Good afternoon poolies! As divisional and conference races only begin to increasingly intensify in the coming days and weeks, we can be sure for yet another fun filled slate this Saturday evening. There are several close-to-call matchups, but I'll do my best to guide you through them. The last few weeks I've been splitting my picks. So-so I suppose, but if my 'slump' is running off at a .500 clip, then I suppose it's not the worst vibe to be on for a turnaround week, where I aim to hit at a high percentage once more.

Ladies and gentlemen, let's get to the six pack.

Stats as of Friday morning
Winning % on the season= 54%
Previous Week Record= 3-3

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Colorado @ NY Rangers (7:00pm ET)
By the Numbers - Frozen Pools

The Rangers wobble back onto home ice after coming out on the rough end of a 5-2 beating at the hands of the surging Pittsburgh Penguins, their 10th victory in a row. However, expect them to bounce back with a fury, as the last time New York allowed as many as 5 goals in a single outing was way back on October 29th vs Ottawa, the 3rd week of the season! Even that required an extra frame. Plus of course, King Henrik had the night off, so surely he'll restore the order and confidence of the backline heading into this one. They'll be especially motivated to shove that tough divisional loss as far back into the rear view mirror as possible. The Avs on the other hand, have been on quite a roll themselves ever since acquiring Steve Downie from the Bolts, outscoring their opponents 22 to 14 over their past seven contests, going 5-2 in that span.

Pick
New York - Home Win Plus – H+(ProLine)

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

You've got to imagine that St.Louis will end up being the most unlikely President's Trophy winners in the award's history (barring a semi Maple Leaf-like landslide). The Blues have been on an unbelievable 39-11-8 run on Hitch's watch! Jack Adam's award has to be a runaway determination for Ken. That being said, despite the league best goaltending tandem, character leaders who have been there and done it all in the Arnotts & Langenbrunners of the world, a first round upset feels more and more like a real possibility to me. Tampa Bay's got to be feeling pretty good about themselves after giving the defending champs their worst beating of the season in a 6-1 walloping a few days back. I like Stamkos' chase for 60 to cause the Blues some serious trouble and I'm going with upset for the hosts.

Pick

Tampa Bay - Home Win– H(ProLine)

Toronto @ Ottawa (7:00pm ET)
By the Numbers -Frozen Pools

I know this story all too well. Once the Leafs are deemed by fans and media to be for all intents and purposes, out of the race, that's when the monkey jumps off their back and an annual magical run to 9th place begins when there was thought to be nothing left to play for. After winning a pitiful two of their past 17 games, a strong victory in Tampa ensures the start of what I believe will be a run of 18 of a possible 22 points down the stretch. This will once again 'propel' them away from the much vaunted top 3 pick range and a near playoff miss….a return to purgatory if you may; as opposed to Edmonton's annual race to the bottom, compiling elite pick after elite pick! Ottawa's last attempt at hosting Toronto resulted in a trek by your truly and my posse down the TransCanada highway to witness a 5-0 whitewashing by the Leafs—one of their last golden moments of the season where home ice advantage was within a half arm's length reach. I expect a little more of the same, albeit probably not as much of a demolition.

Pick
Toronto - Visitor Team Win - V(ProLine)

Buffalo @ Florida (7:30pm ET)
By the Numbers - Frozen Pools

There's tonnes to play for as Buffalo remains only three points back of Washington and four back of Florida for a playoff spot, despite toiling in or near the EAST basement for most of the season. Buffalo has been playing far better over the past month though. In fact, they've recorded points in all but two of their past 14 games. Moreover, the franchise, Mr. Miller, has finally pulled in the reigns and gotten back to what he is fully capable of, sporting a 9-1-2 record over his last 12 starts, bring his numbers back up to a 25-18-6 record with better than decent peripherals at a .915 Sv% & a 2.60 GAA. Meanwhile, something tells me that out in the sunshine, Hodgson will finally be able to clear his head, relieve some stress of adapting to a new team and have that breakout game we've all been waiting for. If you like to dabble into proposition plays, check out Cody to register more than .5 or 1.0 points on the night. Florida has been rolling as well, but Buffalo takes this one!

Pick
Buffalo - Visiting Team Win - V(ProLine)

Columbus @ Vancouver (10:00pm ET)
By the Numbers - Frozen Pools

Best against worst in the West on paper? Perhaps. The Blue Jackets, fresh off of a season best four game winning streak, have gone right back into the stinker, proving to be quite futile as of late, with a mere pair of goals in the last 3 contests. Heading into GM place, I expect more of the same. Vancouver needs a big win to get out of the mini rut they've been in of late. My guess is that the core offensive superpowers of the Canuck lineup, especially the Sedins, have been on cruise control for the past couple weeks as they gear up to hit their stride just as the playoffs are around the corner. My guess is tonight is a good chance for them to flip the switch as a possible blowout could propel them into the hot streak they've been waiting to kick off!

Pick
Vancouver - Home Win Plus- H+(ProLine)

Detroit @ San Jose (10:30pm ET)
By the Numbers - Frozen Pools

This promises to be a close knit affair, The Red Wings have been hit with possibly their worst stretch of the season losing 3 straight and 5 of 6, however San Jose hasn't fared much better, losing 6 of 7 (and currently trail Nashville in the 3rd period as I write this). However these 2 rivals always seem to bring out the best of each other. Despite Datsyuk and Lidstrom still ailing on the sidelines, I expect an intense end to end game with plenty of scoring chances. It's truly a toss-up here, but I like Detroit's individual talent to decide this one, perhaps even in the shootout.

Pick
TIE - T(ProLine) (Detroit in SO)