

Geek of the Week: Cody Franson

Written by Terry Campkin

Saturday, 23 February 2013 12:13 - Last Updated Monday, 25 February 2013 08:16



Cody Franson's hot start is analyzed using the Fantasy Hockey Geek tools.

Throughout the season, I am constantly looking for players who are outperforming expectations and may be available on the waiver wire or at a good price via trade. I try to figure out how sustainable their success is and if the outlook is promising, I try to acquire the player on the cheap to help bolster my team mid-season. Today I am going to take a look at a great example of such a player: [Cody Franson](#) .

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[Cody Franson](#) seems to have finally found a regular shift on Randy Carlyle's team and he has been rewarding his new coach in the early going. We are still only about 1/3rd of the way through the shortened season and Franson has already put up 11 points, while managing to put up a very strong +11.

Let's take a look at how I found Franson. I ran my Dobber Pro league through [Fantasy Hockey Geek](#) for season to date stats (games up to Thursday Feb 21st

). I like to use this league as an example, because I think that the categories are very widely used. If anybody has a different format league you would like me to look at, feel free to drop me a line!

As I do probably twice a week, I ran the current numbers through FHG to see who popped out at me and this is where Franson caught my eye:

(12 team Yahoo! roto league G, A, +/-, SOG, PPP, Hits, W, Sv, GAA)

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Rank

Player

G

A

+/-

SOG

PPP

HITS

17

[Cody Franson](#)

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10

11

25

3

30

You can see from the above that Franson is currently the 17th most valuable player in a league of this format! Running the numbers through FHG is a great way to identify players with higher than expected value, but I wouldn't get too obsessed with the actual number. No, Franson will not finish the year as the 17th most valuable player and even his current value is probably a bit inflated because of his high (and likely unsustainable) +/- number. The best way to use the rankings is at a higher level - to identify guys like Franson who you may not have expected to be providing so much value. I was able to identify Franson in about two minutes and he is only 28% owned in Yahoo! leagues!

There is little doubt in my mind that Franson will finish the season outside of the top 20 players to own in this league, but I do think that it's entirely possible that he will be a top 20 defenseman in the Dobber Pro league. For a guy who is only 28% owned, that is huge value.

Why is Franson so valuable?

- **Points from the backend:**
- **Strong peripherals:** He is averaging two shots per game and over 1.5 hits per game, which is a solid contribution for a defenseman. Hits and shots are often categories that are overlooked in fantasy hockey; this is how guys get underrated/overrated. In leagues that count hits and shots, you won't catch me rostering a defenseman whose shots per game + hits per game total less than three. For forwards, the rule of thumb I use is shots+hits per game has to be over four. Generally speaking, a player who does not hit these hurdles will be hard pressed to provide good value to your team. For this reason, I actually would sooner have [Cody Franson](#) on my team than, for example, [Paul Martin](#).

The above two points go a long way in showing why Franson has been so valuable, but there was one key for me to determine before deciding whether or not he is worth an add: powerplay success.

Defensemen can sometimes get streaky and accumulate some random secondary assists and you know their production won't be sustained ([Andrej Sekera](#) scoring five straight 2 point games in a season where he didn't break 30pts comes to mind). In order to believe in Franson's jump in production, I need more proof that it isn't a fluke. To do that, I took a quick look at [Frozen Pool](#) to see how much PP time he is now getting:

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#1

66.2%

FRANSON,CODY - PHANEUF,DION

#2

27.7%

GUNNARSSON,CARL - KOSTKA,MICHAEL

#3

6.2%

KOSTKA,MICHAEL - PHANEUF,DION

You can see that Franson is getting plenty of time on the Leafs' top unit. Powerplay time is so key for all fantasy players and even more so for defensemen for a variety of reasons:

- PPP as a category is one of the more scarce things to come by. Guys either play on the PP or they don't and if your player is a "don't", then he is simply a non-factor for your fantasy team.
- 22% of points scored by all forwards last season were scored on the power play. For defensemen that same number rises to 27%. If you look at the top 20 in defenseman scoring last season, a whopping 41% of their points came on the powerplay. Clearly PP time is critical to the success of defensemen.
- Increased PP time usually means increased TOI, which also helps with other categories such as hits and shots – especially shots, since teams are obviously shooting more with a man advantage.
- Essentially what I am saying is that one key factor (powerplay time) is a huge determining factor to the success of your players and it is even more important for your defensemen. I always review PP time when valuing a player.

The last thing I always check to make sure a bump in production isn't a fluke is shooting %. Currently Franson has 1G on 25 shots (4%). Nothing to worry about here. His career average isn't great either (6%), but if anything Franson's offensive output should increase as his shooting % trends back towards the norm.

Based on all of the above, I think it is safe to say that [Cody Franson](#) is NOT an example of a bad player who happens to be on a heater. The numbers bear out that he is actually a skilled player who has finally been given the opportunity to perform – and perform he has. His overall value of 17 in the above league is incredible for a player who was largely undrafted. Again, he won't maintain the value of 17

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overall but clearly he is a player with great value who should continue to provide value throughout the 2013 season. He is widely available so grab him now if you can!

To find more guys who are currently providing great value make sure to sign up for [Fantasy Hockey Geek](#) today!

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