



Frank Ranks Vol. 3 – 2009-2010

As we approach the final hours until the 09/10 season kicks off let's take a look at what I've cooked up in Frank Ranks volume 3! Thanks again to Tony for hosting the draft as well and congrats to the Tycoons for their historic season. Again I will explain how I come to my conclusions. I take a close look at the starting top 10 players. From that I give my own opinion and rank each individual player's point totals. The accumulated point totals will correspond with a grade. Your overall team grade is assumed from point totals, depth and the likely possibility of players meeting their projected totals. I won't disclose the skeleton or total points but I will answer any questions you may have the best I can. With that being said lets begin!!

Basement Teams - Teams 19-22. A sad spot for any team as the season begins no matter how bright the future may be. All these teams should be about 30 points off 18th.

22. Denroche Regime

What's going on here? The crop has improved but the standings haven't for the Regime. After landing Tavares with the first overall pick the Regime are heading in the right direction but will endure a lot of hardships as they battle to break out of the DNQ funk.

Forwards: JT is the man here. This one isn't as slick on his feet as the singer but he will be as good of a scorer. It shouldn't take long for Tavares to prove his worth. With that said keep a level headed about expectations right away. Steve may be able to lend some advice after Stamkos' slow start last season. After Tavares Clowe and Bouchard are the best candidates for 60pt range. Which is decent and a starter in this league. Then the Regime drop off to around a 45pt range for their 5th and 6th forward. No 70pt players and little production from the 4-7 this will be a long season up front.

Grade - C- - There is hope for the future and that is evident with Tavares, Bouchard, Bolland, Turris and in time may be a solid group but for now this is close to a fail.

D-Men: I have to admit not a real fan on what is going on here from a competitive standpoint. High end guy shouldn't be any higher than low 30's and the bottom two could realistically average 20pts. Seabrook has potential to produce but is certainly stuck behind a few solid offensive players in Chicago. Girardi was doing great last season until he disappeared for 45 games. Has the potential to produce but may not have the same opportunity with a suddenly more crowded Ranger blueline. Same goes for Staal who I have never felt will be an offensive player.

Grade - C- - Just barely snuck out of the FAIL category for both forward and defence. This is the lowest C- anyone could possibly have. The best D-man out fo this group is Jon Blum. He has much more potential than the rest here.



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Goalie: Leclaire give it another go after being sidelined for the entire year. Fantastic year in Columbus made Leclaire a top 10 pick the following year and after that the Mason show began. Ottawa has seen a lot of changes in the last year and expect that to continue. The Sens shouldn't be a great team, certainly won't be contenders this year and for that the value of Leclaire also suffers. Assuming he is healthy and starts 60 games

Wildcard - Tavares. The most important to anything is the absolute core. The sooner that it is fired up the better.

Review - The Regime weren't far off from unseating the 21st place team. The future is progressing but the Regime will be in the lottery and a safe bet for a top 3 pick with the best chance at first overall. The highest possible ranking (excluding injuries etc) is 21st this season.

21. Moran Assassins

Lots of work still to be done on the forward front. Mason keeps them out of the bottom basement floor. This will be another long year outside of a couple bright spots. Looking to deal the '10 first?

Forwards: After the draft and moving up in said draft the best producing player I see is Perron. Perron will continue to improve and looks to do really well this season. Same may be said for Drew Stafford. Instead all the focus is on the newly acquired Milan Lucic. Sean finally got his guy after dealing Kariya to watch him get scooped. Basically getting Lucic for Kariya and picks is a close one to watch. I see the totals getting slightly better now especially with Kessel gone to Toronto. Then the Assassins will start an uninterested Wolski and whatever 35pters he puts in the final two slots. From a standpoint this season it's terrible to have your 5-7 players averaging 35pts.

Grade: FAIL - The only fail of my report. I really tried to find way that your top 6 will average more than 50pts for a C- but I couldn't.

Defence - No Doughty about it. Turns out the Gonchar deals was good a year later. At times Doughty looked like a rookie but most of the time last season he was a seasoned vet. I expect a solid, solid year from him. This year he is expected to make another jump and I think 40-45pts is a safe bet. Campoli will see the second slot and his rating will stay conservative to where he roughly was last season. He is not a drop but not a number two D-man. Better suited as a an average 3rd d-man. This spot will be for Meszaros who fell into quite the abyss last year. 30 points is the best we'll expect from him and his ceiling seems to suddenly be very limited. Pietrangelo will continue another year of development but everything looks fine after his first year being drafted by the Assassins.



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Grade: C+ - Doughty makes up for the weaker third spot to give the Assassins a chance to crack 100 D points this year. Loads of potential still from this group. Still a year or two out from a playoff type ranking.

Goalie: No denying SOTD winner Steve Mason. Unbelievable year catapulted Mason to the elite instantly. This is a make or break year but I think it's safe to say he will be a solid goalie for some time. Columbus is a great team to have a goalie on. There is always a quality chance to get shutouts. Mason will continue to build on his solid year and establish himself as a great goalie.

Grade: A - This is the year to earn the +. SCHL wise he has all the potential to put up A+ numbers this year.

Darkhorse: Wolski. Has to be make or break for this guy with the Assassins. His coming out party is going on three years. He has to prove it or move on.

Review - The Assassins are slowly moving in the right direction but they need to pick up the pace in the forward department. The crops potential doesn't equal the playoffs at this point in time. The D and goalie are coming along great. All focus onto the forwards. Without significant injuries/trades up front the Assassins cannot finish higher than this position.

20. Sampson Brahmas

Traded Savard so the rebuild begins! Decent draft for the Brahmas who took the right step moving forward. But to do that they pulled the plug to the bottom. They will be here for awhile. Do not expect them to make the playoffs for a minimum of two years.

Forwards: Nothing great expected for production this year. Anything worth producing this year should be moved anyways. That will be Arnott and Blake. Both guys will be around the 60-65pt range. Versteeg will be the best thing after those two are moved. Followed by Sharp, Umberger, Janzal, Neal etc this group has some future by there is a lot more that is needed.

Grade - C- - Barely receiving this grade. Once the two vets are moved the Brahmas will slip below the Regime. For the rebuild to properly get gonig moving forward moving these guys is the best piece of advice I could give.

Defence - Wideman will work as the top D-man and his point totals will be the lone bright spot on this D corp. Look for another 50pt season from this former partner to the now departed Savard. Coburn has the best potential from the rest available but that is comparing him to Kuba and O'Duya who both will play around the 30pt mark.

Grade - B - Pretty solid grade made up by Wideman's 50pts. Won't have too much of an issue cracking a solid B ranking here.



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Goalie - Pekka Rinne was taken 6th overall after a phenomenal year with Nashville. Finished in the top 10 for goalies last year and as the workload increases so should the results. Rinne started less than 55 games last year. The franchise has moved into a solidified position at goalie they hadn't had since Miller. Lets hope this time they hold onto it.

Darkhorse: Versteeg. He had a very interesting year and it appears Daryl got decent value on him. After his season last year and with Hossa out for a few months there is potential for Versteeg to surprise one more time.

Review: Savard is gone but the battle has begun. Things will get worse before they get better as the Brahmas should become the next Regime. The plan has to remain the same and dedicated to rebuilding. Brahmas have the potential to finish 17th as best case and as expected.

19. Tarpan Horses

The Horses are missing some power particularly in net and up front. They have some quality prospects in the system but this will not be the year this Horse blows by anyone.

