We’re turning the final corner of the fantasy season and depending on your league settings you could be heading down a few different paths. Let’s look at those who are gunning for a money spot in Roto leagues, or those entering the playoffs in H2H leagues. If you are in a tight league where every little stat matters, making the smart adds/drops could determine whether you are the league champion or just another one of the 10 or 12 disappointed losers. At this point of the season it’s not about what your players have done for you all season long, it’s all about what your player will do for you in the next four weeks that will determine your fantasy fate.

Outlook Good

Sam Gagner

If you noticed my forum post the other day, you're probably ahead of your competition on the Gagner game. With seven points in his last seven starts (nine in the last 10), Gagner is poised to have another one of his "under-the-radar" late season surges. He was derailed last season by a hip injury, but prior to that he posted 28 in the final 29 contests back in 2007-08, and then followed it up with 21 in the final 20 contests the following season. I would not be completely surprised to see 16 in the final 16 from the "magical fourth year" candidate the rest of the way.

Tom Gilbert

Following along the same lines as Gagner, Gilbert has also seen plenty of past historical success down the stretch for many fantasy poolies. Last season, we saw him rattle off 20 points in the final 21 contests while the season before that we saw him tally 18 in the final 29. You generally won't see very many point-per-game defensemen down the stretch, so don't expect that he'll repeat last season's performance once again, but if you're realistic expecting around 0.6 or 0.7 per game, that seems very achievable considering he's averaging 24:29 and 1:59 on the PP per contest for the Oilers during the last two weeks. You certainly can't ask for much more from the 15 percent Yahoo! owned blue liner.

Scottie Upshall

I've always liked the pedigree of Upshall (I've slotted him as back-to-back sleeper candidates during the last two pre-season guides), and he's finally getting a "real" shot at making a big difference at the NHL level as he joined the Jackets at the trade deadline. Much like James Neal, Upshall is a great complementary player, but doesn't have the skill set to generate the offense on his own, which is why slotting him alongside star Rick Nash (exactly 30 percent) works so beautifully. He's also been given legitimate top-six time as well (18:38 and 2:53 on the PP), which has translated into two goals in four games. If you're looking for RW help, Upshall should definitely be a prime target to snatch up from the WW.

Mikkel Boedker

If there was anyone that really benefitted from the Coyotes-Blue Jackets trade, it's probably the youngster Boedker. Coach Dave Tippet still doesn't have full trust in him just yet as he's still averaging just 12:46 per contest since the trade deadline, but where he has seen a slight upgrade is during the PP, where he joins fellow youngsters Kyle Turris, Brett MacLean, along with veterans Lee Stempniak or Taylor Pyatt. What really impressed me was how Tippet sent out both Turris and Boedker during OT in Saturday night's come-from-behind victory over the Red Wings. With seven points in his last seven games, it's highly unlikely that he'll continue that streak the rest of the way, but he definitely has plenty of upside especially in keeper leagues in the near future, particularly if he garners more than just 12 minutes per contest.

Jamie Benn

There have been a couple of winners out of the Dallas-Pittsburgh deal, and Benn could certainly top that list. With six points in the last six contests, he has certainly seen his responsibility take a giant leap skyward since the transaction. Benn is currently averaging a whopping 23:12 per contest, and 2:09 on the PP. The only knock on him is that he's still not getting top unit PP ice-time, but that's forgivable considering the stats that he's currently putting up. At just 21 percent Yahoo! owned, he should be readily available in plenty of fantasy leagues out there.

Devin Setoguchi

Setoguchi is another prime candidate that has seen his stock rise over the last couple of weeks. He's currently slotted alongside Logan Couture and Joe Thornton on even strength, as well as on the second PP unit alongside Couture and Ryane Clowe. During his last little hot streak he's tallied eight points in seven contests and is starting to get more ice-time than the measly 12 -13 minutes a game that he was garnering at the start of the season. He's also upped his SOG average to 4.29 per contest during that span, which might help explain the increase in offensive output from the Taber-native. I'd easily take a gamble with Seto over any of the RW listed below.

Dan Ellis

There is a few better "gambles" between the pipes out East, but I figured I might as well chuck a West candidate into the mix. Since joining the Ducks, Ellis has posted respectable numbers of 2.31 GAA and .905 SP, which certainly isn't terrible for a late season WW pickup. According to the O.C. Register blog , "**Jonas Hiller** (vertigo) was on the ice before practice but there is no change in his status." Which to me seems like it's going to be a season lingering problem. If you are desperate for some goaltending needs, I'd certainly look towards the 44 percent Yahoo! owned Ellis.

