

## Between the Lines - Ovechkin, Stepan, Bailey and more

Written by Chris Wassel

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*Wassel takes a look at the hottest line combinations in the NHL*

The final three weeks are here. It seems like we just started the season and yet here we are. Do you want to know the hottest line combinations out there? Sure! We all do. Let's get down to business and dig "Between The Lines"...

**Forward March**

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[Alex Ovechkin](#) - [Nicklas Backstrom](#) - [Marcus Johansson](#) (Washington) -- Do you remember when everyone said [Alex Ovechkin](#) was washed up? That was hogwash! Week 11 saw him buoy the top fantasy line with a total of 14 points. Both Ovechkin and Backstrom had 10 points (Ovechkin had eight goals) each and [Marcus Johansson](#) had seven points (15 pts in his last 12 games). This line is on fire!

[Rick Nash](#) - [Derek Stepan](#) - [Ryan Callahan](#) (NY Rangers) -- It is abundantly clear that [Derek Stepan](#) has arrived. While this line racked up 13 points when playing together, it was Stepan who led the way with six of those points. His hybrid balance between the tenacity of Callahan and the power flair of Nash is the reason why this line clicked. The suddenly hot power play (five for 11 in its last three games) is another one. The [Marian Gaborik](#) trade at least so far has worked perfectly.

[Josh Bailey](#) - [Kyle Okposo](#) - Frans Nielsen (NY Islanders) -- No it is not the [John Tavares](#) line here but the "Bailey Brigade". A dozen points were racked up by this second line much to the surprise of many fantasy pundits. Normally they do this in April every year but this season it actually means something. Their line frequency (40.2% EV, 38.5% PP) is a bit high but with a slumping top line, they are handling the load right now. Can this continue in Week 12? With the increased power play time and trust, it is a good time to own these guys.

[Taylor Beck](#) - [Patric Hornqvist](#) - [David Legwand](#) (Nashville) -- Someone has to score in "The Music City". They did find their way with a GPS to 11 points during Week 11. Legwand led the charge with six points as Nashville continues to fight injuries and inconsistency. With the Predators almost out of the playoff picture, they may play a bit more loose. Then again, even if one line clicks, the others seem to vanish. This seems to be the most stable line so they are worth at least a slight play in Week 12.

[Nathan Horton](#) - [David Krejci](#) - [Milan Lucic](#) (Boston) -- This line has to play better than they did on Saturday against Montreal but a ten point week was respectable enough to land them fifth here. Did I mention they play New Jersey in Week 12? This line seems to enjoy that team considerably. Also with [Patrice Bergeron](#) out, the scoring load has to fall on this trio. How will they respond now? Most are bullish with a good schedule strength. The Hurricanes, Islanders, and Devils all have their issues with a big line and

defensively in general.

[Browse through last night's line combos for all teams - right here.](#)

### Lead Us Defenders

[John Carlson](#) - [Jack Hillen](#) (Washington) -- There was just this goofy feel to the week as Carlson and Hillen had five points while playing at the same time. The trade deadline often plays more havoc on the defensive side of things more than any other position. Also both players had three points each while playing on the second power play unit mostly as well as second pairing from time to time. This is a theme so watch out for a lot of mixing and matching in Week 12 to take advantage of the opponent's deficiencies.

[Andrei Markov](#) - [P.K. Subban](#) (Montreal) -- Just give the Norris Trophy to Subban right now! He had another elite week with five points and helps anchor that first power play unit for Montreal.

[Andrei Markov](#) has stayed healthy and they may even see a little even strength time as a duo because of the injuries to the defensive corps. They play nearly 80% of the time on the power play so expect some points to come almost by default. Montreal is rolling along.

[Eric Brewer](#) - [Matt Carle](#) (Tampa Bay) -- When Tampa is rolling, [Matt Carle](#) is usually involved offensively enough to notice him. This week he tied for the lead with five points. Pretty much, he is the offensive thrust for this pairing but

[Eric Brewer](#) is valuable for the blocks and hits he brings to the table. Carle does that kind of thing just not quite as much. Tampa's strength of schedule is not that fortuitous but if there is one team that can penetrate Ottawa, it may be the Lightning. Let's see how Carle handles Week 12.

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As always you can follow @ChrisWasselTHW and fire away those questions. Good luck in the final 20 days.