Chances are that if you are checking out LetsGoBlues.com, you are a hockey fan. An even better chance is that you are probably a Blues fan. With both of these being pretty good probabilities, I'll venture to guess you have taken a crack or two at fantasy hockey as well. Taking all of this into consideration, I figure that you may want to consider drafting Blues players to start the 2010-11 NHL season. It may be a wise idea to consider who is a smart pickup and who will hinder your team from winning. So here is the skinny on the Blues' roster and who will and will not be smart draft picks in the average-ten team league.

Draftees:

1. David Perron – Left Wing

Why? "DP" is coming off of a career-year with 20 goals scored, and his point production has been steady in his first three NHL seasons. Not only that, but Perron loves to have the puck on his stick and loves to get it to the net, causing many rebounds that could result in goals scored by his teammates. These are the reasons for his 2-year, $4.3 million contract extension that he received this summer. He won't get any penalty minutes for your team, but this guy will produce offensively. Especially if you are in a league with hockey fans from other cities, this guy may get overlooked. Mark my words; he will be a 30+ goal scorer by season's end.

Projected Draft Round: 3-4

2. Jaroslav Halak - Goaltender

Why? Easy call, right? Wrong. More so than ever, teams are very happy with their goaltending to start the season. Even Philadelphia sits comfortable with Michael Leighton and Brian Boucher, two guys that have seen the bench more than Cam Janssen. There is plenty of goaltending talent to choose from this year, so Halak may slip through the first couple of rounds

but don't let him drop too far. His .923 save percentage in last year's playoffs was tops in the league, but you don't need numbers to see that this guy has the potential to have the words "franchise goaltender" slapped on his helmet.

Projected Draft Round: 4

3. Erik Johnson - Defenseman

Why? Many fantasy drafters make the mistake of drafting defensemen too high in their league's draft. Realistically, fantasy hockey primarily focuses on point production and goaltenders. The only defensive stats that have any merit are +/- and in some leagues, power-play points, which offensive defensemen thrive on. But Johnson is the real deal on defense; his 39 points last season impressed many viewers. Not only did he thread the needle with his passing, but the ten goals he scored marked the first time that a Blues defenseman saw double digits in goals-scored since the nostalgic Al MacInnis – Chris Pronger days. I would take this guy in the 7th round, but if guys like Dennis Wideman or Sergei Gonchar are still not taken, get them on your roster first.

Projected Draft Round: 7

4. David Backes – Center, Right Wing

Why? Well he's not a kid anymore and he knows that every game counts and he is here to win. Despite starring in a questionable ad-campaign, Backes has a large possibility to reproduce his 31-goal season from two years ago. He loves to crash and bang in the crease, especially in the latter stages of a game. He gets in the mucky areas as much as Brian Sutter did, and he may even be better in that aspect. If he can find some chemistry with Perron, expect to see the 6'3" Minnesota native return to being a 30-goal scorer. Backes' role usually doesn't atone for that many goals though. He is expected to go out every night and throw his body around, which will accrue penalty minutes at times, and poke in the occasional goal. I would say that 25 goals would be a very achievable goal for the young forward.

Projected Draft Round: 7-8

5. Alex Steen – Left Wing

Why? The real question you may want to ask yourself is "why not?" Steen was the Blues' leading goal-scorer, tying Andy McDonald, with 24 goals. His slap shot on the power-play resulted in many scoring opportunities. He will be seeing more ice time this season (as opposed to his 16:16 average TOI in 2009-10), but whether he can reproduce his success or not will be the big question mark. He has great chemistry with fourth-line center Jay McClement, which will actually hinder his goal production, but should keep him at a steady +/-.

Projected Draft Round: 11-12

Stay Away:

1. Eric Brewer – Defenseman

Why? Despite the captain tying his career record with eight goals last season, he should not be a hot commodity in fantasy hockey. Being the number one defenseman, Brewer faces the top offenses in the league, which sometimes can be overwhelming. Add into the equation that the Blues ranked 17th last season with just 2.66 goals scored per game, and the sum is that Brewer never sees a strong +/-. His -17 was worst on the team by far, despite missing 23 games last season. If you're looking for a defenseman late in your draft, you may be better off with Carlo Colaiacovo (8 +/- last season) or Roman Polak (7 +/- last season).

Recommendation: If the Blues are in a playoff hunt late in the season, Brewer may come in handy if the Blues' forwards are hot and scoring on a regular basis. But I would stay away further from Brewer than Edmonton would tell you with Sheldon Souray.

2. Barret Jackman – Defenseman

Why? Jackman was a late-draft pick a lot in his first couple of seasons in the NHL, but his percentage-owned has dropped drastically over the years. Jackman's +/- last season was not the worst we have seen from him (+3 in 2009-10, the first time he has seen a positive rating since 2006-07), but he will not bring much to the table in the eyes of the fantasy world. He will also be seeing a lot of the top offenses in the league, which could only hurt his chances of having another positive season. He just does not score enough goals (eight goals in the last three seasons) and his assists are never something to take to the bank (32 assists in the last two seasons). Simply put: Jackman is a stay-at-home defenseman who will not put up any kind of numbers.

Recommendation: See Eric Brewer.

3. Ty Conklin – Goaltender

Why? "Conks" had a strong season backing up Chris Mason in 2009-10, playing in 26 games and .921 save percentage and 2.48 GAA. But with new goaltender Jaroslav Halak in the mix, it may be hard for Conklin to see the same type of playing time. Pending an injury, Halak will be the number one guy for most of the year and will keep Conklin riding the pine, especially if the Blues can get in the playoff race after the All-Star Break.

Recommendation: As said above about Halak, there are few holes in the goaltending departments around the league. You would be better off giving back-ups Tim Thomas (Boston), Pascal Leclaire (Ottawa) or Brian Boucher (Philadelphia) a look.

Who is the Sleeper of the Team?

Brad Boyes – Right Wing

Why? After a disastrous 2009-10 campaign in which Boyes only scored 14 goals, people are very skeptical about drafting the 28-year old. But Boyes still saw plenty of power-play TOI, racking up 3:02 per game, which ranked third on the team. He still has a cannon from the top of the face-off circles, and he also loves to unload the puck anytime it is on his stick. It was just two seasons ago that he put up 33 goals, and three seasons ago that he scored 43 times. He still has the ability to do it, he just needs to make better on the opportunities he is given.

Other Mentionables: Patrik Berglund, T.J. Hensick, Alex Pietrangelo

For the past couple of seasons, it has been wise to stay away from drafting any Blues players in the top ten rounds or so. But with the growth and development of the younger players starting to show on a nightly basis, the Blues have worked their way back on to the respectable side of the ice. In 2010-11, it may not be a bad idea to take a gamble on some of these players that are hungry for a playoff game to return to the Scottrade Center.

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