

San Jose's Other Joe

Written by Dobber

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There has been much ado about the way defenseman Brian Campbell has turned around the San Jose Sharks since his arrival at the trade deadline. Patrick Marleau has 14 points in the 16 games since February 26. Jonathan Cheechoo, prior to his neck injury, has been showing signs of shaking a season-long slump. Superstar Joe Thornton has also seen a boost in his numbers, tallying 20 points with Campbell in the lineup. But one player seldom mentioned in the mainstream media should be on your keeper-league radar and he also makes an excellent dark

horse for your postseason pools.

Forward Joe Pavelski burst onto the NHL (and fantasy) scene a few weeks into the 2006-07 season with seven goals in his first 10 games. This came just after exploding for 26 points in the first 16 professional games of his life for Worcester of the AHL, which came on the heels of a dominant offensive season in college.

A seventh-round pick in 2003, the 23-year-old late bloomer fizzled out after his hot NHL start and coach Ron Wilson rolled back his ice time. However, enough potential was there to have him drafted in all keeper league pools and most rotisserie ones, in hopes for a step forward.

That step forward has finally come, but it has arrived so late in the season that many of his keeper-league owners are sour on him. Patience is not really a dominant trait among poolies.

Pavelski has 16 points in his last 16 games – or precisely when Campbell entered the lineup. He should be a point-per-game player at some point, but regardless of his current run it will not happen next season. That being said, unless the San Jose offense falls asleep again next year there really isn't any reason for him to fall short of 60 points in 2008-09. He'll get there and he has an 85-point upside...

Meanwhile...

Detroit's Johan Franzen is taking advantage of Tomas Holmstrom's absence from the lineup. He has slid nicely into the vacated spot on the Henrik Zetterberg – Pavol Datsyuk line and has fired home 13 goals and four assists in his last 12 contests. The 28-year-old defensive forward is pulling a Chris Clark, a player who flourished last season on a line with Alexander Ovechkin in Washington. If he holds onto this spot next season, Franzen should get to 55 or 60 points, but you would be taking the huge risk that he may not (and he will likely not) hang onto the job when Holmstrom returns.

Holmstrom's groin injury is quite serious and he may not play in the postseason. If not, Franzen makes a solid dark horse candidate to post 12 points in 16 playoff games...

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