

March 11, 2012

Written by Chris Nichols

Saturday, 10 March 2012 23:21 - Last Updated Sunday, 11 March 2012 17:59

Angus here - I was on the TEAM 1260 yesterday to talk Oilers and Canucks. [Check the interview out here.](#)

Can we all agree as a society that this whole half-yearly, Daylight Savings Time inspired clock-switching ritual is antiquated, nonsensical and should be taken out back and shot?

Marty Turco is seeing relief action against the Penguins as I write this. Apparently this is the first time since 2009 that a goalie other than Tim Thomas or Tuukka Rask has been between the pipes for the Bruins. Then there are teams like the Isles, who have seen one or two more in that time. Let's see... Evgeni Nabokov, Al Montoya, Kevin Poulin, Anders Nilsson, Rick DiPietro, Dwayne Roloson, Nathan Lawson, Mikko Koiskinen and Martin Biron.

The Ducks say that Corey Perry is getting treatment for the shoulder injury sustained last night and he remains day-to-day. Could be worse, but that's still a little fuzzy for Perry owners at this critical time of year.

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Jimmy Howard will definitely be ready for Tuesday, while Nicklas Lidstrom and Pavel Datsyuk are also expected back sometime this week.

The Rangers have brought up Mats Zuccarello from the Whale. He has 36 points in 37 games in the AHL so far this season.

Andrei Markov made his season debut against the Canucks and picked up an assist exactly where you'd expect - on the power play. There isn't much time left for him to get up to speed for this season, but that doesn't mean he can't help out your blueline if it's already decimated by injuries or slumping players for the final weeks. The guy just has a knack with the right offensive instincts.

P.K. Subban has seven points in five games this month and Max Pacioretty is averaging two points a game in that same span. Erik Cole added another pair of goals and needs one more to match the 26 he produced for the Canes last year. Blake Geoffrion also scored his first one with the Habs, which was nice to see. Lineage aside, the kid has legit talent. It'll be really fascinating to watch how his story unfolds in Montreal over the years.

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Ilya Bryzgalov and Jonas Gustavsson battled it out and each came away with a shutout. Claude Giroux was the only one to beat either goalie tonight and the winner came via an oh-so-sweet shootout move that he said he copied from Pavel Datsyuk. But Bryz. Yeah buddy. He has won all five March starts with shutouts in B2B contests and in three of four. Pretty impressive for a guy who has drawn the ire of many fans and media alike for his inconsistencies since joining the Flyers.

It was just what, three or four Sunday Ramblings ago where we touched on this very subject of striking in keeper pools when stars like Bryzgalov are in extended periods of dire straits. Use the anxiousness of hyperventilating owners and take advantage of the low price to pounce. Pick the guys in whom you believe and don't let that confidence waver. In the long run of retention leagues, that strategy will almost always pay off if you're investing in the right guys.

Sportsnet.ca's Ian Mendes had this: Nick Foligno on seeing his brother Marcus score (his first NHL goal) tonight: "I was happy and pissed off at the same time."

The siblings clashed with the Sabres topping the Sens 4-3 in a shootout. With no Thomas Vanek, the Sabres began with a top trio of Ville Leino, Cody Hodgson and Jason Pominville. Vanek didn't skate or work out Saturday and his availability for Monday is still very much in question, according to Lindy Ruff in the post-game scrum.

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The thesaurus is going to need to step up its game to keep up with Erik Karlsson's exploits. Another two goals here, which leaves him one short of 70. When he gets that and then blows by that mark, he'll join Nicklas Lidstrom, Mike Green and Sergei Zubov as the only guys with 70+ since the lockout. I think Mendes had that one too, although Twitter tends to be a blur on Saturday nights.

Weird one between the Devils and Isles. No goals until 6:46 of the third period, when John Tavares scored. Then Jersey potted two, at 18:21 and 18:35, to win the game. Marek Zidlicky has points in two straight, his only points with the Devils, and is beginning to really get comfortable with his teammates on the ice. PP1 regular with Ilya Kovalchuk and Zach Parise, naturally. David Clarkson has been pretty nifty for standard league owners all season and linemate Jacob Josefson quietly has picked up points in four of six this month.

