

NHL Playoff dark horses Pt. 2

Written by Dobber

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Just a few days left in the regular season and people are starting to prepare for their playoff pools. Here are some more players who are at the bottom of everybody's list (if they appear at all) who you should take a flyer on in the later rounds. Click [HERE](#) for Part 1.

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(Originally posted by [The Hockey News](#) on April 4)

Dan Cleary, Detroit – He came from nowhere a year ago and set career highs with 20 goals and 40 points in 71 games. Cleary followed that up with an impressive 12 points in 18 playoff games. This season, he has 41 points, but has played just 62 games. His production is improving and he has a track record of stepping it up in the playoffs. What's even better is the fact he missed time this season (broken jaw), thereby keeping his total points down and allowing him to fly under the radar at the draft table.

Chris Chelios, Detroit – If your pool requires defensemen, don't forget the ageless Chelios had seven points in the 2007 post-season – nearly two-thirds of his total in the regular season. If you think Detroit will go to the final, don't forget about this veteran.

Andrei Kostitsyn, Montreal – Forget about the fact he has a modest 53 points this season. I want you to treat him like a point-per-game player. He has 45 points in his past 57 games, eight in his past eight and he plays on the top line. He also receives plenty of power play time.

Johnny Oduya, New Jersey – No, this isn't a typo. I'm actually recommending a rearguard who has just 26 points this campaign. Twenty-one of his 26 points have come in the past 41 games, which is more than any other blueliner on the Devils in that span. Make no mistake; Oduya is the team's power play quarterback.

Nigel Dawes, N.Y. Rangers – Everyone but the most alert hockey fan will overlook the 23-year-old rookie. He only has 27 points, but Dawes earned 21 of them in his past 35 games and has the strong work ethic that really gets noticed when it matters most.

Brandon Dubinsky, N.Y. Rangers – Another Ranger who really picked it up in the second half. Dubinsky is a fixture on Jaromir Jagr's line, so if you feel Jagr is going to have a big post-season, then by extension so will Dubinsky. He has 34 points in his past 56 contests.

Braydon Coburn, Philadelphia – The 23-year-old is having a nice breakout campaign, hitting 36 points, but he is even better than that. His ice time – especially on the power play – has increased and it shows in his production. He has 20 points in his past 32 games.

Joffrey Lupul, Philadelphia – Lupul has had his share of injuries this season; holding his point totals down. Since most people in office pools just bring a printout of the regular season stats in lieu of a draft list, he will seem less desirable than he should be. Not every player can have a six-point game as Lupul did (against Pittsburgh Dec. 11). If you think Philadelphia will play 12 games (i.e. two rounds), this 24-year-old will get you at least 10 points.

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*These are some great dark horses, but I caution you not to load up on them. Finish selecting your team with two dark horse candidates – three at most, depending on the size of your roster.

Final set of dark horses coming Monday. Good luck at the draft!