Forwards: Richards is the man of the bunch and Tarps is hoping for a healthy year from Richards and 80+ points. With Krejci out for awhile Tarpan is going to rely on production to come from Stillman, Lombardi and Mueller. Mueller is a player that really needs to improve this year after holding so much value when he was acquired by the Horses. Close eyes to be kept on players like Matthias who fell off the chart being taken in the top 10.

Grade: C - A couple real solid players but with Krejci being out it has an affect on these rankings. The potential is there and the Horses have a couple studs waiting in the pipeline but as with every rebuilding team it is a process. A slow process.

Defence: After Mike Green who is the best dynasty D-man? The answer is either Weber or Phaneuf. He is a great snipe the Horses farmed that is now one of the most valuable D-men in the pool. Kaberle is a sexy number two d-man that will keep his totals around the 50pt mark and apparently has cut some weight. Another solid one two punch from the Horses. Hunwick is an interesting choice. His progression last year might indicate he is ready to produce 40+ or it may indicate it was a blip and he'll be soon forgotten. A solid pick-up nonetheless that should keep the values of the top two in tact.

Grade: A - Sneak in with a 'A' grade largely due to the unknown in Hunwick this year. Using a safe number the Horses flirt with this ranking but have the potential to bump up even higher. Of course again, Hunwick, is the focal point.

Goalie: Not a big fan of Lehtonen. Crappy team and crappy work ethic doesn't make him worth a whole lot to me. Not the worst player available but someone that I would be



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looking to replace. His star power is fading and he is quickly becoming unreliable. An average ranking for this season won't be helping Tarpan out.

Grade: C - Lehtonen is an average producer with injury issues and a crappy team. The team is improving but can Lehtonen match the team? I wouldn't be putting my on his shoulders.

Darkhorse: Mueller. Has the potential. Needs to start realizing his value from a couple years ago.

Review: This team has some nice prospects up front and sexy players on D. An improvement to goalie is required if Lehtonen falters once more. The Horses are in for another long season as the rebuild marches forward. The best position for the Horses this year is 16th

Re-building Teams: Done the initial tank in the basement and have poked their head out as their prospects begin to mature and produce. Usually a year or two from the playoffs with an outside chance of surprising this year.

18. Dedrick Devils

The Devils didn't grab a Stamkos or add much to their forwards or D. The big upgrade was in net nabbing Emery. How will Emery 2.0 do this time around after a successful year in the KHL?

Forwards: Stamkos is the best of the bunch. I see him as being a safe lock for 65+ this year and the sky as the limit. I wouldn't be surprised to see 75+. After that overall the Devils actually got worse this year choosing to move Seto for Kane and that will cost them a lot of points this year. Ryder, Koivu and Lupul should be counted on for 55pts average between them. Legwand, Bergeron have the potential to hit 60+ far from expected. Kane has the best potential to become a Steoguchi outside of Stamkos. It won't be this year though.

Grade: C - A solid C grade leaves more to be desired. Outside of two forwards there aren't a lot here that are worth a whole lot. All the players have suffered recent injuries, inconsistencies and etc that have caused their value to be less than half of what it was 2 years ago.

Defence: Led by the best D-man in the pool, Mike Green, the Devils have a much better scenario unfolding here on D as a whole. Green will hover around 70pts lead the league once again. He is an absolute stud and a fantastic player for any team. Not to mention he is quite young. After that Tom Gilbert could be a number one on most teams. He is a solid player that is climbing the ranks as Vizzo begins to fizzle. Expect for another 45+ from this up and coming stud with the ugly name. Gervais makes his debut for the Devils and the Devils play on a tight rope with no spares and he has been



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battling an injury. Although he does have some potential to put up some quality numbers the odds are almost always against the Islanders.

Grade: A - Easy potential to be an A+ here. Getting a better third D-man and a spare would most likely solve the trick.

Goalie: His name is Raaaaaay. Everybody loves Raymond. Had a spectacular year in the KHL as arguably the best goalie and for that was signed as the starter of a study team in Philly. Emery has a temper, is a primadonna but he puts up quality stats before he fell apart. If his head stays in the right place there is no reason to suggest he couldn't return to form.

Grade: B+ - Should be able to make the grade here. Comes with an extreme caution flag though. Has the potential to stir the pot instantly hurting his value. Hopefully he has cleaned up his act and is ready to resume his career in the SCHL

Darkhorse: Emery. Has the potential to play a ton and produce well but what type of goalie will we see? The flamboyant don't give a shit about anyone or the flamboyant don't give a shit about anyone else but will take you to the finals goalie? Either way he is a character and will be fun to follow him again.

Review: The Devils are making strides. Again this year trying to patch up on goalie situation the Devils have gotten worse on the forward front and stronger in net, A neutral change that leaves the Devils in a similar position as last year. The highest the Devils are expected to finish is 13th.

17. Day Express

Ranked last, last year this year he has climbed to a more appropriate ranking. The Day Express had a ton of picks but didn't add a whole lot that will provide instant benefit to their ranking for this year.

Forwards: Ryan and Havlat are the keys to success on this club. I am looking for 150pts between them as a realistic projection. Havlat must stay healthy again or the Express get themselves in trouble fast. Oshie will flirt with 60 and is a great fit on the Express' team. Blake Wheeler was a nice pick-up. I had him as a consensus top 15 pick and while he won't change the team he will be a starter while being a very young player to boot. Benn is close and Schroeder and Colborne are both longer term projects that have huge potential. Grabovski will most likely stay in the high 50's to low 60's while the rest will be looking at totals around the 50 point mark. That goes for Vermette and Sullivan. Oshie is expected for another jump forward

Grade: C+ - I'm not completely sold on this team as a playoff team. They are really a fringe, fringe playoff team with lots of potential up front. They aren't far out but too many players not cracking 60 this year keeps this grade below a B. Soon enough this grade will flirt with A status.



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Defence: A very nice trio here especially considering what was given up...not much. Pitkanen, Visnovsky and Zidlicky are all good for 45+ but a couple carry injury concerns. A solid spare in Wisniewski will help getting ample production from the D group here. The Express should hit 115 D points this year. Visnovsky is banged up but still looks like he will be valuable again soon. Pitkanen is increasing his value but always battling the injury bug. Zidlicky is very stable and should only get better but not worse in Minny,

Grade: B+ - This group is among the best if they are all going. The injury potential for more than one, however, at this point is great. Still a solid attainable grade the Express should be proud to receive.

Goalie: Huet is the man and the team in front of him helps his value. I personally think he is a little overrated and certainly has the potential to crumble. But the team in front of him is too good and won't have a problem being around the top 10 in goalies this season. No back-up means the Express are going to be praying their back-end and goalie doesn't get injured.

Grade: B+ - More so a reflection of the team than the player. Decent player that will be solid this year with Khabibulin out of the picture.

Darkhorse: Grabovski. He could really surprise again. Has the potential to lead the team in scoring. Offensive talent with an opportunity waiting for him. Time to seize it.

Review: The Express are improving and def the JR's they are committing are helping. The foundation has been layed and now the Express begin the rebuild while compete now challenge. The highest the Express could finish is 12th.

16. Ma Tornadoes

The King of the 1st returns with a triumphant draft and solid three first round picks. Varlamov, Schenn and MPS were solid pick-ups for this team. The future is really shaping up for this team.

