W/ Dan Carcillo set to miss a month now (knee, no surgery apparently needed), the early indication headed into Sunday's game against Phoenix is that Brandon Saad will line up alongside Jonathan Toews and Marian Hossa.

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The San Jose Sharks are still in an 'evaluation period' with UFA Scott Gomez. He's still with the team as of this writing.

Were he to sign w/ the franchise, this would likely be a similar situation to Wade Redden where Gomez wouldn't likely be in a position to help the average fantasy owner initially. And just like Redden, Gomez really would just have a focus on being able to contribute positively in a depth role to begin anyway. It's about getting the NHL career back on track.

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Zac Rinaldo left Sunday's game against the Sabres with a lower-body injury.

*

With Ville Leino sidelined, the Sabres rolled out Pominville-Hodgson-Vanek; Foligno-Ennis-Stafford and Hecht in Leino's wing slot w/ Grigorenko-Ott.

Flyers w/ same lines as Saturday against the Pens. Hartnell-Giroux-Schenn; Talbot-Couturier-Voracek; Read-Laughton-Simmonds.

Again, get line combos from every game all season w/ the NHL Line Combo Central page at

SN. Updated in a timely manner each evening and also includes PP times.

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Our cameras at AAC are sharp! They just caught Manti Te'o's girlfriend in section 125 on the jumbotron!

— Dallas Stars (@DallasStars) January 20, 2013

*

Really looking forward to seeing the Oilers' first game tonight. Expected lines: Hall-RNH-Eberle; Yakupov-Gagner-Hemsky; Smyth-Horcoff-Hartikainen. Debuts for Nail Yakupov and Justin Schultz, who'll be paired with Nick Schultz in an effort to give play-by-play guys a headache.

*

The Leafs inked Joffrey Lupul to a five-year contract extension Sunday. He's making $4.25 million per season now, and when the new deal kicks in that'll jump to an average of $5.25 million. Mikhail Grabovski's cap hit is at $5.5 million per, while Phil Kessel's is $5.4 million. Dion Phaneuf is up at $6.5 million.

This is another good excuse for the Leafs to say, "Yeah, we were really happy to get Lupul AND Jake Gardiner for Francois Beauchemin a couple of years ago and..."

Lupul was held pointless in his season debut Saturday, but linemates Tyler Bozak and Kessel combined for 1-2-3.

Lupul had 25-42-67 in 66 starts last season.

Thrilled to be a Maple Leaf for 5 more years. Look forward to doing everything I can to help bring a Stanley Cup to Toronto.

— Joffrey Lupul (@JLupul) January 20, 2013

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NHL GameCenter delivered a #fail of epic proportions on opening day. Don't even get me started. Normally an excellent service. Today? Awful. Atrocious. Threw a gorilla-sized monkey wrench into the night's workload.

Other than that though, so great to have a heavy Saturday evening docket of hockey to dig into again.

*

Marian Hossa and the Chicago Blackhawks crashed the Stanley Cup festivities of the Los Angeles Kings as the NHL started up the shortened season. Hossa had 77 points in 81 games last year and began with a bang here, notching 2-1-3 w/ 4 SOG. Fellow stars Jonathan Toews (1-1-2, plus-3, 16-9 FO) and Patrick Kane (1-1-2) came through with multi-pointers as well.

Good start from Dan Carcillo with an 0-1-1, plus-3 on the top line, but he left the game with a lower-body injury. Andrew Shaw had no points in his third line role, but did see a lot of power play time. Fourth-most on the team. Nick Leddy had 37 points last year and secured his first one of this season in the first tilt. Good confidence booster for Corey Crawford, who only faced 21 shots to get the win.

Of note for the Kings was Alec Martinez seeing 3:51 PP compared with Slava Voynov's 2:05.

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No points for Sidney Crosby, but he was 13-7 on faceoffs. Paul Martin had a pair of power play assists. James Neal from Evgeni Malkin? Yeah, we'll see that a few more times in the coming months. Eric Tangradi began on that line, but Dan Bylsma has said that'll be a fluid situation all season. Seven hits for Matt Cooke.

