Over the course of the last few weekends I participated in a few Yahoo! mock drafts to gain a better grasp of what's been going on in the real fantasy hockey world. I thought I'd pass my findings onto you Dobberities. I participated in random drafts ranging from eight to 14 teams from H2H to Roto leagues with standard settings. This is what I have concluded.

- **Right Wings are massively deep and left wings are crazily not!**

1. These are the examples of the typical** player you can draft at each winger position.
2. 10th RW: Dany Heatley, Claude Giroux or David Backes
3. 20th RW: Chris Stewart, Marian Hossa, or Patric Hornqvist
4. 30th RW: Milan Hejduk, Jaromir Jagr, or Nathan Horton
5. 10th LW: Rick Nash, Tomas Vanek, or Milan Lucic
6. 20th LW: Alex Tanguay, Eric Cole, or RJ Umberger
7. 30th LW: Dustin Penner, David Booth, or Curtis Glencross

Advice: Just like in the past, don't overreach for RW, if you have the opportunity to draft a **LW ahead of a RW, DO SO!**
I would probably go as far as to say, draft your first two LW before you even make your first RW pick (I'd recommend you have at least a top-10 LW within your first three picks). As you can see the talent pool of the lower ranked RW are fairly deep, so you could easily find a 55-65 point player on the WW post-draft. However, I can't say the same for LW.

- **Center, as always, is as deep as ever!**

1. 10th C: Ryan Kesler, Eric Staal, or Jeff Carter
2. 20th C: Danny Briere, Vinny Lecavalier, or Paul Stastny
3. 30th C: Stephen Weiss, Derek Roy, or Mikko Koivu

Advice: Pretty much ditto with centers. If there is a LW sitting right in front of you go after him before taking the C. If you look above, there isn't a large noticeable difference between the 15th to 30th drafted centermen.

Much like last year, the goalie hype seems to have died down a bit, as draftees are holding off on picking up goalies early and electing to wait into the mid-rounds, (rounds 4, 5 or 6), to draft their first goalie.

Advice: Generally speaking, you probably should have two solid goalies by round nine and a third by round 10-12. From my experience, there isn't a large gap between goalies 10 to 20, but there is a steep drop off right after Jaroslav Halak, Dwayne Roloson, and Niklas Backstrom. In a 12-14 team league, you'd be playing with fire if you head into the season with a Steve Mason, Jose Theodore, Semyon Varlamov as your number two goalie.

Big named favourites on the back end are still relatively unknown to the general public.

1. A couple of favourites of mine, Sheldon Souray, Brian Campbell and Sami Salo, I've managed to snag them quite a few times on the mock drafts with a last-round pick.
2. Guys like Stefan Elliott, Travis Hamonic, Brett MacLean, Marek Zidlicky, and Jamie McBain have been left largely undrafted or were drafted very late in many mock drafts, so there are plenty of late round steals available.

Joe Thornton – C- San Jose

Average: 45.5

Yahoo-Rank: 43

On average, Thornton's the 13th overall center being selected in Yahoo! leagues, which is a bit low in my opinion. I know last year was a bit of a down year, but he's only a year removed from being a 1.13 point-per-game player and since the lockout he's averaged 1.26 points-per-game. The drop off in point totals in 2010-11 could be mainly attributed to the offensive depth that the Sharks had. He wasn't heavily leaned upon to put up the points, since they had Patrick Marleau,

Joe Pavelski, Ryane Clowe, Dany Heatley, Devin Setoguchi and the out of the blue producer Logan Couture to do that for him. Now, with big offensive pieces like Heatley and Seto moved, the onus is back on Thornton to be a main focal point of the Sharks offense. I'd strongly consider bypassing a Jonthan Toews, Jeff Carter, or Ryan Kesler and opt for drafting Thornton in the fourth round instead.

Taylor Hall – LW– Edmonton

Average: 94.5

Yahoo-Rank: 105

Hall missed 17 contests last season due to an ankle injury, which kind of explains why he's fallen a bit in Yahoo! pre-season draft rankings. He still managed to post 42 points in 65 contests which would have pro-rated to 52 contests over a full season. Hall also averaged just 18:12 overall and 2:43 on the PP per contest. If he can manage to get up into the 20's and over three minutes of PP ice-time this season, I wouldn't be surprised to see a strong breakout sophomore campaign, (75+ points), from the former first-overall pick.

