



Welcome back! If you're interested in getting an audit for your own keeper team you can begin the process by emailing [Dobber](#) .

Did everyone read the previous line? Seriously, read it if you're thinking of submitting your team for an audit. Stephen Pulham didn't read it and then I had to go get Dobber's go ahead in order to work with the guy for the month. You know what happens to the guy who can't follow instructions on the ice though eh? He watches the game from the press box. Despite that first hiccup I managed to yell at Stephen and pretty soon he was "yes sir'ring" his way to an audit. Not really, I'm pretty sure he thinks I'm the bastard I pretty much am anyway.

Stephen is a Vancouver boy who plays in a 12 team H2H keep 13 cash league that he has only won once in a decade or so. He has finished just out of the money for each of the last 3 seasons. When I came on the scene he was sitting in 5th place and I'm pleased to say that after a month of H2H matchups he had moved up to a solid 3rd

place. The cats for the league are

G, A, PPP, PIM, + -,

and

SOG

for skaters and

W, GAA, SV

, and

SV%

for goalies.

Without further ado let's look at **St. Louis Blues**.

C Patrice Bergeron BOS – the best season of his career was way back in '05-06 where he was nearly a pt/game but he also had over 3.8 SOG/game. He hasn't come anywhere near that many SOG/game and I truly believe that's been the difference in his production. This season he sits at 2.6 SOG/game and I don't believe he'll return to elite point production until he gets that average over three for a season.

C Martin Hanzal PHX – anybody else keep hearing Bugs Bunny in their head going "Hansel? Haaaansel?" The fact that I got to write that sentence is the only reason why I'd want to include him in this article. I can't believe he's the best Yotes C, he's just .. a little boy lost in the woods

who gets trapped in a witch's house and served up for supper. See what I did there? If you didn't then let me be more clear, turf this guy.

C Henrik Sedin VAN – interesting that a Vancouver boy has Hank on his team. Yeah, I think maybe that's on purpose.

LW Daniel Sedin VAN – Dank too? What more is there to say? You have both the passer and the finisher on your team and that makes you an immediate contender. I hear they even look alike, how cool is that?

LW Clarke MacArthur TOR – well he pretty much did nothing before his 62 point season last year and yet Leaf fans expect 30 goals out of him for a half decade. Let's be reasonable shall we? Twenty goal support scoring output could be expected for the next couple of years, at best.

LW David Booth VAN – he looked to have finally clicked with Ryan Kesler when he was felled by an ugly looking kneeing incident. He's on the shelf for another month or so but I'm hopeful that he can be a very valuable cog in the Canucks machine. I realize you're a Vancouver boy but I just want to say that I believe it'd be a huge mistake to drop or trade him before you know if he'll be the contributor he's expected to be.

RW Joffrey Lupul TOR – quite possibly the surprise of the season so far. Some of his production has to be due to Kessel's through the roof production but still a chunk of it has to be due to Loop's hard work on his own. If there's anyone in the top 10 in scoring who's likely to drop off I've got to think it'd be Lupul but enjoy the ride for now.

RW Patrick Sharp CHI – he's been at least a .75 pt/game player for 4 seasons now, can guys finally give him a break? I remember being asked a couple seasons ago if I believed he was close to a pt/game guy and I quickly answered yes. Some people just don't believe, even when confronted with 30 goal seasons.

RW Ales Hemsky EDM – he's the new enigma for me in fantasy hockey, he's what Alex Kovalev used to be. Skills out the wazoo but hasn't been able or perhaps willing to show it. Very recently he started to shoot the puck more and that has started to provide some results but if I could find a taker for this guy I'd pawn him off on any foolish person willing to give him a chance.

D Christian Ehrhoff BUF – the Sabres have had some significant injuries and have been at the forefront of the "protect the goalies" debate so that has affected everyone's stats so far this season. The only Sabre who looks to be doing something so far is Jason Pominville but when everyone starts to contribute like they can then the stats of a guy like Ehrhoff will go through the roof like is his potential.

D **Brent Burns** SJ – don't forget that this kid has a 15 and a 17 goal season under his belt and now he gets to man the point on the PP with one of the best PPA options in the league in Joe Thornton. His plus/minus has improved already and he's still just coming into his prime. Stephen was talking about moving this guy but the more I think about it the more I'd resist the urge whenever the possibility came up.

D **Dan Boyle** SJ – this is the guy I'd look to move actually. He's 35 and on the downside but still can put up respectable numbers. He's put up 15 goals at least three times in his storied career but I don't think he's as likely as others to get there again. If you don't move him then he'll still provide decent scoring for your team.

D **Mike Green** WAS – he'd be among my choices for guys to shop around your league once he's back on the ice. He's only had 8 games under his belt this season and he's been passed by John Carlson on the depth chart (at least in my mind) so if there's trade value there still then I say that you should definitely ask about options when the time is right. Then again, a coaching change may work wonders for everyone on the Caps and Green will go along with the flow.

BN **Brad Richards** NYR – he's a stud offensive option that has learned to have a bit of a defensive conscience. I guess there's a bit of a difference between New York and his PEI upbringing. He'll be a bright light in the big city.

