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.

This month’s audit goes to the team of a Brit. I picked him because his team and league

interested me, and I haven't met any puckhead Brits before. I also figured I might be able to help. But do we really speak the same language?

I've read Shakespeare and I'm not sure we do. James Nickerson, or Shakespeare as I call him, is in the second year of a 12-team keeper league that he got into through another site. His lineup, when everyone is healthy, is decent but he's had to suffer through injuries to Cory Murphy, Kevin Bieksa, and finally Sidney Crosby.

When he contacted us for an audit he was in 11th place and he had scraped his way up to eighth when the truly unfortunate thing happened, Sid took an unwanted holiday.

Shakespeare's league has these categories: G, A, +/-, PIM, PPP, SHP, GWG, SOG, W, GAA, SV%, and SHO. In terms of stats accrued, his team is middle of the road but he has been really hurt by injuries.

Let's take a look, I've marked his keeper options with an * (you can keep 18 max):

C Saku Koivu MON – very nice trade bait for a team that's selling.
C Christopher Higgins MON * - he's a nice special teams option. He shoots some, gets PP

exposure and has 3 SHG each of the last two seasons.
C Jordan Staal PIT * - he's disappeared for most of the season after having a very noticeable rookie year. With Sid injured he's come to the fore more and he's a solid keeper selection.
LW Vaclav Prospal TB – in order for you to hang on to some younger names you'll either have to shop this guy around or leave him unprotected.
LW Alexander Semin WAS * - consider this year an injury blip. He's a 40 goal guy for the next decade.
LW Ryan Malone PIT - some are very high on him … not me. He has some PIM value that maybe you can parlay into something worth keeping.
RW Dustin Brown LA * - I wasn't expecting him to be this good this season but he's definitely a keep. Hard-nosed, PIMy, and goals galore.
RW David Vyborny CBS – the time to trade him was after last season when he put up all those assists. I'd doubt you can get enough back if you moved him unless you just include him as a throw-in on an offer.
RW Jarome Iginla CAL * – he's very valuable to the Flames but believe it or not he's MORE valuable as a fantasy hockey player than he is as a real hockey player. Keep him forever.
W Patrick Kane CHI * - I'm astounded that you have some significant names for keeper options. Another forever keep, I just hope he bulks up a bit so that he can last.
F Petr Prucha NYR – I thought he was going to be a great goal scorer but he's … gone MIA for most of this season.
F Nathan Horton NAS * - I'd certainly trade him if the right deal came along. The fantasy hockey community has waited a while for him to make good on all that promise. 30 goal seasons are nice but I want to see a string of 40 goal seasons and I'm not even seeing that it's possible right now.
D Tom Gilbert EDM * – good and young and will get opportunity as long as Sheldon Souray struggles with his health, which will be forever. He's on the bubble as a keep.
D Alexei Zhitnik ATL – old, past his time, plays like Zhitnik.
D Ryan Suter NAS * - on the cusp of very goodness (not greatness mind you).
D Adrian Aucoin CAL – in a H2H league where Calgary has 15 games during your H2H playoffs then I would imagine you can get a decent return by offering him up to anyone trying to make a run at the title.
D Joni Pitkanen EDM * - somebody has to man the point and although I'm not a huge fan of Pitkanen's he does a serviceable job and has a history of offensive output.
D Cory Murphy FLA * - when he's been healthy he's definitely shown that he can do the job. You have yourself a very solid and young D corps at your disposal, although without a superstar (yet).
G Miikka Kiprusoff CAL * - the guy's 3rd in Wins in the league, what exactly is there to complain about here?
G Chris Mason NAS * - I just can't stand this guy. He's always been a backup in my eyes and I don't see my opinion changing anytime soon. He was drafted insanely high in fantasy leagues this year but people didn't realize that the Preds were and are a very different team. Do you think maybe I want you to trade him?
BN Jason LaBarbera LA – he's a G3 and you have him in the right spot in your pecking order.
BN Tomas Fleischmann WAS – short term bench option who's getting more ice ever since Nylander went the way of the boo-boo.
BN Matthew Lombardi CAL – another Calgary guy who may have some value as trade bait for

