

Johnson & Johnson □ From Shampoo to Young Stars

Written by Dobber

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By now poolies who are not living under a rock are well aware that Jack Johnson has signed a contract with the Los Angeles Kings and will make his NHL debut on Thursday against the Canucks. What may not be as well known is the fact that Erik Johnson is negotiating with St. Louis in an effort to reach an agreement and play the last couple of games of the NHL season. Whether E.J. winds up playing this year or not, let's take a look at the fantasy impact that each of these franchise players will have in the coming days and/or years...



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Jack Johnson - The Kings acquired this top ranked prospect from the Carolina Hurricanes early in the season for Tim Gleason and Eric Belanger. The key to the deal was the fact that the Kings took on the albatross of a contract belonging to Oleg Tverdovsky. Los Angeles took it gladly, figuring that between Johnson and Anze Kopitar, they had the centerpieces of the franchise.

Kopitar has been a smashing success this season, and Johnson will be more so. Ranked fourth overall in THN's Future Watch, the 20-year-old will have just as big an impact as Dion Phaneuf did in his rookie year. Look for 45-55 points for each of the next several seasons, as he gradually blossoms into a 65-point player in about five years. He will also be good for 120-150 penalty minutes per season to start. Eventually, that will tone down to between 90-100 as he matures.

Jack will join the team on Thursday against Vancouver and will play the final five games. Expect three to four points from the youngster, as he is NHL ready.

Erik Johnson - The number one prospect in the world according THN's Future Watch, if E.J. joins the Blues this season he is ready to instantly step into the top two pairing. With Jay McKee now out for the season, there is some need for the Blues to add another body, so stay tuned.

Johnson (no relation to Jack) will also have the same impact as Phaneuf – 45 to 55 points right off the bat, but his penalty minutes will be a little lower. He is a much bigger player than Jack, so his hits are a lot harder. He is a much more complete rearguard than most that are playing the NHL and his upside in terms of offense is pretty much identical to Jack's. That is, anywhere from 65 to perhaps as high as 70 points one day.

While the Kings have Lubomir Visnovsky to run the power play next season, the Blues do not really have anybody. That being said, it would seem as though Erik will have a few more offensive opportunities than Jack in their rookie season, so of the two he might be the way to go (if you want to split hairs).

Do not be surprised if the years 2012-2020 have the name "Johnson" etched onto the Norris Trophy (for best defenseman) several times.