

Saturday's Picks - with Marty

Written by Marty Kwiaton

Saturday, 30 January 2010 12:35 - Last Updated Saturday, 30 January 2010 12:41



Jamaica was incredible!! However going from 32 Celsius to -30 in Thunder Bay in less than 24 hours is quite the shock to your system (that's a 112 F change in temperature for those of you south of the border). Thunder spent the last two weeks at my mother in laws where there is no hockey, so please forgive her picks for this week, and mine too. Still trying to get all that Appleton and Red Stripe out of my system. 10 games on the schedule.

NY Islanders @ Philadelphia Flyers

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With a victory on Saturday the Isles could leap frog past the Flyers into 3rd place in the Atlantic Division. However, after shutting out the Devils 12 days ago the Isles have been outscored 22-11 in losing 4 of their last 5 games. Matt Moulson scored his team leading 20th goal of the year but has only 6 goals since a Dec. 3rd hat trick in Atlanta. JT is -5 in his last 3 games despite 2 assists. Ray Emery hasn't lost to the Isles in his career and New York is 0-7-2 dating back to last year versus the Flyers including 0-3 this season. Two losses on Long Island were by 1 goal each, while they were blown out the last time they visited Philadelphia.

Pick: H+

Thunder's Pick: H

Montreal Canadiens @ Ottawa Senators

The Sens are on fire having won 8 straight. Jason Spezza has a 5 game goal scoring streak going, and what's a great sign, are his 14 SOG in 3 games since his return (averages under 3 SOG/game on the year). Benoit Pouliot is tied for 7th place with Alex Ovechkin with 9 goals in the last month (Burrows leads with 13). Halak is 8-3-1 in his last 12 with a 1.99 GAA while Price is 2-7-2 in his last 11 with a 2.82 GAA. The Sens have taken 5 of the last 6 matchups between these two teams. Ottawa is 19-8-3 at home on the year, and have won 3 of their last 4 matchups at Scotiabank Place on Saturday.

Pick: H

Thunder's Pick: H

Chicago Blackhawks @ Carolina Hurricanes

Eric Staal is on fire, with 8 goals in his last 5 games and has pulled to over a ppg on the season

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after starting out with 7 pts. in 16 games. Carolina has won 7 games in the month of January compared to 11 in the first 3 months of the season. The Hawks are finishing up an 8 game road trip that has seen them go 5-2. Despite their record the once league's top defence has allowed 23 goals during that stretch. Carolina hasn't lost the Hawks at home since 1998, but due to Bettman's retarded schedule, they haven't played there since 2005. Carolina has outscored opponents 21-9 in winning 4 of their last 5.

Pick: T (Carolina in the shootout)

Thunder's Pick: V

Los Angeles Kings @ Boston Bruins

The Bruins are reeling having lost 8 of their last 9 games and have only 3 wins in the month of January. However they're 5-2 in the 2nd game of a back to back set, including 2-0 this month knocking off the Sharks and Sens. The Kings are enjoying a 4 game win streak where they've found their offense again averaging 4 goals per game. Quick is 2-0 in his short career versus the Bruins, and a 15-8-1 record with a 2.32 GAA and .921 SV% on the road.

Pick: V

Thunder's Pick: H

Vancouver Canucks @ Toronto Maple Leafs

Not much needs to be said for this matchup. The Leafs are 0-4 in January in the tail end of B2B situations. The Canucks are 13-2-2 in their last 17 games. This is one of those games that I'll call the Canucks to win by two and Leafs will come away with a 4-1 victory.

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Pick: V+

Thunder's Pick: H

NY Rangers @ Phoenix Coyotes

Rangers have lost 7 of their last 9, and Marian Gaborik has been without a point for 4 straight games, 0 pts. in those 7 losses, and 7 pts. in the 2 wins. Gaborik posted a 3 pt. game versus the Coyotes at the end of October, and should be able to find the score sheet with 25 pts in 25 career games versus Phoenix. That alone may not be enough as the Rangers have given up PPG's in 7 consecutive games. The Coyotes have won 4 of their last 5 at home. Just ask the Rangers what 7 million/year will get you, 0.4 ppg (Chris Drury), and a 6.5 million/year defenseman will add 8 pts. thru 47 games this season (Wade Redden), just in case some of you have been living under a rock this year :)

Pick: H

Thunder's Pick: H

Columbus Blue Jackets @ St. Louis Blues

Every time I write about Columbus I perplexed as to how Ken Hitchcock still has a job? It's time for the Dinosaur to become extinct and join the rest of his friends. Back to the teams at hand, the Blues have DOMINATED the Jackets at home. Having won 8 straight and holding the BJ's to only 11 goals is why the Blues haven't trailed in their last 8 home meetings versus Columbus. In his career versus St. Louis Mason is 2-4-1 with a 3.11 GAA and a .876 SV%. This week we're going with all the streaky teams.

Pick: H

Thunder's Pick: H

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Atlanta Thrashers @ Nashville Predators

Nashville has lost 4 straight since coming back from sweeping Western Canada a couple of weeks ago. Kovalchuk has 7 goals in 7 career games versus the Preds, but with all the recent trade talk he's fallen into his worst slump of the season with 1 pt. in his last 4 games. Hedberg has been playing great for the Thrashers allowing only 6 goals in his last 4 starts, while his counterpart Pavelec has allowed 12 goals in his last 4 outings. Patric Hornqvist has taken over the team scoring lead with 33 pts. (ouch), however with 21 of them goals he should be a shoe in for 30 this year. The Thrashers have always been dangerous on the road.

Pick: V

Thunder's Pick: H

Edmonton Oilers @ Calgary Flames

The good news is, someone is going to come out of this game with a win and snapping their horrendous losing streak. The Flames have lost 9 straight and are starting to see some distance between themselves and the Avs and Canucks in the Northwest. Meanwhile the Oilers are looking for their first win of 2010. This is the last meeting of the season between these two rivals, the Flames have dominated going 4-0-1 this season. Despite everything pointing against the Oilers I have a gut feeling the Oil will get their first win against the Flames this season, and Mike Comrie will be the contributing factor.

Pick: V

Thunder's Pick: H

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Minnesota Wild @ San Jose Sharks

The Sharks are 10-0-2 in their last 12 head to head versus the Wild, including 5-0-1 at home. With Backstrom out and Harding injuring himself last night, Wade Dubielewicz has gotten the call from the AHL. Should be a cake walk for the Sharks.

Pick: H+

Thunder's Pick: V