Injuries are part of all fantasy sports. It's how you find quality replacements that can make or break the situation.

In the DobberHockey Expert's League, I swapped Alex Ovechkin, Micheal Ryder, Zdeno Chara and Dan Ellis for Brendan Morrow, Martin St. Louis, Dennis Wideman and Marty Turco. All in all it was a fair deal at the time, and it brought stability to my goalie situation, while giving me a more balanced offense. Boom, then comes the big news, the day the trade passes, Brendan Morrow makes headline news, gone for the year with torn ACL… I instantly thought my season was done. But I guess the hockey gods are shining down on me, as I managed to cope with the loss of one of fantasy hockey's best players and I'm actually leading the Dobber Expert Pool by two points.

So with Ovechkin I was second last, without him I'm first, what gives? Anyway, I thought it'd be interesting to take a look at some heart-breaking injuries to some key fantasy players and find out who are some quality replacements that are capable of filling those shoes while they temporarily recover on the IR.

Maasquito Buzzings…

- Shawn Horcoff and Sammy Pahlsson both lead the Western Conference in faceoff wins with 470. Mikko Koivu continues to tag along in third with 465.
- Koivu has the most power-play faceoffs won in the Western Conference with 114.
- Wojtek Wolski registered six points this past week, and really is benefiting from gaining a top-line role alongside Ryan Smyth and Milan Hedjuk, look for his numbers to maintain that pace as long as he keeps that roster spot.
- There were 10 Western Conference players ranked in the top-25 in Yahoo rankings last week.
- Dustin Brown maintains the lead in the Western Conference with 154 hits, he now trails Brooks Orpik in the NHL lead.
- Kyle Wellwood took a another hit this week as his shooting percentage fell to 28.0%. As stated in the previous articles, Wellwood's SH% will plummet as the season progress, can anyone say TIMBER!!! Tomas Holmstrom takes second place with a 25.5 shooting percentage and Loui Eriksson rounds out the top-three with a 22.8%.
- Teemu Selanne continues to lead the league with 13 power-play goals, Brad Boyes is taking advantage of the absence and now has 11, while Ryan Clowe and Keith Tkachuk is sitting pretty with 10 each.
- Marek Zidlicky, Pavel Datsyuk, Patrick Marleau, and Bobby Ryan all tallied two power-play markers last week.
- Dustin Brown is firing a ton of bombs on opposing goalies as he maintained his Western Conference lead with 178 shots on goal. He's now dropped to third after Philadelphia's Jeff Carter is beginning to fire away at opposing goalies. Marian Hossa isn't far behind with 175 while Henrik Zetterberg is third with 157.
- Andrew Ladd registered 19 shots on goal this past week, while Bobby Ryan and Wojtek Wolski, both benefiting from injuries on their respective teams registered 17 each.
- Shane O'Brien continues to maintain his NHL lead in PIMs, he has 124 in 45 games played. David Backes who I mentioned a few weeks earlier is now catching up with 113. He has 30 point upside as well as the PIMs, and should be a must own in most roto leagues.
- Brad Staubitz had 15 PIMs this past week, he's only a temporary fill-in for the sharks so I wouldn't put too much emphasis on his PIMs potential.
- Detroit is leading the league in power-play percentage as they are firing at better than one for four. Columbus is at a league-worst 10.8%.
- Minnesota continues to be stellar on the PK with a 87.7%, while Edmonton is Western Conference worst 74.9%
- Columbus gains the leading ratio in five-on-five situations with a ratio of 1.31. The usually defensive minded Wild are a Western Conference worst at 0.79.
- Detroit leads the Western Conference with an average of 10.3 minutes in penalties per contest, they just don't take any penalties. Vancouver is averaging the league high of 18.7.
- Phoenix is 9-3-0 when they are out-shooting their opponents, while Anaheim is a league

worst is 8-11-1. San Jose is 12-1-1 when being out shot by their opponents, while St. Louis is 6-13-2.

