We’re now into the third week of the NHL season, a lot has been happening. Similar to last week, I’ll walk you through the Western Conference to see what’s been happening and catch you up with the latest trends plus this week’s hot pickups/cold starters.

As always before the good stuff let's take a look at a few:

Maaasquito Buzzings…

Players in the last seven days with the highest production in each category who are less than 50% owned in Yahoo leagues.

Goals

Assists

+/-

PPP

SOG

Penner (3)

Demers (4)

McLeod (5)

Demers (3)

Samuelsson (17)

Peterson (2)

E. Johnson (3)

R. O'Reilly (5)

Brassard (2)

Stoll (15)

Samuelsson (2)

R. O'Reilly (3)

Smid (5)

Tucker (2)

Ju. Williams (15)

Ju. Williams (2)

Neal (3)

Penner (3)

Cleary (1)

Kesler (11)

Vesce (2)

Benn (3)

Hannan (3)

Zidlicky (1)

Neal (10)

Anaheim

The Ducks struggling power-play, which is only operating at 14.3 percent, has certainly been a black spot for the franchise to start the season especially if you compare it to the 23.6 efficiency they had last season. Following Saturday night's zero for five performance, they now own a 17 consecutive man-advantage streak without a goal. Something has to change if the Ducks are to get back towards the top 10 in the league. The trio of Ryan Getzlaf, Corey Perry and Bobby Ryan has only registered a combined 12 points in seven contests for the Ducks. My guess is that some line shuffling is going to take place fairly soon.

On a positive note, Ryan is leading the team with 26 SOG, which is essentially a full SOG more per game this season than last season. The downside is that he's only connecting on 3.8 percent of them compared to 17.8 percent shooting efficiency last season. For all you Getzlaf

owners out there, this might just calm your nerves. He started last season with two points in his first seven games before ripping off 18 points in his next nine contests. If history is any indication of future production, he'll be just fine. Jonas Hiller is starting to pull away from J.S. Giguere, as he picked up three consecutive victories before being pulled from Saturday night's contest against the Blues. He has the advantage in both GAA and save percentage with an edge of 2.67 and .920 compared to Giguere's 3.06 and .910.

Calgary

The Flames are off to a flying start as they proudly own a 5-2-1 record so far this season. The surprising thing is that they're doing it while owning the league's seventh worst defense, which gives up a whopping 3.5 goals per game. Last week I had a great debate with fellow forumer BGJ regarding Miikka Kiprusoff's goalie ranking amongst his peers. As I have stated before, his five victories in seven starts is fantastic, but if you are in a league that counts GAA and save percentage, his numbers (3.26 and .900) will do more harm than good.

Rene Bourque is beginning to show signs of slowing down, as he only has one point and three SOG in two contests this past week. I really like him as a fantasy player, but I have a sneaking suspicion that now is the perfect time to deal him while his value is sky-high. He has a career 11 percent efficiency rating, which means that his current 26.7 percent rating will fall back down to Earth hard! Dion Phaneuf looks like he's returning back towards the Phaneuf that he was two seasons ago. The big news coming out of Cow-town is how Jarome Iginla and Olli Jokinen have been split apart. Both players play a similar style and when they were together they just didn't look like they had very much chemistry. Splitting the two might actually help generate more fantasy value than keeping them together.

Chicago

Chicago is also off to a flying start with a 5-2-1 record to start the season. They're also ranked in second place in terms of shots on goal fired per contest with an average of 35.9 per contest. Patrick Sharp is on pace for 102 points, which would easily eclipse his career-high of 62 points that he set two seasons ago. The Hawks' coaching staff is keeping the training wheels on Cam Barker as he's averaging over seven minutes of ice-time less than Niklas Hjalmarsson. The latter has no fantasy value as he's has only picked up 19 seconds of power-play time in eight contests so far this season.

With his hot start to the season, and the Hawks in desperate need of salary cap relief to sign their potential restricted free agents this summer, Brian Campbell becomes a big target for trade bait potential come trade deadline time. I don't know how many lives Cristobal Huet has left in Chicago, but he's surely beginning to run out of them as he spots a 3.25 GAA along with a horrendous .840 save percentage in six starts this season. He's making Antti Niemi look like the second coming of Patrick Roy, with his 1.73 GAA and .910 save percentage. If you own Huet, now might be the time to pick up the handcuff in Niemi. For those of you who are IR surfing, Marian Hossa has begun skating on his own, the main question is does he return a la Vinny Lecavalier or Mike Richards? He's scheduled to be out for another five weeks, which should put his return date around late November.

