A couple of big news items happened this past week with Ken Hitchcock being fired in Columbus and the Flames continuing their reformation project by unloading Olli Jokinen being two of the biggest changes. We're heading into the last week before the Olympic trade freeze, which should result in a few more deals coming into fruition in the next few days. This week we'll take a look at all of the potential trade candidates from the Kings, Wild, Predators, and Coyotes perspective.

But before the good stuff here are 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

Glencross (3)

Oshie (4)

Cumiskey (6)

Oshie (3)

Potulny (15)

Benn (3)

Galiardi (3)

Foote (6)

Demitra (2)

Steen (14)

Handzus (3)

Johnsson (3)

Skrastins (5)

Steen (2)

Langkow (13)

Steen (2)

O’Reilly (3)

Galiardi (5)

Cumiskey (2)

Belanger (13)

Stralman (2)

Lombardi (3)

Johnsson (4)

Handzus (2)

Filppula (12)

Maaaasquito Bite of the week: Matthew Lombardi

Last week my bite of the week was Keith Yandle, this week I'll stay along the same course and delve a little deeper on fellow Coyote Lombardi. He's been red-hot with 17 points in his last 19 contests. Granted Monday night's huge five point effort really swayed the numbers, but even if you ignore those numbers, there are heaps of positives coming from the Lombardi camp to definitely make him fantasy worthy. One thing that you definitely should be aware of is the fact that in the last 10 contests, he's pretty much been attached to Shane Doan's hip as he's spent a whopping 89.62 percent of his overall ice-time alongside the Coyotes' captain. Lombardi has also averaged 3:32 per contest with the man advantage during that span, which should give fantasy owners another reason to pick up the nine percent Yahoo! owned Lombardi. If he's still sitting on your waiver wire definitely snatch him up ASAP!

Now onto the good stuff.

I split the players into three categories.

HOT- look for the player to garner plenty of trade attention come deadline time.

LUKE WARM- the player does have some trade value, but will need a considerable amount of work in order to get moved.

ICE COLD- the player has essentially a slight chance of being moved, but don't bet the farm.

Los Angeles

Safe: Anze Kopitar, Ryan Smyth, Michal Handzus, Jarret Stoll, Justin Williams, Dustin Brown, Wayne Simmonds, Andrei Loktionov, Oscar Moller, Drew Doughty, Rob Scuderi, Matt Greene, Peter Harrold, Davis Drewiske, Johnathan Quick, Erik Ersberg

Movable:

HOT

Alex Frolov – Frolov's problems in LA has been widely published throughout the internet, such as the recent talking tos by GM Dean Lombardi or the healthy scratches by coach Terry Murray. The fact of the matter is that when he's hot, he's one of the best players on the planet (seven multi-point games in 57 contests), but when he's cold (30 goose eggs in 57 contests), he's a thorn to the bottom for all of his fantasy owners. Frolov's scheduled to become a UFA at the end of the season, so there might be plenty of interests for his services come deadline time.

LUKE WARM

Jack Johnson- A few weeks ago there were numerous internet reports regarding a falling out between Johnson and GM Lombardi. Essentially Lombardi mentioned that JJ needed to improve his defensive game, and that he can't just freely ignore his defensive responsibilities. Lombardi also launched a scathing attack on JJ's alma mater, which he didn't take well, about their lack of a development problem for their young players. Things have seemed to have died down, but where there's smoke there's usually fire, and players don't usually forget about these types of situations easily. JJ isn't a prime target to be moved at the deadline, but we certainly need to be aware of the possibility.

Teddy Purcell- Things aren't looking rosy for the 24-year old as he's seen his fair share of healthy scratches this season. Purcell's only appeared in 41 of the 58 contests for the Kings while picking up just six points. The problem is that every time he's drawn in the Kings' lineup, he's ranged anywhere from playing 4:02 to 19:04, but as a whole he's averaging just 11:21 per contest, which is a good indication that he's worn out his welcome in LA. Purcell managed to pick up 83 points in 67 contests with the Monarchs, in the AHL, in 2007-08, which does show that he has some offensive potential. That might just be enough for teams to take a gamble on the undrafted St. John's native come deadline time.

