Last week, we had a look at early season success stories. This week, we'll cover 10 slow starting veteran players based in the Eastern Conference and try to figure out if this is simply a slow start or a sign of things to come.

David Clarkson - RW - New Jersey (10-1-0-1)

Last year after 10 games, Clarkson had eight points, on his way to an abbreviated (due to a broken leg) 46 game, 24 point season. While many, ah heck, most of us poolies think of Clarkson as a low point, high penalty minute producer, he has shown some offensive prowess at every level he's played. In his final year of junior hockey, he had 54 points in 51 games and in his last AHL year, he recorded 38 points in 67 games (47 points pro-rated). His lack of production this season is not due to diminished ice time because the minutes are virtually identical to last season, so it comes down to line-mates.

Verdict: Unless the new coach decides to put Clarkson on a line with Zach Parise and Travis Zajac for an extended look, he will continue to disappoint in the points department this season.

Alex Kovalev - RW - Ottawa (8-0-1-1)

Of course as I sit down to write this (Tuesday night), Kovalev has his best game of the year recording two goals and one assist.

Kimmo Timonen - D - Philadelphia (9-0-0-0)

The Finnish blueliner has averaged 46 points over the last five seasons. He has a history of poor results in October, at least points-wise. Timonen still receives the top power play and overall ice time per game on the Flyers, even more than Chris Pronger (for now).

Verdict: Hold fast, he's still a lock for 40 points.

Chris Pronger - D - Philadelphia (7-0-2-2)

Over the last six seasons, Pronger has averaged 52.5 points. He has scored more than 50 points in a season for four different teams during that period! With 55 regular season points and 18 points in 23 playoff games last year, Pronger is not yet ready to mail it in.

Verdict: Pronger is still a dominant defenseman and a force to be reckoned with at both ends of the ice. As he goes, so go the Flyers.

Nik-frito-lay Zherdev - RW - Philadelphia (9-2-0-2)

His signing this off-season had me puzzled. Weren't the Flyers one of the deeper teams in the league at forward? In Zherdev's last two NHL campaigns, he recorded 58 and 61 points and he spent the previous season in the KHL. He's only receiving 12:36 in ice time per game, nearly two full minutes less than JVR and a bit more than Darroll Powe.

Verdict: If I owned Zherdev, I wouldn't feel too comfortable. He has limited upside (60 points) this season and just isn't worth the heartache. There are safer plays out there.

Jason Pominville - RW - Buffalo (3-0-0-0)

Three games hardly qualify as a slow start, but if another owner got impatient and dropped Pominville, it would be wise to snap him up and place him on your injured reserve or bench. Before the Hjalmarsson hit, the durable 27-year-old hadn't missed a game over the last four seasons while averaging 69 points.

Verdict: Though currently injured, Pominville is very close to returning. Once he comes back, I'd be willing to bet that he'll assume his old form in no time.

Marc-Andre Fleury - G - Pittsburgh (1-4-0, 3.41, 0.861)

Everyone remembers Martin Brodeur and Roberto Luongo on Team Canada's 2010 Olympic roster, but how quickly do people forget that Fleury was chosen as Canada's third goaltender? The first overall pick in the 2003 entry draft played 21 NHL games as an 18-year-old, unheard of since Tom Barrasso jumped straight from high school to the big leagues, appearing in 42 games for Buffalo in 1983-84. The table below shows Fleury's last four seasons:

SEASON

AGE

GS

WINS

SHUTOUTS

GAA

SV%

SAVES

06/07

21

65

40

5

2.83

0.906

1770

07/08

22

33

19

4

2.33

0.921

837

08/09

23

61

35

4

2.67

0.912

1688

09/10

24

66

37

1

2.65

0.905

1604

Verdict: Brent Johnson is not a threat to steal more than 20-25 starts. Fleury is in his seventh NHL season and at a stage in his career where you can count on him to deliver at least 35 wins and a not so hot 2.65 goals-against-average.

Brian Gionta - RW - Montreal (9-1-1-2)

The little leader that could logs the third most average time on the ice amongst Habs forwards as well as first unit power play time. In the four years since his 89 point season, Gionta has scored at a 58.5 point pace.

Verdict: Montreal's new captain will be just fine once he gets settled in. A 55 point season

should be a given.

Nik Antropov - C - Atlanta (8-0-1-1)

Where is the player who has averaged 61 points over the last three seasons? Antropov recorded a career high 67 points last year for the Thrashers. This season, he's averaging an even 14 minutes of ice time per game, nearly a full minute less than rookie Alexander Burmistrov. He still gets second unit power play time.

Verdict: It certainly looks like Antropov hasn't fully recovered from off-season hip surgery. He was supposed to be one of the offensive leaders on a young Thrashers team. He'll eventually get back on track, but will have trouble reaching 60 points this year.

Simon Gagne - LW - Tampa Bay (6-0-0-0)

The former two time 40 goal scorer is only 30-years-old, but the NHL has been hard on his body. He's missed 84 games over the last three seasons. During last year's playoffs, Gagne scored a respectable 12 points in 19 games. This year, playing over 60 per cent of the time with Vincent Lecavalier, Gagne has laid a hat trick of goose eggs in the scoring department. The sad truth is that checker Adam Hall (no relation to Taylor Hall) has been a better fantasy option so far this season on the Lightning.

Verdict: Gagne was receiving nearly 18 minutes of ice time per contest and gets top power play minutes on a potentially lethal power play. If your risk tolerance is high, give him more time to see if he can discover the right fit on his new team, otherwise bail now.

Mike Green - D - Washington (6-0-1-1)

I almost feel stupid putting him on this list. If you are even considering trading Green in any league format, give your head a shake. The guy has *averaged* 25 goals, 75 points, plus-32, 61 penalty minutes, 37 power play points and 224 shots on goal over the last two seasons. Adding the talented John Carlson to the mix will only help the offense. Some say that Carlson's presence will hurt Green's production, but the rookie is not stealing any ice time away from Green, so I'm not sure how adding another offensive piece hurts.

Verdict: The most dominant fantasy defenseman in the NHL. Duh.

Thursday Trivia Time

Name the only two players to finish with a negative plus/minus from Canada's 2010 Olympic

gold medal winning men's hockey team. Bonus marks if you state the link between the two players. Again, please refrain from simply looking up the answer, let people post their guesses first.