

Let's Get Ready to Rumble!

Written by Jeff Angus

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Welcome back to the Wild West, appearing every Tuesday on DobberHockey, and I look forward to dissecting the big and breaking news from the Western Conference. Looking forward to helping DobberHockey grow even more and hope you are ready to come along for the ride.

Baseball playoffs are starting. Who cares? Football is back. Big whoop! The best sport in the world is getting ready to start in about two weeks, and that means that most fantasy drafts have already been completed. While you may be kicking yourself for passing on a certain player, there are plenty of options left on the waiver wire. Here are a few guys getting some big opportunities in training camp so far:

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Ryan Kesler – Vancouver Canucks. Kesler has been skating off and on with Markus Naslund and Dobber's favourite sleeper Ryan Shannon on Vancouver's second unit right now. He looks much more confident in the offensive zone, and his shot has drastically improved as well. Morrison and Naslund didn't really click last year, and Morrison would slide in nicely on a line with Matt Cooke. Kesler could see a significant point increase if he plays some time in a scoring role this season.

Nikolai Zherdev – Columbus. Zherdev slipped through the cracks in many fantasy leagues because of his disastrous 06-07 campaign. His play was uninspired, and he failed to produce at a level most expected. So far in camp, he has been placed at center and the Jackets look committed to developing him there. Zherdev has not played center full time since he was 17, so expect some struggles from him. However, if he clicks with Rick Nash and David Vyborny, the Jackets may finally have the lethal top line they have long desired.

Ryan Clowe – San Jose. Michalek looks like the guy to play on the left wing with Thornton and Cheechoo, but Ron Wilson has put the Michalek-Marleau-Bernier line back together in hopes of having two dominant lines. Clowe has decent hands and is the type of player who would really benefit from playing with talent like Thornton. (Well, who wouldn't?) He won't be a long-term solution, but if you need a winger he is a guy to take a look at. Because of his size, he will also see a decent amount of power play time.