

Notch's Saturday Picks

Written by Steve "Notch" Johnson
Tuesday, 03 November 2009 12:11 -

Notch is up this week - running down the Saturday NHL games and giving you his winners...

Edmonton at Boston 1:00 PM EDT

The Bruins and Oilers are meeting for the 63rd time in this lifetime series with the Bruins holding a 39-17-6-0 record while outscoring Edmonton by a 232-182 margin. The Oilers have been outshot by their opponent in every game this season except for one. Look for Khabibulin to be busier than Thomas again today. The Bruins host the Oilers today in the only game between these teams this season and the Oilers' first visit to TD Garden since February 13, 2007. The Bruins are 3-4-0 on home ice ... They are 2-3-1 vs. Western Conference opponents and lost against their only Northwest Division foes thus far. The Bruins are in a portion of their schedule that sees them playing three games in 3-1/2 days (Oct. 29 vs. New Jersey, 1:00 p.m. vs. Edmonton on Oct. 31 and 1:00 p.m. at NY Rangers on Nov. 1) and six games in ten days. Coach Claude Julien is looking for his 100th victory in his 176th game behind the Boston bench, which would be the third-fastest a Bruins coach reached 100 wins in team history. The Bruins have shut out the Oilers in each of the last two games between these teams with a 3-0 win on February 13,

2007 and a 1-0 overtime win on October 27, 2008 ... They carry a shutout streak of 144:02 vs. the Oilers into today's game with their last goal allowed to Edmonton a Fernando Pisani score at 3:46 of the third period of a 5-4 Boston overtime win on December 3, 2005(vs. Hannu Toivonen in goal) ... Tim Thomas carries a personal shutout streak of 132:17 vs. the Oilers into

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today's game with his last goal yielded to Edmonton coming in his first NHL game on October 19, 2002.

TRICK OR TREAT: The Bruins have had more tricks than treats when playing on Halloween, as they are winless at 0-6-3-0 in their last nine games on October 31sts ... They last played on this date in 2002 (4-1 loss to Anaheim) and last won on this date in 1985 (7-4 vs.Los Angeles) ... They are 6-13-3 overall on October 31st with a 4-6-1 record when those games are at home.

Boston – Home Win – H (ProLine)

Carolina at Philadelphia 1:00 PM EDT

Carolina trails all-time 28-54-19-3 (104), including 16-25-11-1 (53) at home and 12-29-8-2 (51) in Philadelphia. This is the 2nd of 4 meetings this season with Emery getting a shutout for the Flyers on opening night in Carolina. Carolina has earned points in three of the last four meetings (1-1-2), but has won just once in that span (11/28/08 at PHI in OT). The Canes are 4-1-3 in their last eight games at the Wachovia Center with the lone regulation loss since the start of the 2005-06

season coming on March 28, 2007 (5-1). Philadelphia has earned points in each of the last six meetings (4-0-2), including three straight wins. Nine of the last 16 meetings have gone to overtime, including three of four in 2008-09.

Philly in a shootout – Tie – T (ProLine)

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Atlanta at Ottawa 2:00 PM EDT

Both teams will be without their most dangerous offensive weapon (arguable). Kovalchuk and Spezza will be on the sidelines. Atlanta played with heart their last game against Washington only to come up short in extra time. Atlanta will need to be wary on the PP as the Senators are currently third in the league in penalty killing percentage (behind Minnesota - 87.2 % and Colorado - 87.1 %), going 45 for 52 (86.5 %). Ottawa leads the NHL in shorthanded goals with four (Michalek - 2, Phillips, Alfredsson). The four shorthanded goals have come in Ottawa's last three home games.

TRICK OR TREAT - Saturday will mark the fifth time Ottawa has played a game on Halloween ... The Senators are 2-1-1-0 on Halloween, going 2-0-1-0 in three games at home.

Ottawa – Home Win – H (ProLine)

New Jersey at Tampa Bay 3:00 PM EDT

Something has to give. The Devils are 6-0-0 on the road. The Lightning are 5-0-2 at home. This will be the second meeting this season between the two teams after New Jersey stole a win in a shootout after tying the game with one second left in regulation back on October 8th. Stamkos and Marty St. Louis have been lights out for the Bolts this season and Parise may be the first Jacques Lemaire coached player to be over a PPG if he keeps up his current pace.

Tampa Bay in a shootout – Tie – T (ProLine)

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Toronto at Montreal 7:00 PM EDT

The Habs will be wearing their 1912-1913 vintage jersey for tonight's game. Interesting to note, this jersey was referred to as the Barber Shop jersey. It includes the letters CAC on a maple leaf which stands for Canadian Athletic Club. They only wore this jersey for the first half of the year though as complaints from the Senators lead to a midseason jersey change.

Back to the game: While the Canadiens currently have a seven-point lead on the Leafs in the standings, neither team has been doing enough lately to win. Someone will have to deliver on Saturday and whatever the result, as Leafs-Habs games always are, it will be a heated Canadian matchup. Toskala may start this game against Halak. In the last game these teams played the Leafs, who hold a significant size advantage, were out-hit 37-22, while the small, speedy, offense-oriented Canadiens were out-shot by the Maple Leafs 46-27. Final score was Montreal 4, Toronto 3.

Montreal – Home Win – H (ProLine)

Buffalo at NY Islanders 7:00 PM EDT

Ryan Miller continues to impress everyone. If he does indeed get the start tonight, I think that may be enough right there to seal the deal against an improving, hard-working Islanders team.

Buffalo by 2 or more – Visitor plus Win – V+ (Proline)

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Minnesota at Pittsburgh 7:30 PM EDT

Looks to me like a mismatch if you go by previous results and current records. Minnesota is still winless on the road after 8 tries, but the Penguins who are 9-1-0 this season only sport a 3-1 record at home. OK, I know I'm getting picky. This should be a good goalie matchup with Backstrom going against a rested Fleury.

Pittsburgh – Home Win – H