

Continuing with the next set of recap columns from the pre-season, this week I'll carry my 9-0-1 record from last week and review my <u>Undervalued and Underappreciated</u> column from back in September.

Corey Perry – RW– Anaheim Ducks

Written by Ryan Ma Tuesday, 26 April 2011 11:25 - Last Updated Wednesday, 27 April 2011 12:48

What a difference 12 months makes for fantasy poolies. A year ago, Perry would have been considered a sure-fire lock as a first round pick, but heading into 2010-11, he's largely been considered a "has-been" with poolies as shown with his near 40th average draft position. If you look at his numbers, he's averaged 0.88 points, 1.43 PIMs, 0.28 PPP, and 3.27 SOG per contest during the last three seasons. If he can stay relatively healthy for a full 82-game campaign, you could receive a very owner-friendly end of season stat line of 72 points, 117 PIMS, 23 PPP, and 268 SOG, which would certainly be great value if you managed to snag Perry with a late-30's/early 40's pick. I know that I've mentioned holding off on drafting RW last week, but I think you can make an exception for Perry if he's just dangling right in front of you.

Well, Perry finished 2010-11 with the Rocket Richard trophy in his pocket by tallying a league-high 50 goals into the opposition's net. On top of that he notched a career-high 98 points and demonstrated that he really did own a next gear to his offensive game. If you managed to snag him with a late-30's/early 40's pick, where he typically went in most Yahoo! leagues, you probably ended up snagging a massive bargain. Not a bad investment for someone who finished ranked number two in Yahoo! rankings at the end of the season. Maaasquito Bite: HIT

Paul Stastny – C – Colorado Avalanche

During the summer I've had a few opportunities to discuss Statsny's status for this upcoming season. You can read more about it here and here. To sum it up, basically he's got top five scoring potential in him. Every time I watch him play, he just exudes confidence and creates offense much like Sidney Crosby, Alex Ovechkin, and Evgeni Malkin. The Avs, in my opinion, will be the Canucks of last year, where the entire team took a huge offensive step forward together and that Stastny will mirror the output that Henrik Sedin displayed last campaign. Obviously, I have high hopes for Statsny, and you probably should too!

I had really high hopes for Stastny entering this season and up until the Chris Stewart injury I was laughing (22 points in 23 contests). One ill-advised fight later, and all of Stastny's (and pretty much all of Avalanche player's) fantasy value went down in flames. I was certainly shocked to see how one of the most dominant teams at the time just crumbled so dramatically in just a matter of weeks. I still believe that Stastny has another offensive gear in him, but he needs the help of a solid finisher to get him there. Gabriel Landeskog might just be the answer. Look for a bounce back campaign from Stats next year. Maaasquito Bite: MISS

Ales Hemsky – RW – Edmonton Oilers

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I'm not a big fan of band-aid boys as they are huge potential boom or bust candidates. Being the conservative fantasy player that I am, I'd much prefer consistency over "potential" any day. With that said, Hemsky, who is being consistently left off the draft board, could prove to be great value as long as you have a pretty solid backup plan in place. Since the lockout, he's averaged 0.93 points and 2.32 SOG per-game played, the problem of course is you don't know whether he's going to play 22, 65 or 82 games. With RW being a deep as it is, if you manage to snag Hemmer as a third RW, you could be laughing by the end of the season. If you are thinking of snagging him as your second RW, just make sure you pick up a pretty solid handcuff in Jason Pominville or Dustin Brown late in your drafts.

I was pretty much on the ball with my pre-season prediction for Hemmer. He ended up suiting up for only 47 contests due to a torn labrum in the opposite shoulder that gave him troubles the season before. His stats very closely mirrored his post-lockout numbers (0.89 points and 2.13 SOG per-game played) which made him a pretty decent fantasy own up until the end of February. At the end of the day, if you were drafting Hemsky you were always going to deal with fire, but if you manage to snag a good handcuff, as suggested, you would have been well covered. Maaasquito Bite: HIT

Mikko Koivu - C- Minnesota Wild

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If you haven't had a chance to check out www.hockeypoolgeek.com, definitely go and spend a few minutes playing around with the settings, it'll definitely be worth your while. If you look at the rankings in terms of impact on fantasy leagues, the geek has Koivu ranked above household names like, Vinny Lecavalier, Ryan Getzlaf, Pavel Datsyuk, and Jeff Carter, which should send a pretty clear message as to what his fantasy worth really is. With that said, there are always two sides to a story, and the flip side is that Koivu is recovering from both off-season shoulder and knee surgeries, which is never a good thing heading into a brand new season. The positive is that he had the procedure done in early April, which gave him a decent five months of recovery time. From all of the reports that I've read, they all mentioned that he's fully recovered. I'd probably stamp a tread carefully mark on him, but then again you won't find very many top-line centers who contributes as much as Koivu does at that late of a draft position, so he's definitely worth the roster top-up selection.

