

Secondary support at the Igloo

Written by Dobber

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Ten games into the season and the Penguins are averaging three goals per game. That's one goal per game less than where they should be, given their talent level.

Think about it. With 10 more goals this season, there would be 25 more points - give or take - to go around. Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin would likely have a few more points each, but the main beneficiaries would be the secondary offense. The fact players such as Ryan Malone, Colby Armstrong, Jordan Staal and Erik Christensen have yet to record their fourth point of the season is the very reason Pittsburgh has 10 less goals than they should.

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There is nothing wrong with the top power play unit of Crosby, Malkin, Petr Sykora, Sergei Gonchar and Ryan Whitney. It's when that second unit comes onto the ice that opposition goaltenders lean casually against their net and sip confidently on their water bottles as the play goes on.

Poolies are frustrated, to say the least. With Malkin and Crosby as the top two pivots, poolies scrambled to scoop up other Penguins forwards in hopes they will be one of the four wingers playing on the big two lines. Instead, what has happened is coach Michel Therrien has thrown two wunderkinds on a line together. Now, instead of four golden spots for your dark horse hopeful to play on, there is only one and that is the right wing on the top line...

In a related topic, it is looking more and more as if Pens veteran Mark Recchi is finally slowing down. His seven assists in 10 games put him at a 57-point pace and I am starting to believe that is where he will end up. He was demoted to the fourth line for Saturday's contest against the Habs...

With Dan Boyle still out of the Tampa Bay lineup, defenseman Paul Ranger has stepped in nicely. The 23-year-old has nine points in nine. Surprisingly, only one of those points was earned during a power play...

Injuries, from a fantasy league perspective: San Jose winger Ryane Clowe sustained a knee injury Saturday and was placed on injured reserve. No timetable has been given for his return. The Sharks recalled rookie Devin Setoguchi from Worcester. Setoguchi will see his first NHL action and he certainly bears watching, but in all likelihood his ice time will be limited.

Farm Report: There is a reason why Cal Clutterbuck was recalled from Houston this past weekend to fill in for the injured Pavol Demitra instead of training camp standouts Petr Kalus and Benoit Pouliot. Simply put, Kalus and Pouliot have been horrible since their return to the American League. Pouliot has one point in five games, while Kalus has just one in six and is minus-3.

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