the H2H playoffs. I think the 20 goals he put up last year is his ceiling.
BN Daniel Carcillo PHX * - I actually saw him play in an exhibition between the Leafs and Yotes in the preseason here in Winnipeg. I added him to my team the same night. He gives energy to the lineup every night.
BN Kristian Huselius CAL * - maybe your best trade bait for keeper options. I say he'll sign elsewhere in the offseason and will never return to the offensive levels he put up as a Flame.
BN Bobby Holik ATL – I'm not a fan except if your league has Takeaways as a category. He's pretty good in takeaways minus giveaways, but for some odd reason it's not correlated in his +/-.
BN Brandon Bochenski ANH – ice time will drop to virtually nothing now that Teemu is back.
BN Tom Poti WAS – he was to be the PP QB in Washington but he just got his 1st goal of the season and we're heading for the home stretch. Ugh.
BN Michel Ouellet TB – showed promise at one time but it looks like greatness has passed him by.
IR Sidney Crosby PIT * - the best player on the planet.
IR Kevin Bieksa VAN * - he contributes across the board in every category. This has been a lost season for him though.

That's only 17 keeps, but that's ok because I'm not crazy about Chris Mason as a keeper option and we both seem to be pretty keen on moving Kristian Huselius for some young studs since we aren't big believers in what he'll be able to do outside of Calgary next year, and he will be outside Calgary next year. We just have some work to do is all.

the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune (Hamlet 3.1)

Anyone in a keeper league wants to have Sid the kid as his cornerstone and when I came on the scene James and his UKflames were on the brink of a playoff spot in his H2H league. He was trying to decide if he was a "buyer" or a "seller" when an arrow took out his franchise player

in the form of a high ankle sprain. Needless to say, he became a “seller” as all of his hopes for a championship this year went down the tube.

what light through yonder window breaks (Romeo and Juliet 2.2) - waiver wire options

James had been streaming up to four players into his lineup daily in order to maximize his stats on a given week; that changed as soon as he became a “seller”. His goals became; solidify his keeper list for next year, and get younger through waiver and through trade. We each sorted through Dobber’s prospect list for available guys that weren’t rostered and we shed guys from the lineup who were not keeper candidates or had trade value in the league.

Ilya Zubov – 18th ranked prospect on Dobber’s prospect list. I believe that Ottawa will have room for him, perhaps as soon as next year, as they won’t be able to re-sign all of their bigger names.
Torrey Mitchell – graduated as the 14th ranked prospect on Dobber’s prospect list. I think he’s getting a really nice tutoring as viable secondary attack in San Jose. He’s got the ability to be a solid NHL’er, maybe very soon.
Aaron Voros – I see some really big things for Voros down the road but since you already have Carcillo kept for next year there’s little need to keep essentially the same style of player in Voros.
Steve Ott – see Aaron Voros.
Niklas Bergfors – 46th ranked Dobber prospect. I’m not a huge fan but the pickings are also getting slim on your FA list and he’s eligible at RW which helps his value in your pool.
Tyler Kennedy – 45th ranked Dobber prospect. He’ll be a decent option but things are fairly crowded in Pitt too.
Cody Franson – 97th ranked prospect but the top ranked D prospect available in your league.
Ryan Shannon – 34th, I saw him pull this really nice spin-o-rama during the AHL skills competition when it was here in Winnipeg a couple years ago (and he reprised it in a shootout against Chicago this week). He’s small and fast but I don’t think his upside is as high as others do.
Nick Foligno – 36th ranked prospect and the highest ranked LW prospect option available on your wire.
Dustin Boyd – 25th ranked prospect but he doesn’t look to be getting enough opportunity to be of much use anytime soon. He should be fine in a couple years, I just hope he doesn’t become

everything that Chuck Kobasew was for the Flames before getting some notoriety somewhere else.
The options that you chose to go with were Ilya Zubov, Torrey Mitchell, and Niklas Bergfors, while you parted ways with Poti, Bochenski and Holik. All three of the adds you made could have a shot at keeper options and your league is also in discussions about adding a 5-man minor league bench which would certainly help your keeper options down the road.

