This week I'll take a look at a pair of Steve's, both sets call the State of Florida home.

Thumbs Up for Downie

There are many hockey fans who think Steve Downie is nothing more than an out of control goon who should be banned from playing hockey. I agree that he needs to control his aggression. If he can manage to do that, he has the skill to be a very effective NHL player - he has more talent than many haters give him credit for.

Don't forget that he was a key contributor (not just a member) of two World Junior Championship gold medal teams. In the 2006 tournament, Downie's six points were second only (on the Canadian side) to Jonathan Toews seven points. In the 2005 tournament, his six points again placed him second on the team in scoring, this time one point behind Blake Comeau (yeah I know, not as impressive as finishing behind Toews).

I know I've stated his junior hockey accomplishments many times before, but I'll reiterate for those who haven't read my previous ramblings on Downie. In his second last year of junior hockey, he scored 53 points in 35 games (124 pro-rated points) and in his final year, he recorded an amazing 92 points in 45 games (168 pro-rated). He was dominant in the AHL, where scoring 50 points in 49 games, was a plus-16, and logged a staggering 244 penalty minutes!

Last night I caught a pre-game interview with Lightning Head Coach Rick Tocchet and he said that Downie has been excellent over the last five or six games and deserves more ice time. Downie has averaged over 14 minutes of ice time over the last nine games and more importantly, over his last 13 games, he has been getting first unit power play minutes, averaging close to three minutes a game with the man advantage. His puck possession and distribution skills are outstanding.

After watching last night's game, Downie's play was very noticeable, which was important because Malone and Stamkos left the game with injuries. He was also out there in the last minute along with Lecavalier, St.Louis and Tanguay trying to draw even with the Oilers. This kid has the potential to be a key contributor.

Downie has five points in his last nine games played, including four power play points. In pools that value penalty minutes, if Downie is still available, now is the time to add him to your team. If Stamkos and Malone are out for any length of time, Downie will play a more prominent role.

Seen Stamkos?

Steven Stamkos is looking more and more comfortable in his second season. His 17 goals and 30 points in 30 games has him on pace to finish with 46 goals and 82 points. He is also on pace to finish with 38 power play points and 246 shots on goal. Nice production for roto leagues that count those categories.

Stamkos is mired in a mini-slump; he has a single point in his last six games. In the previous 24 games, he registered 29 points, a 99 point pace. I think that his early production is legitimate and we'll see those numbers more consistently in the very near future.

Seen Stamkos? Indeed. Seen Lecavalier?

A Weiss Man

Like most of the Panthers, Stephen Weiss got off to a poor start this season. He recorded seven points in his first 16 games. In the next 14 games, he scored 17 points, which equals nearly a 100 point pace. I'm not for a second intimating that Weiss will continue to collect points at that pace, but the 26-year-old will most certainly improve on last season's career high 61 points.

I don't see Weiss' upside as much more than 70-75 points in the NHL. In his AHL career, Weiss recorded 63 points in 90 games, which is not all that impressive. His last two years of junior hockey were more offensive. He recorded 87 points in 62 games (115 pro-rated points) in his second last junior year and 70 points in 46 games (125 pro-rated) in his final junior season.

Reinstone Cowboy

The song was written by Larry Weiss (not Stephen's father) and sung by Glen Campbell (not related to Greg Campbell). It was recorded one year (1975) before Steven Reinprecht was born.

Steven Reinprecht has found a new home in Florida. The Panthers acquired Reinprecht over the summer and subsequently signed the veteran 33-year-old centre to a three year deal. He has rewarded Florida with much needed offensive production and is on pace for a career high 60 points, which would eclipse his previous high by eight points.

Reinprecht receives first unit power play ice time (3:11) and is on pace for 15 power play points, which would also be a career high.