

Forensics: Tyler Seguin

Written by Michael Amato

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A lot of players suffer through a sophomore slump after having a great rookie season, but for Tyler Seguin the opposite was true. Although Seguin captured a Stanley Cup during his first National Hockey League season, his production during the 2010-11 campaign was nothing spectacular. Recording just 22 points and finishing as a minus-4 in 74 games as a rookie, Seguin's rookie campaign was far from a slam dunk success.

This season, however, all those fears were put to rest as Seguin led Boston with 67 points, and left Leaf fans trying to convince themselves once again that acquiring Phil Kessel was worth it. His strong second year proved why he was a second overall draft pick in 2010, and why some scouts made the argument that he should go number one.

So other than getting more acclimated to the NHL, Seguin had a number of other factors that contributed to his improved play this season. First off, Bruins coach Claude Julien increased the young star's ice-time in 2011-12.

Last year Seguin played just over 12 minutes a game and wasn't even in the top ten among forwards when it came to ice-time. Not only that, but call-up Jordan Caron who played in just 23 games was averaging more ice-time than Seguin. This year he played almost five minutes more per game and was fifth in ice-time among Bruins forwards.

Aside from overall ice-time, Seguin averaged 2:27 per game this season on the power play compared to just 1:21 last year. An extra minute with the man advantage per game has seen Seguin's power play points increase from just three in 2010-11, to 15 in his second year.

Perhaps the biggest help to Seguin's production from year one to year two were his shots on goal. At times Seguin lacked confidence as a rookie and only fired 131 shots on goal, which ranked 12th overall on the Bruins. Looking more comfortable with the pace of the game this year he led the squad with 242 shots.

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Rank	Player	Pos	Team	GP	Total
1		SEGUIN, TYLER	C		BOS
2		CHARA, ZDENO	D		BOS
3		BERGERON, PATRICE	C		BOS
4		SEIDENBERG, DENNIS	D		BOS
5		BOYCHUK, JOHNNY	D		BOS
6		CORVO, JOSEPH	D		BOS
7		MARCHAND, BRAD	L		BOS
8		LUCIC, MILAN	L		BOS
9		KREJCI, DAVID	C		BOS
10		KELLY, CHRIS	C		BOS

Increasing your shot totals by over 100 from one year to the next can do wonders for a player's production. Not only will your goal totals increase, but you can generate more assists as well off of rebounds and just getting more pucks to the net.

In addition to shooting the puck more, Seguin's line-mates this season helped him improve as well, but not necessarily in the way you might think. What stands out most about who Seguin played with in 2010-11 is that he played with several different Bruins and never had the benefit of sticking with a consistent group all year.

2010-11

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Frequency	Strength	Line Combination
10.73%	EV	73 RYDER,MICHAEL - 19 SEGUIN,TYLER - 26 W
9.71%	EV	23 KELLY,CHRIS - 49 PEVERLEY,RICH - 19 SEC
8.67%	EV	37 BERGERON,PATRICE - 28 RECCHI,MARK -
7.30%	EV	73 RYDER,MICHAEL - 91 SAVARD,MARC - 19 S
6.22%	EV	46 KREJCI,DAVID - 19 SEGUIN,TYLER - 26 WHE
6.22%	EV	28 RECCHI,MARK - 73 RYDER,MICHAEL - 19 SE

You can see he never stuck with one combination for more than ten percent of the time. Now look at 2011-12.

2011-12

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Frequency	Strength	Line Combination
47.35%	EV	37 BERGERON,PATRICE - 63 MARCHAND,BRA
12.77%	EV	46 KREJCI,DAVID - 17 LUCIC,MILAN - 19 SEGU
5.96%	EV	37 BERGERON,PATRICE - 67 POULIOT,BENOIT

This year he had the luxury of sticking with Patrice Bergeron and Brad Marchand the majority of the time. Playing with Bergeron and Marchand brought Seguin other benefits besides the fact that his two line-mates finished in the top five in team scoring. Marchand's gritty play frees up more time and space for Seguin on the ice, and Bergeron is a Selke nominee who ranked second in the NHL in face-off percentage.

By playing with a guy who is a good defensive presence and strong in the face-off circle, it allows Seguin to get the puck more and improve his plus/minus. In fact Seguin's rating jumped 30 points this year from minus-4 to plus-34. That was good enough for second on the team and higher than Zdeno Chara's rating. This is crucial for poolies as many times when picking an offensive star you have to sacrifice the plus/minus category, but this is not the case when it comes to Seguin.

The scary thing for teams around the NHL is that Seguin is only going to get better. With a little more experience and development he could find himself in the NHL's elite. Right now he is more than holding his own in the Taylor versus Tyler debate, and even if he didn't go first overall, a Stanley Cup isn't a bad consolation prize.

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