

## Advancers and Decliners

Written by Ryan Ma

Tuesday, 17 January 2012 13:05 - Last Updated Wednesday, 18 January 2012 11:21

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Based on last week's articles, if ice-time and SOG are any indicators of fantasy success, this week's column will be a good complement in identifying a few trends moving forward. We'll take a look at several advancers, as well as decliners out West to help you get through that mid-season lull.

First off, a bit more of the "mathy" stuff from last week.

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With all of the teams playing their complete complement of first half games, I had a chance to interpret some of the data.

The first thing that I looked at was whether or not there was a **correlation** between point production to SOG and TOI. This is what I found.

Forwards	
Correlation Coefficient Point vs. TOI	0.815697648
Correlation Coefficient Point vs. SOG	0.890067852

Defense	
Correlation Coefficient Point vs. SOG	0.887501704
Correlation Coefficient Point vs. TOI	0.750610669

For those of you who aren't well versed in statistics, *Correlation Coefficient* is a measure of the strength of the linear relationship between two variables (Lehman's terms: basically how closely related is one factor to another). The closer the number is to

**1**

, the stronger the relationship, the closer the number is to

**0**

, the weaker the relationship. So as you can see by the pictures above, there's a pretty strong relationship between the three variables of SOG, TOI and point production.

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**Fantasy relevance:** If you're looking for a quick way to identify upcoming riser or fallers then take a strong look at TOI and SOG, as they'll essentially tell you how the point production is going to react.

### Advancers

#### **Viktor Stalberg – LW – Chicago – 13% Yahoo! owned**

The biggest beneficiary of the Patrick Sharp wrist/hand injury has been Stalberg. In the last three contests, he's seen his ice-time jump to 17:34 per game, while spending 89.7 percent of his overall ice-time alongside both Patrick Kane and Jonathan Toews. He's also seen his SOG per game rate increase to a whopping 4.67 per contest. The only drawback is that he's seeing zero PP TOI, so don't expect anything productive from that perspective. With Sharp probably out until the ASB or slightly beyond, look for Stalberg to continue to produce.

#### **Mike Fisher – C – Nashville – 10% Yahoo! owned**

The "offense by committee" in Nashville is beginning to sort itself out, with the big three of Fisher (19:06), Martin Erat (18:05) and David Legwand (18:44), beginning to rise to the top

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during the last two weeks. They are also averaging, 2:35, 2:42 and 2:33 on the PP respectively. Fisher has also seen his SOG totals take a boost, as he's picked up 31 SOG in the last 15 contests. Don't expect any miracles, but maybe something like 20-25 points in the final 37 could still be plenty useful in a few deep leagues.

### **Daniel Winnik – C/LW – Colorado – 1% Yahoo! owned**

There hasn't been much noise, at least offensively, coming out of Colorado this season, but things are starting to turn around, as the Avs are finally getting healthy. Peter Mueller's return should give a much needed offensive boost to the top-six and Duchene isn't too far away from a possible return after the ASB. While doing research for this column, I was pleasantly surprised to see Winnik just nine SOG behind team leader, Gabriel Landeskog. Add that to the fact that he's averaging 16:37 per contest, we should see his numbers take a slight rise in the next few weeks. The major drawback is he is in a similar boat as Stalberg, where both seeing zero PP time, which could be a problem.

### **David Perron – LW – St. Louis - 16% Yahoo! owned**

Perron is in a similar situation to Fisher, where both are members of "offense by committee" teams which are starting to see a few players rise to the top. During the last two weeks, Perron is averaging 19:36, 3:34 of which is on the PP, per contest. If you also consider the fact that he isn't afraid to shooting the puck (24 SOG in seven games), it's a pretty good indicator that he's going to have a pretty strong second half.

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### **Sam Gagner- C/RW – Edmonton – 9% Yahoo! owned**

Edmonton is another team that has been ravaged by injuries during the last couple of weeks. The major beneficiary of the injuries to Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Jordan Eberle is Gagner. Since the two young phenoms left for the infirmary, Gagner has seen his ice-time increase to 19:10 per contest, with 2:26 of which on the PP. The major knock on him is that he isn't a heavy shot taker (just four SOG in last three games), while being mostly a pass first player. If he can alter his approach to the game, given his current ice-time, the points will surely come.

### **Matt Cullen – C – Minnesota – 9% Yahoo! owned**

News coming out of Minny is that captain Mikko Koivu will be out of the line up with a separated shoulder for the next four-to-six weeks. Koivu was chewing up nearly 21 minutes per game, and a large chunk of the Wild's PP (62.2 percent), so there's certainly a ton of ice-time to be had by his replacement. The most logical option is probably Cullen, since he's a proven 14-year NHL veteran, with plenty of offensive play-making abilities, but keep an eye on Kyle Brodziak, as he could be a great potential sleeper candidate as well.