Paul Stastny was injured from blocking a shot from the Coyotes' Olli Jokinen, which resulted in a broken forearm and will cause him to be sidelined for the next six-to-eight weeks. While it's hard to replace a point-per-game center that averages 2.65 shots per game, one potential replacement could be Alex Steen, he's picked up 10 points in his past 12 games, six of which have come from the power-play. He's also averaging 2.25 shots on goal per contest, which helps soften the blow of missing Stastny. Steen's only 6% owned in Yahoo leagues, so he could be widely available in most fantasy pools. If you don't trust Steen's streaky play, you could lean towards a more dependable Travis Zajac. Zajac has 16 since the start of December. In a span of 20 games, he has a plus six rating and a His 2.35 shots on goal per game average. It won't entirely replace Stastny's, but will be enough to hold the fort until he returns from his injury.

Derick Brassard had a huge rookie campaign until he dislocated his shoulder, which will sideline him for the rest of this season. Brassard was on a 0.81 point-per-game pace, while garnering a very responsible plus 12 rating. He was probably would have ended up with a very serviceable rookie scoring rate of 65-70 points this season before the injury. Brassard's injury left many fantasy teams in limbo, but at least there are two temporary replacements for him. Sam Gagner had a terrible start to the season, but since December he has registered 11 points in 15 games as well as a plus five rating, which would have been a similar pace to Brassard's. At 23% owned, he's a great replacement for those who owned Brassard. If you don't want to gamble on the Oiler, you could stay in-house with R.J. Umberger. The loss of Brassard opened up more responsibility for Umberger. He has picked up five points in eight contests since Brassard's injury, while tallying 11 shots on goal. His 1.375 shots on goal per game average is a bit lower than his career 2.07 average, so you could expect a boost in that stat as the Blue Jacket's offense clicks into gear. He's also contributed 10 PIMs during that span too.

Paul Kariya was on fire along with the rest of the Blues, before the injury bug decimated the team. Kariya had 15 points in 11 games prior to the injury, nine of which were power-play assists. He also was nearly at the three shots on goal per game mark. He probably wouldn't have kept that pace up for the duration of an entire season, but with five forwards on the power-play, we'll always have the "what if" scenario in the back of our minds. It's hard to replace that kind of production, but Rene Bourque might be the ideal player to replace Kariya. Bourque's tallied 15 points in the past 12 games, while averaging 3.25 shots on goal per game and a plus 10 rating during that span. His 15 PIMs is also a bonus as well. At 35% owned he's a solid replacement for the injured Kariya. If you don't like youngsters, you could turn towards Ray Whitney, he's garnered 18 points in the past 18 games, while firing a blistering 48 shots on goal. His minus four rating probably wouldn't hurt many fantasy teams either. His 59% Yahoo owned rating, probably might be a bit harder to acquire for fantasy squads though.

Roberto Luongo left a huge hole between the pipes in many fantasy rosters, when he went down with a groin injury. It's impossible to replace someone of that nature, but there are a few stopgaps available to plug the hole. He's still considered week-to-week, so it might be a while before he returns back to the Canucks lineup. One stopgap Ty Conklin, in the past month, he picked up seven victories, along with a 1.77 goals against average and a .940 save percentage.

Those are very Luongo-like numbers if you ask me. At 65% owned, he'll probably be hard to come by in your fantasy league, but you never know. A second option could be Andrew Raycroft, the Avs have been looking for some stability between the pipes, and Raycroft might just be the man. With six wins and 1.96 goals against average along with a .934 save percentage, he might do wonders if you are looking for help between the pipes. At 14% Yahoo-owned, he's a much higher availability rate than Conklin's. Another stopgap that you might want to utilize is the Kings' Jon Quick. The Kings freed up a roster spot by dealing away LaBarbera just so that Quick could be a permanent fixture on the Kings' lineup. In eight starts, Quick is 4-4-0 with a very respectable 2.17 GAA and a sweltering .922 SP. Although it remains to be seen if he can keep it up, read Justin Goldman's article last week about him, he's well worth the gamble at only 18 percent owned if you are in need of a number one goalie.

The Finnish Flash was well on pace to smash his career-high in power-play goals this season before succumbing to a laceration in his right thigh. He was scheduled to be out four to six weeks, which places a return around the start to mid February for the dynamic goal-scorer. Although you can't replace Selanne's 13 power-play goals, Brad Winchester's four power-play goals this past month could possibly hold the fort. If you don't trust the career 11-goal scorer, you could perhaps turn towards the youngster Drew Stafford who also has three power-play markers in the past month. He also has 17 points in the past 17 games, and is gaining top-line ice-time next to Tomas Vanek and Derek Roy. At 14 percent, he's a steal. If you are in a very shallow league you still might be able to acquire Michael Ryder, via the waiver wire, who has three power-play goals this past month and 17 goals overall.