Forwards: This group really isn't all bad. I do expect a drop off for White(who doesn't?) but he should still a decent starter in this league. Brassard and Little will make up the next two forwards and don't be surprised if these two combine for 130 points this year and they both are developing nicely outside of Brassards yearly injury. Staal, Laich, Cheechoo and Stajan will all be hovering around the low to mid 50's in totals which is respectable if not spectacular. The value is in three prospects Hodgson, Schenn and MPS. A very attractive core of prospects to have and the type any team should look to add to build.

Grade - C+ - This group has all the potential to be a top group. This team will have a youthful poor man's Bullets look on forward in a couple seasons. Heading in the right direction in an understatement in terms of forward prospects.



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Defence - The D group is led by both Zach Bogosian and Alex Edler. A great 1-2 combo for a rebuilding team and the best part is they will produce right away. Both will hit 40 this season with the potential to combine for 90 as a realistic expectation. The third and fourth slot is now weak but a problem that will be addressed easily enough once the Tornadoes are ready to compete for a playoff spot. In time Edler and Bogosian will be a deadly 1-2 punch cracking 100pts combined.

Grade: B - Solid B ranking for the Tornadoes here. Once they add a third and true D-man they will be looking at solid A and maybe more in a year or so.

Goalie - Best in the fantasy business. Luongo is the easy choice for best goalie in a dynasty pool. Everything is attractive about him from a fantasy aspect. Enough said.

Grade - A+ - He is the number 1 long term goalie and will be fighting for the Patrick Roy award at season's end.

Darkhorse:: Brassard. Has to stay healthy and quit teasing his potential.

Review: Things are looking good for the Tornadoes having a sexy goalie like Varlamov on the bench the Tornadoes should do well moving one in a trade. Outside of that the core portions of the team are set moving forward. Exciting future for this team. 14th is the highest this team could possibly rank this season.

Fringe playoff teams: These teams are competing and battling for the final two wildcard spots. Usually a semi-rebuilt or young team in this slot.

15. Vancouver Millionaires

The Millies are just on the outside looking in. They are the sleeper of the bunch ready to break into the final playoff spot. A Cinderella story in the making.

Forwards: A stud up front in Carter the Millionaires bank their success on his. No reason to suggest another PPG year for Carter but I'm not sure he has the juice to crack 90 this year. Setoguchi was a great pick-up. He is young, producing and penciled in to play with Thornton and Heatley. McDonald will enjoy another 70+ year provided his health issues have cleared and Ponikarovsky really took flight after Antropov was moved and is poised for another 60+ point year. The 5th-7th slots are the key contributors to why the Millionaires are ranked this low. With players battling for these positions such as Dubinsky, Plekanec, Boedker, Williams, Peverley there is a lot of potential but for now a complete guessing game. On the right track but unless Rick has excellent team management this situation could bode worse if players don't start to distinguish themselves on a more consistent basis.

Grade: B+ - Nothing wrong per se with the depth of this unit it just isn't very established or consistent. The top four are looking solid moving forward.



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Defence - This group has a solid young core with loads of potential waiting to be explored. Barker is getting better every game and Niskanen is the man until otherwise noted in Dallas. Then we get to the real treat, Victor Hedman. A real special and unique talent out of Sweden. Hedman is expected and contribute right away. A solid 35+ rookie capaign should be a safe expectation. Hedman is the anchor the Millionaires needed to propel their D to the next level. Expect things only to get better as Rcik has done a fine job rebuilding the back end.

Grade: B - Not far off from a B+ this solid group will keep the Millionaires a pesky opponent on weeks. As a couple years pass this group will be a solid A. Good work here.

Goalie: The other weakness so to speak that has the Millionaires out of the playoff picture is in net. DiPietro has proven his 90% risk and 10% reward and Bryzgalov may be a decent number 1 goalie he is just on a franchise equal if not worse off than the Islanders. Phoenix has potential to be better than what they are but all the distractions and undoubtedly lost interest in the franchise will wear on these guys. This will yield less than desirable results in-between the pipes for the Millionaires.

Grade: C+ - A generous C+ for a really risky situation. If DiPietro can live up to his contract for a year or Phoenix can make a serious playoff push the goalie situation will continue to be an uphill battle.

Darkhorse: Plekanec/Williams. Both have been either 70pt player or very close. If both of these return to form so shall the Millionaires to the post season.

Review: A fairly solid club that has some unknowns in the 5th-7th slot up front and goalie issues. The bright side is the problems to address are relatively minor in nature. The highest the Millionaires can expect to see is 12th.

14. Diamantakos Spartans

The Spartans made a big splash in the off-season and the post season is now within their grasp. Do they have the juice needed to clinch their first playoff birth?

Forwards - Led up front by newly acquired playmaking stud Marc Savard the Spartans have drastically improved their line-up as a result. This was a fantastic move as none of his key forwards had to be moved during the process. On top of that it was nice to add Hejduk who is a reliable vet at this stage of his career and a definite contributor on this roster. Weiss should have no problem repeating last year's totals as a go to guy on a vastly improved Panthers team while Horcoff and Kesler should average about 60 between the two. A huge jump for the Spartans as their overall totals suggest they are very close with this group.



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Grade: B+ - The Spartans need a player to step up their progression with the likely candidates being Kesler and Weiss. A lower B+ ranking but with Filatov waiting this group has A written all over them.

Defence: Led by Kris Letang farmed nicely by the Spartans he is safe for 40pts+. As Gonchar fades into the sunset Letang's role and more importantly his production will increase. Expect another climb this year. Ballard and Martin round out the starting D and are solid 35-40pt guys again this year. Some potential left in them but Ballard may see a little more production given J-Bo has left. Ranger looks to have been pushed down the depth chart a bit after a promising start. This group is stable but unspectacular this year in terms of point totals.

Grade: B - Easily above average just not great yet this group will keep the Spartans in the hunt and won't hurt their cause. Potential growth for this group is really limited to Letang who has the 50pt ceiling that teams crave.

Goalie: Cam Ward has not been a flop. Far from it. Instead he is one of the most coveted dynasty goalies going. Another solid season is all but expected as the Spartans have a significant strength in net. Ward will push 40 wins and 5 shutouts again as he becomes entrenched as one of the elite goalies.

Grade: A - Not far off from being an A+ goalie. This could be that defining year where stability and ceilings are set.

Darkhorse - Filatov. For the second year he is the darkhorse. Outside of Savard he has the highest ceiling and it will get going this year.

Review - This team is very very close. They are in the same pack of fringe playoff teams fighting for the final two wildcard spots. However they do have a gem stored away that will keep the Spartans close moving forward even after Savard has departed in a few years. No longer a rebuilding team I expect Pete to make some moves to trade some future for more of the now. Push forward, you are close. The highest the Spartans can reach is 10th.

13. Uptown Heartbreakers

The Heartbreakers were heartbroken by the 13 man rule. After that they drafted Alex Burrows to drown their sorrows. Once again Tony remains one of the teams that will battle it out for the playoffs.

Forwards - Led up front by Parise the Heartbreakers have a solid stud up front in Parise. I do feel he will drop his totals slightly this year into the mid 80's but still hovering around the top 10 in scoring and a pain to play against. The rest of the group is really interesting and tough to gauge. Former 90pt player Olli Jokinen has been a shell of his former self after a few games in Calgary. He could put up 60 or 80 with Cammalleri gone. I expect closer to the first option. Tanguay is another that should



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approach 70pt but coming off injury he needs to stay healthy and get after signing a measly one year deal not worth a whole lot. Kunitz, Huselius and Franzen will average around the 60pt mark making the group effective but not overly dangerous. A lot of question marks that need clearing.

