

**March 23, 2012**

Written by Jeff Angus

Thursday, 22 March 2012 21:35 - Last Updated Friday, 23 March 2012 18:29

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Five games for Keith - fantasy breakdown of the suspension coming in tomorrow's ramblings. I'll leave the commenting on this one up to you guys.... I think my opinion is an obvious one.

Kadri is in for the Leafs tonight, as MacArthur and Frattin are both out with injuries.

Washington has called up Cody Eakin to replace the injury Alex Semin. Eakin has been pretty good in spot duty for the Caps - he projects as a solid second line forward - 50+ points and lots of energy.

Great buy for the rest of the season - Kassian is likely going to be playing a lot with Henrik Sedin while Daniel is out. He's not going to be available in keepers, but should be out there in a lot of one-year leagues, especially because of his lack of recent production.

The NHL has changed Keith's suspension hearing from phone to in person (or at least they gave Keith the right to an in person hearing). What this means - they can now hand him a suspension for longer than five games. Shanahan obviously changed his mind after his

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preliminary review of the hit and situation, something he is allowed to do.

Jonathan Quick received his usual goal support of zero last night, and still found a way to get the win.

Quick and his counterpart Brian Elliott (rare start) stopped all 72 pucks fired their way in regulation and OT.

Shattenkirk and Pietrangelo combined for about 60 minutes of ice time and 11 shots on goal.

I'm not sure if anyone has compiled an "all-craffy" NHL team... but Mike Ribeiro would definitely be on it (the team would be captained by Pavel Datsyuk, of course). He makes so many smart plays with and without the puck. So strong on it, too. He'd be mentioned as one of the better centers in the league if he played in a bigger hockey market.

Ramblings up early tonight – heading off to a friend's fundraiser. The friend – former Canadian

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track star Gary Reed. Gary has created the [Reed Athletics Fund](#). The Fund helps support those in the track and field world who have financial constraints holding them back. Great cause – check his site out if you get a chance.

Talk about riding your big guns – Purcell, Stamkos, St. Louis, Malone, and Hedman all played over 24 minutes.

Dwayne Roloson turned back the clock against his former team, stopping 34 of 36 shots. Great fantasy game... but does anybody still own him?

Penguins continue to make easy work of the NHL – Malkin scored twice and is now five away from 50, and goal scorer James Neal turned playmaker, finishing with four helpers.

Malkin also added a 2009-Ovechkin-like 10 shots on goal.

Ovechkin scored again, and he had six shots on goal. He is a night-and-day better player when

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he is shooting more (duh) and more involved physically.

Holtby got the start for Washington and was very good. I wonder if they give him a few games to run with the gig for now? He stopped 27 of 28 shots.

Bryzgalov continues his strong play as well – he has been lights out over the last few months. Bodes well as the Flyers head into the playoffs with a severely undermanned defensive group.

Putting my top 10 keeper league forward prospects list together – should be posted next Thursday. The top six were pretty straight forward, but it was interesting after that. What would be your list? 25 NHL games played is the limit I am using.

Radulov had a goal and was minus-2 in about 16 minutes of ice time in his debut.

Eddie Lack's save percentage in Chicago's last 15 games - .947. Impressive to say the least. He will 100% be in the NHL with the Canucks next year, backing up whichever one of Luongo or

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Schneider is moved.

I'll expand on this later on, but I have a hunch the Canucks move Luongo and keep Schneider (depending a lot on how the postseason plays out). Luongo's contract is a lot like Jeff Carter's – very long, but with a reasonable cap hit. Luongo has choked in the playoffs but he's an elite regular season goalie, and could help a lot of teams get back to that level of respectability. He's also going to retire long before his deal expires.

Why I'd stick with Schneider – age, primarily. Luongo turns 33 this year, Schneider 26. Luongo has played a ton of hockey. Anyway, as I said above, this is very premature speculation.

[A great read on Johnny Boychuk](#) – a star in the AHL who waited patiently for his chance to break out at the NHL level. Boychuk played close to 350 AHL games before getting the call up – definitely an inspiration to many players toiling away in the minor leagues.

