Following the must-read footsteps of my Eastern counterpart, here is the first part of the Western Conference postulations.

All NHL teams have between 19 and 22 games remaining in the regular season. But not all games are created equal. For the shrewd fantasy owner, there is opportunity here.

Thanks to the shootout, there are just two teams in the Western Conference that have a sub-.500 record. Alright, enough chit-chat, let's get started:

Anaheim Ducks

Home (19-8-2)

Away (11-17-5)

Total (30-5-7)

Games Remaining

12

8

20

Against .500 or Worse

3

1

4

Against Better Than .500

9

7

16

Against 75 Points or Better

5

3

10

If you are looking for a favourable schedule you probably don't have to look too much further than the Ducks. They are currently 19-8-2 at home and have 60 percent of their remaining contests at the Honda center. Anaheim averages 3.34 goals per contest at home compared to just 2.30 on the road. With four contests against three bottom-six teams (in goals against average) the Ducks' offense should be feasting on their opponents in the final quarter of the season.

3 Games – COL

2 Games – VAN, EDM, LA, DAL

1 Game – PHX, MON, CLB, NSH, SJ, CHI, NYI, CAL, STL

Gold Prospects:

Corey Perry has very interesting home/away point split numbers. In 62 contests, he has 35 points at home compared to just 24 on the road. With 12 home games in the final 20 contests, look for Perry to finish strong during the stretch run.

Scott Niedermayer is minus 17 away from the Honda Center compare to being even while playing on home ice. He also has 15 PPP at home compared to just six on the road. With the bulk of the Ducks' remaining contests at home, Neidermayer might just be able to turn his dismal season around.

Since assuming the number one gig in Anaheim after the J.S. Giguere deal in late January, **Jon as Hiller**
has posted a 5-2-0 record along with a 2.44 GAA and a .933 save percentage in seven starts. Vesa Toskala won't threaten the number one gig from Hiller, so he should be a great goalie to own for the rest of this fantasy season.

Silver Liners:

Ryan Getzlaf has 46 points in 40 contests against Western Conference teams. 18 of the remaining 20 Duck contests are within the same conference, so look for Getzlaf to maintain a similar scoring pace moving forward.

Injuries have been a big problem for **Teemu Selanne** this season, but it seems that he's on his way back to vintage form with six points and 26 SOG in seven February contests. Selanne also has a combined plus 47 rating in his career for March and April, which means that he might be in for a huge spring.

January was a horrible month for **Ryan Whitney** as he picked up just one point in 15 contests, but did rebound well with a decent February by tallying five points in seven contests. 13 of his 28 points this season have come against division rivals, and with six division contests remaining for the Ducks, the American Olympian should pick up a few extra points moving forward.

Bronze Suspects:

17 of **Bobby Ryan's** 49 points have come from playing against the Northwest division. The Ducks have eight remaining contests against teams from the Northwest, so the final 20 contests for Ryan should remain productive moving forward.

The **Saku Koivu** acquisition has definitely not been as expected as the Finn has struggled from a fantasy perspective so far this season. Since the calendar rolled over to 2010, he has only fired 28 SOG in 18 contests, which is probably one of the main reasons why his point totals are so low. The Ducks need him to develop some chemistry alongside fellow countryman Selanne if they are to make the post-season in April.

Since joining the Ducks earlier in February, **Jason Blake** has spent just over 55 percent of his overall ice-time alongside Selanne. There still isn't any positive news regarding Joffrey Lupul returning early from his back injury, so Blake might find himself in a permanent spot alongside the Finnish duo for the final 20 contests.

Calgary Flames

Home (15-14-3)

Away (15-9-6)

Total (30-23-9)

Games Remaining

9

11

20

Against .500 or Worse

0

1

1

Against Better Than .500

9

10

19

Against 75 Points or Better

5

6

11

The Flames have a very tough schedule looking ahead of them as 19 of the 20 contests will be against teams that have a 500 record or better. Also 11 of the 20 contest are against teams are holding currently holding down playoff spots, so they definitely have a tough road ahead. The saving grace is that they do have four games against the Wild, who on average give up 2.85 goals per contest, so they might be able to use those games to help jumpstart the lagging offense.

