

Statistical Standouts

Written by Russ Miller

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In looking back on the 2007-08 season, I came across some interesting statistics that I would like to share:

Ready, Aim, Fire...

Of course we are all in awe of everything Ovechkin. This season's MVP averaged 5.44 shots on goal per game for a total of 446. I believe only Phil Esposito's NHL record 550 in the 1970-71 season was better than Ovechkin's feat this year.

Ovechkin had ten or more shots on goal seven times this year. He put up a goose egg only once and was held to a single shot twice over the course of the entire season.

Henrik Zetterberg was the next most prolific shooter with 358, a distant 88 shots back. Ovechkin led the league in shots by almost 20 per cent more than the next player. That's interesting because he also finished 20 per cent ahead in the goal scoring department as well, 13 goals ahead of fellow Russian Ilya Kovalchuk.

Calgary's Eric Godard was at the other end of the spectrum, recording only 14 shots on goal in 74 games. Godard averaged 5.29 games per shot. Although he did make his one goal count, it

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was a game winner!

Whoda, Howda, Hejda?

Blue Jackets defenseman Jan Hejda made headlines recently when he signed a three year, six million dollar deal (\$6.1M Cdn). When many of you heard the news, did you have to ask yourself, who the heck is Jan Hejda?

This is a case of a player in real life, being more valuable than in fantasy. This guy was plus-20 on a team that was minus-55 overall. The team only had six plus players and the next best was Rostislav Klesla at plus-7. Hejda played 81 games and received the second most even strength ice time and third most overall.

The Good...

Nicklas Lidstrom was a minus player in only 16 of his 76 games. Of those, only four were worse than minus-1. Fellow Conference Finalist Brenden Morrow was a minus player in 18 of 82 games and was worse than minus-1 in only three games.

The Bad...

I'm not sure how this happened, but Michel Ouellet played 64 games for the Lightning and ended up plus-11. Dan Boyle was a horrible minus-29 in only 37 games, second only to the Preds Radek Bonk and his minus-31. The Lightning were a league worst minus-250 (Detroit was plus-235). Welcome Steve Stamkos, sorry about your plus/minus.

And The Ugly

Daniel Carcillo was the runaway leader in penalty minutes, recording a whopping 324 minutes in only 57 games (would equal 466 over 82 games). That's over 30 per cent more penalty minutes than the next guy (Jared Boll with 226).

Carcillo led the league in gross misconducts with four and plain old misconducts with eight. Boll led the NHL with 28 major penalties.

Dion Phaneuf led the league in minor penalties with 60 (plus 10 majors, 1 misconduct). Pavel Kubina had the most minor penalties (48) without recording a major penalty, although he did have one misconduct and one gross misconduct.

More Power To Ya

The top five players in power play points this season were all Russian. Kovalev, Gonchar, Malkin, Datsyuk and Ovechkin were the fab five. Four of the next five were Canadian; Briere, Thornton, Getzlaf and Eric Staal. A Swede, Henrik Zetterberg, finished eighth in the category.

It's no surprise that the almighty Ovechkin led the league in power play goals, but the guys who finished second and third just might. Thomas Vanek finished with 19 and Olli Jokinen had 18 power play tallies.

You know your coach doesn't like you when you score 35 points and none of them are via the power play! The Sabres Dan Paille scored 32 even strength points and three short-handed

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points. Paille received only 14:05 of power play ice time in 77 games, an average of only ten seconds per game.

Other Fun Facts

Evgeny Malkin and Ilya Kovalchuk led the way with five empty net goals. Half of Sami Pahlsson's six goals were empty netters. Both of Sean O'Donnell's goals were with the opposing goalie riding the pine.

Pavel Datsyuk led the NHL in takeaways with 144. Mike Modano was second with 86 and surprisingly a rookie finished in seventh. The Capitals Nicklas Backstrom recorded 72 takeaways in his first season.

The face-off wins title goes to Mats Sundin with 945. Bobby Holik was second with 877 and Rod Brind'Amour was third with 851...in 59 games. If Brind'Amour had played only seven more games, he would have won the title again.

Both Brian Campbell and Jeff Halpern played in 83 games this year. I don't know why, but I love it when players play more than 82 games. NHL salaries are based on an 82 game season, so when these guys get paid for that extra game, is it marked as overtime on their paycheques? Do they get time and a half?