

The ForgOTTen One

Written by J Status

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For all the PIM leagues out there: this is for those who cherish that dying breed. How often do these vital fantasy cogs get the headlines in articles? They often deserve it. Steve Ott certainly deserves it. He is the next of this ilk to rise, or should I say return, to fantasy-league prominence.

I feel people drastically undervalue players that can both put up 150 penalty minutes and get you 20-plus points. Those players are rare and should be considered very valuable. They are the players that can single-handedly win you an entire category in a week in head-to-head while at the same time not hurt your other numbers.

Here is a little history lesson on the scoring bruisers...

It is really tough to score from the sin bin... especially in the modern NHL. In 2005-06 there were 12 players that ended the season with 150 penalty minutes or more. Five of them scored 20 points or more. PIM superstar Sean Avery led the way with an astonishing 257 penalty minutes and 39 points. You would guess he was the most valuable, but not so fast... Brenden Morrow was a bad man back then. He produced a dominating 65 points while racking up 183 penalty minutes. He was easily a top 20 player in most PIM leagues. Unfortunately, he has since cleaned up his life on the ice, and his penalty minutes are way down. Chris Neil also had significant fantasy influence with 33 points and 204 penalty minutes.

Last season, only six players finished the season with 150 penalty minutes or more. Sean Avery again dominated in value with 48 points, 249 shots on goal and 178 penalty minutes. Chris Neil was the only other significant contributor and only other 150-plus PIM player to contribute 20 or more points and 100 or more shots on goal. So you can see, scarcity has become a real issue.

Luckily, this season, help has arrived. As everyone knows, Daniel Carcillo has destroyed the PIM scene in his first full season in the NHL. He was amazing before the injury, but imagine if he would have stayed with Pittsburgh and protected Crosby. Regardless, what many haven't noticed is the improvements around the league in this category. At just past the mid-point of the season for most teams, 16 players already have 80 penalty minutes or more. Among them, one has the potential to join Avery, Neil, and now Carcillo as consistent combination points and penalty minutes threats. I forgot to mention... he has done it before. Much of the fantasy world has forgotten as well. After a season filled with injury, Steve Ott is back to prove he can do it again.

Did you know in 2005-06, Ott produced 22 points and 178 penalty minutes? Did you know Steve Ott was a first round pick and thus, actually has some offensive ability? Did you know he is only 25 years old? Finally, did you know he has been seeing time on the second line in Dallas?

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Steve Ott now has 12 points in 38 games with a more than solid 88 penalty minutes. Here is how he compares to Avery's perennial runner-up Chris Neil when projected over a full 82 games.

82 game 2007-08 Projections

Steve Ott: 9G, 16A, 25P, plus-2, 190PIM, 99SOG

Chris Neil: 8G, 18A, 26P, plus-6, 196PIM, 100SOG

Well, look at that. They are the same player this season. Also, keep in mind, Ott is three years younger and has already shown this ability in the past. With a healthy season, he is well on his way to joining the elite of fantasy-viable PIM producer. If you are constantly losing out to the Carcillo, Avery and Neil owners out there, then go get your own. The forgotten one needs to be remembered again.

The Status Report: *My long-winded Ott tirade makes for a quick and snappy report this week.*

Sell High:

Dan Ellis, G, NSH

Yesterday, after weeks of talks and fluctuating value, I finally traded Ellis to the Mason owner in one of my leagues. Needless to say, when Ellis coughed up five goals, I wasn't extremely upset. Still, for my article, it isn't great. I am one game too late to encourage you to move him. I hope you did. If some how he does rebound another couple games, make the moves. Mason owners are really sweating when you look at the great numbers Ellis has produced, so the value you can get is probably going to be worth your while. He is an unproven commodity and someone you're better off cashing in on.

Ladislav Nagy, LW, LA

He has 13 points in his last nine games. That is over half of his total for the entire season. He has been a healthy scratch throughout his last couple seasons in the NHL and a real pain to own. Do I need to say more? Get rid of the enigma before he fades again.

Hold:

Teemu Selanne, RW, UFA

Despite the exciting news that Teemu is again skating and seemingly considering his options more seriously, his value will be much higher the day he returns than now. Wait it out. If you trade him now, it is unlikely you will get enough value to make it worthwhile. Keep gambling and be patient. The payoff is worth it.

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Cactus of the Week: *The player you shouldn't touch right now.*

Patrick Marleau, C, SJ

Dare I say, this must to be rock bottom? I think most of us thought that was a few weeks ago. Things have become much worse recently.

Last 10 Days: 3GP, 0G, 0A, 0P, minus-4, 2PIM, 3SOG

He is now at minus-12 and has only 18 points at the seasons mid-point. The native of Aneroid could use some 'roids this season. The Wilsons need to do something to shake things up for Marleau. Do the Sharks dare trade him at his lowest? Maybe he is the Blues next buy low success story. They can only wish. Marleau will get on a roll one way or another by the 60-game mark. He is too talented not to...right?

Fantasy Flashback: *Your weekly reminder that fantasy hockey is a rollercoaster.*

Brenden Morrow, LW, DAL

In returning to the PIM theme, we revisit Mr. Morrow. At the age of 28, Brenden is in his 8th season with the Dallas Stars. From 2000 to 2006 he had five 100-plus penalty minute seasons. It all culminated with his 2005-06 fantasy masterpiece.

2005-06: 81GP, 23G, 42A, 65P, plus-30, **183PIM**, 146SOG

2006-07: 40GP, 16G, 15A, 31P, minus-2, 33PIM, 101SOG

2007-08: 44GP, 15G, 26A, 41P, plus-7, 38PIM, 115SOG

Now as you can see, the reduction in penalty minutes has resulted in increased shot and point production. Still, there is no way he is more valuable in PIM leagues now, than he was in 2005-06. He was a beast we may not see again for quite some time. It is unfortunate how his improved discipline for the Stars has affected his fantasy value negatively in those leagues. That is the paradox that the PIM stat provides.

Thank you to all that applied for the HHKL, and have a great week everyone!

Please send your questions or comments to jstatus@dobberhockey.com