

Non-Playoff Teams Summer Outlook VII

Written by Dobber

Sunday, 15 June 2008 05:15 - Last Updated Monday, 16 June 2008 16:55



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The final part of a seven-part review takes a look at the teams that failed to reach the postseason and what kind of impact each of them will have on your keeper-league squad. We'll close it off with a look at St.Louis and Vancouver.

St. Louis Blues

Possibly on the way out...

I doubt David Backes will get an offer sheet, but you never know. Martin Rucinsky will probably retire, while Mike Johnson will have trouble finding an NHL job. I don't understand that last one, but he had such a tough time getting a contract a year ago and his shoulder injury will make

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things even more difficult this year.

The team will be looking to add...

As part of the youth movement, I don't see any big acquisitions this summer. T.J. Oshie will certainly be on the team in the fall and could be a No.2 center right away. Patrik Berglund is reportedly spending his summer in St. Louis and has also added the strength and bulk that he was lacking last fall – he should make the team as well. With Oshie, Berglund and Andy McDonald up the middle, the need for Keith Tkachuk to play there disappears, so you may see the veteran back in his natural left-wing position. Look for Ben Bishop to take the backup role, and with Manny Legace's injury history...Bishop could see 30 or more games.

General fantasy outlook...

St. Louis is on the right track, but is probably still another two years away from the playoffs. This time, they should finally have several players clearing the 70-point mark. Defensively, they should be one of the best.

Vancouver Canucks

Possibly on the way out...

Markus Naslund has reportedly sold his Vancouver home, and Brendan Morrison is also as good as gone. Trevor Linden has retired, Curtis Sanford is off to Europe and Brad Isbister and Aaron Miller are also likely gone.

The team will be looking to add...

While it is not a complete re-tooling, the 'Nucks will clearly have a different look next season. The Pavol Demitra rumors won't go away, and goaltender Alex Auld is also expected to come back to Vancouver as a backup. The veteran Demitra has become somewhat injury prone and under the Vancouver system (i.e. defense) you should not expect him to tally 70 points. The team once again needs another top-six forward. Here's hoping they don't solve that problem with Brad Isbister again. With a little more cap room, they should do a better job of it this time. As well - a full season out of Kevin Bieksa transforms this defense and solves a lot of problems for Vancouver.

General fantasy outlook...

The Canucks will replace (probably upgrading) Naslund and Morrison, and their defensemen – who were ravaged by injuries last year – get a clean slate. That alone should get this team into the postseason. However, postseason or not, their style will not allow for goals. The Sedins topping out at 80 points will have poolies banging their heads against the wall...but that's what you can expect.

Be sure to check in next week when I run down the players to keep an eye on from the Entry Draft (on June 20).

Are you in a keeper league? If so, then you need an edge. That edge is in which prospects you select in your summer re-entry draft and there is only one place that can help you out there – www.dobberhockey.com. For the second year in a row, Dobber's Fantasy Prospects Report is

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