

What Goes Up Must Come Down

Written by Ryan Ma

Tuesday, 02 December 2008 17:18 - Last Updated Wednesday, 03 December 2008 06:52



If you can remember way back when you were a kid in primary school, your teacher taught you a very valuable lesson in life, what goes up must come down and what is down will eventually come back up. Sure, it might have been for a science lesson or an outcome from your first creative way of attempting to fly, but that lesson still holds true today. We'll just have to apply the same concept to fantasy hockey. For the past four weeks, we covered goalies, defensemen, wingers and centers while examining team-by-team who is primed for fantasy success and who is due for a fall in the coming weeks. As a bonus installment we will look at a whole team approach this week.

I looked at three factors in determining trends. 1) I compared the power-play percentages this season compared to last season to see if there were any big discrepancies between the two. 2)

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I compared the goals scored per game average this season with the same stat for last season and 3) which was the most interesting, I looked to see if there were any discrepancies in team shooting percentages from last season compared to this season.

Before the good stuff let's take a look at a few:

Maasquito Buzzings...

- Shawn Horcoff is leading the Western Conference in faceoff wins with 252. Mikko Koivu has the most power-play faceoffs won with 60.
- Loui Eriksson, Mikko Koivu, Antti Miettinen, Ryan Clowe and Brad Richards all picked up six points this past week.
- Rob Blake and Miettinen were ranked fourth and seventh overall in Yahoo for last week, Blake had three goals, plus three and 24 penalty minutes last week, while Miettinen had six assists with a plus one rating. Blake shot up to 85% owned, compared to earlier in the season when he was less than 20% owned. Miettinen is still at 29% owned so he could be solid pickups for the rest of the season.
- Dustin Brown maintains the lead in the Western Conference with 77 hits.
- Kyle Wellwood upped his shooting percentage to 34.6%, you'd be silly to expect that to be sustained for the course of a full season. Andrew Brunette is firing at 25.8% and Eriksson is at 23.9%.
- Teemu Selanne is unstoppable on the power-play as he picked up another three power-play markers this past week. He now has 12 on the season. Jiri Hudler and Owen Nolan potted two this week.
- Dustin Brown is firing a ton of bombs on opposing goalies as he maintained his Western Conference lead with 98 shots on goal. Patrick Marleau is second with 90 and Devin Setoguchi is third with 89.
- Marian Hossa fired 18 shots on goal this past week, followed by Jarome Iginla at 17 and Milan Michalek at 15.
- Sean Avery regained his PIMs crown as he's sitting pretty as the top-dog with 77, David Backes might be someone to keep an eye on as he has 73 in 22 contests this season, Backes also has eight points so far, so he does have 30 point upside this season to go along with those PIMs. Shane O'Brien is sitting in third with 72 and could be good pickup as a fourth defenseman just for the PIMs.
- Minnesota gave up a few power-play goals this week but continues to be the NHL's leader on the PK, but they dipped below the 90% mark for the first time this season as they still are operating at 89.5%
- Vancouver continues to produce in five-on-five situations with a ratio of 1.41. Colorado is the worst in the Western Conference with a rating of 0.78.
- Minnesota leads the Western Conference with an average of 12.0 minutes in penalties per contest. So don't look for any big PIM producers in a very disciplined Minny line-up. Anaheim is averaging the league high of 19.4 and Vancouver is second last while averaging 18.2. Both teams are near or under the 80% mark on the PK, so would think that doesn't bode well for the

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coaching staff.

- An interesting stat that I never paid attention to, San Jose is 5-0-0 when being out shot by their opponents, Calgary is 3-6-1. San Jose is 15-3-1 when out shooting their opponents, while Anaheim is last at 2-6-1 when out shooting their opponents. On the flip side Anaheim is 12-2-0 when being out shot by their opponents...

