Sorry about last week. I recently moved into my new home and thought the internet connection would be activated quickly. Here now is the final part of the Fantasy Indicators of Success series taking a closer look at the Western Conference centermen. The fantasy value of a center can easily be identified by interpreting the same two stats used to identify the value of blue-liners and wingers which is PP ice-time and SOG. The reasoning behind it is very simple. PP ice-time usually separates players who are offensive-minded from those that are defensive-oriented. The more PP time they receive usually equates to more offensive opportunities they'll have to score with the advantage. On a similar note, SOG usually maintains a similar line of thought. The more a center shoots, the higher the chance it goes into the net or creating offensive chances. The opposite also holds true, the less a center shoots, the lower the chance that the puck goes into the net and the lower the offensive opportunities. Now that we've established clear indicators on determining the fantasy value of centers, let's take a closer look at the men up the middle from the Western Conference.

NOTE: These are based on one-year leagues, and not meant for keeper/dynasty leagues.

Also I looked used the positions as listed on www.nhl.com , so there might be some discrepancies in position compared to your league settings.

Anaheim

Name

Points

SOG

Overall Ice-Time

PP Ice-Time

Status

Ryan Getzlaf

25

40

20:38

3:44

Stand Pat

Saku Koivu

14

36

18:57

1:58

Buy

Todd Marchant

2

26

13:43

0:00

WW

Kyle Palmieri

1

10

8:41

0:00

Stand Pat

Nick Bonino

0

11

9:24

0:01

WW

Kyle Chipchura

0

7

9:20

0:00

WW

Josh Green

0

10

10:05

0:00

WW

Not surprisingly Getzlaf leads the way for fantasy production in Anaheim. He should continue along his near point-per-game pace as the season advances. You should keep a close eye on Koivu as Joffrey Lupul is slated to return fairly soon and will be a great offensive boost to complement the second line of Koivu and Teemu Selanne. Another scenario, to spread out the

offense, might see Bobby Ryan get shifted down to the second line and have Lupul joining Corey Perry and Getzlaf, which would also boost Koivu's value. Either way it's a win-win situation for Koivu owners. At 26 percent Yahoo! owned, he's a great pick up for the time being. Youngster Palmieri could cause some damage in the future, but for 2010 his value is extremely limited. Marchant is a perfect checking third liner but nothing more.

Calgary

Name	Points	SOG	Overall Ice-Time	PP Ice-Time	Status
Brendan Morrison					

15

35

14:38

2:28

Sell

Matt Stajan

14

27

15:26

2:07

Buy

Olli Jokinen

9

55

17:50

3:26

Watch

Mikael Backlund

5

62

14:52

0:49

WW

Craig Conroy

2

10

9:25

0:03

WW

Despite averaging the fourth highest ice-time amongst centermen in Calgary, Morrison actually leads the way in scoring. He hasn't reached the 53-point plateau for four years, so it might be a bit much to expect him to operate at his current pace for the next five months. Stajan has spent a smidge over 80 percent of his overall ice-time alongside superstar Jarome Iginla. Considering how slow they have started, it might be a smart investment to put some stocks into the Stajan portfolio. Jokinen's fantasy value lies completely in his peripheral stats. If you pro-rate his numbers for an 82-game season, he'd have 114 PIMs along with 214 SOG. Add on the 78 HITs and 39 BS and he's a gold mine for peripheral stats. If you can handle the lack of scoring, he's definitely worth a roster slot. Youngster Backlund has plenty of upside, but not enough ice-time to really make a big impact this season.

Chicago

Name	Points	SOG	Overall Ice-Time	PP Ice-Time	Status
Jonathan Toews	19	78			

21:03

3:14

Hold

Jake Dowell

10

33

11:44

0:06

WW

Dave Bolland

5

33

17:08

1:53

Watch

Short and sweet with the Hawks, as we only have three candidates to really analyze. Toews obviously leads the way as he's the leading scorer amongst all of the Chicago centermen and also possesses the most fantasy value. He's on pace to set a new career-high in SOG with 246, which certainly isn't a bad total for a playmaker. Dowell is an interesting case, he is surprisingly on pace for a 30-point season despite averaging just under 12 minutes per contest. Not a lot of value there, but certainly could be someone to keep an eye on. Despite only five points next to his name, Bolland has the potential to put up much, much more. If you break down the numbers, generally speaking a center that averages 1.65 points-per-game and 17+ minutes per game should be on par to finish with 40-45 points. If the numbers fall in line, I wouldn't be surprised to see 35-40 points in the remaining 56 contests out of Bolland.

