Written by Ryan Ma

Tuesday, 03 August 2010 13:18 - Last Updated Wednesday, 04 August 2010 22:25



Continuing the series started a few weeks ago on the breakdown of each Western Conference team. For the final week we'll take a deeper look into the Sharks, Blues, and Canucks.

Here's a summation table of the previous 12 teams that we've covered if you haven't had a chance to go re-read the articles.

**Team** 

Cavalry

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Cavalry		
Cavalry		
Cavalry		
Anaheim		
Selanne*		
Carter		
Sexton		
Calgary		
Langkow		
Kotalik		

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Chicago
Stalberg
Colorado
Galiardi
O'Reilly
Jones

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Stoa
Columbus
Filatov
Dallas
Ott
Brunnstrom

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Detroit			
Bertuzzi	]		
Cleary			
Edmonton	]		
Cogliano			
Paajarvi-Svenss	on		
Omark			
Los Angeles			

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Handzus		
Moller		
Schenn		
Minnesota		
Kobasew		
Sheppard		
Bouchard*		
Nashville		
Ward		

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Wilson	
O'Reilly	
Hornqvist*	
Phoenix	
Prucha	
Turris	
Hanzal*	

San Jose – Top-six pretty much set in stone, shallow competition from bottom-six

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# **Top Six**

Patrick Marleau – Joe Thornton – Dany Heatley Ryane Clowe – Joe Pavelski – Devin Setoguchi (RFA)

### Cavalry

Logan Couture, and Jamie McGinn

### **Bottom Feeders**

Benn Ferriero, Scott Nichol, Torrey Mitchell, Cam MacIntyre

Marleau re-upped with San Jose in the off-season which is a great move for the Sharks and their fans. He completes a formidable trio that the Sharks will ice as their top-line. Thornton is now three years removed from his last 100-point season. As long as Marleau and Heatley, (as well as the talent in the top-six), remain, I just don't think that there's enough points to spread around for him to surpass that plateau in 2010-11. This is why I wouldn't overvalue him heading into drafts this September. Much of the same could be said for Heatley, we all love to believe that there isn't an artificial cap in points for a team, but it doesn't work that way in reality. Pavelski is talented and probably could be a top-line center in 29 other NHL teams, but in SJ he'll be shafted behind the "big three". Last campaign, the highest fourth ranked point getter for a team was Alex Burrows, at 67 points, but that was with Daniel Sedin's absence for 18 contests, that would probably be a starting point to work down from for Pav.

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Setoguchi started off blazing hot with nine points in the first 11 contests, but then registered only 27 in the remaining 59. If you are a Setoguchi-owner, or plan on drafting him, make a mental note of these numbers, 0.91, 0.8, 0.47, 0.53, 0.62, 0.53, and 0.33, as his career monthly point-production breakdown. Keep him for the first couple of months, then sell-high like there's no tomorrow. Clowe is a decent fantasy own, but definitely have a point cap in mind if you are going to draft him, (55 would be an absolute high IMO). Also try not to be tricked by his 131 PIMs, as it was artificially inflated because of three-15+ PIM games.

Couture and McGinn are my two cavalry picks from San Jose. Couture had a brilliant junior career in the OHL with 287 points in 232 contests as well as 53 points in 42 contests with Worchester in the AHL before being recalled to the big club last year. With the Sharks in a bit of cap trouble, they'll need to keep Couture in San Jose full-time to help alleviate some of the cap pressure. McGinn doesn't have as much offensive upside as Couture, but could gain fantasy value if a major injury happens to the Sharks' top-six. Benn Ferriero could also make an impact, as he was given a brief cup of coffee on the big line last season, but his fantasy upside is limited compared to McGinn or Couture.

Last year's pre-season top-six:

Michalek, Thornton, Cheechoo, Marleau, Pavelski, and Clowe.

End of year finish:

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Thornton
89
Marleau
83
Heatley
82
Clowe
57
Pavelski
51
Setoguchi

# Earmarked for Success (West 2010): Part Five Written by Ryan Ma Tuesday, 03 August 2010 13:18 - Last Updated Wednesday, 04 August 2010 22:25 36 St. Louis - Offense by committee. **Top Six** David Backes - Andy McDonald - Brad Boyes David Perron - T.J. Oshie - Alex Steen Cavalry Patrik Berglund **Bottom Feeders**

# Matt D'Agostini, Jay McClement, B.J. Crombeen, Vladimir Sobotka, Brad Winchester, and Cam Janssen.

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The Blues essentially remained status quo this off-season, with the exception of the removal of veterans Paul Kariya and Keith Tkachuk from their line up, which should at least make the picture a little bit clearer heading into this season. Unfortunately the question of where is the offense going to come from still looms. According to FrozenPool, the only line that spent significant time together was the trio of Backes, Kariya and Oshie (10.19 percent). Everyone else was pretty much under the 5.5 percent mark, which should send plenty of warning signs about trying to predict what's going to happen in 2010-11.

