

## Pack Your Bags

Written by Russ Miller

Saturday, 10 November 2007 05:02 - Last Updated Monday, 12 November 2007 04:31

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Last week, we had a look at which players were under-performing. This week we'll focus on which players should be traded while their value is high. It is difficult to be completely confident that you are doing the right thing when trading a guy who is doing so well. Will he continue to play at this level or will his point production slow down? Maybe there's a history of getting hurt and you're constantly scanning the injury reports for his name. A lot depends on your level of comfort. Timing is essential on these guys. It's easy to hold on to players when they are lighting it up. Leave it too late and their value plummets. It's a good idea to trade them away for someone you believe has a better chance to succeed.

Bill Guerin's career high is 69 points in 2003-04. The last two seasons, he's scored 40 and 56 points. I don't see a career high for the soon to be 37 year old. I even see a decline in his penalty minutes. Guerin is averaging 114 penalty minutes for every 82 games in his career. Now that he's the Captain, he must lead by example and stop taking bad penalties. Check out Brenden Morrow's penalty minutes before and after he was named Captain of the Stars. The

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two previous season's, Morrow had 121 and 183 penalty minutes. The year he was named Captain, he had 33 penalty minutes in 40 games. That's less than 70 over a full season. That's responsible.

Cory Murphy is doing exactly what he was brought in to do – quarterback the power play. Of his ten points, nine have been with the man advantage. The problem here is that the coach is not happy with his play at even strength. With the super-sized NHL players, Murphy's getting over-matched in his own end. My concern is that the coach might start using power play time as incentive to play better. Murphy's already starting to cool off with only one point in his last five games.

Mike Richards never scored more than 89 points in any of his four junior seasons. He plays a big man's game, but is only listed at 5'11", 195 pounds. I love how hard he competes, but with the way he plays the game, there is great potential for injury. With 16 points in 15 games, he's a prime guy to move. Richards has never been a natural goal scorer and with the talent the Flyers have up front, any slump and he's off the top power play unit. I'd look to move him for a more legitimate point per game player.

Toronto's Pavel Kubina has scored 11 points in 16 games and is an incredible +7 on the most scored upon team in the NHL. Coming into this season, Kubina was -92 for his career. His career high is 38 points. It is possible that at 30 years old, he could eclipse his previous best. In order to surpass 38 points, he'll need more power play time and on this team, I just don't see that happening. It's close to profit taking time on a guy who was likely a free agent/waiver wire pick up.

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I was going to put Paul Ranger here because with Dan Boyle back in the mix, Ranger will likely lose some power play time. Then I realized that out of his ten points, only one of them is a power play point. His success is as a puck moving defenseman and he was paired regularly with Boyle last year. Now with Boyle out again, it puts Ranger back in the same situation he was in at the start of the season. I'm not quite ready to recommend Ranger yet, but needless to say if he starts scoring on the power play, his value goes up.

Other Eastern Conference players to consider moving while their value is high: Madden, Sykora (hurry), Antropov, Sundin, Brind'Amour, Stillman, Gerber, Tim Thomas and Mike Fisher (before another trip to the IR).

### **Beast from the East (26 Oct – 9 Nov 07)**

Henrik Lundqvist has simply been magnificent in backstopping the Blueshirts this season. Heading into last night's contest, Lundqvist had four wins, two shutouts, a goals against average of 0.82 and a save percentage 0.964 in his last five games. He has been the best goaltender in the Eastern Conference and the envy of fantasy poolies who drafted Luongo, Brodeur or Kiprusoff ahead of him. The best may yet lie ahead. The wins will come as the Rangers haven't really started scoring so far and Lundqvist has been one of the best second half goalies over each of the last two seasons.

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