Trevor Lewis- Lewis is a former first round pick selected 17th overall in the 2006 NHL entry draft by the Kings. He's tallied just three points while appearing in just 11 NHL contests, which shows that he's still trying to find his way in the NHL. I tried to dig up additional information regarding Lewis, but hardly found anything on the AHL website, except the fact that he's tallied just 49 points in 159 AHL contests, which doesn't show a lot of offensive potential. I don't think there's a lot of demand for his services at the deadline, but the Kings might be able to use his high draft status to tack him on as a "toss in" as part of a bigger deal.

Randy Jones- Jones seems to have developed quite a bit of chemistry playing alongside JJ where nine of his 14 points have come from playing alongside the American Olympian. The Kings essentially have five solid defenseman (Doughty, JJ, Scuderi, Greene and Sean O'Donnell), which leaves that sixth spot to be battled out between the trio of Jones, Drewiske and Harrold. Once again, I don't know if there is large market for a stay-at-home defenseman like Jones, but you just never know…

ICE COLD

Scott Parse/Brad Richardson- The duo has combined for 41 points this season in 103 contests. Generally speaking I don't envision third liners having much trade value at deadline time as teams generally prefer the status quo route rather than attempting the trade route, which provides us with more reasoning as to why the Kings would keep the duo past the deadline than to trade them. Richardson also averages 1:22 short-handed per contest, which shows even more reason for them to retain his services. Look for Parse and Richardson to sign new contracts with the Kings in the off-season.

Raitis Ivanans- As discussed in previous columns, fourth line “goons” generally don’t get moved at the deadline. The Kings need a big bodied enforcer for their playoff push anyways, so I don’t see the 6-4 Russian being moved at the deadline.

Sean O’Donnell- O’Donnell’s miniscule $1.25 mil salary isn’t a huge problem for the Kings, and at 37 he’s the eldest member of the Kings’ blue-line corps. He’s also an integral part of the Kings’ penalty kill, by averaging a team-high 3:01 per contest in man down situations. He’s too vital of a part of the Kings’ team to be dealt at the deadline.

Minnesota

Safe: Martin Havlat, P.M. Bouchard, Mikko Koivu, Andrew Brunette, Antti Miettinen, Chuck Kobasew, Kyle Brodziak, Brent Burns, Nick Schultz, Greg Zanon, Niklas Backstrom

Movable:

HOT

Owen Nolan- Nolan’s trade value will depend entirely on where the Wild sit after the next three games. They’re currently sitting just four points out of the final playoff spot in the Western Conference, but with more “talented” teams (on paper) like the Red Wings, Stars, Ducks, Blues, and Blue Jackets also chasing that same playoff spot, the Wild might just receive the short end of the stick by season’s end. At 37 years old, Nolan is on his last legs anyways, so if the Wild can deal him to a contender and pick up a few draft picks in the process that might just help them a bit more during their rebuilding process. If the Wild choose to be sellers at the deadline Nolan’s a prime candidate to be moved.

Eric Belanger- Much like Nolan, Belanger’s status will depend highly on whether the Wild decide

to become sellers or not at the deadline. Belanger has 34 points in 57 contests, and is on pace to shatter his current career-high by over 11 points. His 58.4 percent faceoff win percentage currently ranks sixth overall in the entire league. He could certainly join a playoff bubble team, like the Avalanche (47.3), Flames (47.4), or Devils (48.2), who definitely could utilize Belanger in a third line center role to help boost that all important faceoff winning percentage.

Marek Zidlicky- With 33 points in 57 contests, Zidlicky is on pace for his fifth 42+ point of his career. Zidlicky is one of the most under-rated offensive defensemen in the league, and at a salary of just $3.35 mil per season, his contract is a massive bargain. Teams who are looking for a jump in offense on the blue-line might just be lining up for Zidlicky's services during deadline time. If the Wild fall out of the playoff race, you can bet that he gets moved.

LUKE WARM

James Sheppard- The former ninth overall pick is still trying to find his way in the NHL. Sheppard's picked up 48 points in 203 career NHL contests, which is definitely a far cry from the 96 points in 56 contests that he tallied in his final junior year with Cape Breton. Benoit Pouliot hit a wall why playing with the Wild, but since his trade to the Habs he's tallied 14 points in 20 contests, so perhaps a change of scenery might just jumpstart Sheppard's NHL career just like it has for Pouliot.

