

Continuing the series I started last week of the break down each of the Western Conference teams. This week we'll take a deeper look into the Avs, Blue Jackets and Stars.

As many of the Dobber writers have alluded to, it all boils down to opportunity. A top-line player will receive every possible chance to succeed, while a top-six player will receive decent even strength/second unit power-play ice-time for production. A bottom feeder will most likely receive checking line time and definitely won't receive ample optimal scoring time. Their big break will only come if there are injuries or sudden collapses of young players from their team's top-six. We all like to be optimistic with our projections, but there really isn't a point in projection 80 points for a player who won't even crack a team's top-line let alone top-six.

Written by Ryan Ma Tuesday, 13 July 2010 10:47 - Last Updated Thursday, 15 July 2010 10:48 If you haven't read my projections article, definitely go and take a gander. I know I had an eye-opening experience when digging up all the stats. Take the line combos with a grain of salt. They are just arbitrary and are used primarily to separate a team's top-six from the bottom-six . I really don't want to get into arguments about player X had chemistry with player Y, therefore they'll be on a line together during the season. The following table was the same from last week's column, so make sure you pay attention to the numbers. Offensive Player's scoring position on team West **East** League Median Range

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Тор	
74.6	
74.1	
74.3	
70	
61	
2 nd	
62.8	
64.5	
63.7	
61	
60	

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3	rd
55.1	
54.5	
54.8	
53	
47	
4	th
47.7	
45.1	
46.4	
47	

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34			
5	th		
42.7			
38.2			
40.5			
38.5			
21			
6	th		
36			
34			
35			

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34

31

# Written by Ryan Ma Tuesday, 13 July 2010 10:47 - Last Updated Thursday, 15 July 2010 10:48 Enough of the stats, now onto the good stuff. Colorado – Fairly Locked faces shallow competition from bottom-six **Top Six** Peter Mueller - Paul Stastny - Chris Stewart Brandon Yip - Matt Duchene - Milan Hejduk

Written by Ryan Ma Tuesday, 13 July 2010 10:47 - Last Updated Thursday, 15 July 2010 10:48

