

Eastern Conference Mid-Season All-Stars

Written by Russ Miller

Thursday, 15 January 2009 02:42 - Last Updated Friday, 16 January 2009 02:55



With this being right around the halfway mark for most NHL teams, I thought it would be appropriate to try and come up with a list of Eastern Conference All-Stars. Of course, my list will have a healthy twist. I'll give you the actual All-Stars, my All-Stars, the All-Sucks and All-Steals:

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Apple – A fan favorite voted to the Eastern Conference All-Star starting roster.

Mandarin Orange – Easy to peel, easy to eat. Sweet and simply satisfies poolies appetite for statistics. These are my choices for Fantasy All-Stars.

Lemon – Likely given you a bitter taste in your mouth, mostly because you've been sucking on this player since the draft.

Lime – Looks real good right now, especially with you well on your way to your victory Corona(s) at the end of the season.

Center

Apple – Sidney Crosby sits second in NHL scoring and is the apple of the NHL's marketing eye.

Orange – Marc Savard has numbers that rival Crosby, but the thing that makes Savard a better fantasy player at this point in the season is his gaudy plus-29, which was the best in the NHL.

Lemon – Rod Brind'Amour is on pace for less than 50 points and has an NHL worst minus-27, which will make him all but untouchable if your pool values plus/minus numbers.

Lime – David Krejci has been a revelation so far this season. He's on pace for over 90 points and has an unbelievable plus-26 rating. Todd White deserves at least an honorable mention here with 41 points in 43 games. Most pundits didn't think White would finish the SEASON with 41 points, let alone after 43 games.

Top Banana not mentioned in the fruit basket above – Jeff Carter led the NHL in goals with 29 and was second in shots on goal.

Left Wing

Apple – Evgeni Malkin. No arguments here. Sits atop the NHL scoring race, has a juicy plus-15 and 23 power play points.

Orange – Evgeni Malkin. It's hard to dispute Malkin's dominant numbers from a fantasy perspective. I'd like to see Ovechkin here, but when their stats are compared, Malkin is better everywhere except in goals and shots on goal.

Lemon – I fully expected Chris Higgins to score between 55-60 points this season. Sure he's been injured for half the season so far, but his nine points in 21 games is no consolation for his owners. Marco Sturm gets a mention here because his expectations were pretty much the same as Higgins. Sturm was off to a very good start with 13 points in 19 games, but is now out for the

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year following knee surgery. That just sucks.

Lime – Patrik Elias was likely not taken in most drafts until early in the middle rounds. Many thought he was done as a big point producer. He has teamed with Zach Parise for exactly one hundred points, split evenly between them. Alexander Semin would be here if not for his injuries.

Top Banana not mentioned in the fruit basket above – It would be easy to mention Milan Lucic here, but unless your pool counts plus/minus, Slava Kozlov has had the more valuable fantasy season to date. Kozlov had 40 points in 43 games and 21 power play points. The only negative was his minus-11.

Right Wing

Apple – Alexei Kovalev was the fans choice. Why in the world would Montreal fans WANT to see this guy at an All-Star game, don't they see enough of this under-achieving tease every home game?

Orange – Phil Kessel was having a breakthrough season with 41 points in 42 games before coming down with mononucleosis. Martin St.Louis gets an honorable mention here with 41 points in 43 games and a plus-7 on a very bad Tampa Bay team.

Lemon – After back-to-back 62 points seasons, Nathan Horton is on pace for only 48 points. That is sure to leave his owner's with a bitter taste in their mouths.

Lime – Michael Ryder has already surpassed his goal and point totals from last season. Some of us expected a return to his 30 goal ways, but it was by no means easy as pie. Brian Gionta had 37 points in 42 games. If you don't count Blake Wheeler's three points in 11 October games, he has 25 points in his last 32 games. That's a 64 point pace.

Top Banana not mentioned in the fruit basket above – The New York Rangers had hoped that Nikolai Zherdev would lead the team in scoring, but who knew what the enigmatic Russian was going to do this season. Zherdev is one of only four Rangers on the positive side of the plus/minus ledger. I'm guessing he was happy to leave Columbus, but does anyone think he sent Ken Hitchcock a Christmas card this year?

Defencemen

Apple – Andrei Markov was a pretty decent choice by the fans. He has very nice numbers for a top fantasy defenseman with 32 points in 42 games and a decent plus-10 rating.

Apple – Mike Komisarek is a rotten apple here. He's a great NHL DEFENCEman and one that all 30 NHL teams would love to have in their lineup. It's just that he shouldn't be in an All-STAR game, let alone voted to the starting roster. A road apple is more like it.

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Orange – The top fantasy defenseman in the Eastern Conference is Zdeno Chara. He is worth his weight in gold and his weight is substantial. In 43 games, Chara has 25 points, 52 penalty minutes, 14 power play points, 114 shots on goal and sports a handsome plus-22.

Orange – Many people predicted that it would be impossible for Mark Streit to repeat last year's 62 point season, but that's exactly what he's doing. He even has a better plus/minus on less talented Islanders team this year than last season's very good Canadiens roster.

Lemon – From a strictly point scoring perspective, Tobias Enstrom has been brutal. After a 38 point rookie season, Enstrom is on pace for only 17 points this year. He is playing better defence this season, but that doesn't cut it in the fantasy world.

Lemon – Say it ain't so Joe. The 'Canes Joe Corvo has left a bitter taste in his owner's mouths all season. After scoring 21 points in 23 games with Carolina last season, maybe too much was expected from Corvo this year. He has 19 points in 44 games, but with all the ice time Corvo gets, this one could go from lemon to lemonade by season's end.

Lime – Not much was expected from Filip Kuba after coming over from Tampa this August. Although his career high is only 37 points, Kuba is on pace to score 51 points this season.

Lime – Dennis Wideman had a career high 36 point season last year in Boston. That was decent, but this year he has 29 points in 42 games and could raise the bar much higher at the conclusion of this season.

Top Banana not mentioned in the fruit basket above – Not many expected Mike Green to score at a point per game pace. Green has 30 points in only 31 games so far this season. Sour grapes for you if you didn't believe.

Goaltender

Apple – I can live with Carey Price as the selection here, even though he isn't the most worthy, he is certainly among the top candidates in the East.

Orange – My choice for top Eastern Conference fantasy goaltender is Tim Thomas. He has 18 wins, three by shutout, a 2.04 goals-against-average and an incredible 0.935 save percentage.

Lemon – As much as Marc-Andre Fleury deserves to be here, I will go with Martin Brodeur. A top fantasy pick in any format, Marty took out many fantasy hopefuls when he went down after only ten games. The truth is that a very high number of Eastern Conference starting goaltenders have killed countless fantasy teams this season. Vokoun, DiPietro, Theodore, Toskala, Lehtonen and Gerber come readily to mind.

Lime – Scott Clemmensen edges out Mike Smith. Clemmensen wasn't even the backup when Brodeur went down, but now the Devils Plan C has 16 wins, a 2.40 goals-against-average and a steady 0.918 save percentage. Mike Smith has only ten wins, but a respectable 2.50

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goals-against-average, 0.920 save percentage and is third in the NHL in saves.

Top Banana not mentioned in the fruit basket above – Ryan Miller is having his best statistical season to date. He's on pace for his second 40 win, 2000 save season and his 2.50 goals-against-average and 0.918 save percentage would be career bests. Miller has already tied his career high in shutouts with three. Manny Fernandez deserves an honorable mention with 14 wins in only 18 starts, while sporting a 2.07 goals-against-average and 0.928 save percentage.