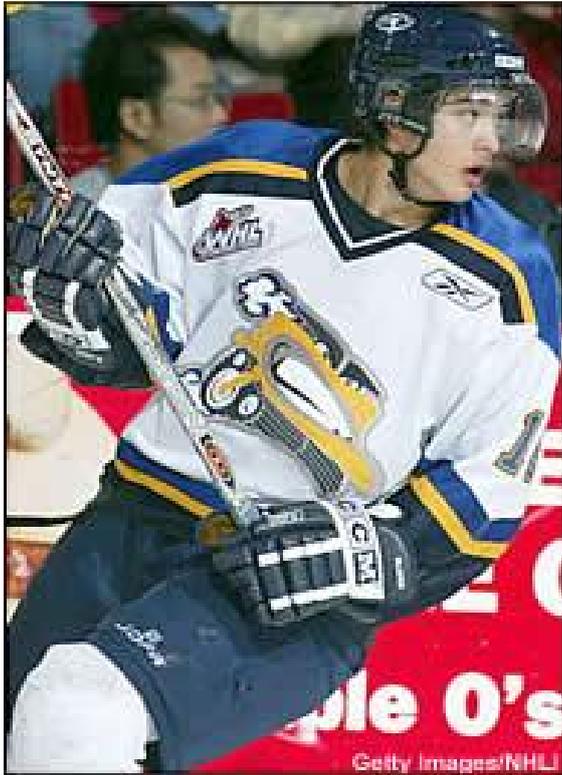


## Repik-ing Playoff Performers

Written by Matt Bugg

Saturday, 12 May 2007 02:45 - Last Updated Monday, 24 September 2007 09:29

---



Far and away, the biggest story of the 2006-07 postseason across the Canadian Hockey League has been the re-arrival of some forgotten names. Once touted as can't-miss stars, these players seemed to start out well, bust, and then suddenly shoot back on the scene with otherworldly play. So which of these guys should you trust to remain out of bust territory?

### WHL

**Devin Setoguchi** (Prince George Cougars, San Jose)

No matter what Devin Setoguchi ever does, he will always be known as the guy the San Jose

## Repik-ing Playoff Performers

Written by Matt Bugg

Saturday, 12 May 2007 02:45 - Last Updated Monday, 24 September 2007 09:29

---

Sharks traded up to draft with Anze Kopitar still on the board. It didn't help that the 8th overall pick in 2005 has sucked for most of his post-draft junior career. Well, that was until he shook off homesickness and more serious physical ailments following a shocking trade from the Saskatoon Blades. A beast once finally comfortable in Prince George, the 20-year-old was a key member of the Cougars during their playoff run, scoring numerous OT game-winners enroute to a 11-10-21 line in 15 games. The major question is this: can Setoguchi, who is headed for the AHL, keep it up? Horribly inconsistent throughout his career, there have been as many glimpses of brilliance as there have been of him just not having the mindset to be a star in the pros. Sharks fans are projecting a Jonathan Cheechoo type career; that's probably not a bad bet, since to date, Cheechoo was the best in the league one year and merely very good or okay the rest.

### **Michal Repik** (Vancouver Giants, Undrafted)

So how does a player who hasn't even been draft-eligible end up on this list? It's because a lot more was expected of a prospect who scored 52 points in 69 games as a WHL rookie. Heading into his sophomore year, Repik, a 5'11, 184 lbs left wing from the Czech Republic, looked to possibly be among the league leaders in scoring thanks to his strong supporting cast and developing skillset. Instead, the 18-year-old winger missed 13 games and failed to score any more than 55 points. Questions about durability and hockey sense dogged the winger into the playoffs, where Repik has so far silenced all critics. The first star in Vancouver's deciding game over Setoguchi's Cougars, Repik has been a star in almost every game, compiling a league-best 24 points in 19 playoff games. Initially thought of as a first round pick before sliding, Repik now jumps back into the top 20 and maybe even 15.

### **Kendall McArdle** (Vancouver Giants, Florida)

19 goals in 63 regular season games. 10 in 20 playoff games?! Easily the most baffling turn-around, seemingly unbustable bust Kendall McArdle was a 20th overall pick doomed for failure by everyone who had ever seen him. Simply not smart or skilled enough to keep up both in the WHL and internationally, the 20 year-old winger entered the playoffs with ironically no pressure and ended up scoring a boatload of points for the Giants. The major difference? Confidence. McArdle actually looks like he knows what he's doing and what he's capable of, something he hadn't ever shown before for prolonged periods. But does this mean he's out of the woods? Nada. Confidence can help a skilled player become consistent, but it does jack for a player who just isn't good enough. McArdle, unfortunately, is not.