Sergei Zubov has been a mainstay for the Dallas Stars for the past 12 seasons, but unfortunately he's been snake bitten in terms of injuries for the past two seasons as age is beginning to catch up to him. Zubov has a career 2.12 shot on goal per game average as well as a 0.72 point per game average. You simply can't just replace that type of production, especially from a defenseman. With that said there are a few temporary replacements that you may be able to utilize in Zubov's absence. Mike Commodore could possibly be one candidate as he's picked up eight points in the past 14 contests, while registering plus seven rating, along with 23 PIMs and 22 shots on goal for the red-hot Blue Jackets. He's only 18 percent owned in Yahoo leagues. Another potential candidate could be the Hurricane's Joni Pitkanen, he's only 44% owned in Yahoo leagues, but has tallied nine points in the past 17 contests, while picking up 18 PIMs and 36 shots on goal. Both could prove to be decent stopgaps for the injured Zubov.

Brendan Morrow was the big killer in the deal that I discussed earlier, so I definitely have to include him in this column. Morrow is one of the best across-the-board fantasy players to own because he contributes in pretty much every category of fantasy hockey, and ranks amongst the top-25 of each statistic, making him impossible to replace. However, all is not lost, you can't completely replace all of Morrow's stats but David Backes does prove that he can help soften the blow. Backes has 21 points in 41 games, while tallying 113 PIMs and 89 shots on goal, which prorated over a course of a season, would give him 42 points, 226 PIMs, and 178 SOG. The points might be a bit off from Morrow's but the PIMs and SOG are there as a replacement. That plus the fact that he's garnering around the 16:30 mark of ice-time certainly bodes well for his fantasy production. He's only 29 percent owned in Yahoo leagues, so definitely scoop him

up if you are missing Morrow's services. I would also add him if you aren't a Morrow owner, his great across-the-board stats is a benefit to all fantasy teams. Scott Hartnell has demonstrated that he's another great replacement option as he's tallied 30 points in 42 contests so far this season. His 70 PIMs and 107 shots on goal rank him amongst the top-30 and 75 respectively in the NHL. Prorated over the season, the numbers would equate to 60 points, 137 PIMs, and 209 SOGs definitely close to Morrow-like numbers. But at 73 percent Yahoo owned, he might be a bit difficult to add in your league via the waiver wire, but you might want to use your negotiating skills to see if you can land the well-rounded left-winger via trade.

Last but not least, we have Marian Gaborik. He toyed with our feelings this season, as he started the season with a point in two games, then sat out close to 30 games with a groin injury. He triumphantly returns with a four points in four games, and then he announces he's going to have hip surgery and will be out for most of the season. That announcement left many fantasy owners pulling their hairs out, but thankfully there have been a few fantasy breakouts this year, to help soften the blow. Bobby Ryan at 50% owned is a serious candidate to replace Gabby. In the past 17 contests, Ryan has tallied 20 points, a plus five rating, nine power-play points, five of which are goals, while firing 51 shots on goal. His ice-time is also beginning to climb, as he gains more confidence in the Ducks' offense. He'll forever be known as the player that was drafted behind Sidney Crosby, but he's certainly proven that he's fully worthy of that title, at least for this year. Jamie Lagenbrunner has also put together a quiet but productive season, he's picked up 23 points in the past 24 contests, while averaging 2.58 shots on goal per contest during that span. The only downside is that only four of those 23 points have come on the power play. It'll be interesting to see what happens with the addition of Brendan Shanahan to the Devil's lineup will do to Langenbrunner's offensive production. If you aren't too pressed for power-play points, he could make a run at a new career-high at the end of this season. At 25 percent owned in Yahoo leagues, he's a much easier option to obtain than Ryan.

Injuries happen all the time, of course we wish it upon our opponents rather than ourselves, but it's not the end of the world when an injury hits close to home. You just have to look for key trends as to who are solid long-term replacement players, and who are temporary quick fixes to plug the hole. Stay tuned, as I have a New Zealand special planned for next week.