Three months into the fantasy season and your team is either a) laughing it's way to the top, b) still in contention just praying for the top-team to have a few injuries or, c) toiling at the bottom wondering where all that confidence is when you drafted your squad back in Summer. This week I'll take a look at 12 players out West who will bring you plenty of joy, or spoil your holiday season.

Matt Duchene – C – Colorado Avalanche

Has Duchy really stepped it up this year or what? He has 34 points in 33 contests, and a blistering 12 points in nine December matches. The Avs, in general, have been great this year so expect the positive trend to continue. His 18:10 overall and 2:51 on the PP will certainly provide him with plenty of opportunities to avoid the sophomore slump. Steven Stamkos had a pretty big breakout sophomore season, and I see much of the same happening with Duchene in 2010-11. **Maaaasquito Bite: Santa**

Ryane Clowe – LW – San Jose Sharks

If you look at the “big names” (Joe Thornton, Dany Heatley, Patrick Marleau, Dan Boyle and Joe Pavelski) of the Sharks’ line up, it’s certainly surprising to see Clowe rank second in scoring in San Jose. Clowe started the season very slowly with just six points in the first 12 contests, but he now has 24 points in the last 21 contests. Since Clowe was united with Logan Couture the line has been absolutely buzzing. He has always posted decent numbers throughout his career, but it seems to be the injury bug that really hampers his optimal production. If he can manage to avoid an injury for the rest of this fantasy season, he could post great numbers the rest of the way. But if you are a trends/numbers type of person, he has career numbers of 46 points in 86 contests from February onwards, so beware of a drop off for the second half. **Maaaasquito Bite: The Grinch**

Keith Yandle – D – Phoenix Coyotes

The passing of the torch is beginning in Phoenix as the transfer from Ed Jovanovski to Yandle is occurring very rapidly. Yandle averages 24:14 per contests as well as 3:51 with the man

advantage. He also leads the way offensively with 21 points along with 85 SOG in 32 contests (nine points and 38 SOG in the last nine). The Yotes aren't exactly a gifted offensive team, but they're getting better as they rank tied for 15th overall with a goals for average of 2.72 per game. As the old adage goes, it's better to own the best defenseman on the worst team than the third/fourth best blue-line on the best team. **Maaa asquito Bite: Santa**

Logan Couture – C- San Jose Sharks

If you've been following my columns this season, you've probably realized that I've been very back-and-forth with my assessment on Couture. With 11 points in the last 10 contests, he's back in my "good books". The only problem for me is the Sharks are currently averaging 2.97 goals for per game. Since the lockout, the Sharks have posted numbers of 3.13, 3.06, 2.63, 3.12, and 3.23, so their current mark is probably right around where they should finish by the end of the year. If the numbers remain status quo, Heatley, Thornton, Pavelski and Marleau would finish with 77, 74, 62 and 59 points respectively, which is too low in my opinion, so something has to give. It's going to be at the expense of Clowe and Couture. **Maaaasquito Bite: The Grinch**

Kevin Shattenkirk – D – Colorado Avalanche

Shatty has been a pleasant surprise this season as he's put up scorching numbers since joining the big club in November. The Avs are just playing some quality up-tempo hockey and it's hard to pick apart anything wrong with what they've been doing. Last season the Canucks had a surprising dual-headed fantasy monster in Christian Ehrhoff and Alex Edler, this season the Avs

are matching that with Shatty and J.M. Liles. With Kyle Quincey out of the picture with a season-ended shoulder injury, it certainly has opened a giant gaping door for Shatty to breakout into the NHL in a big way. **Maaaasquito Bite: Santa**

Bobby Ryan – LW – Anaheim Ducks

You can't really fault a guy who has 27 points in 36 games, but it's the recent trends that aren't all that positive. Ryan had 23 points in the first 27 contests, but only four in the last 10 (one three-point game with eight gooseeggs). He's recently been shifted off the big line alongside Ryan Getzlaf and Corey Perry to help distribute some of the offense across the line up, which hampered his fantasy value quite a bit. The recent return of Joffrey Lupul could also throw a wrench into things for the future, as he would certainly compete for ice-time with Ryan. The young American does possess the skill set to still put up decent numbers the rest of the way, but just expect a bit of a drop off in the next few months. **Maaaasquito Bite: The Grinch**

