Back this week with a ripper of an article. At the end of the last couple of seasons I wrote similar columns which were generally very well received by my fellow Dobberites, so I figured I'd go back to the well once again. It's a great add-on to give you a decent recap of what went on this past fantasy season as well as what to expect for the upcoming season especially if you are trying to get a head start on your competition.

First, let's clear up some general misconceptions about projections:

Ma's 13 guidelines for making projections:

1) **First of all, we need to place a realistic value on overall point production.**

Year	**Number of point-per-game players**	**Number of players > than 80 points**
2007-08	23	19
2008-09	20	

17

2009-10

21

17

2010-11

15

9

- Just by looking at the table above, realistically there's only 15 to 20 or so players that will finish at a point-per-game pace. In the past, we saw much more 80+ point producers, but this year we had a massive drop off of nearly half. What you need to keep in mind is that in a standard 12-team league, that's roughly one, maybe two, per team. If you're expecting three or four, you either have one hell of a team or you're definitely dreaming.
- Also what you need to keep in mind is that a lot of the "big named" players like Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin were hit with injuries, which might explain why the number of 80+ point players are so low. Look for a bit of a bounce back next season, but only a few more (five or so).

2) Ice-time plays a huge factor in point production.

- With the exception of Teemu Selanne and Thomas Vanek, everyone in the top 30 in league scoring garnered no less than 18 minutes of ice-time per contest.
- In the top 60, only eight players (Selanne, Vanek, Jeff Skinner, Milan Lucic, Ryane Clowe, Clarke MacArthur, Nikolai Kulemin and Patrice Bergeron) averaged less than 18 minutes per contest.
- In the top 100, only four players (Ville Leino, Sergei Kostitsyn, Teddy Purcell and Michael Grabner) averaged less than 16:30 per contest.
- There's a direct correlation between ice-time received and point production, so definitely keep that in mind when drafting for the upcoming season.

3) Team depth is vitally important; a player who plays on the third line isn't going to be a candidate for 80 points, or even 60 according to the numbers below. Pay attention to the potential line combos released as part of the pre-season Dobber guide.

4) Another factor that affects player's point production is the player's scoring role on their respective team. Below is a table of average scoring for players on their respective teams:

Scoring position on respective team	Average Points	MIN	MAX	Range	Median
1st	69.4				

43 (EDM)

104 (VAN)

61

66.5

2nd

59.8

34 (OTT)

94 (VAN)

60

58

3rd

53.7

33 (OTT)

76 (ANA)

43

53.5

4th

47.9

31 (OTT)

71 (ANA)

40

47.5

5th

41.9

27 (OTT)

62 (SJ)

35

42

6th

34.8

23 (CLB/FLA)

56 (SJ)

33

35

- What you need to keep in mind is that on average the top scorer on an NHL team is right around the 70 point mark. Yes, you have your Sedin's, Crosby's, Ovechkin's who are all 100 point threats, but mixed in with those guys you also have your Marleau's, Nash's, Tavares' and Backes' who will top out at around the average of 70.
- This is also extremely vital to teams that are considered "deep" or offense by committee. The best case scenario for a player, that's a bit buried by depth (Kesler, Ryan, Sharp, etc.), is 76 points and you have to work down from there. You can't just assume that because a player is "skilled" that you do the opposite of starting at point-per-game and working up from there.

5) The team structure of the player also makes a big difference to the overall point production potential of the player.

- A player that plays for a more offensive minded coach/team tends to perform better than their counterparts that play for a defensive minded coach/team. E.g.) Shane Doan would produce much higher numbers in Detroit than Phoenix if given the identical ice-time and opportunities.

6) Look at the team goal scoring and identify discrepancies.

