Home Stretch

After the trade deadline on March 4 there are still 22% of the games left to play. All NHL teams play between 17 and 20 games. The top schedules belong to the Senators (20.25), Flyers (20.13), Canadiens (19.94), Blackhawks (19.78), and Wild (19.74) who all play 20 games (ratings shown in brackets). At the other end of the schedule the Hurricanes (16.90), Penguins (16.95), Predators (16.97), Ducks (16.97), and Blue Jackets (17.23) have the worst combination of fewer games, tougher opponents and road games. The Blackhawks lead the homes games category with 13 after the trade deadline followed by Panthers, Flyers, and Canadiens with 11.

For those fantasy owners looking for those 'big games' from their offensive stars you might want to hedge your bets to the defensively weaker teams. This season those 'favourable opponents' have emerged as the Leafs, Thrashers and Islanders. The Capitals and Canadiens get to play these three teams six times after the trade deadline. Tampa gets five shots at them. The western conference teams largely miss out on these defensively weaker opponents playing zero to two games against them.

Playoff Rounds

There was question in the forums about the upcoming fantasy playoffs. Forum contributor old_mosely is looking at a first round bye and wants to know where to get the best bang for his buck for round two and three. The time period is Week 25 (March 23 to March 29) and Week 26 (March 30 to April 12).

Week 25 and Week 26:

For the whole three week period the best teams are Flyers (11.25), Canucks (10.88), Blackhawks (10.80), Flames (10.58), and Panthers (10.46). The worst are the Penguins (8.06) and Hurricanes (7.86).

Week 25:

Best - Blue Jackets (4.21), Red Wings (4.20), Ducks (4.15)

Worst - Bruins (2.16), Penguins (2.08), Coyotes (1.92).

Week 26:

Best - Blackhawks (7.95), Flyers (7.45), Devils (7.27), Bruins (7.18)

Worst - Blue Jackets (5.52), Predators (5.38),and Hurricanes (5.14)

Looking at a team's schedule may help your chances of finding a good injury replacement. Here are some of the high and low ratings for teams over a two, three and four week period starting February 20, 2009. The rating is shown in brackets.

Two weeks

High ratings: Capitals (8.66), Bruins (7.13)

Low ratings: Canadiens (4.82), Coyotes (4.69)

Three weeks

High ratings: Capitals (11.63), Hurricanes (11.21), Maple Leafs (11.21)

Low ratings: Ducks (8.36), Canucks (7.94)

Four weeks

High ratings: Capitals (15.77), Maple Leafs (14.20)

Low ratings: Sabres (11.34), Ducks (11.27)

Best Bets
Washington 4.62 - four home games COL, PIT, PHI, ATL
NY Rangers 4.40 - four games BUF, TOR, TOR, FLA
San Jose 4.30 - four games ATL, DAL, DET, OTT
Carolina 4.21 - four games TB, COL, OTT, BUF
Boston 4.10 - four games FLA, TB, FLA, ANA
Steer Clear
Montreal 2.00 - two games OTT, VAN
Vancouver 2.00 - two games TOR, MTL
Calgary 2.00 - two games EDM, CBJ
New Jersey 2.19 - two games NYI, COL
Florida 2.46 - three games BOS, BOS, NYR

Best Bets
NY Rangers 4.40 - four games BUF, TOR, TOR, FLA
San Jose 4.30 - four games ATL, DAL, DET, OTT
Pittsburgh 4.11 - four games PHI, WAS, NYI, CHI
Boston 4.10 - four games FLA, TB, FLA, ANA
Chicago 4.09 - four games DAL, MIN, NAS, PIT
Steer Clear
New Jersey 2.19 - two games NYI, COL
Florida 2.46 - three games BOS, BOS, NYR
Detroit 2.55 - three games MIN, SJ, LA
Tampa Bay 2.65 - three games BOS, EDM, VAN
Anaheim 2.66 - three games CBJ, BUF, BOS

Best Bets
NY Rangers 4.50 - four games TOR, TOR, FLA, COL
Washington 4.33 - four games PIT, PHI, ATL, BOS
Boston 4.20 - four games TB, FLA, ANA, WAS
Carolina 4.19 - four games COL, OTT, BUF, ATL
San Jose 3.88 - four games DAL, DET, OTT, MTL
Steer Clear
Calgary 1.89 - two games CBJ, MIN
Columbus 1.90 - two games CGY, EDM
Vancouver 2.01 - two games MTL, TB
New Jersey 2.10 - two games COL, FLA
Florida 2.47 - two games BOS, NYR, NJ