Colorado

Despite a 6-1-1 start for the Avalanche, trouble could be brewing in Colorado. Wojtek Wolski could be in the coach's doghouse as he was benched for the second time this season in Saturday night's come-from-behind win over Detroit. That's twice that he's played just 10 minutes in a contest this season, which could lead to some trouble in the future. On a positive note, he shares the team lead in points with Milan Hejduk with seven points in eight games. J.M. Liles' loss is Kyle Quincey's gain, as he picked up just under 28 minutes of ice-time in Saturday night's victory. If you haven't been following the news, Liles is out for up to the next two weeks with a shoulder injury.

Did you know that Darcy Tucker scored 335 points in his final two years of junior hockey with the Kamloops Blazers including the playoffs? He's currently on pace to finish the season with a line of 51 points, 153 PIMs, along with 143 SOG. Could he be this year's Alex Burrows? He's currently only 15 percent Yahoo-owned, so snatch him up if you are looking for an across-the-board gem. Craig Anderson has started in all eight of the Avalanche's games this season. Peter Budaj should get a start as the Avs play five games in seven nights starting tomorrow night.

Columbus

The Jackets are off to a flying start as they are 5-1 to start the season. Their offense hasn't been out of this world, but they don't need it to be with their third ranked defense, which means that it's great news for Steve Mason owners, but not so great for Derick Brassard, Kristian Huselius, Raffi Torres, Jason Chimera, Jakub Voracek and especially Nikita Filtov owners. Rick Nash is certainly made his mark this season the real question remains is anyone else in Columbus really fantasy worthy? Anton Stralman is stepping right into the Jackets' power-play unit as he's averaging over three and a half minutes of power-play ice-time in Columbus, but he still doesn't shoot the puck enough to make him fantasy worthy. The Jackets have four contests on the road this week, which means that Mathieu Garon should pick up another start this week

either against the Ducks or the Kings.

Dallas

The Stars finished the week with a respectable 2-2 record. Jamie Benn is starting to flourish as he potted his second career NHL goal in last night's 4-1 loss to the Kings. He's also averaging 3:16 per contest on the power-play for the Stars which is a good sign. However, the last few contests Fabian Brunnstrom has seen some time on the top-line with Brendan Morrow and Mike Ribeiro, so I don't know if they are just tinkering or if they are thinking of moving Brunnstrom on that line on a more permanent basis. Benn-owners definitely keep an eye on that situation. Brad Richards continues to lead the team in SOG, but he did miss Monday's contest with a sore groin. He's scheduled to be back in tomorrow night's contest against the Ducks though.

Matt Niskanen is picking up the most PP ice-time for the Stars while averaging 4:57 with the man advantage. The only problem is that he only has two points to show for his efforts while his counterpart, Stephane Robidas, has five. Alex Auld, 2.50 GAA and .909 save percentage, owns a 2-0-0 record despite having almost identical numbers to Marty Turco, 2.41 and .909. Hmmm interesting…

Detroit

Detroit is reeling after their dismal 3-3-1 start to the season. Their record has been sufficient, but it's the manner of how they've played in their games that worry me. Their offense still ranks amongst the top half of the league, but it's their dreadful 22nd ranked defense that is really letting them down. Chris Osgood had a dismal regular season with a GAA of 3.09 along with a save percentage of .887, before pulling a complete 180 and posting dazzling 2.01 GAA and .926 save percentage numbers in the post-season. Last campaign, the Red Wings had the privilege of a capable backup in Ty Conklin, I'm just not quite sure that Jimmy Howard is on the same level as Conks.

Pavel Datsyuk missed the last two games with an undisclosed upper body injury, so maybe that was the reason why he's started the season so slowly this year. If you take into account the extra 56 post-season contests that Datsyuk has played in the last three seasons, add that to the extra 5-10 contests that he may play in these upcoming Olympics you would have to think that the extra games are going to take its toll on Datsyuk's body. Last week we looked at the Johan Franzen injury and how it has affected the Detroit lineup, a week into the injury it looks like Todd Bertuzzi and Dan Cleary are clearly the main beneficiaries. The duo has picked up three points and 15 SOG during the past week.