- Vancouver topped the list by averaging 3.15 goals per contest, so there's not a lot of room for massive improvement heading into next season.
- On the flip side of the coin, New Jersey averaged just 2.08, so there's a ton of room for massive improvement. If they can manage to climb back towards the league average (2.73 goals per game), it would amount to an extra 53 goals or an added 159 points to spread around for next season.
- Generally speaking, unless something major, like a coaching change happens, overall team scoring is relatively constant from year-to-year. Let's take a look at Minnesota for example. They scored 226, 225, 220, 214, 214 and 203 goals since the lockout. Head into the season expecting something around the 210-220 mark and you should be safe.

7) Take note of a player's past history along with any outliers and tendencies.

- Brian Gionta has one 89 point season but the rest of the time has never surpassed the 61 point plateau. So don't continue holding onto the hope that he'll reach that mark again one day.

- Eric Staal is another example. 100 point sophomore season, will he ever hit that again?
- Martin Erat is third example. Seven consecutive seasons of posting between 49 points and 57 points. Expect much of the same heading into this season.

8) The Western Conference teams are the slightly more offensive of the two conferences.

- The Western Conference teams average 2.78 goals per contest, while their Eastern counterparts average 2.69.
- If you have a comparison between two players in a similar point range, choosing the player in the Western Conference might give you a slight point advantage over one from the Eastern Conference.

9) Beware of expecting lofty numbers from rookies.

Year	Number of Rookies > 45 points	Number of Rookies > 50 points	Number of Rookies > 60 points
2007-08			

6

4

2

2008-09

7

2

0

2009-10

3

2

0

2010-11

5

3

1

- It's taken three years to break the trend of 60+ point rookies, so the "new NHL" is trending towards a lowered rookie production than the days of generational talent like Sidney Crosby and Alex Ovechkin.
- With that said, high-end rookies could still see 55 points, which isn't all too bad for fantasy purposes. I just wouldn't expect 70+.

10) Be wary of the "sophomore slump"

Year

Number of rookies decreased in point production

Number of rookies increasing in point production

Number of rookies staying the same

2008-09

16

14

0

2009-10

12

16

2

- **Biggest increases**: Colin Wilson (+19), Erik Karlsson (+19), Evander Kane (+17), Artem Anisomov (+16), Jamie Benn (+15), John Tavares (+13), and Matt Duchene (+12).

- **Biggest drops**: Mike Del Zotto (-26), Tim Kennedy (-25), T.J. Galiardi (-24), Scott Parse (-20) Peter Regin (-12) and Tyler Myers (-11)
- Just because a player showed promise in their rookie season almost half take a dip in production in their second season. But generally speaking the “big named” guys are pretty safe.

11)□□□Be wary of the “Magical Fourth Year”. (Editor's Note: Dobber's definition - player has played four seasons of 25 games or more. Using Dobber's definition, there is a trend, but a small one. While the fourth year sees the big jump in approximately 25% of stars, the third/fifth year sees it in 20%, so do not place all of your eggs in the fourth-year basket)

Name

1st

2nd

3 **rd**

4 **th**

Ryan Getzlaf

39

58

82

91

Pavel Datsyuk

35

51

68

87

Zach Parise

32

62

65

94

Ilya Kovalchuk

51

67

87

98

Dany Heatley

67

89

25

103

Mike Cammalleri

8

15

55

80

Jeff Carter

42

37

54

84

Marian Hossa

1

30

56

75

Mike Richards

34

32

75

80

Anze Kopitar

61

77

66

81

There has been much debate on whether or not the “magical fourth year truly exists. The simple answer is yes, but too slim to base all of your attention. It’s definitely not a ‘one size fits all model’. Generally speaking, it’s plus or minus a two-year span, with the most frequent occurrences happening during the “fourth” year. Take a look of the above table to see some of the most notable “fourth year” breakouts from recent years.

12) Beware of band-aid boys

- It doesn't matter how much potential a player may have, if he spends half of his season on the shelf, you're only going to get half a season worth of production.
- Be wary of players who take their usual "vacations" during the season (Jason Arnott and Martin Erat), so you need to budget that into the equation as well.
- Ales Hemsky has a 0.91 point-per-game average since the lockout. The downside is that he averages 26.2 games missed due to injury per season. You need to have a fall back plan if you plan on drafting a band-aid boy.

