

The Final Countdown Begins...

Written by Ryan Ma
Tuesday, 10 March 2009 05:34 -



The trade deadline has come and gone which leaves about 15 games until the end of the fantasy season. This week we'll take a closer look at what occurred at the trade deadline and how the deals helped or hurt each team involved.

Maaasquito Buzzings...

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Players in the last week with the highest production in each category who are less than 50% owned in Yahoo leagues.

Goals

Assists

+/-

PPP

SOG

Backes (3)

Johnsson (4)

Kopecky (4)

Handzus (3)

Legwand (15)

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Gagner (3)

Glencross (4)

Conroy (4)

Barker (2)

Moss (14)

Neal (3)

Ott (3)

Draper (4)

Prucha (1)

M. Brown (12)

Upshall (3)

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Smid (3)

Smid (4)

Gilbert (1)

Upshall (12)

Veilleux (3)

Lombardi (3)

Mitchell (4)

Doughty (1)

Veilleux (12)

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Anaheim

The Ducks were huge sellers at the deadline, but the numerous rumors of Chris Pronger being dealt never came into fruition. They lost Steve Montador, Sammy Pahlsson, Travis Moen, Kent Huskins, and two prospects in Eric O'Dell and Logan Stephenson. They managed to pick up Peter Nokelainen, Erik Christensen, James Wisniewski, Petri Kontiola, Nick Bonino, and Timo Pielmeier at the deadline. Basically the Ducks waived the white flag at the deadline and sold off a lot of their depth for not a lot in return. Wisniewski picked up some big time minutes while playing (19:13 and 21:54) in two contests since the move. Erik Christensen won the jackpot as he's lining up next to Corey Perry and Ryan Getzlaf on the Ducks' top-line. He could see a significant increase in fantasy value if he can maintain that roster spot.

Calgary

Calgary made the most impact in the Western Conference, as they landed a few big fishes on deadline day. The Olli Jokinen acquisition was probably the biggest surprise of the day, while landing Jordan Leopold was also another doozy. They really didn't give up much in Lawrence Nycholat and Ryan Wilson but gave up a bit in Matthew Lombardi and Brandon Prust. The thing with Lombardi is that he did have talent but was buried under Daymond Langkow and Craig Conroy which prevented him from ever going to get top-line ice-time between Mike Cammalleri and Jarome Iginla. Olli Jokinen's skill trumps both Langkow and Conroy's which is why the deal was perfect for the Flames. Since his addition to the lineup, Jokinen is averaging 19:46 in ice-time and has potted two goals for the Flames while playing on the top-line between Cammy and Iggy. Leopold is averaging 21:03 but is playing third fiddle behind both Dion Phaneuf and Adrian Aucoin on the Flames' power-play. Unless you're desperate for defensive help, there are currently better options than Leopold.

Chicago

The Blackhawks were relatively quiet at the deadline as they only acquired Sammy Pahlsson and Logan Stephenson from the Ducks for James Wisniewski and Petri Kontiola. It could be construed as a good thing that they were extremely conservative at the deadline while staying on course to developing their youngsters rather than to sell the farm to try to hit a homerun through trading this season. The only problem is that Pahlsson is sidelined with mononucleosis, which means that he won't get much time to practice with the team before the post-season begins. Pahlsson was ranked 22nd overall in terms of faceoff percentage with a 53.5 win

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percentage, which will give the Hawks the faceoff presence that they were truly lacking before the deadline. Wisniewski has upside, but with Brian Campbell, Duncan Keith, Brent Seabrook, and Cam Barker in the lineup he had no chance of succeeding in Chicago.

Columbus

Columbus also stayed relatively quiet at the deadline as they moved Pascal Leclaire to Ottawa for Antoine Vermette. They also made a minor deal in acquiring goalie Kevin Lalande for a 4th round pick with Calgary. The Jackets have only played one game since the deadline, so there hasn't been concrete evidence to show whether the deal benefited Columbus or not. What it does show is that the Jacket's management has complete confidence in Steve Mason moving forward. Vermette was used to center the Jackets' second line of R.J. Umberger and Jason Williams, while Manny Malholtra was utilized to center Kristian Huselius and Rick Nash. Those lines aren't set in stone and could very well change game-to-game for the remainder of this season. It'll certainly be interesting to see what happens when Nikita Filatov, Derick Brassard and Jakub Voracek enter the fold next season.

Colorado

Colorado was extremely quiet at the deadline considering the amount of rumors that surrounded the team at the trade deadline. Ryan Smyth, Marek Svatos, Ian Laperriere, and Tyler Arnasson all stayed with the Avalanche after the deadline. The only big mover was Jordan Leopold being dealt to the Flames. Lawrence Nycholat and Ryan Wilson won't make any impact in fantasy leagues so nothing really changes in terms of fantasy impact for the final stretch of this season.

Dallas

The Stars made zero trades at the trade deadline, but did manage to pluck Brendan Morrison off the waivers from the Ducks. He slotted right into the third line centering James Neal and Fabian Brunnstrom. He's averaging 15:14 in three contests with the Stars and has not tallied a point. His best days of centering the NHL's most dominant line of Markus Naslund and Todd Bertuzzi are long over, so he pretty much has no fantasy value at all moving forward.

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Detroit

Detroit also stood pat at the deadline as they really didn't have the cap space to shore up their roster for the playoffs. The Red Wings will probably welcome the return of Tomas Holmstrom on Tuesday night to help create some traffic in front of opposing goalies. Marrian Hossa is also out with a sore neck and back but should return later on this week. That will probably drop Mikael Samuelsson and Tomas Kopecky's fantasy value to ziltch.