Grade: B+ - A very similar ranking to the Spartans this group has a stud then 60pt players with potential or past successes. The first step forward is for someone other than Parise to crack 70pts. The Heartbreakers will make the playoffs if this happens. That's how close they are.

Defence: Led by uber monster Chara the D group is just alright but nothing great. Ellis should be solid in time but a weak number 3 and no depth has this ranking coming in quite generous with the likelihood something isn't set up right here. Chara and Spacek will eclipse 90 total points but what Johnsson does is anyone's guess. 30 seems almost too high. Either way the grade doesn't change.

Grade: B+ - Just barely making this grade regardless of Johnsson. Thank Chara's consistency couple with Montreal's ability to have multiple offensive D-men.

Goalie: Hiller has really proven his worth and has been notable pick-up for the Heartbreakers but having a Conn Smythe winner on the bench in both spect is a very unappealing situation in net. Chances are Giguere redeems himself and pushes for split time unless a trade occurs. While the effect should be overall nothing too drastic it does provide some annoying times throughout the year. The grade suffers slightly as a result.

Grade: B+ - Hasn't suffered too much. If either goalie was slated for 70+ games this would be an A ranking. The potential is actually here for both goalies to reach A rankings. They just have to be the undisputed starter on different respect teams.

Darkhorse: Jokinen. He had a really crappy year before a couple bright spots in Calgary. Cammalleri was right behind Iginla last year there is an open spot and Jokinen is the most likely candidate to crack 70 on this roster this year.

Review - In a lot of ways this team is a playoff team. Without a decent third d-man and many reserves anywhere the Heartbreakers must stay injury free to have a decent chance at making the playoffs this year. They are points out at this point. Realistically it is the depth lacking. The highest the Heartbreakers can finish is 10th.

12. Paik Gryphons

"I took a wrong turn onto Duchene Cres" Paik was lost on his way but made a move adding a solid stud prospect Matt Duchene.

Forwards: A group badly plagued by injury whether groin or personal the Gryphons are looking to put last year behind them. Heatley got his wish and will suit up beside one of

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the best playmakers in the game on a sexy up temp game the Sharks play. A return to previous 50, 50 form should have Paik smiling every time the Sharks score. Semin had his coming out party but he did spend a quarter of it partying injured. He is another player that needs a full 82 this time round. So that's it? No. Now we have a player that is a weird combination of the two in Gaborik. Somewhat moody and extremely injured I'd be afraid if he was putting on his clothes that he doesn't pull his groin. So much potential being wasted. A complete tease outside of a year that set the tone of his potential he can't reach because he isn't healthy. Maybe a fresh start will help. One of the most talented players in the game. It's a shame he cannot stay healthy. So that's it? Nope. Stastny is running the risk after two injuries last season that had the PPG player out of the line-up more times than not last year. Needs to shake a growing label of an injury risk. The team can't handle the stress. All put together this group is solid adding Boyes' 70 and with guys like Duchene and Giroux waiting.

Grade: A - I do believe Heatley is happy for another couple years and he is the main reason the Gryphons will make the playoffs just barely this year. I gave fairly conservative results for Gaborik and the 6th slot. If I am wrong on either this goes to an A+ quite easily considering everyone stays healthy and happy.

Defence: This group is about to need a huge overhaul quickly. Niedermayer does not have much left in the tank but will be a stud for the next year or so for his troubles. He will accumulate roughly 50% of the total production for this group barring huge positive or negative surprise. I don't expect much more than 30pts for Hamhuis, Daley or whomever is in the mix. A quality group but nothing like the group up front.

Grade: B - Solid ranking for a group that barely passes for a C if they lose Niedermayer. He is worth a letter in the alphabet Paik! The forwards are more than set for ever. Time to dedicate the next year + to getting a couple young D-men who have put up 45pts before.

Goalie: The other weakness is in Vokoun. Was a much better fit in Nashville before he was moved. Almost lost his job to Anderson and was inconsistent to say the very least at times last year. A little more stability but still a very rocky road ahead for the Gryphons in this department.

Grade: C+ - Close to a B but not enough consistency and future to warrant that type of grade. The forwards and Niedermayer are this team.

Darkhorse: Gaborik. Has 90pt production just has to stay healthy. Every year the expectations are the same. This year the Gryphons need him healthy more than ever.

Review: The Gryphons are going to be in the hunt this year due to their strong forward core which is only getting stronger. A weak back end and in net makes the Gryphons' playoff chances. Moving forward again the focus on this team is strictly D. The highest the Gryphons can finish is 7th.



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11. Hesketh Goldminers

The Goldminers look to push into the playoffs for a second straight season. Is there enough gas in the tank?

Forwards: A small but big change was made with the arrival of Danny Briere who has been working hard to live up to his contract and prove the critics wrong. There is no doubt he is a PPG player but really needs to stay healthy. The Goldminers picked up Knuble to Erat, Knuble and Kostitsyn rotating in the 6th slot. Pavelski and Brown will hold down the 4th and 5th slot and both are projected to hit 130pts. Left up front is a decent 1-2 in Cammalleri and Koivu. The group has the potential to surprise but the predictions here are conservative and more likely what should be expected. The starting 6 is basically the same rotating in some depth (Erat, Knuble).

Grade: B+ - Decent group with three players who at some point have been called potentially point per game players the depth is decent enough that Pavelski and Brown are poised for 60-65pt years and more than enough rotating in the 6th slot.

Defence: Bouwmeester is the 6 million dollar man in Calgary and with that come some heightened expectations. 50pts THIS year should be a very realistic expectation. 85 points from the bottom two in Burns and Blake the Goldminer Killer B's on D are ready to produce. Burns should rebound from a flat out weird season last year. A new vow to offence Burns should be an immediate benefactor on the blueline. Ehrhoff having moved on opens up more time for Blake to hit his 40 at 40. Karlsson has progressed and will see some time with the Senators. I hope he makes an immediate impact and can replace Blake next season as my third D-man.

Grade: A - Just barely got away with this grade. I do believe my D will finally start to produce the way people expect. Things will get better for this group. Karlsson has just scratched the tip of his potential.

Goalie: Miller is a top fantasy goalie and a household name in the Klondike centre. His native haircut is a fan favourite up north. Jokes aside Miller has taken another step since becoming a 'Miner. He is now a 40 win goalie that will start 70+ games and put up 5 shutouts a year. Just entering his prime he has years left before a concern will be had in this department.

Grade: A - Solid ranking Miller needs to get his shutouts up and have a playoff team in front of him to produce.

Darkhorse: Briere. If he stays healthy all year the Miners are all but assured a playoff spot. If he sputters or re-injures himself it will be a logn season for the 'Miners.

Review: The Goldminers have done a fine job rebuilding. Lacking a top prospect up front is the next task that will be addressed sooner than later. Outside of that the D and



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goalie are looking good just need to add one more scoring forward to be a legit yearly playoff team. The highest the 'Miners can finish is 7th.

Playoff Teams: Teams that are all but considered consensus locks for the post season

10. Bellamy Barracudas

The Cudas step onto the ice with only Price this year. What could that cost them?

