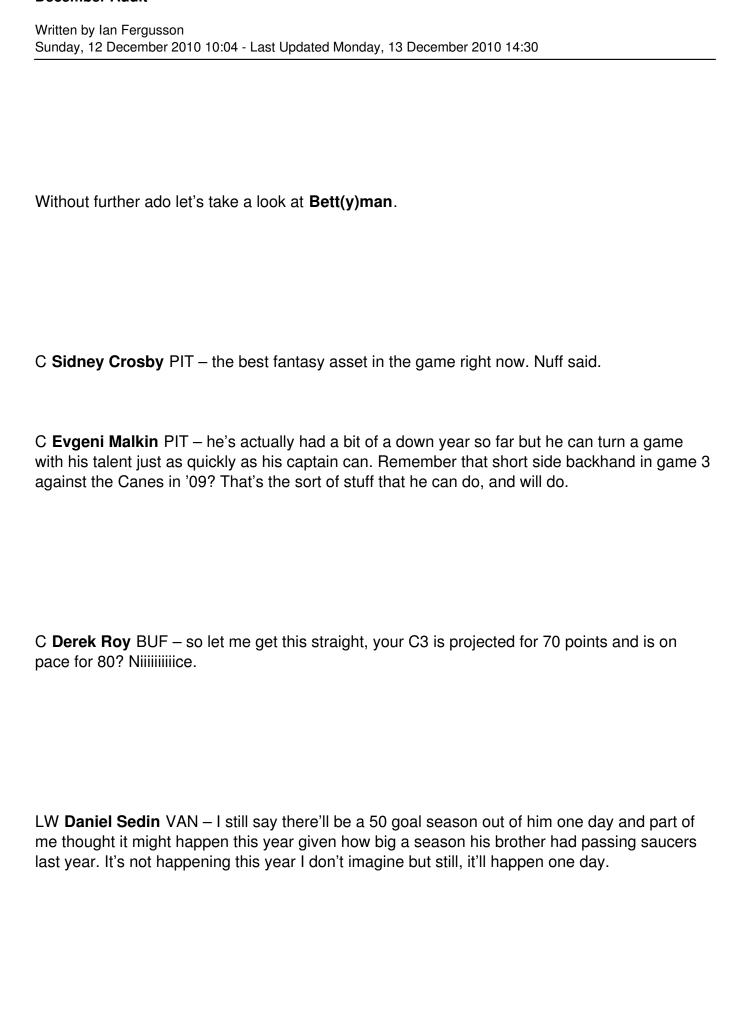


Welcome back to An Expert's Audit. Every month we'll take a look at a reader's keeper league team in the hopes of helping him toward a championship. If you're interested in getting an audit for your own keeper team you can begin the process by emailing Dobber about it.

I had my birthday this past month and I find that as I get older it can be extra irritating to deal with people who are half your age, particularly if half your age makes them old enough to drink, vote and die in a war. Man I'm old. Gary G is 22 and the reigning champ in a 10 ESPN H2H league. The league settings are G, A, P, +/-, PIM, PPP, and GWG to go along with W, SV, SO, GAA and S

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for goalies. He's a Pens fan who has made some really adept trades to get where he is right now. It's insane the sort of keeper options he has at his disposal.



Written by Ian Fergusson Sunday, 12 December 2010 10:04 - Last Updated Monday, 13 December 2010 14:30

LW **Alexander Ovechkin** WAS – if only your league counted SOG too then it'd be even more embarrassing the riches you have at your disposal. Just wait til AO shows his MVP talent on a regular basis like he has in the past.

LW **Tyler Ennis** BUF – he's in a bit of a slump right now after starting off the season very well. He's only gotten three points since mid November and all of those were in one game on December 3. The former Slugs are about to make a run now that Miller is healthy and this kid will need to step up and contribute like he did at the beginning of the season when he was working at a half point per game.

RW **Justin Williams** LA – he hasn't played more than 49 games in any of the last five seasons but before that he was a 30 goal guy. If he plays 70 games or more this season, and I say he does, then he'll return to 30 goals again.

RW **Jeff Skinner** CAR – he's on pace for 24 goals and 61 points this season and I'd absolutely take that out of any rook on any team. I wasn't expecting this sort of production and I actually picked several other non-touted types to be doing better than him. I think it's wonderful for your team to have a nice depth option like him.