Colorado

Name	Points	SOG	Overall Ice-Time	PP Ice-Time	Status
Paul Stastny	22	59	20:00	3:30	Buy

Matt Duchene

21

52

17:38

2:52

Buy

Ryan O'Reilly

7

45

16:55

0:13

Watch

Kevin Porter

6

21

12:13

1:05

WW

Philippe Dupuis

5

25

8:06

0:04

WW

You probably don't need me to tell you that Stastny pretty much holds most of the value in Avalanche country. He's on pace to finish the season with 78 points, which is a bit lower than what I predicted for him during the off-season. Chris Stewart's hand injury (out three-four weeks) will probably hurt Stastny's value, but he's one of the true play creators in the NHL, and with his best finisher out of the line up it might actually force Stastny to think more offensive than to pass first. I'd use Stewart's injury to see if you can buy-low on Stats (he has a career 1.07 point-per-game average post-ASB). With Peter Mueller, TJ Galiardi, Daniel Winnik and now Stewart, the Avs are quickly running out of winger options. I wouldn't be surprised to see coach Joe Sacco put all of his eggs in one basket and run with a Milan Hejduk, Stastny and Duchene line. That could dramatically shoot up Duchene's fantasy value. Keep an eye on that situation. If that scenario were to happen it could shoot O'Reilly up into the second line center slot, which also would also dramatically increase his value.

Columbus

Name

Points	SOG	Overall Ice-Time	PP Ice-Time	Status
Derick Brassard	18	61	16:55	3:52	Buy

Antoine Vermette

11

39

17:44

3:03

Sell

Kyle Wilson

9

25

11:10

1:15

WW

Sammy Pahlsson

6

27

15:58

0:06

WW

Derek Mackenzie

5

22

10:38

0:34

WW

With 18 points in 22 contests, Brassard is really breaking out this season. He's on pace for a "magical fourth" year total of 63 points, which is a nice outcome for owners who gambled on the 23-year old at the draft table. At just 34 percent Yahoo! owned, he's a bargain bin pick up considering that in the last three contests he's spent close to 90 percent of his overall ice-time alongside superstar Rick Nash. Snatch him up immediately. Despite garnering more ice-time than Brassard, Vermette is on a much lower point-per-game pace and not as much upside. The PP ice-time is there, but the lack of SOG is a worry. If you are an owner make a swap, there are much better options than Vermette available on the WW. Pahlsson is more of a defensive presence than an offensive impact, not much value attached with him.

Dallas

Name

Points

SOG

Overall Ice-Time

PP Ice-Time

Status

Brad Richards

28

87

20:36

5:27

Buy

Mike Ribeiro

21

49

19:05

3:56

Stand Pat

Tom Wandell

2

23

11:34

0:13

WW

Brian Sutherby

2

12

7:50

0:07

WW

Toby Petersen

2

17

9:45

0:03

WW

We can’t really complain about the production of Richards. He averages the fourth most PP ice-time behind only Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and James Wisniewski. Garnering that many SOG should see him maintain his 1.22 point-per-game pace for the duration of the 2010-11 season. Ribeiro probably has the second most value, but with Richards above him in the depth charts, his production won’t be optimal.

Detroit

Name

Points

SOG

Overall Ice-Time

PP Ice-Time

Status

Pavel Datsyuk

24

56

19:48

3:49

Stand Pat

Valtteri Filppula

12

37

16:51

2:31

Stand Pat

Mike Modano

8

41

13:08

3:18

WW

Darren Helm

6

28

11:45

0:04

WW

Jiri Hudler

6

32

12:20

2:40

Sell

Datsyuk leads the way in Detroit. After a pretty dismal 70-point season last campaign, it appears that Datsyuk is back into the 90-point threat that we have grown so accustomed to seeing. Look for him to flirt with the century mark once again come April. Filppula has decent value, but won't be anything to really make or break your fantasy season. Modano is clearly in the downside of his career, despite garnering over 66 minutes of PP ice-time he only has a lone point to show for it. Averaging just over 13 minutes a game won't be enough for him to make a fantasy impact this season. Hudler is clearly getting the short end of the stick in HockeyTown. Averaging less ice-time than 40-year old is never a good thing for fantasy hockey. Drop him immediately.