Shane Doan – RW – Phoenix Coyotes

Doan's pretty much been left for dead in most fantasy leagues as his current 44 percent Yahoo! owned percentage indicates. If you look deeper at the numbers, eight points and 27 SOG in the last eight contests, he ranks 38th amongst all skaters in terms of production for the last 30 days and is also tied for 38th overall amongst all forwards in PP ice-time (3:39 per game). Doan has a 0.70 point-per-game average since 1999. If you pro-rate those numbers over the remaining 51 contests, he could be in store for roughly 35 points, which would be a great second half haul. **Maaaasquito Bite: Santa**

Jay Bouwmeester – D – Calgary Flames

I've been harping about JBo for a few years now, and I guess I'll continue to do so since he hasn't shown me anything different. The story with JBo is very much like our memories of our first love. We always hang onto the positives but can't really ever move on. We keep dwelling on the wonder years (when he was in Florida), but can't seem to convince ourselves that there's always going to be a bigger and better option available elsewhere. Let me put it plain and simple, black and white, for you. He's currently on pace for 26 points along with 149 SOG. To put it into perspective, roughly 50 blue-liners hit that mark last season, which makes him clearly WW fodder in leagues that have 12 teams or lower. Don't expect anything different from here on out. Use his big name to your advantage and move on! **Maaaasquito Bite: The Grinch**

Taylor Hall – LW – Edmonton Oilers

Hall is finally getting his time in Edmonton as injuries to veterans have really opened up the door to allow the young kids to play to their hearts content. He's averaging 18:08 overall along with 2:42 on the PP per contest in December, which is the amount that Stamkos received when he started putting up big numbers in his rookie season. Hall's success is directly related to the success of the Oilers. He has 14 points and a plus 10 rating in the 12 Oilers' victories, but just five points and a minus 12 rating in the 19 losses. Direct correlation? Being such a young kid, Hall will have plenty of ups and downs along the way, but the ice-time that he's receiving should provide him with plenty of opportunity to come bearing plenty of gifts in the New Year. **Maaaasquito Bite: Santa**

Erik Johnson – D – St. Louis Blues

I've mentioned EJ in my last few columns, so you probably know my stance on him. The problem is the numbers are just not there to expect a major shift for the young American. His 10 points and 62 SOG rank him tied for 68th and 24th overall respectively in those departments amongst all blue-liners. If you take into account the lowly 1:15 that's he's averaging on the PP during the last four losses, it's certainly not a good sign that things are about to change. **Maaaasquito Bite: The Grinch**

Brendan Morrow – LW – Dallas Stars

After posting 74 points in 82 contests back in 2007-08, Morrow's career has taken a bit of a down turn. After sustaining an ACL injury back in 2008, he has only registered 66 points in 109 contests. He's currently only on a 50-point pace, but if you look at the numbers (18:27 overall, 3:57 on the PP, and 2.70 SOG) they reflect more of a 60-65 point player. I wouldn't be surprised to see 40 points in the remaining 49 contests from the Saskatchewan-native. **Maaaasquito Bite: Santa**

Brian Campbell – D – Chicago Blackhawks

Putting up great across-the-board numbers has never been Campbell's thing, but he still carries

a big enough profile that he should be producing at a much higher level than he currently is. In eight December contests, Campbell recorded a whopping four points along with six SOG! You know something's wrong when there are 127 blue-liners that have tallied more SOG in the last 30 days than you have... especially when their names are Steve Kampfer, Mark Fayne, and Niclas Wallin (who?). Considering he's makes more money in one game than my entire annual salary ($87,108.23), Campbell's got to be the biggest fantasy Grinch in my book. **Maaaasquito Bite: The Grinch**

Questions or comments? Like always I'll be ready and willing to discuss them with you in the comments section below. I hope to see you guys back here again next week to discuss a few statistical anomalies.