Edmonton

Patty O'Sullivan is starting to heat up with three points in his last two outings, while firing five SOG and tallying a plus four rating. He's averaging close to 18 minutes per contest along with 2:46 on the power-play. At only 49 percent owned in Yahoo leagues, he should be a great replacement for the owners that lost Daniel Sedin last week. Dustin Penner had six points in three games before having that streak snapped with a goose egg performance yesterday night against the Canucks. He looks a lot different than the Penner that suited up for the Oilers last season, that's for sure.

Gilbert Brule has also found a new lease on life with the Oilers, as he's currently firing at a point-per-game pace while enjoying each and every little bit of the minuscule ice-time he's receiving in Edmonton (12:55). Sheldon Souray remains out of the lineup with some serious post-concussion symptoms. A lot of owners caught a break last season when he played in all but one contest for the Oilers, just keep in mind that in seven of his 11 NHL seasons, he's played in 70 or less contests, so his 81 game season is definitely not the norm, but an aberration. Nikolai Khabibulin has started in all but one of the contests for the Oilers this season, I don't expect this type of workload to continue so look for Jeff Deslauriers to pick up at least one start this week.

Los Angeles

The Kings picked up a much needed victory against the Oilers as they dropped three of their previous contests prior to last night. The Kings top-line of Anze Kopitar, Ryan Smyth and Justin Williams have been firing on all cyliners as they have a combined 35 points in the nine contests so far this season. Surprisingly Williams is currently only 27 percent owned in Yahoo leagues, if O'Sullivan unavailable Williams wouldn't be a bad second prize to act as a Sedin stopgap for the time being.

Uh oh, Alex Frolov is in Terry Murray's doghouse once again. He was scratched in last night's contest against the Oilers. I think it's a two-way street with him. He has the talent if given optimal time he could be put up some very nice numbers, but he hasn't been given the time

because we expect more work ethic from his talent. To be honest, I don't think there's anything positive that can come out of this situation and a trade is probably the best and simplest solution to the problem. Jon Quick finally got his GAA under the three mark, with his solid performance last night, he's still nowhere near the 2.48 and .914 numbers he posted last season. Don't worry he'll get there by season's end.

Minnesota

Two huge underdogs bloomed out of Minnesota as Andrew Brunette and Eric Belanger combined for six points and 11 SOG this past week. The later has never had an anything more than a 38 point season, so I wouldn't hold my breath for him to finish the season on a 93 point pace. Brunette however is only two seasons away from an 83 point season with the Avs so it's not inconceivable that he finishes the season on a point-per-game pace, while averaging exactly 18 minutes of ice-time per contest for the Wild. Despite averaging a team-high 24:10 in ice-time, 4:53 of which come on the power-play, Brent Burns still only has a measly assist, while on the flip side he has registered 22 SOG though. The Wild offense on a whole is struggling to score goals, as they are tied with the fourth worst ranking in the league with a 2.14 average goals scored per contest. As discussed last week, any glimmer of hope that Backstrom will return to the numbers he posted last year is beginning to fade. If you are a Backstrom owner and haven't begun to search for alternatives, you might want to do so right about now.

Nashville

Alex Ovechkin: nine. Predators: nine. That basically sums up the non-existent offense in Nashville. On the bright side, Jason Arnott is proving that you don't need to be on a highly offensive team in order to be fantasy worthy. His PIMs are a bit lower than normal, but his points and SOG are right around where he would be a borderline top 10-15 center. He has extra value if your league counts FW as a stat as well. The latest news is that he's going to miss the next week or two due to an arm injury. Patric Hornqvist is still holding strong with nine SOG in the past week. With the Preds giving up an average of 3.14 goals per contest, and the fact that both goalies are splitting the playing time fairly evenly (236 minutes to Dan Ellis compared to 191 minutes for Pekka Rinne) it's probably not wise to own either of the Nashville duo at the moment.

Phoenix

Wow, what a start for Ilya Bryzgalov and the Coyotes. Bryz is off to a 5-1-0 start along with a mind-boggling 1.14 GAA and a .950 save percentage. Looks like the defensive scheme that coach Dave Tippet has incorporated has turned the Russian into Superman. I'm still waiting for the bubble to burst, but hey you never know what may happen this year. If you own Bryz perhaps you might want to see if you can parlay him into a slumping Jon Quick or Tim Thomas, while his fantasy value is sky-high. Radim Vrbata is continuing to fire away as he has 32 SOG in seven contests, all while averaging 3:11 of power-play ice-time for the Coyotes. The lines are continually being juggled around, as Taylor Pyatt is lining up alongside Shane Doan and Robert Lang. Matthew Lombardi is centering Scottie Upshall and Peter Mueller, while the Czech line of Martin Hanzal, Petr Prucha and Radim Vrbata round out the top nine for Phoenix. A sleeper D that you should keep an eye on is Adrian Aucoin, in the seven contests he's picked up four points, a plus four plus/minus rating, eight PIMs and 20 SOG. If you are reeling from the Sheldon Souray or Andrei Markov injuries, Aucoin might just be the fix for your fantasy squad. He's only owned in a quarter of Yahoo leagues.