Kim Johnsson- Johnsson is the leading average ice-time receiver for the Wild. He's a great stay-at-home defenseman with 10 years of NHL experience. He would be a great rental option for teams who are desperately in need of some veteran presence on the blue-line (Blues), but his $4.85 mil salary could prove to be too pricey for a few teams.

Josh Harding- Harding has a 5-8 record along with a 2.79 GAA and .905 save percentage, which isn't exactly bad numbers for a number two goalie in the NHL. The Wild have Wade Dubielewicz and recently recalled Anton Khudobin in the pipeline, so they aren't exactly hard pressed to be forced to keep Harding. He's scheduled to become a RFA at the end of the season, and with Niklas Backstrom signed for a long term, you might just see Harding change addresses at deadline time.

ICE COLD

Derek Boogaard- Much like the situation with Ivanans, there isn't much trade value for the Boogey man. He should remain a part of Wild property until the off-season.

Cal Clutterbuck- The Wild fanatics absolutely love the man that hits pretty much anything and everything with two legs. The NHL hits leader is great value for fans as well as the Wild. I would peg Clutterbucks chance of being traded to be somewhere between zilch to none.

Guillaume Latendresse- With 24 points in 33 games, Latendresse is thoroughly enjoying his new home in Minnesota. The Wild will definitely do their best to try to re-sign the pending RFA in the off-season and I don't envision any potential problems in them doing so.

Andrew Ebbett- Playing on three teams in one season probably will ring a few alarm bells for opposing NHL teams. Ebbett is only averaging 10:52 per contest for the Wild, so it's not like he's exactly untradeable from the Wilds' perspective. I don't think he garners enough value for teams to take a gamble on the pending RFA, so look for him to remain in Minnesota.

Robbie Earl- The former sixth round pick from the 2004 NHL entry draft is finally beginning to crack his way into the NHL. The only problem is that he's averaging just 8:25 per contest, which probably isn't enough time for potential suitors to scout Earl at a high level prior to the deadline.

Shane Hnidy- There probably isn't going to be much interest in a stay-at-home D with just 12 points in 57 contests that averages just 13:50 per contest.

John Scott- Ditto as above.

Nashville

Safe: Martin Erat, David Legwand, Jason Arnott, J.P. Dumont, Steve Sullivan, Joel Ward, Jordin Tootoo, Ryan Jones, Jerred Smithson, Marcel Goc, Cal O'Reilly, Shea Weber, Ryan Suter, Kevin Klein, Alex Sulzer

Movable:

HOT

- Dan Ellis/Pekka Rinne- The Preds face an interesting situation with their goaltenders as both goalies are heading into the off-season with UFA status. Rinne has started in six out of the last seven contests, which demonstrates that he has the edge in number one status over Ellis at the moment. Rinne also has more of a respectable lead record-wise over Ellis with a 20-11-3 edge over Ellis' 11-11-1. Rinne also has the age advantage (three years) over Ellis, which might make him the more attractive net-minder to keep long term. But with huge list of potential FA goalies available in the off-season, (Marty Turco, Evgeni Nabokov, Jose Theodore, Vesa Toskala, Kari Lehtonen, Chris Mason, Carey Price, Ray Emery, Ondrej Pavelec, Martin Biron, Peter Budaj, Josh Harding, Johan Hedberg, Alex Auld, Patrick Lalime, Jonas Gustavsson, Michal Neuvirth, Antti Niemi, Jaroslav Halak, Andrew Raycroft, Michael Leighton, etc.) you would have to think that unloading Ellis, at the deadline, would be a lucky feat if the Preds were to pull it off.

LUKE WARM

- Dan Hamhuis- A recent Globe and Mail report featured Hamhuis being a top commodity come trade deadline day. The Preds are chock full of defensive talent with Franson, Jon Blum, Ryan Ellis and Charles Olivier-Roussel down the pipeline, meaning that keeping Hamhuis into the off-season won't be a big priority. You would think that GM David Poile would rather get at least something in return for Hamhuis rather than losing him to free agency for nothing in the off-season, which might cause him to lean towards trading Hamhuis at the deadline.

- Cody Franson- As mentioned above the Preds are extremely deep in terms of defensive talent, which means that they might be in the market to transfer some of that talent into offensive talent fairly soon. The question remains will it be this trade deadline, in the off-season, or a few more years down the road that it happens?

