

The Next Great Goalie? - An Expert's Audit"

Written by Ian Fergusson

Monday, 12 October 2009 11:09 - Last Updated Monday, 12 October 2009 12:50



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.

I think that Philippe Charron nearly gave up on an audit after he learned that I was a Leaf fan. He's a lifelong Hab fan and most of our discussions happened right near the opening night of the season. If you recall the Leafs and Habs had quite a dustup on opening night where that "traitor" Mike Komisarek had what I thought was a very physical and fun game in a losing cause. It was probably a good thing that Phillippe's points league doesn't really make use of PIMy options like Kommie because we never got eye to eye on whether he's a "traitor" or not.

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Phil plays in a 12 team points league where goalies get 2 points for a win and 3 points for a shuttie. Goalies are always valuable in points leagues, often more valuable than most skaters and in a keeper a young stud goalie goes a long way. Phil had to drop five names from his roster prior to this season and then (long boring story) he had to draft seven names in his draft to start the year once all the keeps were in place. The gem in this story is the fact that he'd have the second pick in every round of his draft this season, that'd come in handy in the end once we learned who it was that was available.

Let's take a look at Phil's points league summer roster. The R slot listed below is reserved for a rookie from any position who is less than 82 games into his career.

F **Sidney Crosby** PIT – in a points league I actually rank Sid 2nd in the game (behind Malkin) since the rarity of goals can be ignored in this system. Obviously it's great to have the kid on your roster.

F **Anze Kopitar** LA – I'm not surprised at his start, except I was expecting it last season instead of this one. He'll put up elite numbers for your team.

F **Tomas Vanek** BUF – he'll score goals in bunches at various times throughout the season. If he passed a little more he'd be a better option but I still love rostering goalscorers.

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F **Daniel Sedin** VAN – he's going to be close to the end of November before he's contributing for you again but when healthy he's more than a solid citizen on your squad.

F **Paul Kariya** STL – the Blues will score in bunches this season and dare I say it but I think that Kariya can get past 70 pts if healthy. That'll actually be more than the norm for recent seasons.

F **Scott Gomez** MON – I'm just not a believer that Gomez will be back to the 70 pt plateau this season or any other soon. I just don't. Cammalleri is a prime goalscorer who'll put away some of those dishes and Gionta is decent at best but I think the whole line is too small and will get bashed a bit.

F **Michael Ryder** BOS – playing with a superior talent like Marc Savard will either turn Ryder into a great goalscorer or he'll disappear like he did during his last year in Montreal.

F **Sergei Kostitsyn** MON – he's still a kid and the upside is still there. He'll get some seasoning in Hamilton and he could eventually be hated in NHL cities like certain other AHL grads are presently on the Habs. I'm looking at you Maxim Lapierre.

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F **Pavol Demitra** VAN – he's injured again, or is that still. He didn't make the cut for your keeps anyway and good riddance.

F **Teemu Selanne** ANA – he's already declared that he's done after this year and in spite of that he's playing like he's 10 years younger than he is. We considered keeping him for this season but in the end determined that it was best to look elsewhere.

D **Brian Campbell** CHI – there are only so many points to go around what is a very talented blueline in Chicago but Campbell will continue to get his share of it. He'll keep scoring enough to easily be your D anchor for this season but eventually I suspect that Bogo will be your best D.

D **Zach Bogosian** ATL – he'll make a nice jump this season and could end up as the 2nd leading scorer amongst the Thrasher D this season. Eventually he'll be their best option but probably not til next year at the earliest.

D **Bryan McCabe** FLA – with Bouwmeester gone then McCabe is really the only offensive option for the Cats. I can see 40-some points out of him this season if all goes well. I like him on your team as a D3.

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D **Paul Martin** NJ – he makes the most of opportunity as the best offensive option on the Devils
D. I'm not a big fan at all but he's serviceable as an option in most formats.

D **Jack Johnson** LA – fantasy folk having been fawning over him for years now, and so did I quite frankly. He has given next to no return for all that love. He's a tease and if he doesn't step up soon then I'm cutting ties for good.

R **Nikita Filatov** CBS – he has talent oozing out of him and if he gets more opportunity then I think he'll be a star. If he's getting 5 minutes of ice a night like he has to start the season then this gamble blows up in your face.