When doing my research on the Blues, Backes surprised me as he took the second most face-offs on the team, and more importantly the most on the power-play. Considering he had winger eligibility in Yahoo! leagues, he would certainly be gold for those leagues which utilize FOW as a category. Boyes had a bit of a down year as he only tallied 42 points, but head into this season expecting a bit more. McDonald has a career 0.70 point-per-game average, which would equate to a 57 point season if he plays a full 82 game schedule.

Here's Oshie's career October-December/January-April breakdown, 0.49 point-per-game pre-January and 0.75 post-January. Screams out second half buy to me! Steen led the Blues with seven power-play goals last season, he's a dynamic player on the man advantage, so if you're after PPP make sure you keep him in mind. I like Perron's upside, but his inconsistencies will, mean his fantasy worth never reaches peak value.

Berglund was once a highly touted prospect in management's eyes, but with 26 points and the

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48

Tuesday, 03 August 2010 13:18 - Last Updated Wednesday, 04 August 2010 22:25 surprising play of Steen and Perron, his value to the Blues is plummeting rapidly. Sobotka was acquired from the Bruins in the off-season and could make a small impact, but he hasn't shown me enough flare to warrant a gamble just yet. D'Agostini is meant for a third-line checking role than scoring role, so don't expect an offensive breakout from him. One thing that's for sure is that this offense-by-committee is definitely not a good thing for fantasy poolies. Last year's pre-season top-six: Kariya, McDonald, Boyes, Tkachuk, Berglund, and Oshie. End of year finish: McDonald 57 Backes

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Oshie
48
Steen
47
Perron
47
Kariya
43

# Top Six

Daniel Sedin - Henrik Sedin - Mikael Samuelsson

Mason Raymond - Ryan Kesler - Alex Burrows

# Cavalry

Cody Hodgson\*, Sergei Shirokov\*, and Jordan Schroeder\*

#### **Bottom Feeders**

Manny Malhotra, Janik Hansen, Darcy Hordichuk, Tanner Glass, Rick Rypien, Joel Perrault

The Sedins really opened plenty of eyes last season, as both took it to the next level with well over point-per-game productions. The question remains whether or not they can repeat it for a second consecutive season. I slotted Samuelsson into the highly-coveted spot alongside the twins because he showed more chemistry than Burrows did, (22 vs 14 points during the playoffs including PP situations), but that situation could change throughout the year.

The Canucks had one of the best top-six productions in the league last campaign, but I don't know if they can repeat that performance. Kesler picked up 75 points along with 214 SOG in

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19:37 per contest last campaign. If you read my <u>projections article</u> earlier in the summer, those numbers mirror more of a 60-point producer than a 75 point producer. I'd head into the season expecting a little dip, and if that doesn't happen you would have at least covered your bases.

I know the playoffs are a different kettle of fish compared to the regular season, but six points in 12 contests doesn't exactly make me that excited about Burrows. Especially since undergoing the same shoulder surgery in the summer that Vinny Lecavalier underwent a few off-seasons ago. Raymond had a big breakout season in 2009-10, as he managed an 11.5 shooting percentage, which was nearly four percent higher than the previous year. I just don't envision him repeating a 200+ SOG and 11+ shooting percentage for a consecutive season.

With players like Malhotra, Hansen, Glass and Rypien, there isn't exactly a major need for the Nucks to rush the cavalry. This is the main reason why I asterisked all of the cavalry players, as they all could be boom or bust players this campaign. Hodgson probably has the best shot but could also find himself mostly in the AHL. Same could be said for Shirokov and Schroeder. Unless a major injury shakes up the Nucks roster I don't think the trio would make a large fantasy impact in the NHL this season.

Last year's pre-season top-six:

D. Sedin, H. Sedin, Burrows, Demitra, Kesler, and Samuelsson.

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End of year finish:
Sedin
112
Sedin
85
65
Kesler
75
Burrows
67
Samuelsson

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Tuesday, 03 August 2010 13:18 - Last Updated Wednesday, 04 August 2010 22:25			
53			
Raymond			
53			

Thanks for sticking with me the last few weeks. Hopefully you guys found the information useful and are able to utilize it for your drafts in the upcoming season. I've had a pleasure doing the research as well as having some hotly debated topics in the comments section, so if you have questions or comments like always I'll be ready and willing to discuss them in the section below.