

Hurricanes create offensive storm

Written by Dobber

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Far and away the Carolina Hurricanes have more goals per game this season than any other NHL squad.

There's a line that would have had you laughing in September, especially when looking at the talent on the rosters of the Penguins, Sabres, Senators, or the newly revamped Rangers. After all, this is a team that finished 13th in total offense one season ago and the only change they have made to their roster was to bring back Matt Cullen and to add Jeff Hamilton.

Perhaps that was enough. Whatever the reason, if you take a look at the top several teams in your fantasy league right now, you will notice that those squads have the likes of Rod Brind'Amour, Cory Stillman, Eric Staal, Justin Williams and Cullen on them.

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Cullen?

Yes, the third-liner who recently celebrated his 31st birthday and who has a career high of 49 points has been a major fantasy factor through 17 contests. Only selected in the deepest of pools, or else a waiver wire pickup, Cullen has consistently put up the numbers in his second tour of duty with the Canes with 18 points in his past 14 games.

It seems that every season the Hurricanes grab a player with zero value in fantasy circles and turn him into a stud.

Two years ago, after the lockout, Brind'Amour was coming off back-to-back seasons of 37 and 38 points and he had gone five straight campaigns with less than 57. The surprise of his 70 points that year was only surpassed by the shock of his 82 points the following one.

Last season it was Ray Whitney's turn. After seasons of 43 and 55 points, the then 34-year-old posted a career-high 83 points.

Is it Cullen's turn this time around? I wouldn't bet too much on it...but then again, last December I was screaming at my readers to trade Whitney while he was still hot and the December before that I was doing the same thing about Brind'Amour. I'm going to leave the door open on this one for now.

Incidentally, both Brind'Amour (23 points) and Whitney (19 points) are continuing to be fantasy studs, with no signs of slowing down. Another big factor is the return to form of Stillman, who has been a monster this season with 22 points in just 14 games; converting on nine of his 36 shots – six on the power play.

The Canes have their PP rolling and are currently second in the league right now at 26.1 percent (24 goals). A lot of this has to do with Hamilton, who was brought in to anchor the blueline with the man advantage – even though he is a forward. The Canes lack a true quarterback, but Hamilton has fit the bill so far. Eight of his 12 points are on the PP.

Everything is rolling for Carolina right now – jump on the bandwagon while you can...

Farm Report: Toronto rearguard Anton Stralman has been very impressive in his North American debut. He has not looked out of place with the Leafs and he has seven points in seven games with the Marlies. Now that Pavel Kubina is on the shelf (knee), Stralman will remain with the big club and will see some time on the power play. He bears watching for this season and certainly for down the road if you are in a keeper league...Los Angeles prospect Teddy Purcell currently leads the American League in scoring with 20 points in 13 games.

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Purcell was a college standout for Maine and was signed by the Kings as a free agent. The 22-year-old needs to add bulk, but besides that he looks like a solid prospect on a Kings team that will boast a pile of offense in coming years.

(taken from my article in THN November 12)

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