4 Games - MIN

2 Games – DET, VAN, COL, SJ,

1 Game – NJ, OTT, ANA, NYI, BOS, WAS, PHX, CHI

Gold Prospects:

Much like Neidermayer, **Jarome Iginla** has very much been a road warrior. He has a minus seven rating at home but a plus 11 rating on the road. He also seems to play more physical as he has 40 PIMs away from the Pengrowth Saddledome compared to just 11 in Calgary. Since Dion Phaneuf and Olli Jokinen have been shipped out of Cowtown, Iginla has certainly played with an added edge. Prior to the trades, Iggy was averaging 3.02 SOG per contest, after the deal he's averaging 4.29 per contest. As the old adage goes, more shots usually mean more points.

Niklas Hagman has certainly enjoyed the new scenery in Calgary as he has three points and 15 SOG in seven contests with his new club. He's also spent 83 percent of his overall ice-time alongside Olympian Iginla and at the end of the day if you spend that much time alongside a superstar, you'll certainly be guaranteed to pick up a few points along the way.

Much like the situation with Niklas Hagman, **Matt Stajan** has really enjoyed his new home with the Flames. He basically went from spending 52.6 percent of his overall ice-time next to Phil Kessel in Toronto, to spending 88 percent of his ice-time alongside Iggy in Calgary. No offense to Kessel, but Iggy is much more refined in terms of skills than Kessel, so Stajan should see a huge jump in fantasy production moving forward.

Silver Liners:

The **Jay Bouwmeester** acquisition in the off-season hasn't exactly panned out in the Flames' favour as he's only on pace to finish the season with 30 points. The Flames cleared out Phaneuf earlier this month, which pretty much handed the number one blue-liner job to JBO. He's also averaged 3:12 on the power-play per contest in the month of February. Bouwmeester should see plenty of opportunity moving forward for the Flames.

Rene Bourque has 10 points in 13 career contests against the Wild. The Flames have four remaining contests against their division rivals, which mean that there will be plenty of opportunity for him to "seize the day" in the remainder of this fantasy season.

Chris Higgins has found himself on the Flames' second line alongside Daymond Langkow and Ales Kotalik. He has still yet to register a point, but does have 21 SOG besides his name. Averaging 17:47 per contest should be enough for him to hit the score sheet soon enough.

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Bronze Suspects:

Eight of the remaining 20 contests for the Flames will be against division rivals. 10 of **Daymond Langkow's**
32 points have come against the Northwest division, which means that the 33-year old should see some added success in the final 20 contests of the season.

Averaging 21:22 per contest in the month of February sits **Mark Giordano** second behind only Bouwmeester in terms of ice-time by a Flame blue-liner. He also picked up an average of 2:19 per contest on the PP during that span. Giordano won't exactly light up the score sheet, but do expect the departure of Phaneuf to help increase the fantasy production of Gio.

A third defenseman makes the list for the Flames. **Ian White** was a major part of the package coming back from Toronto for Phaneuf, but has yet to completely impress the Flames' faithful. He ranks third behind JBO and Gio in terms of PP ice-time by averaging 1:49 per contest. White was averaging 2.32 SOG per contest in TO, but just only one SOG per contest in Calgary, so he'll need to increase that stat if he's to be more productive fantasy wise the rest of the way.

Chicago Blackhawks

Home (23-6-2)

Away (18-9-3)

Total (41-15-5)

Games Remaining

10

11

21

Against .500 or Worse

2

2

4

Against Better Than .500

8

9

17

Against 75 Points or Better

5

3

8

There isn't anything glaringly special in the remaining schedule for the Blackhawks. It's pretty much split down the middle in terms of home/away games. The most important portion of the schedule might be the five-game stretch where they play PHX, PHX, CLB, CLB and STL in the

middle of March, where they might be in a position to clinch a playoff berth and begin to rest up their star players for the post-season run.

