We’re into the fourth week of the NHL season and there have been plenty of surprises as well as disappointments so far. Much like the last few weeks, I’ll toss out a few of my thoughts on all 15 of the Western Conference teams to generate some discussion.

Anaheim

After starting the season with zero points in the first three contests, Lubomir Visnovsky now has six points in the last six contests. Angus and I are both quite high on him, and it appears that our early-season predictions of him possibly leading the Western Conference blue-liners in scoring are justified. Ryan Getzlaf has also found his groove with 11 points in the same amount of games. An Interesting stat-line I dug up, Ducks at home 11 goals for and nine against. Ducks away from the Honda Center 10 goals for and 23 against. Jonas Hiller owners, time to start

streaming... (Home: 2-0-1, 2.92 GAA, .918 sv% Away: 0-4-0, 3.92 GAA, .905 sv%)

Calgary

After being pasted by the Oilers 4-0 in the season opener, it appears that the Flames are back to playing quality hockey. Their offense isn't all that exciting (2.62 goals for per contest, 21st ranked in the league), but their defense is really stepping it up (2.12 goals allowed per contest, tied for fourth). Miikka Kiprusoff hasn't really built himself a good reputation over the last two seasons, so now might be a good time to see if you can pick him up on a down-low (use the stats from the last two seasons for the bartering). Rene Bourque certainly does have a knack for scoring. He has a career 0.27 goal per game average, and has admitted that he wanted to tally 30 this season. If he maintains the numbers that he currently possesses (18:02 and 3.4 SOG per game), they'd project to be somewhere around a 60-65 point RWer. Not bad for someone who's currently only 55 percent Yahoo! owned. Brendan Morrison has seven points in eight contests, compared to Olli Jokinen with just three assists in the same amount of games, what gives? Another fun fact, the Flames are operating at an efficiency rating of just 8.1 percent, which is slightly more than the Devils at 7.1 percent... ouch!

Chicago

Patrick Sharp is off to a blazing start with eight goals in nine contests. Do I think that he's a 72-goal guy? Nope, but a new career high of 36+ could certainly be in the picture. Duncan Keith

and Brent Seabrook rank third and ninth in terms of blocked shots and hits by blue-liners respectively. Is there a more valuable defensive combination than those two in the league? Their eight combined points could use some work though. Another interesting split stat scenario, Marty Turco home: 3-1, 2.18 GAA, .935 sv% away: 1-1-1, 3.27 GAA, .901 sv%.

Colorado

Well it appears that John Micheal Liles is out of coach, Joe Sacco's doghouse, as he is now tied with Filip Kuba for the NHL record for most consecutive games with an assist (10). We'll see tonight if he sets a new record. His 22:30 overall and 3:39 on the PP will pretty much guarantee that he keeps up this scoring pace. My pre-season dark horse candidate to win the Art Ross trophy was Paul Stastny, and so far he hasn't entirely disappointed. If you watched the Saturday night contest against the Kings, you would have seen a few of the reasons why he was my boy. Still not on par with Steven Stamkos just yet, but you could say he's fairly ballpark to the Daniel Sedins, Sidney Crosbys, or Ryan Getzlafs. Craig Anderson certainly doesn't resemble the Anderson from 2009-10, as his 3.15 GAA and .910 save percentage demonstrates. The Avs desperately need him to get back to the mid 2's and .915ish numbers to make the playoffs in the tight Western Conference. He'd be someone that I might target in trade talks as a buy-low candidate.

Columbus

Another campaign, another coach, but things are still status quo for Nikita Filatov. The highly touted Russian has averaged just 5:58 in the last two contests while toiling on the Jackets' fourth line. If you search under thread topic "Filatov" and under the user "Gotlaid", you'll be able to find all of my thoughts prior to the commencement of the season. For me it was never about talent, it was always about competition and opportunity. For those who thought that the Jackets would just automatically hand him a top-six job and shaft the veterans must have had blinders on. At the end of the day you just can't let a young rookie loose when there are high expectations in place for the club to succeed. The Jackets just aren't in the same boat as the Isles, Thrashers or Oilers to experiment with green-lighting a rookie. Despite averaging 4:40 on the PP per contest, Anton Stralman has just two points. The Jackets are operating at an efficiency rating of just 11.8 percent, once that efficiency normalizes, I'd expect Stralman's points to increase as well. Consider him a pretty solid buy-low candidate. Steve Mason: 3-3-0, 3.18 GAA, and .900 save percentage. Mathieu Garon: 2-0-0, 1.50 GAA, and .942 save percentage. To quote Justin Goldman, "goalie controversy?"

