A good time to do a recap of the fantasy season and dish out a few fantasy awards to deserving candidates.

Selke

Pavel Datsyuk – Datsyuk is certainly deserving of a nomination for the best defensive forward in

the Western Conference as he finished the season while leading all Western Conference players with a plus 34 rating. That in addition to the fact that he also averages 1:36 short-handed per game demonstrates that coach Mike Babcock has full confidence in Datsyuk's ability at both ends of the ice. It's very hard to award defensive play in fantasy hockey, but Datsyuk might be the only exception.

Alex Burrows –Burrows probably isn't considered your prototypical defensive forward, but his numbers of 68 hits, and plus 23 rating probably made him a very quiet defensive achiever this past fantasy season. He also averages one of the highest time on ice in short-handed situations as a forward with a 2:57 per contest average, which certainly shows his defensive prowess on the ice.

Patrick Marleau – Marleau tallied five short-handed goals this regular season, which makes him a constant threat every time he touches the ice for the Sharks. He also finished the season with a plus 16 rating which ranked him 14th amongst Western Conference forwards in the league. If you are looking for an all-around player, Marleau should certainly be on top of that list.

Winner: I'll give the Selke to Datsyuk as he led all Western Conference players in +/-. I know plus/minus is a bit of a wonky that that fluctuates year-in-year-out, but at the end of the day it's still a main stat considered in many default fantasy hockey pools. If you own an offensive player that can give you a plus 34 rating, you're certainly in good standing to win your league, compared to someone that's in the minus.

Norris

Shea Weber – Weber finished the season with a line of 23 goals, 30 assists, a plus 1 rating, 80 PIMs along with 251 shots while manning the Predators top power-play unit. He was also a huge minutes chewer as he averaged almost 24 minutes per game on the Nashville blue-line. It's safe to say that with a quality season like this past one, Weber has firmly entrenched himself in the top-10 in terms of fantasy value for defenseman.

Scott Niedermayer – Niedermayer finished the season with a line of 14 goals and 45 assists, a minus 8 rating, 70 PIMs, along with 178 SOG with the Ducks. Nieds was even more of a minutes chewer as he averaged almost 27 minutes of ice-time per game for Anaheim, which is only four seconds less than the league-leader Jay Bouwmeester. What's also amazing is that at 35 years of age, he produced his third highest career point total in his 17-year NHL career.

Sheldon Souray – The oft-injured band-aid boy had a relative healthy year as he managed to play in all but one game for the Oilers this past fantasy season. In 81 games, Souray finished the season with a line of 23 goals, 30 assists, a plus one rating, 98 PIMs, along with 268 SOG. He averaged just under 25 minutes per contest in Edmonton, while ranking second amongst defensemen in the league for power-play goals. He is definitely as across-the-board as they can possibly come.

Winner: Extremely tough choice in this decision, especially when I left Niklas Lidstrom off the ballot, but I ended up going with my hometown hero of Souray for this one as he just had a

great overall statistical year, while having the edge over his competitors in PIMs, SOG and most importantly power-play goals.

Tiger Williams (opposite of Lady Byng)

Shane O'Brien – O'Brien finished the season with 196 PIMs, while collecting 48 minor penalties and 10 major penalties in 77 contests with the Canucks. A huge advantage that O'Brien possesses over his competition is that in fantasy leagues he could have been utilized as a third/fourth defenseman where he wouldn't have taken away an offensive roster spot for your fantasy squad. Getting that much production from a traditionally weak roster spot is definitely advantageous to all of those owners who were smart in utilizing him that role.

Zach Stortini – Stortini finished the season with 181 PIMs, which ranks him fourth amongst all of the players in the NHL. Stortini earned his paycheck through major penalties as he racked up 25 majors in just 52 contests for the Oilers. The only blemish for Stortini is that he appeared in only 63 percent of the Oiler's contests, so if you owned him it would have been a crap shoot every night whether or not he was going to be in the starting lineup for the Oilers.

Jared Boll – This was the second consecutive season that Boll has topped the 180 PIMs mark in his young NHL career. He finished last season with 226 PIMs, which showed a slight decline from last season to this season. He also appeared in 75 contests, while averaging in just under nine minutes per contests for the Blue Jackets, which at the end of the day probably isn't across-the-board enough to own in fantasy pools.

Winner: Winner of the PIMs award goes to O'Brien. Having a third/fourth defenseman single-handedly win you a category in fantasy hockey is essentially fantasy gold in terms of hockey pools, especially when it doesn't necessarily cost you an important roster spot. If you are actively looking for PIMs for your fantasy squad you should strongly consider O'Brien for next season as a third or fourth D-man.

