It happens to virtually every fantasy team in every format. Injury issues. It can force some tough decisions.

TEAM EVAL

Jasmin

“Hey Chris,

I really like reading you on Sunday mornings, great stuff well written.

My team slipped to 2nd place this week (in part due to Ward's poor play) in a H2H league, offensive scoring categories being G,A,P,+/-,PPP and GWG and goaltending categories being W,GAA,Sv% and SHO. My goaltending is good with Lundqvist, Backstrom and Ward so I'm not worried on this front. However, I have two issues with my team.

First issue is with my defensemen. Because of injuries to Pronger and Visnovsky (dropped Pronger and put Visnovsky on IR), I am currently rolling with Edler, Subban, Kaberle and Whitney. I picked up Kaberle

Friday when he was traded. I am unimpressed, to say the least, with Subban and Whitney. FAs include Pietrangelo, Kronwall, Shattenkirk, Quincey, Goligoski, Corvo, Bieksa, Leddy, Hamuis, Del Zotto, Carle and the likes. Do I make a move or stay pat?

My other issue is with injuries/unproductive players. I currently have Giroux and J.Staal DTD, M.Richards, Visnovsky and Stastny on IR (only 2 IR slots so Statsny is on the bench). Staal has gone 5 games without a point and is now injured. I also have Chris Stewart not helping me much. I am wondering if a move should be made on this as well. FAs include Prospal, Parenteau, Moulson, Jokinen, Cole, Krejci. I am leaning on hanging on to Staal but maybe drop Stewart. Would you agree? Also, any news on Stastny? Is it worth hanging on to?

Many thanks Chris!"

Chris: Thanks for reading Jasmin.

Alright. Let's tackle the D first. I think Kaberle's arrival may help Subban, but you don't count PIM or SOG so you have less of a need to be patient with Subban in general. Whitney? Given your FA options, I'd punt him for now. He had such a long layoff and while he will come around (and will look good doing it with EDM's developing talent), I'd say you could look elsewhere for now.

Shocked as I find myself to write it given the options there, I'd actually recommend Del Zotto for the time being. He's a regular on PP1 with no real competition there and has been producing really well over the past few weeks. Shattenkirk might be the best guy for that second open

spot. Good mix of points and the potential for a decent +/- and in a position to succeed.

And DTD especially can kill you in H2H, without a doubt. Staal's injury doesn't seem to be a big deal. No Giroux update as I write this, but we may know more today or tomorrow. Stastny doesn't really seem to have a timeline, but given your situation I'd have no issue with you replacing him with Krejci. Jokinen has been much hotter of late and I suppose that's an option, but I just think Krejci is the safer play if you're thinking the whole season ahead.

There are many instances where I'd say wait on Chris Stewart, but since you can't take advantage of his PIM in your format I'd be less inclined to wait. My first choice for you would likely be Prospal since Huselius is down again and Prospal should keep that spot with Carter and Nash. All three guys are due for a hot streak before long, IMO.

SALARY CAP CONCERNS

Chris B

"Thanks for doing this. Would like your views on a couple of fantasy hockey questions.

(1) In a dynasty league, salary cap based on actual salary, points and +/- are main

scoring categories, who would you rather own and why: Okpso or O'Reilly (Colorado)?

(2) Dan Boyle - he been terrible from a fantasy perspective for over 10 games now -

I like him as a player but he costs a lot ($6.67 million) - will he turn it around?”

Chris: In terms of Okposo vs. O’Reilly, from the standpoint of offensive production I’d take O’Reilly for today... but Okposo for the true long run of a dynasty league. That really depends on how committed you are to the long run and how many keepers we’re talking about annually though.

O’Reilly is playing so well right now and he’s a hard working kid who deserves everything he’s getting – including recent linemates of Gabriel Landeskog and Milan Hejduk with Paul Stastny out. I don’t think O’Reilly has Okposo’s upside, but Okposo’s game is now where it needs to be right now to help out poolies consistently. He did well last night and has four points in five games this month. But in November he barely did anything. Can he keep this run going with Frans Nielsen and Michael Grabner? Hopefully. For his sake and the Isles.

Okposo is not worth a $2.8M cap hit right now in pools, but if you go by actual annual salary then he's only costing $1M this year and $2M next season. By the last two years of that deal ($3M + $3.5M) he should easily be earning that cash. O'Reilly, as you likely know, will be an RFA this summer and he's looking really good to the Avs.

As far as Boyle, I absolutely think he'll turn it around and I get the frustration with that cap hit. He and Brent Burns both need to do more production-wise, but they will. Boyle's career track record is way too good and his prime spot with the Sharks is too key to write him off after this stretch.

With anything in fantasy though, it always depends on your options (FA or trade) and how your league works.

NEAL'S KEEPER WORTH

Johnny

"Hey Chris,

Will Giordano or Letang play this season and should I consider keeping James Neal over my current top 5. My roster:

FW: TOEWS, GETZLAF, Neal, Pavelski, Oshie, Brouwer, Krejci

D: YANDLE, LETANG, Mezzaros, White, Giordano

G: LUNDQVIST, Pavalec

Chris: Giordano's hamstring will be evaluated again in several weeks. It doesn't seem to be a season-ending thing, no. Letang has a concussion, so there is absolutely no way to tell how long he'll be out.

It's too early to say on Neal. I'd say he has moved himself into the discussion to be a top five guy for you, but were you to keep him I'd say it'd likely have to come at the expense of one of your two keeper D. I wouldn't surrender Letang unless this concussion becomes an issue. Yandle? We'll see where he finishes. 45 points or so would make him less attractive than last year's standout campaign, especially if Neal has a strong second half. A legit goal-scoring winger in Pittsburgh with that cast of centres is a true gem for any keeper format.