Ca	va	lry

T.J. Galiardi, Ryan O'Reilly, David Jones, and Ryan Stoa

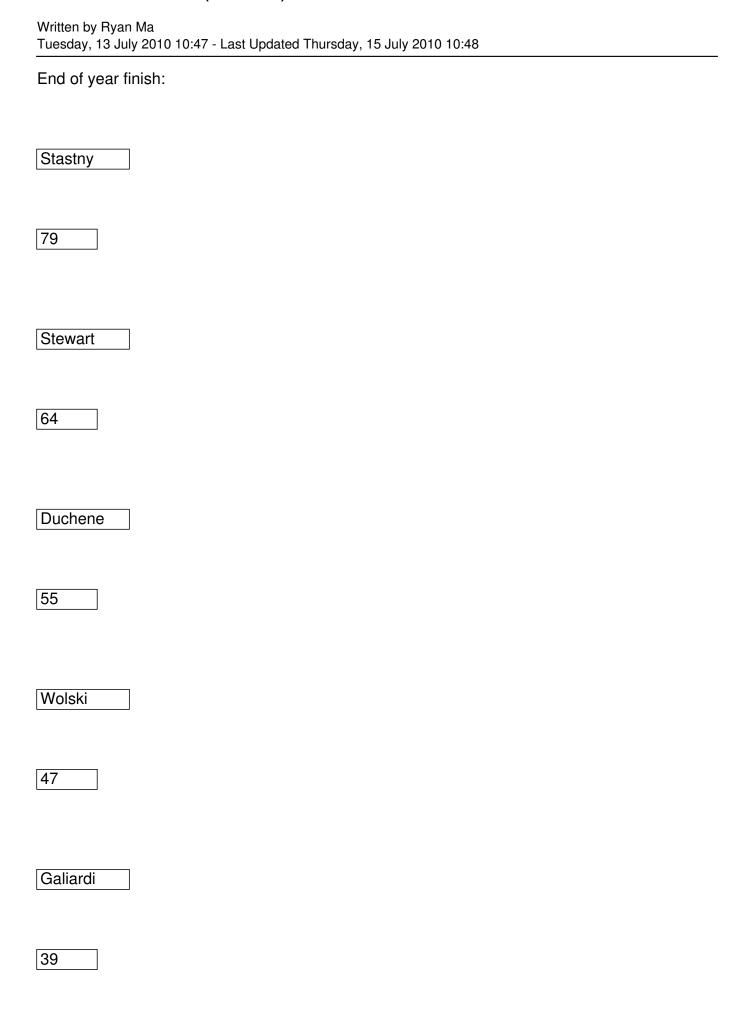
## **Bottom Feeders**

Cody McLeod, David Koci, Kevin Porter and David Winnik

What a difference 12 months makes! Last year I had no clue who the top-six on the Avs was going to be, but now it seems all of the dust has settled. Mueller, Stastny and Stewart could form a very productive under-the-radar top-line for fantasy purposes. Hejduk picked up 61.35 percent of his total points last season playing alongside youngster Duchene, so I think they'll keep the duo together. Yip seems to be a perfect energy type guy to complement the duo, so look for the Avs to keep them together during the season. The cavalry of Galiardi, O'Reilly and Jones could pose some complications but the top-six should be strong enough to ward off any sustained competition from the trio. After picking up 40 points in 54 contests with Lake Erie last season, Stoa has proven to be NHL ready. If Stastny or Duchene succumb to an injury, Stoa's fantasy value could skyrocket. On the flip side, if an injury doesn't occur, he could also see a full season in the minors, which would negate any fantasy value he would have in 2010-11. His status definitely makes him a high-risk/high-reward player for next campaign.

Last year's pre-season top-six:

Wojtek Wolski, Stastny, Hejduk, Tucker, Duchene, and Svatos.



## Earmarked for Success (West 2010): Part Two Written by Ryan Ma Tuesday, 13 July 2010 10:47 - Last Updated Thursday, 15 July 2010 10:48 O'Reilly 26 Columbus - Top nine fairly set, stiff competition from Filatov **Top Six** Kristian Huselius - R.J. Umberger - Rick Nash Antoine Vermette – Derick Brassard – Jakub Voracek Cavalry

Nikita Filatov\*

**Bottom Feeders** 

Written by Ryan Ma Tuesday, 13 July 2010 10:47 - Last Updated Thursday, 15 July 2010 10:48

Ethan Moreau, Sammy Pahlsson, Chris Clark, Andrew Murray, and Derek Dorsett

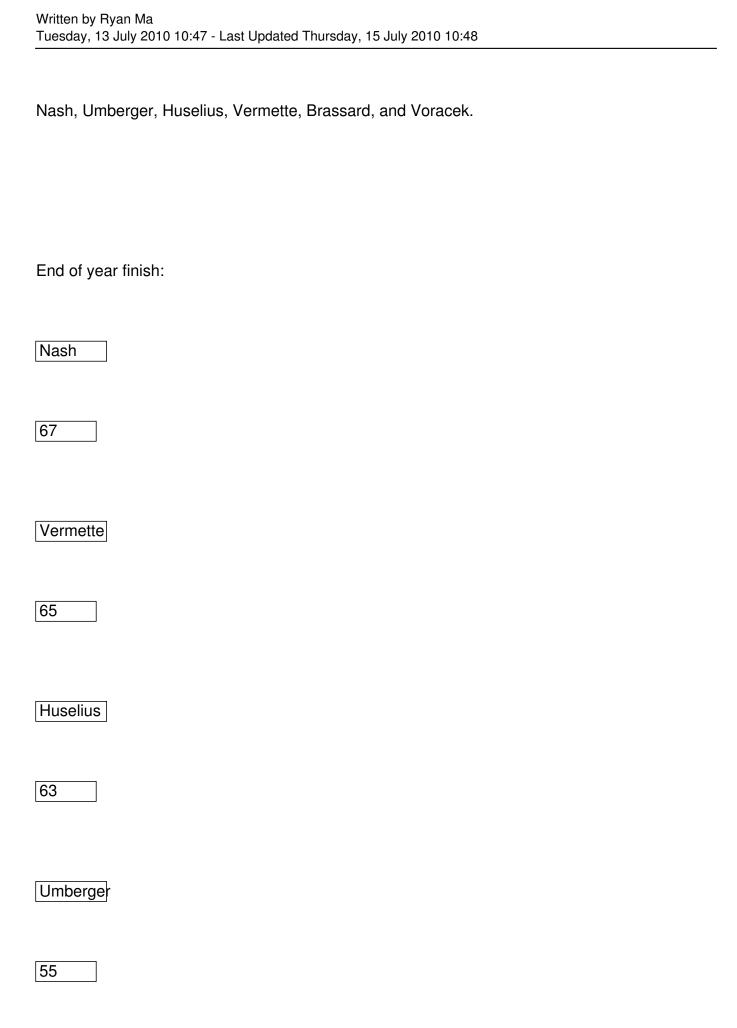
All the pieces are pretty much in place in Columbus with a big asterisk lingering next to the name of Filatov. Voracek started the season with 28 points in the first 56 contests, but vamped it up to the next gear to finish the season with 22 in the final 25. He has an outside shot at out-pointing Nash this campaign in my opinion. Last season my comments on Filatov were, "If you look at CLB, they have Nash, Huselius, Vermette, Umberger, Voracek and Brassard already, now throw in Torres, Chimera, Pahlsson, and Modin. Unless he completely blows the clothes off the coaches at training camp, it'll be near impossible for him to get into the CLB lineup let alone the top-six.

