

Saturday's NHL Picks - with Marty and Thunder

Written by Marty Kwiaton

Saturday, 07 November 2009 12:54 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 November 2009 14:36



Last week proved to be another terrific week. Thunder and I managed to call 10 out of 15 games each, including a BOS-OTT tie, and the Avalanche beating the Wings by two at home. Unfortunately the Sabres scored with 17 seconds left against the Lightning from the corner, and Vincent Lecavalier clanked a backhand off the crossbar to deny me over \$300. Thunder, after getting her ID checked (she's six, so 36 in dog years) at the convenience store, should have stayed away from the battle of Alberta, as the Oilers ruined her gambling debut. The season is roughly 15 games old so hopefully some teams are starting to settle into a groove. 13 games on tap for tonight, damn I love Saturday nights!

Nashville Predators @ LA Kings

16 games into the season for the Kings and Anze Kopitar leads the league in scoring with 26

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pts, while Jon Quick is tied for the league lead with 10 wins. Who would have thought trading for Ryan Smyth would help align the stars for this marvellous run. The Kings look to extend their point streak to nine games for the first time since 1980. The Preds seemed to get rolling by winning three straight before being shutout in Anaheim. They were able to sweep the season series last year between these two teams, a feat that certainly won't be repeated this time around. Kopitar has 10 goals and 15 pts in seven home games so far this year. The only thing keeping me from making this a H+ pick is Quick's 3.11 GAA at home.

Pick: H

Thunder's Pick: H

Buffalo Sabres @ Boston Bruins

The Bruins are in desperate need of some offense, so going up against Ryan Miller and his 9-2-1 record and 1.86 GAA isn't exactly a remedy for breaking out of a scoring slump. Buffalo went 4-2 versus the Bruins last season, with both losses coming in Boston. The Bruins 10.9% PP is worst in the league, and their strategy going into this one will be to hope/pray that Patrick Lalime starts this one.

Pick: V

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Thunder's Pick: V

Carolina Hurricanes @ Columbus Blue Jackets

Wow, not much left to say about the Canes, especially when you lose to the Leafs, at home to boot. The Canes have only scored 30 goals all year, are 0 for their last 25 PP chances, and are 0-6-2 on the road, being outscored 34-14. That doesn't exactly scream competitive enough to break the goose egg in Columbus this Saturday night. Despite Steve Mason's struggles the Jackets have managed to pick up pts in four straight thanks to team leading scorer Rick Nash with 21 pts and sophomore Jakub Voracek (tied for 2nd) with 12 pts. Columbus has taken the last 2 H2H meetings by a score of 9-2.

Pick: H+

Thunder's Pick: V

Florida Panthers @ Washington Capitals

The Caps are finding ways to win without Alexander Ovechkin...might as well throw Backstrom and Semin into the mix as well, as the two have combined for one pt in their last two games. Florida will try to avenge Friday's 4-1 loss, but they continue to allow the most shots on goal in the league at over 36 per game. That recipe spells disaster against the 2nd highest scoring

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team in the league at 3.6 GF/game.

Pick: H

Thunder's Pick: V

Detroit Red Wings @ Toronto Maple Leafs

This should be a great original six matchup at the ACC this Saturday night. The Leafs have climbed out of a tie for the basement by defeating the lowly Hurricanes on Friday night while the Wings may be turning the corner with their defeat of the San Jose Sharks, their 4th win in 5 games. The Leafs haven't won at home yet this season and are probably going to play rookie Jonas Gustavsson in back to back nights as his record (2-2-3, 2.84 GAA) outshines Toskala's, who's making most of the AHL goalies look good (0-2-2, 5.13 GAA). The Leafs have won 3 of their last 4 versus the Wings but their league worst defence (4.0 GA/game) and PK (69.1 %) will make it difficult for that trend to continue.

Pick: V+

Thunder's Pick: V

St. Louis Blues @ Philadelphia Flyers

The Flyers have been on fire scoring 17 goals in their last three wins this season. Scott Hartnell has a PPG in each of those wins to go along with 7 pts, 8 PIM, and 11 SOG (roto stud!). In the 5 losses out of their last 7 games the Blues only managed to put up 3 goals in those games. If you look at buy low candidates for fantasy hockey, you can look at the entire Blues lineup except Keitch Tkachuk (9 pts. in 13 games) and Erik Johnson (8 in 13). Boyes, Berglund, Oshie, and Backes have combined for six goals this year, compared to 14 last year (Boyes had 7 in October alone). Hopefully the Blues 2nd ranked road PP (31.1%) can get things going again.

Pick: H

Thunder's Pick: H

New Jersey Devils @ Ottawa Senators

The Devils are 7-0 on the road to start the year and have won 9 straight dating back to last year's regular season. The last time the Devils won 10 road games in a row was in 2001. A rested Martin Brodeur will take his 31-18-4, 2.18 GAA, .918 SV% lifetime numbers into Ottawa in search of the team's 5th straight win. New Jersey is 10-3-1 in Ottawa since the 2001-02 season. Spezza and Parise average a point-per-game against their respective opponents.