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once more into the breach, once more (Henry V 3.1) - trading options

Anyone drafted by an NHL team can be on a roster in your league. If the player isn't listed on the league's system then the team must keep an empty roster spot in lieu of the unlisted player. If he chooses to fill that roster spot then the player goes back into the draft pool for next season but he can't be picked up for the remainder of this year. That's exactly what happened to some poor soul who has lost the rights to Kyle Turris this season. Just imagine your draft this offseason, you'll have a shot at Steven Stamkos, or Kyle Turris. I'll expect those guys will go one, two in some order. You're going to want to get one of those picks in your lottery draft this year, and getting both would be phenomenal.
You'll want to trade to fill in the last of your keeper list, and trade to get younger. You already have some exemplary young options to keep, just make it better.

You're going to finish in the bottom half of the league. You've stopped streaming players into your lineup and you've added some young bucks to your team so that you have options on guys when you need to set your keeper list. You now need to target all the playoff teams to see what you have on your roster they think will help put them over the top. Target their young guys and develop your keeper options. I'll list your potential trade partners, their potential trade targets in the order I'd like to go after them and suggest trade offers to make.

1st place Bandy's Evolution - Targets: Mike Green, Josh Harding, Drew Stafford. Recently

Bandy traded Devin Setoguchi to land Mike Green and I loved that move for him. Green is the guy that you should target off him first and often. Bandy is playing short at D and I wondered if an offer of Aucoin and Prospal for Green and a throw-in or Green alone does anything for him.

2nd place SLODawgs – Targets: Matt Niskanen, Sergei Kostitsyn, Pekka Rinne, two 1st round picks next draft. I think I have a real liking for Matt Niskanen and Dawgs is on the threshold of a championship. Aucoin/Horton/ for Niskanen/1st rounder might get it done. He gets more points on the season, Aucoin has 15 games during the H2H playoffs and Dawg has a real shot at the title. You get a stud D for the next decade and a first round pick that you can flip for a shot at one of the top two picks in the draft.

3rd place Waterloo Warriors – Targets: Erik Johnson, Ryan Miller, Tomas Plekanec. The University of Waterloo is my alma mater and Warriors is their school team name, so I would very much like to get a deal done here. Unfortunately, Warriors doesn't want to deal EJ since he figures he'll blow up for stats next year. That's going to mean that you put trade discussions with him on the back burner and look at trying to trade for someone like Tomas Plekanec if other trade options aren't working out.

4th place Concord Canucks – Targets: Patrick O'Sullivan, Andrei Kostitsyn, T.J. Hensick, Patrick Sharp. Concord has a very well balanced offense that matches up well against any team in the league, except in PIMs where he falls vastly short. If he were to beef up in PIMs he could win this league so offer him Carcillo for O'Sullivan and A. Kostitsyn. When Carcillo was demoted to the AHL this deal became moot since Concord won't want to trade for PIMs that won't help him.

5th place Little Ball of Hate – Targets: Jack Skille, Eric Fehr, Jeff Tambellini, Milan Lucic, Jiri Tlusty. LBOH loves to trade and you should love to take some of those young guys off his hands.

6th place ROKKEN – Targets: Anze Kopitar, Nicklas Backstrom, Jack Johnson, Niklas Kronwall, Shea Weber, Jonathan Bernier, Tuukka Rask. Rokken needs all sorts of offense so

it's best to target non-NHL'ers or disappointments off him. An option that you have at your disposal who should get a good measure of PPA this season is Saku Koivu, offer him up for any of the targets other than Kopitar or Backstrom who he isn't going to want to give up. Koivu for Jack Johnson would be very nice indeed.

