



Welcome once again to “An Expert’s Audit”. This audit will 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 (contact link at bottom of website) about it. But send it in by the 15th, as I will be starting on my next one at that point.

Let me introduce you to Dean Calder, you might know him as “What the Puck?” around the Dobber boards. Dean lives in Portage la Prairie Manitoba and he commishes a salary cap league amongst some friends out here in Manitoba. I selected him for an audit this month because many guys play in salary leagues but few actually do all that is necessary to make sure they’re as well prepared for the auction as they should be.

September Edition - Audit Your Fantasy Squad

Written by Ian Fergusson

Saturday, 12 September 2009 09:30 - Last Updated Saturday, 12 September 2009 10:48

I wanted to have a conversation with Dean about inflation as it relates to your fantasy keeper league and if your reaction is “huh?” then you need to go read [this](#) immediately. Seriously, it’s a brilliant piece written up for dobberhockey that deals with inflation in salary auctions. Yes, I realize that I wrote it, it’s still brilliant. Anywho, Dean and I had that conversation and if you read that column then you’re well on your way toward helping yourself in your own salary auction this fall.

Dean has up to 11 keeps to determine, contracts to buy out or extend and he’s got a \$40 salary cap to stay under during the course of his auction. It’s a straight points league for skaters but things get interesting when you consider the goaltending. Goalies get 8 pts for a win, 10 pts for a shuttie, 4 pts for an OTL but his point total is then divided by his GAA so that the great goalies are pure gold and the decent goalies are still well worth rostering. Some teams use up half their cap rostering the best goalies around and then they sign him to forever contracts handcuffing themselves like many actual NHL teams do.

Let’s take a look at the **Dufferin Stingrays**.

***Alex Ovechkin** WAS - \$6.50 signed through 2016. This price is more than reasonable and you have a lot of lead time with him on the roster. LOVE. IT.

***Alexander Semin** WAS - \$1.50 signed through 2010. I love the price and I’m a bit worried about his brittleness over the years to come. If you’re not succeeding this season then you can look to move him for some other assets in the new year. What am I saying? There’s no way that you won’t be succeeding with this lineup.

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***Nicklas Backstrom** WAS - \$2.80 signed through 2014. I expect you'll begin to get tremendous value out of him for the duration of this contract. It's pretty astute to have him locked in like this when he's so young.

Joe Thornton SJ - \$9.30 signed through 2011. This is just too expensive so my suggestion is that you don't keep him but try to get him back in your auction, preferably for a cheaper price.

Jarome Iginla CAL - \$9.50 signed through 2011. Also too expensive but you should try to get him back too. He's a lesser priority to roster than Thornton will be though since this is a straight points league.

Alexei Kovalev OTW - \$.50 for this year but can be extended for any number of years at .50/yr. We debated whether we should extend him at all and in the end we sent him back into the pool under the assumption we can get comparable value for the same price in the auction.

Brian Gionta MON - \$.90 signed through 2011. I'm fairly confident you could get him back at roughly the same price if you wanted to.

Saku Koivu ANA - \$1.10 signed through 2011. I wouldn't want to pay this much for him anymore anyway. He should definitely go back in the auction.

Milan Michalek SJ - \$.80 through 2010. So much has been expected and he seems to fall short every season. This is a good price for him and you can get back there again if you bid on him again.

***Mike Green** WAS - \$1 for 2010 but can be extended for any number of years. The suggestion is a 6 year contract where you'll pay \$4 for each of the next six seasons. I expect he'll provide the most value out of any D in the game over that 6 year span.

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Tomas Kaberle TOR - \$4 through 2011. You should be able to get him or someone comparable back in the auction for roughly the same price, or cheaper. I'm just not willing to pay this much for ½ the production of Green.

***Andrei Markov** MON - \$3.40 through 2011. You wouldn't be able to get him back for a better deal so why not just run with it.

Mathieu Schneider VAN - \$1.80 through 2011. Actually he's joined a crowded blueline now and I'm not so sure that he'll be stealing PP minutes away from guys like Edler, it might be the other way around.

