

Taking Advantage of Opportunity

Written by Russ Miller

Thursday, 14 October 2010 10:03 - Last Updated Thursday, 14 October 2010 23:31



It was an ugly scene last Monday with Jason Pominville being escorted off the ice on a stretcher after being hammered into the boards by Chicago's Niklas Hjalmarsson. With the NHL's discipline czar dishing out a two game suspension, all that's left to figure out is who might benefit from Pominville's absence?

Nathan Gerbe drew into the line-up last night. For those who haven't seen the pint-sized fireplug play, he is versatile (can play all three forward positions) and offensively gifted.

Taking Advantage of Opportunity

Written by Russ Miller

Thursday, 14 October 2010 10:03 - Last Updated Thursday, 14 October 2010 23:31

Gerbe recorded 68 points in 43 games for Boston College in 2007-08. The following year, he turned professional and was named AHL Rookie of the Year, scoring 30 goals and 56 points in 57 games. His second pro season was split between the AHL (38 points in 44 games) and the NHL where he had five points in 10 games.

If Coach Ruff decides to substitute Gerbe directly for the injured Pominville, he would line up with the talented Tim Connolly and sniper Thomas Vanek. Gerbe might also be in line for some power play time. He would still need to step up and take advantage of this opportunity. Note: Last night Gerbe received only 10:48 minutes of ice time, including 1:48 on the power play.

Infirmiry Island?

One interesting storyline is taking shape is with the New York Islanders. You may have noticed that the Isles have some issues with serious injuries to their best players; Mark Streit and Kyle Okposo are both out for *months* with shoulder injuries and John Tavares is currently sitting out with a concussion. That's three of their top offensive players.

Taking Advantage of Opportunity

Written by Russ Miller

Thursday, 14 October 2010 10:03 - Last Updated Thursday, 14 October 2010 23:31

Despite those key injuries, heading into last night's games, the Islanders were one of the top scoring teams in the league, recording ten goals over their first two games. Fully half their goals had come via the power play that was clicking at a gaudy 38.5 per cent.

What's left is a collection of mainly cast-offs and late bloomers that have overachieved thus far in 2010-11. The top three lines are Josh Bailey-Blake Comeau-P.A. Parenteau, Doug Weight-Nino Niederreiter-Michael Grabner and Trent Hunter-Matt Moulson-Frans Nielsen. Not exactly something opposing coaches are drawing up plans on the chalkboard to defend against. So who's picking up the slack on Long Island?

One Islander player who looks rejuvenated is **Doug Weight**. The 39-year-old is tied for the team lead (Comeau and Bailey are the other two), recording four points in the first three games this season. He's averaging nearly 20 minutes of ice time per game while playing with rookie Nino Neiderreiter and the speedy Michael Grabner. Last night, Weight set up rookie El Nino for his first NHL goal. Waiver wire pick up Michael Grabner added the second assist.

Does this mean you should run out and pick up Weight if he's available on your waiver wire? Maybe. He could be a decent short term call up, especially in a points only league.

What's with **Clarke MacArthur** and his four goals this year? He had 16 goals all of last year! He's playing on a line with Mikhail Grabovski and Nikolai Kulemin, two guys who are underrated skill-wise. MacArthur has a history of being a bit of a streaky player, so don't get all worked up

Taking Advantage of Opportunity

Written by Russ Miller

Thursday, 14 October 2010 10:03 - Last Updated Thursday, 14 October 2010 23:31

and think that he'll finish with 35-40 tallies. Ratchet those expectations down to about 25 for this season.

Sticking with the **Maple Leafs**, it's kind of nice to see *Canada's team* atop the NHL standings! Two years ago, I thought the Leafs were overachievers and then last year, they grossly underachieved. This year should see the Leafs at least challenge for a playoff spot. Note: I am NOT a Leaf fan, so please refrain from accusing me of being one, it's insulting...I'm an Oiler fan!

Thursday Trivia Time - Doug Weight is one of only 25 NHL players who have hit the century mark in points from the 1995-96 season onwards. Less than half of those 25 players went on to repeat the feat. Eleven players managed to record 100 points twice during that period and only six of them were able to hit the mark three times or more.

Name the six players who have recorded three or more 100 point seasons since the 48 game lock out season. Cheaters, please let others try to answer before using Google!