Edmonton

Name	Points	SOG	Overall Ice-Time	PP Ice-Time	Status
Shawn Horcoff	14				

36

19:25

2:38

Stand Pat

Sam Gagner

14

50

17:36

3:04

Buy

Andrew Cogliano

7

29

15:01

0:41

Watch

Gilbert Brule

6

31

13:49

1:02

Watch

Colin Fraser

3

17

9:57

0:05

WW

Horcoff garners more overall ice-time, but Gagner probably has higher potential for upside. He has a career pre-ASB average of 0.51 point-per-game compared to a post-ASB average of 0.77. Gagner's a massive buy-low candidate for the second half of this season. The line of Brule, Cogliano, and Dustin Penner was absolutely buzzing last night, but probably won't garner enough PP ice-time to be sustained all season long. Keep an eye on that situation, but don't get your hopes up too high.

Los Angeles Kings

Name
Anze Kopitar

Points
21

SOG
78

Overall Ice-Time
21:35

PP Ice-Time
3:57

Status

Stand Pat

Jarret Stoll

17

54

17:20

2:41

Stand Pat

Michal Handzus

8

33

17:05

3:19

Watch

Brad Richardson

5

40

12:15

0:04

WW

Trevor Lewis

2

16

10:20

0:00

WW

Kevin Westgarth

1

5

5:21

0:00

WW

Kopitar is the king in LA, as all of the numbers point to a potentially solid season for him. You might even want to prod his owner to see if they are disappointed with his current 0.91 point-per-game pace and buy-low on him. The Kings' second line of Ryan Smyth, Justin Williams and Stoll has started to build some positive chemistry. Keep an eye on Stoll as he

could be in for a very quiet 45-point, plus 15, 45 PIMs and 175 SOG season. Despite being relegated to a third line checking role on even strength, Handzus is averaging plenty of PP ice-time alongside Dustin Brown and Kopitar. There's a ton of hidden value there, so keep a close eye on that situation. I wouldn't be surprised to see 35 points in the final 60 contests from the seasoned Slovakian.

Minnesota

Name	Points	SOG	Overall Ice-Time	PP Ice-Time	Status
Mikko Koivu					

18

52

19:40

3:12

Stand Pat

Matt Cullen

17

49

19:24

3:50

Stand Pat

John Madden

7

34

16:31

0:30

WW

Kyle Brodziak

6

25

13:09

0:19

WW

Patrick O'Sullivan

2

9

14:47

1:29

Watch

Casey Wellman

1

19

11:14

1:03

WW

The younger Koivu brother is beginning to step out of older brother's shadow as he's posting great numbers and plenty of ice-time to show for it. He's the "go to" guy in Minny so his number should continue to trend upward. Cullen has never been remotely close to the 60-point pace that he's currently on, but then again he's never really garnered as much ice-time as he is now. His numbers are just a little too crazy to expect him to keep his current pace, so expect a bit of a dip moving forward. Recently acquired O'Sullivan is seeing a much more offensive role with the Wild, so definitely keep a close eye on this situation as this could be the break that he finally needs.

Nashville

Name

Points

SOG

Overall Ice-Time

PP Ice-Time

Status

Cal O'Reilly

13

29

18:07

2:58

Stand Pat

Marcel Goc

10

33

16:07

1:00

Watch

Colin Wilson

8

26

12:23

1:51

WW

David Legwand

8

37

17:24

1:26

Stand Pat

Jerred Smithson

3

24

13:37

0:08

Sell

Matthew Lombardi

0

6

14:49

2:25

WW

There really aren't any huge fantasy standouts out of Nashville. O'Reilly has the most upside as he's on pace to finish with just under 50 points. Goc has missed some time this season dealing with a separated shoulder, but seems to have found his scoring pace with multiple roles with the Preds. He's a good candidate to keep an eye on. Wilson has been highly-touted by Dobber the last few seasons, but he's probably a few years off before making solid fantasy impact. Legwand much like Pahlsson is fit for more of a checking defensive role. He has more impact in the "real world" than in fantasy land. Lombardi is still dealing with a concussion, and it doesn't appear to be getting any better. It's probably a good time to drop him back on the WW if you need to clear up the IR.

