

Enlightened You Shall Be (West 2011)

Written by Ryan Ma

Tuesday, 13 September 2011 11:34 - Last Updated Wednesday, 14 September 2011 07:46



Over the course of the last few weekends I participated in a few Yahoo! mock drafts to gain a better grasp of what's been going on in the "real" fantasy hockey world. I thought I'd pass my findings onto you Dobberities. I participated in random drafts ranging from eight to 14 teams from H2H to Roto leagues with standard settings. This is what I have concluded.

It's the opposite to last week's article of players who are undervalued and under-rated in Yahoo! fantasy pools.

Now, onto the good stuff!

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Corey Perry – RW- Anaheim

Average: 5.3

Yahoo-Rank: 5

Dobber Expert League: HockeyKnight (3rd overall)

I mentioned Perry a few times the last couple of weeks, and I'm staying the course with my initial opinion of him. It's not that I don't want him on my fantasy team, it's just that it's a damn high investment of a fifth overall pick for someone who's only had **one** statistically great season. You've probably read all of the reasoning behind a possible decline for Perry, so I won't bombard you with that again, but you also have to keep in mind that in a 12, maybe even 14-team league, RWers are so plentiful that if you miss out on Perry you still have quite a few options in the next 4-5 rounds who would still produce similar numbers. I know it's bloody hard to see his name dangling there in front of you, but it'd be a wise move to go after a player that's from a shallower position.

Anze Kopitar – C- Los Angeles

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Average: 15.5

Yahoo-Rank: 11

Dobber Expert League: HockeyKnight (33rd overall)

Quiz time: Which player would you rather have (based on the previous average three-year production)?

Player A: 71.3 GP, 21 G, 57.7 A, 78.7 P, plus 7.7, 78.3 PIMs, 28.7 PPP, and 164.3 SOG

Player B: 77.7 GP, 34 G, 39.7 A, 73.7 P, plus 3, 63.3 PIMs, 25.3 PPP and 315 SOG

Player C: 79.7 GP, 28.7 G, 44.7 A, 73.3 P, plus 4.7, 22.7 PIMs, 26.3 PPP and 242 SOG

Player D: 80.3 GP, 22 G, 59.7 A, 81.7 P, plus 12.3, 52.3 PIMs, 32.3 PPP and 143 SOG

Player A is Ryan Getzlaf, player B is Eric Staal, player C is Kopitar and player D is Joe Thornton. Now consider their relative draft positions. Getzlaf (36.2), Staal (35.6), Kopitar (15.5) and Thornton (45.5): which one of the four doesn't fit in like the others? I wouldn't mind having Kopitar on my team, but the price of a second round pick is just too expensive for my liking. I can essentially wait two rounds and snag a Thornton, while having the exact same production

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and saving my second round pick. Think of this scenario, would you rather have a combo of Pavel Datsyuk and Thornton or the combo of Kopitar and Vanek? What about Getzlaf and Kovalchuk or Kopitar and Marleau?

Antti Niemi – G– San Jose

Average: 26.0

Yahoo-Rank: 20

Dobber Expert League: Nation of Domination (27th overall)

Niemi had a fantastic season when he posted a 35-18-6 record, along with a very respectable 2.38 GAA and .920 save percentage last campaign. The only problem for me was that those numbers were posted with an injured Antero Niittymaki on the shelf for much of the season with a lower body injury, which kind of forced Niemi into the number one role by default. He definitely played well enough last campaign, to enter this season as the number one, but a hiccup/cold streak and the pendulum could easily swing back to the way of Niittymaki. The reward might be great, but the risk is definitely dangerous if you're depending on Niemi as your number one heading into the season. Just a word of advice if you are dead set on selecting him make sure you snag a handcuff in Niitty as well.

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Bobby Ryan – LW – Anaheim

Average: 12.4

Yahoo-Rank: 9

Dobber Expert League: Nation of Domination (34th overall, steal at that position!)

Ryan is just a tad overrated in fantasy drafts. He certainly has the pedigree to put up huge numbers in the future, but for this season I don't think he'll get that opportunity. At the end of the day, the Ducks are going to be Ryan Getzlaf's and Perry's team. Ryan will always play third fiddle to the dynamic duo, and probably won't really be a focal point of the Anaheim attack. I also understand that the LW position is a bit shallow, but I'd lean towards a Henrik Zetterberg or Ilya Kovalchuk (who play more of a bigger scoring role with their respective clubs), before Ryan.

Ryan Kesler – C – Vancouver

Average: 30.8

Yahoo-rank: 28

Dobber Expert League: FrozenPool (56th overall)

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The latest news coming out of the Kesler camp is that “there’s not a chance that he would be able to play right now.” and that his status for the regular season is still unclear. There’s just too much uncertainty to gamble on a player of “decent but not great calibre” at a second/third round slot, especially with players like Ryan Getzlaf, Eric Staal or Jeff Carter who are ready to be taken just around the corner. Be sure to drop Kesler down a few notches on your rankings on draft day.

David Backes – RW- St. Louis Blue

Average: 65.4

Yahoo-Rank: 60

Dobber Expert League: Dry Island Holdout (61st overall)

Backes is great for leagues that have a strong focus on the peripheral stats (+/-, HITS, BS, and PIMs), but if you are in a points league or a standard settings leagues, then Backes might not be worth the initial draft investment. He had a great season when he posted a line of 62 points, a plus 32 rating, 93 PIMs, and 211 SOG, but this campaign might be a completely different story, as the competition for ice-time in St. Louis has become much stiffer with the additions of Jason Arnott and Jamie Langenbrunner. Backes is currently drafted on par with Marian Gaborik and ahead of fellow RWers Phil Kessel and Martin Havlat. I’d easily select one of those options ahead of Backes in my fantasy drafts.