*****13) Be realistic with your projections, and be aware of personal biases.**

- Everyone in the league has 100 point potential. It's whether there's a one percent chance, 10 percent chance or an 85 percent chance.
- Anyone can go out on a limb and say that player X could bust out for 85 points this season and justify it by saying because "that's what I think." (I'm thinking in my head ok, there's a 10 percent chance) or I could be more realistic and say that he's a 50 point player with upside for slightly more (75 percent chance of happening). That way if he bombs and pots 35, I'm really only out 15 points, compared to being out 50 which would be detrimental to any league.
- Also one of the biggest overestimations for projections is when you own a player or the player is one of your "favourites". You'll naturally have the inclination to expect a higher output than in reality, so keep that in check when assessing the player in question.

Now, onto the real mathematical stuff. Keep in mind these are general average numbers, there may be certain exceptions to each scenario.

Centers

- A point-per-game center* averaged 62.1 games played, along with 25.1 goals, 46 assists, 172 SOG, 20:32 in overall ice-time and 4:11 on the PP during the season. (*includes a few major injured players, Sidney Crosby, Brad Richards, and Pavel Datsyuk)
- A top 10 point-producing center averaged 79.2 games played, along with 24.2 goals, 45.4 assists, 197.6 SOG, 19:55 in overall ice-time and 3:26 on the PP during the season.
- A 60 point-producing center averaged 76.0 games played, along with 21.8 goals, 37.1 assists, 195.2 SOG, 18:48 in overall ice-time and 3:03 on the PP during the season.
- A 50 point-producing center averaged 74.2 games played, along with 19.5 goals, 30.2 assists, 185.0 SOG, 18:57 in overall ice-time and 3:02 on the PP during the season.
- A 35 point producing center averaged 82 games played, along 16.8 goals, 18.3 assists, 160.0 SOG, 16:09 in overall ice-time and 1:23 on the PP during the season.

Left Wings

- A point-per-game left wing averaged 80.3 games played, along with 32.3 goals, 57.3 assists, 313 SOG, 19:50 in overall ice-time and 3:46 on the PP during the season.
- A top 10 point-producing left wing averaged 79.2 games played, along with 23.6 goals, 39.8 assists, 167.2 SOG, 18:00 in overall ice-time and 2:48 on the PP during the season.
- A 60 point-producing left wing averaged 79.7 games played, along with 25.3 goals, 34.4 assists, 189.4 SOG, 18:29 in overall ice-time and 3:24 on the PP during the season.
- A 50 point-producing left wing averaged 75.6 games played, along with 23.1 goals, 26.3 assists, 159.9 SOG, 16:48 in overall ice-time and 2:38 on the PP during the season.
- A 35 point producing left wing averaged 75.4 games played, along 16.8 goals, 18.3 assists, 148.3 SOG, 15:40 in overall ice-time and 2:02 on the PP during the season.

Right Wings

- A point-per-game right wing averaged 78.4 games played, along with 36.4 goals, 50.8 assists, 252.4 SOG, 20:17 in overall ice-time and 3:44 on the PP during the season.
- A top 10 point-producing right wing averaged 79.2 games played, along with 31 goals, 33.8 assists, 260.8 SOG, 19:14 in overall ice-time and 3:16 on the PP during the season.
- A 60 point-producing right wing averaged 75.3 games played, along with 24.7 goals, 34.5 assists, 217.8 SOG, 18:56 in overall ice-time and 2:59 on the PP during the season.
- A 50 point-producing right wing averaged 72.6 games played, along with 18.9 goals, 30 assists, 194.3 SOG, 16:52 in overall ice-time and 2:52 on the PP during the season.
- A 35 point producing right wing averaged 76.3 games played, along 17 goals, 20.4 assists, 170.7 SOG, 15:50 in overall ice-time and 1:48 on the PP during the season.

