

David Desharnais vs. Tyler Ennis

Written by Rick Roos

Tuesday, 22 October 2013 17:19 - Last Updated Wednesday, 23 October 2013 07:17



Who has more fantasy value in your league - David Desharnais or Tyler Ennis?

By request (thanks rack55!), this week's Cage Match has Buffalo's [Tyler Ennis](#) battling Montreal's

[David Desharnais](#)

[David](#)

, two forwards arguably as big on talent as they are small in stature. The question is, which one is the better own? Look no further than Cage Match to give you the answer!

Career Path and Contract Status

In terms of NHL experience, you'd have a hard time finding two more evenly matched players, what with both entering their magical fourth year and having suited up for nearly an identical number of NHL games entering this season (178 for Desharnais, 187 for Ennis). But when you examine their path to the NHL, interesting differences emerge.

Desharnais, now age 27, was undrafted, and had a journey to the NHL mirroring that of other late bloomers (like P.A. Parenteau, [Johnny Boychuk](#) and [Matt Moulson](#)) in that he only became a regular with the Habs at age 25 after toiling in the AHL for several seasons. In fact, Desharnais just this month reached the point where he's now played in more NHL games than AHL contests. Conversely, Ennis is only 24 and was a former first round selection, with a path to the NHL (time in juniors, followed by just one AHL season) consistent with someone of that draft position.

In terms of contract status, both have already received mini-paydays. Ennis is finishing a two year deal that paid him \$2.5M last season and \$3.0M for 2013-14 and will become an RFA after this season, while Desharnais is on year one of a four year \$14M deal.

The reality is both players are earning enough to have their teams think twice about not giving them quality Ice Time (more on this below). And while Desharnais' time spent toiling in the AHL might make him especially hungry and eager to work harder to succeed, keep in mind that Ennis also hasn't exactly had things handed to him on a platter either, what with being a former first rounder roughly the size of a [Dustin Byfuglien](#) pregame snack. Plus, Ennis has added motivation to earn a pay jump for his next contract. To me, neither player holds an edge here.

Ice Time

Season

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Total Ice Time

Rank among team's forwards

PP Ice Time

Rank among team's forwards

SH Ice Time

2013-14

18:39 (T.E)

14:57 (D.D.)

5th (T.E.)

6th (D.D.)

3:42 (T.E.)

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2:21 (D.D.)

3rd (T.E)

4th (D.D.)

0:00 (T.E.)

0:23 (D.D.)

2012-13

17:52 (T.E)

16:27 (D.D.)

5th (T.E)

4th (D.D.)

3:22 (T.E.)

2:53 (D.D.)

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2nd (T.E.)

6th (D.D.)

0:03 (T.E.)

0:07 (D.D.)

2011-12

16:09 (T.E.)

18:23 (D.D.)

7th (T.E)

5th (D.D.)

1:56 (T.E.)

3:17 (D.D.)

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7th (T.E.)

1st (D.D.)

0:02 (T.E.)

0:27 (D.D.)

2010-11

15:40 (T.E.)

12:52 (D.D.)

8th (T.E.)

8th (D.D.)

2:16 (T.E.)

1:53 (D.D.)

6th (T.E.)

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7th (D.D.)

0:02 (T.E)

0:54 (D.D.)

It's clear from this data there are trouble signs for Desharnais, as his numbers slipped from 2011-12 to 2012-13 and have shrunk even further thus far in 2013-14 (through October 20th) despite the fact that he signed a new contract in the offseason. If a bigger contract can't bring with it significant minutes, then things clearly are not looking good.

Plus, we can't ignore the elephant in the room, namely the breakout performance of Montreal's "don't call us the EGG" line of [Lars Eller](#) , [Alex Galchenyuk](#) , and [Brendan Gallagher](#) . So far in 2013-14, Eller and Galchenyuk are receiving more Ice Time per game than Desharnais, while Galchenyuk and Gallagher are receiving more PP Ice Time. One might think this is due to [Max Pacioretty](#) missing a number of early season games, since much of Desharnais' value has come from his chemistry with Pacioretty. But the data from 2012-13 cuts against that argument, as his Ice Time was still lower than in 2011-12 despite both him and Pacioretty being healthy for all of 2012-13. It's hard to sugar coat these numbers – the ongoing decline in Ice Time for Desharnais is very concerning.

On the flip side, the Ice Time numbers for Ennis are trending nicely upwards, with him making gains in overall Ice Time in each of these seasons and in PP Ice Time in two of the past three. Beyond that, one of the players who ranks ahead of Ennis in both overall Ice Time and PP Ice Time is [Thomas Vanek](#) , who most expect to be traded before the deadline, leading to Ennis receiving even more Ice Time. Huge advantage in this area to Ennis.

