

NHL Picks for Saturday March 07

Written by Marty "Mapletree" Kwiaton

Friday, 06 March 2009 04:46 - Last Updated Saturday, 07 March 2009 15:30



Last week signified one small step for mankind as Thunder seemed to come back down to earth winning only three of 11 matchups. Yes, I realize that I only picked four correctly, however at this stage in the game I'll take any small victory I can get to get the ball rolling. Thunder is still ahead with a 12-12 record through two weeks. I have a feeling we'll be moving our clocks one hour ahead this Saturday night... YES! I've already got one right this week. Plenty of games, so here we go:

Chicago Blackhawks @ Boston Bruins

Despite winning the last four matchups between these two teams the Bruins are 0-2-1 in their last 3 home games and are winless in their last four Saturday contests (12-4-1 prior to this stretch). The Blackhawks are coming out of February with an impressive 6-3 road record, and hold a +15 GF to GA margin on the road this season (ranked second in the NHL behind Boston).

Prediction: V

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Thunder's Pick: H

New Jersey Devils @ NY Islanders

Hmmm I guess I could just copy and paste what I wrote for this matchup two weeks ago when the Isles shutout the Devils 4-0 on Long Island. Since then, the Devils have won 4 straight while the Isles are 2-2-1. Danis has put up Brodeur like numbers at home this season going 6-4-2 with a 1.84 GAA and a .945 SV% and 2 SO. Marty is 41-22-4-2 versus the NYI all time including 10 of his 100 career shutouts. It's the bloody Islanders, lightning can't strike twice.

Prediction: V+

Thunder's Pick: H

Minnesota Wild @ Los Angeles Kings

Both teams snapped five game winless streaks before heading into this matchup. LA has won the last three head to head games with the previous three going to the Wild. The Wild have the worst offense on the road with only 57 GF in 28 games, but sport the second best GA in the league away from home. Combine that with LA's hit and miss offense that has been held to one goal or less 21 times in 64 games this season and this could be a game headed for a shootout just like their last affair.

Prediction: T

Thunder's Pick: H

Edmonton Oilers @ Toronto Maple Leafs

The Leafs have won 5 of their last 6? Including a 2-1 road victory in Washington with a 37 save performance from Martin Gerber?? I thought they brought Gerber in to help them sink their position in the standings and improve their draft pick...err I mean to replace Vesa Toskala who's out for the rest of the year with hip and groin surgery. The Oilers snapped their PP slump (0 for 26) with a PPG in a losing cause at the Corel Centre. The Leafs have won five of the last six and 14 of the last 20 versus the Oil. Wow three weeks in a row now that I'm picking the Leafs...ugh.

Prediction: H

Thunder's Pick: H

Nashville Predators @ Philadelphia Flyers

The Predators are the hottest team in the league right now riding a six game winning streak outscoring their opponents 28-11. Five of those wins came at home, which is a problem since they're only 5-10-1 in their last 16 road games. The Timmins Tornado has arrived with nine pts. in his last five games. Despite winning only three of their last eight home games the Flyers boast the top PP in the league at home (29.9%) and have the 2nd highest shooting percentage. Finally, it's quite incredible that the Flyers not only lead the league in SHG with 16, but they are also the only team in the league that hasn't surrendered a SHG against.

Prediction: H+

Thunder's Pick: V

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Buffalo Sabres @ Ottawa Senators

Both teams have snapped recent three game winless streaks. Ottawa holds a stranglehold on the H2H series winning 13 of the last 20, including 3 of 4 this season. Brian Elliott is 2-0 in his young career versus the Sabres, as the Sens have won the last six matchups played on Saturday night. Buffalo has only won three of 12 backend B2B games this season.

Prediction: H

Thunder's Pick: H

Columbus Blue Jackets @ Detroit Red Wings

With their humiliating loss in Nashville last Saturday behind them the Wings look to flex their home muscle versus the Jackets. Their +50 GF to GA differential at home is tops in the league averaging over 4 GF per game. The Wings have won five of the last seven head to head matchups, losing the two most recent encounters in Columbus with Osgood in net. Mason has given up three or more goals in his six of his last seven starts and has only won three of his last 10 games that have been decided by two or more goals.

Prediction: H+

Thunder's Pick: V

St. Louis Blues @ Florida Panthers

The Blues have won 5 of the last 7 H2H matchups. They are 6-6 on the tail end of B2B games this season having won their last three. Florida has the best save percentage at home (0.931) in the NHL. Florida has a +12 GF to GA margin at home compared to the Blues' -17 differential on the road.

Prediction: H

Thunder's Pick: H

Carolina Hurricanes @ Tampa Bay Lightning

This season Mike Smith is the first Tampa Bay goalie to have a GAA under 2.75 since the lockout. Unfortunately he's still on IR with post concussion syndrome. The Bolts have surrendered 4.0 GA per game in their last 10 contests. Carolina has won the last 6 H2H matchups including all 5 this season. The Canes have also won 5 of their last 7 overall and 8 of 10 backend B2B contests this season. The Bolts have lost their last 4 backend B2B games by a margin of 21-6.

Prediction: V+

Thunder's Pick: H

San Jose Sharks @ Vancouver Canucks

These two teams are headed in opposite directions, the Canucks are heating up at the right time winning 7 of their last 8 games and 11 of the last 13, while the Sharks have only 1 win in their last 5 contests. San Jose has a stranglehold on the H2H matchup having won the last 7 games and boast the 2nd best road PP in the league. The Canucks are the third most penalized team in the league this season, but have managed to hold a +20 GF to GA differential at home

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and have scored 47 GF in their last 13 contests overall.

Prediction: H

Thunder's Pick: V