Forwards: Vanek had quite a dip due to injury and his hurting face. He'll get back over 70 and quite possibly eclipse 80 once again. A lot of 85pt talk in the offseason about Perry and I just don't see it. I do see him coming close to 80 but not cracking it. Regardless a safe 150pts from the top two guys here. Elias will not be the leading scorer on this team and I believe most people see mid 60's as a realistic drop for him. The big return is Richards who will place upwards of 70 while Zajac, Hartnell and Horton will be a solid 5th and 6th forwards. All in all there is some nice depth going on and this group will produce.

Grade: B+ - A solid scenario similar to a few teams around them. Solid depth the Barracudas can afford an injury to the bottom three with little effect on the production.

Defence: Gonchar is getting old but he isn't done yet. He was a beast when he came back before he got injured again. Provided he plays a full year another 60 points is well within reach for this aging stallion. Outside of that a few underrated D-men round out the Barracuda core. Ehrhoff, Corvo and Kubina should all do the usual 40pt average between the two. Corvo may crack 45 this year. Regardless the grade should be fairly stable to give. Ehrhoff will be interesting to see how his role develops with a few decent D-men there as well as Kubina's in Atlanta's newly crowded blueline.

Grade: A - A solid well deserved A here. Solid depth and a high end anchor that can produce monstrous numbers this year.

Goalie: The team has totally revamped itself. Hopefully Price has prepared again. He lost a lot of weight at the beginning of last year...maybe that was a result of partying with some Russian Brothers? Moving forward Price should be getting better. Although interesting not to see a Halak handcuff by Nathan here. There was a little dispute last year and it is always a good idea to have a back-up if there is any uncertainty. The expectations here may need to be humbled a bit as Price slowly moves into a respectable ranking once he is able to establish some consistency.

Grade: C+ - Not a huge fan after last year. Team should take a little bit to gel in all forms. Price will still be a solid goalie and he could surprise this year but I think the transition will be a little slower than initially expected when he was drafted 3rd overall.

Darkhorse: Price. Obvious choice here. If he does surprise the 'Cudas launch up the rankings. May be a year early though.



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Review: The mags kind of went off and projected ultimate years for everyone. While some players may see an increase others should see a decline leaving the Barracudas a solid playoff team but not a true contender due to the instability in net. It isn't a problem that needs addressing persay just the rest of the team is ready to contend and the Cudas must have a short fuse in terms of patience this year. What a gong show in Montreal last year for everyone who didn't own Markov. Lets hope those days are behind us and everyone there can flourish! With that the 'Cudas are a good sleeper team to contend just not someone I'd put my money on today. Quality depth and forward and D gives them the chance they need. Highest 'Cudas can finish is 5th.

9. Rattray Kilts

Semi-rebuild won't keep the Kilts out of the playoffs this year. Will the moves pay off? The Kilts don't appear much worse for wear from a competitive standpoint but have loaded up on youth in hopes of a couple breakouts moving forward.

Forwards: The sexy combo of Datsyuk and Zetterberg is going to be very solid once again. Look for a safe 90+ from Datsyuk and a PPG return for Zetterberg. Eriksson and Gionta round out the third and fourth slots on this club. 135pts between the two seems very realistic. Both have appealing opportunities in front of them. In short the top four is solid and still by all accounts not old. The 5th to 6th slot here help the Kilts slide down the very tight rankings. They did a nice job picking up Brind'Amour late to fill in the 5th/6th slot and have potential with mainly Malone and Nilsson looking to fill the void. Then the kids arrive. The Kilts picked up lots of youth and are tooting Stalberg's horn early. Should be an interesting year on the ice and in the pipeline as the Kilts have 11 forwards.

Grade: A - Still get a decent grade thanks to the strong top 4. A low A but still an A nonetheless. Enough depth here and consistent production up front to carry this team into the post season.

Defence: Boyle is a point producing beast. Getting a little more mileage on the engine Boyle is still a 55+ player that will see another solid year with the Sharks getting better up front (if that was possible). Timmonen was shipped off in favour of young D-man Kyle Quincey who was taken a little later than I had projected him to go. Quincey will see some adjustments but will flirt with 40 again as should only improve as time goes on. He looked good as a King last season and Colorado should start to improve. Should be about a loss of 10pts gaining a decade in age. Sekera and Roszival are not solid starters but will yield 30pts for their troubles.

Grade: B+ - Solid grade for a fairly weak 3rd and 4th D. Potential is in Sekera but nothing is certain for this year. He has 40pt potential on the weak blueline in Buffalo. They also do alright producing solid offensive D-men lately it seems.

Goalie: He's back and healthy and dangerous. The greatest ever, the ageless wonder. Whatever you want to call him he is a favourite to win the Patrick Roy award. Provided



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he doesn't start a new trend Brodeur will knock 40 wins out of the park and push 8+ shutouts. He is certainly getting older but this is a key year for him as his body may not keep up with his rigorous schedule. All should be well and fine though with Lemaire in town.

Grade: A+ - No reason to think it will be anything but again this year. Brodeur is a phenom and an all round stud. He can win weeks on his own still.

Darkhorse: Stalberg. I've heard so much about the guy already. Let's see what he brings as a late round sniiiiipe.

Review: The Kilts stocked up on picks and players and really moved into a semi-rebuild but have the potential to remain solid contenders thanks to a strong core. They need to really focus on the rebuild through the draft again moving forward. It will be interesting to see if the Kilts are buyers or sellers at the deadline. All these young guys set the table for a JR if I've ever seen one. Boyle 2.0? Or Boyle traded? Either way lots going on in Kiltville. Highest Kilts can finish is 5th.

8. Franson Shrubdogs

The Shrubdogs stroll in the number 8 position doing quite well after the draft that's aw them pick up some much needed depth for a playoff push with a couple players that could always get injured.

Forwards: The forwards led up front by Spezza and St Louis. The change of scenery in Ottawa will be interesting to say the least for Spezza but he should get his points. Both players will maintain their averages and play in the 90pt range assuming Spezza doesn't get into a game online. JPomms and Kariya round out the top 4 and a solid group here. These two should hit an average of 70pts between the two. 5th and 6th slots are a combo of Connolly, Langkow, Berglund, Backes etc and will average in the late 50's. Any over/under for consecutive games Connolly will play before taking one off for injury? Million to one for the new ironman? A very solid group with solid depth the Shrubdogs were showing everyone what they thought of their roster.

Grade: A - A very similar rating to the Kilts up front the Shrubs barely get away with an A ranking on their forward front. A solid mix of stud, vet, depth and youth the Shrubdogs have a team that has Cinderella written all over them. A safe bet to return to the postseason again.

Defence: One of the best groups in the pool. This is where the Shrubs have done very well. Raflaski and Campbell should average 55 between the two again and Colaiacovo and Grebeshkov will be a solid group once again this year. Rafalski is getting older and his play is starting to decline but until otherwise noted he is a very safe 50+ D-man. This is really what separates Shrubbies from the teams near them. The staple on D.



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Grade: A+ - Not the best D in the pool but certainly in the top 3 this year. Two top producers, excellent depth and a quality prospect in the pipeline. Things are looking A OK here.

Goalie: Khabibulin was a fine inexpensive pick-up by the Shrubdogs. In Edmonton he will see a lot of starts and with that more opportunities to produce and build on a solid year that was cut short due to injuries. He is getting old and isn't as stable but is a real sleeper to really push up the standings. I'd expect about 30 wins with 4+ shutouts for a solid ranking for this year. Like another Biron from last year. A temporary patch job hopefully until Markstrom comes over.