Calder

Bobby Ryan – Ryan finished his rookie season with 57 points, 33 PIMs, a plus 13 rating, along with 174 SOG in just 64 games. If you pro-rated those numbers over a course of 82 games, he certainly could have been one of the reasons why someone would have won their fantasy pool instead of finishing second. He certainly beginning to lived up to being the "person drafted after Sidney Crosby" moniker, at least for a season that is…

Steve Mason – Mason certainly had an outstanding rookie season as he finished the season with a record of 33-20-7 along with a 2.29 goals against average and a .916 save percentage. His 10 shut outs were also a glaring factor as that was the most amongst all of the goalies in the NHL.

Pekka Rinne – The debate regarding who is better Rinne or Mason continues as both have certainly proven that in terms of statistics-wise, they are essentially within the same ball park figure of each other. Rinne finished the season with a 29-15-4 record, along with a 2.38 goals

against average and a .917 save percentage. His seven shut outs also aren't too far off from Mason's, which ranks him in the same league as Evgeni Nabokov. I'm sure the debate between who's the better goalie Mason or Rinne will continue for years to come.

Winner: The Calder goes to Mason. Entering the season, teams who gambled without a number one goalie were bailed out if they were able to scoop Mason off the waiver wire early enough. Mason probably singlehandedly changed the face of many fantasy teams when Pascal Leclaire went down with his injury. It was a very very close call between the three candidates, but the Blue Jackets had so much confidence in Mason that they dealt away Leclaire to firmly entrench Mason as the number one, couldn't' say the same about Rinne in Nashville.

Vezina

Evgeni Nabokov – Nabby finished the season with the highest win percentage amongst all of the goalies in the NHL. He finished the regular season with 41 wins despite starting in only 62 games for the Sharks. His 2.44 goals against average ranked him just outside of the top-10 for that category, but it still doesn't move him out of the top-tier of goalies to own in fantasy pools.

Niklas Backstrom – Backstrom had a very quiet season in which he tallied some really decent numbers for fantasy leagues. He finished in the top-five for wins, saves, goals against average, save percentage and shut outs. Backstrom pretty much performed as a top-tiered goalie, but didn't have the price tag attached with it. He had a great season statistically and is certainly deserving of the new $24 million four year contract he picked up with the Wild during the season.

Chris Mason – Mason is kind of an out there pick, but I certainly think that he is deserving of being nominated as a fantasy Vezina candidate. If you throw out all of the numbers from his horrible 2008, Mason finished with a 24-10-6 record with a .924 save percentage along with a 2.10 goals against average in 40 games in 2009. When it was heading into the stretch run of the season where a lot of teams were desperately looking for some solidarity between the pipes, Mason certainly provided that plus more to help a few fantasy owners make a run at the championship in the last two months of the fantasy season.

Winner: The fantasy Vezina trophy goes to Backstrom. Owning a goalie that was in the top-five for each of the main goalie categories in default setting fantasy hockey pools is certainly could make the difference between winning your fantasy pool or losing it. Mason was great, but you can't just base it in half a season's production, which is the main reason why I left Roberto Luongo off the ballot in the first place. Nabby had a good team in front of him and still had inferior stats to Backstrom, so I didn't think he was deserving of the award.

Hart

Ryan Getzlaf – Getzlaf finished the season with a fantastic fantasy line of 25 goals, 66 assists, a plus five rating, 121 PIMs, along with 227 SOG. His stats are certainly comparable to the big three of Sidney Crosby/Alex Ovechkin/Evgeni Malkin but without the expensive price tag. His fantasy production was across-the-board which proved to be a difference maker in many

fantasy leagues this season. Getzlaf is certainly deserving of a nomination for a fantasy Hart trophy.

Daniel Sedin – Sedin finished the season with a decent line of 31 goals, 51 assists, a plus 24 rating, 36 PIMs, along with 285 SOG. If you compare Sedin's numbers to Getzlaf's, he really only trails him in the PIMs department, but has the advantage in SOG and plus/minus. Sedin always seems to produce in four out of the five major fantasy categories year-in-year-out but is never ever mentioned as a top fantasy producer. Some food for thought as you are planning for drafts next season…

Rick Nash –Nash finished the season with 40 goals, 39 assists, a plus 11 rating, 52 PIMs along with 263 SOG. If you look at those numbers they aren't as spectacular as the two players mentioned above, but if you consider overall draft position and value you are getting out of him, he's certainly deserving of a fantasy MVP nomination.

Winner: Very very close call between Sedin and Getzlaf. When I considered the winner for an MVP award, I tried to drop all emotions and base it purely on numbers. In the end, Sedin finished the season with a three to two edge over Getzlaf in the five major categories for fantasy hockey, which is why I had to give the Hart to Sedin.

Agree/disagree with a few of my choices for the winners? I'd love to discuss them with you in the comments section below.