It wasn’t long ago that the Detroit Red Wings were high above the competition. They were the 747 with the rest of the league looking like ants. Don’t look now but… Detroit has company.

On February 6th, Detroit carried a huge lead ahead of the rest of the Western Conference with 86 points. At that time, the now runner-up Stars trailed them with 69 points. In less than a month, Dallas has made up 14 points by going 9-3-0 during that time. Meanwhile, Detroit went 2-8-2 adding only six points. Now the two are only separated by three points. Despite the fact

Detroit has played two fewer games, this is an amazing fall from grace for the perennial powerhouse. Will they collapse? At the beginning of February, their strangle hold seemed unbreakable and no one would have predicted such vulnerability. Now, the last two weeks have added even greater intrigue.

First, we have the return of the king. The quack attack is back at full force. Going into Monday, Anaheim had gone 9-1-0 since Detroit began their collapse. It all started with the return of Niedermayer and when that proved not enough, Selanne reemerged to put them over the top with 12 points in 11 games. The elder wonder even had a five-point game to boot. He's done exactly what he needed to in order to dig them out of their big hole. He both inspired and produced for a flailing team.

Next, the Colorado Avalanche add Foppa then Foote. We have yet to see how much these two potentially significant moves will help the Avs, but the returns of both Sakic and Stastny this month are definitely huge for this team. IF they can somehow get healthy, they can challenge the elite. I say this even with the loss of Svatos for the season. A healthy Sakic, Stastny, Smyth(eekk) and especially Foppa would definitely outweigh that loss on offense. Mentioning the Foote acquisition on the back end, this takes us into the trade deadline and back to the Pacific.

San Jose got the help they desired on defense. **Brian Campbell** will come in and do what **Matt Carle** couldn't… yet. He will produce as a great puck mover and play solid in his own. San Jose gets that much better where they needed it and they have plenty of forwards to fill the gap left by Bernier in the short term.

Finally, Dallas made the huge splash by acquiring Mr. Brad "I know how to make an entrance" Richards. With this move, Dallas has put the final nail in the coffin when it comes to thinking this is the team where offense comes to die. With the Morrow and Ribeiro connection and Richards making role players into semi-stars, this team looks primed to take over the top spot in the Western Conference. Will Detroit let them?

Let's recap. The Pacific is coming after Detroit. The Wings are no longer running this joint. Colorado is the huge darkhorse to come into prominence, but without health they will struggle to stay in 8th. During all these moves to catch up, Detroit has struggled with injuries and recently lost their best player in Lidstrom for a significant amount of time. Will the return of ancient Hasek make up for this. No… he is no better than Osgood anyway. Will Cleary make up for this. Umm no. The return of other D may help, but at their age and/or fragility (Kronwall), I'm not counting on them all.

Detroit chose to try to do one of the most difficult things in both fantasy and real sports. They are trying to play for now and the future. Is there team strong and deep enough to win it all and not sacrifice future players like Hudler for the now? Most teams aren't. In recent history, it would be just like Detroit to dominate and disappear. The rest of the conference is catching up, and they've done nothing.

The *Status* Report:

Sell High:
***Peter Forsberg* , C, COL**
If you can still trade… sell, sell, sell and then sell. We have been waiting forever for this guy to have value again. If you have a Colorado fan in your league, this may be the time already. Otherwise, after one great game, the time would be ideal. Use your best judgment, but I wouldn't be too picky. Forsberg is much older than his age. I think you know what I mean. You shouldn't take the extremely high risk when his name should get you a decent return very soon. Let someone else bask in the memories of glory days past, and avoid the harsh reality to come.

From the Dust:
***Zack Stortini* , RW, EDM**
Edmonton has featured several interesting youngsters this year, but Stortini seems to be one that most teams overlook. He has been a consistent PIM producer with double-digit penalty minute games in each month. Recently, he has increased that to the tune of 3 double-digit games in February. At only 22 years of age, he is showing he isn't necessarily one dimensional either with 8 points on the season. With only 79 games of experience, he could easily mature into a 20 and 150 player. He is actually on pace for over 200 PIM this year, is top five in the category and has just begun his career. He should increase points and decrease penalties but still be extremely serviceable in PIM leagues for years to come.

***Dick Tarnstrom* , D, CLS**
Teams need to grab this guy for the stretch run. Before Columbus he had 5 points in 28 games. With Columbus he has had 7 points in 10 games. Is he back to the player he was in the old NHL? I sure hope so. He scored like he was in the modern NHL back then. Don't forget he had 52 points with Pittsburgh in 2003-04. He is fitting in well as the Columbus QB.

Cactus of the Week: *The player you shouldn't touch right now.*
***Martin Havlat* , RW, CHI**

As if you didn't realize this already. Martin Havlat is the most frustrating player to own in fantasy. Or is he? At least you always can count on him getting hurt. How much longer can this guy keep it up? Before you know it, Martin may fade away into the distance as his diminishing skills resulting from injury cause him to scale back his play and eventually give up his dream. It is sad really, but often a reality for players in sports as physical as hockey. Chicago has a future

now and may not hesitate to pass him by. If you didn't get rid of him while you could, don't do it now. Right now you should not trade nor drop Havlat. He is too go to drop and too low to trade. That IS pretty frustrating. Good luck in your return from yet another surgery Martin. I'm sure glad I don't own you.

Fantasy Flashback: *Your weekly reminder that fantasy hockey is a rollercoaster.*
PIM Machines, NHL
In case you didn't notice, the NHL has been a bit rougher this year. There is more fighting and more minutes spreading around. Perhaps it is all a trickledown effect from a couple feisty new guys like Carcillo and Boll. It does take two to tango. Or maybe the NHL is loosening the reigns a bit. Overall, it just seems this can be attributed to a great new crop of scrappers coming into the league. The top of the leaderboard is littered with youngsters for this category.

2006-07: Full Season: 51 Players 100+ PIM, 6 Players 150+ PIM, Leader 233 PIM
2007-08: 3/4 Season: 26 Players 100+ PIM, **8** Players 150+ PIM, Leader **244** PIM

With 76 players with 75 PIM or more, the league is well on its way to passing the 51 over 100 last year. Carcillo has been an amazing leader despite his injuries and demotion. The league already has a higher leader in him and more 150+ with many games left to play. I really like to see this because it helps to diversify value to players in leagues in other ways besides scoring.

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