



Welcome once again to “An Expert’s Audit”. This audit will also be posted here as well as on my fantasy hockey blog at www.fantasyhockey.hockeyanalysis.com . I also do weekly reviews of teams for people who email in to me for a look-see. These 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 (via the contact link at the bottom of the website).

Protecting the right guys

It is a common misconception that you just keep the best players. Well I suppose it is true that

in a straight draft keeper league you do indeed keep the best players, but that's because there aren't other factors to consider.

However, let's talk a bit about a salary league. In a salary league you don't protect the best *players*

you protect the best

value

. There's a big difference between spending a fifth of your cap on Sidney Crosby and having a minimal FA protection on Steven Stamkos. Should you use 1/5

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of your cap to protect Sidney Crosby or do you protect Sam Gagner, James Van Riemsdyk, and Cody Hodgson for the same price? You protect the kids and then you use the extra space in your cap to try and resign Sid for as close to the same price as last year.

Protection in salary leagues isn't about

talent

, it's about

value

and it's always better to have your cake and eat it too.

And now, something completely different

We don't have a salary keeper question for this issue of EA, but that doesn't make it less important. Let's take a look at Steve Tremblay's **West Coast Wings**.

Steve emailed in with a simple question, who does he protect in this 10 team points plus .25 PIMs league? He gets to keep 12 plus 3 kids for next year. The definition of a "kid" in this scenario is any NHL'er who has played less than 82 games in his career. Let's take a look shall we? I've *'d the 12 keeps plus I've **'d three kids for you.

F **Evgeni Malkin** * PIT – duh, obvious keep.

F **Alexander Ovechkin** * WAS – wow, can't believe you have 2 of the top 3 options in the game. Very nice.

Fantasy Hockey Audit - August, 2009

Written by Ian Fergusson

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F **Eric Staal** * CAR – his 2nd half last season rocketed him into 3rd on your team's scoring.

F **Dustin Brown** * LA – PIMs are a bonus and he'll line up on the top 2 lines. The Kings are primed for an offensive output.

F **Johan Franzen** * DET – he's going to be the backbone of the offense, hanging out in front of the net. That analogy works right?

F **Anze Kopitar** * LA – he's quite a magician. I personally think he can be Datsyuk good.

F **Mikko Koivu** * MIN – he actually outproduced Kopitar in this system last season.

F **David Krejci** * BOS – I think he's right along there in the Datsyuk mold along with Kopitar. His youth will serve him well on your team too.

F **Steve Ott** * DAL – he actually outscored Frolov, Pominville and even Kopitar in this league last year and the PIMs bonus puts him over the top as a keep for me.

F **Jakob Voracek** ** CBS – he's only had 80 games in his career so he still qualifies as a kid. He could explode onto the scene or he could just disappear completely given how much his coach slowly breaks kids into a system.

F **Derick Brassard** ** CBS – he still qualifies as a youth keep because he was injured and has only 48 games to his career. Bonus.

F **Cody Hodgson** ** VAN – would you believe that at the end of the season you were looking

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for a 3rd kid keep and nobody had claimed the CHL player of the year? That is freaking HUGE. He'll make the 'nucks and I expect a career better than Trevor Linden's, at least that's the comparison I keep hearing.

F **Alexander Frolov** LA – streaky, streaky, streaky. I just think the Kings offense will streak along and he won't outproduce other options for your team.

F **Scott Gomez** MON – he actually outscored Franzen in this system last year but I just don't see enough finishers in Montreal and Gomez needs a true sniper to deal with all the dishes he snaps back and forth. I don't see Gomez among your top 12 for this season.

F **Milan Michalek** SJ – there has been a ton of hype around him ... and he falls short again. I like him but wouldn't be keeping him.

F **Mikkel Boedker** PHX – he would qualify as a kid keep but he just isn't a better option than the others.

F **David Perron** STL – doesn't qualify as a kid keep anymore and just isn't good enough for a keeper otherwise, so pass.

F **Jason Pominville** BUF – I think there's a good chance that last year's production may be the norm and his 80 pt production from two seasons ago would be the anomaly.

D **Dion Phaneuf** * CAL – he's monstrous (just ask Pierre Maguire) in this system when put up against just about any D in the game. PIMs and points, I love that combination. In case you haven't yet, read my contribution to the Fantasy Draft Kit he says pimpingly.

D **Lubomir Visnovsky** * EDM – he still hit the 30 point barrier last season and he only got into 50 games. He also took a long time to get his bearings last year and that won't be repeated in the future.

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D **Shea Weber** * NAS – people jumped ship two years ago while he struggled horribly and those that waited were rewarded handsomely. He could surprisingly be the 2nd best defenseman in the league this year. That's right, I said it.

D **Niklas Kronwall** DET – finished 11th in D scoring last year, and 3rd in D scoring on his own team. He has incredible value and even more if (God forbid) something were to happen to the top two in Detroit.

D **Joni Pitkanen** CAR – solid upper tier D, but not a keep.

G **Jose Theodore** WAS – he won't even have the top job this season I expect.

G **Tomas Vokoun** FLA – saves aren't tabulated here anyway and that's where Vokoun has his best value. It's a tough cut but I'd rather keep someone else in your situation.

Crunch Time

So in this scenario Gomez, Pominville, Frolov, Michalek, Kronwall, and Vokoun are not kept. It was your suggestion that Gomez and Frolov be kept but I'm suggesting Ott and Franzen instead.

Let's talk about the others first though. Pominville and Michalek aren't better options than Ott or Franzen so I didn't really consider either as a keep for very long. They'll both be solid contributors to their teams but the PIMs bonus in Ott and Franzen's place in the Wings offense are just too much to ignore.

Kronwall is a decent option but you're already keeping 3 defensemen and you only have 12 slots so you'll just have to draft him or someone just like him if you can.

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Vokoun is a solid option but one of the rules in your league is that no team can have more than 2 goaltenders on the roster at any one time so why not just draft a couple solid options when you KNOW there will be at least 12 starters available to draft. It's only a 10 team league and you won't be keeping your two goalies. You'll be ok for tending if you draft carefully.

So the question becomes which two of Ott, Franzen, Frolov or Gomez. Last year in this system Ott put up 79.75 pts, Gomez 73, Franzen 70 and Frolov 66.5 pts. It is my opinion that Gomez' trade to Montreal will hurt his numbers, I just don't see enough finishers for all the dishes that he'll keep serving. I think that Frolov is just too streaky to consider as a keep and I think the rest of the offense will key off of Kopitar and Brown. My choices are Ott and Franzen. The PIMs bonus will help Ott make your top scorers in this system and Franzen will just plain hang out in front and score garbage goals all season long. I suppose you take a bit of a chance that Franzen stays healthy but I for one am ready to take that chance.

Well, that does it for me this month. I'd like to talk about inflation calculation next month and it might be nice to talk about a team that would need to look at that for this season. If you play in a salary league then consider an audit for next month, particularly if you have an auction in early September or earlier. You can start the process by emailing Dobber about it.