This week we will continue to look at players who are emerging as excellent cap bargains in the AHL and can potentially help your team in the not-too-distant future. All players profiled will have a cap hit under $1 million. The idea is to find players who can help you fit more expensive stars on your roster while not sacrificing anything in terms of production.

Here are five more forwards from the Eastern Conference.

Richard Panik (RW – Tampa Bay)

Cap Hit: $900,000

Years Left: 2
AHL Team: Syracuse

GP: 23
G: 11
A: 9
PTS: 20
PIM: 30

Richard Panik has become a somewhat forgotten name in Tampa Bay's farm system as other new sensations have arrived. But Panik is making a statement this year as he ranks second on his team with 11 goals and tied for third with 20 points. His 92 PIM in a combined 87 combined games over the last two seasons bode well for his roto league value.

Opportunity may be a concern for Panik as there are at least a half-dozen forward prospects on the verge of being NHL-ready. There may not be enough roster space for everyone. However in fantasy hockey you are better off rolling the dice on a potential strong contributor rather than investing in marginal players with no upside. If Panik is able to land on his feet in the NHL he

has a good chance of becoming a strong depth contributor in all formats.

Mark Stone (RW – Ottawa)

Cap Hit: $873,333
Years Left: 3
AHL Team: Binghamton

GP: 14
G: 2
A: 5
PTS: 7
PIM: 6

Mark Stone is an intriguing prospect because the Senators have done an excellent job bringing up young talent and helping them produce immediately. Stone is off to a modest start to his AHL career with seven points in 14 games but is likely second in the call-up order behind Jakob Silfverberg who may even start the season in Ottawa when the lockout ends.

In terms of upside, Stone has that in spades. He was dominant in his last two junior seasons scoring a combined 229 points. He will be given an opportunity to crack the main roster before too long. And with two years left on his entry-level contract beyond this one, there is a good chance that you can get some respectable contributions out of him before he gets his first raise.

Eric Tangradi (LW – Pittsburgh)

Cap Hit: $726,000
Years Left: 1
AHL Team: Wilkes-Barre/Scranton

GP: 22
G: 10
A: 4
PTS: 14
PIM: 32

After several years on the bubble, the time for Eric Tangradi is now. The Penguins lack scoring depth in their lineup and he is the most NHL-ready player up front in the system. Currently the mammoth forward leads his club with 10 goals and ranks fifth with 14 points.

It is unknown if Tangradi will become a prominent scorer in the NHL but even in a bottom-six role his rugged style of play could make him a solid roto league contributor. In any event, he is running out of time so you will get an answer pretty quickly regarding his NHL future.

Brendan Gallagher (RW – Montreal)

Cap Hit: $870,000
Years Left: 3
AHL Team: Hamilton

GP: 21
G: 6
A: 6
PTS: 12
PIM: 37

After a strong finish to his junior career, Brendan Gallagher is off to a strong start to his professional career in Hamilton. He leads the squad with 12 points in 21 games. Last year Louis Leblanc and Aaron Palushaj were the primary call-ups but Gallagher's play could move him to the front of the line rather quickly.

As an undersized player there is some risk in his projection at the NHL level. His feisty game could land him a bottom-six role in a forechecking role but if he fails to crack the top-six he probably will not score enough points to be relevant in points-only leagues. The good news is that he is only in year one of a three-year entry-level contract so you have time to evaluate his progress.

Kyle Jean (LW – NY Rangers)

Cap Hit: $925,000
Years Left: 2

AHL Team: Connecticut

GP: 23
G: 5
A:9
PTS: 14
PIM: 15

A complete unknown before having a strong start to the season, Kyle Jean is a real wildcard in fantasy hockey. Some may think his hot start is a flash in the pan given that he was just a secondary scorer at the college level before turning pro. Others will look at the lengthy development of most power forwards and think that he may just be a late bloomer.

One thing to note is that Jean is out-performing the Rangers' top prospects in Connecticut. There is a possibility that he could earn a depth role with the Rangers while the younger players with more long-term upside get quality playing time on the farm. From there you never know.

Previous posts from Eric Daoust:

- **Salary Cap Bargains: Part I**
- **Short Term Pain for Long Term Gain?**
- **Western Conference Salaries to Watch**
- **Eastern Conference Salaries to Watch**

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