***Ryan Whitney** ANA - \$.80 through 2011. In the right situation he's a 40-50 pt option and without Pronger around someone will have to join Niedermayer and carry the rest of the PP production from the point.

Tobias Enstrom ATL - \$1.80 through 2011. Some are really touting him to break out big but I say it's going to be Bogo with the breakout. I'm just not a fan of Toby.

***Carey Price** MON - \$.10 through 2010 but can be extended for any number of years. The suggestion is to extend the contract for 8 years where you'll pay \$4.10 for each of those 8 seasons. Your league is so goalie-centric that this sort of move is going to make you look like a genius for a long time.

***Sergei Varlamov** WAS - \$1 through 2011. You'll also get to extend him before losing him so he'll be rostered for you for a long time too. I love this young tandem you have going here. By the way, he's got the job and you've got the price on him too. Nice move.

***Kari Lehtonen** ATL - \$3.50 through 2012. The price tag is too steep for him if you ask me and since goalies are craved after more than any other position in this league then I'm betting you can exact a really nice price if you put him on the block. This was a fun part of the story actually.

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Jaroslav Halak MON - \$1 through 2011. Too expensive and not worth the amount you pay for him.

Brian Elliott OTT - \$1 through 2011. He only has value once Pascal Leclaire gets hurt, which could actually happen.

Ok, so goalies are gold in this league and you've locked up 9 keeps including 3 goaltenders. If a goalie is a starter then your league pays through the nose to acquire him and the top goaltenders go for \$20 in a \$40 cap league (that's not a misprint). Take inflation into account in your auction and we'll see what sort of fun we can have by offering Lehtonen around your league prior to your auction. Your D keeps are excellent given the price tags on them and you've locked up all the Capitals worth having for a long time. Seriously, how'd you manage that?

Trading Options

- Rat Creek Salmonbellies inquired about Kari Lehtonen but he only offered expensive, expiring contracts in Marc Savard or Marian Hossa. We discussed trying to acquire any of Dan Boyle, Danny Briere, Devin Setoguchi or Andy McDonald and he wasn't interested in parting with any of those names or contracts.

- Hellzapoppin expressed interest in Kari Lehtonen but didn't respond in any way to trade requests in a bid to land Corey Perry. In this sort of league guys an offer like that actually flies since guys are just that desperate to land a goaltender, but that didn't fly.

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- Willie's Wonderboys was also interested in Kari Lehtonen and offers fired back and forth over the week prior to keeper submission day (Labour Day). We offered Lehtonen, Enstrom and Michalek for Jason Spezza and Mike Ribeiro and we were rebuffed. We offered Lehtonen, and Iginla for Spezza and Ribeiro and Willie declined because Iggy's salary was too much. In the end we got **Spezza (\$3.50 2011) for Kari Lehtonen (\$3.50 2012)**.

Yes please. Not only do we get a star skater for a price we like but the overpriced options that were on your team go back into the auction pool so that you can go bid on them again. You can go out and target Iginla or Thornton again if you like.

Conclusions

Did you go read that inflation article? The inflation rate in your auction draft will help you determine whether or not you can afford to go after star options like Thornton or Iginla again, even after you extend Green and Price for more than a half decade. You see, if guys use up half their cap on stars of their own (like goalies) then that's all the more cheaper options for skaters that you can use your excess funds to bid on. If you get just a bit mathy you'll be able to determine what money is still on the table available in your auction, how many players still need to be slotted in and just how much extra you can spend on your elite targets.

Additionally, we traded for Spezza! That deal only cost your Kari Lehtonen, think about that. That is such a freakingly awesome deal that there aren't enough ways to express it properly. I couldn't believe that we were even discussing the possibility of getting more but we tried to do that. At any rate, it was a great move for your team in terms of talent available to you and dollar values still preserved for your auction.

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I have more than a sneaking suspicion that you'll be fine Dean. Enjoy.