Confession time guys. I'm still way into the 90's. Seinfeld re-runs still crack me up, my favourite bands are mostly grunge, and my fashion sense is still awkwardly horrible (probably because my clothes from grade six still fit me). Beyond my cell phone (which I abhor) and high speed internet I really haven't moved on from that decade. I know this because over a decade later I still don't find it the least bit weird that I still have an Austin Powers "Oh Behave!" poster hanging above my bed. The irony has never ceased to crack me up, just like I'll never get over the awe I feel for players who played back then. I don't know if it is nostalgia or if I am a complete loser, my friends won't tell me.

The good news (outside of having saved a crap load of money on clothes) is that it could be worse. I mean, at least some of those things I love still exist. Seinfeld is now on more than ever, Pearl Jam is still touring and a couple of my all-time favourites, Teemu Selanne and Jaromir Jagr, are taking one last kick at the can. To be honest, the latter one is the one that interests me most because I feel like time is running out. This has repercussions not only for you fellow nostalgics but for all of us fantasy owners out there. That's why we are going old school with this week's *Cage Match*. It's Jagr vs. Selanne, time to rock out like it's 1995.

One of the most common biases in fantasy sports is the recency bias. This is the one where people overvalue what players have done for them lately. This is the very first thing that we have to tackle when considering any *Cage Match* and certainly this one in particular. Why? Well because Selanne has done a whole crap load for us lately and what has Jagr done?

Play in the KHL?

Uh… thanks, Jagr.

I think to really consider this week's *Cage Match* we need to wipe the slate clean or at least provide a levelling perspective.

The first thing I see is that Selanne overachieved last season. It is not that he went above and beyond his talents but rather that he simply played more games than one would expect of him. Selanne is still one of the better players in the game, particularly on the power play, but at the ripe old age of 41 his body is breaking down and has failed him the last several seasons. Over the last four years Selanne has averaged 54.5 games played and considering he had off-season knee surgery that had him contemplating retirement I do not consider him a safe bet to repeat the 73 games played he posted last season. I am not willing to count on him for more than 60. Couple that with the expected regression of some of his teammates (see Visnovsky, Lubomir and Perry, Corey) and I have him pegged for no higher than 60 points. Obviously there is some swing value here if he plays more games but it is not something you can bank on. The take away here is that his 80 from last season is a real long shot to be repeated.

The next thing is to figure out what we can reasonably expect from Jagr this season. To be completely honest I am highly optimistic. I would like to propose this question: If Selanne can hit 80 points, why can't Jagr?

The arguments against Jagr are three-fold. How will he re-acclimate to NHL play? Is his opportunity as good as Selanne's? And is he even as good as Selanne?

The first one is the most important and the one we will most struggle with because we simply will not know how Jagr adjusts until he does so. What we do know is that he spent the last three seasons playing in what is arguably the second best league on Earth, the KHL, and dominated

scoring at a point per game pace. It's worth noting that the KHL is a lower scoring league and on top of that it is much harder to register assists over there then it is playing in the NHL. There is no model that I am aware of that can extrapolate how previous KHL scoring projects for future NHL scoring but I would like to propose that the restricted scoring balances out the reduced talent level. Essentially what I'm saying is that yes I do think Jagr can score at a point per game level much like Selanne.

We also know that over the past three seasons Jagr has competed for the Czech Republic against elite talent in one Olympics and three World Championships. Over that span he has gone for 28 points in 30 games.

Furthermore, in his last NHL season, 2007-08, Jagr scored 71 points in 82 games for the leagues sixth worst offensive team. What all this proves is that when given the opportunity Jagr will produce.

Consider then that Jagr is joining what was last season's third best offensive team. Clearly he will have the opportunity to produce. We already know from training camp that the Flyers would like to use Jagr on the top line with Giroux and van Riemsdyk. This should prove an excellent opportunity.

Now is it as good as Selanne's opportunity? I think that if you compare their respective teammates that things stack up tighter than Kate Winslett at the Emmy's. When I look at Philly's

top four of Giroux, JVR, Briere and Pronger I see a group that is less proven but no less potent than Anaheim's top four of Getzlaf, Perry, Ryan and Visnovsky. I do not think it's at all a stretch to expect similar levels of production out of Philadelphia's top grouping and for Jagr to bring the same sort of veteran presence to that group as Selanne has in Anaheim. Certainly for lack of knowing whether Jagr will fit in for sure you have to give Selanne the advantage in opportunity but only because we know that he fits like a glove.

Finally we need to know if Jagr is even as good as Selanne and if history is any indication he just might be better. Since the lockout Selanne has only outscored Jagr by 99 points despite Jagr having been out of the league for three full seasons. Granted Jagr was helped immensely by his huge 2005-06 season when he led the league in scoring, he is never the less bringing quite the track record with him. Jagr is younger, healthier and has a better scoring history than Selanne. All indications are that Jagr is physically capable of replicating what Selanne has these past few seasons but on a larger scale because he will stay healthier. In Jagr's last three NHL seasons he did not miss a single game and over the past three seasons in the KHL he only missed nine games. Granted they play a shorter schedule but Jagr is simply built to take the pounding of a long season. I mean, look at those glutes! His but is literally built to take a pounding, and (Hey! Get your mind out of the gutter and stick with me here) at 240 lbs. he should stand up to take whatever pounding the NHL has to give him. If anything his game suffered from the open ice of the European game and will only flourish in the tighter quarters of the NHL.

On top of pure talent one must further consider scoring categories. Jagr is a peripheral monster. He has always boasted strong Plus/Minus numbers and playing for Philly versus Selanne's Anaheim is surely advantage Jagr. Jagr is also not shy about mixing it up giving him a solid advantage in PIM. SOG are probably pretty close. Both Selanne and Jagr used to fire the puck an obscene amount but Selanne has grown more generous in his later years and Jagr seemed to be trending that way as well. I feel safe assuming Jagr will not post more than 220 SOG, which should give him a slight but not astronomical advantage.

Points are another story. Due to the unknown factor of Jagr's adjustment period I cannot in good conscience give him the benefit of producing at a point per game pace right out of the gate. That will skew his numbers down to a pace more in line with what Selanne should do with his mere 60 games. That puts Goals, Assists and PPP all as a wash. Goals and Assists may swing one way or the other but overall points should be the same so those two categories will cancel each other out. As for PPP this category is a wash because both Selanne and Jagr are wizards on the power play. I mean at this point let's call them Gandalf and Dumbledore. These old bastards will put a spell on you. It is certainly worth mentioning that Anaheim's power play was way more potent than the Flyers was last season but there are two factors that make me believe they can right the ship. The first is Jagr himself bringing his grey-bush, old school magic to the table and the other is Pronger who was notably missing for much of last season.

There are too many unknowns in play to give Jagr the decisive edge over Selanne but I am certainly leaning that way. Call it a tie because Selanne is definitely no sure thing either. With that in mind consider then that with Selanne having signed his new deal how many people in your pool will be suffering from the recency bias and taking Selanne way ahead of Jagr? My guess is a few. My suggestion is to wait it out and grab Jagr later on or if you own Selanne offer him up for Jagr and see what incentives you can receive for your trouble.

For those of you feeling as nostalgic as me here are some highlight packages.

{youtube}oDX0pxdidB4{/youtube}

{youtube}PPkE2RnO4Fs{/youtube}

Also, here's a great all-time Cage Match: The Salute vs. the Machine Gun. What do you guys think?