7th place Charlestown Chiefs – Targets: Alexander Radulov, Jeff Carter, James Sheppard, Robert Nilsson. I would LOVE to get Radulov here but in discussions it seems that it would cost "a lot" to get him. You should still find out what the price is and even if it costs you a keeper other than Crosby or Iginla I'd take a serious run at this. Chiefs in 2nd in the league in assists but is only 5th in goals, Prospal and his 21 goals might be just the sort of bait that you need. Prospal/Horton for Radulov. Prospal for Jeff Carter.

a pound of flesh for repayment (The Merchant of Venice 4.1) - Trades accomplished

Trade done – Kristian Huselius to Little Ball of Hate for Jack Skille and Eric Fehr. I'll take the blame here for not getting enough because I really think you could've landed more, in the end though you got Jack Skille and Eric Fehr for Kristian Huselius. It would've been nice to get a pick off of him too but you were happy with what you got so I won't be a buzzkill about it.

Trade done - Horton, Aucoin, Prospal, Malone and a 3rd and 10th round pick to SlowDawgs for Niskanen, Miroslav Satan, Scott Walker, Ruslan Fedotenko and two 1st round picks (originally owned by Dawgs and the team in 10th presently). You get Niskanen and two 1sts which is all you wanted anyway but you do lose more offense up front. It should be noted that you were only going to keep Horton anyway so Niskanen replaces him and you get two bullets to go after Turris or Stamkos in the draft.

Trade done – Mathew Lombardi to Little Ball of Hate for a 3rd round pick. You actually traded this 3rd rounder to LBOH earlier this season and now you're just reversing that again. It's complicated but that's how it'll play out, you're getting your own pick back. We wanted to expand this to somehow upgrade on Chris Mason but that didn't fly at all. Essentially in this deal you got a pick for a guy you had no intention of keeping anyway.

out, out damn'd spot (MacBeth 5.1) - Conclusions

In one sense, I'm sad for your team, as probably are you. I hate the idea of selling on a season but in a practical sense you were tooth and nail to make the playoffs even with Sid in your lineup so to lose him was a death knell for this season. In another sense though I'm excited for your prospects (pun intended), things are going to be very bright for your team for a lot of years.

Guys going out: Kristian Huselius, Nathan Horton, Tom Poti, Brandon Bochenski, Bobby Holik, Adrian Aucoin, Vaclav Prospal, Ryan Malone, 3rd round pick, 10th round pick.

Guys coming in: Jack Skille, Eric Fehr, Matt Niskanen, Ilya Zubov, Torrey Mitchell, Niklas Bergfors, Miroslav Satan, Ruslan Fedotenko, Scott Walker, 1st round pick (presently 3rd overall), 1st round pick (presently 11th overall).

Your keeper list changes as you add some younger options available to you and you trade away some older guys that are hopefully on the back end of their careers or at least their fantasy productivity. Both Skille and Fehr become keeps and they take the places of Huselius (who you traded) and fill your last keeper slot. Matt Niskanen becomes a keep and takes the place of Nathan Horton. You might want to look at the idea of keeping Ilya Zubov or Torrey Mitchell ahead of Tom Gilbert; certainly work them into your minor league bench if you can. Mitchell should be up with San Jose for all of next year and should contribute nicely to the secondary attack for the Sharks. I really think that the Sens want Zubov to succeed as soon as next year, particularly when they look at their budget line and realize they can't re-sign all the studs they have. Mitchell is closer to being more valuable to your team than Zubov is in my opinion.

Your draft is a lottery so you'll have a couple bullets to fire in an attempt to land one of Kyle Turris or Steven Stamkos. Who knows, you're presently in position for the 5th overall and you own the pick for guy who'd have the 3rd overall slot, in a lottery you could even end up with the first two picks in the draft. At the very least you can offer up two of your 1st round picks for a

shot at either Turris or Stamkos.

From here through the rest of the season you can still shop Saku Koivu and David Vyborny around; decide if your last keeper is Tom Gilbert, Torrey Mitchell or Ilya Zubov; and see if you can somehow upgrade your goaltending away from Chris Mason. I don't envy you on that last one.

Well ok, your team is a lot younger. Most of your draft next fall will be filling in guys who weren't kept but can provide adequate offense during the season. I see your team being competitive for a playoff spot next year and a world beater by the year after that.

Parting is such sweet sorrow, normally … for you though? You'll be fine dude.

Interested in having your keeper league team audited for March? Email Dobber@dobberhockey.com