2 Games – DET, LA, PHX, CLB, STL,

1 Game – NYI, EDM, VAN, PHI, WSH, ANA, MIN, NJ, CAL, DAL, COL

Gold Prospects:

Patrick Kane is just five points away from setting a new career-high and with 21 contests remaining it's pretty safe to say that he'll smash that plateau. He's also on pace for 266 SOG on the season, which should rank him amongst the league leaders by season's end.

71 points is nearly unheard of in this day and age by a defenseman, but that's the pace that **Duncan Keith**
is on as he continues on his blistering offensive pace. In February, he averaged 4.33 SOG per contest, which is certainly a positive sign for Keith owners. He also has 13 points in 18 divisional contests and with six more contests remaining, he should be primed for a solid last quarter.

Patrick Sharp entered the Olympic break blazing hot by tallying nine points and 15 SOG in four contests. He's really cemented himself alongside Kane, as he's spent 72.6 percent of his ice-time, in the last three contests, on the same line as the American Olympian. He should be a great fantasy own for the final 21 contests.

Silver Liners:

Jonathan Toews has completely scorched the Central Division as he has 21 points in 18 divisional contests. With six contests remaining against his divisional rivals, Toews should see plenty of success moving forward.

Marian Hossa is right on his typical point-per-game pace. Since the lockout Hossa has 67 points in 63 March/April contests so look for him to maintain a similar pace this campaign.

After recording six points in the first 13 contests of the year, **Dave Bolland**, was bitten by the injury bug, which sidelined him for the next three months. He returned at the beginning of February to pick up two points in six contests. In the last three contests, he spent less than 20 percent of his overall ice-time alongside Hossa, but the opportunity is certainly there for Bolland, especially with the Hawks gearing up their lines for post-season in the last couple of weeks of the regular season.

Bronze Suspects:

Kim Johnsson has stepped right into the Hawks' line up with little or no problems as he's averaging 18:58 per contest on his new team. He'll need to have a better partner than Jordan Hendry if he is to be fantasy productive in the final 21 contests.

Brian Campbell had only three points in the last 12 contests heading into the Olympic break. He's still averaging 23:30 per contest in Chicago, but in terms of depth chart wise he's probably ranked behind both Keith and Seabrook. He's on pace to establish a new career-high in SOG, so that should help with the production moving forward.

Dustin Byfuglien averages 2:38 per contest on the man advantage, which ranks him fifth amongst all Hawk forwards. He was on a seven-game point-less drought heading into the Olympic break, but that streak should end once the NHL schedule resumes in March.

Colorado Avalanche

Home (20-8-2)

Away (15-12-4)

Total (35-20-6)

Games Remaining

11

10

21

Against .500 or Worse

1

1

2

Against Better Than .500

10

9

19

Against 75 Points or Better

5

5

10

Coach Joe Sacco have the Avs dazzling at home by winning over 66 percent of their contests.

They have 11 contests remaining at the Pepsi Center, which should be an added bonus for Avs' players moving forward. The Avs also have a very Pacific division based schedule where 11 of the remaining contests are against the Ducks, Kings, Coyotes, Sharks or Stars, which could prove to be a handful since all the teams will remain in the post-season hunt till the very last week.

3 Games – ANA, LA

2 Games – PHX, STL, VAN, CAL, SJ

1 Game – FLA, DAL, EDM, CHI, DET

Gold Prospects:

If you are looking for the fantasy force of the Avalanche, you don't have to look any further than **Paul Stastny**
. The Quebec-native has been widely disregarded on many fronts since draft day in 2005. He entered the Olympic break by tallying 18 points in the previous 24 contests and has single-handedly gotten the Avs into the post-season race.

