

## Desperate Times Call for Desperate Measures (Part 2)

Written by Ryan Ma

Tuesday, 24 March 2009 02:54 - Last Updated Wednesday, 25 March 2009 04:27

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Another look at some hot and cold players in the Western Conference...

### ***Maaasquito Buzzings...***

Players in the last week with the highest production in each category who are less than 50% owned in Yahoo leagues.

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**Goals**

**Assists**

**+/-**

**PPP**

**SOG**

Gagner (4)

Upshall (4)

Seabrook (3)

Turris (3)

Lombardi (15)

Ward (4)

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Nilsson (4)

Vermette (3)

Handzus (2)

McDonald (12)

Handzus (3)

Simmonds (3)

Brodziak (3)

Grebeskov (2)

Wolski (12)

Barker (2)

Penner (3)

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Klee (3)

Purcell (2)

Cheechoo (11)

Torres (2)

Kotalik (3)

Mitchell (3)

Doughty (2)

Ward (11)

Players who I suggested last week and their production during the week.

**Alex Burrows**

2 G, 0 A, +2, 6 PIMs. 0 PPP, 7 SOG

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**Antoine Vermette**

2 G, 0 A, + 3, 2 PIMs, 0 PPP, 4 SOG

**Steve Sullivan**

1 G, 0 A, -2, 2 PIMs, 0 PPP, 5 SOG

**Ryan Kesler**

1 G, 2 A, 0, 0 PIMs, 1 PPP, 6 SOG

**Kyle Quincey**

0 G, 0 A, -7, 4 PIMs, 0 PPP, 4 SOG

**Joe Pavelski**

1 G, 3 A, + 2, 2 PIMs, 0 PPP, 13 SOG

**David Backes**

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1 G, 1 A, -1, 4 PIMs, 1 PPP. 5 SOG
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Only two misfires - operating better than Dobber's famous 52% rate!

### Who's Hot

**Alex Burrows & Ryan Kesler** – Both players had huge weeks and should see the trend continue this week with four games on their plate. Three of the four teams (Dallas, Colorado, and St. Louis) rank amongst the bottom half of the NHL in goals against average, which should bode well for the Vancouver duo. The Canucks are also only three points back from the division-leading Flames, which should provide more incentive for the Canucks to “go after it” this week. At 52% and 33% owned in Yahoo pools respectively, both members should be widely available in most leagues this week.

**J.P. Dumont**– Dumont certainly had a bit of a hot streak as he's tallied four goals along with 13 assists and 43 SOG this past month. During his recent five game point-scoring streak, he has picked up seven points, 19 SOG all while averaging 17:02 in ice-time. His stats are intriguing because the Preds are missing their number one center in Jason Arnott with post-concussion symptoms. Nashville is also clinging onto the eighth spot in the Western Conference which gives them plenty to play for in this four-game week. At 66% Yahoo-owned he might be a bit harder to scoop up off the waiver wire, but hey you never know...

**Sam Gagner**– Gagner started this season with a massive sophomore slump while tallying only 20 points in his first 56 games, but has salvaged this season with his solid play during the past month. Gagner has eight goals and six assists along with 28 SOG in the month of March (10 contests) and was on a six-game point-scoring streak before having that streak snapped in Sunday night's shut out loss to the Wild. He seems to have found a perfect fit playing alongside Ales Kotalik and Robert Nilsson on the Oilers' second line. What's impressive is that he's not logging a lot of ice-time. In the past 10 contests he's only averaging 16:08, which isn't a ton by fantasy standards. The Oilers also play four times this week, which should give plenty of opportunity for Gagner to pick up some points this week. At 24% Yahoo-owned he's a steal for this week.

**Joel Ward** – Ward is fitting in nicely on the Pred's second line alongside Vernon Fiddler and J.P. Dumont. Ward picked up five points this past week, while firing 11 SOG. He's averaging

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18:37 in ice-time in the past six contests and gaining plenty of confidence since joining the Predators top-six. With the Preds fighting for a playoff spot, while having four games this week, it's a perfect time to add Ward to your fantasy squad. Ward should be easily attainable while being only 2% Yahoo-owned.

