

Take Advantage of These Hot Starters

Written by Ryan Ma

Tuesday, 01 September 2009 16:51 - Last Updated Wednesday, 02 September 2009 08:28



It's not hard to judge a player's fantasy value based on an overall yearly performance, but if you break it down further while taking advantage of trends it might just give you enough of an edge to push you over the top at the end of the season. This week we'll take a look at eight hot starters that you may be able to take advantage of early on in this upcoming season.

Jarome Iginla – RW – Calgary Flames

Despite popular belief, Iginla has actually been a better producer in the first-half than in the second half for the past three seasons. Iginla has shown a four, 24 and an 11 percent drop from the second half compared to first half in the past three seasons. On average, Iggy has averaged 1.25 points-per-game pre-All-Star, and just a tad over the point-per-game mark post-All-Star. So what does it all mean? Basically if I were in a one-year league, I'd still go out and draft Iggy fairly early and then use his typical decent first half production to parlay that into a better second half producer to score the best of both worlds.

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Patrick Kane – RW – Chicago Blackhawks

Kane has also experienced a second half slump in the initial two seasons in the NHL. Kane has seen a 19 along with a horrible 45 percent drop-off in point production in the last two seasons. Granted a few of the factors were injury related, but with Kane flying the red, white and blue flag for team USA, you would have to think that he could be too burnt out from Olympic hangover to buck the current trend this upcoming season.

Kris Versteeg – RW/LW – Chicago Blackhawks

Much like teammate Kane, Versteeg is a first half “stud” and a second half “dud”. In the past two years, Versteeg has experienced a 79 and a 48 percent drop in point production in the two halves of the season. He should experience a similar type of trend this year, as the Hawks will initially be without Marian Hossa to start the season, which should open the door for Versteeg to gain a temporary top-six position with the club. But upon Hossa’s return, Versteeg will probably see that production plummet. A wary poolie would draft Versteeg semi-early in their drafts and see if they can parlay his hot start (around the second last week of October) to gain an upgrade somewhere else in their roster for the rest of the season.

Sheldon Souray – D – Edmonton Oilers

A simple way to sum up Souray’s fantasy value is pretty easy. When he is healthy and he suits

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up, he's a fantasy stud, when he doesn't you pretty much have a huge bust on your hands. If you were to delve a little deeper into his stats, you would probably see that Souray is also a first half "stud", but a second half "dud". He has seen a 22, 31, and a 25 percent drop-off in point production from the second half to the first half in the last three seasons. So once again if you were a smart poolie, you would probably want to use that knowledge to your advantage and see if you can pawn Souray off to another unsuspecting owner near Christmas time to truly reap the benefits.

Ed Jovanovski – D – Phoenix Coyotes

Jovo's inclusion to this list certainly shocked me when I was doing the research for this piece. In the past three seasons, he has experienced a 17, 6 and a 20 percent drop-off in point production. I also would like to chip in the fact that in the past three seasons Jovo didn't really get much help on the blue-line, which is why he averaged 23:09, 22:33, and 22:11 in the past three seasons. With the new additions of Adrian Aucoin and Jim Vandermeer along with the development of Keith Yandle, the Coyotes will most likely trim down Jovo's ice-time to keep him fresh throughout the season. Once again, if I owned Jovo and saw that he had a hot start, I'd think about dealing him at Christmas time to take advantage of the old adage "buy low, sell high"

Devin Setoguchi – RW – San Jose Sharks

Setoguchi is an interesting case as he really doesn't have a large bank of data to draw from. What I did manage to dig up however was the fact that he always seems to take off hot, but then cool down in the later stages of the season. In his two seasons in the NHL, he's experienced a 16 and a 33 percent drop-off, which probably doesn't bode well for his second half projections for this upcoming season. He always seems to find himself starting the season lining up alongside Joe Thornton, but gradually loses the gig to someone else whether it's Milan Michalek or Jonathan Cheechoo. VERDICT: Don't overpay to get him in one-year drafts. In keeper leagues, see what offers come floating around mid-season, if it's a decent offer jump

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ship, if it's not then keep him.

Brad Boyes – RW – St. Louis Blues

Boyes is an interesting case as well. In the previous two seasons before this past season, Boyes had back-to-back seasons of a decrease in production from the second half compared to the first half, while last season he actually had a slight increase of one percent. Granted the previous two seasons the Blues didn't really have much to play for and they were down in the dumpsters in terms of the standings. This season could very well be the opposite for Boyes as the Blues try to contend for another playoff spot down the stretch run, but hey if the price is right...

Mikael Samuelsson – RW – Vancouver Canucks

Samuelsson's first half production versus second half production has almost a night and day trend. He has shown a 12, 16 and 58 percent point production drop-off in the last three seasons. You have to acknowledge that in Detroit's situation which was very deep in wingers with Johan Franzen, Thomas Holmstrom, Marian Hossa, Dan Cleary and Valtteri Filppula, it probably forced Samuelsson lower on their depth charts than he really should have been. Finding a new home in Vancouver, and probably alongside the Sedin twins, might just keep Samuelsson's production consistent throughout the season, but then again with Pavol Demitra, Alex Burrows and Steve Bernier all in the mix for that highly-coveted roster position, Samuelsson might just once again experience another point production slump in the second half of the season. Informed poolies shouldn't dive in head first on the Samuelsson train without at least considering some of his downsides.

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Other Notables

Daymond Langkow, Marian Hossa, Matthew Lombardi, Dustin Boyd, Wojtek Wolski, Saku Koivu, Joffrey Lupul, Marcel Goc, Paul Kariya, Radim Vrbata, Kyle Wellwood

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