## OHL

### **Sam Gagner** (London Knights, Undrafted)

Another undrafted player. Tough crowd. Forgotten in the lovefest over James Van Riemsdyk, Pat Kane, Jakub Voracek, Kyle Turris, Alexei Cherepanov and Karl Alzner, Sam Gagner sort of faded as all the credit went to his linemate Kane. But as the calibre of play as lifted, so too has the offensively gifted centreman. Disregarded because of a lack of size, speed and defensive awareness, Gagner has shown himself superior to his peers in hockey sense and overall ability,

## Repik-ing Playoff Performers

Written by Matt Bugg

Saturday, 12 May 2007 02:45 - Last Updated Monday, 24 September 2007 09:29

---

potting a playoff-leading 22 assists in 16 games. While those numbers wouldn't be the same without Kane, Gagner hasn't riding shotgun.

### **Jiri Tlustý** (Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds, Toronto)

It's been a rough year for Jiri Tlustý, and a lot of people forgot him- partly because they didn't know where he went! After beginning the year in the AHL, the Leafs decided not to burn up a year of service, sending the skilled centreman to the OHL. Shortly into his major junior career, Toronto's first round selection in 2006 broke his ankle and was sidelined for a month. Toss in a bout of culture shock, and you've got a pretty good excuse for a bad year. 34 points in 37 OHL games was respectable in light of the entire year, but the 6'0, 209 lbs centre got better as the year progressed. In 13 playoff games, the underdog Greyhounds were lead by the neck by Tlustý, who tallied 17 points in just 13 games. The team was eliminated from contention in mid-April, but had no business going as far as they did with - much less without - the next Pavel Datsyuk.

### **Jared Staal** (Sudbury Wolves, Undrafted)

And the Staal family magic continues. Simply an atrocious skater and player to start the year, the youngest of the bunch had the worst debut of a Staal to date, netting 3 points 63 games as an OHL rookie. However, playing with the best means learning from the best, and Jared has done that in spades. Faster, more physical, and the scorer of the biggest goal of the postseason for the Sudbury Wolves, the 2008-eligible forward has at least shown he has some semblance of a checking game. As an aside, am I the only one who thinks Jared should just become a goalie? It just works- one brother is a centre, one is winger, one is a defenseman... how was he NOT a goalie? Get him to throw the pads on over the summer and face shots from his siblings. He'll get better over those three or four months than he will facing OHL shooters.

## **QMJHL**

### **David Perron** (Lewiston MAINEiacs, Undrafted)

As a year older than most of his draftmates, 19 year-old David Perron was seen as a shoe-in for a mid to late first round selection. While he did quite well- 83 points in 70 games well- there were questions as to whether those born in 1989 would do better with a year of seasoning and thus would make better picks. Well, as the 3rd-highest playoff scorer in the league, Perron has gone a long way towards silencing his critics. After leading Lewiston in points during the regular season, the Sherbrooke native took the squad on his back, netting 12-16-28 in 17 games. A slick, intelligent forward capable of making the small decisions that win games, Perron proved he could also do the big things required of a top prospect.

### **Raffaele D'Orso** (Val-d'Or, Undrafted)

Once considered a top goaltending prospect for the 2007 Entry Draft, an extremely mediocre

## Repik-ing Playoff Performers

Written by Matt Bugg

Saturday, 12 May 2007 02:45 - Last Updated Monday, 24 September 2007 09:29

---

regular season doomed Raffaele D'Orso in late-season rankings. In fact, Central Scouting thought so low of the 5'10 keeper to rank him third-worst out of thirty goalies in their final rankings. One can't really blame them. In 31 games, the QMJHL rookie fumbled badly, allowing 3.17 GAA while posting a 0.888 Sv%. Facing the spectre of playoff hockey, many expected Val-d'Or to implode from the net out. However, it was in goal that the squad was strongest. In 21 games, the tandem of D'Orso and 21 year-old Jeremy Duchesne held their squad in it, with the former playing outstanding in three games. In fact, D'Orso's 2.41 GAA and 0.915 Sv% are both the third best totals in the postseason. It's not a large sample size, but it's enough to get him out of the rankings cellar.