**Scottie Upshall** - Upshall is enjoying quite the change of scenery as he seems to be blossoming in his new home in Phoenix. Since joining Phoenix at the trade deadline, Upshall has picked up seven points while firing 30 SOG and tacking on 16 PIMs during that span. Those are the types of numbers that should prove to be very beneficial in many fantasy leagues. In the last five contests, he's also averaging 18:43 in ice-time which shows that coach Wayne Gretzky has plenty of confidence in the former 6th overall pick in the 2002 NHL entry draft. With nothing much to play for this season, look for the 5% owned Upshall to get plenty of ice-time for the remainder of this season.

**Cam Barker** – Barker has had a huge month while tallying 12 points, 10 PIMs, and 28 SOG in the process. Barker was on an eight-game point-scoring streak before missing Sunday night's contest against the Kings with a lower-body injury. He's also picked up three minutes or more in power-play time in seven of the past nine contests while quickly becoming an integral part of the Hawks' power-play unit. At 41% Yahoo-owned he should be widely available in many fantasy pools. Definitely add him to your roster if he's available on your waiver wire.

### **CAUTION**

Barker is day-to-day with a lower-body injury.

## Who's Not

**Paul Stastny** –Stastny has struggled immensely this past month since returning from his forearm injury. He's only registered five points and 28 SOG in 11 games. The Avs don't have much to play for in the remaining games of this season, so don't look for a huge production from Stastny this week, especially when they face the Canucks sandwiched by the Ducks on this week's schedule.

**Brad Richards** – He returned from a wrist injury that sidelined him for 15 games only to break his opposite hand in the third period in Saturday night's loss to the Sharks. The injury will most likely sideline him for the remainder of this season, which means he's pretty much droppable in one-year leagues. You should be able to replace him with Gagner, which will pretty much fill in the exact same missing stats.

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**Dustin Brown** – Brown's not on a terrible slump, but with the Kings needing wins badly to get them into a playoff spot, they'll certainly expect more production from their captain. Brown only has five points in 11 March contests, but has fired 33 SOG during that span. The Kings face St. Louis, Dallas and Nashville this week, which all could potentially have hot goalies on the rise. Brown isn't an immediate drop, but if a Dumont, Burrows or Backes is available I'd probably take them over Brown for this week.

**Alex Frolov** – Frolov was one of the top streakiest players to own in fantasy leagues if you read Dobber's column a few weeks back. When he's hot, he's really hot, and when he's cold, he's extremely ice-cold. He's on one of the cold streaks since being booted off the Kings' top-line of Anze Kopitar and Dustin Brown, which is why he's point-less this past week while firing only four SOG in three games. He also collected a minus four rating, which won't be doing your fantasy squad any favors. Do yourself a favor and save yourself the headache and drop Frolov for this week. \*Update - he is injured and out for a week, per the ramblings.

**Jonathan Cheechoo** – A lot of people have been waiting for the Cheechoo-train, but it doesn't look like it's going to arrive this season. Despite averaging 18:44 in ice-time in the previous three games before Sunday's contest, Cheechoo tallied only two points and 10 SOG. If you ask me, give up on the Cheechoo-train and pick up someone who won't cause you to tear your hair out during the playoffs.

**Jason Arnott** – As mentioned earlier, Arnott has been sidelined with post-concussion symptoms and according to the news reports from Nashville, it looks like he won't be anywhere close to returning to the Preds' lineup in the near future. He does not have IR eligibility, which means he'll just be chewing up a roster spot this entire week, while not helping out your fantasy team at all. He's a great fantasy own over the course of the year, but you won't miss his production for the rest of this year even if he comes back early.

With head-to-head playoff hockey pools being as tight as they are, a single point here, a PIM there, and a SOG possibly could make or break your fantasy season. That's why it is essential to take advantage of the players that you have at your disposal, and cut loose any of the dead weight that is dragging your fantasy squad down. After all this is your last opportunity to claim the crown even though you might not have had a great regular season. It's not about emotions, but purely based on stats from here on in. Good luck! See ya next week, if you are still alive in your pools.