

Fantasy Hockey Defensemen □ Down the Stretch

Written by Dobber

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Some defensemen got moved around on deadline day and I am already seeing changes in the way rearguards around the league are producing.

Let's start with the big one first. The Sabres moved Brian Campbell to San Jose, and the style of two teams suddenly changed. Buffalo lost a puck-moving defenseman, but have several candidates to fill the void. Jaroslav Spacek would be the logical candidate, however his ice time has not increased one iota since the deal. It wouldn't make sense to move a rearguard such as Toni Lydman into the void, however he had a four-point game after the deadline. His ice time hasn't increased, but his power-play time has. That being said, he does not have 40-point ability so don't get on the Lydman bandwagon just yet.

The biggest beneficiary seems to be Dimitri Kalinin, who has logged 22 minutes per game of ice time since – a full five minutes more than before. He has just one assist to show for it, however. My personal favorite is Nathan Paetsch. He is now seeing about 17 minutes per game, which is nearly four minutes more than his average on the season. He is seeing nearly three minutes per game on the power play now, but if he doesn't post points soon, his window will close for this year.

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Over in San Jose, the Sharks are scoring at about 10 or 15 percent higher a clip in the three games since the deadline. Campbell, who is actually the team's second-leading scorer now, has two points in those games. Craig Rivet, Matt Carle and Christian Ehrhoff have four points between them, while Sandis Ozolinsh is likely scratched permanently. Campbell is clearly manning the top PP unit with a forward, while Carle and Rivet man the second unit. Ehrhoff is off the power play altogether.

Over on Long Island, the team has Chris Campoli on the sidelines for the year with an injury and they shipped Marc-Andre Bergeron to the Ducks. Suddenly, the often-scratched Brian Berard is logging 19 minutes again and has three points in three games since D-Day. He has been scratched 19 times this season, but I don't think it will happen again.

Bergeron, meanwhile, saw just 12 minutes in his game Friday with the Ducks and just 1:14 on the power play. Meanwhile, Mathieu Schneider and Scott Niedermayer saw over five minutes of PP time each. When Chris Pronger returns from his broken jaw, Bergeron will have the best season in the house up in the press box.

One move that went under the radar is the Colorado acquisition of Ruslan Salei. The veteran is averaging 21 minutes a game in his new uniform and is manning the top power-play unit with John-Michael Liles. He has three points in two games. The player most hurt by this addition to the lineup (along with Adam Foote) is Jordan Leopold. He has averaged around 10 minutes per game of ice time. He must know the heat is on because he picked up three assists last game despite zero seconds on the power play. It may be wise to take advantage of his three-point game and trade him to an owner who is not aware that his ice time has plummeted.

One more trade-related defenseman to bring to your attention is Dick Tarnstrom being shipped to Columbus on February 1. Since the move, Edmonton rearguard Tom Gilbert has seven points in 11 games. Tarnstrom, meanwhile, has six in nine games for the Blue Jackets (okay, so it was two defensemen to bring to your attention).

As with all things fantasy hockey, the sooner you catch onto the subtle changes outlined above, the sharper your edge.

Comment on/ [discuss some fantasy values for NHL defensemen here](#) .