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They make you pull your hair out. They also make you overtake the leader in your fantasy league. Come to think of it, they also make you lose that insurmountable lead that they got you just weeks later.

There are all kinds of streaky players. There are players with constant three-game spurts followed by a handful of pointless games, or players who give you nice and measurable 10-game runs that go hot and cold, hot and cold. There are the ‘marathon’ streaky players who tease you for 25 games of absolutely off-the-wall production, but then disappear, never to be seen from again.

The important thing is to label them for what they are. Just because Player X picked up 29 points in his last 23 games, that does not mean that he is a 100-point player, now or in the

future, if he is a streaky player. In fact, he may not even be a 70-point player, which sounds odd considering he just posted 29 in 23. If you know your players, you won't be dazzled by the hot (or cold – because it works both ways) phases.

Here are the 10 that come to mind when I think of the word "streaky":

10. Antti Miettinen, Minnesota – There was a three-week span last year in Dallas (13 points in 10) where you figured this guy could be an 80-point player. This was reiterated when he kicked off this campaign with his new team by tallying seven points in three contests. But he has had just 35 in 65 since then – and that included another three-game run of seven points and a three-game run of five points. Miettinen gets his points in 'spurts'.

9. Cory Stillman, Florida – He started 2007-08 with 34 points in 26 games and was among the league leaders. He had 31 more points the rest of the way. That's a long streak for him, as his M.O. is generally a streak of eight to 12 games. He had nine points in eight games to start this year, and he had 13 points in 11 games starting in late January. You will never see him hit 80 points again, but you will see two or three of those 10-game spurts each season.

8. Brad Boyes, St. Louis – He went at least four games without a point on three different occasions last year. This campaign, he has had stretches of three points in eight games, one in eight and two in seven. Sandwiched around those slumps are some impressive runs, including eight-game runs of 11 and 13 points. By the end of those runs you are convinced that he is a 90-point player. Nope.

7. Daniel Cleary, Detroit – Two seasons ago, in December he had me convinced that the Cleary we expected in the 90s had finally arrived with 27 points in 24 games. Despite no drop in ice time, he had just one point in 12 games after that and it became 'clear' that 'Cleary' was streaky. Last year he had a couple of other good runs, including 13 in nine. This year he has had two good runs – 10 points in 10 games, and 10 in nine.

6. Milan Michalek, San Jose – He loves his eight- to 12-game runs. This season he has had two of them – nine in eight and 12 in eight. He teases owners into thinking he will be an 80-point player, but the reality is he will probably post 60 to 70 points a season with three or four very hot runs. He still hasn't hit his prime yet (he is only 24), so don't completely write him off. Just don't let yourself get sucked in too far.

5. J-P Dumont, Nashville – He ended last season with 49 points in 44 games, so his streaks tend to be longer than most. But he balances them off with horrendous runs. He had six points in eight December and January games, proving that he is pretty much a 70-point player. Yours truly was teased by his second half performance and was suckered into believing 85 points was in the cards. Nope. But he sure is handy to own when he is 'on' for 20 or 30 games.

4. Derek Roy, Buffalo – He is a 60-point player in the first half and a 90-point player in the second half. In the end, he gets 80 points or so. One of these years he'll put it all together and reach 90 points, but in the meantime he is great to buy low on in December. He has 32 points in his last 32 games after starting with 31 in 37. Last year he had 30 in 39 followed by 51 in 39.

The season prior he had 16 points in the first half and 29 in the second.

3. Kristian Huselius, Columbus – For 10 or 15 games you think he has no peer. Then for 10 or 15 games you think he has no presence. It drives coaches and fantasy owners bananas. If the coach has patience and plays the right system, he could tally 80 points and tease you with runs of 20 points in 10 games. Under the current Hitchcock system, Huselius' hot runs are tempered to a point per game.

2. Vaclav Prospal, Tampa Bay – Perhaps misclassified as 'streaky', since his streaks last for an entire season. But how else can you put it? This guy has an 80-point season and follows it up with, give or take, a 50-point one. It's a statistical marvel. His last six seasons have gone like this, starting in 2001-02: 55, 79, 54, 80, 55, 71 – and this season he is on pace for 51.

1. Alexander Frolov, Los Angeles – By now, fantasy owners realistically peg him for 70 points, give or take. But two years ago and again last year he had us all fooled into thinking he was a 90-point superstar in the making. His white-hot runs last 10 to 15 games and are always followed up with eight to 12 games of three or four points in total. Currently, he is on a six-game streak (eight points) so if you own him you can expect it to go another five games yet. He started the year off with three points in nine contests and later had slumps of just three in 10 and four in seven. Otherwise, his hot streaks add up to 44 in 42, which is actually quite modest compared to recent years.

Up-and-coming: Ryan Clowe, San Jose – With really only this season to refer to, Clowe has had the following clusters since the puck dropped in October:
One point, five games.
22 points, 19 games.
Two points, eight games.
22 points, 20 games.
Five points, 15 games (and counting).