

Part 1

The second part of a two-part look at some training camp battles with fantasy implications.

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The battles on the blueline are, generally speaking, for a No. 6 or 7 spot, with the winners seeing – at best – 30 points this year. We'll run through them quickly before taking a closer look at the forwards.

Carolina: Bryan Rodney vs. Jamie McBain. With Anton Babchuk gone (KHL), a spot opens up for one of these youngsters.

Anaheim: Luca Sbisa vs. Steve Eminger. The latter has the advantage due to a one-way contract and the fact that the former needs to be in the top five or the team won't waste his development.

Boston: Andy Wozniewski vs. Johnny Boychuk. The winner will be the No.7 rearguard.

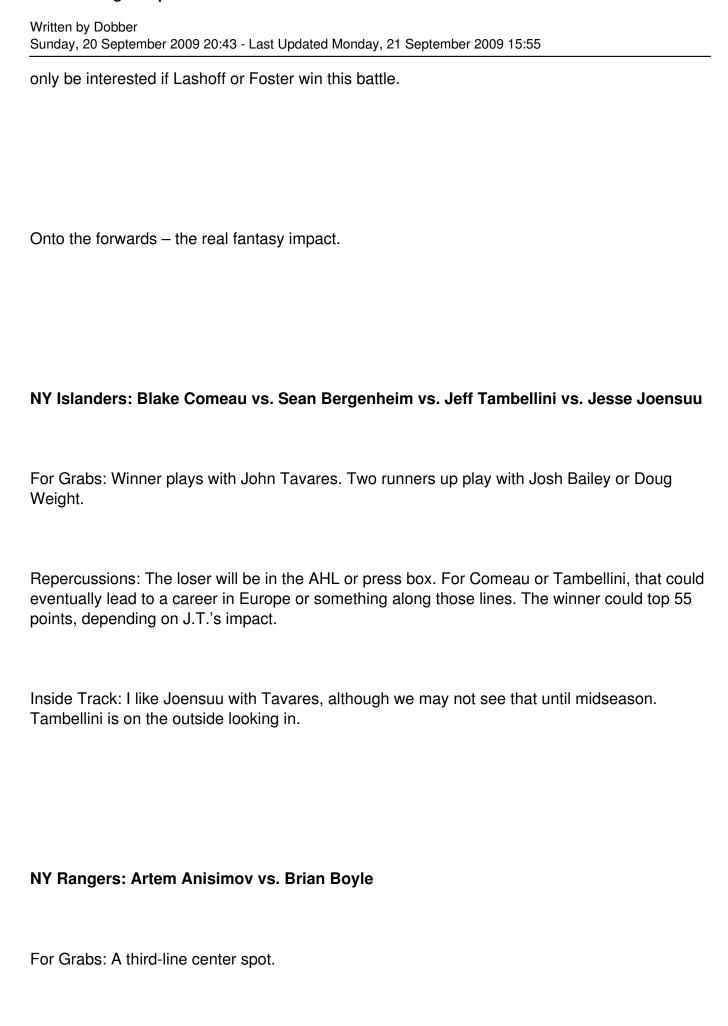
Dallas: Ivan Vishnevsky vs. Jeff Woywitka. The latter is running out of chances.

Nashville: Cody Franson vs. Jonathan Blum vs. Teemu Laakso. Two spots with three vying.

New Jersey: Cory Murphy vs. Matthew Corrente. Murphy needs to stay healthy and if so he will get some PP time if he wins this battle.

St. Louis: Steve Wagner vs. Alex Pietrangelo vs. Brenden Bell. All three have offensive ability and two of them could make the team.

Tampa Bay: Matt Lashoff vs. Kurtis Foster vs. Matt Smaby vs. Matt Walker. Poolies will



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Repercussions: Another year in the AHL for the loser. You can't have too many of those when you're in your early 20's.

Inside Track: Anisimov has proven superior in training camp thus far.

Ottawa: Ryan Shannon vs. Mike Fisher or Shannon vs. Jonathan Cheechoo

For Grabs: Two spots in the top six.

Repercussions: Shannon was out of chances last year, yet he still got one more. He did well with it, but he needs to build on that or he will be a career minor leaguer. Fisher is best suited for the third line so if the Sens try Shannon back and center and it works, then the issue is solved. Cheechoo will be a top six winger for at least the first 20 games. If Shannon can't get the No.2 center job then he'll have to wait for Cheechoo to flounder for his next (and probably final) opportunity.

Inside Track: The easy answer is 'Fisher and Cheechoo'. I have to go with the easy answer, as much as I like what I've heard about Shannon these past seven months. Fisher's recent hat trick only helps him.

Philadelphia: James van Riemsdyk vs. Patrick Maroon

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For Grabs: A third-line spot

Repercussions: Nothing serious. Either a 30-point rookie season or a one-year delay before making the show.

Inside Track: As well as Maroon has played, you have to still give the edge to their golden boy JVR.

Phoenix: Petr Prucha vs. Taylor Pyatt vs. Radim Vrbata vs. Kyle Turris vs. Mikkel Boedker

For Grabs: The entire second line

Repercussions: Assuming Matt Lombardi, Peter Mueller and Shane Doan are already in the top six (with Mueller probably right wing or possibly center, depending on how Turris does).

Inside Track: Vrbata and Turris. I think Pyatt will initially get a top six spot, but when he fails to produce (as always happens with him) it will be Boedker.

Pittsburgh: Luca Caputi vs. Eric Tangradi vs. Chris Conner vs. Ryan Bayda vs. Konstantin Pushkarev

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For Grabs: Many auditions on a line with either Sidney Crosby or Evgeni Malkin.

Repercussions: Obviously huge.

Inside Track: Ruslan Fedotenko, Chris Kunitz and Bill Guerin will all see time on those lines, so this battle is technically for just one spot. However, if two players proved themselves, coach Dan Bylsma wouldn't mind. Caputi had the edge after a strong prospect camp, but Tangradi has shown far more once exhibition season started.

Tampa Bay: Steve Downie vs. Martins Karsums vs. Drew Miller vs. Carter Ashton

For Grabs: A spot on a line with Vincent Lecavalier and Alex Tanguay.

Repercussions: Possibly numbers in the 50-point range.

Inside Track: Most people pick Downie for this spot, but I've always figured Karsums to be a better fit (and a more disciplined one), with Miller as a long shot. How about 'D', none of the above? Ashton was in camp basically for the experience, as team brass certainly didn't want to rush him. But he has shown excellent poise and maturity and has already seen some game action on the big line. Watch this situation closely.

Toronto: Tyler Bozak vs. Rickard Wallin vs. Jason Allison vs. Nazem Kadri; Viktor Stalberg vs. Christian

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Hanson

For Grabs: Lots going on in Toronto. The No.3 center job and a top six winger job, with lots of candidates.

Repercussions: Either job could see a 45-point player this year.

Inside Track: Bozak and Stalberg are having an excellent camp. So is Kadri, but he would be best served with one more year of junior.

Vancouver: Sergei Shirokov vs. Mason Raymond vs. Mikael Samuelsson

For Grabs: A spot on the Sedin line.

Repercussions: The difference between 30 to 40 points and 45 to 60 points.

Inside Track: It's Samuelsson's spot to lose, but so far he might be losing it – to Shirokov, who is having an excellent camp.