

The Frog's Picks: Buying Low

Written by Eric Maltais

Wednesday, 31 October 2007 03:00 - Last Updated Wednesday, 31 October 2007 18:06



I received a question this week from Steve Emmert asking me which players are on my buy low list, and which are on the sell high. So this week I'll focus on buy low candidates and next week I'll address the sell high side. Some of the buy low targets might actually be free agents in some leagues, so if that's the case, just consider them nice pick-ups instead of trade targets.

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Ladislav Nagy – After an awful start that led to him being a healthy scratch for a couple of games, he has scored seven points in the last six games. Nagy is a very talented player who doesn't always put up the effort so his fantasy owners are probably very nervous about the fact that he was benched early in the season. However, it looks like coach Marc Crawford has ignited his fire so don't hesitate to make a bid for him.

Tuomo Ruutu – Ruutu has the talent to become an 80-point player, if he stays healthy, which is a big IF of course, but he did manage to stay healthy last season after missing the first 10 games. The Hawks are an extremely talented young team and as Patrick Kane and Jonathan Toews become NHL superstars, they'll upgrade Ruutu's value dramatically. He's a great buy-low in keeper leagues.

Marian Hossa, Slava Kozlov – The Thrashers are a complete mess right now, but once the team settles the coaching situation things will return to a more normal state and players like Hossa and Kozlov will produce as expected.

Ed Jovanovski – The window to acquire him at a low price is closing fast following his two-point outing during the last game, but it could also be seen as an opportunity to unload him by his owner. Jovocop is a 40 to 50 point producer when healthy and odds are good that he'll be traded to a better team before the trade deadline.

David Vyborny – Vyborny is not really a player to target specifically since his upside is limited, but if you're looking to make a multi-player trade and can get Vyborny as a throw-in because of his slow start, you can gain a 60-point player for next to nothing. And if he's a free agent in your league, he's certainly worth picking up.

Patrick Elias – I wrote about Elias last week and I talked about him on Sirius radio last Saturday. I believe in Elias and I also think now is the perfect time to acquire him at a really low cost with all the negative news surrounding him.

Patrick Marleau – I am worried about Marleau. He received a lot of flack during last year's playoffs and there were numerous trade rumors involving him during the off-season so his psyche probably isn't all that great this season. However, he has scored 28-plus goals in four straight seasons, so his 13-goal pace is way too low to even be considered as par for the season.

Jonathan Cheechoo – Cheechoo is on the same goal scoring pace as Marleau, but remember last year's slow start and the fact that he finished with 37 goals and go after him if his owner is tired of him.

Michael Ryder – Ryder can be very streaky so there's a good chance that the goal he scored during the last game is the beginning of a hot streak after a horrible start.

Brendan Shanahan – Although he's now 37 years old, Shanahan is second in the league behind Henrik Zetterberg in shot on goal. Those shots will start going in sooner or later.

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Shane Doan – Doan has six straight seasons of 20 to 30 goals, including three straight of 27 goals or more. He's no superstar and his upside is very limited in Phoenix, but he can be counted on when all is said and done. But act quickly, since he scored his first goal of the season along with two assists last Saturday so his fantasy owner might see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Jordan Staal – This is mainly a keeper league recommendation. With only one goal and two points thus far this season, Staal is a great buy-low candidate. It's no surprise to see his production slip this season since his 29 goals were an anomaly considering he had only 131 shots on goal last year. However, his long term upside remains very high and I still think the Penguins will wake up one of these days and put him on the top two lines where he can start producing like a no.2 overall draft pick.

Yahoo! Position eligibility

Following up on last week's column about position eligibility in Yahoo leagues, here are a few notable additions that were made by Yahoo during the past seven days.

Pavol Demitra (RW Added LW) – I mentioned last week that it was about time to give Demitra eligibility at left wing. Mission accomplished.

Jozef Stumpel (C Added RW) – His 50 to 60 points weren't interesting at center, but now to be considered at right wing.

Martin Straka (C Added LW) – Great value when he returns from injury in a few weeks.

Petr Prucha (C, RW Added LW) – Not going to have any value if Nigel Dawes continues to do so well while Straka is out.

Phil Kessel (C Added RW) – Kessel could benefit greatly from Patrice Bergeron's one-month absence.

Erik Cole and Dustin Brown (LW Added RW) – Solid players even more so with added flexibility.

Milan Michalek (RW Added LW) – Will become an 80-point player when shakes inconsistency bug.

Pierre-Marc Bouchard (C Added RW) – Was barely worth a notice at center, now a very attractive right wing.

Brad Boyes (C Added RW) – I am not surprised by his rebound in production and while his goal scoring pace will relent, he'll remain very valuable as a right-winger.

Michael Cammalleri (C Added LW) – A superstar as a left-winger.

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Antoine Vermette (C Added LW) – Wasn't worth it at center in shallow leagues, but on the wing he should be owned in all leagues.

Jason Williams (C Added RW) – Same as Vermette.

Brian Rolston (RW Added LW) – Flexibility is just added bonus.

Tuomo Ruutu (C Added LW) – As discussed above, really valuable as a left-winger.

Vaclav Prospal (C Added LW) – His season debut is for real, he's continuing the high-low cycle of the past five years. Since 2001-02, his point production has been 55-79-54-80-55. So you can expect an 80-point season.

Dustin Penner (RW Added LW) – His struggles were totally predictable and I don't expect him to pick things up any time soon.

Tomas Holmstrom (LW Added RW) – Having a career year, but will slow down quite a bit.

Dany Heatley (RW Added LW) – Ok, it doesn't change his value since he was already a top five player, but it's nice to have the added flexibility if you own him.

Industry Experts league

<http://hockey.fantasysports.yahoo.com/league/experts>

The Experts' league is a good indicator of free agents to target, but it's particularly useful to identify players who shouldn't be owned in many leagues since it's a 15-team league with 19 players per team (plus 2 IR spots). So if a player doesn't make the cut in the Industry Experts' league, he probably shouldn't make the owned in your league. So I encourage you to visit the league and it'll give you an idea of players to target and players to avoid.

Hot pickups this week included Devon Setoguchi who's all about upside at the moment and Dany Sabourin who has done well with limited the playing time he has received this season.

Questions for the Frog

We have 2 spots available for IR. I have Wellwood, Sullivan and Tucker. I have to let one go, who should it be? – Ken (Canada)

FROG: Sullivan's a point-per-game player so you absolutely must keep him on, particularly since he's on target to return in December. Wellwood has the potential to be a point-per game player, but hasn't done it over a full season yet and the fact that he's a center compared to Tucker who plays right wing would tilt the balance in the favor of keeping Tucker, particularly if you count penalty minutes. However, since Wellwood is expected back soon, you're better off

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keeping him if you need someone who can help you out sooner rather than later.

Wondering who to pick-up? Who to trade? Who to keep? Write to the Fantasy Frog at fantasyfrog@dobberhockey.com and you could see your fantasy hockey question answered in Croaks from the Fantasy Frog. Please indicate where you are from.