

April 22, 2012

Written by Ryan Ma

Friday, 20 April 2012 22:34 - Last Updated Sunday, 22 April 2012 03:11

Ma here, moving up in the world and finally getting a shot at the ramblings. This is my first go at it, so be gentle with the criticism.

Couple of potentially huge upsets on the horizon, with the Sens shutting out the Rangers tonight and the Kings pushing the Canucks to elimination tomorrow night. Who went into their playoff pools projecting both eighth seeds to knock out the top-seed in the first round? Our Dobber "expert" picks certainly aren't looking great at the moment.

Craig Anderson now owns a shutout streak of 116 mins and 32 seconds heading into Ottawa on Monday night. He's so hot right now.

With two goals tonight, Jason Spezza now has 48 points in 50 career playoff contests. Is there anyone more clutch of a playoff performer in Ottawa than Spez?

Offensive depth was one of the factors that the Rangers had over the Sens. Somebody needs to send out a search party for both Brandon Dubinsky and Derek Stepan, as both have been MIA on the scoreboard this series.

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Despite being the higher seed heading into the playoffs, the Panthers were clear underdogs compared to the Devils in many eyes. They pulled off a 3-0 shutout of the Devils and now have a chance to close out the series in New Jersey.

Jose Theodore stopped all 30 shots that he faced to pick up his 21st victory and second career playoff shutout.

The Panthers are seven for 22 (31.8 percent) on the PP this series. Talk about efficiency.

Kris Versteeg now has nine points and 29 SOG in his last 10 contests dating back to March 30th. He also has 10 points and 21 SOG against the Devils this season. If I were Pete DeBoer, I'd posterize his picture and make the entire team stare at it for half an hour tomorrow.

Huge 4-3 win by the Caps over the Bruins early last night, which has given them a commanding 3-2 series lead heading back to Washington for game 6.

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Braden Holtby has convinced me that he is the goalie of the future for the Caps. He owns a 3-2 record along with a sparkling 1.86 GAA and monstrous .946 SP during the most important time of the year. He's bringing back memories of the Cam Ward playoff run back in 2005-06. Keeper leaguers jump on while the price is still relatively low.

One of the biggest factors for success during the playoffs is scoring depth. Surprisingly, it's coming from a non-typical source this season; Washington. 16 of the 20 players that have suited up for the Caps these playoffs have picked up at least a point.

Mike Green has just two points in his last 30 contests, granted much of it has been injury-riddled, but is he even fantasy relevant anymore? Where would you take him in fantasy drafts next campaign? Do you think the Caps will re-sign him?

Ho hum, another early playoff exit for the Sharks. My pick of them making the Stanley Cup Final certainly blew up in my face.

Something needs to be addressed with that team. They don't need to blow it up entirely and partake in a complete rebuild, but they do need to shuffle some pieces just to change the culture of the locker room.

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I mean if you look at the scoring potential of the team, along with the number of President's trophies in the cupboard while comparing that to playoff success. It just doesn't add up.

If you break it down Sharks vs. Blues, I don't think the Sharks were out-talented by the Blues, I don't think the Sharks were physically dominated by them or even out-coached. It came down to who wanted it more and the Blues clearly won that edge.

Joe Pavelski and Patrick Marleau were non-existent and were clearly being out-worked by Patrik Berglund and Andy McDonald.

If you handed me the keys to the Sharks, I'd look into moving Marleau as my primary option. His role is redundant when you have Joe Thornton and Pavelski playing similar roles. I wouldn't even necessarily want a skilled player back, someone like a Ryan Callahan, Mike Fisher, Ray Whitney, Brian Boyle or David Clarkson, someone who'll go out there and just lift the intensity/work-rate of the players around him. I don't think they're getting that from their leadership group at the moment. What would you do if you were given the reigns of the Sharks?

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The Blues advance to the second round of the playoffs for the first time in a decade.

Lost in all of this has been the brilliant play of McDonald, he finished the series with four goals and four assists along with 18 SOG. He's always been a fairly clutch performer. If it wasn't for his band-aid-boyness, he'd be discussed in the same breathe as Spezza, Thornton, Daniel Briere and Anze Kopitar.

Patrick Berglund is another that has really impressed me in this series, just 38 points in 82 contests during the regular season, but has stepped it up immensely with seven points this series. The major reason behind the difference: **ice-time** (17:59 TOI per game average during the regular season and 21:26 during the playoffs). Try to convince me that ice-time doesn't play a role in offensive production.

With how well Brian Elliott is playing, will Halak get back into another playoff game this year?

Chicago picked up a late 2-1 overtime victory over the Coyotes, to breathe a bit of life back into the series. It was the fifth consecutive time this series that has gone to overtime, which ties a 61-year NHL record.

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Corey Crawford has been unimpressive, the Hawks have helped him the best they can by allowing just 27.8 SOG to the Coyotes, but he needs to do much better than a .906 SP if they are to go any further.

Raffi Torres' [25-game suspension as justified](#) by Brendan Shanahan. Pretty fair in terms of what he did in my honest opinion, but when you compare it to everything else that's been dished out, Aaron Asham (four games), Andrew Shaw (three games), Nicklas Backstrom (one game), James Neal (one game) and Shea Weber (none -for "Webering"), 25-games seems a bit excessive doesn't it? Coyotes fans plead their case [here](#)

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This [column](#) over at CopperNBlue piqued my interest. If Ryan Murray does make Team Canada for the World Championships and does reasonably well, do the Oilers still take Nail Yakupov at number one?

Make sure you head over to [Dobber Prospects](#) and give that a good gander. Brendan Ross and Matt Bugg are two of the most knowledgeable people in terms of hockey prospects.

Should you be so inclined, follow me on [Twitter](#) if you think that my article/tweets are useful.

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Chris Neil hit on Boyle vs. Torres hit on Hossa, suspendable?