Relative Value of Points

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Points are more valuable for a fantasy team when they're not shared by other players owned in your league, since those are the kinds of points that can cause actual movement in the standings. In looking at this area, it's a good opportunity to examine the [Frozen Pool](#) data for each player, as that will also give useful information about year-to-year trends in linemates.

2011-12

61.31%

EV

72 COLE,ERIK - 51 DESHARNAIS,DAVID - 67 PACIORETTY,MAX

52.44%

PP

72 COLE,ERIK - 51 DESHARNAIS,DAVID - 67 PACIORETTY,MAX

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25.55%

EV

63 ENNIS,TYLER - 82 FOLIGNO,MARCUS - 21 STAFFORD,DREW

14.91%

EV

63 ENNIS,TYLER - 9 ROY,DEREK - 21 STAFFORD,DREW

10.79%

EV

63 ENNIS,TYLER - 19 HODGSON,CODY - 21 STAFFORD,DREW

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10.27%

EV

63 ENNIS,TYLER - 42 GERBE,NATHAN - 21 STAFFORD,DREW

16.26%

PP

63 ENNIS,TYLER - 82 FOLIGNO,MARCUS - 21 STAFFORD,DREW

9.34%

PP

63 ENNIS,TYLER - 29 POMINVILLE,JASON - 21 STAFFORD,DREW

2012-13

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47.41%

EV

51 DESHARNAIS,DAVID - 11 GALLAGHER,BRENDAN - 67 PACIORETTY,MAX

14.62%

EV

72 COLE,ERIK - 51 DESHARNAIS,DAVID - 67 PACIORETTY,MAX

49.79%

PP

51 DESHARNAIS,DAVID - 11 GALLAGHER,BRENDAN - 67 PACIORETTY,MAX

24.79%

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PP

72 COLE,ERIK - 51 DESHARNAIS,DAVID - 67 PACIORETTY,MAX

26.53%

EV

63 ENNIS,TYLER - 82 FOLIGNO,MARCUS - 21 STAFFORD,DREW

11.09%

EV

63 ENNIS,TYLER - 42 GERBE,NATHAN - 9 OTT,STEVE

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15.68%

PP

63 ENNIS,TYLER - 82 FOLIGNO,MARCUS - 29 POMINVILLE,JASON - 26 VANEK,THOMAS

13.94%

PP

63 ENNIS,TYLER - 19 HODGSON,CODY - 9 OTT,STEVE - 29 POMINVILLE,JASON

2013-14 (through October 20th)

21.57%

EV

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48 BRIERE,DANIEL - 51 DESHARNAIS,DAVID - 67 PACIORETTY,MAX

14.46%

EV

17 BOURQUE,RENE - 48 BRIERE,DANIEL - 51 DESHARNAIS,DAVID

13.24%

EV

17 BOURQUE,RENE - 51 DESHARNAIS,DAVID - 8 PRUST,BRANDON

43.28%

PP

17 BOURQUE,RENE - 48 BRIERE,DANIEL - 51 DESHARNAIS,DAVID

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23.88%

PP

48 BRIERE,DANIEL - 51 DESHARNAIS,DAVID - 67 PACIORETTY,MAX

40.74%

EV

63 ENNIS,TYLER - 82 FOLIGNO,MARCUS - 21 STAFFORD,DREW

10.95%

EV

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63 ENNIS,TYLER - 82 FOLIGNO,MARCUS - 9 OTT,STEVE

94.17%

PP

63 ENNIS,TYLER - 19 HODGSON,CODY - 26 VANEK,THOMAS

From this data, we can see that Ennis' line placement has stabilized more each year, while Desharnais went from a very stable situation in 2011-12 to bouncing around a bit more last season and even more this season, although again that likely has a lot to do with the injuries this season to Pacioretty. Plus, the only players who Ennis or Desharnais are seeing regular even strength time with this season that are more than 6% owned in Yahoo leagues are Ott (19%) and Pacioretty (78%). And with Ennis only seeing about 11% with Ott versus Desharnais seeing more than 20% with Pacioretty, the slight edge in this area goes to Ennis.

Secondary Categories

Season

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Plus/Minus

Hits

Blocked Shots

PIMs

Shots

2012-13

-2 (D.D.)

-14 (T.E.)

26 (D.D.)

28 (T.E.)

18 (D.D.)

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25 (T.E.)

26 (D.D.)

16 (T.E.)

66 (D.D.)

108 (T.E.)

2011-12

T.E. = 48 games

D.D. = 81 games

+10 (D.D.)

+11 (T.E.)

33 (D.D.)

26 (T.E.)

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48 (D.D.)

18 (T.E.)

24 (D.D.)

14 (T.E.)

98 (D.D.)

82 (T.E.)

2010-11

D.D = 43 games

T.E. = 82 games

-3 (D.D.)

+0 (T.E.)

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16 (D.D.)

42 (T.E.)

19 (D.D.)

27 (T.E.)

12 (D.D.)

30 (T.E.)

55 (D.D.)