BN Dustin Brown LA – he's a hitter. Unfortunately he's not a huge PIMy type and your league doesn't track hits. With the pace he's on so far he won't reach 50 pts on the season and since the PIMs won't be there then he ends up hurting your team in this format. He could pick up the pace of course and I hope he does but I'd also look at trading him if the right move came along.

BN Michael Cammalleri MON – usually you can set your calendar on Camm getting 20 goals when he plays 60 games and 35 goals when he plays 80 games. He's already missed five games after that laceration in Winnipeg but with all the remaining games he's still on pace for less than 20 goals. That's just wrong. I'm hoping for your team's sake that their PP is improved greatly by Kaberle and the eventual return of Markov because it has to get better than this.

G Niklas "Nikl-back" Backstrom MIN – the thing that worries the most about Nik is that he has good talent behind him on the depth chart and only 1 year left on the contract after this season. I'm sure that he's had extension discussions if that's what he wants but the last time he waited until the trade deadline of his last season before he signed for four more seasons. It's also a pretty big deal to be the starting tender for the top team in the West, and that's Nik's gig right now.

G AI "Inigo" Montoya NYI – prepare to die. Not only did you kill his father but also you've been stupid enough to roster a goaltender for the Islanders. When you don't have goaltending you have to do something to try and stay afloat, and that's what you're doing here.

BN **Evgeni Nabokov** NYI – I still hope that all their goalies come back and then they trade Gene ... anywhere. By now he must be thinking that he should've stayed in Russia.

BN **Josh Harding** MIN – I like handcuffs in fantasy goalie gigs, at least this way you're assured of a starter going any night the Wild are playing. He's got some skills too so there's a little upside to look for down the road.

IR **James Reimer** TOR – I can't believe how often I get asked whether Optimus Reim is the real deal or not. He is. It was an easy decision to activate him when he was ready to go and he'll be the backbone of your goaltending for a lot of years to come.

Additionally there is a five man minor league roster that can be graduated to the big club or sent down without penalty until the player has played 100 NHL games. Those players include **Ryan Murphy, Cam Fowler, Corey Schneider, Zack Dalpe,**
and

Evgeni Kuznetsov

. Fowler and Schneider spent a good amount of November on your big club since they were pretty useful during that time period.

Your D corps is a strength when you consider that Fowler sits in your minors. Your forwards need to shoot more, you need more goals and you don't have any PIMy influences at all. It'd be nice if your league tracked hits because Brown would be an all star for you but his drop in

offensive production has hurt your team a good deal. Your goaltending is young and it should be fine for this season and going forward.

Waiver Wire Options

Any player added to your team would have to remain on your roster for a three day period, this prevents most cycling/streaming that is common in many H2H leagues.

Chris Neil OTW – your team has no PIMy influences to speak of. You have some hitters which is always nice but you'll need a broken nose type to mix it up more for you. Neil is one of my fave PIM/pt options since he'll chip in the odd point to go along with plenty of bad attitude toward opponents.

Blake Wheeler WPG – I was able to go see the Panthers completely dominate the Jets (November 10) and I was very critical of Wheeler since he played lazy and disappeared for entire periods despite getting a regular shift. He's turned a corner since about a week after that game getting 11 pts in 10 games since November 17.

Cal Clutterbuck MIN – I thought he was going to be goon but it turns out that he's a hitter in the Dustin Brown mould. I like that he'll pocket goals in bunches and he's a viable option for the bottom of a roster.

Brooks Laich WAS – I was really impressed with his leadership skills off the ice when the Caps were adjusting before their coaching change. On the ice he's serviceable but in the room I think he's invaluable to that team. If that can translate into more opportunity then it'll also translate into more stats.

Curtis "Fred" Sanford CBS – with James Reimer on the bench for most of this month you needed some tending help and Fred has filled the gap for C-Bus while Steve Mason has struggled. He's certainly a good stop-gap option for the bottom of your tending roster.

Trading Options

You traded Ales Hemsky, Cam Fowler and a 3rd round pick for Evander Kane, Tyler Myers and a 7th round pick. I was completely astounded that we got this deal. Hemsky is the perfect example of what was hurting your team, a guy who wouldn't shoot enough and who wasn't putting up any offense

whatsoever. We had spent most of our conversations talking about our search for SOGgers who'll get goals since that'd help your team best and one of our many trade targets was a young Kane. Evander was on a nine goal, 12 pt streak from mid November through early December. You had the strength of some D depth you could move and yet you still managed to secure a young D in the deal that I think could turn into Zdeno Chara one day so losing Fowler didn't hurt all that much. This is a wonderful deal for you.

Conclusions

We spent most of this month working on a way to find some extra SOG and a few goals. Eventually that trade we made provides that for you and the price tag was very affordable. Some of the waiver moves were temporary to help your situation short term but also the Sanford move was very valuable while Reimer was shelved since you had another starter to roster on a regular basis.

Your team has already started to climb the hill and I suspect you'll keep climbing as the season progresses. Your team is looking pretty good from here on out. Good luck.