Sixth, 13th, seventh, and third are the league rankings for wins, goals against average, save percentage and shutouts respectively for the Avs' number one goaltender. **Craig Anderson** has been a fantasy gem this season, and for those of you who took a gamble on the American at the beginning of the season, are surely laughing your way to the bank at the moment.

Brandon Yip has 18 points since joining the big club in mid-December. He's averaging just 14:18 per contest, which is shocking compared to how much he has produced at the big league level in just his rookie season. With Milan Hejduk scheduled to return after the Olympic break, Yip should see plenty of ice-time alongside Matt Duchene and the 11-year Czech veteran in the final 21 contests.

Silver Liners:

Milan Hejduk's knee has been giving him problems all year long, but did elect to make a smart decision to take the last 14 contests off for knee surgery. The five weeks off plus the extra two weeks of the Olympic break should be enough time for Hejduk to get it all prepped up for the stretch run of the season. He was a 0.75 point and 2.58 SOG per game player prior to the surgery, so he should post similar numbers in the final five weeks of the fantasy season.

J.M. Liles is on his way out of Colorado as he's been healthy scratched five out of the last seven contests. Liles has tallied 39+ points in three out of the last five seasons, which does show that he has plenty of offensive upside for potential trade partners to put in bids for his services on deadline day. If he can find himself onto a contending team, Liles might be a fantasy gem in the stretch run of the campaign.

Chris Stewart has hit the jackpot in terms of garnering optimal ice-time for the Avs. He's spent 84.73 percent of his overall ice-time in the last 10 contests alongside superstar Stastny. Stewart is also on pace for 61 points, 230 SOG and 80 PIMs which are fantastic numbers fantasy-wise for owners. Look for Stewart to finish strong the rest of this season.

Bronze Suspects:

Kyle Quincey's ice-time took a bit of a hit last month, as it dipped to just 21:07 compared to his seasonal average of 24:22. With the prospect of Liles being moved at the deadline, Quincey will pretty much be top dog on the Avs blue-line on the power-play moving forward. Look for Quincey's value to skyrocket post-Olympic break.

With only two points in his last 10 contests, **Wojtek Wolski** hit a bit of a snag prior to the Olympic break. He's bounced around playing roughly 54.7 and 41.5 percent with Stastny and Duchene respectively, so he's not exactly been lining up next to scrubs. Garnering a top-six role on any NHL squad will pretty much guarantee fantasy production, and playing with a playoff

contender will provide even more umph to his production.

Despite averaging just 12:58 per contest for the Avs, **Darcy Tucker** is spending 2:08 per contest on Colorado's second power-play unit alongside Matt Duchene, T.J. Galiardi, or Yip. Nine of the 16 points that Tucker tallied has been with the man advantage, so look for a few more PPP from Tucks in the remaining 21 contests for the Avs.

Columbus Blue Jackets

Home (15-10-6)

Away (10-18-4)

Total (25-28-10)

Games Remaining

10

9

19

Against .500 or Worse

1

1

2

Against Better Than .500

9

8

17

Against 75 Points or Better

3

4

7

With eight contests remaining against divisional rivals, the Jackets have a favourable schedule to help make a solid post-season run in the final 19 contests. The Jackets only have two contests against teams with sub-500 records, which mean their schedule is quite tough compared to the rest of the league.

3 Games - DET

2 Games – STL, CHI

1 Game- VAN, SJ, LA, ANA, ATL, EDM, MIN, NSH, NJ, NYI, TB, WSH

Gold Prospects:

I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that **Steve Mason** will make a huge fantasy impact in the final quarter of this fantasy season. Since Ken Hitchcock was fired at the start of February, Mason has gone 3-1-0 with a 1.26 GAA along with a .960 save percentage in four starts. Yes, Mason has experienced a terrible sophomore slump. Yes, the Jackets haven't been playing up to snuff and yes, they are nine points out of the final playoff spot out west, but I still have plenty of faith in the Jackets, especially Mason, for the remainder of this season.

