After a great start two weeks ago everything came crashing back to reality last week. I ended up down 2 bananas for the week so my two-week total looks like this:

Week 1: +13 bananas
Week 2: -2 bananas
Total: +11 bananas

Vancouver Canucks @ Pittsburgh Penguins
-Key Injuries-
VAN - Kevin Bieksa, Sami Salo, Rick Rypien
PIT - Sergei Gonchar, M.A. Fleury, Ryan Whitney

-Notes-
These two teams may not be aware of each others existence. They've only met twice since December of 2003. The Canucks and Penguins looks to be a battle of two equally-matched teams. The Penguins have the star power and Vancouver seems to be working well as a team with everyone contributing. Personally, I wouldn't touch this game with a 10-foot Pizza Sub (Hi Kyle Wellwood) but I know some of you can't resist the action. I think the home-ice advantage will allow the Pens to get the matchups they desire and will give them the slight edge.

-Prediction-
I look for Luongo to continue his stellar play but I think the Penguins PP will get one or two by him.

-Bet-
1 banana on PIT to win
1 banana on the UNDER (5.5)

New York Rangers @ Ottawa Senators
-Key Injuries-
NYR - Scott Gomez
OTT - Mike Fisher, Chris Neil, Ryan Shannon

-Notes-
Ottawa is falling faster than the Canadian Dollar. The Senators have lost at least 5 in a row...I've lost track...and the chances of turning things against the Rangers don't look good. The Rangers have the 2nd stingiest defence in the league averaging only 2.3 goals against per game. Coincidentally, the Senators have the second worst offense in the league averaging 2.3 goals for per game. Look for Ottawa to score 2.3 goals...haha, too obvious, I know...sorry. The only thing Ottawa has going for them in this matchup is that they have a better powerplay. Unfortunately, the Rangers have the second best PK at 90.1% and give up the fewest powerplay chances.

-Prediction-
Look for Lundqvist to rebound from the Vancouver onslaught and look for Ottawa to continue their non-scoring ways.

-Bet-
1 banana on NYR to win
2 bananas on the UNDER (5.5)

Columbus Blue Jackets @ Atlanta Thrashers
-Key Injuries-
CLB - Rostislav Klesla
ATL - Todd White, Zach Bogosian, Kari Lehtonen

-Notes-
Atlanta was putting together a nice little run until they went to Pennsylvania. The Keystone State (yes, I had to look that up) was not kind as they lost 1-goal games to both the Flyers and the Penguins. The Thrashers give up an average of 3.6 goals per game which is the second most in the NHL. They also allow the third most powerplay goals. A saving grace is the fact that the Blue Jackets have the worst powerplay in the league. It's clicking at only 12.1%.

-Prediction-
I look for Leclaire to rebound from his nightmare game against Edmonton where he gave up 7 goals on only 19 shots.

-Bet-
1 banana on CLB to win
1 banana on the UNDER (5.5)

Chicago Blackhawks @ Toronto Maple Leafs
-Key Injuries-
CHI - Dustin Byfuglien (healthy scratch?), James Wisniewski
TOR - Carlo Colaiacovo, John Mitchell, Mike Van Ryn

-Notes-
It's Wendel Clark night! The Maple Leafs will honour Wendel Clark by raising his #17 to the rafters. Following the ceremony they'll matchup against another one of Clark's former teams, the Chicago Backhawks. The Hawks have won two straight on their road trip and have a very good shot at making it three. They are the NHL's second highest scoring team and Toronto is the NHL's third worst defensive team. Chicago averages 3.7 goals for per game and Toronto averages 3.5 against.

BTW, I once met Wendel Cark and after having my picture taken with him I remarked that I was going to Photoshop a Montreal Canadiens jersey on him. He shot me a glare that almost gave me a concussion.

-Prediction-
Wendel Clark's former team will win. Unfortunately for Toronto, it will be the one he only played 13 games for.

-Bet-
1 banana on CHI to win
1 bananas on the OVER (5.5)

New York Islanders @ Buffalo Sabres
-Key Injuries-
NYI - Mike Comrie, Rick DiPietro, Kyle Okposo, Freddy Meyer, Thomas Pock, Mike Sillinger, Nate Thompson, Brendan Witt
BUF - Tim Connolly, Ales Kotalik

-Notes-
The Islanders have won 3 in a row and the Sabres have lost 3 in a row. NOTE: this is written before Friday's games. The meeting between these two teams earlier in the season saw Buffalo beat up on the Islanders and come away with a 7-1 victory. The Sabres have given up too many goals as of late and a matchup with the Islanders may be just what they need. New York may have won 3 of their last 4 games but they have only scored 9 goals in those games.

-Prediction-
Ryan Miller and the Sabres should put the Islanders back in their place.

-Bet-
1 banana on BUF to win
1 banana on the OVER (5.5)

Phoenix Coyotes @ Philadelphia Flyers
-Key Injuries-
PHO - Daniel Winnik
PHI - Daniel Briere, Riley Cote, Derian Hatcher, Randy Jones, Ryan Parent, Ossi Vaananen

-Notes-
Here's another rare matchup in the NHL. Phoenix is struggling to score goals right now and the result has been three losses in a row. The Flyers are coming off wins against Atlanta and Montreal and are now above .500. The Flyers give up the second most powerplay chances but Phoenix's powerplay is only clicking at 14.67%.