Paul Stastny – C – Colorado

Average: 93.8

Yahoo-Rank: 72

Things were pretty much fine and dandy for Stastny up until Christmas. Things were going swimmingly when he picked up 35 points in 37 contests, then disaster struck and the entire Avs team came crashing down to Earth along with Stastny. Yes, they lost Chris Stewart, but they found a replacement in Gabriel Landeskog. Peter Mueller, (mentioned later), should be back and if T.J. Galiardi or David Jones can stay healthy the Avs can seriously be a darkhorse team this campaign. Stastny is currently being drafted as the 22nd overall center, but I would not be at all surprised if he ended up top-10 by season's end. He'd be a great number two for all fantasy squads.

Alex Edler – D- Vancouver

Average: 124.4

Yahoo-Rank: 136

Yahoo! dropped the ball on this one. Edler was on a 55-point pace before succumbing to a torn disc in his back, which caused him to miss nearly three months of the regular season. Depth was a problem for the Canucks blue-line last campaign, as there just wasn't enough ice-time to spread amongst all of their defensemen. That problem has received a temporary solution as Christian Ehrhoff was let go in the off-season, meaning that there should be more ice-time (especially on the PP), to spread around this season. Edler is the "go to" guy in Vancouver and should be the main recipient of some of that residual ice-time. Make sure you slide him up the list on draft day.

Shane Doan – RW – Phoenix

Average: 154.0

Yahoo-rank: 149

If you're looking for consistency then you probably don't need to look much further than Doan. Since the lockout he's averaged 78.5 games played as well as 64.5 points and 231.8 SOG per season. Someone will need to score for the Yotes and it'll probably most likely be Doan. 43.3 and 30 percent of Doan's points occurred with Ray Whitney and Radim Vrbata on the ice respectively. Both of those players remain in the desert, so there should be some residual chemistry left for the top-line. At the bargain bin price of the 150th pick, it makes Doan well worth it.

Jamie Benn – LW – Dallas

Average: 160.1

Yahoo-Rank: 160

Benn managed to tally six points and 21 SOG, while averaging 22:27 per game during the seven contests that Brad Richards was out last season dealing with concussion issues, which does show that the ability to self-generate offense is definitely there. He'll need to step up big time to help fill the void that Richards left and should get plenty of opportunity to do so with a top-six gig securely locked up in Dallas. Considering he's on average the 27th LW taken in fantasy drafts, that's definitely great value if he ends up on your squad and not someone else's.

James Wisniewski – D – Columbus

Average: 119.2

Yahoo-Rank: 146

Jeff Carter claimed most of the the poolie's attention when he was traded to the Jackets earlier in the summer, but the bigger move might have been the signing of free agent Wisneiwski. The Jackets have lacked a puck-moving D-man now for ages, and they might have found their solution with Wissy. 38 percent of his career points have come with the man advantage and the 1.69 SOG per game average demonstrates that he isn't afraid of shooting the puck. A power-play unit of Rick Nash, Jeff Carter, Vinny Prospal, Grant Clitsome and Wissy could certainly post plenty of headlines this season. He's severely undervalued compared to his average ranking of the 36th defenseman taken at Yahoo! drafts at the moment.

Simon Gagne – LW – Los Angeles

Average: 159.8

Yahoo-Rank: 269

I know Gagne has been nicked up the last few years with injuries, but the offensive upside still remains plentiful for the 31-year old. One of the biggest reasons why the Kings picked up Gagne from the free agent market over summer was his previous ties with newly acquired Mike Richards. The last time that both he and Richards suited up together in Philadelphia, Gagne registered 74 points, while Richards recorded 80. According to FrozenPool, 84.7 percent of

those points were recorded with Gagne on the ice. There was certainly plenty of chemistry between the two stars in Philly and if they can manage to rekindle some of that in Hollywood, Gagne would certainly make a great dark horse candidate to snag late in drafts.

Ian White – D – Detroit

Average: 160.3

Yahoo-Rank: 245

If Nicklas Lidstrom is singing White's praises, then he's probably doing something right. The latest news coming out of Detroit is that Lidstrom thinks that White is going to be just fine in the MotorCity. White's playing style just reminds me a lot of Brian Rafalski and how he approached the game. There isn't exactly a ton of competition in the Detroit defensive corps, which should pretty much hand White a default top-two gig on a silver platter. If Rafalski can manage to pot 48 points last season, expecting 40+ from White probably isn't too much to ask.

