We’re about a third of the way into the fantasy season and there have certainly been a few busts to start the year. We’ll discuss a few that have caught my attention and see if that’s going to be the expected norm or whether things are going to look brighter moving forward.

Pavel Datsyuk

You can’t really call someone who has 20 points in 24 contests a certified bust, but poolies probably expected much more from the 10th overall ranked player in Yahoo drafts. His SOG per contest average has climbed to 3.29 after his opening month average of 2 to start the season, which is a sign in the positive direction. **Maaaasquito Buzz:**
Don’t expect his 63 point pace to continue. Look for 60 points in the remaining 56 contests moving forward.

Dion Phaneuf

Phaneuf currently has 13 points in 26 contests which probably isn't as good as many poolies expected as the second ranked defenseman drafted at the beginning of the year. His current 11.1 percent shooting percentage is almost double of his current career average (6.7), which means that his numbers are inflated as they are. What's different this year compared to previous years is that he's always been the "go-to" guy, but that role is being diminished by the inclusion of Jay Bouwmeester and Robyn Regher in the Flames line up. Phaneuf's SOG per contest average has also completely plummeted. Last season he had a 3.46 average compared to this year's dismal 2.08. If he only tallied 47 points last season, it's kind of unreasonable to expect him to tally more points by firing 40 percent less. **Maaaasquito Buzz:** Don't expect anything more than 45 point this year, so probably between 25-30 points in the remaining 56 contests.

Martin Havlat

Band-Aid boy Havlat is back as he's dealing with a hamstring (groin!) problem. Even before the injury he was on a dismal 0.42 point-per-game pace, which probably puts him squarely in the bust category. The main difference from last year compared to this year is that he had the protection of Patrick Kane and Jonathan Toews in Chicago. This year he's drawing all of the attention from the opposition's top checking lines, which probably will 1) cause him to be injured more frequently or 2) dramatically hurt his fantasy production. It appears that both are occurring at the moment. **Maaaasquito Buzz:** I don't quite know about his injury status, so I can't give you a firm number for expected points for the rest of the season, but I'll offer a 0.60 point-per-game projection in the remaining contests when he returns.

David Backes

A week ago, people were selling Backes as if it was the lone cure to the Swine Flu, but with six points in the last four contests, it appears that move might have been premature. Last year, Backes started the season with eight points in the first 23 contests, so his 10 points in 25 probably actually is a slight upgrade over last year. In the last three contests, Backes has spent 57.49 percent of his overall ice-time alongside Paul Kariya and T.J. Oshie, which probably is the main reason why his points are improving. **Maaaasquito Buzz:** Backes won't put up a 54 point season like he did last year because the Blues have Kariya and Keith Tkachuk healthy this year, which will put a firm limit on Backes' ice-time/production for the duration of the fantasy season. I wouldn't expect anything more than 30 points in the remaining 57 contests from the Minnesota native.

Nicklas Lidstrom

It's been a while since we last saw Lidstrom this unproductive for fantasy hockey purposes. He's on pace to finish the season with only 25 points, which probably is unfathomable for a player of his calibre. His SOG per contest average is still at a pretty reasonable 2.27, which is at least one positive you could turn towards if you are a Lidstrom owner. **Maaaasquito Buzz:** Don't expect anything near the 59+ point mark that he has tallied for the past four consecutive seasons. Look at the 38-point that he achieved in the 2003-04 season as a real possibility for this year.

Brad Boyes

Brad Boyes has started the season on a 0.6 point-per-game pace, which is probably not the

pace that owners are expecting from the seventh year veteran, especially considering he had back-to-back seasons of 65+ points. The SOG and ice-time are there, but similar to Backes, the return of Kariya and Tkachuk has really flattened out the fantasy production in St. Louis. **Maaaa squito Buzz:**
I don't really see any of the Blues being that productive fantasy-wise this season. You'll probably see all eight of the top Blues' forwards tally between the 50-65 point marks.

Brian Rafalski

Along the same lines as Lidstrom, Rafalski hasn't exactly lit up the scoreboard. He has 12 points in 25 contests, and is currently riding a five-game pointless drought. On a positive note, he is on pace for 146 SOG, which probably should help soften the blow if you are a Rafalski-owner. Much like Lidstrom, I wouldn't expect Rafalski to match any of the numbers that he's put up in the last three seasons. **Maaaasquito Buzz:** Look for him to finish with 28 points in the remaining 57 contests, anything more will be a bonus.