G **Carey Price** MON – short of getting shellacked in Vancouver this season he's had a really nice start to what could be a bounceback year. I think he's your best trade bait right now.

BN **Shawn Matthias** FLA – he's got some upside but come on, it won't be soon that he's a decent contributor to any team.

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BN **Teddy Purcell** LA – he's got a shot at lining up on the same line as some talent like Alexander Frolov or Dustin Brown; if he does then he could luck into something nice. Then again he could end up buried in the AHL again too.

BN **Matt Carle** PHI – he teamed up with Chris Pronger for a great start to the season. If he gets to continue the relationship then we could be looking at a really nice spike in his stats. Some are throwing around some really heady numbers for him but I'm nowhere near to saying that he'll bring down 50 or 60 pts this season, if he gets past 30 then he's had a great year.

Five Drops

We debated the 5 worst options for your drops but we had to declare those names before it was determined that Sergei Kostitsyn wasn't making the Habs to start the season. We kept him and obviously that decision hasn't worked out well to start this season.

Our 5 cuts were Demitra, Matthias, Carle, Johnson and Selanne. Selanne has been on fire for the start of the year but in a keeper he wouldn't help beyond this season so he got cut. It's too bad because that Kostitsyn keep is going to really need to benefit Phil down the road. We also discussed the fantasy value of Carle and Johnson but in the end we determined quite rightly that they had less value in a straight points league.

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Draft Time

Phil had the 2nd pick in every round of a 7 round draft and there were a number of names that were very interesting. It was learned that Tavares would be going first in the draft so we discussed what would be the likely and best strategy for the 2nd pick. The name that jumped out at us in the draft was Steve Mason. There's no way that a quality tender like him should be available, even in a 12 team league with only one starting goalie slot. If we're going to be drafting with this pick, he'll be the selection.

We toyed with the idea of trading down in the 1st round so that we could get an extra 2nd round selection but that idea didn't go anywhere. Nobody offered any sort of a deal to move anywhere in the draft. The only offer to consider was an offer of Zdeno Chara for the 2nd

pick but we declined that after considering that Mason would be a better pick than Chara in a straight points league.

1st round – **Steve Mason** – there are some huge things in store for him. I think he has the frame to take up huge spaces in front of the twine and he has the skills to make up and cover for those spaces that he can't fill. I can't get rid of the vibe that I think he's going to be Brodeur-good in a few short seasons.

2nd round – **Alex Goligoski** – you had to drop 2 defensemen and you did excellently to replace either of them with Golly. I love this move, you traded up pretty huge.

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3rd round – **Antoine Vermette** – if the Jackets moved a kid like Filatov (who you also roster) up to the 2nd line and gave him more opportunity than both Vermette and the kid would be helped exceedingly. I don't think it's happening this year though, and I'm just not enamoured with this pick. I wasn't at your draft so I couldn't advise you here.

4th round – **Kris Versteeg** – this is a much better selection than Vermette in the 3rd round. He'll get plenty of face time on the top lines of what is an up and coming offense like the Hawks. I can see Versteeg making the next jump up toward 75 points this season.

5th round – **James Wisniewski** – he got injured early into the season but when healthy he looks to have an excellent opportunity in Anaheim with both Beauchemin and Pronger gone. I like him much more in multi-cat leagues since he can be rather PIMy but he has a little less value here.

6th round – **Rich Peverley** – if Nik Antropov has no real chemistry with Kovalchuk then at least Peverley has shown that he can find a little chemistry with the captain. I suspect that Peverley will have to make due with hanging out with Slava Kozlov or Todd White and that'll certainly hurt his value.

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7th round – **Steve Ott** – you didn't like this pick much and I've got to be honest, he doesn't have much value in a points league. I still like him a lot in multi-cat leagues and his value in all leagues goes through the roof if any of the top 6 forwards gets hurt for any extended period of time.

Conclusions

It's a pity that we couldn't find any takers to move up in the draft, all it would've cost was something like a second round pick in addition to a first round swap. As it was we just drafted Mason in the first round and we can now shop Mason or Price for a quality option up front somewhere. Since this league is populated by Habs fans then it'll be a very nice idea to see what Price could bring you in a keeper like this one, particularly after his nice start to the season.

It looks like the fun is about to start for you Phil, I'm happy for you that you got to add Mason to the mix. Good luck this season and any other.