

Playoff eye-openers

Written by Dobber

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As usual, there are several performances in the post-season that – for better or worse – have influenced or changed the opinions of fantasy owners. Here are the top observations of the 2008 NHL playoffs:

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Jaromir Jagr is having the playoff of his life. After a horrible season (by his standards) made his stock plummet, he has really turned it back on. With no contract for next season (unless he wins the Conn Smythe Trophy), speculation was rampant that Jags would retire or go to Omsk of the Russian Super League. His performance thus far (15 points in nine games) makes it difficult to believe he will leave the NHL so soon.

Mike Ribeiro was having a “fluke” season according to many fantasy owners, but I’m not one of them. Seeing him tally 13 points in 10 games when it really counts has converted a lot of people. It’s time to take Ribeiro seriously.

Niklas Kronwall has eight points in the post-season and also had a strong second half of the regular season. Has he finally turned the corner at the age of 27? How many seasons in a row have fantasy owners drafted or acquired this guy figuring “he’ll break out now?” Next season it will finally happen - if he can stay healthy for 70 games.

R.J. Umberger is stuck on a roster with a lot of offensive options up front. Furthermore, with prospects such as Claude Giroux, Andreas Nodl, Ryan Potulny and James van Riemsdyk on the way, it doesn’t look as though there will be any breathing room coming soon. Yet, he has still managed to score seven playoff goals and it looks promising he’ll hit 60 points next campaign.

Daniel Briere was a 95-point player in Buffalo, then he came to Philadelphia and tallies 72? Fantasy owners were worried – he was actually dealt three times combined in my two keeper leagues since January. Be at ease – 14 points in 11 playoff games is no small feat. He can still reach 95 points in Philadelphia.

David Krejci proved his end-of-season surge was no blip. He had nine points in the last seven games of the season (when Marc Savard went down) and continued with an additional five points in the playoffs. With Patrice Bergeron returning next year, Krejci will be relegated to the third line, but with what we have seen he will almost definitely become a 65- to 70-point player in a couple of years.

Johan Franzen has arrived. What would a list of playoff eye-openers be without him? A new NHL record was set when he scored nine goals in the four-game sweep over the Avs. He had 15 goals and 20 points in the last 16 games of the regular season (after most fantasy trade and waiver deadlines had passed, of course, making him available in a lot of leagues). What is even more impressive is he has scored 11 times in 10 playoff games. He now has 26 goals and eight assists in his past 26 contests. I don’t think he’ll score 82 goals next year, of course, but he is showing that reaching 35 will be easy for him to achieve and the potential for more is vast.