

Saturday's NHL Picks - March 10th

Written by Martin Kwiaton

Friday, 09 March 2012 19:28 - Last Updated Saturday, 10 March 2012 23:25



Lots of great playoff races in both the Eastern and Western conference this weekend. The West looks to be the tougher conference as even 11th place Calgary would be tied for the 8th and final playoff spot in the East right now. Plenty of games that playoff ramifications sell let's get right to the action.

Oilers @ Avalanche

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By the Numbers - [Frozen Pool](#)

The Avalanche have won six of their last nine games since making the trade for Steve Downie. Both him, and Jamie McGinn have meshed very well with the Avs, the latter scoring four goals in his last three games. The egg they put up against the Blue Jackets last week at home may stand out to be the point or two this team misses the playoffs by. They have five games remaining against divisional opponents (they only had three wins against the northwest before sweeping the Wild earlier this week) and essentially need to win at least four of them to give themselves a chance as other teams in the hunt have games in hand.

My Pick: H (Avs win)

Thunder's Pick: H (Avs win)

Sabres @ Senators

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It doesn't seem to matter who the Senators start in goal as the result has been a pleasant one at a crucial time in the year. With Anderson cutting his hand making a sandwich the Sens have played Robin Lehner, and gave newly acquired Ben Bishop a start against the Rangers on Thursday resulting in a victory. They're 7-3 in their last 10 games, and could really cool off the surging Sabres who have picked up points in eight of their last ten games (7-2-1) and sit two points behind Washington and Winnipeg.

My Pick: H (Sens win)

Thunder's Pick: V (Sabres win)

Flyers @ Maple Leafs

By the Numbers - [Frozen Pool](#)

The Leafs have blown opportunities and fallen five points out of the final playoff spot, and surely a loss to the Flyers in regulation would all but seal their fate on another missed post season. The Flyers head into this game as the highest scoring team in the league, and they way the Leafs defense has been turning the puck over and the poor play in their zone should more than account for a couple of Flyers goals on Saturday. Throw in the fact that Bryzgalov appears to be

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back in his groove (4-0 in March with five goals against on 125 shots against and two shutouts) and this is a game Leafs fans may want to avoid on Saturday.

My Pick: V (Flyers win)

Thunder's Pick: V (Flyers win)

Red Wings @ Predators

By the Numbers - [Frozen Pool](#)

The chase is on. Not only could this game be a preview of a first round playoff series, but with a regulation win the Predators could pull within two points of the Red Wings for fourth in the conference and home ice advantage in the opening round. The Predators have won 18 of their last 23 games at home, while the Wings are struggling with only two wins in their last seven games overall. Those wins came against the lowly Blue Jackets and Wild.

My Pick: H (Preds win)

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Thunder's Pick: V (Red Wings win)

Sharks @ Coyotes

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A huge game for both teams as they are currently struggling and could use two points in the standings in the battle for a playoff spot. The Coyotes have cooled off in a big way, losing their last five games, while the Sharks have only won two of their last twelve games. Such slides have seen both teams falter and trail Pacific leading Dallas by 3 and 4 points respectively. These two will face each other twice more before the end of March and San Jose play 12 times in the final 20 days of March. This will probably end up in being a dreaded three-point game.

My Pick: T (Coyotes win in shootout)

Thunder's Pick: V (Sharks win)

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Ducks @ Stars

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The Stars look to be peaking at the right time, and have most recently rolled over the Canucks and Sharks en route to an 8-1-1 record in their last ten games. Barring a Phoenix or San Jose type slide the Stars should be punching their ticket to the post-season; however the team has their eyes said on 3rd place in the conference. The return of all-star forward Jamie Benn has only made the club stronger as they've rallied around goalie Kari Lethonen who is 6-0-1 in his last seven starts allowing only 12 goals and hasn't surrendered more than three goals in 14 consecutive starts. The Ducks made a valiant charge under Bruce Boudreau, but being seven points out and a loss in Texas will all but seal their fate this season.

My Pick: H (Stars win)

Thunder's Pick: V (Ducks win)