San Jose

Joe Thornton is back to his old ways as he's leading the Sharks with 14 points in nine contests. He's on pace to finish the season with 109 assists! I guess that's what happens with you mix a world class sniper with a world class passer. The inclusion of Jason Demurs in the Sharks lineup has had a direct negative impact on the fantasy value of Rob Blake. Demurs currently has seven points while Blake only has three. If you compare the power-play ice-time averages it also points towards Demurs as he's averaging close to a full minute and a half of ice-time with the man advantage more than Blake. If you are looking for an across-the-board producer stick with Blake, but if you are in a league that only counts points, you might want to consider Demurs.

Although Devin Setoguchi has been demoted off the top-line on even-strength opportunities, he's still getting plenty of quality power-play chances with Dany Heatley and Jumbo Joe. He'll be fine this season. I can't say the same for Ryan Clowe as he only has a poultry one assist in nine contests this season despite picking up over 150 minutes of overall ice-time. Evgeni Nabokov is coming back around after starting the season with below average numbers. His current .911 save percentage is right around his career numbers, and probably will be right around that mark for the entire season. The Sharks travel on the road for their next three contests, so expect Thomas Greiss to suit up against the Lighting or Thrashers later on this week.

St. Louis

The Blues are coming off of a huge 5-0 win over the Ducks on Saturday night. Ty Conklin stole the show as he picked up his 11th shut out of his career by stopping all 26 shots that he faced during the contest. His 2-0 record along with his impressive 1.50 GAA and .950 save percentage might start planting some seeds into coach Andy Murray's brain about possibly

going with him as the number one moving forward. The foursome of Keith Tkachuk, Paul Kariya, Brad Boyes and Andy McDonald has combined for 23 points and 59 SOG in their first six contests of the season. It'll be interesting to see how long they can keep it up before one of the seasoned vets succumbs to the injury bug. With the vets doing so well, it appears as though Patrik Berglund is the player that's greatly affected. He averaged 14:43 overall and 3:14 on the power-play last season, but is only averaging 12:35 and 2:19 this season. Warning bell meet Berglund-owners.

David Backes is still averaging decent ice-time as he's picking up 17:38 each contest. The problem is he's being juggled between lining up alongside either McDonald, Kariya, Boyes or David Perron that he really hasn't found a rhythm playing with a consistent pairing. I don't think he gets the opportunity to build upon his 54 point season from last year. Erik Johnson doesn't look like he missed a beat after missing all of last season with an ACL injury. He has six assists in six contests, all while averaging two and a half SOG per contest.

Vancouver

Henrik Sedin is just fine without his twin brother Daniel. Many poolies including myself thought that all hell was going to break loose when Daniel went down with the heel injury, but things seem to be hunky dory as the Canuck's offense hasn't exactly been lighting up the score sheets, but haven't really keeled over and died either. Mikael Samuelsson is tearing it up with 17 SOG, while averaging 18:37, in his last three contests without Sedin in the lineup. At just under 50 percent owned in Yahoo leagues, he could be a great addition to many fantasy leagues that count SOG as a stat. Sergei Shirokov has eight points in seven contests for the Moose, if he keeps that pace up he's surely expected to get a call-up fairly soon, especially when the Canucks' offense is struggling to find goals.

The Canucks blue-line corps took a big blow after learning that Sami Salo will miss the next four-to-six weeks with a MCL injury. Christian Ehrhoff has assumed the extra responsibilities while averaging 20:54 in ice-time the last three contests. Roberto Luongo owners are starting to panic, but just calm yourselves down before making a decision that you're going to regret later. Luongo finished with a 2.98 GAA along with a .902 save percentage at the end of October last year. He also had a 2.91 GAA and a .903 save percentage the year before that, so really his current 3.22 and .879 doesn't really seem to scary after all does it?

Questions or comments? Like always I'll be ready and willing to discuss them with you in the comments section below. See ya next week.