Dallas

The Stars have remained relatively healthy this season, which is a far-cry from two seasons ago in which they were decimated by injuries. The most important person that has so far warded off the injury bug has been goalie, Kari Lehtonen. The well-renown certified band-aid boy has appeared in all seven of the Stars contests this season while posting an incredible 2.38 GAA along with a .930 save percentage. The main question is how long do you trust that it will last? If you were a savvy owner, you might want to play it "safe" and see if you can move him while his price/stats are sky-high. It would be shame to see it all come burning down when you see him IRed with another groin injury. A player that I'm keeping a close eye on is James Neal. He does have eight points in seven games, but it's the zero PPP that's caught my attention. Neal also draws the short end of the stick as he misses out being in the top Stars PP unit. I'm sorry, but playing alongside Steve Ott, Jamie Benn, Brad Richards and Robidas isn't the same as playing alongside Richards, Loui Eriksson, Mike Ribeiro, Brendan Morrow and Matt Niskanen. Richards is averaging 5:02 per contest on the PP, now only if Dallas' PP would operate at a more efficiency (eight percent), he'd be churning out the points.

Detroit

Raise your hand if you invested fairly highly on Hudler just to be disappointed seven contests into the season. Well the good news is that coach, Mike Babcock, has plenty of faith so you probably should too. "We need him to really compete on pucks. He's got a ways to go, but I think that line has a lot of growth potential in it and Huds, in my opinion, has a chance to be a star." Niklas Lidstrom is a notoriously slow starter. He has a career 0.72 point-per-game average in the month of October and a 0.75 point-per-game average the rest of the months. I picked him up cheap in the Dobber Expert pool and should be laughing all season long. Following along the same lines as the James Neal scenario, I'm not too fussed about the Johan Frazen scenario in Detroit. He seems to also be drawing the short end of the stick as he's missing out on the top Wings PP unit. The Wings have gone with Mike Modano, Henrik Zetterberg, Pavel Datsyuk, Tomas Holmstrom and Lidstrom as their "go-to" unit, while Franzen is toiling with Valtteri Filppula, Jiri Hudler, Niklas Kronwall and Jakub Kindl in mop up duty.

Edmonton

After starting 2-0, the Oilers have now dropped four consecutive contests in which they have been outscored 8-19 during that span. Ryan Whitney hasn't slumped as he still is on an assist-per-game pace. His 6:02 PP and 26:02 overall ice-time is certainly something to make a note of. Tom Gilbert has struggled offensively to start 2010-11, but remember 12 months ago when he was pretty much in the exact same position then rattled off 20 in 21 to finish the season. I wonder if he can repeat that performance once again? Sam Gagner is the biggest gainer this season. He's seen his ice-time rise to 18:39 and 4:05 on the PP up from 16:17 and 2:36 last campaign. A magical fourth year?

Los Angeles

Although it's not as hot of a start as last season (21 points in 12 contests), Anze Kopitar still has eight points in eight contests for a pretty respectable point-per-game pace. It's the almost four SOG per contest that I'm really digging. Jack Johnson has been the main beneficiary of the Drew Doughty injury, (concussion), as he's seen his PP ice-time shoot up to 5:49 per contest. If Doughty is out of the line up for a long period of time, the 65 percent Yahoo! owned Johnson will certainly be a hot pickup. If you have a free roster slot, or are looking for a defensive replacement, you might want to strongly consider JJ. Jonathan Quick is back to his rookie numbers with a 1.95 GAA and a .930 save percentage. It seems that having some competition in Jonathan Bernier has lit a fire under Quick.

Minnesota

The biggest news coming out of Minny is that P.M. Bouchard is looking pretty close to returning to the Wild line up. He still needs a few weeks to get back into game shape and perhaps a rehab stint in the AHL, but he should be suiting up for the Wild by mid/end of November. He could be a big boost to the Wild, as well as your fantasy line up for the rest of 2010-11, so stash away. After starting the season with just one point in the first three contests, Brent Burns now has five points in the last five games. It appears that being paired up with a defensive partner in Nick Schultz has opened up Burns' offensive game. It appears that Niklas Backstrom is rebounding after a poor campaign. He possesses a 2.25 GAA along with a respectable .930 save percentage.