Joffrey Lupul

You can't really fault Lupul for his slow start to this season because he is dealing with back spasms. I usually don't want list players who are/were dealing with injuries as bust candidates because I think it's a bit unfair, but judging Lupul on his performance in the first 20 games of the season, you'd probably have to give him a D. The goals scored per contest still remains pretty decent as well as the SOG average, which is why I peg Lupul to be a great buy-low candidate at the moment. **Maaaasquito Buzz:** Look for Loops to return to the Anaheim line up late next week and tally around 40 points in the remaining 52 contests.

Patrick O'Sullivan

O'Sully had big expectations heading into this fantasy season, but he really hasn't flourished the way that I thought he would in the first 27 contests. His 2.85 SOG per contest average is still conducive for fantasy purposes, but his 39 point pace probably isn't. Like the old adage goes, the more you shoot, eventually you'll score. With Ales Hemsky out of the line up for the remainder of the season, look for Pat Quinn to give Patty an extra long look for the duration of the campaign. **Maaaasquito Buzz:** Buy now and look for 45 points in the remaining 55 contests for the fourth year winger.

Shawn Horcoff

For a player to have 11 points in 23 contests, you might just mosey along and say ho-hum, but can you say that when he's making $5.5 million this season? Horcoff did have some chemistry playing alongside Ales Hemsky, but unfortunately the later is side-lined for the rest of the season. Result of Horcoff's fantasy value? (cue sound of dropping bomb + explosion sound) **Maaaasquito Buzz:**
If you are a Horcoff owner, drop now!

Martin Erat

Erat has started the year with nine points in the first 23 contests, which pro-rates to a 28 point pace. Compare that to his five consecutive seasons of near 50 point totals, the start of this campaign has certainly been a disappointment. In his career, Erat has tallied at a 0.67 point-per-game pace between January and March. You can thank me for doing the homework for you, as the Preds have 37 contests in those three months, which should give him 24 points

during that span. If he stays on course with his career point averages in December and April that would result in 32 points in the remaining 56 games. **Maaaasquito Buzz:** That's probably a bare minimum for Erat, I'd probably look for him to reach the 50 point plateau for a six consecutive season. He's only 10 percent owned in Yahoo leagues, so you might want to add away on the Czech.

Peter Mueller

You've probably read Dobber's column on him a few weeks back, so I'm not going to beat a dead horse. He's probably the biggest bust that fantasy poolies have invested in this season. With four points in the first 24 contests, it seems that all hope might be lost. What you also should keep in mind is that Mueller did start his rookie season with 11 points in 22 contests, and then busted out for 36 in the final 55 games. You need to recognize that the potential is there. **Maaaasquito Buzz:**
If there is ever a time to buy-low on Mueller, now's probably the time. If it's not going to cost you anything to acquire Mueller you might want to roll the dice to see if you can pick up a sleeper candidate.

Steve Mason

If there is an award for the biggest bust between the pipes to start the year, it has to certainly belong to Mase. Mason sports a 9-6-4 record along with an underachieving 3.38 GAA and .892 save percentage. It's definitely not what fantasy owners expected from last season's Calder winner. If you look at the overall numbers, they're actually quite mediocre, but if you throw out the two blowout performances against the Rangers and the Red Wings, he actually has a .936 save percentage and a 2.07 GAA along with a 3-1-3 record in those seven contests. Currently, the Blue Jackets possess the third-worst team defense rating by giving up an average of 3.38 goals per contest. Face it a Ken Hitchcock coached team won't finish that low in the standings, which means that Columbus should be in store for one hell of a ride from here on out. **Maaaasquito Buzz:**

You just need to be aware of which match ups are favourable to Mase, and which aren't. If you can handle a blip every once in awhile, his baseline stats will remain relatively unvaried. So if you are looking for some help between the pipes, you might want to see if the Mason owner in your league is getting fed up.

Questions or comments? Like always I'll be ready and willing to discuss them with you in the comments section below. We'll see you here back again next week.