

## NHL Picks (Pro-line) for October 25, 2008

Written by Steve Johnson

Friday, 24 October 2008 10:41 - Last Updated Saturday, 25 October 2008 04:44

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ALL 30 teams are playing Saturday - enjoy the games, and consider some of these points when placing your friendly wagers...

New Jersey at Philadelphia 4:00 PM EST

This game time was changed to accommodate the World Series and so that Philly residents can

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go to both games. This is the back end of a home-and-home between these two division rivals. The Devils have been playing well even with big injuries to Rolston and Holik. Philly may be looking for their first win still depending on how they do on Friday night. The Devils have dominated the series and won six of the eight games last season. The Flyers did, however, post a pair of shutouts over the Devils in their 2 wins in 2007-08. The final three contests between the teams last year - two of which were won by the Devils - were decided via overtime or shootout.

New Jersey – V

Atlanta at Boston

This will be a back-to-back game for Atlanta as they played last night in Detroit. Atlanta has a good record against a Northeast division opponent since 2006-07 going 21-17-3 over that period. Boston is coming off a bad loss to Toronto and will be fired up for this game. The depth and physicality of the Bruins will be tough for the Thrashers to contend with.

Boston – H+

Ottawa at Toronto

Ottawa is struggling, they are better than this. The Sens play on Friday against Anaheim and this will be their 3rd game in 4 nights. Toronto is rested yet again. I expect Auld to get the start.

The season series was split last year with Ottawa winning the last game on April 3rd by a score of 8-2. Even though the Sens won that game, it essentially eliminated the Sens from the first round of the playoffs because of Mark Bell, the cage-wearing, AHL player who injured Alfredsson and Fisher in that game. If Toronto had anybody that could fight in their lineup, I would say to expect payback.

Ottawa – H

Anaheim at Montreal

The Ducks are playing back-to-back games and this is their final game of a three game trip through Ontario. The Ducks have the best record against the East out of any team from the Western Conference going 15-4-2 since 2006-07. Be wary though, these are not the same Ducks of previous years. Montreal is rested and will be using this game as a gauge to see how they stack up against bigger Western teams. Montreal is 11-8-2 versus the West in the last three years. Anaheim averages 22 minutes in penalties a game which could be trouble against the Habs powerplay.

Montreal – H+

Carolina at NY Islanders

Both teams are rested. The Hurricanes were playing well against Crosby and the Pens on Thursday before a third period meltdown saw them lose their 1-0 lead and eventually the game 4-1. DiPietro has been back for 2 games now, but is winless. The difference in this game may be PIM's. Carolina averages 12.2 PIM a game, the Isles average 21.5

Carolina – V+

Pittsburgh at NY Rangers

The Rangers won five of their eight meetings against the Penguins in the regular season in 2007-08, including all four at Madison Square Garden, but were eliminated by their

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Pennsylvania rival in the Eastern Conference semifinals in just five games. The Rangers (6-2-1) lead the Atlantic with 13 points and the Penguins (5-2-1) currently sit in third place with 11 points. After a hot start, the Blueshirts have lost 2 in a row; the Pens on the other hand have won their last 3 after a rougher start. This is a back-to-back game for the Rangers.

Pittsburgh – V

San Jose at Tampa Bay

Dan Boyle returns!!! For the first time in seven seasons, the Sharks defenseman returns to Tampa Bay on Saturday as a visitor. Boyle, who was traded by Tampa Bay, scored his first goal of the season with his new team 85 seconds into overtime last Saturday in a 5-4 victory over the Flyers. Star-power is something Tampa Bay could use as the club has started the season 1-2-3 under Coach Barry Melrose and is currently last in the Southeast Division. The Sharks are tops in the Pacific Division with 12 points (6-1-0) and Boyle has played a big part, chipping in with 2 goals and six points in seven games. The only thing I see going against the Sharks is that this is a back-to-back game for them and TBay is rested. San Jose is 15-6-3 versus Eastern Conference teams over the last 3 seasons.

