Happy 2010 everyone!!! I'd like to congratulate Steve Johnson for his recent hot streak with picking winners. It is time to start betting some of my hard earned cash on his picks next week -I need some spending money before I go to Jamaica. Last week Thunder and I tied with identical 6-6 records; however she gets the edge for calling that Dallas tie. There is plenty of action this Saturday, and I hope everyone enjoyed that CAN-US New Years Eve clash, and the outdoor game from Fenway yesterday. Here's hoping all those underachieving bums on our fantasy hockey teams start producing. Cheers!

Carolina Hurricanes @ NY Rangers

Coming off a 2-1 loss to the Rangers on New Years Eve the Canes are right back at MSG. With only two wins on the road this year, although one was just recently versus the Capitals, it doesn't seem like Carolina will get another 5 pt night out of Eric Staal to pull this one out. The Rangers look for their 3rd win over Carolina in the last 12 days.

Pick: H

Thunder’s Pick: H

Vancouver Canucks @ Dallas Stars

The Stars are riding a three game home winning streak, and the line of Richards, Eriksson and Neal continues to roll. The Canucks look to head home after this ending a short four game road trip, as they’re currently 2-0-1, which is great news as they prepare for their 14 game road trip at the end of the month. They’ve split two games so far this year with each team winning at home, and this game should be another tight one as Luongo is 9-4-2, 2.07 GAA, .935 SV% in his career versus the Stars. He goes up against Turco, who is 18-6-2, 1.91 GAA, .927 SV% versus the Canucks.

Pick: T (DAL in the SO)

Thunder’s Pick: V

Pittsburgh Penguins @ Tampa Bay Lightning

The Pens have lost three in a row and four of their last five, which includes two shutouts at the hands of Martin Brodeur. Tampa Bay has managed pts in 14 of 19 games at home this season. Lecavalier seems to be coming around with 16 pts in December and 11 in his last eight, but his and St. Louis' lowly 6.2 shooting percentage isn't going to get the job done against the Pens. Smith is 1-3 versus the Pens in his career, while Niittymaki is 4-6 with a 4.18 GAA... ouch. I want to take the Pens by two or more but they've only won once on the road by two or more since mid October.

Pick: V

Thunder's Pick: H

Washington Capitals @ Los Angeles Kings

After finally breaking a 4 game losing streak the Kings are rewarded with a visit from the highest scoring team in the league. The Caps look to avoid a fourth three-game losing streak this season. Neuvirth's 4.34 GAA on the road doesn't instil much confidence and neither does Theodore's 3.25 GAA all-time versus the Kings. The Kings have been great this year, but I don't think they're ready yet to contend with NHL powerhouses like the Caps. The Caps have come out of their losing skids winning by 2 or more every time.

Pick: V+

Thunder's Pick: V

Toronto Maple Leafs @ Calgary Flames

It is a New Year, but expect the same old Leafs. The Flames should be able to extend their winning streak to four games on Saturday. Toskala is 1-6 on the road this year with a 4.35 GAA, while Gustavsson got pulled after allowing three goals in 10 minutes the last time he faced the Flames. Not much explanation needed in this one.

Pick: H

Thunder's Pick: H

Atlanta Thrashers @ NY Islanders

The Thrashers enter the New Year on a six game slide, and it hasn't been the offence that's the problem, as they've scored 3 or more goals in 4 of those losses (26 GA). Roloson has been playing well for the Isles, 3-0-1 in his last 4 starts as he's stopped 137 of 143 shots. No one will be happier than John Tavares for the start of 2010, as he leaves behind only 1 pt. in his last 10 games of 2009. Kovalchuk's lowest PPG total is versus the Isles out of teams that he has faced 10 or more games in his career. With a win the Isles can move into an 8th place tie in the East.

Pick: H

Thunder's Pick: H

Colorado Avalanche @ Columbus Blue Jackets

The Blue Jackets have three wins in their last 22 games. How has Hitchcock not been fired? In

that losing streak are two losses to the Avs.

Pick: V

Thunder's Pick: H

Anaheim Ducks @ Nashville Predators

Anaheim's five road wins is the 2nd worst total in the league behind only the lowly Hurricanes. They sit 8 pts. behind Dallas for 4th in their Division. Nashville has snapped a recent 3 game slide winning their last 2 games and will host the Ducks twice on their current 4 game homestand starting on Saturday. They were shutout in Anaheim in the only meeting so far this season, but that was in early November before the Preds got hot. The Preds have gotten balanced scoring as 8 players are on pace for 15 or more goals this season.

Pick: H

Thunder's Pick: H

Detroit Red Wings @ Phoenix Coyotes

A couple of teams headed in opposite directions, for this season anyways. No one would have expected for the Coyotes to be in the playoffs and the Wings to be on the outside looking in at the halfway mark of the season. After having their 10 game home win streak snapped on New Year's Eve, Phoenix hopes to start a new streak on Saturday. The Wings have been shut out 3 times in the last 2 weeks, and lost in Phoenix back in October. It's hard to bet against Bryzgalov's 15-3-1 home record, with a 1.61 GAA and .939 SV%. Despite their 3rd highest SOG total in the league, the Wings have the worst team shooting % at 7.6%, which helps explain their T-25th ranked offence.

Pick: H

Thunder's Pick: H

Chicago Blackhawks @ St. Louis Blues

The Blues have the worst home record in the league at 6-13-3, and have lost 4 straight entering

2010. The Hawks have won the only meeting thus far 3-0 in Chicago. You know you're struggling when Steen is your hottest player with 10 pts. in his last 7. Duncan Keith on the other hand is on pace for a 70+ pt. season, and has 10 pts. in his last 8 games. The Hawks allow the fewest shots on goal in the NHL, which helps them, have the best defence in the league. 6 of their 8 wins versus division rivals have come by 2 or more goals this year, while the Blues have lost 5 of their 7 losses in December by 2 or more goals.

Pick: V+

Thunder's Pick: H

New Jersey Devils @ Minnesota Wild

The road warrior Devils have dropped their last 2 on the road, in their defence they were against two of the best teams in the league (WSH and CHI). Lemaire gets to return to Minnesota where they've managed to swing their season around after a dismal start to sit 6 pts. out of the playoff picture (in the East the Wild would hold the 8th spot). Backstrom hasn't fared well versus the Devils allowing 6 goals in only 96 mins in his career. He's also surrendered 3 or more goals in 5 of his last 6 starts. Brodeur on the other hand is 6-1-2 versus the Wild with a 2.15 and .928 split. The Devils haven't lost 2 straight overall since mid November.

Pick: V

Thunder’s Pick: V

Edmonton Oilers @ San Jose Sharks

The Oilers have scored 2 goals or less in 6 of their last 7 games. In the same span San Jose has won all 7 (4 by 2 or more) of their games and scored at least 3 goals in each of them. Simple math will help us determine the winner of this outcome..3 > 2.

Pick: H+

Thunder’s Pick: H