210 (T.E.)

Just as both guys are within 10 games of each other for total regular season NHL games played prior to this season, their career totals for most secondary stats over the past three seasons were also remarkably close. For example, we can see that total Hits for each player are separated by only 21 (advantage to Ennis), total Blocked Shots by only 13 (edge to Desharnais), total PIMs only by two (Ennis having more), and total career plus/minus by only eight (Desharnais being more plus). And if we add all these together, the difference is just two!

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But the reality is that neither player has impressive totals in any of those secondary categories. In fact, the only secondary category where one of them would hold value is Shots, as Ennis has a roughly two to one advantage over Desharnais for this period and has above average totals for a center in general.

Windexiness

In many leagues, Ennis and Desharnais might be good enough to be owned by not good enough to start all season long, instead being cycled into and out of the line-up to take advantage of scheduling or as an injury replacement. Thus, it makes sense to examine how streaky (or “windexy”) each player is. Here’s the data for each player for the past three seasons:

Season

Total Points Scored

Stretches of four or more games with zero points in each game

Stretches of four or more games with at least one point in each game

Total number of two point games

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Total number of three or more point games

2012-13

28 (D.D.)

31 (T.E.)

1 (D.D.) – 5 games

1 (T.E.) – 7 games

1 (D.D.) – 4 games

1 (T.E.) – 4 games

7 (D.D.)

7 (T.E.)

0 (D.D.)

1 (T.E.)

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2011-12

60 (D.D.)

34 (T.E.)

4 (D.D.) – 4, 4, 5 games

2 (T.E.) – 4, 8 games

4 (D.D.) – 4, 4, 4, 6 games

3 (T.E.) – 4, 5, 5 games

12 (D.D.)

7 (T.E.)

4 (D.D.)

2 (T.E.)

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2010-11

22 (D.D.)

49 (T.E.)

2 (D.D.) – 4, 9 games

4 (T.E.) – 4, 4, 5, 6 games

2 (D.D.) – 4, 4 games

0 (T.E.)

1 (D.D.)

12 (T.E.)

2 (D.D.)

2 (T.E.)

This data paints the players as similarly non-windexy at this point, although Ennis had been very windexy back in 2010-11. And just like with career games played and some secondary category stats, they're very even – just look at 2012-13! What's also interesting is neither player has ever recorded more than three points in a game. Overall, no edge to either player.

Value vs. Cost

In Yahoo leagues, as of October 20th Ennis was 44% owned and ranked 128th (just below [Jussi Jokinen](#) and [Jiri Hudler](#), and just above [Scott Hartnell](#) and [Brayden Schenn](#)), while Desharnais was only 10% owned and ranked down at 184th (just below Devon Setoguchi and [Bryan Bickell](#), and just above Olli Jokinen and [Curtis Glencross](#)). I'm a bit surprised the gap between the players is so wide, since although Desharnais doesn't seem to be the same player he was in 2011-12, Ennis has his own issues, most notably just one point in his first ten games this season.

Look at it this way – is Ennis a better value to your team than 43% of all other NHL players, and is Desharnais a worse value than all but 10%? I think that at present Ennis is overvalued and Desharnais is undervalued. Pretty big edge to Desharnais here.

So Who Wins?

In truth, neither player is in a great spot right now. Ennis is toiling – poorly - for one of the league's worst teams whose best players ([Ryan Miller](#) and [Thomas Vanek](#)) will be elsewhere by this time next season, if not sooner. Plus, he's not even the number one center –

[Cody Hodgson](#)

is. Desharnais plays for a better team, but between injuries to his running buddy

[Max Pacioretty](#)

and breakout performances from the likes of

[Lars Eller](#)

and

[Alex Galchenyuk](#)

he seems like the odd man out in Montreal, perhaps until

[Tomas Plekanec](#)

and his \$5M per year salary leaves town after 2015-16.

I give the clear edge in a points only one year league to Ennis, since someone will have to score for Buffalo and Ennis will get every chance he can to succeed. In fact, Ennis probably holds the edge in all one year leagues, except perhaps those which put a premium on plus/minus, as I think Ennis is a good bet to finish this campaign with a plus/minus rating even worse than his -14 from last season.

For keeper leagues it's a bit of a cloudier picture. I actually think Desharnais might be trade bait this offseason (or sooner), due to the top six logjam in Montreal and since his contract isn't too hard for another squad to swallow. On another team with a secure place in the top six, Desharnais could shine once again. Meanwhile, Ennis is all but assured to stay with Buffalo and re-sign there as an RFA. Although that will give him a secure top six spot and prime Ice Time, he'll be challenged to put up great stats for a team that will likely struggle to score and win games.

If you have either player in a keeper, hold onto him for this season. Desharnais owners should hope he gets moved, while Ennis owners should cross their fingers that Buffalo finds a way to surround Ennis with a decent supporting cast in 2014-15 and beyond.

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