

Wheeling and Dealing in the West

Written by Jeff Angus

Monday, 26 February 2007 10:06 - Last Updated Monday, 26 February 2007 11:45

The trade deadline is upon us, and I expect a flurry of activity Tuesday morning. While the prices so far have been extremely high, most of the eight playoff teams in the West still need to do some tinkering and upgrading before having a playoff line-up ready. There still remain a few big names out there (Smyth, Souray, Guerin, Bertuzzi) that may be moved by Tuesday's deadline. I also have a gut feeling we are going to see a blockbuster deal involving non-UFA assets (some names like Zherdev, Horton, that kind of player). Here is a breakdown for the current needs for the eight playoff teams in the Western Conference:



Detroit

Needs: Top six scoring forward. Some of the rumoured players include Danius Zubrus, Gary Roberts (who may be already on his way to Pittsburgh as I write this), and Ryan Smyth.

Prediction: Detroit packages up prospects and a pick for a second line winger. Exciting!

Nashville

Needs: A center! Realistically the Preds add a veteran winger or defenseman. This team doesn't have any real holes at all. Guys like Martin Gelinas, John Klemm, that type would fit the bill.

Prediction: Draft pick or prospect for a depth veteran forward with playoff experience.

San Jose

Needs: Veteran help! The youngest playoff team in the West suffers from inconsistency due to an overwhelming amount of youth in the line-up. Rivet addressed some of the needs for a defensive veteran to help out the young guys like Carle and Ehrhoff.

Prediction: Draft pick or prospect for a grinding winger, and maybe a depth defenseman (although all 16 playoff teams would like to add a depth defenseman).

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Anaheim

Needs: A winger for Getzlaf and Perry (no, Shawn Thornton and George Parros won't cut it),



and defenseman.

Prediction: The O'Brien to Tampa trade has given Burke a first rounder to play with. Expect them to make a fairly decent move to acquire a top six forward and a top-four defenseman.

Calgary

Needs: Consistency! The leagues best home team morphs into the leagues worst road team once they leave Calgary. If they don't get home-ice advantage, things don't look good.

Prediction: Minor defensive move. Warrener has been atrocious this year and is a big liability. The Flames have no holes up front and just need to find their game.

Vancouver

Needs: Defensive defenseman, forward help.

Prediction: The Canucks need a defenseman after their stellar top-4, as Krajicek and Fitzpatrick aren't cutting it right now. Expect a move there, as well as getting a checking centre to replace Ryan Kesler, as he is still a ways away from returning. If Nonis still has some assets to play with, the Canucks will explore a scoring winger, but they have more pressing issues. Defenseman is a guarantee for Nonis tomorrow.

Minnesota

Needs: Defensive depth.

Prediction: Minor deal, if any. The Wild are strong up front but would like to add a depth guy. As Buffalo showed last year, defensive depth is a huge key for playoff hockey, and I'd expect nearly every playoff team to try and address the issue.

Dallas

Needs: Top nine forward (and Marty Turco to not suck in the playoffs).

Prediction: A guy like Bondra from Chicago or Nolan from Phoenix. The Stars have a wealth of depth at defence and may move a guy to get a few picks back.

I expect a lot of depth moves to be made, as well as a few shockers. There are some big names out there and anything can happen on deadline day. I'd keep checking

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