Skinner! Jeff Skinner notched his first multi-goal game since the start of November and he has eight points in his past seven affairs. Nice to see the kid beginning to get back to where he was prior to the concussion. Tuomo Ruutu also played his first one since mid-February, when he was injured right in the midst of the trade speculation. Ruutu was winging it with Eric Staal to begin today.

Ryan Malone has a six-game point streak (easily his best of the season) and has points in nine of 10.

Pretty much the usual for the Blues tonight. I just love seeing how strongly Kevin Shattenkirk has come on in the last three weeks though. Alex Pietrangelo scored too and thanks to his overpowering results so far in 2012, he's only one point away from matching last year's total of

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43. 31 have come since the start of January, which is still a mind-boggling total despite bringing this up routinely either here or in the Live Recaps. Point-per-game pace. Or, as it's known in Ottawa, he's Karlssoning.

Andrei Kostitsyn tickled the twine twice and has 3-3-6 in five starts with the Preds. He only had 24 in 53 with the Habs before the trade.

Two injury impressions from the 2-0 Dallas win over Anaheim. Brenden Morrow came back from his to play in that one, which gives such a different dimension to that Stars squad. The first line of Loui Eriksson and Michael Ryder with Mike Ribeiro has really been clicking, but now having the captain back with prolific centre Jamie Benn and the ornery Steve Ott to reconstitute their dynamic trio? So much harder for the opposition to deal with nightly.

The potentially bad news was Corey Perry, who was barely able to play after injuring his shoulder in the second period. X-Rays were negative, which is a relief, and he's considered day-to-day at this point.

Mike Smith picked up his fifth shutout of the season as the Coyotes dispatched the Sharks by a 3-0 count. The potential was certainly there going into this season for him to have good numbers, given Phoenix's style of play and the past success of Bryzgalov, but good on Smith for working out the kinks in his game to deliver the results he has to date. If you stole him at the draft back in the fall, all the better for you.

The Caps kicked off Saturday with a 4-3 win over the Bruins. Dmitry Orlov had a pair of assists in that one and has eight points in his past 12 GP. Milan Lucic needs 11 points to match last year's output of 62 and he has points in all six March games so far, which is his longest such streak of the season.

The Avs topped the Oilers in a shootout, 3-2. Two things of note there. Peter Mueller, who has bounced in and out of the lineup for various reasons all season, played his 22nd game of '11-12. More importantly, he has tallied points in four straight. The guy has so much talent and now that he's getting some consecutive games played he's doing what he can do offensively. He opened opposite Milan Hejduk with Mark Olver in the middle.

Second thing. Call it a pet peeve of sorts for me. Every time any Oilers-related discussion comes up these days, invariably it centres on their low standings placement and the possibility of either another top pick or close to it. Which prompts the debate of – depending on where the pick falls - whether or not the Oil should take Nail Yakupov (who was the victim of a pretty nasty head shot tonight, which forced him to leave the game), Mikhail Grigorenko or trade down to get a badly-needed defenceman.

Oy. Listen. I don't profess to be an expert on the juniors because the fact is my gig with Sportnset commits me to watching and reading about the NHL continually. So I just don't have the ability, time-wise, to delve as much into the CHL or juniors overseas as much as I'd like.

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But let me tell you this: If I were in charge of the Oil, no way in HELL would I pass up a chance to draft one of Yakupov or Grigorenko. Are you kidding me? On a team already featuring Taylor Hall, Jordan Eberle and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins?

Do the Oilers need help on D? Abso-~~-\$&*\$^&*-~~lutely. But why do people tend to forget how long it takes for blueliners to develop once they're drafted? Edmonton can fill that void in the coming seasons by trade and free agency, bringing in the required veteran presence. You don't think interest is percolating around the NHL among players, who see the growing star talent pool simmering and getting ready to boil over? Say what you will about living in the city, as many players have, but talent is talent is talent.

As much as I, as an Oilers fan, would have loved a higher finish in the standings this season, I'll be cheering vociferously for regulation losses from here until the first week of April concludes.

Bring. Me. The. Russian. #donotcarewhichone

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Check out tonight's [Live NHL Recap](#) over at [Sportsnet.ca](#) for a full rundown, including line combos and PP times.