Taking Brett Connolly with the 6th overall selection was a bold pick for a new general manager.

There's no disputing Connolly's talent, but a pair of hip injuries last season that limited him to just 16 WHL games had teams concerned. That didn't bother new Tampa Bay Lightning general Steve Yzerman, but it scared off a few other teams.

Admittedly, it's a bit like showing up for a job interview and telling your prospective employer that you've got a doctor's appointment and you can only stay for 10 minutes. Some teams get leery.

The problem started in August 2009 when Connolly was hurt at the Ivan Hlinka tournament. He started off well by scoring goals in both of Canada's pre-tournament games, but rushed back for the final when he shouldn't have. It was a harbinger for the rest of his 2009-10 season.

When he returned to Canada, he skated with the Prince George Cougars in the preaseason and played in the first seven games, but the injury was still nagging him. He had just six points, so he shut it down for seven weeks. He came back in late November, but played just five games before his other hip started to bother him. He was compensating for the original injury.

"It being my draft year and the team not doing too well, I felt I had to do something," Connolly told NHL.com before the draft this summer.

After his second, brief comeback, Connolly was more patient and sat on the sidelines for three months and missed the CHL Top Prospects game. He returned for the final four games of the season to bring his season total to 16. He notched 10 goals and 19 points, which really wasn't much to go on.

Teams were basing their assessment of him on his performance as a 16-year-old when he scored 30 goals to win WHL and CHL rookie-of-the-year honours. He also made an impressive showing for Canada as an underager at the 2009 world under-18 championship.

Connolly described his injury as “a hip flexor tear or strain" in his interview with NHL.com. It was multiple micro-tears.”

It wasn’t something that could be fixed with surgery, just patience, rest and rehab.

Like any Dobber fan worth their salt, NHL teams were skeptical of his injury. Was he a band-aid boy in the making?

So far, there’s nothing to indicate that will be the case, although he certainly should be on your watch list.

Prince George coach Dean Clark said Connolly had a thorough examination before the treatment plan was determined.

"We sent him to Vancouver to see a specialist to make sure there wasn't something genetic that wasn't right," Clark told NHL.com. "But that came back fine, and it was more just rest and physiotherapy and strengthening the area."

It’s also important to note that this was the first big injury of Connolly’s career. He was healthy by the time the draft rolled around and he was prepared to undergo a battery of tests to prove he was fit.

“I’m ready to see the doctors and I have nothing to hide,” Connolly said to Ken Campbell of The Hockey News. “I’m looking forward to getting this all out of the way. My hips are 100 per cent now and I’ve had a couple of really good months of working out. I feel great.”

Connolly has pro size with excellent skating ability and puck skills. He has an excellent shot and his hockey IQ is off the charts. He is an elite offensive talent and if not for his injury, there would have been talk of him going in the top tier with the likes of Taylor Hall and Tyler Seguin. If you nabbed Connolly later in your keeper league draft like the Lightning did, take a bow. You’ve got yourself a steal if he can stay healthy. When he’s on, he can dominate a game as he’s showing in the early going this season. If you don’t have him, go get him before he plays for Canada at the world junior tournament; his price will only soar after that.

Connolly has 13 goals and seven assists for 20 points in just 12 games. He's surely a favourite for a spot on Team Canada's junior team and would love an opportunity to prove himself on the world stage.

Upside: 40-35-75