It's a hashtag that's appeared frequently on Twitter feeds throughout the season – especially those belonging to fans of the Blue Jackets, Oilers and Hurricanes: #FailForNail.

For those who live under a rock and haven't yet taken their first steps into the magical world of Twitter, it's a rallying cry for the team in question to sacrifice wins this season in order to land the talented Mr. Yakupov with the first overall pick next June.

While it's doubtful that any NHL organization would intentionally lose to improve their draft ranking, the notion is certainly understandable. For the better part of the past decade, Leafs fans have decried the frustrating tendency of their team to play just well enough to barely miss the playoffs, thereby depriving their fans of not just the post-season dance, but also the high draft picks that can truly change a team's fortunes, a la Pittsburgh, Chicago and potentially Edmonton. From a big picture perspective, it would seem preferable to have three years at the

very bottom of the standings than to have three years of finishing 20th overall.

Which brings us to one of the favourite topics of conversation among poolies (if the sheer volume of posts in the forums is any indication): tanking.

Webster defines tanking as “to make no effort to win; to lose intentionally; to give up in competition.” Crafty fantasy managers realize that no one remembers who finished 9th in a 12-team league, so perhaps it’s better to gun for the bottom if you find yourself in that position, to assure yourself of an elite draft pick. Without having to worry about the real world pressures of a frustrated fan base, lagging ticket sales and a meddlesome media horde, intentionally throwing the season becomes that much more tempting.

I’m of two minds on the subject, which has landed me at the centre of controversy in the forums from time to time. On one hand, much like Coach from Survivor (*insert snicker*), I’m a firm believer in playing the game with honour and integrity. I want my leagues to be fair and sportsmanlike. Tanking skews the standings, not just at the bottom end but also at the top end, where some contending teams may get an advantage by padding their stats in a matchup with the tanking team. Furthermore, if tanking is carried out through trades, it can also ruin the competitive balance of the league. Tanking violates the spirit of what is supposed to be a fun game.

On the other hand, I firmly defend a manager’s right to run his team as he sees fit. If he is truly

doing it for the right reasons and with a long term strategy in mind, it's tough to argue that dropping from 9th to 12th isn't the best scenario for his team. Enduring short-term pain for long-term gain by trading veterans for promising youth is a valid game plan.

Part of what makes this such a difficult issue is that tanking isn't a black and white issue; there all kinds of grey. What strikes one person as tanking may seem perfectly reasonable to another.

In my league we have a rule that teams must dress their best roster each week, so for instance, dressing injured players while sitting healthy stars is clearly out of bounds. However, we also have a farm system that allows you to keep a player on the farm until he's played 165 NHL games, coupled with a rule that a player can only serve a maximum of four years on your active roster and then you have to trade or release him.

So, over the past few years, the bottom teams have kept players like John Tavares, Taylor Hall, Tyler Seguin and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins on the farm, ensuring that they don't burn up any of their 4 years of service while their team has no chance of contending. They would rather keep them on the farm for as long as possible, and build towards those next few years after these prospects graduate to their big league roster.

It's a smart strategy, but technically it violates the rule that they must dress their best roster every week. Inarguably, these teams would be stronger with their top prospects in their line-up. But does their strategy violate the spirit of competition? Should they be forced to dress these

players in the interest of integrity? I think not.

Where I would draw the line is in cases that involve clear collusion, in which the tanking team trades their best players to a contender and reaps a share of the rewards for a high finish. There's no place for deceit in fantasy hockey.

The line between legitimate strategy and tanking is a fuzzy one. Any case of suspected tanking must be handled carefully. As a commissioner, you can't judge every move at face value. You need to talk to your owners, get inside their heads and seek to understand their thinking behind the moves they make. If they can make a strong case that that they are acting in the best interest of their team, I wouldn't want to deny them that right, even though it may have some implications on the standings. As a commissioner, my goal is to create a fair and fun environment in which all managers can operate their teams however they think is best.

Where do you draw the line on tanking, and how would you deal with an obvious tanking situation in your league?