

## Is big Bert back?

Written by Dobber

Monday, 14 January 2008 19:32 - Last Updated Tuesday, 15 January 2008 04:41

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It has been one of the biggest questions asked of me over the past year, amazingly consistent in both frequency and wording. Can (or sometimes “will”) Todd Bertuzzi bounce back?

(Originally published by [The Hockey News](#) on January 11)

While anything is possible, my typical response is usually – he may bounce back to close to a point-per-game again, but he will never play a full season again. The big concern with Big Bert is his back. It has held up pretty well so far – the time he missed earlier in the season was due to a concussion.

After just 10 points in 23 contests, Bertuzzi has shown flashes of his old self with nine in his

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past nine. Playing primarily with Ryan Getzlaf and Corey Perry, he is now lining up with talent similar to that of Brendan Morrison and Markus Naslund – his regular linemates in Vancouver when he was at his scoring peak.

From a production perspective, Bertuzzi has regained his touch. Acquiring him will likely give you a point-per-game going forward. However, it is still too early to trust his back and he has also shown that he is susceptible to other injuries.

With 35-plus games left in Anaheim's schedule, pick him up on the assumption that he'll be good to play in 25 or 30 of them and count anything extra as a bonus. He should salvage 45 to 50 points this season and he's a 60- or 65-point player going forward...

Sergei Samsonov played his first game for Carolina on a line with Cory Stillman and Rod Brind'Amour. Both Stillman and Brind'Amour seem to produce no matter what the team does with them, so this is exactly the spark Samsonov needs to turn things around. If he can't produce on this line, then nothing will help. My money is on "nothing will help," but watch the situation closely...

Scott Hartnell has finally arrived in Philadelphia. Maybe his luggage was missing for three months and he had his production packed inside. After eight points in 27 games, Hartnell has 12 in his last 12 and six in his last two. He also has 16 minutes in penalties in those 12 contests and is the fantasy asset that he should have been in the first place...

With [Alex Ovechkin in Washington](#) for 13 more seasons ( [analysis](#) ), it is apparent they will have a potent power play for much of that time. That is why, in a keeper league, it would be wise to secure some of the young talent that will make up the rest of the PP unit. Nicklas Backstrom is an obvious one, but there is one other component already in place you need to secure: Mike Green. The 22-year-old rearguard has eight points in his last five games and 24 on the season. On this team, he could feasibly flirt with 70 and become a top-five scoring defenseman...

**Injuries, from a fantasy league perspective:** Apparently, Florida rearguard Cory Murphy is finally starting to feel better about his "mystery" shoulder injury. Do not be surprised if he is back before the end of January.

**Farm Report:** Kings prospect Brian Boyle is red-hot right now in the American League for Manchester. The tall pivot has 18 points in his last 15 games and is as surefire an NHLer as a prospect can get. That being said, the Kings are deep up front with their youngsters and have occasionally tried Boyle on defense with much success. If he can make the NHL as a forward, he has great upside, but that may require a trade. He'll be ready for the big time next season.

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