

Roto Keeper Monsters - Hits/BS Top 10 Defensemen

Written by Gates Imbeau

Tuesday, 28 June 2011 00:06 - Last Updated Wednesday, 29 June 2011 17:08



Hits and Blocked Shots are two rotisserie categories that have been thrown into the limelight of fantasy hockey as of late. This edition of Roto Keeper Monsters allows you to experience a different mindset of category evaluation. By taking a proactive approach and diving into the world of extended categories, I hope to provide you with an alternative way of building a winning team.

This combination of categories accentuates the value of physical defensemen. Thus, added importance must be given to the few defensemen who willingly throw their bodies in harm's way for the good of their team.

In fantasy hockey, commissioners tend to use Hits and Blocked Shots for several league specific reasons:

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- 1) It can bring balance to category weight between Forwards, Defensemen and Goalies,
- 2) It rewards players that would otherwise have no fantasy value (especially some fan favourites),
- 3) It bridges the gap between real NHL value and fantasy league value,
- 4) It adds different layers to team building and creates more ways to win.

Before reading, keep in mind that Hits and Blocked Shots are the only statistics in focus; all other categories have zero influence over the rankings shown below.

10.▯ Theo Peckham

Last season, Peckham was arguably the best bang for your buck player in leagues with extended peripheral categories - he finished with a very respectable 196 hits, 123 blocked shots and 198 penalty minutes... all while making only \$ 550,000. At age 23, Theo's star is shining bright and is a fan favourite in the making.

Should Peckham repeat last year's performance, your chances at acquiring him cheap will be slim to none. Kudos to the fantasy managers who caught on early and acquired him last season – he will not disappoint. To all others, the word is out.

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One Year Upside : 225 Hits, 125 Blocked Shots
Three Year Upside : 265 Hits, 150 Blocked Shots

9. Brooks Orpik

Arguably one of the best hitters in the game, Orpik has undoubtedly been a key component to the Penguins' blue line for the better part of the decade. Over the last four seasons, Orpik came three shoves shy of a thousand hits, including the massive 309 hit showing in 2008-09 (1st among defensemen, and 2nd

league wide behind Minnesota's Cal Clutterbuck).

Yes, Orpik's totals have been slightly decreasing since that power season, but don't sweat it. In the 63 games he did play last season, the lowest of his NHL career, Brooks posted up 194 hits and 94 blocked shots – putting him right on par when prorated to 82 games.

While reaching the 300 hit plateau might have been a career season for Orpik, at 30 years of age, Brooks can still be very efficient in keeper leagues.

One Year Upside : 240 Hits, 125 Blocked Shots
Three Year Upside : 275 Hits, 140 Blocked Shots

8. Matt Greene

When a player clocks in a combined 683 hits and 398 blocked shots over their last three seasons, they deserve to be on this list. If your league counts Hits and Blocks, Matt Greene makes a great category-specific solution. With the proper entourage, the Mean Greene Hitting Machine is bound to finish top five in hits every season - giving you a decent chance at winning the category weekly.

A pattern to track with Greene is that the more he hits, the less he blocks. To back that up, in 2008-09, Matt recorded 202 hits and 167 blocked shots. The following season he put up 36 more hits, but blocked 41 less shots (a ratio of 238 : 126). This past campaign, Greene finished the season with the second best hit numbers among blue liners (243), to the expense of lower shot block totals (105).

Will that trend continue in 2011-2012?

One Year Upside : 250 Hits, 115 Blocked Shots
Three Year Upside : 275 Hits, 140 Blocked Shots

7. **Dennis Seidenberg**

Dennis Seidenberg has a knack for giving teams a hard time getting pucks to the net. Admittedly, not a lot of poolies know of Seidenberg's extra efforts - it is time to give some long overdue credit. The fact that Seidenberg is only 28 and signed long-term with the Bruins, fantasy owners should expect strong peripheral numbers with confidence. Look no further than the eventful 2010-11 post-season, where Seidenberg finished as the shot block leader, padded

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by a couple of beauties in the Stanley Cup Final.

While Seidenberg challenges to be top shot blocker yearly (like in 2008-09 with 215), it is his consistency that makes him so worthwhile. Take hits as example; Seidenberg accumulated 146, 166 and 161 hits in the last three seasons, an average of 158. In that same span, he averaged 183 shot blocks.

Put those two averages together and you have yourself a quality workhorse d-man that will "hit" multiple categories for any fantasy squad.

One Year Upside - 170 Hits, 180 Blocked Shots
Three Year Upside - 185 Hits, 230 Blocked Shots

6. Stephane Robidas

Stephane Robidas is a player who any GM would love to have on their team. He never quits on any play, and even at the age of 34, his devotion is clearly seen through his repertoire of selfless acts. In 2008-09, a loose puck had broken his jaw. Robidas missed just one shift following the incident, on route to playing more minutes than any other skater in that game. Moral of the story? He will do the same for your fantasy squad.

Over the last six seasons combined, Robidas has registered 1318 hits, an average of 220 per

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season. Don't worry about his age, there is plenty more left in the tank for at least three more seasons.

One Year Upside : 230 Hits, 150 Blocked Shots
Three Year Upside : 260 Hits, 175 Blocked Shots

5. Mark Giordano

Giordano is a rising star - time lapse his rookie season to now and witnesses him break out of that cocoon. Sooner or later, fantasy owners are going to start realizing his multi-cat potential and this may very well be your last offseason to draft him under the radar... in some cases it is already too late!

