

Capital Gains

Written by Dobber

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You see it practically every time a coach gets the pink slip. Heck, you saw it six games into the season when Atlanta fired coach Bob Hartley.

The team gets hot and the slumping stars go on a tear.

Sure, it took the Thrashers a couple of games to get going under interim coach/GM Don Waddell, but once they started rolling, fantasy leagues were turned on their ear. Ilya Kovalchuk had four points in six games under Hartley – but he has an astonishing 27 points in his last 12 games.

Well guess what? Another coach has been let go and his former team carries a certain Russian superstar who has been producing below expectations.

If you're slow to catch on, what I am saying is – pick up Washington players right now. Their power play has been abysmal, ranking 24th in the league despite bringing in proven power play

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specialists over the summer. A new coach will turn that around – if only temporarily.

Naturally, Alex Ovechkin will be impossible to get. So go after the beneficiaries of Ovechkin's almost-certain resurgence. Chris Clark, Viktor Kozlov, Alexander Semin, Tom Poti and Nicklas Backstrom are all candidates to really step up their game. Rotisserie owners should be scanning the waiver wire for any or all of these players and/or looking into the trade route. If they can be had for cheap, you will be well rewarded.

Admittedly, this "new coach" strategy doesn't always work, but when you couple it with the fact Alexander Semin is now back from his ankle injury, it looks very promising. Give Semin a couple more games to get his timing before he really takes off. I compare it to the Atlanta situation with Marian Hossa, who missed time with a groin injury. Once he got his timing back after a few games, the Thrashers really flew.

As for Alex Ovechkin, I still feel he will finish in the top three in league scoring. If that happens, the coaching change will be the catalyst...

Injuries, from a fantasy league perspective: With the shoulder injury to Patrick Eaves, the Sens have recalled Alexander Nikulin, who has 10 points in 14 American League games. Nikulin has some upside, so depending on where the Sens play him he is worth keeping an eye on. Eaves is officially out "indefinitely," but I would count on three to six weeks...Manny Fernandez is recovering from a knee injury, but just when he got close he suffered back spasms. Just keep riding the Tim Thomas wave for the next several weeks...Carolina's Erik Cole (neck) has been cleared for full contact. His return will spark his linemates, who slumped without him. Eric Staal and Cory Stillman will start to roll again.

Farm Report: Columbus prospect Derick Brassard, who sustained a broken jaw when he collided with a Syracuse teammate a week ago, will be out of the lineup until just before Christmas. He was having a fantastic American League rookie season...Montreal prospect Sergei Kostitsyn (brother of current Hab, Andrei), is off to an excellent start to his pro career with 17 points in 16 games for Hamilton. He is adapting quickly to the AHL, unlike his brother who took a couple of years to get rolling. This is just a hunch, but when he gets to Montreal for good in a year or two, he will get his brother's game going, as well.

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