

Sharks lacked bite

Written by Dobber

Thursday, 15 May 2008 05:00 - Last Updated Friday, 16 May 2008 03:15



The San Jose Sharks actually had some people, myself included, convinced they could be the first team in decades to come back from a 3-0 series deficit when they took Dallas to Game 6 and pushed it to overtime. As we know, they didn't, and poolies are now hoping for a change of philosophy.

(Originally posted by [The Hockey News on May 9](#) - four days before Wilson was fired, not bad timing eh?)

The Sharks are a defensive team and have been for a couple of years. They boasted the top penalty-killing unit in the regular season and the third-best goals-against average. However,

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despite being loaded with offensive talent, they ranked 19th in goals for.

Much to fantasy owners' disdain, the rule of thumb is defense wins Cups. In the post-season, checking gets a whole lot tighter, but there is such a thing as overdoing it. When taking a look at how some of the players performed for San Jose, it is clear where things went wrong: a defensive coach such as Ron Wilson is a fantasy nightmare. A run-and-gun coach would mean the world to an owner stocked with Sharks players.

Joe Thornton – One of the most talented players in the entire league perennially posts more than a point per game, but he had just 10 points in 13 playoff contests. That pro-rates to less than 65 points in a season. He'd be a 130-point player under a freewheeling coach.

Patrick Marleau – Received a lot of criticism for his lack of production in the second round, but the bottom line is his playoff production actually increased versus the regular season. We've already seen Marleau tally 86 points in one season, so we know what he can do if the defensive reins come off.

Ryane Clowe – Clowe led all players in the first round with eight points, but only notched one in the second round. You will see this inconsistent production next campaign and he will likely settle in with 55 points; unless, of course, a different coach comes in. If that happens, look for 70.

Joe Pavelski – Probably the most promising of the non-Thornton forwards, Pavelski had nine points in the post-season and finished the regular season with 18 points in his last 20 games. Under Wilson, Pavelski will finish in the top three on the team with 65 points, but he won't pop in as many as some of his teammates if a coaching change is made; his upside is probably no more than 80 points.

Jonathan Cheechoo – Will the disappointing winger ever find his 93-point magic again? Not under a defense-first coach he won't. I think 60-65 points is the best you can expect from Cheechoo in the current situation. Even a new coach won't push him back above the 80-point mark, as a lot of his magic with Thornton is gone.

Brian Campbell – His astounding numbers since joining the Sharks tapered off when the team tightened up defensively and played a very safe game in the post-season. When the Sharks score just 30 goals in 13 games there are not many points to go around. San Jose wants him back and odds are he will stay. His regular season output indicates 60 points is in the cards for him, but think of the potential if the rest of the team scored more.

Milan Michalek – The Czech winger should be an 80-point player by now. Following up a 66-point season with just 55 is beyond disappointing, though earning just four points in 13 post-season games is even worse. It is starting to look as if 70 points is out of reach for him under the current coaching system.

As for Ron Wilson's future – Doug Wilson was quoted in the Contra Costa *Times* on his coach's future after the team was eliminated: "We haven't even started the in-depth

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evaluations that we do every year at the end of the season," the GM said. "Change takes place; it's a natural course of this business. But we try not to make decisions on emotions and we take the time to meet with everybody."

Injuries, from a fantasy league perspective: San Jose rookie Devin Setoguchi will undergo a pair of surgeries in the near future. He will have surgery on his left shoulder, as well as a sports hernia operation, but will be fine for training camp... Tampa Bay pivot Jeff Halpern suffered severe damage to his knee at the World Hockey Championship. The injury will put him on the shelf until November at the earliest and perhaps as late as January. He had 18 points in 19 games after joining the Lightning in the Brad Richards trade and it would have been interesting to see how Halpern would have done over a full season, although he probably wouldn't get more than 55 points in a perfect situation. It seemed as if Tampa gave him the perfect situation, but that's down the toilet now.