Grade: B+ - Solid ranking for Khabibulin. I expect him to have a solid season backed with respectable numbers. This puts the Shrubdogs in an above average position in goalie.

Darkhorse: Kariya/Connolly. If these guys put together 70 games apiece the Shrubs line-up gets scary. The opportunity is there, can these two stay healthy?

Review: The Shrubdogs have a great team and a great ranking as a result. A lock for the playoffs and a borderline contender. The forward crop is great with two players capable of popping 90 with one of the best D's in the league the Shrubdogs will be taken seriously. Lots of depth at all the positions(minus goalie) the Shrubdogs have a team that will see some injury time but should have prepared adequately this year. The highest they can finish is 5th.

7. Lee Triads

Lots of offseason movements have the Triads as contenders. Looks like they have found the right combination of players that will push them deeper into the playoff race.

Forwards: Lots of new faces here up front the last couple years. Nash and Alfie will hit their PPG totals again and lead the group up front while Hossa is nursing his injury that will keep him out more than a quarter of the year. Doan will be relied upon for his quiet 70pts leading Phoenix again in that dismal city. Dumont will end up being a solid 5th forward with 65pts to his name becoming his yearly production and a few 60pt guys in Langenbrunner, Prospal rounding out the starting forwards. Young players Gagner and Voracek are due for a rebound and increase respectively. This group will get stronger once Hossa returns with a new shoulder but getting everyone on the same page once they make the playoffs is key for the push. Expect Dave to sell a prospect to add more into his starting line-up.

Grade: A - With the injury to Hossa this falls to a fringe A but solid nonetheless. Great depth and great talent up front. This is a line-up that can go the distance is everyone stays healthy when it counts.



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Defence: The Triads improved their D on draft day trading a late 2nd and a late 3rd for Timonen. A great pick-up even though the Kilts got a decent young player. Timonen is a sure thing for 45pts every year it seems. He has a couple years left in the tank and will be a go to guy on the Triads. Biekse and Liles round out the starting core of 45ptish D-men. McCabe is the biggest question mark after battling injuries again last season he is expected to see better production provided his health hold up with Bouwmeester out of town. A solid four D-men compliment a solid mix of age and studly youth up front.

Grade: A: Slip into another A ranking just barely thanks to acquiring Timonen. Do not be surprised if the Triads fall into a solid B+ by seasons end. Regardless the difference in the grade is minimal to the Triads success.

Goalie: Thomas is going to be decent for the next year or so. After that all bets are off as the Devils will command control of the Bruins. Until then Thomas is a Vezina winner and classic late bloomer in every sense of the word. The Triads will need every spectacular performance repeated again this year. Goaltending has not been a strong suit for the Triads over the past few seasons so an improvement will be welcomed even if it's a short term fix. I don't expect Smith to be the saviour should something happen to Thomas. Success will rely on his shoulders.

Grade: A - Slips in with an A ranking for the third category. Thomas will enjoy another successful year but by all accounts this isn't a scenario that will stay the same over the next couple years. After the next two seasons Thomas will have little relevance as his time will be too split to hold value or Rask will be starting. Until then he is holding things together long enough to push the Triads deep into the playoffs.

Darkhorse: Hossa. He really changes the composure of the forward group and the team as a whole. He really needs to come back healthy and productive. The Triads would be higher on the list as a result.

Review: The Triads have patched together an interesting blend of youth and veteran presence on a team largely considered to contend this year. The team is built for the now but the core is also there up front for the future. A team that can't afford to rest on their laurels and will have to continue to source out potential deals that continue to push them towards the top of the list. I felt the Triads were comparable to the teams around them but gave them the benefit of the doubt once Hossa returns. With that said the loss of Hossa this year limits the peak ability at 5th.

The Contenders: Playoffs are a lock and all these teams should be in a battle for the byes!

6. Mitchell Vanguard

A team chalked full of young studliness up front and a SCHL favourite the Vanguard soar into the 6th slot as we begin our look at the contenders.



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Forwards: What a studly cast. I find myself saying the top three players here often throughout the season and wondering how that happened. Regardless there aren't many teams out there that can say my top 3 have all hit 100 at some point. I'm hinting at the projections that Getzlaf will indeed crack 100. he will come dangerously close. A return to form is also in order for Lecavlier and Staal. Look for them to total 180 points on top of Getzlaf's career year upcoming. Kessel being out hurts the cause at the 4th slot by about 20 total points but the top three is so solid there is no way the Vanguard don't receive a solid A for this group. Frolov will have another year around the 70pt mark and the 6th slot will be the mystery and definite weakness. I am somewhat concerned at the lack of depth here. Not using all three studs to the fullest team potential.

Grade: A - Solid, solid A. Get a quality 60pt 6th forward and you've got yourself an easy A+ group here. The problem is very minor to fix. I don't expect this to be a minor leak.

Defence: So a team that has three absolute studs is totally hurting on D right? No. Instead they have arguably the second most valuable fantasy d-man there is in Phaneuf. While he slowed a bit for about half the year last season he still finished with solid point totals and should see similar if not better results into the mid 50's again this year. Jovanovski seems to have lost another stride and taking another step down the ladder to mediocre territory. Better suited as a strong third d-man the group gets a little weak here. Gilroy has had everything from minimal to monstrous projections and I will fall somewhere in the middle. Being a seasoned NCAA vet is nice but the Rangers haven't been producing 45pt d-men at will so anything really above low 30's should be a surprise for a rookie showing. Carle is still hanging tough to a roster spot and doing well this pre-season so hopefully he has a decent role on the second unit this year.

Grade: B+ - They squeak along with this grade as long as they get 30pts out of their third slot. Could dip as low as a C+ if inconsistency or reduced roles hit either Gilroy or Carle.

Goalie: Backstrom has proven to have been well worth the trade. One of the top fantasy goalies last season he was poised for an A+ rating until Lemaire left. For every ying there is a yang and with Richards it will be on the defensive end. Not saying there won't be any attention and the Wild are going to turn into a high octance offensive minded team but definitely the focal point will be nowhere near Lemaire's. Still expect a top 8 showing and another fantastic year for the Vanguard's goaltender.

Grade: A - Solid ranking for a goalie that should see less focus on him and more focus on scoring. May not affect stats by more than a dozen points or so but enough to drop a ranking.

Darkhorse: I am going to go with Higgins. He really needs to step things up and get back to producing 55pts while Kessel is out. Really could be the difference in a few standings points. Penner is another solid option that needs to do produce while Kessel is absent.



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Review: The Vanguard are a staple built off a very sexy core at all positions. This group really begins to define the contenders and pretenders in this pool. As long as the Vanguard make an honest effort to patch up the depth the team will be right there in the hunt for either trophy. There really isn't much else to be said the Vanguard are going to make the playoffs and are going to do some damage. How much damage done by Kessel being out will be determined by how the players respond in the depth aspect of the Vanguard's forwards and d-men.

5. Steier 79ers

Ashterisk proved the critics wrong last year and this year I think he can do the same again.

Forwards: Lead up front by none other than Sid the Kid. Best overall fantasy player possible and one of three ultimate rarities. Sidney Crosby is one of those unique talents that can put up oddles of points making the NHL look like a game of shinny at times. A real treat to watch and a real nightmare to play against there isn't anyone out there that would kill to have this guy on their team. Then we bring you two the number two, Big Joe. Not only was he a sexy beast but he just got a Heatley make over and as a result will crack the century mark this season. I expect 215 points out of the top two players. Unreal. I think Kozlov has one more year at decent production and Gagne will help these two average close to 70pts. Even the bottom two forwards are looking adequate in Michalek and either Drury, Guerin or Cole. There is even depth here. A very well rounded group with elite talent, above average 3rd and 4th point producers this year and solid depth. Lacking youth and upside as a whole as Kozlov is all but done.