During the pre-season, Koivu was on average selected as the $32^{\rm nd}$ center in Yahoo! leagues but finished in 24

spot which is great value for someone who was snagged pretty much near the end of most fantasy drafts. He also missed quite a few games this season with a broken finger, which would have certainly helped boost his offensive totals if he was healthy. If you subscribe to Dobber's "point-per-game" analysis, the Finn finished with the 15 th

highest point-per-game numbers amongst all centers, so definitely keep him in mind for your drafts come August/September. Maaasquito Bite: HIT

Olli Jokinen – C – Calgary Flames

Similar to Statsny, I wrote quite a bit on Jokinen in the forums during the summer, read it here. If you don't pay too much attention to the points, Jokinen is actually one of the best across-the-board producers for peripheral stats in fantasy hockey leagues. If you used his three year average to simulate for an upcoming 82-game season, Jokinen would produce a line of 60 points, 71 PIMs, 23 PPP, and 278 SOG, which would mirror very closely to Mike Richard's 62 points, 79 PIMs, 31 PPP and 237 SOG that he put up last season. Considering Jokinen is being drafted nearly 120 spots after Richards, that's plenty good value that you are receiving at a bargain basement price.

Jokinen pretty much finished where I projected him to be back in September. He finished with a line of 54 points, 44 PIMs, 19 PPP and 208 SOG. During pre-season drafts he was selected, on average, as the 53rd pivot in Yahoo! drafts, he finished the season as the 39th

ranking center. Jokinen probably wasn't a player that completely changed the face of your team, but he certainly was valued much higher than initially thought. Maaasquito Bite: HIT

Patrick Sharp – C/LW – Chicago Blackhawks

Did Yahoo! really drop the ball on this one or what? How can a player who picked up 66 points, a plus 24 rating, and 266 SOG last season be ranked so bloody low? What makes it hurt even more is the fact that he is part of the select few who have gained the unique dual eligibility to start the season, and in one of the weakest positions to fill in fantasy hockey. I dunno what Yahoo! was thinking, but I'm definitely slotting Sharp higher in my draft lists than they have and it appears that many of you have too!

At the time of writing, Sharp was slotted in 212th spot in Yahoo! draft lists. As the season wore on, he finished off being drafted on average as the 100 th

pick. He finally concluded the season ranked 27

. If you were lucky enough to snag Sharp late in your drafts, thanks to Yahoo!'s boo-boo, you probably managed to finish very well in your pools. Yahoo! won't make that same mistake heading into next season.

Maaasquito Bite: HIT

Martin Havlat - RW - Minnesota Wild

Last season, I pegged Havlat as a "not with a 10-foot pole" candidate because there just wasn't a lot of protection or support for him in Minnesota. This year, they have a pretty clear cut top-line of Andrew Brunette, Mikko Koivu, and Annti Miettinen. Throw in the possible return of PMB, a full year of Guillaume Latendresse, and the recent additions of Matt Cullen and John Madden and Havlat now has plenty of protection and support. I wouldn't project point-per-game numbers for him, but I'd head into this season expecting about 10-15 more than the 54 points that he tallied last campaign. Considering he's mostly being picked up in the last rounds of fantasy drafts, or in some cases not even selected at all, that's a pretty low price to pay for someone with pretty high potential.

Havlat ended up finishing the season with 62 points, which was a little lower than I initially thought, but still good enough to make a strong impact in many fantasy leagues. Considering he was mostly drafted in a low-risk, "might as well take a gamble" slot, his point total was certainly plenty valuable considering it was good to be tied for 39th in overall league scoring. Look for a similar type of production from him in this upcoming season.

Maaasquito Bite: HIT

Andrew Brunette – LW – Minnesota Wild

If you're like me and consistency is your thing, you don't have to look any further than Brunette. I'm going to pretty much echo what I wrote in the fantasy guide. In the past five seasons, Brunette has posted pretty consistent numbers of 81.6 appearances, 16:25 TOI/game average, 63.2 points and 134.8 SOG per campaign. As long as you don't expect anything more from him, he could be a solid pillar to lean on especially for those who opted to hold out on drafting quality LW early.

Brunette was a little off his "consistent" numbers, as he finished with a line of 82 appearances, 16:47 TOI/game average, 46 points and 117 SOG. A lot of the offensive drop off could be attributed to the finger injury that Koivu suffered, which caused him to miss 11 contests between mid-February and mid-March. If Koivu was active, the numbers for Brunette probably would have been much closer to the average from the past five seasons. Maaasquito Bite: MISS

Stephane Robidas – D – Dallas Stars

As you can tell, players who contribute across-the-board I hold to a pretty high esteem, which is why Robidas also makes my "U&U" list. HPG has Robidas listed as the 18th ranked defenseman in terms of default settings for Yahoo! leagues, but he's been treated consistently

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as a high 30's or even in the 40's defenseman. Considering he averaged 24:29 per contest and 3:09 on the PP, there will be plenty of opportunities for him to repeat 2009-10 this campaign. Don't forget his name come draft day.