Phoenix

Name	Points	SOG	Overall Ice-Time	PP Ice-Time	Status
Eric Belanger	12	30	17:14		

1:42

Sell

Martin Hanzal

9

38

18:29

2:16

Buy

Kyle Turris

6

23

11:03

1:21

WW

Vernon Fiddler

4

33

15:40

0:12

Buy

Despite the lack of a fancy stat line, Hanzal carries the most fantasy upside in Phoenix. He missed six contests early in the season dealing with a “lower-body injury”, which is probably the

reason why his numbers aren't great. If you look at the numbers, 2.4 SOG, 18:29 overall and 2:16 on the PP per contest, those numbers fall closely in line with a 50-pointer. Look for 40 points in the final 60 from the Czech. Belanger is a consistent 35-point scorer. He's averaged between the 33-41 point mark for the last seven seasons, so his current 44-point pace is a tad high. Expect that to take a dip as the season progresses. Turris has plenty of hype, but it appears that coach Dave Tippet is keeping the reins on him. He's nothing more than WW material at the moment. Fiddler is on pace to finish the season with 812 FW, if you are in a league that records that stat, he'll singlehandedly win for you in that department. His 15 BS and 19 HITs also help on the peripheral front as well.

San Jose

Name

Points

SOG

Overall Ice-Time

PP Ice-Time

Status

Joe Thornton

22

27

18:35

4:02

Sell

Joe Pavelski

19

93

19:27

4:02

Buy

Logan Couture

13

78

17:33

3:03

Sell

Scott Nichol

5

19

9:46

0:02

WW

Torrey Mitchell

5

34

13:36

0:15

Stand Pat

Thornton is the “go-to” guy in San Jose, but Pavelski is quickly making a strong case to overtake JT on that front. His 27 SOG ranks him tied for 109th amongst centermen in the league. If you were a smart fantasy player, it might not be a bad idea to use his “big name” to fetch yourself a more across-the-board producer like Toews, Kopitar or Stastny. Pavelski’s 93 SOG ranks tops amongst all Western Conference centers. With dual eligibility in Yahoo! leagues, it’d be hard to argue that there’s anyone with a greater fantasy value than Pav (maybe

Dustin Byfuglien). After starting the season with 12 points in the first 18 contests, Couture is already showing signs of a decline with just a lone point from the last four games. A few weeks ago, a fellow Dobberite asked me about Couture, good thing I didn't tell him to buy...

St. Louis

Name	Points	SOG	Overall Ice-Time	PP Ice-Time	Status
Andy McDonald					

17

73

19:53

3:44

Buy

Patrik Berglund

14

39

16:14

3:10

Sell

Brad Boyes

13

64

17:22

3:31

Stand Pat

Alex Steen

11

68

19:28

4:24

Stand Pat

TJ Oshie

10

22

19:01

3:34

Stand Pat

Jay McClement

4

34

16:53

0:02

WW

Vladmir Sobotka

4

16

13:16

0:09

WW

After starting November with four consecutive goose eggs, McDonald has turned it up a notch with 12 points in last nine contests. It's kind of interesting considering it's pretty much coincided with the absence of Oshie from the Blues line up. It appears that McDonald has been the primary beneficiary from the Oshie injury. Boyes and Steen are on pretty good point and SOG paces. Look for them to continue their trend as the season progresses. Oshie will be out for another three months to recover from his ankle injury. It'll probably be after the ASB before he returns, so stash him for now. Berglund is on a pretty good point pace, but the numbers point towards a downturn in the next few months. The lack of SOG and overall ice-time will start to catch up to him. Expect a 40-45 point season from him, but not the 52-point pace that he's currently on.

Vancouver

Name	Points	SOG	Overall Ice-Time	PP Ice-Time	Status
Henrik Sedin	27				

43

19:33

3:18

Stand Pat

Ryan Kesler

15

67

20:15

3:22

Stand Pat

Manny Malholtra

11

40

16:18

0:28

WW

Henrik is on pace to post a second consecutive 100-point season. It's the on pace number of seven goals that's starting to scare me. His 4.7 shooting percentage is a career-low and almost 13 percent lower than last year's rate. I'd quietly shop him around to see what you can fetch, if the price is right then pull the trigger. If not you can always stand pat. On the opposite end of the scale, Kesler is shooting with blazing accuracy but lacking in the passing department. He's only on pace for 18 assists, which is a far cry from the 50 he recorded last season. The Canucks offense has taken a hit this season as they're averaging just 3.09 goals per contest compared to the 3.27 last campaign, which probably explains the drop in numbers from the secondary producers in Vancouver. Much like Henrik, I'd quietly shop him around and see what is available.

Questions or comments? As always I'll be ready and willing to discuss them with you in the comments section below. We'll see you next week, as we further discuss events from the Western front.