as a FA expecting that you'll be the backup. Ollie has value, particularly in a 16 team league starting 3 goalies each. He was selected in your waiver draft.
Steven Weiss FLA – who doesn't want a 1st line center? His +/- is going to be crap but there's upside toward an explosion of stats here.
Slava Kozlov ATL – he was an 80 pt guy two seasons ago and his fall from elite status has really affected his value in leagues this year. I don't see why 80 pts isn't possible again although his +/- is going to stink.
Owen Nolan MIN – if he gets 2nd line duty, and he should then I could see him lining up with one of Koivu or Bouchard. Either guy would be nice for helping to get him some stats this season.
Brooks Laich WAS – some are saying he'll get top 6 minutes but I just don't see it. I figure he'll see a lot of time with Federov unless Anna's ex is going to play D. Even if he lines up with Federov, Fed isn't who he used to be and that'll hurt Laich's value.
John Madden NJ – one of the best shut down C's in the game. Not phenomenal for fantasy but

in a league that counts SHP he should be looked at.
Evgeny Artyukhin TB – he was overbid on and won by Eric Maltais in the Dobber Expert's league this season. I don't see his value for your team since you already have PIMs but this also isn't the first time that I've played against the Fantasy Frog in a league and I've come to trust his eye for talent. I'll certainly be keeping my eye on Tyuk and you should too.
Ben Bishop STL – in a goalie crazed league he's a decent add, particularly when you consider how brittle and inconsistent the goalies ahead of him on the depth chart can be. Eventually you added him to your roster and it only cost you a blank roster spot.

It seldom pays to chase the flush

Betting big when you don't have the flush yet can be REALLY dangerous, particularly if the other guy hits something on the flop. Trading for low percentage categories like SHP can be just as dangerous.

You have a boatload of PIMs on this team. Phaneuf and one of Carcillo, Ott, or Burrows should be more than enough to keep your team afloat this season so moving some PIMs is a quick and easy way to try and improve your team. Do NOT trade Phaneuf, ever. Ok, the time may come that you can trade Phaneuf but it won't be anytime soon. Carcillo has the most value if you moved him now and his PIMs will be picked up by Burrows for your team this year. I don't see that Ott will get into your lineup as a C very often so he's a guy you could also shop around. As you shop some PIMs then you'll be looking for more offense off the wing and if you can find some help at SHP then that'd be a bonus in a very rare category.

You also have some nice depth at D that you could move. I read one post in your league about how another guy figures he has the best D corps in the league but I'll just say that as soon as Zubov is back and contributing I'd put your D corps up against ANYBODY in this league. When Zubov is back then Scott Niedermayer becomes your 5th D, and that ain't so bad. When you shop some of your D strength around you'll be looking for some help from a C3 or a RW3 but I suspect the best deals you can move on will happen once Zubov is healthy and contributing again.

Trade Nathan Horton and Daniel Carcillo to VintageVibe for Patrick Sharp and Chris Kunitz – I actually take some of the blame for not getting more here, but not all the blame. I also wanted to throw in a swap of D's (where you gave up the lesser D) in order to even things up a bit. For whatever reason no D's were put into this offer and it didn't seem prudent to pull an offer and renegotiate once it was on the table. I actually saw this offer in a thread on the Dobber boards and only then did I realize who was on the other end of the deal (I'll give you a hint, I've never seen an episode of Ben10). All the advice on the thread told Vibe to take the deal because of the PIMs being offered and I didn't respond to the thread because I wanted to save my response for this article. In review, Jess has PIMs out the wazoo and this offer provides him more offense across the board and a much better shot at SHP. Let me also point out that Kunitz tallied 60 pts two seasons ago when he got plenty of first line duty. I'm expecting more than that out of him this season. Let's hope you aren't chasing the flush on this one.

Trade Martin Hanzal to Top Cheese for Joe Sakic – this offer was declined and it was the

eventual final offer as you slowly inched your way toward suggesting it. You actually offered him about 4 offers before finally suggesting this one and it didn't take. I still think that this one should've worked. Burnaby Joe "might" be done after this season but I personally think he'll hang on long enough to captain Canada at the Oly's in 2010, then he'll retire. You'd be giving up some nice upside down the road on this deal but given the chance that Joe might be done this season you don't want to up the offer any higher right now.

Trade Alex Burrows and Kyle Chipchura to Sterling Stars for Michael Ryder and Tim Connolly – you'd be taking some chances here but once again you can afford the hit in PIMs, particularly if you can get Ott into your lineup semi-regularly. If this deal got done (it wasn't) then you'd be taking some pretty big chances that Ryder would be reborn in Philly and Connolly can just stay off the trainer's table.

Break the table (Conclusions)

You told me how frustrating it is to trade in this league … and you were right. The only deal you got done was because the other guy figures he won the trade outright … he didn't. Adding Patrick Sharp will you help in SHP where you needed the help and you don't lose anything you can't afford to lose. In fact you gain on offense across the board and you still have more than enough PIMs to take anybody you come across to the woodshed as it were.

I think you're going to love the contributions that Patrick Hornqvist gives your team. You were resistant during your draft but the 40-50 pts he gives you this season will be more than worth the 3rd round pick you spent on him. The fact that Teddy Purcell got cut won't help your team much, I was really hoping for some good things from him. That doesn't mean that YOU cut ties with him though, I still see a strong possibility of him returning to the big league this season. It's a good thing your D is strong enough that you can shop some of them around for an upgrade elsewhere, it looks like the upgrade you'll need elsewhere will be at RW.

Players coming in: Francois Bouchard, Zach Boychuk, Patrick Hornqvist, Patrick Sharp, Chris Kunitz, Scott Niedermayer, Ben Bishop.

Players going out: Christoph Schubert, Francois Beauchemin, Nathan Horton, and Daniel Carcillo.

The young kids you add are going to help you long term and since you have so few roster slots you won't be able to get all of your depth in the lineup every night anyway. The trade you made helps you in the categories for your league and it cost you what you could afford given your depth of PIMs. You'll want to look at trading some depth at D for some RW depth as soon as you can but you'll probably have to wait until Zubov returns from his old man ailment (like I'm one to talk, I'm actually older than Zoob).

Best of luck to you Jess, you're on your way. Play through the swings and break the table.