Claude Giroux, Scott Hartnell and Brayden Schenn delivered the only pointage for Philly owners. Jakub Voracek is still on PP1, despite not having the L1 RW slot. Scott Laughton impressed with some scrappiness. Kurtis Foster only played 13:50, but did see PP2 time.

*

Erik Karlsson came through with a three pointer (1-2-3, 6 SOG), picking right up where he left off. Jakob Silfverberg was a screen on Karlsson's goal and played 14:02 in his NHL debut. Kyle Turris (1-0-1, 5 SOG), Milan Michalek (1-0-1) and Sergei Gonchar (0-1-1, 2:10 PP led team) helped out. Craig Anderson turned aside 27/28.

Dustin Byfuglien (1-0-1, 6 SOG) and Tobias Enstrom (0-1-1) did what they do well. Produce. Mark Scheifele opened on the fourth line and saw 11:49.

*

No multi-pointers for any Bruins, but Milan Lucic (1-0-1, 3 SOG, 12 PIM, 4 hits) gave you a good reminder of why you love him in standard leagues. Dennis Seidenberg actually ended up with the second-most power play time on the team and Tuukka Rask delivered the first of many wins. Dougie Hamilton 13:40 TOI with PP2 minutes as well.

Henrik Lundqvist made one of the more ridiculous saves you'll see this year. Scroll down to have a look. Brad Richards and Rick Nash combined on NYR's only goal.

*

How great was it to see Nazem Kadri bury so early in this one against the Habs? Phil Kessel with a pair of assists. Not only was Michael Kostka paired with Dion Phaneuf, but he had a helper and finished with the most power play time of any blueliner on the team. Tyler Bozak had a goal and as long as he's skating between Kessel and Joffrey Lupul, he maintains fantasy interest. Also really cool to see Ben Scrivens with the start and the win. He's done so well in the AHL and starting him was the right call, regardless of result.

Alex Galchenyuk began his first game w/ Tomas Plekanec and Brian Gionta. 13:06 TOI with no points. His two linemates collected points on Montreal's only goal, but that was on the PP and Rene Bourque was on the line instead of the youngster.

*

Ilya Kovalchuk, Travis Zajac, David Clarkson and Patrik Elias each had a point. Kovalchuk and Clarkson with 5 SOG apiece.

Brad Boyes saw a decent amount of power play time. Kyle Okposo and Michael Grabner, who both need good seasons, began with an appearance in the box score thanks to one point each.

*

Steven Stamkos (0-2-2), Martin St. Louis (2-1-3), Vincent Lecavalier (1-1-2) and Teddy Purcell (0-3-3) all came up big. Cory Conacher, who was w/ Lecavalier-Purcell, translated his AHL excellence to his first NHL start. Sami Salo, incidentally, ate up the most PP time on D but had no points. Anders Lindback wins his first start with the Lightning.

Joel Ward (2-0-2) and Wojtek Wolski (1-1-1) had good evenings. Tom Poti finally able to play again and he chipped in a helper too. No points for Mike Green, but he logged big man advantage minutes like we're used to seeing from him when healthy.

*

Think Jonathan Huberdeau (1-2-2, 5 SOG, 2 PIM in only 14:25 TOI) is ready for the NHL? Alex Kovalev (1-2-3) and Peter Mueller (0-1-1) are on his line. Brian Campbell (2-0-2) is going to rack up many, many points again. Jose Theodore faced 42 shots, so a nifty .976 SV% there.

Justin Faulk has seen the power play time expected early on. He and Joni Pitkanen had an assist each.

*

Vladimir Tarasenko (2-0-2). Welcome to the National Hockey League. Chris Stewart (2-0-2) – so you do remember where the net is located. T.J. Oshie (1-2-3), Alex Pietrangelo (0-2-2), Kevin Shattenkirk (0-2-2) and Alex Steen (0-2-2) also gave owners multi-pointers. Jaroslav Halak with a 14-save shutout.