Defenseman

- A top 10 point-producing defender averaged 79.2 games played, along with 13.2 goals, 41 assists, 204.2 SOG, 24:09 in overall ice-time and 4:07 on the PP during the season.
- A 40 point-producing defender averaged 78.2 games played, along with 8.6 goals, 31.4 assists, 146 SOG, 23:41 in overall ice-time and 3:38 on the PP during the season.
- A 30 point-producing defender averaged 77.2 games played, along with 6.6 goals, 23.2 assists, 123.2 SOG, 21:54 in overall ice-time and 2:36 on the PP during the season.
- A 25 point producing defender averaged 68.9 games played, along 4.7 goals, 18 assists, 103.9 SOG, 21:48 in overall ice-time and 2:17 on the PP during the season.

Goalies

I didn't know how to tier the goalies without getting 50 billion complaints about how I did it, so I guess I'll just state some quick points.

- Zero goalies finished the season with 40 or more wins, compared to five and two the last couple of seasons. 11 had 35 wins or more (eleven and seven last two seasons).
- Three goalies started in 70 or more contests. (Cam Ward, Miikka Kiprusoff, and Carey Price) None of which made it past the first round of the playoffs. Maybe there is a correlation between performance and games started after all???
- The average top 40 goalie picked up 25.3 wins while starting 48.7 games this season. (25.9 wins while starting 50.4 games last season).
- Of those 40 only Roberto Luongo was considered a quality own goalie (60 starts with at least a 60 percent winning percentage). There is however quite a few reliable owns (60 starts and a 55 win percentage). Jimmy Howard, Antti Niemi, and Jon Quick.
- When averaging the top five goalies in wins, you get stats of roughly, 37.4 wins, 67.6 starts, 55.3 win percentage, a 2.49 GAA, and a .918 save percentage.
- A goalie that finished the season with 35 wins had stats of roughly, 63 starts, 55.8 win percentage, 2.36 GAA, and a .921 save percentage.
- A goalie that finished the season with 30 wins had stats of roughly, 54.6 starts, 54.2 win percentage, 2.39 GAA, and a .917 save percentage.
- A goalie that finished the season with 20 wins had stats of roughly, 43.7 starts, 47.3 win percentage, 2.62 GAA, and a .915 save percentage.
- A goalie that finished the season with 15 wins had stats of roughly, 36.5 starts, 41.1 win percentage, 2.91 GAA, and a .904 save percentage.