Team

PP% 08-09

PP% 07-08

Chicago

21.6%

15.9%

Columbus

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9.9%

14.9%

Detroit

32.3%

20.7%

Nashville

14.0%

14.8%

St. Louis

23.7%

14.1%

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Very interesting numbers if you compare this year to last year, St. Louis had the worst power-play in the NHL last season while operating at 14.1% but this year they improved dramatically to third overall at 23.7%. The main problem that exists is that percentage is under the pre-Andy McDonald era. Now that he is absent due to injury, that power-play may stagnate just a bit. With that said, the Blues employ a non-traditional five forward set on the power-play, which should be offensive enough that the Blues should maintain a 20% power-play for the duration of the season. Detroit's power-play will be due for a big fall, as they just can't keep scoring at a one for three pace all season long. Montreal was first last season with a 24.1% efficiency rating, so you just can't expect Detroit to be a full 8% higher than last season's leading power-play output. Detroit is also 4% better on the power-play on the road than at home. Columbus' power-play is due for a huge rise as they are only operating at 9.9% right now, which is a full 4% less than last season's lowest output. Their main problem is that they lack a true power-play quarterback on the blue line. The addition of Kris Russell should help, but look for them to address that need via trade fairly soon. Either way the power play can only go up for the Blue Jackets.

	Team
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GFG 08-09

GFG 07-08

Chicago

3.32

2.85

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Columbus

2.91

2.32

Detroit

3.48

3.07

Nashville

2.87

2.77

St. Louis

2.73

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2.46

In terms of offensive production all the teams are up in offensive production this season compared to last season. Detroit is averaging almost three and a half goals per game, which could be sustainable for the rest of the season considering they kept a similar lineup as last season, but added Marian Hossa to their already potent offense during the off-season. Adding Hossa should account for the additional 0.41 of goals scored per game for the Red Wings. Chicago is fourth in the league with a 3.32 goals scored per game average. They are a highly offensive team, but a dip in scoring from a very young Blackhawks team is in the books in the coming weeks. A 3.00 goals for average seems to be more of a realistic target to maintain than their current pace. What that might translate to is that secondary players like Kris Versteeg, Dave Bolland and Troy Brouwer will probably take a hit in production in the coming weeks, which is something for owners to consider when attempting to sell high on those players. Columbus has taken the biggest jump while averaging almost 0.60 goals more per game this season than last season. The additions of Huselius, R.J. Umberger, Derick Brassard, and Jakub Voracek will help maintain the scoring for the duration of the season. St. Louis and Nashville should uphold a similar scoring pace for the rest of the season.

Team

Shots For 08-09

Goals 08-09

SH% 08-09

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SH% 07-08

Chicago

669

73

10.91%

10.18%

Columbus

696

67

9.63%

7.98%

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Detroit

824

80

9.71%

8.94%

Nashville

671

66

9.84%

9.36%

St. Louis

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583

60

10.29%

9.43%

I thought comparing the team's shooting percentage from last year might be another good way to look for trend and I'd found some very interesting findings.

Columbus shot just under eight percent last season, and is up to nine and a half percent this season. Over the duration of a season a one percent jump usually accounts for roughly 24 to 25 goals, so if you look at Columbus they should be due for a 40 goal increase this season from last season. It'll most likely spread towards guys like Brassard, Voracek and Umberger. Detroit shot just under nine percent last year, so the increase of 0.77% from last season to this season certainly justifies the 0.41 increase in goals for per game. Chicago and St. Louis are shooting way above the ten percent mark, which also means they are due for a substantial drop. Guys like Patrick Sharp (18.8%), Versteeg (15.9%), Bolland (11.1%), Tkachuk (19.0%), and Patrick Berglund (18.2%) will be due for a big decline in goals. So now might be time to sell high on these guys. Nashville should stay status quo.

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Team

PP% 08-09

PP% 07-08

Calgary

20.0%

16.8%

Colorado

16.0%

14.6%

Edmonton

19.6%

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16.6%

Minnesota

24.0%

18.9%

Vancouver

16.1%

17.1%

Not any real big surprises this season in the Northwest. Calgary has a 3.2% boost in power-play production this season. The addition of Mike Cammalleri will account for that. They also trialed Matthew Lombardi on the top power-play unit with Jarome Iginla and Cammy, Lombardi has blazing speed and has great on ice presence, but hasn't put it all together yet. If he can be a mainstay on the Flames top power-play unit, he could get a huge increase in points. He's only 3% owned in Yahoo leagues, so he might be worth keeping an eye on. That means Daymond Langkow gets the shaft in Cowtown. Sell on Langkow if you can. Another interesting fact is that Calgary is 4.6% better on the power-play at home than on the road.

