

Don't panic about The Juice

Written by Dobber

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The last four Calgary games have not been pretty for Kristian Huselius owners. After averaging less than seven minutes of ice time in the previous three games, Huselius found himself watching from the press box as a healthy scratch for Tuesday's game against the Canucks.

(Originally posted at [The Hockey News](#) on March 28)

It's a real head-scratcher, to be sure. Poolies have no idea what to make of it. In a recent game against Colorado, Huselius played about six minutes, yet still managed an assist. The following game he garnered similar ice time. In fact, prior to the games in question, 'The Juice' tallied eight points in eight games. So why the rollback in playing time?

The easy answer is coach Mike Keenan and his unbending desire for players to give the appearance of hustling on every shift. He is not a fan guys who appear to be coasting. For some players, that is their style – cruising the area where they feel they need to be to create a play. A lot of great players in the NHL's illustrious history had that style. Just not while playing for Keenan.

So the 29-year-old Huselius, despite ripping off 25 points in a 12-game span in December/January, is getting the "rookie" treatment.

Own him in a keeper league? Not to worry. While I would not count on Huselius for more than a couple of points in the final week of the regular season – and any points he contributes in the post-season would be a bonus – I will be counting on a big season next year.

Huselius is an unrestricted free agent in the summer and will sign for big bucks. With big bucks comes first line status and responsibility. When The Juice gets a lot of ice time, he gets a lot of points.

Expect a career season in 2008-09...

Los Angeles rookie goaltender Erik Ersberg is making the team wish they brought him up as their starter back in October. Perhaps they would be fighting for a playoff spot right now. You

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can't argue with these numbers: 11 games, 1.97 GAA, .942 SP, two shutouts and a 5-3-3 record on a weak team. At the very least, he will be a backup in the fall, but I would not be surprised if he and Jonathan Bernier shared duty on a much-improved Kings team.

All the offense is in place, so the addition of a player like Drew Doughty (an expected top-two pick in this summer's draft) and the growth of a player like Jack Johnson - along with better goaltending - will have the Kings competing. One year from now in the fantasy world, it will be extremely hard to acquire any Kings, so grab them while the price is still reasonable...

Boston's Phil Kessel has three points in the two games since Marc Savard went on the shelf (bone fracture in his back). The 20-year-old is right on track, from a fantasy standpoint. He followed up last season's 29-point rookie campaign with approximately 39 or 40 points. Look for another step forward next year, to the 45- 55-point range, and then a breakout in 2009-10 with upwards of 80 points. He could eventually be a 90-point player.