

Stepping Back

Written by Dobber

Sunday, 11 November 2007 09:31 - Last Updated Monday, 12 November 2007 16:31



Nothing exemplifies the stock-marketesque up-and-down value of fantasy players more than missing 10 days of hockey almost completely and then throwing yourself back into it full throttle. Despite such a small window, players can bounce from rock bottom in value back to the top – and vice versa.

After missing nearly all things hockey while on vacation, I am finally able to delve back in. I notice some people who were diving off of certain sinking ships are now scrambling to get back on, while some flashes in the pan are suddenly not looking quite so inviting.

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Here are some of the bigger changes in value, both good and bad, from October 31 to today...

Peter Mueller – Even I was starting to feel my trigger finger get itchy on this guy and I began to wonder if I put too many eggs in one basket with him. I have him in two keeper leagues, as well as one of my one-year pools. When I left he had two points in nine games, plus a healthy scratch, while his teammate Martin Hanzal was stealing all the accolades. Suddenly, in the eyes of many fantasy owners, Hanzal's value had actually surpassed that of Mueller. Things have certainly turned around since then, as Mueller has six points in his last three games and is now seeing time on the top line with Shane Doan and Steve Reinprecht.

Marian Hossa – I missed a chance to land him cheap just before I left by not bending far enough in trade talks in my keeper league. Hopefully, you didn't do the same. What does a player need to do to prove that he is money in the bank? With three points in nine games before I left, I could have landed him for little more than Anze Kopitar. I balked, thinking he would cave and take less. Since then Hossa has seven points in five games.

Ilya Kovalchuk – Sure, he had 12 points in 12 games before I left and was considered a top 20 player in all fantasy leagues. With 10 points in five games since – including back-to-back hat tricks, Kovalchuk is now considered a top five or six guy again.

Ray Whitney – After just four points in eight games to start the year, Whitney had a four-point game just before I left. Clearly, that wasn't a fluke – and neither was last season's breakout - as the 35-year-old is on a nine-game point streak and has 15 points in that span.

Paul Stastny – After starting off with 14 points in seven games, fantasy owners were ready to christen him as the next 110-point player. He has just five points in nine games since, leading me to believe that my original projection of him being a player who puts up 80 to 90 points year in and year out is a good one. My prediction for this year of the mid-70s is finally starting to look accurate.

Matt Cullen – With 13 points in 13 games, Cullen was hot before I left. His five points in four since that time is making poolies take him a little more seriously. Suddenly, the former college scoring star is looking as if he will shatter his career high of 49 points. Every year the

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Hurricanes seem to create a fantasy star. Rod Brind'Amour became one after the lockout, Whitney turned into one last season...could this year be Cullen's turn?

Jeff Hamilton – Still with the confusing Hurricanes, Hamilton had 10 points in 12 games before I went off to enjoy the sun and lots of beer. Coming back to the cold reality of Canada, I see that Hamilton has also come back to reality with just two in his last five. Fortunately I traded him in the Experts League to Gus Katsaros of McKeen's before I left – for Tom Poti.

Nik Antropov – C'mon. Even Leaf fans couldn't possibly believe that Nik could continue his 15 points in 12 games pace! He does look good out there this season, but clearing a point per game is a little far-fetched for the injury-prone Kazak. His two points in six contests since then have swung his point totals to something a little more reasonable.

Andrei Kostitsyn – Before I left, the elder Kostitsyn had been a healthy scratch in four out of five games and had just one point on the season. I come back and he has three points in five contests since. Look for his chemistry with Alexei Kovalev and Tomas Plekanec to continue for the time being.

Petr Sykora – With 11 points in 12 games, Sykora was a hot commodity in fantasy circles, particularly with the alluring possibility that he could play with Sidney Crosby at any given moment. Just two points in six games later and Sykora's value is back to that of a 65-point player, although with Crosby factored in there will always be a lot of upside here to consider – which will buoy his value all season long.

The Buffalo Sabres – What the hell is going on here? When I left, the team was 5-5-0 and just having what I would consider a disappointing start. The Sabres have gone 1-4-1 since then and scoring just eight goals in six games as a team. This is the stuff that kills poolies, but it is precisely the time you should be making inquiries on grabbing Maxim Afinogenov, Tomas Vanek et al. Also when I left, defenseman Brian Campbell had 11 points in 10 games. He has just one in six since then. In that span, Derek Roy was a minus-7 (just two points), Jason Pominville had just a single point, while Vanek and Afinogenov have just two points each. Owners who were holding onto their Sabres tightly before I left are suddenly willing to talk trade.

I have now seen first hand that looking at things through a 10-day window is a great way to pinpoint potential "buy low/sell high" opportunities.

[Comment on the values of these players here](#) .