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With the firepower in Colorado, you would think they'd score more than one in every six opportunities, but surprisingly they have been more efficient this season than last year. The slow starts of Wojtek Wolski and Marek Svatos might explain why their power-play isn't in the high teens, once those two get going, the Avs power-play will begin to flourish. Look for increases in production from Wolski and Svatos in the next few weeks. Minnesota's power-play is the winner of the big What Da? award. So let me try to explain this to you. Last season they had Marian Gaborik, Pavol Demitra, Brian Rolston, Brent Burns and Mark Parish on the top power-play unit, this season they have Mikko Koivu, Andrew Brunette, Antti Miettinen, Marc-Andre Bergeron and Burns on their top power-play unit and yet are operating at 5.1% higher this season than last season. Oooooook then... It's safe to say that those numbers are due for a big drop by the end of the season. If you own Koivu now might be a great time to pawn him off to another owner as he won't be able to maintain a 89 point pace. Vancouver and Edmonton are just about right.

Team

GFG 08-09

GFG 07-08

Calgary

3.00

2.76

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Colorado

2.35

2.73

Edmonton

2.61

2.68

Minnesota

2.68

2.68

Vancouver

3.00

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2.52

Calgary's increase in production can be explained but the early success of Todd Bertuzzi and Mike Cammalleri. Their 0.24 goals scored per game increase is certainly justifiable. Colorado's 0.38 goals scored per game drop however is not. They pretty much ice the same team as they have last season with the addition of Darcy Tucker who replaced Brunette. That still shouldn't account for the big drop in offensive production, which seriously means that Wolski, Svatos, Milan Hedjuk, and Ryan Smyth are due for a big increase in the following weeks. Colorado's offense is much better than the 27th ranked offense in the NHL. Minnesota is right on the average that they scored last season, considering they own a 5.1% increase on the power-play. Vancouver is also a bit of an anomaly, their off-season additions don't justify a half a goal per game increase in offensive production. Hot starts by Ryan Kesler, Kyle Wellwood, Jannik Hansen and Alex Burrows have all attributed to the dramatic increase in offensive production this year. Look for those players to take a drop in the next few weeks. If you own them, see if you can pawn them off for some legitimate full-season producers. Edmonton is once again just about right.

Team

Shots For 08-09

Goals 08-09

SH% 08-09

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SH% 07-08

Calgary

743

72

9.69%

9.76%

Colorado

662

54

8.16%

9.54%

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Edmonton

624

60

9.62%

10.20%

Minnesota

609

59

9.69%

9.92%

Vancouver

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641

72

11.23%

9.19%

There are two huge anomalies in the Northwest Division. The first is Colorado, their current eight percent shooting percent is well below the league norm, which suggests only one thing, it can only go up from there. They pretty much ice the same team as they did last year, so there isn't any justification for the huge discrepancy in shooting percentage between last season and this season. Look for guys like Svatos (7.7%), Sakic (4.3%), Stastny (8.5%) to all pick up the scoring in the next few weeks. On the other end of the spectrum Vancouver is shooting at an unbelievable 11.23%, which is over three percent higher than the Avalanche, you really don't expect the Canucks to score 72 goals more than the Avs this season do you? Expect big drops in shooting percentage from Wellwood (34.6%), Demitra (20.6%), Steve Bernier (14.3%), Hansen (12.0%) and Burrows (12.5%). The other three Northwest Division teams should stay right around their current mark for the duration of the season.

Team

PP% 08-09

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PP% 07-08

Anaheim

21.6%

16.6%

Dallas

15.1%

18.1%

Los Angeles

16.1%

17.4%

Phoenix

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13.5%

18.6%

San Jose

22.2%

18.7%

San Jose's power-play deserves a much improved 3.5% with the additions of Rob Blake and Dan Boyle on the blue-line for the Sharks. The added production from Ryan Clowe, Devin Setoguchi, Joe Pavelski and the re-emergence of Patrick Marleau have also contributed to the increase this season compared to last season. The Sharks power-play will be lethal this season, so look for it to top the one in four efficiency rating as the season progresses. San Jose's power-play is also nearly 6% better on the road than at home. The Kings really have to stop playing around with Patrick O'Sullivan. He spends one game playing with Anze Kopitar and Dustin Brown, then spend the next on the second line with Handzus and Frolov. Once they decide to keep him on the top-line, the chemistry on even strength and the power-play will begin to click. I've also highlighted Kyle Quincey in a few of my past articles. He must be owned while averaging 3:33 in power-play ice-time per contest as the Kings' power-play quarterback. Once he gets going, the Kings will get going. If he's still on your waiver wire, pick him up. He's this season's Mike Green!!

