

The Fat Lady Has Sung Part V

Written by Ryan Ma

Tuesday, 23 June 2009 11:12 - Last Updated Wednesday, 24 June 2009 07:46



The Stanley Cup Final is over, so I guess it's time to finish off the final part of this series. We'll do a quick assessment of the Red Wing players with fantasy significance and take a look at what could be in store for them next season following their valiant loss to the Penguins in Game Seven of the Stanley Cup Final.

Detroit **Five Stars**

Johan Franzen – Franzen continues to impress during the playoffs as he picked up back-to-back seasons of point-per-game performance during the post-season. He finished with 23 points in 23 games along with three game-winning goals to share the team-lead with Dan Cleary in that department. Franzen seems to be a band-aid boy as he averaged just over 70 games played in the last three seasons, which will certainly cause his overall point totals to drop. A lot of point production for next season will hinge on whether or not Marian Hossa decides to return to Detroit. If Hossa doesn't look for Franzen to be up around the 75-80 point

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mark, if he does ear mark Franzen for 60-65.

Henrik Zetterberg- There wasn't really any holes that you can poke at during Zetterberg's playoff performance. He finished with 24 points, which placed him third overall behind the Pittsburgh duo of Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin. He was a plus 13 overall while averaging 3.57 SOG per contest. Zetterberg had a bit of a down year, when he picked up only 73 points during the regular season, so look for him to be back towards the 85-90 point mark next season.

Niklas Lidstrom – Similarly to Zetterberg there wasn't really any holes that you find in Lidstrom's playoff performance. He finished with 16 points in 21 contests, which is certainly a commendable effort considering he was playing through an injury in his "man area" during the playoffs. Although Mike Green probably has claimed the top dog moniker for fantasy defenseman in pools, Lidstrom should be noted as the most consistent. Once again look for a line of 60 points, a plus 35 rating, 36 PIMs, four GWGs, and 200 SOG from Lidstrom next season.

Four Stars

Valteri Filppula – Filppula had a great post-season while finished tied for third in Red Wings scoring with 16 points. What's interesting is that he picked up all of his scoring while averaging almost five minutes of ice-time less than Zetterberg. He also finished the post-season while averaging only 1.52 SOG per contest for the Red Wings. Similar to Franzen, Filppula's fantasy value for next season will depend heavily on Hossa's decision. If you're looking for a ball park figure of where he would most likely tally, it would probably be between 65-50 with or without Hossa.

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Dan Cleary – Cleary never ceases to amaze me. Every season I keep predicting his bubble to burst, but it just seems to get bigger and bigger season after season. He finished with 15 points which places him alongside superstar Hossa. What's also surprising is that he did all of that while averaging just 16 seconds of power-play time per contest for the Red Wings during the playoffs. Look for another 40 point, 160 SOG season from Cleary next season.

Three Stars

Jiri Hudler – Hudler deserves a passing mark for these playoffs as he finished with 12 points in 23 contests, while averaging just over 13 minutes of ice-time per contest. He'll probably be the main beneficiary if Hossa does decide to leave for another team in the off-season. For his career Hudler has tallied 127 points in 255 games all while averaging less than 14 minutes per contest in his career. Hudler looks primed and ready to bust out this season so pencil him in for 65.

Brian Rafalski – Rafalski also deserves a passing mark, as he played well throughout the playoffs. He finished with 12 points in 18 contests which ranks him tied for fourth amongst all blue liners during the playoffs. The main reason why I dropped him down to three instead of giving him four stars was that during the regular season he averaged 1.80 SOG per contest, compared to just 1.33 during the playoffs. Perhaps with the extra eight shots he might have changed the Red Wings' playoff fate. Rafalski has been pretty consistent in the last three seasons, so once again look for another 55 point, 26 PIM, 150 SOG season from Rafalski for next season.

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Pavel Datsyuk – Similar to many of the other Red Wings, Datsyuk did a reasonable job during these playoffs, but it wasn't enough to get the job done. He finished with nine points in 16 games, despite spending a large amount of the playoffs hobbling around with a foot injury. This past season, Datsyuk has firmly entrenched himself as part of the NHL elite and now owns back-to-back seasons of 97 points, plus 34 ratings, 20 PIMs, 10 power-play goals, and 250 SOG. Look for him to have a third straight productive fantasy season.

Darren Helm – Helm played his role brilliantly this post-season as he pretty much cemented his role as a checking forward for the Wings heading into next season. He led all players in the playoffs in hits with 118 and will line up nicely alongside Kris Draper and Kirk Maltby. Helm isn't going to light up the score sheets, but will probably tally in the vicinity of 30-35 points for next season and chip in plenty of grit on a checking line for Detroit.

Two Stars

Marian Hossa – I know it's a bit harsh to put Hossa in two star territory, but I think in the end it needed to be done. I'll give him props as he finished tied for fifth in scoring for Detroit. I'll also give him props for finishing with a team high 100 SOG. What disappointed me was that Hossa left the Pens last season because he thought he would have a better chance of winning a cup in Detroit than in Pittsburgh. At the end of the day, if you have superstar potential, you can't just simply waltz onto a team and expect a championship, especially when you yourself just tally three assists in the Stanley Cup final. Who knows where Hossa will end up, but I'm certain that some team is going to splurge out huge money for Hossa's services.

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Nik Kronwall – The only reason why I placed Kronwall this low was because of his great regular season, and I expected a similar result during the playoffs. Kronwall finished with a 0.64 point-per-game averaged in the regular season, but managed only 0.39 during the playoffs, which makes me ponder which one is the true Kronwall? It also makes me deliberate whether or not a team has the capacity to truly carry three 50-point defenseman? You would have to think that what Kronwall did this season was special, but with Lidstrom and Rafalski there, is there really any room for a third scoring defenseman?

One Star

Tomas Holmstrom – Holmstrom began the playoffs with a bang while tallying four points in the first four games, but then only managed to tally three in the next 19, which makes me wonder if there was a lingering injury that the Red Wings didn't disclose to the media. He was dropped down to third line duties which caused him to average only 13:44 in ice-time in the post-season. Holmstrom has been nicked up for the past two seasons with various injuries, so hopefully he can get rested up this summer and once again wreck havoc in front of opposing goalies next season.

This concludes our Fat Lady Has Sung series regarding the Western Conference playoffs. I'll be taking a break for awhile as I bake in the sun in Thailand. Enjoy the draft and we'll see you back here in three weeks.