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Pick: V

Thunder's Pick: V

Atlanta Thrashers @ NY Islanders

Based on the Thrashers strong road performances, 5-1-1 on the road this year, perhaps the team is auditioning for relocation? The Isles were my upset pick over the rolling Rangers two weeks ago and it seemed to pay off. Atlanta is 4-2 in their last 6 games on Long Island. They're also the third highest scoring team in the league, boast the 2nd best PP overall (27.1 %), and the 2nd best PK on the road (89.7 %). Despite the odds, and trends favouring the Thrashers I like to go with the hot goalie. Rolly's 3 straight wins and his splits 4-0-2, 2.60 GAA in his career versus ATL, and 3-0-2, 2.12 GAA, .932 SV% at home this year are good enough for me to take the Isles again this Saturday.

Pick: H

Thunder's Pick: H

Tampa Bay Lightning @ Montreal Canadiens

The prodigal son returns, so let the trade rumours officially begin. Steven Stamkos, with his hot start has taken over the top line centering duties in Tampa Bay, scoring 12 goals so far this season. Montreal is 8-8 on the season, but is 7-0 in OT's and shootouts this year already. Carey Price seemed to have a great bounce back game turning away 42 shots to pick up the W over the Boston Bruins. In their last 10 meetings, both teams have walked away with 5 wins, however the Bolts are 29th in the league this year scoring only 1.7 goals/game on the road. Nitty has been great for the Bolts this year, 3-1-2, .934 SV%, 2.09 GAA, but is 1-8-1, .881 SV%, 3.53 GAA in his career versus the Habs. Smith's #'s are reversed 2-3-3, .879 SV%, 3.64 GAA on the year, and 1-0-1, .938 SV%, and 1.92 GAA versus Montreal.

Pick: T (MTL wins in SO)

Thunder's Pick: V

Dallas Stars @ Minnesota Wild

Dallas heads into St. Paul with leading goal scorer James Neal on the bench due to a groin injury. It seems like there are so many injuries this year. Hopefully this isn't one of those nagging injuries and he's good to go for the team's next game, which isn't until Thursday. Dallas has won 5 of the last 6 matchups between these teams and is the 3rd highest scoring team on the road (3.8 GF/game). Although they have the 2

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worst PK in the league (74.5%), the Stars also give up the 2

nd

fewest PP chances. Backstrom is 3-5-3 in his career vs. Dallas, while Turco is 13-4-1 vs. Minnesota (Auld is 5-1-1 1.31 GAA .944 SV%, in case they decide to sit Turco in the 2

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game of the back to back).

Pick: V

Thunder's Pick: T

Phoenix Coyotes @ Anaheim Ducks

Mueller scores!!!! Not only P. Mueller, but I believe a weight has been lifted off the entire fantasy hockey community at dobberhockey that has been high on this kid right from the start. The Ducks haven't played well at home 3-6, but have managed to post a 4-0-2 record versus Phoenix in their last 6 matchups. The Coyotes early recipe for success has been defence, defence, defence. They're the third stingiest team on the road allowing only 1.9 goals per game. Hiller is 6-0-2, 2.11 GAA, .930 SV% vs. the Coyotes, which will help turn the tables in a close one.

Pick: H

Thunder's Pick: H

New York Rangers @ Calgary Flames

I went against the Flames two weeks ago and they burned me (no pun intended) bad. Seems like coach Sutter's suicides at practice has gotten the message across to the players. Perhaps Kiprusoff should get the flu more often if he's going to play the way he did in St Louis on Thursday night. Captain Jarome Iginla seems to be coming around with 9 pts in his last six games. The Rangers look to get things back on track after finishing out the month of October 1-4-1 allowing 24 goals in that span. Iggy also has 16 pts in 15 career games vs. the Rangers, while Marian Gaborik has 34 in 40 games versus the Flames.

Pick: H

Thunder's Pick: H

Pittsburgh Penguins @ San Jose Sharks

Both teams are playing some really good hockey at the moment the Pens go into San Jose suffering their first road loss of the year, blowing a 3rd period lead versus the Kings Thursday night. Meanwhile the Sharks are 4-0-1 at home and have beaten the Pens in 6 straight at home. Nabokov is 7-1 in his career versus the Pens posting a 1.84 GAA and .931 SV%, his splits at home this year are even more impressive with a 1.36 GAA and .954 SV%. The league's top road scoring team (3.9 GF/game) will go up against the top home defence, and best home PK (90.9%). Sidney Crosby has only managed 2 assists in 4 games since Malkin's been out of the lineup. Heatley has 29 pts. (19 goals) in 25 career games versus the Pens.

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