-Prediction-
Unless Gretzky straps on the blades and pops in a couple I expect Phoenix to continue to struggle offensively. They have plenty of young players and youngsters are prone to inconsistency. Although I guess one could argue that they are consistently not scoring...anyway...

-Bet-
1 banana on PHI to win
1 banana on the UNDER (5.5)

Boston Bruins @ Montreal Canadiens
-Key Injuries-
BOS - Andrew Ferrence, Marco Sturm

MTL - Mike Komisarek

-Notes-
It's Patrick Roy night! The Canadiens will retire Roy's #33 and Mario Tremblay will probably be nowhere near the Bell Centre. The mere presence of Roy in the building will probably strike fear in the Bruins. Truth be told, the Bruins have been playing very well. Tim Thomas has been...um...Patrick Roy-like. The Habs will be looking to rebound from the 6-1 loss to the Bruins a week and a half ago. If Montreal has any intention of winning this game however, they will need to score more than one goal. In the last five games Montreal has three losses and two wins. They've managed only one goal in each of the losses. The Habs, who allow the third most powerplays, will need to maintain their discipline as the Bruins have the league's third best powerplay.

-Prediction-
Montreal should be inspired by the Patrick Roy ceremony.

-Bet-
1 banana on MTL to win
1 banana on the UNDER (5.5)

Anaheim Ducks @ Dallas Stars
-Key Injuries-
ANA - Francois Beauchemin, Brad Larsen, Brian Sutherby
DAL - Jere Lehtinen, Joel Lundqvist, Brendan Morrow

-Notes-
Here's a matchup of underperforming teams. Dallas still has the worst defence in the league. Anaheim allows the second most PP goals in the league. I have no idea what to expect from either of these teams, although with Zubov back, it would probably be in Anaheim's best interest to stay out of the penalty box.

-Prediction-
Bobby Ryan looks like he's here to stay and looks to have some chemistry with Selanne. He could help make the difference.

-Bet-
1 banana on ANA to win
1 banana on the UNDER (5.5)

St. Louis Blues @ Minnesota Wild
-Key Injuries-
STL - Patrik Berglund, T. J. Oshie, Paul Kariya, Erik Johnson, Dan Hinote, D.J. King, Andy McDonald
MIN - Marian Gaborik, Kurtis Foster

-Notes-
It's Bernie Federko night! Well not really, but it could be. In fact, the Blues could probably use Bernie with all the injuries they have. Minnesota is the toughest team in the league to score against and having McDonald, Kariya, Berglund and Oshie out of the lineup certainly won't help the Blues. St. Louis' powerplay (at 23.7%) is the league's 2nd best Minnesota's penalty killing leads the league at 92.4%.

-Prediction-
I will be surprised if St. Louis manages to score more than 2 goals.

-Bet-
2 bananas on MIN to win
2 banana on the UNDER (5.5)

Detroit Red Wings @ Calgary Flames
-Key Injuries-
DET - Chris Chelios, Dan Cleary, Tomas Holmstrom, Niklas Kronwall
CGY - Matthew Lombardi, Rhett Warrener, Jim Vandermeer

-Notes-
It's never easy to bet against Detroit and there's a reason for that. The Red Wings are the league's highest scoring team and have the best powerplay. The PP is scoring at a deadly 34.6% and the Wings have 4 wins in a row. The Flames are coming off consecutive wins against the Colorado Avalanche in which they did not allow a PP goal. The key was they gave Colorado only 3 PP chances. The three games prior they allowed 7 PP goals on 20 chances. The Flames better stay out of the penalty box against the Wings.

-Prediction-
Make it 5 in a row.

-Bet-
1 banana on DET to win
1 banana on the UNDER (5.5)

Colorado Avalanche @ Los Angeles Kings
-Key Injuries-
COL - Joe Sakic, Marek Svatos, Ben Guite
LOS - Jack Johnson

-Notes-
Colorado beat the Kings 4-3 earlier in the season. This is a different Los Angeles team now though. They are playing much better and are coming off a win against a good (albeit, injured) Washington team. The Kings dominate the Avalanche in every key statistical category. Colorado has the third worst powerplay and the Kings have the third best penalty killing.

-Prediction-
I like the Kings.

-Bet-
1 banana on LOS to win
1 banana on the UNDER (5.5)

Washington Capitals @ San Jose Sharks
-Key Injuries-
WAS - Alexander Semin, Sergei Fedorov, Mike Green, Brian Pothier
CGY - Evgeni Nabokov, Torrey Mitchell, Mike Grier

-Notes-
San Jose is 10-0 in their last 10 games against Washington. The Caps are missing Green, Semin and Fedorov and Ovechkin doesn't score against San Jose. All signs point to a San Jose win so the Capitals will probably win 4-0 with all 4 goals scored by Ovechkin. Seriously though, if you want to bet on this game you must bet on the Sharks.

-Prediction-
11-0

-Bet-
2 bananas on SAN to win
1 banana on the OVER (5.5)

Don't bet if you can't afford to lose!