

Top Fantasy Hockey Events of 2009

Written by Dobber

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After poring over second-half statistics for the 2008-09 season, as well as this season so far, not to mention polling the members of DobberHockey's forum, I have whittled the list down to 15 events of the past year that had the greatest impact on fantasy hockey in 2009.

15. Steve Ott's big run

The Stars'...er, stars... were dropping like flies, but they found a new source for offense – Ott. He tallied 37 points in his last 40 games to give him 46 on the campaign. That 75-point full-season pace, when coupled with his 150-PIM potential, made him a potential fantasy juggernaut. Alas, with the likes of Brad Richards et al in the lineup, Ott has been pushed back to the third line and is on pace for a mere 22 points.

14. Andrew Ebbett breaking through...then breaking down

When Teemu Selanne went down in the Spring, Ebbett took full advantage of the added ice time. He went on a run of 28 points in 39 games, teasing us with 70-point potential. With Selanne back, his production dropped off and when the Ducks acquired Saku Koivu and Joffrey Lupul in the summer, there was just no room for Ebbett in the top six. Ironically, he was waived and picked up by Chicago (and later, Minnesota) prior to Selanne (again) and Lupul getting hurt, so we were never able to see if he was for real or not.

13. Peter Mueller's concussion

When Mueller suffered a concussion January 27, he had 84 points in 128 games. His numbers since returning from the injury – 15 points in 55 games. And that would look much worse if he didn't pick up five points in his last seven (so perhaps he's turning things around – one can hope).

12. Jamie Langenbrunner strikes linemate gold

He has 74 points in 82 games for 2009 and that's thanks to playing on a line with Zach Parise and Travis Zajac – both of whom just happened to break out last campaign. A perennial 50- or 60-point man, Langenbrunner has vaulted himself into the mid- to upper-tier for fantasy forwards in leagues that just count points (or points and plus/minus).

11. Ryan Kesler – Dobber was way off

I'll chalk this up under "oops" and hope that not too many of you took my advice on this one. I had Kesler pegged as an elite third-line checker with upside of 55 or maybe 60 points. He has 71 points in 82 games for 2009. Needless to say, I now think he can reach 75 one day – more with a star linemate or two.

10. David Krejci fizzles after exploding onto the scene

Offseason surgery aside, Krejci's statistics have impacted a lot of leagues. After starting the 2008-09 season with 40 points in 37 games, Krejci has managed just 52 points in 79 games in 2009. So is he an 80-point player or a 50-point player? Probably somewhere in the 65 to 75 range, but we need the roller coaster to stop if we are to know for sure.

9. Todd White's Dud/Stud/Dud act

It's easily explained away, but there were still some poolies who were caught in the trap. White ended last campaign with a career high of 73 points. He is on pace for 32 points this season, which would be a career low for seasons in which he has played at least 55 games. That kind of yo-yo effect puts Vinny Prospal to shame.

8. Dustin Penner's hot start

The fact that Penner has just two points in his last six games probably knocked him a couple of slots down on this list, but the fact remains that he has come into his own. Still on pace for a point per game, Penner caught a lot of fantasy owners off guard. He's played fewer than half the games that he played all of last season, yet already has more points (38 versus 37). If he slips to just 10 points in the final 44 games, he'll still set a career high.

7. Jason Spezza's crash and burn

Although last season was a write-off for Spezza, the fact that he had 41 points in his last 44 games gave hope that perhaps the new coach and a fresh season would bring him back to elite status. However, he stumbled out of the gates with just 19 points in 30 contests before wrecking his knee – he's out until the end of February. He has become untradeable in keeper leagues because opposing GM's are concerned that his high point totals were the result of Dany

Heatley.

6. Rich Peverley's arrival

It's the ideal scenario for all fringe NHL players – get picked up on waivers by a team willing to put you in their top six and then getting hot at the right time. Peverley was claimed by the Thrashers on January 10 and has since posted 68 points in 76 games, earning a two-year contract in the process. There was a point there in November where poolies had visions of him being an 80-point player, but a recent slump (10 points in 20 games) has brought his numbers back down to Earth somewhat.

5. Steve Mason's disappearing act

Unlike with Spezza, Mason was really counted on in many fantasy leagues and single-handedly has taken teams out of contention. After posting stellar numbers and winning the NHL's rookie-of-the-year award, Mason has imploded. Nobody saw his 0.887 SP coming, nor his 3.40 GAA – especially in a Ken Hitchcock system.

4. The Detroit Red Wings – no longer a powerhouse

I mentioned in the summer that the mighty Red Wings may not make the playoffs this time around – all it would take would be a long-term injury to the likes of Henrik Zetterberg. Well, they have been hammered with injuries to Johan Franzen, Jason Williams, Niklas Kronwall and even Zetterberg himself is sidelined. The Wings are currently in ninth and will indeed be hard pressed to make the postseason. The result of this is many of the players on the Detroit roster have seen their trade value drop. Big time.

3. The KHL

Two big names left for the KHL this past summer and another one left not long after. Jiri Hudler, Nik Zherdev and Nikita Filatov all flew the coop. Filatov should be back and Zherdev could be back next year, but Hudler is gone for two. Their values have taken a hit, as well as the value of all Russians in fantasy leagues to some extent. Prior to Alexander Radulov leaving, no competing hockey league has ever influence fantasy hockey trades. Now, when discussing a deal in your keeper league you find yourself gauging the odds of a KHL impact on the players involved.

2. Mike Green – the next Paul Coffey?

In leagues where positions counts, it is no longer the “Big 3”. Mike Green has made it a

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foursome, thanks to his monster 2008-09 campaign. And much of that was in the second half. He has 86 points in 80 games in 2009 – and this is a defenseman we're talking about. We haven't seen this kind of thing in years. He'll win the defensemen scoring race by at least 10 points this year.

1. Injuries to start the 2009-10 season

Everything has been turned on its head this year, thanks to more big-name injuries than in recent memory. Among the list of players who have missed, or will miss, at least 10 games: Eric Staal, Ryan Smyth, Johan Franzen, Marian Hossa, Ales Hemsky, Brian Gionta, Jason Spezza, Sergei Gonchar, Phil Kessel, Daniel Sedin, Marc Savard, Daniel Alfredsson, David Booth and Andrei Markov. Not to mention that two of the Big 3 – Evgeni Malkin (seven games) and Alex Ovechkin (eight games) also went down. The result has made for some interesting dynamics in all variations of fantasy hockey leagues.

Over at The Hockey News, I have similarly compiled a list of 20 events that impacted fantasy hockey over the past decade. You can [check out Part I here](#) . Part II will be posted on Tuesday.

Also – it's that time again. The [Midseason Fantasy Guide](#) is released early on January 9 (or perhaps the evening of January 8, depending on our efficiency over at Dobber Headquarters). Get all the second-half projections, plus MORE prospect info than ever before in this particular fantasy guide.