*“Boychuk got his break when he was traded to the B's before the 2008-09 season, though he had to ply his trade in Providence for a year. With the Baby B's, he was allowed to play defense full-time and demonstrated he belonged on the blue line all along. He had 20 goals, 45 assists and a plus-19 rating in 78 games, and added three goals and five assists in the playoffs.*

*He got called up for just one game that season, but he could see the light at the end of a long tunnel.*

*"I knew that I was a little bit older than the prospects they wanted to develop, and they wanted to give them a chance," Boychuk said. "But I had to keep sticking with it and stay positive, especially when you're doing well down there, you can't do much more. Just keep doing the same thing and eventually you'll get your chance."*

Ever since returning from a concussion, Jeff Skinner has been a different player, and not for the good. [His propensity for penalties has increased dramatically.](#) Good news for poolies, in a way, but Skinner isn't on your team for PIM. And less time on the ice means fewer goals and assists.

*"Skinner played in 30 games before suffering the concussion on December 7 in Edmonton. In those games, he took 18 penalty minutes, none of them majors or misconducts. Of the penalties, four were "aggressive penalties" (roughing, cross-checking, slashing, etc.) and five were stick or obstruction penalties (hooking, holding, interference, and so on).*

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*After the concussion, Skinner has suddenly turned into a latter-day Bobby Clarke. He's nearly doubled his penalty minutes, with 34 including six in Wednesday's game against Florida, and of the 13 penalties he's taken all but three have been aggression penalties."*

Who are the best hitting forwards in the NHL? [Arctic Ice Hockey takes a look](#) , and the answers may surprise you. The metrics they use are quite interesting. I'd recommend spending a few minutes to read this.

Hits are the next "big stat" in fantasy hockey, and I think this is spot on analysis.

*"But we all know that it doesn't really matter how hard you hit somebody; it's like a slam dunk in basketball - as long as the ball goes in the hoop, it doesn't matter if you throw it down or hit a 10 foot fadeaway. The hit needs to be useful, which is hard to assess (and something I won't look at in this post), but for a preliminary look I think we also need to look at guys who can execute their hits without a potential drawback of physical play: minor penalties."*

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Hits, regardless of how you characterize them, are a positive measure (unlike PIM). Their contribution towards winning is still a huge grey area, though.

Robin Lehner had a 41-save shutout on Wednesday night for the Binghamton Senators. Perhaps some competition wasn't the worth thing that could happen?

The Caps coasted into the playoffs last year, and they got swept by the Lightning in round two.

[They aren't coasting this year](#)

, and they say they are better off for it? What is your take?

*“Added **Mathieu Perreault**: “If you look at the last few years, we’re just sitting there wondering who we’re going to play in the first round. When the playoffs would start, maybe we wouldn’t be as sharp as we could. This year it’s going to be a battle to the end, so when the playoffs start we’ll be in the playoff mode and that’ll be a good thing for us.””*

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Ryan Getzlaf has nine goals. Ouch.

[My piece on the Canucks Army from](#) yesterday looked at the regular season stretch runs for the past 12 Conference Finalists – turns out that coasting is pretty common.

*“The three most recent Cup winning teams have struggled in March, as well. Boston, Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Detroit only won a combined 21 of 45 March games.”*

Linden Vey is a really good prospect, and you'll be hearing his name a lot in the future. He was a 4<sup>th</sup> round pick from 2009, and he's having a good season for the Kings AHL affiliate. He has 17 goals and 37 points and is the youngest player in the league – last year he led the WHL in scoring with 116 points. He could see some time with the Kings next year before making the full time leap in 2013-14. There will be lots more on him in the upcoming Prospects Report, which is

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being worked on as we speak.

You'll notice some Fan Zoo banners on the site now. They are a Vancouver-based memorabilia site who sell quality, unique pieces. We will be doing some work with them and they will be supplying us with awesome prizes in the future. They are also running a contest to send two people to Calgary for a Canucks/Flames game. [More info on their site here](#) .

This reminds me of Wayne Gretzky - flying down the wing, slapper top corner:

{youtube}56aFJNrK0Dk{/youtube}