RW **Mikael Samuelsson** VAN – I just don't like this guy for much production given the other options in Vancouver. I didn't think it was a good signing a couple years ago, I wasn't surprised that he didn't make the Swedish Olympic team and I'm not surprised by his relative lack of

Written by Ian Fergusson Sunday, 12 December 2010 10:04 - Last Updated Monday, 13 December 2010 14:30 production. The one thing he does is shoot the puck when he gets enough ice time but your league doesn't count SOG so he's not much use to you. Now having said that, you don't have better options available to you at RW. D **Erik Karlsson** OTW – I'm most worried about his +/- but everything else is going to be stellar for a lot of years. He was just short of 30 points last season and he'll easily bust open that career high this year. D Mark Giordano CAL – Ian White was moved to Carolina and I think it has created some extra opportunity for Giordie. He's actually had seven points in seven games since the end of November. D Shea Weber NAS – he's only on pace for a 30-point season and given the fact that he's your best D then it'd be a huge disappointment unless he picks up the pace in a huge way. D Keith Yandle PHX – I can't believe how much the Yotes offense has fallen off this season so far but Yandle is leading the way for what few bright lights there have been in the desert.

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Util Sean Avery NYR – I love having this guy on any fantasy team that counts PIMs and I hate it whenever I watch the circus that is his hockey life sometimes. He'll be among the Top 2 pt/PIM options in the league this year.
G Jaroslav Halak STL – in this league he's a fantastic option because he gets minutes and wins, the ratios are excellent, he sees a decent amount of rubber and he gets his share of shutties. You only keep four players from year to year but right now he's your fifth best option.
G Marc-Andre Fleury PIT – if you can then it's fun to roster some of your favourite players and MAF is one of those guys for you. It doesn't hurt that he's a great option for W's while keeping the ratios decent.
BN Pekka Rinne NAS – he has struggled so far this year but I point to a Preds offense that has done little to help their goalie reach for any W's. Rinne has a dinged knee but should be back and contributing around the new year. Hopefully by that time the offense has woken or continues like it looks to have done since his injury (they've gotten five out six points).
BN Michal Neuvirth WAS – he was great to start the season while Varlamov was shelved and now that Varlamov is back the battle rages for who's going to be the guy for the Caps. I've been

saying for a couple years now that I like Neuvirth better in the end and I'm still hoping to see my

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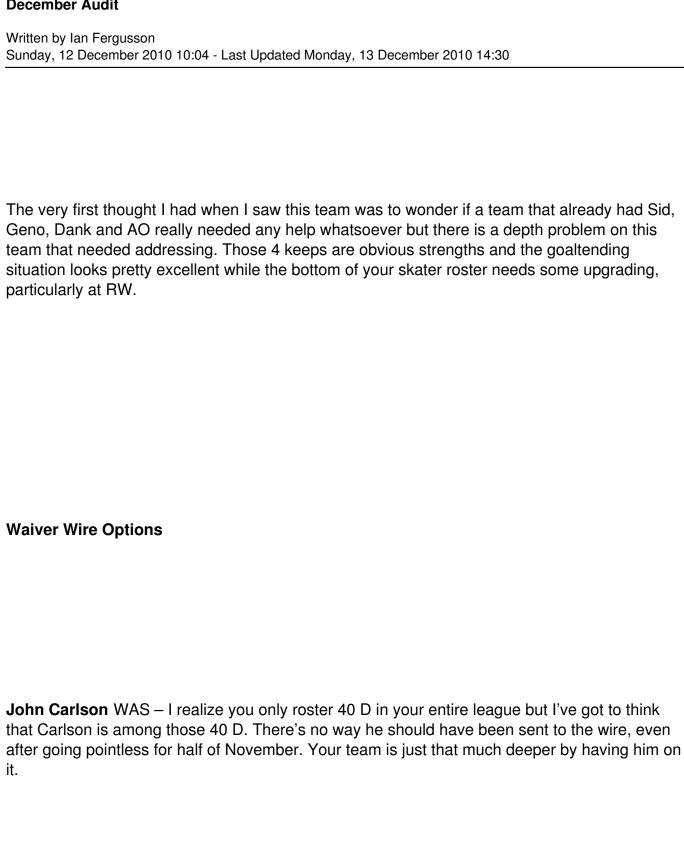
prediction come true. Be patient here, if Neuvirth finally takes the job then there'll be a boatload of W's waiting for you.

BN **Nik Antropov** ATL – half of his production this season has happened in the last 30 days and I fully expect close to 60 points out of him by season's end (he's on pace for 40-some right now). The soon-to-be Winnipeg Thrashers (sorry QC) have been on fire through the first third of the season and they've done so without much of a contribution from anyone who wasn't a Blackhawk last season. Once Nik contributes on last year's pace (or better) then your team and theirs will be that much better for it.

