Since the format change I've managed to tie my mutts after three Saturday's, as we share identical 7-11 records. You could say I have nine wins since I did have the Sharks and Hawks winning, but in a shootout. It's amazing what you'll try to squeeze out of a losing record! On a positive note, I've gone from one win, to two, and last week saw four winners. Could have been six for six, but Boston let me down in overtime, and even though I knew the Hawks would win for some reason I thought the Leafs would manage to get a point. Oh well. Some great playoff races are happening around the league and many hearts will be broken. Quite a few games on the schedule so let's get right to it.

Columbus @ Minnesota

By the Numbers – Frozen Pool

The Wild's playoff hopes maybe have been dashed on their latest four game road trip which saw the team come away with zero points, and only managed to score four goals. The Blue Jackets on the other hand, don't have much left to play for this season. The Jackets have only one win in their last 10 games, as they continue to stumble into a lottery position with a slim chance at drafting top five. Columbus leads the season series, with all the games being decided by a single goal.

Pick: **T (MIN in the Shootout)**

Thunder's Pick: **V - CLB**

NY Islanders @ Florida

By the Numbers – Frozen Pool

Despite being out of the playoff picture the Panthers have managed to win three of their last five games, beating Tampa Bay and Chicago in the process. The Isles were 4-0-3 in the month of March before dropping a fairly lopsided decision to the Rangers this past Tuesday. Their offence has hit another gear as the team has scored 31 goals during that period of time. Tavares is leading the charge with 24 pts. in 22 games since the start of February, and a ppg pace since the start of December (48 pts. in 49 gp). This season 70 points should be within reach, and next year with a healthy Okposo and Streit for a full season, there's no reason why we won't see Tavares at 80+. The last time the Isles visited the Panthers, JT had his first career hat trick.

Pick: **V – NYI**

Thunder's Pick: **V - NYI**

Tampa Bay @ Ottawa

By the Numbers – Frozen Pool

Curtis McElhinney is having a pretty impressive audition for the Sens. First he held the Bolts to a single goal in Tampa in his first start, and Thursday night another single GA versus the steam rolling Devils. Their win combined with the Avs loss has dropped the Sens down to the #3 overall draft position. The Bolts have gone 3-4-3 in their last 10 to allow the Caps to open up a four pt. lead in the Southeast. This is Tampa's game in hand so look for them to come out firing to close the gap on home ice advantage thru the first round of the playoffs.

Pick: **V - TB**

Thunder's Pick: **H - OTT**

Detroit @ Nashville

By the Numbers – Frozen Pool

Here is a random tidbit; the Preds are 14-14-7 in games played on a Sunday thru Wednesday, whereas they sport a 22-11-3 record in games played Thursday thru Saturday. They are 0-2-2 in the former this month, and 4-0-0 in the latter. The Wings look to try and get a stranglehold on

the Central division crown by extending their 10 point lead over the Blackhawks, which has been helped by a four game win streak. The Predators have won the last three matchups this season outscoring the Wings 10-3. The Predators have a good stretch of home games to help them claw their way back into the playoffs.

Pick: **H – NSH**

Thunder's Pick: **T**

Colorado @ Edmonton

By the Numbers – Frozen Pool

Two weeks ago I picked this game and figured Edmonton would win by a similar score as they had in their previous meeting. Another 5-1 beat down at the hands of the kids in Edmonton has Avs fans hoping that when they go to sleep, they'll wake up and it'll be mid-April. The Avs have surrendered four or more goals in six straight games, and have given up three or more goals in 24 of their last 25 games. OUCH! The usual script goes something like this: fragile Avs go down early, the little confidence they have left evaporates. They put in a solid 20 minutes in a 60 minute game; however the Oilers speed creates havoc, and numerous scoring chances will be converted on sieve goaltender. I'm tempted to repeat a similar 5-1 score, but I wouldn't want to get so cocky against my favourite team.

Pick: **H – EDM**

Thunder's Pick: **H - EDM**

Anaheim @ Los Angeles

By the Numbers – Frozen Pool

Wow, as I write this article the Kings are down 3-0 to the Blues at home with 11 minutes left in the 3rd period. I haven't seen any highlights, but based on the fact that the Blues are outshooting the Kings 35 – 14 at this point pretty much sums up how manhandled they're getting. The Kings are coming off a 4-0 road trip but have dropped all three games to the Blues this year perhaps that explains it. The Kings are 8-2-1 and hope to continue riding this streak as they rotate Quick and Bernier to ensure Quick isn't fatigued for this year's playoffs like he was last season. Kopitar has 22 points in his last 16 games to lead the way offensively. The Ducks have their own run going 6-2-0 in their last eight games and currently sit in eighth place. If the playoffs started today, all five Pacific Division teams would be in the postseason dance. The Kings have taken the past 2 meetings between these teams and they have two more pivotal matchups. The Kings have lost 2 or more at home in a row on only 2 occasions this year.

Pick: **H – LA**

Thunder’s Pick: **V - ANA**