Summation Tables

Point-Per-Game C

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

81

29.5

61.7

225.2

20:29

2009-10

76.6

31.6

58.8

233.6

20:43

2010-11*

62.1

25.1

46

172

20:32

4:11

Average

73.2

28.7

55.5

210.3

20:34

*Multiple injured players

TOP 10 C

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

81.4

32

47.8

251.6

20:50

2009-10

76

24.8

49.6

240.8

20:39

2010-11

79.2

24.2

45.4

197.6

19:55

3:26

Average

78.9

27

47.6

230

20:28

60-point C

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

76

25.8

33.6

217

18:31

2009-10

77.8

24.8

35.0

219.7

19:40

2010-11

76

21.8

37.1

195.2

18:48

3:03

Average

76.6

24.1

35.2

210.6

18:59

50-point C

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

76

22

28

157

17:49

2009-10

75.6

19.2

31.1

177.4

18:24

2010-11

74.2

19.5

30.2

185

18:57

3:02

Average

75.3

20.2

29.8

173

18:23

35-point C

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

65

11.5

23.1

124.5

16:45

2009-10

67.1

12

23.1

130.4

16:55

2010-11

82

16.8

18.3

160

16:09

1:23

Average

71.4

13.4

21.5

138.3

16:36

Point-Per-Game LW

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

77.4

39.9

48.1

311

19:40

2009-10

74.5

40.3

47.7

297

20:30

2010-11

80.3

32.3

57.3

313

19:50

3:46

Average

77.4

37.5

51

307

20:00

Top 10 LW

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

79.2

30.6

43.6

233

19:10

2009-10

79.8

27.2

39.4

227.8

18:18

2010-11

79.2

23.6

39.8

167.2

18:00

2:48

Average

79.4

27.1

40.9

209.3

18:29

60-point LW

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

78

28.4

31.4

214.8

18:10

2009-10

79.3

25.3

39.5

195.8

18:00

2010-11

79.7

25.3

34.4

189.4

18:29

3:24

Average

79

26.3

35.1

200

18:13

50-point LW

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

75

20.8

29.6

146

16:32

2009-10

74.2

22

27.7

181.5

17:15

2010-11

75.6

23.1

26.3

159.9

16:48

2:38

Average

74.9

22

27.9

162.5

16:51

35-point LW

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

63

16.5

18

118.5

15:49

2009-10

73.6

17.8

17.4

146.1

15:10

2010-11

75.4

16.8

18.3

148.3

15:40

2:02

Average

70.7

17

17.9

137.6

15:33

Point-Per-Game RW

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09*

80

37.5

46.5

276

21:11

2009-10

78.4

32

52.2

244.6

20:25

2010-11

78.4

36.4

50.8

252.4

20:17

3:44

Average

78.9

35.3

49.8

257.7

20:37

*small sample size

Top 10 RW

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

79

31.8

39

258.6

18:27

2009-10

79.6

30.4

33.6

237.6

18:38

2010-11

79.2

31

33.8

260.8

19:14

3:16

Average

79.3

31.1

35.5

252.3

18:46

60-point RW

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

78

24.8

34.2

196.2

17:11

2009-10

81.5

24.8

37

216

18:30

2010-11

75.3

24.7

34.5

217.8

18:56

2:59

Average

78.3

24.7

35.2

210

18:12

50-point RW

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

77

22.5

26.3

185.5

17:16

2009-10

73.8

21.8

28.2

192.2

17:14

2010-11

72.6

18.9

30

194.3

16:52

2:52

Average

74.4

21.1

28.2

190.7

17:07

35-point RW

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

73

15.6

19.4

144.2

15:10

2009-10

74.9

16.5

18.1

177.4

16:29

2010-11

76.3

17

20.4

170.7

15:50

1:48

Average

74.7

16.4

19.3

164.1

15:49

Top 10 D

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

77

16.8

41.7

189.7

24:40

2009-10

78.7

11.8

44.6

170.1

24:55

2010-11

79.2

13.2

41

204.2

24:09

4:07

Average

78.3

13.9

42.4

188

24:34

40-point D

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

73

10

29.6

139

21:40

2009-10

81.2

9

30.8

160.4

22:45

2010-11

78.2

8.6

31.4

146

23:41

3:38

Average

77.5

9.2

30.6

148.6

22:42

30-point D

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

72

6.2

23.8

109

19:51

2009-10

75

6.2

23.8

142.8

22:39

2010-11

77.2

6.6

23.2

123.2

21:54

2:36

Average

74.7

6.3

23.6

125

21:28

25-point D

GP

G

A

SOG

IT

PP TOI

2008-09

71

4.6

19.1

102.1

21:15

2009-10

76.3

5.7

19.4

103.3

21:57

2010-11

68.9

4.7

18

103.9

21:48

2:17

Average

72.1

5

18.8

103.1

21:40

Practical Applications

So you're probably sitting there wondering, there's a whole bunch of numbers, what does it all mean? Here's how I would use the numbers...

Let's take a look at Patrik Berglund. Tim Lucarelli wrote a great piece on him earlier this week, but I have a few more points to add. He appeared in 81 games, averaging 17:11 in overall ice-time, 2:53 in PP TOI while accumulating 175 SOG as a center. If we look at a smaller sample of recent data (post-trade deadline), the stats are 17:56, 2:37 and a SOG pace of 196. According to the stats from the last three years, he's probably closer towards a 50-point C than a 60-point C, **if the situation remains status quo**
.

