

Pavel Datsyuk - Back on Track

Written by Dobber

Friday, 26 January 2007 11:32 -

By Darryl Dobbs - also posted by Dobber's Affiliates. Pavel Datsyuk has managed to do what nobody thought he would do three weeks ago – get back on pace for a 75-point season. Fifteen points in seven games has certainly changed that opinion.



Tom Pichrean/Getty Images

The 28-year-old kicked off the year with just 15 points in 25 games, which was barely on pace for a 50-point season. Those numbers were unrealistically low and I had said at the time that he would turn his season around and tally around 70. Detroit as a team was not scoring and it seemed as though they would not have a single player get 75 points. However, they have found that extra gear of late with 38 goals in their last nine contests.

Prior to the run, the Red Wings were focusing on defense and the only player up front who was scoring was Daniel Cleary. Interestingly enough, now that the team is scoring with more frequency, Cleary has gone pointless in eight contests. He is certainly not the reason for the surge, nor is rearguard Mathieu Schneider, who has missed the last three games with a knee injury and went pointless in two before that.

Besides Datsyuk, there are other players who have turned their offense around. Tomas Holmstrom has 14 points in his last 12 games playing mostly with Datsyuk. The third member of the line, Henrik Zetterberg, has 13 points in nine games. Rearguard Nicklas Kronwall, who so many poolies expected big things from this year, has seven points in his last nine games – not bad considering he had five in 36 before that!

The Wings seem to have two lines that can score now and it is making all the difference...

Meanwhile...

Ottawa's Chris Kelly has 10 points in his last four games and has 14 in his last eight. Obviously



he would make a great short-term pickup seeing that he is playing with Daniel Alfredsson and Dany Heatley, but I am not ready to recommend him for the long-term. His pedigree is that of a hardworking 40-point player who has to fight for every point that he gets. He reminds me of Washington's Chris Clark, another 30- or 40-point player who is thriving on a big line. When Jason Spezza returns to the lineup, expect Mike Comrie to be moved to the wing and the pair will form a potent second line. When Mike Fisher returns, he will form what could be the best third line in the NHL with Antoine Vermette and Patrick Eaves...

Calgary has won all four games that they have played without Jarome Iginla. Furthermore, they have 17 goals in that span. During those four games, Iginla's linemates Daymond Langkow and Alex Tanguay have six points and five points respectively, while Kristian Huselius (five points) and Matthew Lombardi (four points) have also been doing well...

Florida pivot Stephen Weiss has had two consecutive three-point games...

Ottawa rearguard Wade Redden is on a six-game point streak in which he has nine points. His injuries are all healed up and now he is playing (and producing) the way he should. Kudos to the sharp poolies out there who scooped this guy up cheap when his owners were no doubt sour on him a month ago...

Ric Jackman is making another early impact with a new team. He has four points in his last three games with Anaheim. He will continue to produce for another two or three weeks before finding himself in the press box upon Chris Pronger's return...