### **Stefan Elliott – D – Colorado – 5% Yahoo! owned**

One of the strongest indicators of point production for a defenseman is looking at their SOG. Elliott has averaged 2.91 SOG per game during the last 11 contests. The 18:28 overall TOI per contest isn't all that flashy, but it's the 2:43 on the PP that bears watching. With Kyle Quincey, and his \$3 mil+ cap hit, heading to UFA status in the off-season, the Avs probably will be green

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lighting Elliott once Quincey is moved at the deadline.

**Trending:** Brodziak, Derick Brassard, Ales Hemsky, Brendan Morrow, Dany Heatley, T.J. Oshie, Curtis Glencross, Tom Wandell, Ryan O'Reilly, Roman Josi, Jeff Petry, M.A. Vlasic and Fedor Tyutin.

Decliners

**Craig Smith – C/RW – Nashville – 25% Yahoo! owned**

As discussed earlier, with the emergence of Fisher, Legwand and Erat, Smith has taken a sharp nosedive in the TOI department as he's slipped to averaging just 11:25 per contest during the last two weeks. His SOG average has also taken a hit going from 2.76 per game to just two. Now is probably a good time to cut bait.

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### **Chris Stewart- RW –St. Louis – 60% Yahoo! owned**

If you've been a follower of my work for the last year, then you've probably already read what I'm about to say in the next paragraph. With Stewart it's not about skill-set, mental fitness, skating ability, or sniping ability. It's always going to be about opportunity and in STL there's just isn't any to be had for Stewart. He's averaging just 15:37 and 2:31 on the PP with the Blues during the last seven contests. One could argue that he has five points and 14 SOG during that span. But I would counter that with he's also shooting at a ridiculous 21.4 percent, when his career average is 13.3. Do you really expect him to maintain that rate? Use his current hot-streak as a major selling point, and never look back.

### **Justin Williams – RW – Los Angeles – 56% Yahoo! owned**

With the transition to a new coach changes were bound to happen. While some are good and others are bad. Williams is on the end of the later, as he's seen his ice-time dip to just 16:45 per game since Sutter has taken over. The PP TOI with Anze Kopitar and Dustin Brown is still there, but you can't just primarily rely on PPP to feed your fantasy team. Use his "name" value as trade bait.

### **Johan Franzen – LW/RW – Detroit – 95% Yahoo! owned**

Franzen primarily makes his living scoring on the PP. Over a third of his points tallied during the last three seasons have been on the man advantage. The Red Wings haven't drawn very many penalties lately (just 29 opportunities in the last 14 contests), which explains why Franzen's

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points totals have dried up since mid-December. It also doesn't help that he's averaging just 17:28 per contest during the last two weeks. His "name" factor could draw a hefty return in trade talks with an unsuspecting owner.

### **Henrik Zetterberg – C/LW – Detroit – 98% Yahoo! owned**

If you look at Zetterberg's career numbers, he's always been a high volume, low percentage shooter. For the last three seasons, he's averaged 308 SOG at a shooting efficiency of 8.4 percent. This campaign, he's only on pace for 255 SOG and connecting at a rate of just 6.4 percent and most importantly only 15 goals. There are two doors you can possibly take. Door number one will see you continue down the current road hoping that he turns it around in the second half and door number two will see you trade him to someone who will take door number one. Which option will you choose?

### **Brent Seabrook – D – Chicago – 68% Yahoo! owned**

Seabrook had a fantastic season last campaign while posting 48 points and 135 SOG in 80 games thanks to a very fantasy favourable 58.3 to 41.7 ES to PP point split. In the four seasons prior, he had splits of 73.2 to 26.8, which just showcases how extraordinary last season was for Seabrook. This campaign it's a mind-boggling, 90.7 to 9.3. I don't have any stats to back what I'm about to write up, but I have a hunch that it's due the number of SOG/touches on the PP last season that has resulted in such an offensive outburst. This campaign, he's reverting back into his shell, and being much more tentative with the man advantage. There's just not a lot of room for a 30-point blue-liner with limited SOG potential on any fantasy roster.

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**Trending:** Patrick Berglund, Mason Raymond, Jason Arnott, Alex Burrows, Nick Leddy, Ryan Suter and Nicklas Lidstrom

Questions or comments? As always I'll discuss them in the section below.

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