

What are the Chances?

Written by Justin Goldman

Monday, 24 January 2011 15:14 - Last Updated Tuesday, 25 January 2011 11:50



Another week goes by, another set of prospects get thrown into the NHL fire. On Saturday, it was Braden Holtby shutting down Toronto and receiving high praise from Don Cherry. Less than 24 hours later, Jacob Markstrom made his NHL debut in relief of Scott Clemmensen and suffered the loss. One performance was certainly way more impressive than the other, but the influence each one had on their team's goalie situation were both massive.

What are the Chances?

Written by Justin Goldman

Monday, 24 January 2011 15:14 - Last Updated Tuesday, 25 January 2011 11:50

[FANTASY MAILBAG – JANUARY 24](#)

Now more than ever before, I feel like a kid in a candy store. Tracking all of these prospects is a ball because I can project their increasing fantasy value with more insight and accuracy. And at this point in the season, understanding what kind of chances a prospect has to increase their role in the NHL allows you to better manage your fantasy team. The questions are mounting, the probabilities are shifting and opportunities are being dished out...yep...like candy.

To help make sense of all this, I've answered four "What are the chances..." questions in regards to prospects that are currently in the fantasy spotlight. These situations will surely intensify as the NHL approaches the All-Star break and then shifts gears into the playoff push. If there's another similar question you have on another prospect, be sure to drop it in today's Fantasy Mailbag, which is linked above.

Despite my projections, keep in mind that you never know what could happen next. The prospects below are capable of stepping up and winning big games for their club. They're also prone to having their value regress. That could lead to a trade, a demotion or a full-time graduation. You simply have to watch as much as you can and be sure to look deeper into their situational statistics to truly get a grasp on their development pace.

What are the Chances?

Written by Justin Goldman

Monday, 24 January 2011 15:14 - Last Updated Tuesday, 25 January 2011 11:50

What are the chances that Sergei Bobrovsky becomes the Flyers starter by next season?

Right now, Bobrovsky has a 50% chance of being the starter next season. He'll not only have to play extremely well through the regular season, but he'll have to continue to be consistent. He currently holds a five-game winning streak and has allowed two goals or less in each game. If he extends this kind of performance into the playoffs, he could write a similar story to that of Jonas Hiller and let a post-season run set him up to win the starting job.

In order to secure the starting role next year, he still needs to make some technique adjustments. Most importantly, he has to be bigger and taller in the butterfly. He still hunches over way too much and that kills his ability to eliminate space in the upper corners. He looks more comfortable moving in and out of certain save sequences and his rebound control is improving, but he still gives up a ton of space when he's down in the butterfly. If he can straighten his back and crouch more at the knees than at the shoulders, it will be a major sign he's evolving and improving.

Bobrovsky was inconsistent in December, but after an 11-day break from playing, and since Michael Leighton went down to the AHL, he has been much better. Part of this is because he's getting consistent minutes again. That has helped revive his rhythm and boost his confidence. Every goalie goes through these highs and lows, but it's a huge learning experience for Bobrovsky and that could keep him from losing confidence in this important stretch of games.

What are the Chances?

Written by Justin Goldman

Monday, 24 January 2011 15:14 - Last Updated Tuesday, 25 January 2011 11:50

What are the chances that James Reimer plays for the Maple Leafs full-time next season?

Right now, Reimer has a 60% chance of making the Leafs out of training camp next year. Most of his chances rest on the shoulders of Jean-Sebastian Giguere retiring or being traded. The Leafs would also have to be confident rolling with Reimer and Jonas Gustavsson as a tandem. This doesn't seem very plausible since they would lack a veteran presence and have one rookie and one European struggling with confidence and consistency.

With Reimer recalled for a fourth time, expect this three-goalie system to have a similar impact to the one in Philly. It will cause one or two goalies to lose their timing and rhythm and ultimately struggle. With Giguere starting tonight and then Reimer expected to start tomorrow against Tampa Bay, Gustavsson will most likely be the odd man out. But he was already struggling to begin with.

Reimer's fourth recall is a sign that roles and plans are shifting for the Leafs, but where things go from here is totally unclear. There could be a trade in the works, they could just be waiting for the right time to send Gustavsson down for a conditioning stint, or they might just let all three goalies battle it out and display their traits for other team's scouts.

Either way, Reimer's value once again receives a boost. He has opened the door for a chance at a full-time gig. With the Leafs comfortable putting Ben Scrivens in a Marlies uniform, they

What are the Chances?

Written by Justin Goldman

Monday, 24 January 2011 15:14 - Last Updated Tuesday, 25 January 2011 11:50

have two solid goalies in the AHL and that also boosts Reimer's chances of graduating to the NHL for good.

What are the chances that Braden Holtby plays for the Capitals full-time next season?

Right now, Holtby has a 40% chance of playing full-time for Washington next year. I watched him play on Saturday night and concluded that he'll be more than ready for the NHL by the end of this season. If he gets a few more games in with the Caps, it will bring him the exposure and experience needed to make Varlamov and Neuvirth expendable. And Bruce Boudreau has already confirmed that Holtby will start again tonight against the Rangers.

I can only speculate on this, but either one of the three goalies could be traded. That's a School of Block lesson by itself. So a lot of Holtby's chances heading into next season depend on what Washington chooses to do with their other two goalies. They're all under the age of 23 and they're all tremendous talents with amazing potential. It's a great position to be in for the Capitals, but a very tough decision on who to keep and who to possibly move.

Holtby would be fine spending another year in the AHL, just like Cory Schneider, Jonathan Bernier and many others have done in the past few years. So there's still a 60% chance he simply spends another year carrying the workload in the AHL. This is more likely to happen, as the Capitals could let Dany Sabourin walk, thus allowing them to bring up one of Todd Ford or Jared DeMichiel from South Carolina (ECHL) to play with Holtby in Hershey.

What are the Chances?

Written by Justin Goldman

Monday, 24 January 2011 15:14 - Last Updated Tuesday, 25 January 2011 11:50

What are the chances that Corey Crawford is Chicago's full-time starter next season?

Crawford has a 75% chance of landing the full-time starter's job for next year. He's already logging "starter" minutes in Chicago and he has already played consistently enough to earn the confidence of head coach Joel Quenneville. That's all it takes to win the job in the Windy City, as we all know Coach Q is very finicky with his goalie decisions.

A major aspect of Crawford's success heading into next season will be his ability to continue playing with a high level of confidence. In Sunday's game against the Flyers, he was rattled after allowing the first goal on a crazy scramble in the crease and never recovered from it. It was a clear sign that he's still developing the mental toughness needed to be a full-time starter in a Blackhawks uniform.

Finally, his ability to put the Blackhawks in the playoffs will have the biggest impact on his role and reputation heading into next season. If he can be a huge factor in their late-season success and then win at least one playoff series, he'll definitely improve both aspects of his career as a starter.

What are the Chances?

Written by Justin Goldman

Monday, 24 January 2011 15:14 - Last Updated Tuesday, 25 January 2011 11:50

This is a huge stretch of games for Crawford, as success will pave the way for more opportunities heading into next year's training camp. If he totally bombs, he'll not only lose confidence, but some of the luster of his long-term value will fade away. But as you can see, I'm fairly confident in his ability to not only play at the same level he's at right now, but continue to evolve and improve all areas of his game.