

## The Anatomy of Change Part 2

Written by Ryan Ma

Monday, 29 December 2008 18:26 - Last Updated Wednesday, 31 December 2008 04:55

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Change is always constant in our everyday world. We change the way we talk, we change the way we walk, and we change our daily rosters in our fantasy hockey squads. Some change is good, some is bad. Last week we took a look at the first five teams and their rosters as to what changes we could potentially expect from them, this week we'll take a gander at the next five. Buckle up and get ready for the ride.

### ***Maasquito Buzzings...***

- Shawn Horcoff regains the Western Conference lead in faceoff wins with 397. Mikko Koivu continues to keep pace at 391, and Sammy Pahlsson replaced the injured Paul Stastny at number three with 379.
- Radek Bonk actually leads the NHL in FO% at a win-rate of 64.3%
- Koivu has the most power-play faceoffs won in the Western Conference with 95.
- Bobby Ryan tallied a Western Conference high of seven points this past week. He is majorly benefiting from injury to Teemu Selanne.
- Ryan Getzlaf was ranked number one overall this past week according to Yahoo rankings. Ryan Smyth was fourth, Lubomir Visnovsky was sixth, Ryan and Olli Jokinen rounded out the top five with seventh and eighth rankings respectively.
- Dustin Brown maintains the lead in the Western Conference with 129 hits.
- The top-three in shooting percentage in the Western Conference remains unchanged as Kyle Wellwood remains in the top spot with a shooting percentage of 31.0%. Loui Eriksson

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continues to take advantage of Brendan Morrow's absence and is now firing at 26.5%, Tomas Holmstrom rounds out the top-three with a 26.2 shooting percentage while playing alongside Marian Hossa and Pavel Datsyuk.

- Teemu Selanne continues to lead the league with 13 power-play goals, but will miss four-to-six weeks with the laceration on his thigh. Brad Boyes, Keith Tkachuk and Ryan Clowe will try to chase him down while he's dealing with his injury.
- Sheldon Souray potted three power-play marks this past week and now has seven on the season.
- Dustin Brown is firing a ton of bombs on opposing goalies as he maintained his Western Conference lead with 162 shots on goal. He's second to only Alex Ovechkin who has a blistering 223. The Detroit pairing of Marian Hossa and Henrik Zetterberg is continuing to rack up the shots on goal. Hossa is fifth with 150 and Zetterberg is seventh with 136s.
- Ryan Geztlaf and Daniel Sedin both fired 19 shots on goal this past week, the Detroit pairing of Johan Franzen and Henrik Zetterberg tallied 15 shots on goal each.
- Shane O'Brien continues to maintain his NHL lead in PIMs, he has 118 in 38 games played.
- Minnesota regains top-spot in the NHL with a stellar 88.6% on the PK.
- Detroit's power-play has cooled off a bit as they are now second in the NHL operating at a 26.7% rate.
- Chicago now gains the leading ratio in five-on-five situations with a ratio of 1.31. St. Louis is the worst in the Western Conference with a rating of 0.78, Paul Kariya's season-ending surgery probably doesn't bode well in this department for Blues fans.
- Detroit leads the Western Conference with an average of 10.5 minutes in penalties per contest, they just don't take any silly penalties. Vancouver now averages the league-high of 20.0 penalty minutes per contest.
- San Jose is 16-3-3 when they are out-shooting their opponents, while Anaheim is 5-9-1. San Jose is 11-1-0 when being out shot by their opponents, while St. Louis is 6-12-2.

### Dallas

#### **Salary Cap Status**

\$55.523 room of \$1.177 mill

#### **Team Status**

Dallas is in an interesting situation, they have been hammered with injuries to many of their key stars this season, namely Brendan Morrow and Sergei Zubov, which really has hampered their offense this season. Their roster for next season is in transition as a few aging veterans are up for free agency at the end of the season. Unfortunately, they don't really command much trade value so the Stars will most likely be trapped with their services for the rest of the season.

