Kris Letang is back tonight too - Pittsburgh is getting their best forward and best defenseman back in the same game. Scrap what I wrote earlier - he will be playing the PP1 point with Crosby. Sullivan gets bumped off.

Wrote a piece on Justin Schultz for the CanucksArmy today - chatted with Corey Pronman and Chuck Schultz, who both gave some good insights on the potential UFA from Wiconsin.

Crosby is going to start out on the point on Pittsburgh's top power play tonight, alongside fellow forward Steve Sullivan.

Kyle Palmieri had two goals for the Ducks last night.

Ray Whitney was fantastic for Phoenix, finishing with three assists. Antoine Vermette also had three points. The Coyotes didn't get a strong game from Mike Smith, but they didn't need one, putting up five goals on Luongo.

After a few months of rock solid play, Luongo is struggling a bit. A combination of his own play and poor defensive coverage in front of him - he's allowed three or more goals in four straight starts for the Canucks.

David Desharnais had a goal and three shots in almost 23 minutes of ice time last night. Montreal was forced to play him more because of an injury to Nokelainen after he fought Ottawa's Jared Cowen.

Both Price and Ben Bishop were really solid in goal. Bishop seems to be fitting in well with Ottawa and showing some upside with his play. A shrewd trade by Ottawa GM Bryan Murray, as he could develop into a very good 1B goaltender for next season.

Montreal defenseman and human missile Alexei Emelin was a late scratch with a minor injury.

Quite the game in Buffalo last night – the Sabres lost the lead with less than a second to go in the third, and eventually lost to Colorado in a shootout.

Tyler Ennis is thriving at center – he had three helpers for the Sabres last night, skating on a line with Foligno and Stafford.

Foligno had two goals and looked to have his first career hat trick, but he didn't tip Sulzer's shot in upon second look.

Stafford was Buffalo's best forward – three points, generating chances on the PK, even strength, and PP.

Brayden McNabb played with Sekera and Myers out (sick and suspended, respectively). He was an honourable mention on my keeper league prospect defensemen list.

Blake "Superstar" Wheeler (unofficial new nickname) – had two more points for the Jets. He continues to be a dominant physical force in every single game.

Eric Fehr scored – only his second goal of the season. Injuries have killed whatever offensive upside he once had.

Bachman got the start for Dallas, but he gave up five goals on 28 shots. He's been pretty solid this season, providing solid play in relief of Kari Lehtonen.

Andrew Ladd scored twice and had eight shots on goal for the Jets.

The Avs are a lot of fun to watch right now – Downie looks like he was made for the Burgundy, and Landeskog is starting to run away with the Calder race.

Landeskog had two points and was instrumental in the tying goal.

Peter Mueller scored the shootout winner, and he added an assist in 15 minutes of ice time (he also had a brutal turnover, leading to Stafford's shorthanded goal).

Ryan O'Reilly played almost 25 minutes – slightly inflated because of the OT, and also because Duchene remains out.

David Jones is now three goals away from 20, and could reach 25 if he gets hot. An underrated player – Colorado likely wants to re-sign him. They made a calculated risk in not trading him, and it appears to be paying off.

Erik Johnson looks more and more like his old self, but the skating still isn't there. Looks a bit bothered by the knee injury that affected him earlier this year (could have just been last night, though).

Has there been a hotter player over the past few weeks than Colorado's Jamie McGinn? He has nine points with Colorado since the trade, and he has also left a huge hole in San Jose. Don't believe the second part? Read this.

“The Sharks have just 12 goals since the trade, or 1.50 per game. Compare that to the eight previous games with McGinn still in the lineup, and San Jose had 24, or 3.0 per game.”

Canucks had the power play going last night, and Henrik Sedin found the score sheet for the first time in nine games (yikes). However, the team still looked a bit lethargic and sloppy, especially defensively – Bieksa and Edler were particularly bad.

Zack Kassian played OK, but he looks a bit gassed. Likely running on fumes after some energetic games last week. He’s playing more of a grinding, checking role right now, but the Canucks need a bit more from him.

Raymond skated with the twins – he looked OK, but he isn’t a solution there long term.

Alex Burrows played on the checking line with Pahlsson and Hansen, and he looked great. Lots of chances and shots generated through tenacity and hard work.

Ekman-Larsson has averaged over 26 minutes in his last five games. Who says Dave Tippett doesn't like playing rookies?

What can the Caps expect if/when Backstrom returns?

"On average, forwards who are put on injured reserve for head-related injuries play just 45 games during the season the injury occurs. But two-thirds return to play more than 65 games the following season.

That's good news for Washington. Centers like Backstrom are rare enough, and with the free agent market for top-six centers thin over the next few years, the Capitals are going to need their best player on the ice if they are to be legitimate Cup contenders in the future."

Ottawa prospect Jakob Silfverberg, a player who I have mentioned a few times, was recently named as the MVP of the SEL. 54 points in 49 games, and he's a very strong contender to earn

a roster spot with the Sens next season. Has the two-way ability to contribute on the third line, and Ottawa may want to start him off there.

Sebastian Stalberg was signed by the Sharks – he starred at Vermont and is the younger brother to Chicago's Viktor. He led Vermont in scoring with 31 points in 34 games. He also looks identical to his brother.

Current San Jose Shark Torrey Mitchell also played his college hockey at Vermont.

Another college signing – Ottawa has inked Cole Schneider to an entry-level contract. Bobby Butler and Stephane Da Costa were both college free agents signed by the Senators in recent years. Schneider set scoring records at Connecticut in both goals (23) and points (45). He's got good size, too.

Thomas Drance takes a look at Cody Hodgson's struggles in Buffalo.

“This is what Vigneault was doing when he was closely protecting Cody Hodgson's minutes, you see. He was using the young, talented forward to beat up on the third-pairings and fourth-lines of opposing teams, something Hodgson is mostly capable of doing at the NHL level at this age and stage. Unfortunately, fourth lines and third pairings don't get many minutes; and Canucks fans, the Vancouver media and Hodgson personally, were chaffed about his limited usage. But Vigneault was absolutely right to deploy Hodgson in the deliberate fashion that he did.”

Matt Duchene is playing for Colorado tonight – well ahead of schedule.

Tim Erixon was the hardest defenseman to leave off of my recent list (the main page column). I went back and forth on him and Barberio, but I think the young Lightning blueliner has a shot at producing sooner than Erixon does.

Matt Moulson has three straight 30 goal seasons. Not bad for a player who couldn’t hack it in LA before getting the boot.

What’s all the fuss about with Justin Schultz? A little sample:

{youtube}KgTuzuOf1t8{/youtube}