

There are so many different types of leagues out there. The most common ones are: head-to-head (H2H), points-only, Rotisserie (ROTO) and categories (H2HCat). You can even have leagues that are a mix of the above. What's important is that you build the right draft strategy based on your league type and your league settings. Generic draft guides won't give you an advantage come draft day. In fact, it could put you a step behind the competition. Let's look at some different strategies for each of the leagues mentioned above.

Points-Only League

This is probably the most common league out there: points-only league. It's really simple-- at the end of the season, the team with the most points wins! How do teams collect points? Usually it based on player points (goals, assists, points) and goalie stats (wins and shutouts). Again, this can vary from league to league, but we'll use player points and goalie stats.

The strategy here is actually quite simple, yet at the same time, extremely complex. If you draft players who don't accumulate points, you'll fall behind very quickly, maybe too far behind to catch up! The waiver wire becomes very important to try and find players who are on a hot streak, and to let certain players go who aren't performing up to expectations.

The strategy that has worked best for me is to target forwards who are averaging close to a point-per-game (0.9P/GM), defenceman averaging 0.6P/GM and goalies with 30-plus wins. This is a formula that I use specifically, you can adjust it to meet your league settings.

What works with this strategy is it will adjust for player injuries. Some players are going to get hurt, but if they average over 0.9P/GM, they are worth a roster spot in my books.

This strategy does have it flaws, specifically with rookies. Since they have no prior NHL experience, It's hard to accurately predict how many points in a season they will have. For points-only leagues, I usually stay away from rookies altogether, but that's a risk i'm willing to take.

If we break down those numbers, [43 forwards averaged over 0.9P/GM](#), [21 defecemen averaged over 0.6P/GM](#) and [12 goalies with 30+ wins](#). These are very raw numbers, so they will have some flaws. This also doesn't take into account a decline in a players expected points. Every draft strategy will have flaws, but it's about limiting those flaws. I've had some success in recent years with the strategy and i'll be using it again this upcoming season.

Head-to-Head (H2H)

I love playing head-to-head fantasy hockey. Some people hate this format, but I love the ability to face a new opponent every week! H2H focuses on drafting players who will accumulate points based on goals, assists, shots on goal saves and goals against. As always, leagues can

vary in how players accumulate points. The goal here to finish with more points than they other team you're facing.

The draft strategy here is to focus on players who rack up a bunch of points (duh!) and to target goalies who win games, make a boat load of saves and give up very few goals.

The best strategy here is to target forwards who average about 0.9P/GM and close to 200 SOG per year. You'll also want to look at players who have a lot of success on the power play. Players like Steven Stamkos and Alex Ovechkin are power play gods. Some leagues reward players who score goals and rack up assists on the power play or penalty kill. These players become extra valuable.

For defenceman, you'll want to look at players who average around 0.6P/GM, collect points on the power play, and in some cases, block shots and hit. Some leagues will reward players who dish out hits and who block a ton of shots. This adds a specific value to players who may not rack up a ton of points, but can block shots on a nightly basis (TJ Brodie comes to mind off the bat).

I'll say this about blocked shots and hits-- I won't go out my way to over value those two categories. If two players have the same amount of points, I'll look to draft the player that averages a higher amount of blocked shots per game, but I won't draft a player who blocks more shots over a player who collects points. Shots blocked in a "nice have" stat. It adds value to some players who may not have much value in standard leagues because they don't rack up points.

As for hits, I won't even consider it when drafting a defenceman. All NHL players hit, some more than others, but some leagues reward 0.2 points per hit. At the end of the day, it's not a huge margin to force my hand to draft a player who hits more than another.

Rotisserie (ROTO)

I'm going to be brutally honest here-- I hate roto leagues. I don't play them and I never will. I understand the concept, but I have draft based on category needs and not the best player available! It's more common to play roto in baseball, but there are some roto leagues out there for hockey.

A rotisserie league usually has five to eight categories. Depending on the number of teams in your league, you'll get points for how high in that category you are.

For example, in a 12-team league, if you lead the league in hits, you'll accumulate 12 points. If you're last in that same category, you'll accumulate one point. In a eight category league with 12 teams, a "perfect score" would be 96 points (12x8). The goal is to get as close to 96 as possible.

Every day, you could go up, or down, depending on if another team jumps you in a certain category.

The best draft strategy here is to draft a player who fills multiple categories. Neglecting a category completely could really hurt your team, so you'll need to build a draft strategy that fits your league specific rules.

Like I said, i'm not an expert in this category, so I won't pretend like I know what i'm talking about. If you play ROTO NHL, stop.

Categories (H2HCat)

Categories is a combination on H2H and Roto. It's a pretty common league format in the NHL world. There are so many different ways to play H2HCat, no one strategy is the best.

H2HCat can be broken up into two ways: one-win and wins. In the one-win format, the team that wins the most categories in a week wins the week (just like H2H). In wins, you'll pick up a win for every category that you win. For example, if you win seven out of the ten categories against your opponent, your record at the end of the week will be 7-3 and your opponent's record would be 3-7. Both leagues are a ton of fun to play in, but they have two very different strategies.

In H2HCat one-win, your goal is to win the most amount of categories to pick up the weekly win. This means that if you win the week 10-0 or 6-4, you still win the week. Most people are perfectionists, so they try to win EVERY category. This doesn't have to be the case. You only need to win one more category than your opponent. Just like in hockey, if you win 1-0 or 9-2, you still get two points in the standings.

The best strategy for this format is to focus on winning a few categories and just punting the rest. If your league for some reason still has the plus-minus (+/-) and penalty minutes (PIMs) stat, you should probably think about changing leagues. Ok, maybe don't do that last part, but you shouldn't be drafting players who have a really good plus-minus or that rack up a ton of penalty minutes. Both these stats are random and it becomes hard to track from one season to another.

There are exceptions of course. Patrice Bergeron is a plus-minus king and Tom Wilson love to rack up penalty minutes, but i'm not bumping them in my rankings, especially not Wilson. For both the categories, I'll punt them and focus on more important categories, such as goals, assists, shots and power play points.

In H2HCat wins, you might have to give Tom Wilson stronger consideration. You can't just win every week 6-4, you need a couple of 9-1 or 10-0 weeks to make it to the top of the leaderboard. In this format, I love to focus on "stat stuffers." These players do a lot of everything

right. The best example is Evgeni Malkin. He can score goals, pick up assists, shoots the puck often enough, collects a bunch of power play points and can collect penalty minutes. He's a player that will stuff every category. These players are incredibly value in this type of format. If you can target these type of players, you'll do just fine every week.

This logic is also true for goalies. In one-win leagues, you can focus on goalies that win a lot of games and have a low GAA, but in H2HCat wins, you have to focus on everything!

As I mentioned earlier, there isn't a perfect draft strategy for any of these leagues, but if you're using a point-only draft strategy for a H2HCat wins league, there's a good chance you are going to struggle all season long.

The draft kit rankings will focus mainly on H2H points and H2HCat, the most common draft styles in fantasy hockey. If you have any draft specific questions, you can find me on twitter @fuzzychris91

Happy drafting!