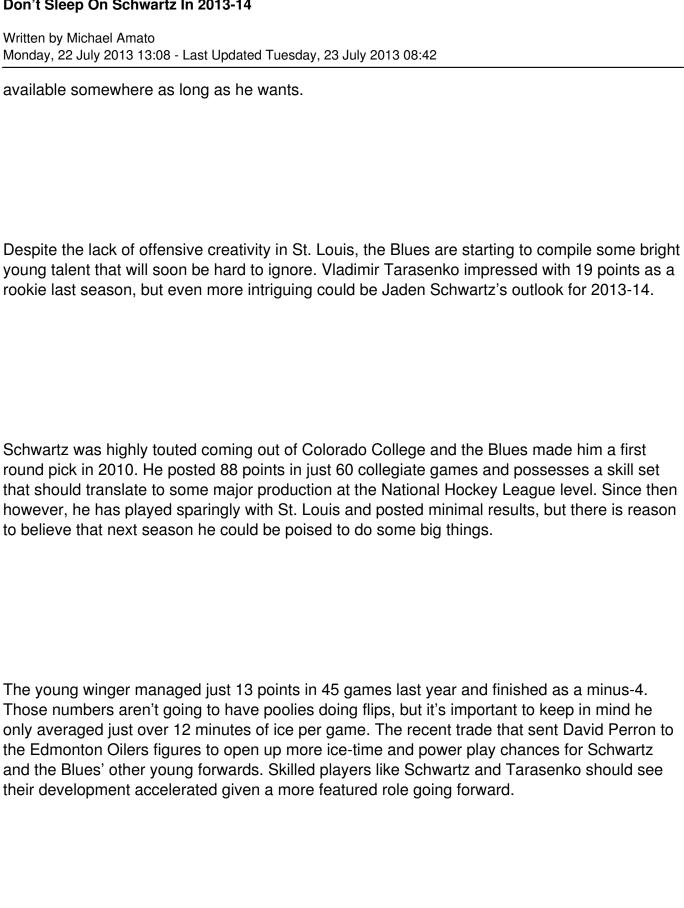


Jaden Schwartz set to ignite Blues offense next season.

If you were a poolie looking to boost the offensive statistics on your fantasy squad, the St. Louis Blues probably wouldn't be the first place you would look. The team had just one player exceed 30 points in 2013 and watching them play under Ken Hitchcock is sometimes like taking a time machine back to 1995 and the dead puck era. His defense first, defense second, and if there's anything left defense third system is great for winning games, but doesn't always help fantasy hockey enthusiasts. And if you are longing for the day that Hitchcock finally calls it quits, the fact that he once took the Columbus Blue Jackets to the playoffs probably ensures he will have a job

Don't Sleep On Schwartz In 2013-14



Not only that, there were already indications that Schwartz was going to be provided with more playing time in the future. His minutes jumped up to 16 per game in last year's playoffs and he was one of the Blues' best skaters in their series against the Los Angeles Kings. Seeing his

2/4

Don't Sleep On Schwartz In 2013-14

Written by Michael Amato Monday, 22 July 2013 13:08 - Last Updated Tuesday, 23 July 2013 08:42

minutes jump up by four per game from the regular season is a good indication for Schwartz owners that he will be featured more in 2013-14.

Schwartz also saw his line-mates change during the post-season and that could lead to more points if he sticks with this group. He played with David Backes and Alexander Steen nearly 65% of the time during the playoffs, compared to the regular season where he was moved around constantly and never skated with the same group for more than 20% of the time. Backes and Steen were two of the top three scorers for the Blues last season, so if Schwartz sticks with them next year his numbers should shoot up.

To further elaborate on the benefits on this line change for Schwartz, just take a look at the difference in his shot on goal totals. During the 2013 regular season he was averaging just over one shot per contest, but in the series against the Kings those numbers jumped up to over two shots a night. Shots on net are usually a good indicator of the odds of someone's production going up or down. Obviously the more shots you are getting, the better your chances of finding the back of the net and picking up assists via rebounds and deflections.

Another factor that should help Schwartz, and the rest of the Blues for that matter, is the new conference alignment for 2013-14. St. Louis finds itself in arguably the weakest division at the moment or as I like to call it, the "New Southeast." The Central has just three teams that cracked the post-season last year and that's including the Minnesota Wild who just snuck in. Sure the Chicago Blackhawks are still a powerhouse, but the rest of the teams figure to be in rebuild mode. This should mean some favourable matchups for the Blues and their skaters.

Don't Sleep On Schwartz In 2013-14

Written by Michael Amato Monday, 22 July 2013 13:08 - Last Updated Tuesday, 23 July 2013 08:42

It's always a risk raising your expectations for a player who hasn't accomplished much but has great potential. As we have seen with many young players in the past, some simply just don't pan out and drive organizations as well as fantasy owners nuts. However, the old adage nothing ventured, nothing gained really applies to fantasy hockey. Sometimes those that have the best success are the ones who take a risk on someone that has an opportunity to make a major impact. If you are one of those that are willing to take a chance, Schwartz may be the guy to bet on.

Feel free to follow me on Twitter at @amato mike

Recently from Amato:

Pressure Now Squarely On Seguin
Seth Jones Landed In The Perfect Spot
Ekman-Larsson Poised for Big Year
Anaheim's Crease Getting Crowded
Colorado Is On The Clock