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Wayne Gretzky needs to take a rip into his power-play. They were very efficient at 18.6% last season, but have dropped to a poultry 13.5% this season. That shouldn't happen with the addition of Olli Jokinen, Kyle Turris and Mikkel Boedker into their lineup this season. Jokinen is out for the next few weeks with an injury, so they might just return back to the system they used last season to jump start the power-play. Look for Shane Doan, Peter Mueller and even Steven Reinprecht to make a small gain in power-play production in the next few weeks. Anaheim has also enjoyed a steady increase from this season compared to last season. A 5% increase could be attributed to a full season of Niedermayer and Selanne, and the emergence of Getzlaf and Perry as legitimate stars in the NHL. 21.6% might be too high for them to maintain over a course of a full season though. Look for it to dip down to around 18% by the end of the year, as Selanne won't end up with 39 power-play goals. Dallas has a very interesting power-play, they operate at 20.4% at home, but only 10.5% on the road, once they find some consistency on the road that power-play percentage should rise.

	Team
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GFG 08-09

GFG 07-08

Anaheim

2.88

2.40

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Dallas

2.83

2.89

Los Angeles

2.64

2.76

Phoenix

2.39

2.55

San Jose

3.75

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2.63

It's hard to image that the Kings averaged more goals per game than the Sharks last season, but this year it's a totally different scenario. The Sharks are averaging almost a goal per game more than the rest of the teams in their division. Last season, Ottawa led the league in scoring by averaging 3.15 goals per game, San Jose's ridiculous 3.75 goals per game pace will be too difficult to sustain over the course of the season. They are certainly offensive enough to perhaps maintain a 3.33 goals for average, but 3.75 will be near impossible. What the means is that a lot of the secondary scoring from Clowe, Setoguchi, Pavelski could take a hit. Even Marleau's 88 point pace is probably too good to sustain. If you own any of those players and the right deal is available pawn them off for proven fantasy hockey studs.

The Kings will get it right, once they utilize O'Sullivan properly. Last season's 2.76 average seems reasonable enough to anticipate for the end of the season. The Coyotes are much better than their 2.39 scoring average. Jokinen, Doan and Mueller just need to find some chemistry and Turris, Boedker and Hanzal need to step it up for the rest of the season. Mueller picked up 36 points in the final 45 games for the Coyotes last season, so he definitely likes the second half of the season much better than the first half. He could repeat that performance again this season. See if you can buy low on Mueller right now. Anaheim and Dallas' production seem reasonable enough to maintain status quo.

Team

Shots For 08-09

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Goals 08-09

SH% 08-09

SH% 07-08

Anaheim

734

72

9.81%

8.79%

Dallas

631

65

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10.30%

10.84%

Los Angeles

613

58

9.46%

9.62%

Phoenix

660

55

8.33%

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8.36%

San Jose

879

90

10.24%

8.90%

There are also a few anomalies in the Pacific Division, Anaheim has a one percent increase from last season to this season. They have Scott Niedermayer and Teemu Selanne for a full season, so that may account for the slight increase in shooting percentage. San Jose had a huge boost with a 1.34% increase this season. That can be largely attributed to the hot shooting from Clowe (17.2%), Setoguchi (13.5%), Pavelski (12.8%), Milan Michalek (12.3%) and Dan Boyle (11.4%). That just provides you with another reason to expect a slight dip in production from the secondary players in San Jose in the next few weeks. Phoenix is the second worst in the Western Conference in terms of team shooting percentage, they shot 8.36% last season, so their current 8.33% isn't too much of an aberration. But they added Jokinen, Turriss, Boedker, and Porter in the off-season, so they really should be going up rather than down this season. Reinprecht (8.3%), Hanzal (7.1%), Turriss (6.9%) and Viktor Tikhonov (6.3%) should all see a boost in production in the next few weeks. Dallas might take a bit of a dip now that Brendan Morrow is out. The Kings should remain steady at nine and a half percent.

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I would also like to take the time to thank those who have made positive comments in the forums section at DobberHockey. Your positive comments keep me motivated in doing my best to dig up the latest information for everyone.