So this is what life will be like without Nicklas Lidstrom. Damien Brunner saw 18:50 TOI and saw a lot of first unit power play time.

*

Artem Anisimov (1-0-1) came through in regulation and the shootout for the Jackets. Nikita Nikitin (0-1-1) is still producing. Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 32/34 and is off to a great start with his new team.

Ryan Ellis (1-0-1) and Martin Erat (1-0-1) potted goals for the Preds and Sergei Kostitsyn (0-2-2) had a multi-assist result.

*

Monster outing for Jaromir Jagr (2-2-4) owners to begin the new campaign. He and Ray Whitney (1-1-2) had six points as members of their latest NHL franchise. Stephane Robidas (0-2-2) had good power play minutes. Derek Roy (0-1-1) and Loui Eriksson (1-1-2) were beneficiaries of Jagr here.

Radim Vrbata (2-1-3) and Keith Yandle (0-1-1) had the noteworthy Phoenix contributions. Matthew Lombardi, who was L3 C, added an assist too.

*

So Dany Heatley (2-0-0), Mikko Koivu (0-2-2) and Zach Parise (0-2-2, 8 SOG) did what they're supposed to do and Mikael Granlund (1-0-0) made the home crowd smile in his first NHL start. Pierre-Marc Bouchard (1-0-1) is healthy. Cal Clutterbuck (0-1-1, 4 SOG, 4 hits) still likes to hit people. Jared Spurgeon (0-1-1) is going to be a solid depth asset on D. Ryan Suter was held pointless, but was just under three minutes shy of playing half the game. Nobody on either side had more even strength or power play time.

Steve Downie (0-1-1, 6 PIM, 4 hits) had the best fantasy night for the Avs.

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2-2-4, 4 PIM, 5 SOG for Teemu Selanne. I mean... it never ends with this guy. Sheldon Souray (1-1-2) added a pair of points and is already making an impact for those who took a chance on him late in the draft. PP1, as expected. Nick Bonino (0-1-1) only had a point, but it's that L2 assignment that has been the attention getter. Ryan Getzlaf (0-2-2) and Corey Perry (1-0-1) should deliver, but tonight the third line of Daniel Winnik (2-0-2), Saku Koivu (0-2-2) and Andrew Cogliano (0-2-2) had multi-pointers.

Jannik Hansen (0-2-2) was on the first PP unit, as was Jason Garrison (0-0-0). The Sedins and Edler made the scoring summary appearances, but Cory Schneider (9/14) being pulled may make a headline or two. Or 10,000.

*

Grab the line combos from each game on Saturday's slate, along with PP info, with the NHL Line Combo Central blog at SN. I'll be updating that as quickly as possible each evening once the games begin (lines) and end (PP times).

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#Oilers news. Former #Shark 50 goal scorer Jonathan Cheechoo has signed Player tryout with OKC of #AHL . Organization looking 4 added depth.

— Nick Kypreos (@RealKyper) January 20, 2013

*

Wings' Darren Helm on Todd Bertuzzi having mono:“He's got mono? Uh, oh! I'm lucky I wasn't kissing him."

— Ansar Khan (@AnsarKhanMLive) January 19, 2013

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Henrik Lundqvist. Just another day at the office.

{youtube}Ov9YFuOE8tE{/youtube}

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Henrik Lundqvist. Again. This time with Swedish Chef. Nothing more needs to be said.

{youtube}ybZiaSp-RzM{/youtube}

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Twitter: @Nichols_NHLPool NHL news, analysis & fantasy takes with minimal inane babble.

Weekday Hockey Hearsay blogs on Sportsnet.ca, 12 months a year.

NHL Line Combo Central on Sportsnet.ca, with full lines and power play info from EVERY game.

Fresh Ramblings each Sunday.