If you are mentioning the Jackets, it's hard to ignore the captain, **Rick Nash.** Prior to the Olympic break, Nash was on a seven-game point-scoring streak, in which he also tallied 20 SOG. He has a career 3.51 SOG average in the month of March and the Jackets will definitely lean heavily on their captain in the remaining 19 contests.

In the **Antoine Vermette** .vs. R.J. Umberger battle, it appears that Vermette is coming out as the winner, as he's lined up alongside Nash in over 60 percent of his shifts. Since Claude Noel took over from Ken Hitchcock that number has risen to nearly 73 percent, while Vermette has responded by tallying at a point-per-game pace. With the Jackets desperate for victories in the final 2 months look for Vermette to get every opportunity to succeed on a line with Nash.

Silver Liners:

With so many remaining games against their division rivals, there will be plenty of room for the Jackets to make up some ground in the Western Conference. They'll have to lean heavily on the third member of the top-line, **Kristian Huselius**. Huse has 11 points in 14 divisional contests, and they'll need him to at least maintain or better that pace in the remaining eight divisional contests if the Jackets are to squeak into the post-season this campaign.

If you are looking for some help in the SOG department, you probably won't have to look much further than **Umberger**. He currently sits second amongst all Blue Jacket players with 163 SOG. We mentioned earlier how he drew the short end of the stick in the Nash line mate sweepstakes, but that hasn't translated in him missing out on a lot of points. He still picked up four in his last five contests, so there's still plenty of offense available from the Pittsburgh-native.

Fedor Tyutin has also benefitted from the coaching change as he has three points and five SOG in four contests since Hitch was removed from head coaching duties. He's averaging 23:06 per contest, 3:42 of which have come on the power-play, during that span. His 112 SOG is a bit low for my liking, but his top dog status on the Jackets' blue-line should be more than enough to deem him fantasy worthy moving forward.

Bronze Suspects:

Anton Stralman plays second fiddle to Fedor Tyutin as his 19:54 per contest average, in the last four contests, indicate. Much like Tyutin, Stralman doesn't fire a lot of pucks to the net, but is quite effective in terms of picking up a few cheap points as a third/fourth d-man. The Jackets own the sixth-best PP efficiency rating in the league, which means that both Stralman and Tyutin should see plenty of opportunities to pick up those all important PPP in the final 19 contests.

Much like the rest of the Jackets, **Jakub Voracek,** has turned it around with Hitchcock's dismissal. Voracek is on a four-game, seven-point scoring streak prior to the Olympic break, while amassing a whopping 16 SOG during that span. His 2:36 PP ice-time has also steadied as well. He won't have the same fantasy impact as Nash, but he could be a great sleeper option in the final weeks of the fantasy season.

Following the same lines as Voracek, **Derick Brassard** has also put up a four-game point scoring streak entering the Olympic break, while spending 81.35 percent of his shifts along the Jackets' second line with Voracek. Brassard does have a goose egg in five career contests versus Detroit, and with three remaining games against the Red Wings, he'll definitely need to buck the trend.

Summary of First Five Teams

ANA

CAL

CHI

COL

CLB

Total Games Remaining

20

20

21

21

19

Home Games Remaining

12

9

10

11

10

Away Games Remaining

8

11

11

10

9

Games Remaining Against Teams Same or Better in Standings

14

11

1

10

17

Games Remaining Against Teams Worse in Standings

6

9

20

11

2

Total Against .500 or Worse

4

1

4

2

2

Home Against .500 or Worse

3

0

2

1

1

Away Against .500 or Worse

1

1

2

1

1

Total Against Better Than .500

16

19

17

19

17

Home Against Better Than .500

9

9

7

10

9

Away Against Better Than .500

7

10

10

9

8

Total Against 75 Points or Better

11

12

8

10

7

Home Against 75 Points or Better

6

5

5

5

3

Away Against 75 Points or Better

5

7

3

5

4