

Top Fantasy Prospects - Movers and Shakers

Written by Stuart McDonald

Saturday, 21 March 2009 07:03 - Last Updated Sunday, 22 March 2009 12:34



The big movers on the Top 200 prospects list this month include an undrafted Newfoundlander, a western boy whose twin sister might be a better athlete, and a speedy Swede who is not much bigger than Zdeno Chara's stick.

Teddy Purcell, a 6'3, 200-pound winger, jumped up and grabbed the minutes left by Patrick O'Sullivan who was moved in a three-way deal to Edmonton March 4th. Originally undrafted, Purcell excelled for the University of Maine before being signed by LA. He then proceeded to tear up the AHL, easily leading all rookies in scoring.

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Purcell really hasn't looked back and is destined to be a top-six forward in the NHL. He excels on the power play where his gifted hands and great reach come in handy. Still ridiculously underrated by some because he went undrafted, Purcell has been on a tear of late. He has three goals and eight points in his last 10 games, making the O'Sullivan trade look shrewd. Purcell moved from 14th to 7th in the top 200 this month.

In between periods at Hamilton Bulldog games, the video scoreboard regularly shows player interviews. One Bulldog was asked what he would do if he wasn't a hockey player. He replied, "I'd be Matt D'Agostini's agent." Good call. D'Agostini was lined up with Alexei Kovalev and Tomas Plekanec by new coach Bob Gainey in early March. Since Gainey is the big dog in Montreal, the 6th rounder's future looks bright in la Belle Province. D'Agostini's plus/minus is terrible and he's since been moved off the No. 1 line, but that's more a reflection of his poor defensive work than his offensive ability. On a team deep in young talent, D'Agostini has very similar numbers to Sergei Kostitsyn, Maxim Lapierre and Guillaume Latendresse. His lower profile and great wheels make him an under the radar prospect to watch. The "Dagger" moved from 35th to 23rd in the top 200.

Jamie Benn is yet another late-round pick who is playing like a first rounder. Dallas' 5th rounder in 2007 has 46 goals and 82 points in 56 WHL games. Benn is fifth in WHL points-per-game and leads the league in goals-per-game. The 6'2, 205-pound winger is only 19 and has serious potential as an NHL power forward. Benn was a big mover this month going from 73rd to 19th.

New Jersey drafted Mattias Tedenby 24th overall in the 2008 draft. Tedenby fell in the draft because of his size. His size should also be of concern to poolies given that the 5'9, 175-pound Swede doesn't have the frame to consistently ward off injuries. That said, Tedenby can really move. He has excellent acceleration and his top speed is star calibre. New Jersey is very high on Tedenby; although it's possible he'll play in Sweden for one more year. Watch him in training camp. Tedenby recently moved from 58th to 25th.

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Zach Boychuk's twin sister Corissa, is a member of the Canadian senior national gymnastics team and is a world class competitor on the trampoline. Since genetics is a crucial factor in determining athletic success (just ask Brett Hull), that little piece of trivia bares noting.

Boychuk is a little on the small side at 5'10, 185 pounds. The Carolina 2008 first rounder isn't your typical small player, however, as he's been major-injury free for his entire career in the tough Western Hockey League.

Boychuk is also not afraid to mix it up despite his size, earning 80 PIMs in 61 games in 2007-08. Boychuk's injury concerns may be far less than Tedenby's, but his upside is probably not quite as high. Overall Boychuk is a safer pick as he'll get his minutes because of his all-around game, and he's less likely to get injured. Boychuk moved from 91st to 49th.

Toronto fans are having a terrible time with the team's rebuilding efforts judging by the "Tank Nation," phenomenon that has gripped the city. Jiri Tlusty's progress emphasizes that the Leafs organization is not tanking but rebuilding. This is something Toronto fans are not used to or simply don't trust. Tlusty will help them trust the process if his development keeps up. Tlusty absolutely lit up the AHL in February with 23 points in 12 games. He added to that on March 4th with a six-point game against Providence. The 21-year-old winger looks to have a bright future as a top-six NHL forward. Tlusty moved from 39th to 13th this month.