San Jose – V+

Los Angeles at Nashville

Los Angeles has played a league low 5 games (6 after Friday night) and has been very ordinary. They average 3 goals scored per game and also 3 goals against. The Kings will be playing their second game in as many nights, but should have lots of energy because of 3 full days off prior to these weekend games. Nashville has Arnott back in their lineup after a short absence. The Preds will have to stay out of the box as they have the 3rd worst PK in the league at 74.3%. LA has a good powerplay and their PK have yet to allow a goal.

Los Angeles in a shootout – T

Columbus at Minnesota

The Blue Jackets will be in tough after playing a hard hitting Dallas team last night while the Wild rested. Columbus has a 17-21-4 record against Central division opponents since 2006-07.

The big thing that stands out to me is Hitchcock. He prides himself on matchups and he can't get those matchups on the road. In the last 3 season Columbus has a road record of 30-48-8. Compare that to Minnesota, who is the third best home team in the league over those same 3 seasons going 55-18-11. The Wild are one of two teams who have yet to lose in regulation this year.

Minnesota – H

Washington at Dallas

Both teams are rested, struggling and in the mid to lower half of the league in every stat I try to look up for this game. Every time these teams have a good game and look to have turned a corner they fall flat the next game. Since Washington has lost 3 in a row and Dallas just beat the Islanders on the strength of Ribeiro's 5 point night, I am tempted to take the Caps. These teams have not faced each other since 2006-07 when The Caps won 4-3 on the strength of Kolzig's 35 saves. That victory over Dallas gave Olaf a win against every team in the league as the Stars were the only team he had left to beat.

Dallas – H

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### Detroit at Chicago

The next time the Red Wings travel to Chicago, it will be to Wrigley Field for the Winter Classic on January 1st (I have tickets and can't wait)! Despite missing the playoffs for the ninth time in 10 seasons in 2007-08, the Blackhawks were still the first team in 15 seasons to win five games in a season against Detroit last year. Wings GM Ken Holland calls Chicago one of the best rivals they have. Being original 6 teams and having Scotty Bowman join his son in the Blackhawks front office is just extra motivation for Detroit to avenge losing the season series last season.

Chicago – H

### Florida at St. Louis

This will be the third game in 4 nights for both teams. The Panthers have been on the road and logged a lot of miles; the Blues have stayed home. It is a good thing that the Panthers only take 12.7 PIM's a game because the Blues have 5 forwards on their powerplay and it is clicking at an amazing 40% right now. The next closest is Detroit at 32% followed by Minnesota and Ottawa.

St. Louis – H

### Buffalo at Colorado

The Sabres are impressive. They have yet to lose in regulation and just beat the only other team that can still say that in the Wild. The Avs are not to be taken lightly. Six of the Avs seven games this year have seen them score 3 or more goals. Colorado leads the lead in goals for. Every game, Colorado outshoots their opponents and if it wasn't for poor goaltending this team would be a contender. The Western Conference Colorado Avalanche also boast the second best record against Eastern teams since 2006-07 going 16-6-0

Colorado – H

### Edmonton at Vancouver

The clubs split the season series in 2007-08 - Edmonton winning three of the meetings via a shootout. The Oilers looked bad against the Avs on Thursday and a lot of the game talk was about the lack of chemistry and confidence of the young players. Garon looked good though. The Canucks are currently in the midst of a six-game road trip and Saturday's game against the Oilers will be their first home contest at GM Place since a season-opening 6-0 dusting of Calgary on Oct. 9. Demitra is out.

Vancouver – H

### Calgary at Phoenix

Both teams are rested and should have lots of energy to add to their PIM totals. The Flames average the 2nd most PIM's per game with 23.7; the Coyotes are not far behind at 21.3. The Flames have dominated this series in recent years, winning 14 of the last 18 matchups and seven of nine at Phoenix, including both road meetings last season. Kiprusoff is 8-3-1 with a 2.05 GAA in 12 games versus the Coyotes.

Calgary – V

Proline Ticket \$10 pays \$72.90

Boston – H+

San Jose – V+

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