

Expect the Unexpected

Written by Ryan Ma

Tuesday, 28 December 2010 11:13 - Last Updated Wednesday, 29 December 2010 14:26



We've all heard of the phrase "the numbers don't lie", but there is always room for statistical anomalies that make each and every one of us scratch our heads. This week we'll take a look at 18 statistical anomalies that have occurred so far this season along with my thoughts on whether the numbers will re-align itself or are they good for the long run.

Jeff Tambellini

Tambellini's currently firing at a rate of 20 percent, but his career shooting percentage is just 9.5 percent, so expect a bit of a dip moving forward. He has spent 64.7 percent of his overall ice-time lining up alongside Ryan Kesler, so the quality of line mates might have influenced his numbers this season. Expect roughly a 15 percent efficiency rate by season's end.

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Logan Couture

Couture's currently on a ridiculous pace to finish the season with 41 goals. Couture couldn't tally that in juniors (high of 39), so it's kind of hard to expect him to register that in the Bigs. To think that he'll out-goal Patrick Marleau, Dany Heatley, and Joe Pavelski is blasphemy. Look for the Cy Young number to normalize in the second-half.

Henrik Sedin

Sedin is well on his way to his second consecutive season in leading the NHL in assists. He's on pace to finish with 86 which will be three better than last season. The chemistry that he shows playing with Daniel and Alex Burrows should see him continue the trend the rest of the way.

Daniel Sedin

The twins have combined for 52 points (Daniel: 27 Henrik 25), in 17 road contests. Traditionally speaking they are better road warriors than home cooks, so they could be in for a treat with eight of the next 12 contests away from Rogers Arena.

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Cody McLeod

McLeod is currently averaging a whopping three PIMs per contest. The fact that he'll also chip in with 15-20 points and 70+ SOG makes him a valuable asset to the Avs line up as well as many fantasy squads. Colorado is 18-10-5 with him in the line up and just 1-2-0 without him, coincidence?

Steve Ott

If consistency is what you're after then Ott is probably a "safer" PIMs option. He leads the league in minor penalties (23), which is probably easier to predict/control than going after the big fish with goons or agitators. The fact that he'll also contribute on the points, HITS, and SOG front helps should help with the across-the-board production. If Brad Richards is moved at the deadline, Ott could be the likely candidate to fill the void in a top-six role.

Toni Lydman

Lydman has got to be the most under-rated defensive blue-liner in the NHL. He won't put up the massive mind-blowing numbers, but it's the solid defensive play that makes him so valuable in "real-life". He's on pace for a plus 42 rating, which could really stabilize the always hard-to-predict plus/minus category. The Ducks are crammed with offensive depth up front, which should see Lydman continue the trend well into the second-half.

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Patrick Sharp

Sharp is currently second only to Alex Ovechkin in terms of SOG. He's also on a ridiculous pace to record close to 350 by April. With both Patrick Kane and Marian Hossa returning to the Hawk line up fairly soon, expect the SOG to dry up to around the 250-275 mark.

Dan Boyle

Boyle is also on pace to set a new career-high in terms of SOG. He's on pace to finish with 238 which is around 20 more than his previous seasonal best. The fact that he also garners the league's best overall ice-time (26:59 per contest) as well as PP ice-time, for a d-man, (4:57 per contest) should see him put up great numbers the rest of the way.

Brad Richards

It's no surprise that Richards is amongst the league leaders in PPP production. He averages the third most PP ice-time per contest (5:30) behind only Evgeni Malkin and Sidney Crosby. Last season, he finished with 40 PPP and should be on pace to repeat that for a second consecutive campaign.

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Home Goals

Joe Louis Arena is probably one of the most hostile places for visiting teams to enter, which kind of explains why the Red Wings average a league-high 3.8 goals per game at home. Since the lockout they have averaged 2.93, 3.80, 3.12 and 3.51, so their current numbers are certainly justifiable. Not that you'll ever bench your Red Wings, but it does give you more reason to start them when they are at home.

Away Goals

On the other end of the spectrum, the Hawks enjoy being on the road as they're averaging 3.38 goals away from the United Center. With 25 of the remaining 45 contests on the road, it might be a good time to acquire some Hawks for the second-half.

Third period goals

The Nucks are the comeback kings as they're leading the league in third period goals with 48. If you are looking for an exciting team to follow, Vancouver is a great option.

One goal games

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The Kings are 9-3-1 in one-goal games followed by Dallas 14-3-4 and Colorado at 10-2-5. Edmonton 6-5-6 and Calgary 6-7-3 are the worst. That's the difference between making the playoffs and missing them.

SOG

If you're looking for offense you probably don't have to look much further than the Sharks. Once again they're amongst the league leaders in SOG at 33.8 per contest. Minny is the worst at 25.5. You won't win very many games if you're being outshot game-in and game-out.

Team Defense

The Sharks lead the league in offense, which isn't all that surprising, but to see them near the lead in the Western Conference in terms of team defense (28.4 SOG allowed per contest), is pretty shocking. If they can manage to keep this pace up, their 19-12-5 record will dramatically improve for the second-half. On the flip side of the coin the Ducks give up a league worst 34.5 SOG per contest, but they also have a star in Jonas Hiller. If he hits a rough patch, the Ducks could be in serious trouble.

Team FO percentage

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If team faceoff percentage is any indication to team success, the Hurricanes could be in massive trouble. Only six of 29 teams, that have ranked near the bottom of team FO percentage in the last four years, have made the post-season, which means that it could spell massive trouble for teams like the Canes (42.5 percent), Rangers (45.5) and Ducks (47.6) in the second-half of this season.

Power-play

The Jackets are atrocious with the man-advantage at home as they're operating at just 7.9 percent efficiency. Wasn't Scott Arniel supposed to be a power-play specialist? I mean Ken Hitchcock had them amongst the league leaders before he was fired last February. Minnesota's power-play has been brilliant as they're operating at 23.3 percent efficiency on the road. The more I watch them the more under-rated I feel that they really are. They'll be solid in the second half, so look for that trend to continue.

Questions or comments? Like always I'll be ready and willing to discuss them with you in the comments section below. I wish you and your family a Happy New Year and I hope to see you guys back here again next week as we analyse my projections from the pre-season guide.