Grade: A+ - Works out to be one of the top forward core and overall value in the league. 79ers have done a good job at putting together a quality eight forwards with well complimented talents throughout the line-up.

Defence: Whitney leads this group that is the overall the worst out of the other contenders. Whitney once had a ridiculous value after putting up 60 in Pittsburgh. An injury and a tough road since Whitney appears to have found his place in Anaheim. Whitney will rebound and hit the mid 40's this year. After that the supporting cast of Tyutin and Aucoin will average in the low 30's. A less than appealing average for any team let alone a supposed contener. Ash will continue to patch up the team through minor tinkering but this team should remain virtually the same throughout the year.

Grade: B: Above average but far from great. Whitney hasn't re-established himself as a potential number one guy and the overall depth and production from the starters isn't what a team usually needs to win.

Goalie: The 79ers boast one of the best in the business. Henrik Lundqvist is a special find that annually sees his name listed for a Vezina finalist. A solid goalie that is always cracking the top 10 Lundy is the a former SCHL champ and a staple within the league. New coach may shift some of the attention but Lundqvist will always remain in the top



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10 for total points. Ash has done well sniping this monster that has really masked the holes that started to develop in this contender.

Grade - A -Solid A ranking for this stud. May not have the juice to crack the century mark but always right there in the hunt.

Darkhorse: Whitney. Strong anchor in net and perfect core up front. Need an anchor to emerge and on the thin blueline he is the only suitable candidate.

Review- The 79ers proved the critics wrong last year and look to do the same again this year. The D is still under par but the big years expected from the forward group has launched this team into the fringe of the top 5. This ship still requires maintenance as the year goes on but the patch job is certainly better than before and some nice names here that could really compliment the top four. Getting Whitney on track is key and another day for Lundy should have the 79ers feared once again. The highest the 79ers can finish is 3rd.

4. Ferrari Flash

In a Flash Jon is back in the mountains...no he's a Tarpan lately! The Flash are poised to make some noise for a change on and off the ice.

Forwards: Led up front by superstar and original Flash, Ilya Kovalchuk we are expecting the mid 90's Kovalechuk to show up and leave the mid's 70's back where they belong. In the second and third slots we find Roy and Marleau who should see a safe 150 between the two. With Heatley in San Jose Marleau's totals may dip slightly but nothing like he experienced two years ago. A very solid top three that will be doing damage on a weekly basis. Then we get to arguably the best 4th and 5th guys in Gomez and Morrow. Morrow is somewhat of an injury concern but if he stays healthy he'll be found cracking 70 and same will be close for Gomez who is just shy of a PPG player himself. With a new change for Gomez(again) the opportunity to rebound and improve is there. Interesting to see how he does moving forward. Okposo, Filppula, Fleishmann are the likely candidates for the 6th/7th positions and a little less than ideal for this position. However the exceptional depth the Flash are a phone call away from addressing that problem and getting a stable 60pts in the 6th slot and not a guy that likely should get 50.

Grade: A - A really solid A. Lacking on the 6th and subsequently the 7th starting forward was enough to drop them but not keep them out. A small trade of one of the 100 prospects for a veteran scorer would be a wise move.

Defence: The defensive corp is led by the greatest of our time in Niklas Lidstrom. This Norris winning beast was acquired after Whitney fell out of favour with the Flash. To date it has been a fine move as Lidstrom will be putting up 60 until the day he hangs them up. By then Jon will just draft another Lidstrom as that is his specialty. Keith and Vlasic round out a very nice young top 3 with over 40pts average between them. Vlasic



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will see an improved year with Ehrhoff moved on and Keith is really starting to emerge as a fine young D-man that was sniped three years ago. Prospects are the depth. Sbisà was doing alright until he was clipped midseason by the Flyers then ended up as a small piece in the massive Pronger deal. A step forward is expected this year for this kid just not sure where to cap the production. Low 20's seems like a logical number as a candidate for a great year. Carlson was a nice pick-up. Monster d-man with great offensive talents on the Capitals.

Grade: A : Just barely Jon. I actually had to have a meeting to decide what grade was going to be issued here. In the end Lidstrom is starting to wind down and while the A+ potential can be touched with your fingertips health and improvement from the starters is essential.

Goalie: One of the best in the business. Nabokov will play virtually every game and is on one of the best goalies out there. I still recall a ridiculous stat that if San Jose scores three goals their winning percentage is well over .800. I remember my mouth dropping when I heard the stat. Phenomenal. Getting a little older but far from a concern and a top notch fantasy goalie no matter how the points are broken down. Expect more stability as the firepower has easily increased this year in front of Evgeny.

Grade: A+ - Well deserving of this grade. Great job Jon you have done well. Another awesome year in this department.

Darkhorse: Okposo. Time for him to put it all together. He isn't far off and will flirt around 60.

Review: The Grossman Flash are an SCHL staple. Great drafting makes up 90% of this team. Jon is a former champion and may have the right mesh this year to really challenge for the cup. The forwards are looking stronger than ever and the D is going to continue to be strong until Lidstrom decides to hang them up. After that one of Carlson or Sbisà should be nearing a starting position. In the end the Flash have an excellent blend of high end talent and solid top notch youth built over the years. A perennial contender the Flash are looking as good as they can heading into this season. The highest they can finish is 1st

3. North Shore Screaming Jawas

Added some pieces...moved a few others. The contender that is ever changing.

Forwards: Led up front by Evgeny Malkin, I guess, who is part of that generational talent. Cam got lucky that number extended to three in the Ovechkin deal. A rare talent who has cleaned up some hardware. Seems like Sid has some catching up to do. Expect another easy year cracking the 100pt barrier which is seemingly getting harder to do. After Malkin a solid group of three with the Twins and Ribeiro emerge. All three should continue a safe PPG average. The Sedins are still looking for that solid answer on the wing. Otherwise a very safe bet. Ribeiro built on a spectacular season



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with another solid one as he has really emerged in Dallas. Antropov should then serve as a fine 5th forward hitting the low to mid 60's in Atlanta. After that things get a little interesting. Lots of faith is being put in O'Sullivan who hasn't really put up adequate starting numbers to date. Jawas really need to stay injury free as their depth are based off of two prospects. Shirokov has earned a spot after a solid camp but just how much he can produce right away shouldn't be expected to start for the Jawas. Grachev will be solid but again won't be a starter this year for the Jawas.

Grade: A+ - When you have four guys that can hit 85pts and one that can produce up to 120pts you are looking at great results on teh report card.

Defence: Led by Streit who is still somewhat undervalued in comparison to virtually every other D-man near his point totals. Streit has been consistant the past three seasons and will have another productive 50+ pt year. Yandle, Goligoski and Hainsey round out the potential starters for this club. Yandle and Goligoski are posied to see solid improvements and realistically could average around 40pts between the two. Hainsey is somewhat stuck behind a crowded blueline. He was most effective on the PP but may have that role reduced. Overall a decent group led by a underrated anchor has the Jawas sitting pretty. Decent potential in Goligoski and Yandle moving forward especially once Gonchar is out of the picture.