Nashville

It's no surprise to see the Predators with a 5-0-3 record especially since they own the league's fourth best goals allowed per game average. The "twin towers" of Anders Lindback and Pekka Rinne have a combined .939 save percentage (262 of 279). The Preds are still giving up too many shots for my liking (almost 35 per game), so expect two things to happen: 1) the shots allowed come back down to Earth, or 2) the save percentage drops and the goals will begin to trickle in. What do you think will happen? With Matthew Lombardi (concussion) on the shelf, David Legwand (18:46) and Cal O'Reilly (17:36) have picked up the slack. The later has really picked up the PP ice-time left behind (3:18). O'Reilly actually registered 99 points in 68 contests in the final year of junior hockey with the Spitfires in 2005-06. If that isn't enough to wow you, how about the 253 points in 262 games with the Admirals during his AHL stint (15 in 31 during playoffs). He certainly has the pedigree to be very successful in the NHL, especially if Lombo is going to be on the shelf for an extended period of time. Is there anything you can fault in Shea Weber's stat line? Five points, six PIMs, 25 HITs, 21 BS, and 19 SOG.

Phoenix

What a difference 12 months make. The Coyotes are currently ranked 27th overall in terms of shots allowed to the opponent by giving up a whopping 35.3 SOG per contest compared to 29.6 (12th) last campaign. The current numbers don't resemble a typically Dave Tippet coached team, so look for those numbers to adjust themselves accordingly. Kyle Turris was highly touted when he was drafted as the third overall pick in the 2007 NHL entry draft from the last two contests, you can understand why. I'd still wait a few more games before snatching him up, but if he hammers out another couple of points in tonight's contest, I'd hit the pickup button straight away. Shane Doan should return back to the Yotes' line up tonight, they definitely need his much needed leadership and offensive abilities. Despite Phoenix not being able to provide him with any offensive support or defensive on that matter, Ilya Bryzgalov still has pretty respectable stats 2.61 GAA and .925 save percentage.

San Jose

The Sharks got blasted 4-0 by the Flames on Sunday night. At least it appears that that spreading of the offense is now over, as the most popular lines in the last three contests have been: Dany Heatley with Patrick Marleau and Joe Thornton (11.17 percent), Ryane Clowe, with Joe Pavelski and Devin Setoguchi (10.62 percent) and Jamal Mayers, John McCarthy with

Scott Nichol (10.07 percent). As a Pavelski owner, I'd like to see either Marleau or Heatley to join Pavelski, but with 42 FW from a winger position, I'm not complaining. Before looking at the stat line I thought that Dan Boyle has been struggling, but in reality he's had a very quiet five points and 17 SOG in seven contests (58 points and 199 SOG pro-rated). Maybe toss out a line to see if you can pick up Boyle on the cheap. SJ goalie battle: Antti Niemi: 1-3, 4.50 GAA, and .850 sv% vs. Antero Niittymaki: 2-0-1, 1.81 GAA and .930 sv%. Sophomore slump?

St. Louis

The Jaroslav Halak attack is in full force in St. Louis as the Blues rank second in terms of goals allowed per game. He's currently the fifth ranked goalie in Yahoo! leagues. Erik Johnson owners beware. Carlo Colaiavcovo is starting to creep up on the depth charts, if not surpassing EJ (4:26 vs. 3:17 on the PP). I understand it's still very young in his NHL career, but I'm starting to see a little Jay Bouwmeester in him, which isn't a good sign. The Blues' top-eight forwards even strength ice-time breakdown: Alex Steen (13:53), David Perron (13:53), Brad Boyes (13:43), Andy McDonald (13:42), Patrik Berglund (13:16), Jay McClement (13:15), TJ Oshie (13:14), and David Backes (13:14). Talk about an even split or what!

Vancouver

The biggest news coming out of Vancouver, Roberto Luongo is 1-3-2 with a 2.92 GAA and a .900 save percentage. His understudy, Cory Schneider is 2-0-0 with a 0.83 GAA and a .968 save percentage. Schneider won't unseat Luongo as the number one in Van City, but you would think with his solid play it might just steal 20-25 games off Luongo. The Nucks are desperate to get Alex Burrows back in the line up as they're experimenting with absolutely everyone alongside the Sedins to find some chemistry. Mikael Samuelsson has be trialled for 14.41 percent, Mason Raymond trialled for 5.84 percent, Jeff Tambellini trialled for 3.12 percent, Jannik Hansen for 2.16 percent and finally Ryan Kesler for 0.62 percent. The only major omission is Raffi Torres (doesn't he play more of Burrows' style than any of the others?). Hats off to those who took a late flier on Alex Edler. He was on average drafted with the 144.3 pick in Yahoo! drafts. Five assists, 20 SOG with an ice-time average of 25:15 per contest will see his fantasy value significantly rises over the season.

Questions or comments? Like always I'll be ready and willing to discuss them with you in the comments section below. See ya next week as we return back to the very popular Fantasy Indicators of Success series starting with the Western Conference goalies.