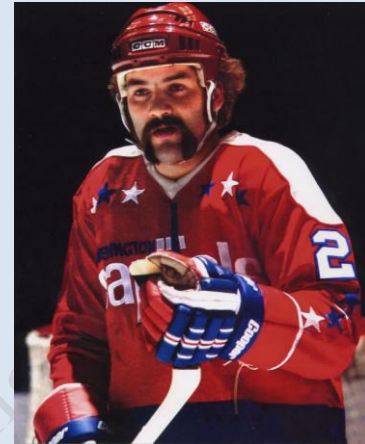




Dennis Maruk

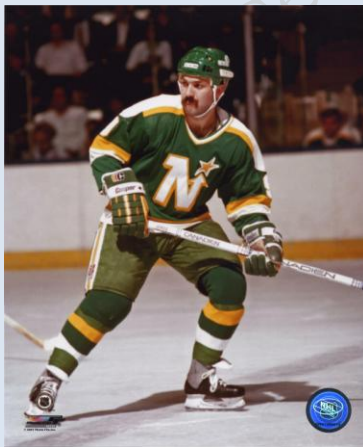
Only 19 players in the history of the NHL have scored 60 goals or more in a season. Perhaps the most underrated of all those players is Dennis Maruk. Maruk scored 60 goals for the Washington Capitals in the 1981-82 season.

Dennis was overlooked as many 5'8" hockey players are. In spite of lighting it up in Junior League for the London Knights, Dennis was taken 21st overall in the 1975 draft in the second round by the California Seals. His rookie season with the Seals was their last in existence and Dennis became the first rookie in NHL history to score 5 shorthanded goals in a season.



In 1976, the Seals folded and resurfaced as the Cleveland Barons where Maruk played for two seasons and posted seasons of 78 and 71 points. The Barons merged with the Minnesota North Stars in 1978 but Dennis was quickly traded to the Washington Capitals where he netted 90 points in his first season in DC. 1980-81 was a breakthrough season for Dennis as he hit the magical 50-goal plateau and had 97 points. But 1981-82 Dennis put excelled by scoring 60 goals and 76 assists for a total of 136 points making him the first Capitals player in franchise history to have a 100-point season and 136 points remains the franchise high-water mark to this day.

After scoring 81 points in 80 games the next season, the North Stars traded for Dennis. He played his final 6 seasons in Minnesota before retiring. His career totals are exceptional and proved that there is room in the game for diminutive but creative offensive players. Dennis finished with 356 goals and 878 points in 888 games. The feisty center man also spent 761 minutes in the penalty box again proving that he wouldn't give quarter to larger players. He was also named to the all-star team twice in 1978 and 1982.



It's hard to believe that a 60-goal scorer is often overlooked in hockey history but few fans could name Dennis as one of the top scorers in the game. That is likely due to the fact that Dennis put up huge numbers while playing for poor teams. Only once did his team make the playoffs in his long career. If not for his menacing looking Fu Manchu mustache, few fans might recognize Maruk. But that is fine with Dennis; he's a modest self-effacing superstar!

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