

Forensics: Is Jiri Tlustý For Real?

Written by Tom Collins

Thursday, 29 August 2013 15:32 - Last Updated Friday, 30 August 2013 17:13



Sometimes, all an NHL player needs is a chance. Jiri Tlustý received his last year.

And a player needs to be ready, because they never know when that opportunity will come. Sometimes it's an increase in ice time when a teammate gets injured, clicking with the new linemates or switching from defence to forward.

Or in some cases, all it takes is a new coach who is willing to give you that chance.

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That's what happened with Jiri Tlustý last season. Once Kirk Muller took over the head coaching duties in Carolina, Tlustý has seen an increase in ice time and quality of linemates, helping him finish fifth in the goal-scoring race this past year

Just look at his top linemates from the last three seasons.

[2010-11](#)

Frequency

Strength

Line Combination

21.45%

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EV

39 DWYER,PATRICK - 16 SUTTER,BRANDON - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

14.69%

EV

59 LAROSE,CHAD - 16 SUTTER,BRANDON - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

11.59%

EV

36 JOKINEN,JUSSI - 16 SUTTER,BRANDON - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

9.65%

EV

20 BODIE,TROY - 29 CARTER,RYAN - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

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8.25%

EV

39 DWYER,PATRICK - 71 SAMSON,JEROME - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

5.94%

EV

14 SAMSONOV,SERGEI - 16 SUTTER,BRANDON - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

[2 011-12](#)

Frequency

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Strength

Line Combination

18.79%

EV

39 DWYER,PATRICK - 16 SUTTER,BRANDON - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

15.97%

EV

15 RUUTU,TUOMO - 12 STAAL,ERIC - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

14.21%

EV

59 LAROSE,CHAD - 12 STAAL,ERIC - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

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5.81%

EV

71 SAMSON,JEROME - 12 STAAL,ERIC - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

3.99%

EV

12 STAAL,ERIC - 13 STEWART,ANTHONY - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

3.77%

EV

39 DWYER,PATRICK - 12 STAAL,ERIC - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

3.18%

EV

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59 LAROSE,CHAD - 16 SUTTER,BRANDON - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

[2012-13](#)

Frequency

Strength

Line Combination

59.3%

EV

28 SEMIN,ALEXANDER - 12 STAAL,ERIC - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

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3.59%

EV

39 DWYER,PATRICK - 12 STAAL,ERIC - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

3.22%

PP

28 SEMIN,ALEXANDER - 12 STAAL,ERIC - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

2.89%

EV

59 LAROSE,CHAD - 12 STAAL,ERIC - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

1.97%

PP

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28 SEMIN,ALEXANDER - 53 SKINNER,JEFF - 12 STAAL,ERIC - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

1.72%

EV

28 SEMIN,ALEXANDER - 11 STAAL,JORDAN - 19 TLUSTY,JIRI

Going from playing with Patrick Dwyer and Brandon Sutter to Eric Staal and Alexander Semin is a huge upgrade.

In the 102 games Tlustý has played for Muller, he has 65 points, a 0.64 points-per-game pace, highlighted by last season's 38 points in 48 games. In 174 games with other coaches, Tlustý has 47 points, for a 0.27 points-per-game pace.

And while Muller may have shown faith in his player, you can sum up Tlustý's breakout season in two simple words: Eric Staal.

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[Line production](#)

Total Points for Jiri Tlustý : 38

Str

On Ice Line Combination

Points

**%Total
Points**

EV

SEMIN,ALEXANDER - STAAL,ERIC - TLUSTY,JIRI

20

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52.63%

PP

SEMIN,ALEXANDER - STAAL,ERIC - TLUSTY,JIRI

4

10.53%

PP

BRENT,TIM - SEMIN,ALEXANDER - STAAL,ERIC - TLUSTY,JIRI

3

7.89%

EV

SEMIN,ALEXANDER - STAAL,JORDAN - TLUSTY,JIRI

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3

7.89%

EV

STAAL,ERIC - TLUSTY,JIRI - WALLACE,TIM

1

2.63%

EV

STAAL,ERIC - TLUSTY,JIRI - WESTGARTH,KEVIN

1

2.63%

EV

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JOKINEN, JUSSI - STAAL, ERIC - TLUSTY, JIRI

1

2.63%

PP

SKINNER, JEFF - STAAL, ERIC - TLUSTY, JIRI

1

2.63%

EV

LAROSE, CHAD - STAAL, ERIC - TLUSTY, JIRI

1

2.63%

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EV

SEMIN,ALEXANDER - STAAL,ERIC - STAAL,JORDAN - TLUSTY,JIRI

1

2.63%

EV

DWYER,PATRICK - STAAL,ERIC - TLUSTY,JIRI

1

2.63%

EV

BRENT,TIM - LAROSE,CHAD - NASH,RILEY - TLUSTY,JIRI

1

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2.63%

Staal was on the ice for 34 of Tlustý's 38 points, almost 90 per cent. And as you can see, Tlustý had only eight powerplay points. Staal was on the ice for every one of those, as well. Staal is the catalyst of this whole thing. As he goes, so too goes Tlustý.

Time on Ice

TOI

PP TOI

2012-13

18:14

2:37

2011-12

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14:54

0:51

2010-11

9:51

0:09

Since Muller took over, Tlusty has seen a major increase in ice time and powerplay ice time, two more reasons for the points increase.

In the first 25 games of the 2011-12 season under Paul Maurice, Tlusty played less than 12:30 on nine occasions. In 102 games with Muller, he's only played less than 12:30 five times.

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So was Tlustý a one-season wonder, or is this the start of a fantasy-relevant hockey career?

Tlustý's value skyrockets in salary cap leagues. He is slated to make \$1.6 million this season. How many first-line players that have a shot at 60-plus points making less than \$2 million? Not many.

There are some other things working in Tlustý's favour in non-salary leagues: There's no reason to expect that Tlustý will not be playing with Eric Staal to start the season as there was no major signing or trade this summer that could take ice time away from him. Muller is still the head coach and has faith in Tlustý. The powerplay should be better than what it was last season, which will give Tlustý more points.

However, there are still reasons to be skeptical. Tlustý's shooting percentage was a whopping 19.7 per cent last year, which was 10th in the league for guys playing at least 30 games. His 5-on-5 PDO — which basically measures luck — was 1.040, 16

th

in the league among guys who have played at least 500 minutes. Eric Staal injured his knee last year at the World Championships in May, so he may not be 100 per cent by the time the season begins on Oct. 4 against the Detroit Red Wings.

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With no real competition behind him, Tlustý should be solid as a top linemate for Eric Staal for the upcoming season. Unless he falters big time, he should expect to stay there for quite a while.

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This year, he should be able to replicate his points-per-game pace of 0.79. Pencil him in for 65 points.