What's preventing him from being a 60-point C, is the overall and PP TOI. He needs to garner around 19 minutes overall and 3 minutes on the PP in order to finish with roughly 60-points. With Andy McDonald and T.J. Oshie there, who are talented in their own right (point number four above), I just don't know if Berglund can manage to garner the ice-time needed. I've seen numerous arguments that "oh he has the talent to just blow the competition out of the water" or "the competition is no match for him" in the past. I've also seen the same arguments made for (Nikita Filatov
, Jiri Hudler or
Nikolay Zherdev
) but rarely of which have come into fruition. A potential positive for the Blues is that they finished tallying the 10

th

highest average in the league with 2.88 goals per game last season, so there is a bit of room to improve, but not a whole lot. If they bumped it up to three goals per game, that's an extra 30 points to spread around (but then again only four teams accomplished that feat this season, and I don't know if I'd safely head into the season expecting STL to match them). I've also seen a few comparisons to Claude Giroux, but what I will add is that he averaged 19:23 per contest as well as a team forward-high of 3:04 on the PP for the league's third highest scoring team and still only managed to pot 76 points.

Now imagine the worst case scenario, what happens if Berglund gets buried by depth and ends up back to a sophomore slump-like season. Would you be able to bite the bullet if you drafted him as a 65-70 pointer and only tallies say 35-40? If Matt Duchene, John Taveres or Mike Richards was sitting in front of you at the draft table, would you confidently take Berglund over the three of them? What I'm saying is that if you temper your expectations and draft him as a 50 to 55-pointer, you've covered your bases. If you are pretty "high" on him, and want to overreach just a little bit, treat him as a 60 pointer, but if you go into the draft guns a blazing and draft him as a 65-70-pointer, you could end up being a genius, but you also leave yourself open to being the goat.

Let's try a second example to make sure that we're all on the same page. Paul Stastny finished the season with an ice-time average of 19:44 per contest while tallying 181 SOG. Those numbers for a C pretty much fell in line with a 60-point producer, which is pretty much exactly where he finished. Another positive is that he also averaged a team forward-high of 3:03 in PP ice-time, so that should add a few extra points. An interesting split-stat that I dug up with Stastny was that before Jan. 24, he had numbers of 19:45, 3:11 and a 195 SOG pace. Post Jan 24, the numbers were 19:25, 2:49 and 201 SOG pace. So if he and the Avs can manage to get back towards the pre-Jan 24 pace, he might be closer towards top-10 C production, (74 points), for next season. If you look at his past history he's generally been pretty close to a point-per-game player, but he's also a bit of a band-aid boy. Just to cover my bases I'd head in expecting 60-65 but with the upside of a bit more.

James Neal was another name that was popular in the forum post. His numbers this season were a bit skewed because the Penguins roster next season should be completely different than the roster that Neal experienced in his brief tenure with Pittsburgh this campaign. If we use his 2009-10 data (200 SOG, 18:11 TOI and 2:45 PP TOI with the Stars) and transposed it to the Pens, it might give us a general ballpark figure. If he maintains similar type of numbers with Crosby and Co., it should project to a 60-point LW. Now the interesting thing about Pittsburgh is that anyone that plays third fiddle to Crosby and Evgeni Malkin always seems to top off at around 50-68 points (Mark Recchi 57 and 68, Petr Sykora 63 and Jordan Staal 49), so despite contrary popular belief playing alongside Crosby or Malkin does not equate to a huge payday. Head into the season expecting 60 and you should be safe, if he gets more its gravy, if he gets less you’re pretty much covered.

So hopefully you can use the guidelines above, along with the numbers to help you gain a better grasp of what to expect for player X heading into next season. Of course if you are desperately seeking different opinions, hop onto the DobberHockey Forums and there will be plenty of fantasy fanatics who are ready and willing to give you’re their opinions. Questions or comments? As always I’ll be ready and willing to discuss them with you in the comments section below.