

Advantageous Situations

Written by Russ Miller

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There are times during the season when certain players are given an opportunity to shake a season long funk or step up when a team mate succumbs to an injury. All fantasy owners know to watch out for this, but we are often too busy to recognize it before it is too later and a competitor swoops in and claims the glory.

A good example this season would be both James Wisniewski and Andrew MacDonald. The Wiz took full advantage of Mark Streit's injury and is now on pace for over 50 points and about to cash in on his pending unrestricted free agency. When the Isles dealt Wisniewski, MacDonald stepped up and seized the opportunity.

Another great example would be Patrice Bergeron. Heading into last night's play, he registered 17 points over the last month. That's one more than the NHL's leading scorer, Steven Stamkos and the streaking Thomas Vanek had over the same period. Yikes! Marc who?

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This week, we'll take a look at several players who could be in advantageous situations.

Rumour has it that **Zach Bogosian** could be had for the right price. If the same is true in your keeper fantasy league, now may be the time to strike. The 20-year-old has the recently injured Tobias Enstrom and slumping Dustin Byfuglien ahead of him on the depth chart, but with Enstrom possibly out several more weeks, now is the perfect time for Bogo to shine.

Bogosian has offensive ability as evidenced by his 61 points in 60 games over his final year of major junior hockey and now he is going to be in a position to showcase his talent.

With Mike Green sitting out for hopefully only a small number of games, the time is right for heir apparent **John Carlson** to step up his game offensively. Hey, someone has to play Green's minutes on the power play, so why not the rookie Caps defender? Over his last three games, Carlson has averaged close to 27 minutes of ice time. He has logged the most power play ice time in all but one of his last three games. The only exception being the game before Green was injured, but Carlson still recorded the second most power play minutes.

Carlson teased us fantasy owners by starting the season with six points in his first five games. He has faded since then and most recently has only five points over the last 19 contests. Don't forget that this is the same John Carlson who scored 39 points in 48 AHL matches (a 67 point

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pace) as a rookie and 76 points in his final 59 major junior games.

There is a small window of opportunity here before Green returns to action and my money is on Carlson to step through the looking glass.

Another Mike down, another opportunity. Mike Lundin was averaging 20:31 in ice time before an untimely injury put him out. Enter **Marc-Andre Bergeron**. History has shown us that this power play specialist can be a liability when he is given too much even strength ice time. Tampa's Head Coach Guy Boucher actually coached Bergeron last year during a brief three game AHL stint with Hamilton, where MAB recorded six points. Boucher should have an idea on how to manage Bergeron's ice time for maximum effect.

The 30-year-old Bergeron got off to a great start earlier this week, recording two points, one with the man advantage, in his first NHL duty of the season. He followed that up with no points and a not so nice minus-4 in his second game. Last year, Bergeron recorded 34 points in 60 games with Montreal, 22 of them via the power play. Tampa's man advantage unit is the sixth highest rated in the league and will only get better with MAB shooting bullets from the point.

Jack Skille is going to be afforded every opportunity to prove that Florida made the right decision in trading for him. The problem is that the Panthers traded away Nathan Horton last year and now that they've dealt another of their rare offensive gems in Frolik, who is Skille going to play with? I guess Stephen Weiss and David Booth are still in the picture.

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Skille never really blossomed as a scorer in college, but over his last two AHL seasons, he has scored at a 64 point clip each year. Fast forward to this year, Skille went on a tear in early November where he ripped off eight points over an 11 game stretch while averaging only about 10 minutes of playing time. Now we get to see what Skille can do with top six minutes.

AI "Tony" Montoya is the newest member of the Islanders goaltending gang. He should be very nervous as only Dwayne Roloson and maybe Joey MacDonald have seemingly been allowed to leave the Island intact. For a very in-depth read on Montoya's prospects of starting on the Island, read Dobberhockey's goaltending guru, Justin Goldman's take <http://www.thegoalieguild.com/2011/02/montoya>

If you are in a deep league and need starts, then Montoya may well be your man. Just don't expect very good auxiliary numbers, as the Islanders have a great shot at the top pick in next year's entry draft.