ICE COLD

- Patric Hornqvist- He's tied for the team lead with 36 points. The Preds have a ton of cap space for the next season and beyond, so there shouldn't be any reasons for the pending RFA to not receive a huge pay rise in the off-season.

- Wade Belak- The Saskatchewan native has just 33 points in 529 career NHL contests, and the amazing thing is that he was once a 12th overall pick in the 1994 NHL entry draft. That definitely would have to make you think what the Nordiques scouting department was thinking back in the day. Either way no team is going to want to give anything of value for Belak's services at the deadline.

- Francis Bouillon- With just 25 points in his last 184 contests, Bouillon hasn't exactly been lighting up the league with points. The pending UFA does seem to contribute in all situations as he averages 1:32 short-handed and 1:50 on the power-play each contest for the Preds, so he does have some "real-life" value. I just don't know if potential suitors will show too much interest in the 11 year veteran.

Phoenix

Safe: Shane Doan, Radim Vrbata, Petr Prucha, Vernon Fiddler, Lauri Korpikoski, Ed Jovanovski, Jim Vandermeer, Kurt Sauer, Keith Yandle, Ilya Bryzgalov, Jason LaBarbera

Movable: Anders Eriksson, Sami Lepisto

HOT

- Peter Mueller- Mueller's difference between pre/post-concussion numbers has been widely documented on the Dobber website. He had a great rookie season and was earmarked to be a gifted offensive star in the NHL, but a concussion completely flipped that situation on its backside. He has just 52 points in the last 121 contests, and a change of venue might just help revitalize his career. Mueller's probably the biggest bargaining chip that the Yotes' possess, which makes him a prime candidate to be moved at the deadline.

LUKEWARM

- Taylor Pyatt- The former eighth-overall pick has yet to breakout at the NHL level. The positive is that he does have 584 games of experience under his belt, which might be something that trade partners could be looking for at deadline time. I'll give it a 50/50 chance that he gets dealt at the deadline.

ICE COLD

- Matthew Lombardi- With 40 points in 56 contests, Lombardi is second in team scoring behind only Shane Doan. His $1.817 cap-hit will definitely make a huge jump next season. I envision him as a big part of the Yotes' future moving forward, so look for him to remain in Phoenix after the deadline.

- Scottie Upshall- Upshall might have been a potential trade candidate at the deadline, but a knee injury that will sideline him for the rest of this season pretty much destroyed any hope of him being moved at the deadline. Look for him to head into the off-season as a RFA, and the Phoenix brass to ink him to a long-term deal in summer.

- Robert Lang- The Yotes' are smack dab in the middle of the playoff chase, which means that they'll most likely be buyers at the deadline rather than sellers. They'll need Lang's veteran presence in the lineup, so they'll keep him post-deadline.

- Martin Hanzal- Hanzal is developing into a great two-way center and at a salary of just $850k, plus bonuses, it's not going to be a sore spot for the Phoenix management where they'll be forced to move him at the deadline.

- Adrian Aucoin- Much like the situation with Lang, the Yotes will need as much veteran presence as they possible can for the post-season push. Aucoin won't be moved at the deadline.

- Zbynek Michalek- Michalek is averaging a team-high 23:04 per contest in Phoenix. He's entering the prime age for defensemen, and with the Coyotes still in the running for a post-season berth, Michalek shouldn't be changing addresses at the deadline.

- Sami Lepisto- Lepisto is scheduled to become a RFA in the off-season, which is why he's considered for the movable list. He seems to have found a bit of chemistry playing alongside Keith Yandle that the Yotes' management might want to keep that duo for the long term. Look for Lepisto to be re-signed in the off-season.

- Daniel Winnik/Joel Perrault/Paul Bissonnette- The trio has amassed just 22 points in 92 contests while garnering 929 minutes of combined ice-time. None of the players have enough trade valued to be moved at the deadline.

- Anders Eriksson- Eriksson has only appeared in 12 contests this season and is essentially a seventh/eighth depth defenseman. There aren't too many teams that would be interested in those types of players, so I would be surprised if Eriksson was dealt at the deadline.

Questions or comments? Like always I'll be ready and willing to discuss them with you in the comments section below. Check in next week as we finish off the series by discussing the trade deadline situations of the Blues, Sharks and Canucks.