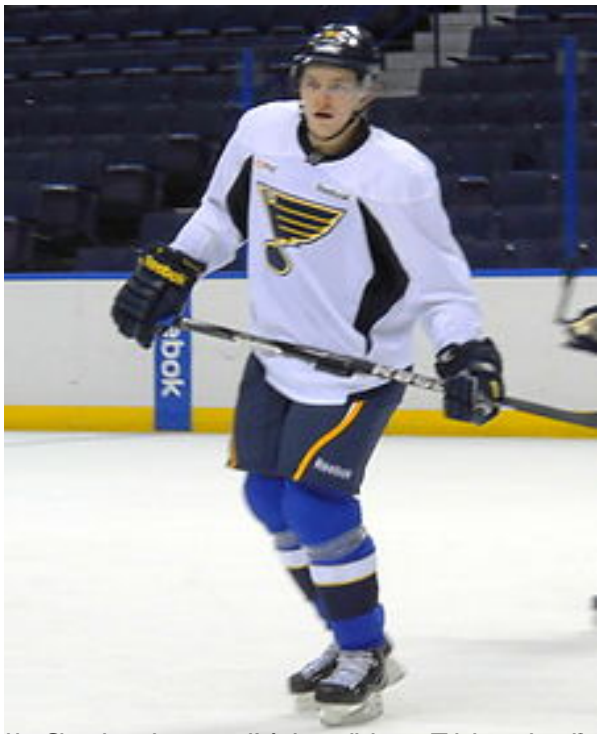
My weekly/monthly Prime Cuts is back after a lockout-induced hiatus. In this edition, I discuss the ongoing Roberto Luongo saga in Vancouver, the early season returns on a few notable rookies, the importance of developing in a winning environment, Patrick Kane's next level, and much more.

I originally started putting together my Prime Cuts as an homage to Elliotte Friedman's brilliant weekly '30 Thoughts' piece for CBC Sports. Quick hitting analysis on a wide variety of issues and storylines relating to hockey.

1. Cory Schneider is 100% unequivocally the starting goaltender in Vancouver, regardless of what you hear from Canuck management or the coaching staff. Schneider will be given every opportunity to play, but unlike most other starters in the league, he has an elite goaltender backing him up. Here is my quick take on the Luongo trade negotiations:

The Canucks have several standing offers from a few NHL teams. However, none of them make the team markedly better (my best guess – Edmonton has offered Sam Gagner as the main piece, and Toronto has done the same with Tyler Bozak). Until the Canucks get an offer that improves their club both for the short and long term, expect Bobby Lu to remain in Vancouver… as a backup.

2. Am I surprised by Vladimir Tarasenko's quick start? Yes and no. I say no because Tarasenko isn't your typical rookie – he has been playing against men in the KHL for a few years now, and he has been a dominant offensive talent over there to boot. I say yes because the St. Louis Blues are a very deep and very balanced team up front. I wasn't sure Tarasenko was going to be given enough offensive minutes to be a consistent point producer right out of the gate. So far, he is leading the charge.



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