

Non-Playoff Teams Summer Outlook

Written by Dobber

Sunday, 29 April 2007 09:25 - Last Updated Monday, 30 April 2007 17:18



Part one in 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. This week, we take a look at Boston and Carolina.

Boston Bruins

Possibly on the way out...

General manager Peter Chiarelli has already locked up the core of this team, so the Bruins will not lose any major pieces to their chemistry puzzle. Petr Tenkrat, Jeff Hoggan and Jeremy Reich are all scheduled to become unrestricted free agents, as is rearguard Bobby Allen. Brandon Bochenski, Andrew Alberts and Dennis Wideman need to be signed, but are restricted free agents. The usual Glen Murray trade buzz has died down with his groin-injury problems (he should be fine for training camp), but recent rumors involving a Tim Thomas trade have surfaced.

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The team will be looking to add...

The thinking behind the Thomas rumors is the fact that the Bruins may try to add an elite goaltender in the summer, using Hannu Toivonen as the backup. Their goals against ranked 29th in the league, so not only would an upgrade in goaltending help, but they will also be on the lookout for an elite stay-at-home defenseman to compliment Zdeno Chara. Andrew Ference is good, but is more of a No. 5 guy than a No.2.

General fantasy outlook...

From a fantasy standpoint, the Bruins will be concentrating on shoring up their defense. Success in this will ensure that the plus/minus of each player will vastly improve for next year. Poolies will also look forward to full seasons in their new environment from the likes of Brandon Bochenski (22 points in 31 games for Boston), Stanislav Chistov (played most of his tenure with a wonky knee, but underwent surgery) and Chuck Kobasew (concussion problems all year). The hot and cold Bochenski could be in line for 60-plus points next season, while either of Kobasew or Chistov are capable of the same thing – albeit with far less certainty. All in all, this team is on the right track, but unless they rock the NHL with something drastic for their defense, they will be playing golf next April once again.

Carolina Hurricanes

Possibly on the way out...

Scott Walker, Anson Carter, Josef Vasicek, Glen Wesley and David Tanabe are all slated to be UFA's this summer. Of the group, only Walker has a solid possibility of returning. The team will also need to get goaltender Cam Ward under contract.

The team will be looking to add...

Ward's signing will eat up a lot of cap space, but the 'Canes will still have a good \$4 to \$6 million to work with, thanks to the cap increasing. Unless Harrison Reed can stun the coaching staff in training camp, this team is in desperate need of scoring wingers. Andrew Ladd's improved play will help. They are also lacking an elite No.1 defenseman. Locking up Ray Whitney and having Cory Stillman for a full year helps with the former issue, but Frantisek Kaberle is not the answer to the latter issue. He is more of a No.2 or No.3 guy. Carolina will be out shopping to solve these two problems.

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General fantasy outlook...

Eric Staal is not a 70-point player: he is a 90-point player. He will most assuredly bounce back next season, however that improved production will be counteracted by the decline of Whitney. The 34-year-old is coming off a career season, but he had just 15 points in his last 22 contests. 65 to 70 points is more his comfort zone. Another year of experience under Ward's belt will work wonders, so the Hurricanes truly need that elite defenseman to put it all together. If they find one, they are back in the playoffs. If they don't, it will be another dogfight. Carolina could have six players reach the 70-point mark next year, so it would be tough to count them out.