Short schedule from which to select my card this week, but nonetheless there are certainly some beauts that are ripe for the picking! Last week, I presented you my picks just after a brisk skate down the Rideau Canal, during my road trip to Ottawa from Toronto to see the Sens/Leafs **contest** lopsided pounding. Toronto thoroughly obliterated their provincial rivals in each and every facet of the game except SOG. However on that note, Optimus Reim was so in the zone that even a 49 shot barrage was converted into a goose egg, as the Leafs took it to the very team they are closest to chasing by a 5-0 score.

Anyhow, despite correctly predicting the Leafs road win, I shockingly went with ALL 6 road victories last week for the 1st time in history, 3 of which came through. So all things considering not a bad week at all!

Anyhow, lets dig into this week's slate!....

Stats as of Friday morning
Winning % on the season= 56%
Previous Week Record= 3-3

(~~ Follow Anthony Lancione on Twitter @Anthisdaman**)**

Pittsburgh @ Philadelphia (1:00pm ET)

By the Numbers - Frozen Pools

In the past few days both teams leading scorers, Malkin and Giroux(1-2 in the NHL) have 5 point nights to their names. The NHL scoring race is now just 2 points separating the two. After hitting their first real snag of the season, Philly, losers of 6 of their past 8, once again fell down 2-zip at home, early in their Thursday night encounter with Buffalo. However the light switch finally flicked with 7 unanswered goals, led by 5 assists from Giroux. I think it's fair to say they've rid themselves of that slump! The City of Brotherly Love will surely be up for this latest Battle of Pennsylvania, for a Flyers squad faced with the unenviable task of taming the wild raging beast that is Mr. Geno. He, of a league leading 69 points, despite missing several weeks out of the gates was held off the score sheet for the just the 3rd time since January 11th last game. Although, all four times Malkin's been left off the score sheet in 2012, he's responded with at least a goal in his next outing.

Pick
Philadelphia - Home Win - H(ProLine)

Chicago @ Columbus (1:00pm ET)
By the Numbers - Frozen Pools

The Blackhawks can now breathe a huge sigh of relief after finally putting an end to their ridiculous 9 game losing streak which saw them fall from the top 3 in the NHL to the 6th spot in the west only a couple points out of a playoff spot. They laid a 1st period 4-0 pasting on the East leading New York rangers, before comfortably locking down the W. Recent history between these two divisional foes has not proved to be very successful for the jackets being outscored 41-21 over their last 10 contest dating back to the beginning of last season and with the Hawks taking all 4 contests thus far this season. Looks like it may be another long night for Columbus.

Pick

Chicago - Home Win Plus – H+(ProLine)

Toronto @ Vancouver (7:00pm ET)

By the Numbers -Frozen Pools

The Canucks continue to absolutely run away with their division, leading Calgary by a staggering 15 points! (With a game in hand on the Flames, as well as on the Red Hot Wings whom they remain two points behind in the president's Trophy race) To put it into perspective, the 2nd largest divisional gap is 8 points; third most is 4!! Barring a collapse of epic proportions, they can pretty much send off their order for the 2011-12 Northeast Division Champs Banner. More recently, its fair to say the Canucks are the NHL's hottest team, despite Detroit's all-time home winning streak, as the Nucks have reeled off 11 straight games on home ice & on the road registering at least a point(mostly W's), dating back to before the all-star game, with 19 of a possible 22. They haven't lost in regulation in over a month! Meanwhile, the Leafs crawl into this one on the heels of snapping a four game losing streak, and nearly extending it to five after squandering a late 3rd period lead.

Pick

Vancouver - Home Team Win - H(ProLine)

Washington @ Tampa Bay (7:00pm ET)
By the Numbers - Frozen Pools

This has all the makings of an old fashioned shootout **(Take the over for those looking for a little extra juice to lay)** The caps remain a solitary point behind division leading Florida—Surely feeling a playoff spot within reach should be enough motivation to go guns-a-blazing for the win versus a continuously shaky Tampa Goaltending duo (Garon is the slated starter—Thanks to Justin Goldman's team at www.goaliepost.com !) (Bare in mind, at the time of submitting this piece the 1st place matchup between FLA & WASH on Friday night was not yet underway). Both teams have been struggling this month, and coming off multiple consecutive losses, so something will be forced to give.

Pick
Washington - Visiting Team Win - V(ProLine)

Dallas @ Phoenix (8:00pm ET)
By the Numbers - Frozen Pools

Mike Smith is ***In The Zone!*** With 2 consecutive shutouts, Mike Smith has not allowed a goal in 139 minutes. Moreover, he has not allowed more than 1 goal in a game since his first start of the month, running with a ridonculous February SV % of .968!!! That surely qualifies as giving him the label as the NHL's hottest goalies at this time! Dallas trots into town with a much needed OT victory of their own, over Calgary, which ended a three game losing streak.

However, go with the hot hand hear folks!!

Pick
Phoenix - Home Win- H(ProLine)

Calgary @ L.A. (10:00pm ET)
By the Numbers - Frozen Pools

Somehow the Kings continue to be the league's most futile team! Yet, Jonathan Quick and their entire team defensive prowess has enabled them to hold down a spot in the West's top 8. However the Flames are literally right on their heels. A regulation road victory in LaLa Land could pull them even for a share of the 8th spot! Last month's trade chatter/speculation of Jarome Iginla possibly heading off to team like say, L.A, surprise!, has really been put to rest with the Flames play of late. Either way you slice it, this affair will certainly prove to be one of the studs of the evening, with probable playoff-like intensity, given the implications of the impending result!!!

Pick
Los Angeles - Visiting Team Win - V(ProLine)