

## Hurricanes Rock...and Other Random Thoughts

Written by Russ Miller

Tuesday, 12 March 2013 11:41 - Last Updated Wednesday, 13 March 2013 08:22

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*Miller discusses the Hurricanes, the Tavares line, Subban and more...*

Last season, the Carolina Hurricanes finished last in arguably the weakest division in the NHL. They were aggressive during the summer and went out and got [Jordan Staal](#) , sending promising Center

[Brandon Sutter](#)

to Pittsburgh, plus they also signed unrestricted free agent

[Alexander Semin](#)

. The Hurricanes took a large financial risk signing the enigmatic and oft-injured Russian to a one year, \$7-million contract, but it is paying off handsomely for both parties involved.

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[Alexander Semin](#) has 15 points in his last eight games played. In those eight matches, he has four three point efforts. Carolina is 6-2-0 over the last eight games and in the two losses, Semin was kept off the scoresheet.

On the season, Semin has 26 points in 24 games, 80 shots on goal and sits third in the NHL with a plus-18 rating. In his final two campaigns with Washington, Semin recorded back to back 54 point efforts. In the two seasons prior to that, he had 84 points in 73 games and 79 points in 62 games. Now, he just needs to stay healthy.

If you told me that [Jiri Tlusty](#) would be leading Carolina in goals at the midway point of the season, you would have been called crazy. I would have chosen one of the Staal boys, Semin or even some guy named [Jeff Skinner](#) over the soon to be 25-year-old. Tlusty has played well over three-quarters of his even-strength shifts on a line with [Alexander Semin](#) and [Eric Staal](#)

. He has 21 points in 24 games and sits eighth in the NHL in both plus/minus (plus-16) and goals (13). He has nine points in his last six games.

[Brad Boyes](#) has been skating with [John Tavares](#) and [Matt Moulson](#) , a prime gig for sure. He has 14 points in his last 16 contests and 21 points in 26 games on the season. He is owned in only 20 percent of Yahoo! leagues and his spot on the top line is as secure as it gets. See P.A. Parenteau's role when he was with the Islanders; Boyes has effectively replaced Parenteau on that line and his points are legitimate.

So the question is, can he sustain this pace? Last season, he had 23 points in 65 games, but the year before that, he had a combined 55 points in 83 games for the Sabres and Blues. Boyes is only 30-years-old and has a nice role on the Island riding shotgun on the top line, so if you have an open roster spot available, feel confident in using a pick to add him to your roster.

Immediately preceding [Michael Ryder](#) 's trade back to Montreal, he ended his tenure in Dallas with a six game, nine point streak. Since the trade, Ryder has nine points in seven matches in his second go round in Montreal and sits atop the team in scoring with 23 points in 26 games.

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I'm still having a hard time giving [Paul Martin](#) his due. He's got 17 points in 24 games, including 11 in his last 11 contests. Despite the fact he receives the sixth most average power play time on ice, he only has five power play points. I keep expecting the production to stop, as the 32-year-old recorded 27 points all of last season and his career best came way back in 2005-06 when he registered 37 points with the Devils.

Another surprise for me is seeing [Kimmo Timonen](#), who turns 38-years-old next week, tied for second in defense scoring with 19 points in 27 games. Fourteen of his 19 points have come via the power play. Logic would dictate that the venerable Flyer fade down the stretch, but there really is no other offensive option on the back end in Philly.

It hasn't taken [P.K. Subban](#) long to jump into the defensemen scoring race, recording 18 points in 20 games, tied for fourth in the NHL. His six goals also tie him for the goal scoring lead amongst defensemen. He's scoring at a 74 point pace, pro-rated to 82 games. While the likelihood of any defenseman scoring 70 points in a full season is slim, I would put only [Erik Karlsson](#) and [Kris Letang](#) ahead of Subban's chances.