" 12 months later, and things remain status quo. Take out Torres, Chimera and Modin and replace them with Moreau and Clark, but everything else is pretty much identical.

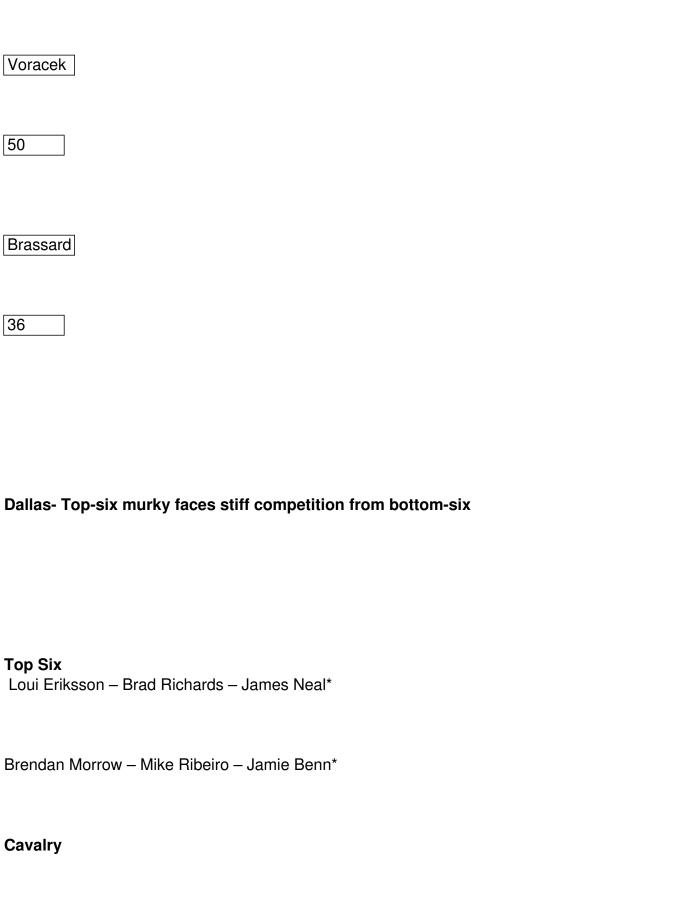
Yes, I understand that the wicked "Hitch" of the west is dead, but if you read Brett Lemon's <u>article</u>

last week, it doesn't appear that new coach Scott Arniel is all too flash on the offense either. For those of you who are hanging on the hope that they'll shift Umberger or Vermette lower on the depth charts to "make room" for Filatov, you probably might want to revisit that thought. Vermette and Umberger finished second and fourth in team scoring with 65 and 55 points respectively. Those numbers plus their combined experience, 458 and 392 games, would certainly surpass anything that Filatov could bring to the Jackets this campaign. Compounded by the fact that Columbus' top-six was actually ranked eighth overall, in terms of scoring as a unit, will only make it more difficult for the Russian to be productive fantasy-wise this campaign. The only hope that I could see Filatov garnering a top-six role in Columbus is if they decide to move Huselius. The Canucks have a plethora of d-men, and an open roster position for a top-six role, while the Jackets are in need of an offensive d-man and have an extra piece in Huselius. I dunno, seems like a match made in heaven to me...

Last year's pre-season top-six:



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## Steve Ott, Fabian Brunnstrom\*

### **Bottom Feeders**

Brian Sutherby, Tom Wandell, Toby Petersen, and Brian Segal

Nothing really has changed too much in Big D from last season. The separation between the top-six and bottom-six isn't as distinct as many of the other teams in the league. The trio of Richards, Eriksson and Neal accounted for 22.2 percent of the entire Stars' offense last campaign, so I envision Marc Crawford going back to the well once again to attempt a repeat performance. I temporarily placed Neal and Benn in the top-six but they're still negotiating new contracts for next season and wilder things could still happen. As of right now they only have \$43 mil committed to their current roster, so they still have plenty of cap space to re-sign their RFAs before October. It appears that both Ott and Brunnstrom will get handcuffed once again, so don't invest too highly on the pair come draft day. With the Stars depth at forward, Scott Glennie will spend another year in Brandon honing his offensive skills. Les Jackson, the Stars' director of scouting and player development, wants him to dominate the junior ranks and play a major role at the World Juniors this upcoming year, so don't expect him in a Stars uniform in 2010-11.

Last year's pre-season top-six:
Eriksson, Ribeiro, Morrow, Neal, Richards, and Ott
End of year finish:
Richards

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91		
Eriksson		
71		
Neal		
55		
Ribeiro		
53		
Morrow		
46		
Benn		