#### **Key Changes**

My guess is that Zubov has a 50/50 chance of retiring or returning to the Stars. It's kind of hard to end a career on an injury note. If the Stars don't re-sign him there are plenty of teams that will

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be looking for a puck moving veteran presence on the blue-line. Jiri Lehtinen probably has used up his value in Dallas and will probably be let go at the end of the season. Mark Parrish will probably join another team, if he still has any value in the NHL next season. Morrow should give the Stars offense a boost when he returns in full health by the start of next season.

### Key Needs:

- Offensive depth

### Unrestricted Free Agents:

- Jiri Lehtinen (\$4.1)
- Joel Lundqvist (\$0.750)
- Brian Sutherby (\$0.700)
- Mark Parrish (\$0.500)
- Landon Wilson (\$0.550)
- Sergei Zubov (\$5.35)
- Darryl Sydor (\$2.5)
- Doug Janik (\$0.500)

### Restricted Free Agents:

- Tobias Stephan (\$0.485)

## Detroit

### Salary Cap Status

\$57.048 room of \$0.274 million

### Team Status

This will be Detroit's make or break season, a few of their star and support players will be headed towards unrestricted free agency at the end of the season, which means that there could possibly be whole sale changes in the Detroit lineup come next season. They are in a comfortable position to repeat as Stanley Cup champions once again this season, so you probably won't see any of the potential free agents being dealt at the deadline this season.

### Key Changes

It looks like at least one if not two or all three players between Marian Hossa, Henrik Zetterberg or Johan Franzen will find themselves in a new uniform at the start of next season. Hossa will most likely look for a longer term deal with a new team, while Zetterberg could find a few potential suitors who would be willing to fork out the big bucks to land him in the off-season. Franzen won't command as much money in the open market, so he appears to be the most likely candidate to remain a Red Wing for next season. If Zetterberg or Hossa go, look for the Wings to re-sign Jiri Hudler to a long-term deal.

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### **Key Needs:**

- none

### **Unrestricted Free Agents:**

- Marian Hossa (\$7.45)
- Henrik Zetterberg (\$2.90)
- Mikael Samuelsson (\$1.20)
- Johan Franzen (\$1.150)
- Darren McCarthy (\$0.575)
- Tomas Kopecky (\$0.525)
- Chris Chelios (\$0.750)
- Ty Conklin (\$0.750)

### **Restricted Free Agents:**

- Jiri Hudler (\$1.150)

## **Edmonton**

### **Salary Cap Status**

\$54.825 room of \$1.875 million

### **Team Status**

Edmonton is in ok financial situation for next season, they have the main core of their players locked up for next season, while having a few of their high salaried players coming off the books, so they have a bit of financial freedom to perhaps make a pitch towards a mid-ranged free agent.

### **Key Changes**

Edmonton will most likely let Dwayne Roloson walk at the end of this season if not earlier if they can find a potential suitor at the deadline. Cole has been a bust this season, and doesn't justify a \$4 million re-signing. Garon's salary at one million is a much cheaper between the pipes, especially with Jeff Drouin-Deslauriers ready for full-time NHL duties. Rob Schremp and Gilbert Brule were once offensive stars when they played in the juniors when they were younger, and both possess some decent trade value. With the young pipeline of the Oilers include Riley Nash and Jordan Eberle which might deem Schremp and Brule expendable. Both could be peddled to a young up-and-coming team like the Kings, Blue Jackets, Coyotes, or Atlanta for some additional veteran scoring help up front. Denis Grebeshkov and Ladislav Smid are also both solid contributors on the blue-line which could be used as trade bait at the trade deadline. Scott Howson, GM of the Blue Jackets who is also good friends with Kevin Lowe, might look towards swinging a deal with the Oilers for one of their puck moving defenseman.

### **Key Needs:**

- Complementary players on offense

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- Number one option between the pipes
- New head coach?

