

## Move Stud Rearguards up Your Playoff List

Written by Dobber

Wednesday, 04 April 2007 07:16 - Last Updated Thursday, 05 April 2007 06:23

---



This column, and all of Dobber's work, can also be read on The Hockey News, ESPN.com and MSN.ca.

It is no secret that the power play is the most important element of offense in the playoffs. This makes the participants of the power play the most fantasy worthy in terms of playoff pools. Defensemen who quarterback the PP actually see their production rise by as much as 40 per cent. This makes moving them up your draft list a no-brainer. Today, FPL will take a look at the Western Conference quarterbacks. Wednesday I will take a look at the East. **Anaheim**  
The Ducks are one of just two teams in the West with three solid options – four if you count Ric Jackman. It's hard to improve on nearly a point-per-game as a defenseman, so in the cases of Chris Pronger and Scott Niedermayer I would leave them right where they are on your draft list...that is, high. Francois Beauchemin is another matter, however. He has been hot down the stretch and with his low season totals he is bound to slip through to the later rounds. Expect a point for every two games from him. Jackman will likely not be a factor unless one of the above three rearguards get hurt.

### Calgary

Dion Phaneuf, as a rookie, had a horrible playoff debut last season. Do not expect that to be repeated this year. If the Flames go two rounds, expect at least eight or nine points from the

## Move Stud Rearguards up Your Playoff List

Written by Dobber

Wednesday, 04 April 2007 07:16 - Last Updated Thursday, 05 April 2007 06:23

---

youngster. Roman Hamrlík makes an excellent dark horse. He has 31 points in his last 49 games, which translates to six or seven points in two rounds of playoff action. All this, of course, is going on the assumption that the Flames get into the playoffs and although Colorado may have something to say about that, it's looking pretty good at this point.

### Dallas

The Stars have been a team all season long that has relied on their defense for offense. This will be magnified starting April 11. Sergei Zubov and Philippe Boucher have, on several occasions, led this team in scoring. Both players are capable of 15 points if Dallas goes three rounds.

### Detroit

There are no surprises here. The more games this team plays in the postseason, the more points Nik Lidstrom and Matt Schneider will get for you. These are two of the best, in terms of offensive blueliners. Both men are capable of tallying a point per game over a short 10- or 15-game span. Youngster Nik Kronwall was starting to have a decent season offensively before he was injured on Friday and will be out for what looks like the first three rounds.

### Minnesota

The Wild do not have a defenseman amongst their top nine scorers. This opens the door wide for a dark horse. Kim Johnsson is the obvious choice, but Brent Burns has 18 points in his last 40 games. I like Burns here as the guy who will step up and post more than a point for every two postseason contests. Other candidates: Petteri Nummelin has talent, but is a risk in that he is a healthy scratch quite often. Ditto for Kurtis Foster.

### Nashville

The other western team with four options, the Preds can look to Marek Zidlicky, Kimmo Timonen, Ryan Suter, or Shea Weber. Suter is probably a little young to be considered a possible dark horse, so focus on the other three. Zidlicky has had several long cold spells this season. He could be the player you choose that gets you zero points in 10 games. He could also be the savior of your team, tallying 15 points during a run the Stanley Cup Final. Timonen and Weber are the safe bets.

### San Jose

While rookie Matt Carle is head and shoulders above the other picks here, don't count out the likes of Christian Ehrhoff, rookie Marc-Edouard Vlasic, or Craig Rivet. All three of these players have been hot down the stretch and any one of them could have a dozen points in the postseason. Rivet has eight points in 14 games in a San Jose uniform.

### Vancouver

Kevin Bieksa all the way. If the Canucks play 15 games this postseason, Bieksa will get 12 points. Do not take a chance on Sami Salo – his groin injury is too high a risk. Matthias Ohlund is as steady as it gets and will do what you would expect. It is Bieksa, however, that runs the power play and he will shoulder most of the offense from the back end.