Big miss on my part. I thought that Robidas would carry the momentum of last campaign into this season, but it just never happened. If you were following my columns throughout the year, you probably would have read quite a few times telling you to cut bait. The biggest factor for the decrease in production is due to his hesitance to shoot the puck. His SOG totals plummeted to a mere 106 down from 199 a season ago, which probably explains the drop off in offensive production. With Alex Goligoski taking over the offensive duties in Dallas, look for Robidas to step back into his two-way form once again. Maaasquito Bite: MISS

Marek Zidlicky – D – Minnesota Wild

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A second "U&U" defenseman that is a favourite of mine is Zidlicky. He has a career 0.56 point and 0.96 PIM per contest average, which would pro-rate to 46 points and 78 PIMs at the end of the year. The only major knock on him would be his run of the mill career 1.46 SOG per contest average, but at a bargain basement price of the 166th pick, he'll definitely be worth the investment.

Zidlicky pretty much finished on par with his career numbers (0.52 point, 0.65 PIM and 1.15 SOG per contest averages) but the problem is that he missed almost half of the season dealing with shoulder and hamstring injuries. If he was healthy for the majority of the season, I would have thought that he probably could have made a big impact in quite a few fantasy pools. Maaasquito Bite: PUSH

Lubomir Visnovsky – D – Anaheim Ducks

Angus stole a bit of my thunder on the weekend, as I was about to announce that I thought Visnovsky could be the biggest "steal of the year" candidate heading into this year's drafts. Last

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season, the Ducks were tied with the Sharks for the fourth best power-play efficiency in the league. The only major change that has occurred is that Scott Niedermayer has been replaced by Vizzy, but that's not much of a downgrade at all. They still have Ryan Getzlaf, Bobby Ryan, Teemu Selanne and the aforementioned Perry, so I fully expect them to repeat what they did last year once again. I too have no problems thinking that he will lead the Western Conference blue-liners in points scored.

Angus and I were right on the money on this one. Vizzy ended up winning the league scoring title amongst all blue-liners and finished as the fourth highest ranking defenseman in Yahoo! leagues. The only really knock on him was the lack of PIMs and SOG, but he sure made it up with the plus/minus, point and power-play point totals. Maaasquito Bite: HIT

Other Notable Western Conference "U&U" players:

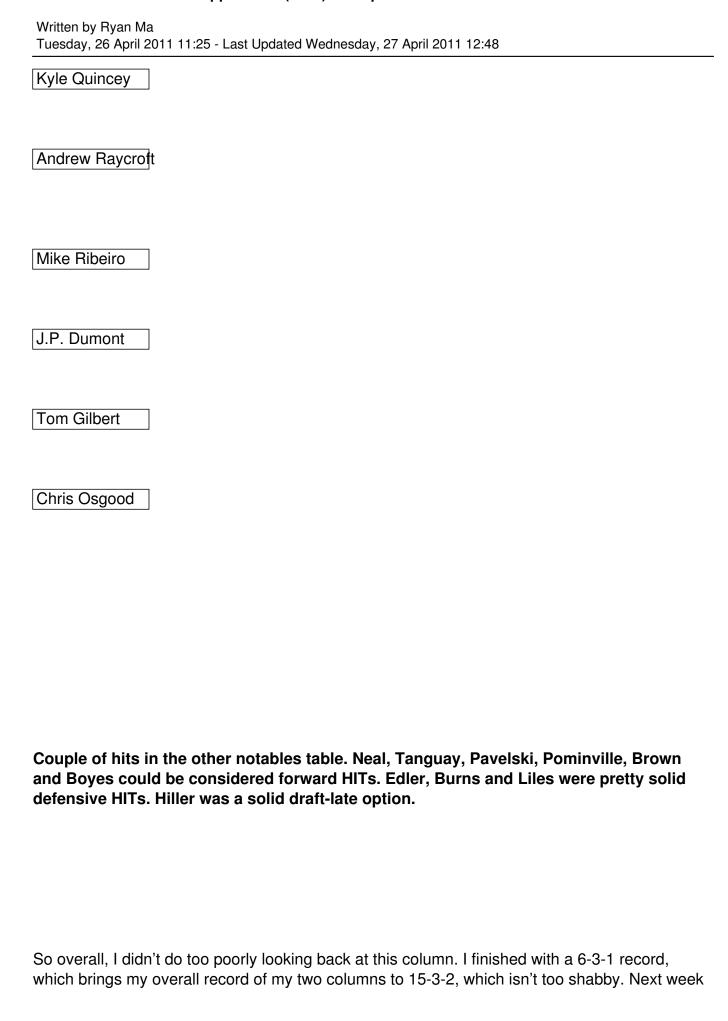
Centers

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RW			
LW			
D			
G			
Sam Gagner			
Joe Pavelski			
James Neal			
Alex Edler			
Jonas Hiller			
Derick Brassard			
Jason Pominville			

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Tuesday, 26 April 2011 11:25 - Last Updated Wednesday, 27 April 2011 12:48 Alex Tanguay Brent Burns Steve Mason Matt Lombardi **Dustin Brown** Rest mostly out East J.M. Liles Marty Turco Shawn Horcoff Brad Boyes





we'll take a look back at my Not With a 10-foot Pole! column from back in August.

Questions or comments? As always I'll be ready and willing to discuss them with you in the comments section below.