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Johan Franzen – RW- Detroit

Average: 75

Yahoo-Rank: 73

Dobber Expert League: Dobber (108th overall)

Frazen is another one of those players who carry “big name” status but always seems to under-perform when you’re reflecting upon your fantasy season in April. I don’t think it’s from a lack of talent, but moreso to do with the depth charts. Much like Ryan, he’ll always play third fiddle to Pavel Datsyuk and Henrik Zetterberg in Detroit add in the fact that there will always seem to be a plethora of 40-point players that will always slot in as competition to steal points away from Franzen. Poolies always seem to value him as a 65-70 pointer, but he’s never once hit that expectation. I know the attractiveness of Franzen’s name will always tempt you, but take the high road and pass.

Miikka Kiprusoff – G – Calgary

Average: 55.5

Yahoo-Rank: 51

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Dobber Expert League: Dry Island Holdout (31st overall)

I can certainly understand why my Eastern Counterpart (Tim Lucarelli), would take a stab at Kipper for the Dobber Expert League based on our league settings. He has averaged 73.7 games played, 39.7 wins, a 2.50 goals against average and a .912 save percentage per season since the lockout. But if you are playing in a standard Yahoo! league, 2.50 and .912 numbers aren't going to lead you to a championship. I would much rather take a Martin Brodner or Cam Ward roughly 10 slots later and still get similar (if not better results), instead. Another interesting stat that I've dug up, is that Kipper has March numbers of 19-16-1, 3.17 GAA, and .889 save percentage for the last three seasons. Brent Sutter, if you are listening, play Henrik Karlsson for a few more games (15-20 games), throughout the season and keep Kipper fresh for the March run and your team will be much better off.

Alex Burrows – LW – Vancouver

Average: 85.6

Yahoo-Rank: 89

Dobber Expert League: GMGates (70th overall)

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Burrows is another player that gets overvalued due to association. His 45 even strength points tied him with Tomas Vanek, Loui Eriksson, Nathan Horton and Jeff Skinner for 28th overall in the league in that department, but it's the one power-play point that puts a huge damper on things. With Mikael Samuelsson or Marco Sturm probably occupying top PP ice-time alongside the Sedins, Burrows will most likely be shafted once again. I know LWers are getting pretty thin at this point, but I'd probably take a pass on Burrows and take a stab at Taylor Hall or Mike Cammalleri a round or two later.

Jimmy Howard – G – Detroit

Average: 45.6

Yahoo-Rank: 47

Dobber Expert League: Messier4Life (37th overall)

Pretty much the same as Kipper's comment. With Howard, you pretty much have the name factor, but other than that you don't exactly get a lot of substance with it. The 37 wins were nice, but the 2.79 GAA and .910 save percentage probably wouldn't have garnered you a championship. Howard honestly didn't play well enough to sustain a number one gig all season long, but luckily an injury to Chris Osgood (and a lack of a quality backup), saved the job for Howard. 2011-12 will be a different story as the Red Wings have brought back a familiar name of Ty Conklin for the backup gig. If Howard struggles for a second consecutive season, he might not have as much luck as he did last campaign.

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Loui Eriksson – RW – Dallas

Average: 81.1

Yahoo-Rank: 79

Dobber Expert League: Dean's List (98th overall)

There's been a lot of polarizing debate on the status of Eriksson heading into the new season. At this point you've probably read all of the arguments and have now well and truly drawn your own conclusions. The only thing that I'll add to the debate is draft position. At an average pick of 81st, he currently sits above a few proven guys like Marian Hossa and Dustin Brown. Those two have a tad higher potential upside than Eriksson, which is why I'd be more inclined to select those two over an uncertain Eriksson on draft day.

Mark Giordano – D – Calgary

Average: 116

Yahoo-Rank: 115

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Dobber Expert League: Angus (115th overall)

Gio certainly had himself a pretty decent season last campaign when he posted 43 points, 25 of which came on the PP, 67 PIMs along with 165 SOG. The only thing that I'd be wary about is whether or not he'd be able to repeat that performance for 2011-12. Considering he's on averaged selected ahead of number one PP QB options like Alex Edler, Erik Johnson and James Wisniewski, it'd be a tough pill to swallow if you selected Gio and have one of those three light up the scoresheets against you.

Ryan Whitney – D – Edmonton

Average: 98.5

Yahoo-Rank: 92

Dobber Expert League: Angus (126th overall)

Ditto for Whitney! His elevated ranking is entirely based on an injury-shortened 35 contests. Whitney had a bit of a hiccup in the pre-season when he rolled over on his surgically repaired ankle two weeks ago, which should send some warning signs to all poolies who are wanting to take a leap of faith on Whitney. The fact that he's taken ahead of players like Chris Pronger, Alex Goligoski, Alex Pietrangelo or Jack Johnson reveals that he's being over-rated in fantasy pools.

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Logan Couture – C – San Jose

Average: 113.3

Yahoo-Rank: 118

Dobber Expert League: FrozenPool (116th overall)

Much like a few of the players mentioned above, Couture got a large boost in the pre-season rankings due to great 2010-11 numbers. The fact that he also plays for the highly offensive Sharks also helps to increase his stocks somewhat, but is it necessarily enough to select him over the likes of number one centers like Jason Spezza, Mike Ribeiro or Mikko Koivu? At the end of the day, Couture is still going to be choked offensively behind Joe Thornton, Patrick Marleau, Joe Pavelski, and possibly Martin Havlat, so he'll certainly have quite a few roadblocks to overcome in order to put up favourable fantasy numbers. I'd rather go with a solidified number one center option instead.

Did I forget anyone? Or have a few "over-valued" candidates of your own? Questions or comments? As always I'll be ready and willing to discuss them with you in the comments section below.