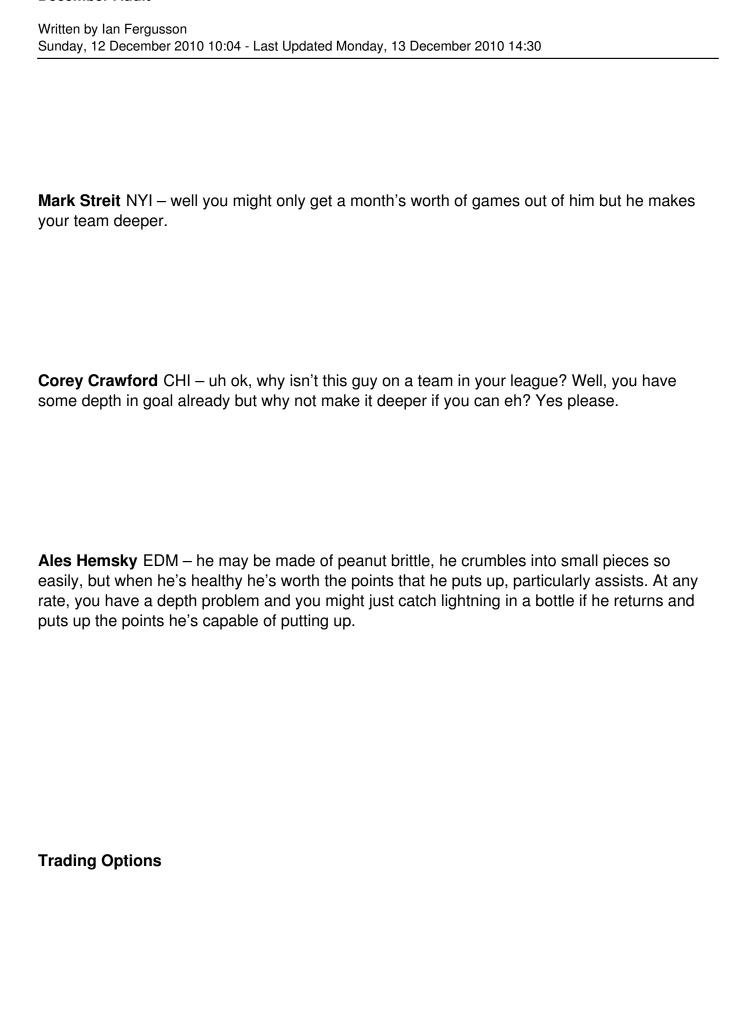
BN **Jiri Hudler** DET – cut bait. Run away. He was relegated to the bottom of their roster and he should be right off of yours. Soon you were saying, "Jiri who?"

BN **Eric Fehr** WAS – he got 50 goals as a Junior and put up 21 as an NHL'er last year but he has completely dropped off the table this season. He's not doing you much good and I've got to think there are better options for you in a trade or on the wire.

BN **Marek Zidlicky** MIN – what is it about players whose last name starts with Z that makes them sound so cool? Seriously, if Zarley Zalapski was the coolest name in hockey then how could anyone named Zidlicky not get great props in NHL circles? There's even the innuendo option, and don't pretend you don't know what I'm talking about. A 40 pt D is worth gold in any fantasy league and Z'lick is on pace for 59 this season as that Wild PP has been a wild PP.



Travis Zajac NJ – it's true that he's been ice cold all season but he was nearly a pt/game player last year and if he can put together some chemistry with Kovalchuk and Langenbrunner then all of them will be better options this season. It's a bit of a gamble but one that I'm taking myself in one of my leagues.



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The only way you should be trading any of your four keeps would be if you are upgrading to a different keep. Pretty much unless someone is offering you Stamkos then you'll stick with your Top 4.

You traded Pekka Rinne, Marek Zidlicky and Mikael Samuelsson for Claude Giroux and T.J. Oshie – your goaltending was so strong that you could definitely afford to move a goalie for an upgrade on the wing. The fact that Oshie was included only helps your team when he returns In February. The guy on the other end of this deal was pretty desperate for goaltending and we were able to take advantage of that. This was a sweet, sweet deal.

Conclusions

Ok, you had four phenomenal options at the top of your roster and you had deep goaltending that you could afford to move to strengthen a depth problem. You added every single one of the waiver wire options and you made a trade where you took advantage of someone else's need in order to make your RW stronger. Giroux is a monster in waiting and you could move a decent young goaltender in order to get depth where you needed it. On top of that trade you added some young stars in John Carlson and Corey Crawford to go along with some better vets than those you already had available to you. We did a lot of work this month and you solidified your team for another run at the championship.