Don't Count on it

Paul Stastny

The Avs sent a pretty clear message that they were in rebuild mode at the deadline when they moved Chris Stewart, Kevin Shattenkirk and Craig Anderson to the Blues and Sens respectively. Since the move, Stastny has registered a double goose egg along with six SOG. I tuned into the Avs and Oilers matchup on Saturday night and the Avs commentators were stating how the Colorado dressing room is just zapped of energy and how everyone is “down” and seemed “dead”. That instantly set a fantasy alarm bell off in my head. To me, things are not looking good for the Avs’ players during the final stretch of this season. I don’t know what type of deal you can salvage by moving Stastny in one-year leagues, but if you can get something, I’d try to move him for whatever I can get. I might even go as far as an extent of just outright dropping him for a Jarret Stoll or Antoine Vermette.

Brad Richards

I’m no concussion expert, but from all the blogs/news sites that I’ve been reading, I don’t think that Richards is anywhere near ready to return anytime soon especially with how the news of “concussions” has affected the “big name” players of the NHL recently. Let’s go with a realistic example. Say he sits out another five games, which would leave him with 12 games remaining on the season, he will need two or three games to adjust back to speed, and then continues along his 1.13 point-per-game pace, it would give him around nine or 10 points for the rest of this season. Keep in mind that Richards has the dreaded red DTD mark beside his name, so it’s not like you can even IR him and pick up a replacement, so you are almost forced to have to sit him on your bench occupying a much needed roster spot. On the flip side if you were to snag a replacement center now and make full use of the scheduling advantage (Philadelphia, Boston, Buffalo, New Jersey, Ottawa, Columbus or Colorado), you could very well end up with a slight advantage than to hang onto Richards and await his return.

Chris Stewart

I'm going to rock a few boats with this one, but I would actually sell-high on Stewart during the stretch run of the season for a number of reasons. Firstly, he's currently shooting at ridiculous 36.8 percent (his career average prior to the trade is 12.6 percent). Secondly, the SOG has also declined dramatically since the move. Stewart averaged 2.86 per contest prior to being dealt by the Avs, since joining the Blues, he's averaging just 1.9. If you follow Ma's Laws, SOG = point production, ↓ SOG = ↓ point production. Thirdly, you also need to look at the depth charts. In STL, he has competition with Andy McDonald, David Backes, T.J. Oshie, Patrik Berglund, and Alex Steen. In Col he was essentially the top-dog with no competition. Finally, just looking at the standings, the Blues are 10 points out of the final playoff spot out West with 16 games remaining. They're also just three points outside of a top-five lottery pick, so logically speaking it would be in the Blues' best interest to perhaps "t---" the season and snag a comfortable spot to snatch up a solid prospect in Adam Larsson, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, Sean Couturier or Gabriel Landeskog. I would be more than happy to sneakily move Stewart for an upgrade in another area of my fantasy squad, and then pick up a Brad Boyes, Mats Zuccarello, Setoguchi, or Upshall as a replacement for the stretch run.

Matt Duchene

Along the same lines as Stastny, Duchene has also hit a large rut since the end of January with just four points in the last 13 contests. Once again, a lot of it could be attributed to the lack of SOG where he is averaging 1.46 SOG per game during this last stretch or 13 games, compared to 2.64 in the 50 contests prior. With the Avs fighting for a lottery pick in the upcoming NHL entry draft, I wouldn't expect things to change for the sophomore.

Ryan Smyth

With just four points in his last 11 contests, Smyth has been on a bit of a slide since mid-February. If you add in the fact that the recently added Dustin Penner is starting to gather momentum in a top-six role, you'd have to start to wonder whether or not there's going to be enough points to spread around in Hollywood. Since the deal, Smyth has seen his ice-time drop

to 15:35, but luckily his PP ice-time is still intact (3:57). Unfortunately, the problem of point scarcity still remains and at the end of the day Smyth is just a 0.62 point-per-game player. If you pro-rate that into the remaining 17 contests, it would equate to just 10 points over the remainder of this season. Wouldn't it be more logical to pick up a player that would yield a higher potential than Smyth?

Niklas Kronwall

We can remember back to two seasons ago when Kronwall notched 51 points in 80 contests, which has given him "big name" status in many fantasy pools. The problem with that breakout season is that it's driven his fantasy value up so high that it's almost become the "expected norm" for him, which I find unfair. With Nicklas Lidstrom and Brian Rafalski in the mix, I would think that it'd be near impossible for him to notch at that rate in Detroit, which explains why he has struggled in recent weeks with just five points in the last 16 contests. With another 16 games left in the regular season, I would certainly swap him with a "hotter" defenseman for the stretch run.

Mason Raymond

Raymond has also hit a major cold streak over the last couple of weeks, with just a lone point in his last nine contests. It's due to a combination of factors: lack of overall ice-time (15:18), PP ice-time (1:38), line chemistry, etc. At a 56 percent Yahoo! owned rate, that's just too high for a player whose recent performance can be considered detrimental to a fantasy team.

Remember at this stage of the season, it's not about when you drafted a player back in September, nor is it about a player that's averaging 1.13 points-per-game that's sitting on your bench with DTD status. It's all about what can a player potentially do for you from here on out. Don't let "big name" status get in the way of you winning a fantasy championship, it's all about the numbers from here on out.