

The Impact of a Comeback

Written by Dobber

Sunday, 02 November 2008 04:47 - Last Updated Monday, 03 November 2008 10:38



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How comfortable did you feel drafting Alexander Semin in September? Not comfortable enough to draft him when you should have? Was he taken by somebody else in the ninth round when you were considering him in the eighth?

How do you feel about that now?

The league leader in points (tied heading into Saturday) and in points per game, Semin is showing all the skills that were on display in 2006-07 when he had 73 points. He missed much of last year with a sprained ankle and when he did play he was clearly still hampered by the injury.

Semin isn't the only player who has bounced back from such a year. Entering Saturday, Philadelphia's Simon Gagne was 11th in scoring with 12 points in nine contests, Joe Sakic had a point per game, Shea Weber was tied for the lead amongst rearguards and Kevin Bieksa had nearly a point per game. If those players were healthy last season, each one of them would have been drafted a good three to five rounds ahead of where they actually were selected this past summer in fantasy leagues.

I don't have a hard and fast rule about the amount of aging stars (Sakic) or Band-Aid Boys (Gagne) or possible future Band-Aid Boys (any young player who misses significant time in his first two or three seasons, i.e. Weber, Semin or Bieksa) on my fantasy league. But I do monitor the situation while sitting down at the draft. If I see I have Semin on my team, I probably think twice before drafting a Weber.

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It's all about the level of risk you are comfortable with. In my one keeper league – the league is in its 19th season – the team in second is just a few points ahead of me. He has Semin, Gagne and Sakic. It's your classic "buy low" scenario and he really took advantage. Will he hang on? I would eat my hat if he does. One of those players will get hurt again and my money is on Gagne, who has more of a history than the rest of the group.

Even so, it's a game of luck and this fantasy owner took too many risks and every one of them has paid off. He could have just as easily had Justin Williams, Joni Pitkanen and Pavol Demitra instead of the other three. In the summer, how was anyone to know which players would get hurt again and which ones would bounce back?

Dobber's Predictions:

Alexander Semin will play at least 78 games and wind up with 85 points. When Alex Ovechkin gets rolling, Semin will start to slow.

Simon Gagne will get to the 35-game mark (31 points) before suffering a minor injury. Upon his return, he will get to 62 games before missing more time. Expect 59 points in 62 contests.

Kevin Bieksa will miss games from time to time with minor injuries, but will finish with 54 points in 72 games, completely a solid comeback year.

Joe Sakic will play 80 games and garner 80 points. Never doubt Big Joe!

Shea Weber will also get to the 80-game mark and have a Dion Phaneuf-like breakout season, tallying 53 points.