Edmonton

The Oilers' capped the day off with two of the last deals of the day. They sent away potential unrestricted free agent Erik Cole back to Carolina, which resulted in Patrick O'Sullivan, from the Kings, joining the Oil. O'Sully joined Sam Gagner and M.A. Pouliot on the Oilers' second unit which gave him an average ice-time of 16:12 over two games. The downside is that he's only fired one shot on goal, which is a far cry from the 3.23 SOG/game average that he tallied in LA. The second deal that the Oilers landed on deadline day was Ales Kotalik. He joined Ales Hemsky and Shawn Horcoff on the Oilers' top unit in which he's averaged 17:47 with the Oilers, while garnering three SOG. The two deadline acquisitions really hampered Dustin Penner's fantasy value as he only garnered an average of 10:50 in ice-time, while playing on the Oilers' third line with Andrew Cogliano and Fernando Pisani. If you own Penner now is probably the right time to cut bait.

Los Angeles

The Kings were part of the three-way with the Oilers and the Hurricanes. They ended up acquiring Justin Williams and sending away O'Sullivan. This was definitely a move for the future as I fail to completely understand why the Kings would deal away a young budding star in O'Sullivan for an oft-injured Williams, especially when the Kings are in the midst of playoff contention this season. This wasn't a salary saving move as O'Sully was scheduled to make \$2.95 million next season compared to Williams' \$3.5 million. There were some reports that it was because he held out at the beginning of the season that left a sour taste in GM Dean Lombardi's mouth, which caused him to be dealt. I guess only Lombardi and O'Sullivan would know what the truth behind the whole story. There hasn't been any additional news regarding Williams' status that I could dig up, except that he was supposed to be sidelined for a month from the 15th of February, which should put his somewhere around next week. Upon his return, he should pick up a top-six role in the Kings' lineup.

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Minnesota

Minnny pretty much stood pat at the deadline, but they did make a significant re-signing in Niklas Backstrom. Backstrom re-signed at \$6 million per year, which I thought was a great deal for both sides of the table. I still wonder how much would Backstrom have received from another team if he held out for free agency in the Summer. Now onto Marian Gaborik...

Nashville

The Predators also stood pat on deadline day as they didn't make any moves. It was interesting with Steve Sullivan scheduled for unrestricted free agency, why they didn't deal him to a contending team for some picks or prospects for the future. They're in a playoff position now, but will standing pat get them into the playoffs? Time will tell...

Phoenix ☐ ☐ ☐

Out the door went, Mikael Tellqvist, Olli Jokinen, Daniel Carcillo, and Derek Morris. Donning a new maroon jersey are, Matthew Lombardi, Brandon Prust, Scottie Upshall, Dmitri Kalinin, Petr Prucha, and Nigel Dawes. With nothing much to play for the rest of this season, a lot of the new acquisitions at the deadline will get plenty of ice-time moving forward. Lombardi has already made an impact with three points in three games, while averaging 21:09 with the Coyotes. Prucha has two points and is averaging 18:10, while Dawes has one point and averaging 15:06. Rounding off the new acquisitions, Upshall also has a two spotter while averaging 16:58. The main losers of the acquisitions were Peter Mueller and Martin Hanzal who were both scratched from Sunday's contest against the Islanders. The key to many of these acquisitions is that they are RFA's at the end of the season. With a predicted decrease in salary cap in the coming seasons, you might just see a few teams start poaching a few of these RFAs as cheap third line options. It'll be interesting to see where Shane Doan, Viktor Tikhonov, Mikkel Boedker, Kyle Turris, Mueller, Hanzal, Lombardi, Dawes, Prucha, Upshall all end up for next season.

San Jose

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The Sharks added some much needed toughness in their lineup as they acquired Moen and Huskins from the Ducks on deadline day. Moen played on the third line in one contest and was a healthy scratch in another. He'll be in and out of the Sharks' lineup for the remainder of this season. Huskins will also find it hard to crack the Sharks' lineup on a permanent basis.

St. Louis

The Blues didn't make any changes to their lineup at the deadline which might just get them into the post-season this year. They reunited Keith Tkachuk, with Brad Boyes and Andy McDonald on the Blues' top-line. With Chris Mason's great play as of late, I seriously put them as my dark horse to make the playoffs as the eighth seed this season.

Vancouver

The Canucks also stayed pat as they really didn't have too much salary cap room to make any big acquisitions at the deadline. The top-six pretty much remains the same in Vancouver, as Alex Burrows lines up with the Sedin twins, while Ryan Kesler lines up with Mats Sundin and Pavol Demitra. They will certainly help the Canucks make a run at the Flames for the Northwest Crown this season. The Canucks could actually make a quiet run at the Stanley Cup if they can get some consistent scoring from their offense.

If you haven't read [Dobber's column on depth guys](#) for the rest of this season, do so, there's a few key players mentioned in the article that will certainly help you make a strong push to winning your pool this season.

With five weeks remaining, I'm now 7.5 points up on second place Comish in the Dobber's Expert League. After the bombshell that Maltais dropped with Notch last week, I countered it by picking up Anze Kopitar and Scott Hartnell for Ryan Smyth and Devin Setoguchi. I have Claude Giroux as a backup plan so losing Seto isn't that big of a deal, but adding Kopitar should complement my team very well for the stretch run.