Grade: A - Barely make this grade but thanks to Streit they are pushed over the hump. The potential here will put them in a solid A but overall may not have the juice for this current group to enjoy an A+ ranking

Goalie: Turco is looking to rebound from and off and on year. He was a model for consistency until Sean Avery showed up. Since then it has been a rollercoaster ride for Turco. His totals may suffer a bit with Crow in the nest above the bench. Not known for being a defensive minded coach to say the least. With that said Turco is still a much better option than Lehtonen is or may ever will be. Jawas also did well nabbing Chris Mason late. One of the best producing goalies after the all-star break.

Grade: B+ - Right below an A status there is enough talent to warrant a solid A ranking when all is said and done. A solid grade nonetheless.

Darkhorse: O'Sullivan. If he can breakout the Jawas patch their only true hole on the team.

Review: Arguably the best top 4 in the league and one of the most fun combos possible the Jawas are going to be contenders for a long time because their forwards will carry them no matter what happens elsewhere. These guys can win weeks by themselves but the Jawas do have some quality depth that will keep them in the top 3 again this year. The highest the Jawas can finish is 1st.



2. Wilson Bullets

The Bullets have the powder to pierce the top spot.

Forwards: Still led up front by arguably the best captain in the NHL, Jerome Iginla, the Bullets have really enjoyed the rewards of this JR. A virtual lock for 90pts and plays an exciting, physical game. Not much to dislike about Iginla other than his age. Only because it doesn't fit in with the rest of the team. The Kane and Toews combo is poised for another step forward as both should average 80pts this season. Kopitar is ready in the fourth slot and has PPG written all over him after the Kings added some much needed secondary scoring. Kovalev has found a new home in Ottawa and will remain as a starter for this Bullets team after being shopped during the summer. Tough to predict what a guy like Kovalev will produce consistently but 65pts is a safe number to expect. I would be surprised if Kovalev hit 75 this year. In the 6th slot is Smyth and Bourque. Bourque enjoyed a solid year and with the departure of Cammalleri may see an increased role. Ceiling may not be much higher than a 5th starter but quality depth and could surprise. Smyth should be the safer starter on a scoring line in LA.

Grade: A+ - In the top five in forwards the Bullets have a great core and some solid depth to compliment them. Everyone on this team that is 21/22 is a star so no prospects persay here outside of Anisimov.

Defence: EJ returns onto the ice after a freak golfing injury really devastated what was being projected as a solid year for the young stud. The return will come quickly for Johnson who had a solid rookie year. Everyone healthy in St Louis is a step in the right direction for the Bullets anchor. Suter slides in the number two and after his outstanding year he could challenge as a number one if he can crack 50. The third spot is of some concern with Schneider who is an injury risk, Koistinen who never got a real chance and Myers who is a rookie. This is where the uncertainty lies for the Bullets. One of these guys needs to step in and produce 30 points and as of now the best candidate this year is Koistinen with Myers close behind.

Grade: B+ - Great 1-2 up front but too iffy of a third d-man keeps the Bullets off the A grade.

Goalie: One of the best fantasy goalies and my personal favourite Marc-Andre Fleury. Has had a little trouble with injuries but overall is a stud beyond his time. He will be a lock for the top 5 every year for the next decade and has one of the sexiest teams in front of him. Nothing more I can say but he is one of the best options and provided he stays healthy will hit 40 wins and crack 100pts making this position an advantage over the basic regular starter.

Grade: A+ - Top marks for production this year and moving forward.

Darkhorse: Koistinen/Myers/Schneider. Someone really needs to take control or it will be a gong show circus rotating in and out of the line-up.



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Review: The original tankster did it to perfection. Lorne is the perfect example of taking the rules and squeaking around them only to shut the door once he's through. He certainly is a trailblazer when it comes to creating rules. That said his team is one of the best in the league. The forwards are fantastic from the ones he drafted to the JR's acquired via trade the Bullets are looking great up front and between the pipes. The only concern is on D. This has been a concern for quite some time. The Bullets really need to earn this generous grade on D to have a shot at the WG.

1. Johnston Tycoons

The SCHL founder and undisputed champ nestles in the top bunk for another year

Forwards: Owner of the best combo in the game Ovy and Backstrom are both monsters by themselves. Together they help the Tycoons forwards match entire basements teams point totals. Look for this duo and more specifically Backstrom to rise up the chart. A very legit chance there are 5 100pt guys this year and the Tycoons own two of them. Look for 210pts between this combo. Easily the best combo in the league. An easy 30pts over the next best SCHL combo. That is a remarkable feat. Britney is no more but the 'ney' remains as he winds down his stellar tenure with the Tycoons. He will regress the most or should but not to fear the Tycoons have studs in the fold that have been farmed very well. Hemskey will maintain his usual pace just under a PPG and another duo is looking to breakout in Booth/Frolik. Selanne rounds out the top 7 then we head into reserves. A solid top 7 that will be up there with the best of them. Another year at the top of this breakdown is in store for the Tycoons. Booth and Frolik should get close to 130pts combined and Selanne may have one last trick before he retires.

Grade: A+ - Best duo in the league, solid top to bottom and another great combo as well. Tycoons receive highest of honours here.

Defence: Starting off with the second highest scoring D-man is a good start but then adding three more guys that can produce 50pts is outstanding. A rarity to have a 50pt d-man go down and calmly insert another one. Souray, Pronger and Kronwall are the four beasts that keep the Tycoons separated from other contenders. They should have little trouble winning this breakdown as well. Overall a studly cast with a younger stud already being farmed in Kulikov. He will also be a beauty. The best of the best and really the X factor that distinguishes the Tycoons from other contenders. Pronger will flourish in Philly while Kronwalls role is set to expand. Souray has to be worth the least out of the bunch but that is more of a compliment to the other three than a knock on Souray. The knock on Souray is he needs to stay healthy to keep his personal value high. Best of the bunch that could be traded.

Grade: A+ - Best in the league. A perfect grade.

Goalie: Mikka Kiprusoff is the weakest link out of each respected position and he'll finish in the top 5. New coach in Calgary should bode well as any goalie can't really ever like



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Mike Keenan. Kipper will see a return to form in the shutout department but should be started a few games less to give him some rest. He was overworked last year and it started to show. With that said he is a top goalie and definitely can get into the highest grade but he will end up just shy and will have to settle for being a top 5 goalie. Calgary has also improved the D adding Bouwmeester to the mix so that again will help them focus on protecting the goalie and preserving those close wins.

Grade: - A - Solid A near an A+ but a strong suit that only a few teams could argue they are better at. Another reason why the Tycoons are the undisputed number 1 team in the league.

Darkhorse: Frolik. He could really emerge this year given his end to last year. With Whitney winding down this is the perfect time for Frolik to take over the reigns.

Review: The Tycoons end the year in a familiar spot: First. They have very little chance of being unseated because they are so overwhelmingly strong in each category. They can even afford to lose a top producer and still compete for the WG. It is a rare set-up that has been orchestrated well by the Tycoons. They are the undisputed champ, the team to beat again this year. This will be a repeat for years as the core is so incredibly young and getting younger and better each year. Overall the Tycoons have had some luck but made the right moves at the right times and that is what separates a contender from a champion.

So that wraps up another year of Frank Ranks Volume 3. Hope you all enjoyed it and were able to get through it all in one sitting!

For the SCHL, I'm Ryan Hesketh