Fantasy Impact: Dallas has traded James Neal and Matt Niskanen to the Pittsburgh Penguins for Alex Goligoski.

The Penguins get: a potential first-line winger and a solid young No.4 d-man with some upside.

The Stars get: a power-play quarterback with a lot of upside.

Fantasy Players Impacted: Finally, a winger on the Penguins who has fantasy value. Sure, Chris Kuntis remains on the top line, but now the team can stop pretending that Pascal Dupuis has any business up there. James Neal is now a Sidney Crosby linemate. His upside was probably in the low 80s - but that was in Dallas. With (a healthy) Sidney Crosby, who is still two years or more from his prime, on his line for the next several years, it is certainly feasible for

Neal to get way beyond that low-80s upside. Ninety? A hundred? That would depend on Crosby and his continued growth. But WOW. Neal keeper league owners, feel free to take some time to yourself, close your eyes, and bask in your good fortune.

Oh, there were other players involved? Sorry, I got a little carried away. Matt Niskanen is a solid No.4 defenseman who can run the second PP unit. It's a role that the Penguins needed, given Kris Letang's breakthrough season. But I don't think he can get more than 45 points, barring a Letang injury. As for Goligoski, he is now the undisputed No.1 PP quarterback in Dallas. This actually helps him in the short term. I think he's a 55-point defenseman in Dallas, which is great - for now. Long term, he'll never be that 70-point rearguard that he could have been in Pittsburgh as he grew with that team. But take this as a 'win' for this year and for next year, Goligoski owners.

Dallas clears $2.5 million in salary, which will help them re-sign Brad Richards. I think the odds of him re-signing just went up significantly.

Dobber's Note: *I wish there was a way to make every reader understand what I write. I know the majority of you do, but there are some who also get carried away. The amount of emails I received either applauding or denying my statement about James Neal and breaching the subject of 100 points... it worries me. James Neal is not going to get 100 points. I would bet $1000 on it right now. Would I bet $100,000? No. That is where my definition of "upside" comes in. Neal's Upside was 80 points, and his "likely three-year peak" I had as 71 points. The move from Dallas to Pittsburgh, to me, pushes his upside to 95 and his 3YP to 78 or 79. That's a huge jump in the fantasy world. I mused about 100 points, but that's all it was - musing. If Joe*

Thornton can make Jonathan Cheechoo a 93-point player, than why can't Crosby do the same to Neal? After all, prior to the Thornton trade, I had Cheechoo's upside at 70. With Neal at 80...aren't his odds even better?
Before you tell me about how little Kunitz is doing with Crosby, let me say this - Kunitz is a 55-point player and Crosby makes him a 65-point player. Injuries got in the way of us seeing that. But call the bump 15%. If Neal was going to get 65 points in 2011-12 in Dallas, and I think that's ballpark, give him the same bump in Pittsburgh. So 75 points, if everyone is healthy.

Fantasy Players this helps, in order:

1. James Neal

big gap

still a gap

more gap

2. Alex Goligoski (short term - 1.5 years)

3. Sidney Crosby

4. Chris Kunitz

Fantasy Players this hurts, in order:

1. Pascal Dupuis

2. Matt Niskanen

3. Alex Goligoski (long term - the high-end upside)

4. Brad Richards (22 of Neal's points was on a line with Richards and Eriksson)