In three short seasons, Mark Giordano has gone from 55 hits and 39 shot blocks to 140 and 193 respectfully. Look for Giordano to build off those numbers next season.

One Year Upside : 155 Hits, 210 Blocks Shots
Three Year Upside : 200 Hits, 250 Blocked Shots

4. Greg Zanon

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If you need a fix in these categories, Greg Zanon has your back, leg, arm and so on. Zanon will ring you up to two million in salary cap leagues, but he is money in the bank. In the last three years, he finished third, fourth and second place among defensemen in the blocked shots department. That deserves some love!

Zanon, who has a thing of always finishing in between 160-190 hits and 180-220+ range, is the definition of dependable.

One Year Upside : 170 Hits, 210 Blocked shots
Three Year Upside : 190 Hits, 235 Blocked Shots

3. Brent Seabrook

Seabrook is another defenseman who likes to bang the body, highlighted by an impressive three season total of 659 hits. This past season, Seabrook brought home 227 hits. To put that into perspective, the combined effort of all other Chicago defensemen skating in 2010-11 (eight total) was 307 – an 80 hit difference. Of those defensemen, Nick Boynton was the closest to Seabrook with 50 hits, followed by Duncan Keith with 45.

On the bigger stage, Seabrook is a likely candidate to repeat as one of the top three defensive performers in the hits department. That is surely worth the price of admission, especially when you receive a voucher for 150 blocked shots - renewed yearly.

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2. Luke Schenn

Inexperienced hockey poolies will look at Luke Schenn's point totals and write him off. Let them. He is without a doubt Toronto's hardest working blue liner. Yes, often times that doesn't translate into good fantasy numbers, but if your league counts Hits and Blocked Shots, he instantly becomes a monster.

Luke Schenn, 20 years old, not only lead all defensemen last season with 251 bruise inducing hits, but managed to throw himself in front of 168 shots as well – a combined total of 419 “defensive” plays.

Schenn will eventually reach 300 hits and 200 blocked shots, just maybe not in the same season. A good rule of thumb would be to expect a combined total of hits and blocked shots ranging from 400 to 450 yearly with the odd 475.

One Year Upside : 255 Hits, 160 Blocked Shots
Three Year Upside : 300 Hits, 175 Blocked Shots

1. Dan Girardi

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Here we are, down to number one. Realistically, any one of the top five could have taken top spot. The reason why Dan Girardi takes top honours, in my books, is because he is arguably the most balanced blue liner when faced with the dual categories.

Girardi has consistently hovered around the 200 hits mark the last few seasons. While that is an impressive feat, it is Girardi's newly found dedication and willingness to block shots that saw his stock rise. Three seasons, three huge leaps. In 2008-09 Girardi blocked 82 shots. The next season, he stepped it up big time adding triple digits to that total (182). This past season, Girardi managed to finish top of the league with 236 blocked shots.

Girardi, received a nice raise from the New York Rangers last season and is still signed for three more years at 3.325 million. At 27, it is safe to say that he has only begun his bruised filled journey. Expect big things from Girardi - he will deliver.

One Year Upside : 210 Hits, 220 Blocked Shots

Three Year Upside : 235 Hits, 250 Blocked Shots

RKP Top 10 – Hits / Blocks Combo

Gates "@GM_Gates" Imbeau

Player Name	1 Year Upside	3 Year Upside
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9. Brooks Orpik	240	125	275
8. Matt Greene	250	115	275
7. Dennis Seidenberg	170	180	185
6. Stephane Robidas	230	150	260
5. Mark Giordano	155	210	200
4. Greg Zanon	170	210	190
3. Brent Seabrook	235	155	275
2. Luke Schenn	255	160	300
1. Daniel Girardi	210	220	235

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Honourable Mentions

Josh Gorges – Only played a third of last season, but will shine in these categories in 2011-12, mark it.

PK Subban – With a little more seasoning, PK will be a frequent addition to the Top 10.

Anton Volchenkov – Once the king of blocked shots, Anton needs a good rebound season to get back in.

Shea Weber – Shot blocking is not Shea's forte, but the Pred's captain can deliver many crushing hits.

Mike Weber – Weber, 23, had 158 Hits and 99 Blocks in 58 games last season. That is 223 / 140 prorated.

When I asked a few fellow poolies about the inclusion of Blocked Shots and Hits into rotisserie leagues, they responded with:

"Hits and blocked shots are definitely long overdue in fantasy hockey. They are part of the

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game and help quantify people's true contributions to their team. Above all, it's another step towards eliminating the "he's more useful to his NHL team than your fantasy team" and adds a deeper pool of relevant talent to leagues."

"I like their inclusion. I want to get into a pool that uses them, I think, that at the moment it creates market inefficiencies to be exploited and it expands on the value of previously low value players

I think it makes fantasy hockey more like the NHL, always a good thing"

"I think Hits and Blocked Shots are a great addition to any rotisserie league. Adding these categories brings value to many 3rd/4th line players who are typically ignored in most leagues. Furthermore, I believe it adds a realistic element to fantasy leagues - in the NHL 3rd/4th liners fill an essential role on any team and through the addition of hits and blocks they also play an essential role on fantasy squads as well. Lastly, it completely alters player valuations as a player like Dustin Brown becomes much more than a 65 point player which I feel creates a unique challenge."

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What are your thoughts?