### **Unrestricted Free Agents:**

- Erik Cole (\$4.00)
- Jason Strudwick (\$0.65)
- Dwayne Roloson (\$3.000)
- Mathieu Garon (\$1.000)

### **Restricted Free Agents:**

- Kyle Brodziak (\$0.500)
- Liam Reddox (\$0.515)
- Rob Schremp (\$0.650)
- Gilbert Brule (\$0.765)
- Denis Grebeshkov (\$1.50)
- Ladi Smid (\$0.952)

## **Los Angeles**

### **Salary Cap Status**

\$45.206 room of \$11.494 million

### **Team Status**

The Kings are in great financial position to start next season with a contending roster. All of their current star players are making pennies, so they have plenty of cap room to land a big free agent in Hossa, Gaborik, or Zetterberg to complement Anze Kopitar and Patrick O'Sullivan up front on offense. They are already set in terms of defense with Drew Doughty, Kyle Quincey, Jack Johnson, Peter Harold, Matt Greene and Tom Preissing, so their main concern will be which free agent to sign between the pipes. They'll have plenty of options in Dwayne Roloson to Manny Fernandez to Niklas Backstrom or even Nikolai Khabibulin to choose from. Either way the Kings are on their way up next season.

### **Key Changes**

The Kings are still battling for a playoff spot this season, but probably won't sacrifice their future in order to get there today. They don't have a lot of free agents to re-sign at the end of this season, so they'll most likely be sellers at the deadline rather than buyers. Kyle Calder, Derek Armstrong and Denis Gauthier are the possibly candidates to switch teams at the deadline.

### **Key Needs:**

- Number one goalie.
- Veteran presence in the locker room.

### **Unrestricted Free Agents:**

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- Kyle Calder (\$2.70)
- Derek Armstrong (\$1.60)
- Denis Gauthier (\$2.20)
- Jason LaBarbera (\$0.850)
- Erik Ersberg (\$0.700)

### **Restricted Free Agents:**

- Teddy Purcell (\$0.900)
- Brian Boyle (\$0.750)
- Matt Moulson (\$0.522)
- Jack Johnson (\$0.850)

## **Minnesota**

### **Salary Cap Status**

\$54.877 room of \$1.823 mill

### **Team Status**

Minnesota could be in a heap of trouble for next season if everyone decides to abandon ship. Marian Gaborik has made it clear to the Wild that he does not intend to re-sign in Minnesota, which will free up his \$7.5 million salary for next season. Truth be told, they aren't a championship team with Gaborik, so losing him for a few younger offensive and less injury-prone players might be better off in the long run than keeping Gaborik.

### **Key Changes**

A lot of their changes will depend on Gaborik. Their second biggest key re-signing will depend on goalie Niklas Backstrom. There is probably a bigger market for goalies this off-season than offense, so Backstrom could be in for a hefty raise from another team next season. If a young up-and-coming team offers the same if not more money to Backstrom, you would think Backstrom wouldn't hesitate to leave Minnesota in a heartbeat. Which is why I think, if the Wild can't get Backstrom re-signed by the trade deadline, they're better off dealing him rather than to lose him for nothing in the off-season. If Backstrom gets dealt, look for Josh Harding to claim the number one job in Minny. M.A. Bergeron is a good puck moving defenseman, which could prove to be very attractive at the trade deadline for many teams. His fairly cheap salary also won't impact many team's salary cap, which makes him a very likely candidate to be dealt at the trade deadline if the Wild begin to slip in the standings.

### **Key Needs:**

- Second line winger

### **Unrestricted Free Agents:**

- Marian Gaborik (\$7.50)
- Stephan Veilleux (\$0.863)

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- Krys Kolanos (\$0.500)
- Martin Skoula (\$1.900)
- M.A. Bergeron (\$1.691)
- Kurt Foster (\$1.025)
- Niklas Backstrom (\$3.1)
- Nolan Schafer (\$0.600)

### **Restricted Free Agents:**

- Benoit Pouliot (\$0.850)
- Eric Reitz (\$0.500)
- Josh Harding (\$0.750)

Stay tuned next week, as we conclude this trilogy with Nashville, Phoenix, San Jose, St. Louis and Vancouver.