

Whether in the DobberHockey forums or over a pint at the local pub, people who follow hockey love to talk numbers. And without NHL regular season stats to analyze, a lot of talk among many fantasy hockey enthusiasts these days has naturally drifted to hockey history. What's nice is that in talking about the past, you can definitely gain valuable insight into the present and future, both in terms of "real life" hockey and fantasy hockey.

With this in mind, we focus our debate on historical goal scoring feats and ask:

Written by Rick Roos Thursday, 13 December 2012 20:12 - Last Updated Sunday, 16 December 2012 22:39 Which goal scoring mark will be achieved again first - 70+ goals in a season by a forward, or 30+ goals in a season by a defenseman? 70 goals by a forward - it's happened more often in the past and there have been more near misses in recent years Quick quiz – in how many seasons between 1981-82 and 1992-93 was there at least one 70+ goal scorer in the NHL? You might be surprised to realize that in all but two of those seasons there was at least one, and in three of those seasons there were two different 70+ goal scorers! So that means for a 12 season stretch, it happened 13 times! Compare that to the instances during the same time frame where a defenseman scored 30+ goals and you see it happened more often (13 times versus only eight times for a 30+ defenseman goal scorer during those 12 seasons) and that more players did it (seven different players scored 70+, versus only five different defensemen with 30+ during that time span). Of course history doesn't predict the future, but when you're debating a non-regular occurrence like

this you have to factor in what's happened in the past as a useful indicator of the future.

The Rarer Feat - A 70 Goal Forward, or a 30 Goal Defenseman?

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What's more, when you break down who accomplished the 70+ goal scoring feat during those 12 seasons, you see there were generational talents, namely Gretzky (scored 70+ four times) and Mario Lemieux (two times). There were also the pure snipers, like Brett Hull (three times),

Teemu Selanne (once), and

Alexander Mogilny

(once). Lastly, there were also the talented goal scorers whose game was elevated by being able to play on the same line with a generational talent, like Jari Kurri (once) and Bernie Nicholls (once), both of whom had the luxury of playing wing with Gretzky during his prime.

Kurri and Gretzky combined for some magic later on in their respective careers:

{youtube}9Wdb9I7AOcQ{/youtube}

Why is this important? Not only does the NHL have its share of snipers (<u>Steven Stamkos</u> and Alexander Ovechkin

, assuming he regains his scoring touch under new coach Adam Oates) who could easily flirt with the 70 goal mark, but I also think most would acknowledge that Sidney Crosby

likely fits the definition of a generational talent from what we've seen from him so far (4th in NHL history for points per game!). If Lemieux and Gretzky could hit 70, why can't Sid the kid (assuming he can stay healthy)?

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