Cam Janssen has never been a stranger to taking the spotlight. Why not? He has nothing stopping him.

Janssen sounded off last week about the Cardinals and Reds brawl in which the Blues tough guy called Reds pitcher Johnny Cueto “completely gutless” for kicking during the fight. But this isn't the first time that Janssen has made headlines.

Remember that hit in January last season when Janssen steamrolled Canadiens goaltender Cary Price? Or how about that marathon-fight in March with Pierre-Luc Letourneau-Leblond of New Jersey? Of course its hard to forget that five-game suspension that Cam was handed after a ferocious hit on Matt Bradley against Washington.

But its going to take a lot more than just headlines for Janssen to prove that he belongs in the Blues' lineup this upcoming season. Blues management has shown that they believe in Janssen this summer, signing him to a one-year, $600K contract and then trading fellow tough-guy D.J. King to the Washington Capitals for prospect Stefan Della Rovere. With King on the outs, St. Louis native Janssen has an even better chance of playing every night for head coach Davis Payne.

But Janssen's role may ask for more than just big hits and trash talk.

The Blues' offense has taken quite the hit this summer, losing both Paul Kariya and Keith Tkachuk to free-agency and retirement. The man that was going to step in and play a big role, prospect Lars Eller, was dealt to Montreal in the Jaroslav Halak deal. The only fresh face in the Blues lineup is Vladimir Sobotka, a former Bruin that put up just four goals last season in 61 games. It is apparent that the Blues will be needing some improvement from their current roster over last season, and Janssen does not get off easy because he is the team tough guy. In 206 career NHL games, Janssen has just two goals and four assists. While his actual production may not be expected to improve drastically, he still has to bring his game to a higher level.

Of course the best way to improve numbers is to stay out of the penalty box and earn playing time. While his fighting majors are definitely a plus, his minor penalties must be decreased. His 20 major penalties led the team in true Janssen-style, but his 15 minor penalties were mostly a setback for his teammates. Too many unnecessary penalties will just get your team into a heap of trouble.

Cam also has to watch his misconduct-penalties. He was the only member of the Blues last season to have more than one. He racked up four misconducts, including two game-misconduct penalties.

Janssen does have an element in his game that the fans and his teammates love; he brings that spark to the rink every night. His hits always ignite his team and rejuvenate the Scottrade Center crowd. If the 26-year old can find a way to use that spark in the most effective way

possible, he could be a big lift for this team down the stretch.

"St. Louis is my home and always will be," said Janssen after signing his new deal in July. "We have a great group of guys and I'm looking forward to start the season."

The hometown boy certainly has the proper attitude to be a powerful asset to this Blues squad.

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