Sheldon Souray – D – Dallas

Average: 165.9

Yahoo-Rank: 171

The biggest Western Conference boom or bust candidate heading into this season is probably Souray. As I mentioned last week, he spent the entire last season riding the buses in the minors, and will enter this season with a huge chip on his shoulder. Much like the situation with White, there isn't a lot of competition on the defensive front for Souray in Dallas. With a cannon of a slapper, he'll surely be primarily utilized on the Stars' top PP unit and garner plenty of high quality scoring opportunities on the way. Another huge positive for Souray is he's a great under-the-radar contributor for the peripheral stats. He maintains career averages of 1.57 PIMs and 2.32 SOG per game, which roughly translates to 128 PIMs and 190 SOG over a course of a full 82-game campaign. Obviously, things don't always go peachy keen with him. Injuries are a major problem for him as he's averaged just 60 games played per season since the lockout. If you can swallow the gamblers pill, you could certainly be well rewarded if Souray comes back with a vengeance.

Peter Mueller – LW– Colorado

Average: 167.6

Yahoo-Rank: 321

If you've been following fantasy hockey for a while now, then you're probably well aware of Mueller's situation. He basically missed the entire last season due to recovery from concussion symptoms. A couple of positives that you should keep in mind is that he did register 57 points during his rookie season as well as a massive 20 points in 15 contests when he was moved to the Avs post-trade deadline in 2010. The chemistry between Milan Hejduk, Matt Duchene and Mueller was undeniable. If they can manage to rekindle some of that chemistry, the Avs could be a surprise team in 2010-11. With LW being so shallow, definitely keep Mueller's name in the back of your mind for your drafts.

Devin Setoguchi – RW – Minnesota

Average: 160.4

Yahoo-Rank: 209

A change of scenery is exactly what the doctor order for Seto. In SJ he was playing fifth/sixth fiddle to the “big names” of the Sharks. If you look at his overall stats, they aren’t actually all that horrifying. He boasts a 0.6 points and 2.68 SOG per game career averages (pro-rated to 49 points and 220 SOG over 82 games). Seto will finally get a chance to show his stuff in a locked top-six role with the Wild. If he, Mikko Koivu, and Dany Heatley can make a connection, he’ll certainly produce much higher than the 41st RW that’s currently being taken in fantasy drafts.

Sami Salo – D- Vancouver

Average: undrafted

Yahoo-Rank: 637

The most under-rated player in terms of Yahoo! rank probably has to be Salo. I know he missed most of last season due to an Achilles injury, but when he returned he posted a decent seven points in 27 regular season contests while following that up with five in 21 during the playoffs. After Ehrhoff and Edler, Salo was actually the third highest recipient of PP ice-time for the Nucks. With Ehrhoff out of the picture, look for Salo to claim a large chunk of Ehrhoff’s residual ice-time. The only downside is that he’s averaged just 57.3 games played per season since the lockout, so if you do take the leap of faith on the 37-year old expect a few games missed.

Other Notable Western Conference “U&U” players:

Centers

RW

LW

D

G

Mikko Koivu (124)

Marian Hossa (113)

Marco Sturm (331)

Grant Clitsome (169)

Steve Mason (103)

Andy McDonald (242)

Milan Hedjuk (147)

Sergei Kostitsyn (332)

Marek Zidlicky (238)

Nikolai Khabibulin (342)

Martin Hanzal (273)

Teemu Selanne** (183)

Vinny Prospal (347)

Stephane Robidas (275)

J.S. Giguere (382)

Sam Gagner (311)

Martin Erat (189)

Pierre-Marc Bouchard (385)

Tom Gilbert (280)

Ray Emery (556)

Daymond Langkow (412)

Ales Hemsky (314)

Gabriel Landeskog (456)

Cam Barker (651)

Michal Handzus (430)

Jiri Hudler (530)

Scott Parse (698)

Did I forget anyone? Or have a few “U&U” candidates of your own? Questions or comments? As always I’ll be ready and willing to discuss them with you in the comments section below.