Fantasy Hockey Site Review - HockeyDraft.ca

Note: This is the third in a series of reviews of the most popular online fantasy hockey league websites. All the sites have their strengths. The intention of these reviews is not to favour one site over another, but to provide a resource for league commissioners to determine which site will best meet the needs of their league. All sites are evaluated on the same criteria to provide for easy comparison, with a letter grade assigned to each factor. The opinions of the reviewer do not necessarily reflect those of Dobber Hockey.

Name of Reviewer: David Nunes

User-Friendliness: B-

As the admin I find it pretty easy to setup the league. For managers, however, there is no support for trading; trades have to be managed offline and the admin has to implement them

once the trade is finalized. The admin also has to do any add/drops; there is no automated system for that like Yahoo has. Setup each season is quick, and you can import last year's teams if you're running a keeper.

There is support for either weekly or monthly lineup changes (no daily change option, unless the admin does it instead of the managers). If your league requires setting lineups, this is not the site for you. However, if your league is a points-only league, or "count the Top X" league, there is tons of flexibility. Said flexibility includes manual points adjustment.

Scoring and Stats: B

For a points-based league, they have just about every stat you can think of (except Hits and Blocked Shots). You can fully customize how many points you want to assign to any particular stat and you can create however many custom point systems you need. For example, I use one for Skaters and one for Goalies, but you can easily setup two different point systems for Forwards and D-men.

There is no support for roto or head-to-head leagues. They do have support for Box Selection leagues. Similar to Pool Expert, Office Pools and that ilk, Hockey Draft is focused on Box Selection or points-based.

The Draft: F

There is no draft room. This is ideal for those who hold live drafts for points-based pools.

Keeper League Compatibility: C

The website has limited features for keeper leagues. You can import your teams from the previous season. However, you can't use the site year-round; the site goes down for about a month in August, so you need to make sure you save your rosters offline so you don't lose

access to them until the site comes back online in September (and then you can import from last year).

Dobber's note – Hockey Draft is looking to add draft picks and year-round accessibility soon.

Farm Teams: F

There is no specific support for farm teams, which is another reason why this manager is great for points-based teams without lineup changes…but not so good for H2H, roto or other formats that require you to set your lineups. Hockey Draft suggests using the Active/Reserve feature for this – i.e. set "count top XX players" and "must have at least xx forwards, xx defensemen", etc.

Salary Cap Leagues: F

No support for salary cap leagues.

Playoff Pools: A

HockeyDraft does offer playoff pools, with the same rules/options as regular season. The commish can manually assign points ("manual offset"), and a date window can be set that allows for tracking by round if you so desire.

Customization: A-

Customization is where this site really shines, and it's pretty much the reason we use it for our league. There is a lot of flexibility in determining rules, rosters and stats. In addition to that, the admin can manually offset player scores as well; so if there is something you can't implement through the system you can always manually offset players to get the intended result.

I'll give you an example: rather than setting up line-ups ahead of time, my pool has a rule where we take the best 'X' player scores at the end of a given week. The way we handle this is by using the manual offset to remove points from the players that won't count for that week.

Fun Features: C

Hockey Draft does have a trash talk message board. There is "top pick per round" feature which tracks the highest point total player for each round of the draft through the year. They also have a "3 stars" feature; I'm not sure how they calculate it, but the idea is they are the 3 best "value" players based on some combination of points and what round they were drafted in. For example, Ray Whitney is my league's first star because he was drafted in the 16th round.

There is no support for tracking league records or past results.

Resources: C+

The front page has recent hockey news/articles and several resource links. However, I can't say I've ever used them; I pretty much just stick to Dobber.

On the plus side, the site has a lot of useful tools for tracking stats. It has quick links set up for Points Today, Points This Week and Points this Month, but you can also use Points in Range to do a custom search on points in any time range that you like. You can also view the rosters by Points per Game and there is a Top Undrafted link to view all undrafted players. The reporting system is great – neat and tidy.

Responsiveness: A

In my experience they respond very quickly and I have seen them implement some features

due to user feedback.

Cost: C

It costs $20 per year for the full league.

Overall Rating (1-Year Leagues): C+ *(which is 'F' for non-points-based leagues that require lineup changes, and A- for points-based leagues that don't require lineup changes)*

Overall Rating (Keeper Leagues): C- *(which is 'F' for non-points-based leagues that require lineup changes, and A- for points-based leagues that don't require lineup changes)*

I would definitely recommend Hockey Draft, but only for certain types of leagues. There are plenty of options that it does not support as you've read above, but I think it fills a niche for anyone that needs a certain level of customization that isn't offered by other websites.

If you have a more complicated league you're probably better off using Yahoo or something else, but if your pool has some rules that aren't supported you might find a way to implement them in Hockey Draft. If you know the needs of your league, then you'll know if this is a fit.