

Frog or Prince □ part 2

Written by Eric Maltais

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After taking a look at players who seemed to have turned into unforeseen princes in my last article, this week I'm focusing on players who've been mainly frogs this season when you expected them to be your fantasy team princes. You'll notice that there have been much more disappointments this season than there have been pleasant surprises.

Note: The values next to each player indicate the pace of production over 82 games based on the player's per-game production through November 10.

Patrice Bergeron – 47 points Not only does Bergeron have to deal with coming back following serious concussion repercussions last season he has to manage with linemates such as P.J. Axelsson and Michael Ryder. Verdict: Frog as long as he plays with current linemates

Zdeno Chara – 23 points Chara hasn't scored fewer than 39 points in the past five seasons. He'll snap out of it sooner rather than later. Verdict: Prince

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Eric Staal – 49 points Although he averages over a point-per-game over the last three seasons, Staal has the habit of being very streaky. When he's hot few players can put up the points like he can. Get him before he hits that hot stride. Verdict: Prince

Jonathan Toews – 6 goals It took Toews 13 games to score his first goal this season. It won't take 13 more for him to get his second one. Remember that he scored 24 goals in only 64 games last season. He's getting his shots on goal with 41 so it's only a matter of time before the puck starts finding the back of the net on a regular basis. Verdict: Prince

Erik Cole – 27 points I applauded the Oilers when they acquired Cole this past offseason and expected him to revert to the near 30-goal form he displayed in Carolina before last season. However, he hasn't clicked with any linemate yet in Edmonton despite lining up with Shawn Horcoff and Ales Hemsky to start the season. Verdict: Second half Prince

Dustin Penner – 22 points I am not a fan of Dustin Penner. I didn't believe his 29 goals in 2006-07 were for real and even his 23 goals last season were a pleasant surprise. While his production is bound to increase, I won't be surprised on the other hand if he fails to reach 20 goals this season. Verdict: Frog

Sam Gagner – 12 points It's been a very difficult season for the sophomore following a surprising 49-point season as a rookie. He got the opportunity to play on the top line next to Hemsky during the last couple of games, but there were no dividends so that experiment might not last very long. It could be a very difficult season for Gagner, but I'd expect him to bounce back in 2009-10. Verdict: Frog

Jay Bouwmeester – 18 points A notorious second-half player, Bouwmeester isn't surprising anyone with his slow start. As always acquire him after the Holidays. Verdict: First half frog, second half Prince

Sydney Crosby – 18 goals, Alexander Ovechkin – 21 goals Just to get those numbers up here...

Mike Ribeiro – 6 goals Ribeiro's 27 goals last season were an aberration considering he had never scored more than 20 goals and his once in a lifetime shooting percentage. While he could very well end up with 80 points, he won't reach 20 goals this season. Verdict: Frog for goals

Brendan Morrison – 10 points Morrison has been a perennial 50-point scorer averaging 58 points per 82 games since the start of his career. You'd have thought this kind of production would continue with Teemu Selanne at his side, but the two have struggled mightily. Of Selanne's nine goals, eight have come on the power play and Morrison isn't part of the top power play unit. My guess is that they'll soon have a hot streak and Morrison will be a hot pickup in most fantasy leagues. Verdict: Will become a Prince for a span

Andrei Kostitsyn – 33 points While both Kostitsyn brothers have struggled much more is expected of Andrei than Sergei. Linemates Alex Kovalev and Tomas Plekanec have been doing well lately so Andrei should follow suit soon enough. Verdict: Prince

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Brian Gionta – 13 goals Nobody expects Gionta to ever score 48 goals again, heck, we don't even expect him to score 30 goals anymore. But we do expect at least 20 to 25 goals...or we did at least. I just don't trust Gionta and wouldn't have him on any of my fantasy teams. Verdict: Frog

Steve Stamkos – 23 points It's a tough career debut the top overall pick in this year's draft. Other than a 3-point game Stamkos has been a non factor this season. His playing time is irregular and he has no quality linemates so don't expect much from Stamkos all season. 2009-10 will be the first real indicator of his true NHL value. Verdict: Frog as a rookie

Antoine Vermette – 23 points Vermette's point production increased each season during his four NHL seasons, but it will be extremely difficult to continue that trend this year following such a slow start. He's currently lining up with Jason Spezza and Dany Heatley so the outlook is very bright for Vermette, but he must seize this opportunity and produce quickly. Verdict: Prince

Ed Jovanovski – 13 points Much has been written about Jovocop on the site lately. You know he'll get going soon enough. Verdict: Prince

Milan Michalek – 18 goals After scoring 26 and 24 goals the last two seasons, Michalek was expected to make a run for the 30-goal mark this year. However, with Patrick Marleau now playing wing on the top line, Michalek is stuck with Pavelski at center and he's simply not good enough to take Michalek to another level. Verdict: Frog

David Perron – 0 goals Sophomore Perron has yet to score a goal this season. While I didn't expect a huge jump in production from last year's 13 goals, a run for 20 goals was reasonable. It obviously won't happen this season, but keeper leaguers shouldn't despair, he still has a bright future. Verdict: Frog

Tobias Enstrom – 33 points There were several doubters when before the season when I wrote that Hainsey's arrival would hurt Enstrom's production. Not only did this occur, but Mathieu Schneider's arrival didn't help matters for Enstrom either. He's adjusted his numbers thanks to five points in three games recently, but it's no coincidence that his resurgence has occurred during Schneider's absence due to injury. When Schneider returns expect Enstrom's numbers to suffer again. Verdict: Frog

Radim Vrbata – 10 points Stupid is as stupid does, the Lightning was stupid for signing him and so were you if you drafted him. Verdict: Not even worthy of being a frog.

Ryan Malone – 18 points Stupid is as stupid does, the Lightning...hey didn't I just write this?

Nicklas Backstrom – 35 points Once Ovechkin gets going so will Backstrom. I was way wrong expecting him to top the 90-point mark, but I'd acquire him still expecting that kind of production sooner or later. Verdict: Prince

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