Best Bets
Dallas 4.14 - four home games SJ, STL, ANA, PIT
Washington 4.04 - four games PHI, ATL, BOS, FLA
San Jose 3.88 - four games DAL, DET, OTT, MTL
Philadelphia 3.86 - four games WAS, LA, MTL, NJ
Los Angeles 3.51 - four road games MIN, PHI, DET, CHI
Steer Clear
Anaheim 2.65 - three road games BUF, BOS, DAL
Detroit 2.84 - three games SJ, LA, NAS
Colorado 2.87 - three games ATL, NJ, NYR
Montreal 2.90 - three games VAN, PHI, SJ
Columbus 2.92 - three games CGY, EDM, VAN

Best Bets
NY Islanders 4.44 - four games PIT, TOR, BUF, COL
Colorado 3.97 - four games ATL, NJ, NYR, NYI
Philadelphia 3.86 - four games WAS, LA, MTL, NJ
Washington 4.04 - four games PHI, ATL, BOS, FLA
Los Angeles 3.51 - four games MIN, PHI, DET, CHI
Steer Clear

Anaheim 2.65 - three road games BUF, BOS, DAL
Detroit 2.84 - three games SJ, LA, NAS
San Jose 2.87 - three games DET, OTT, MTL
Montreal 2.90 - three games VAN, PHI, SJ
Columbus 2.92 - three games CGY, EDM, VAN

Best Bets
NY Islanders 4.44 - four games PIT, TOR, BUF, COL
New Jersey 4.36 - four games COL, FLA, PHI, TOR
Pittsburgh 4.10 - four games NYI, CHI, DAL, TB
Dallas 4.06 - four games STL, ANA, PIT, SJ
Washington 4.05 - four games ATL, BOS, FLA, CAR
Steer Clear
Montreal 1.85 - two games PHI, SJ
Phoenix 2.02 - two games NAS, STL
Buffalo 2.06 - two games CAR, NYI
Anaheim 2.58 - two games BOS, DAL, CHI
Edmonton 2.76 - three games CBJ, MIN, NAS

Best Bets
Colorado 4.36 - four games COL, FLA, PHI, TOR
Dallas 4.06 - four games STL, ANA, PIT, SJ
Washington 4.05 - four games ATL, BOS, FLA, CAR
Detroit 3.96 - four games LA, NAS, STL, COL
Colorado 3.89 - four games NJ, NYR, NYI, DET
Steer Clear
Phoenix 2.02 - two games NAS, STL
NY Rangers 2.10 - two games FLA, COL
Anaheim 2.58 - three games BOS, DAL, CHI
Philadelphia 2.64 - three games MTL, NJ, BOS
Los Angeles 2.70 - three games DET, CHI, CBJ

Best Bets
Washington 4.11 - four games BOS, FLA, CAR, TOR
Florida 4.00 - four games NJ, WAS, ATL, PIT
Detroit 3.96 - four games LA, NAS, STL, COL
Dallas 3.88 - four games ANA, PIT, SJ, LA
Calgary 3.87 - four games MIN, TB, OTT, PHI
Steer Clear
Anaheim 1.84 - two games DAL, CHI
Phoenix 1.84 - two games STL, STL
Atlanta 2.04 - two games CAR, FLA
St. Louis 2.06 - two games PHX, DET
Carolina 2.08 - two games ATL, WAS

Best Bets

Dallas 4.82 - FIVE games ANA, PIT, SJ, LA, ANA
Washington 4.11 - four games STL, FLA, CAR, TOR
Florida 4.00 - four games NJ, WAS, ATL, PIT
Calgary 3.98 - four games TB, OTT, PHI, CAR
Ottawa 3.50 - three home games TOR, CGY, EDM

Steer Clear

Vancouver 1.84 - two games CBJ, MIN
Chicago 2.06 - two games LA, ANA
NY Rangers 2.22 - two games COL, NYI
Philadelphia 2.62 - three games NJ, BOS, CGY
Edmonton 2.68 - three games MIN, NAS, OTT

Best Bets

Florida 4.29 - four games WAS, ATL, PIT, STL
Tampa Bay 4.24 - four games CGY, PIT, STL, CAR
Calgary 3.98 - four games TB, OTT, PHI, CAR
Columbus 3.86 - four games VAN, LA, NAS, DET
Dallas 3.78 - four games PIT, SJ, LA, ANA

Steer Clear

NY Rangers 1.10 - ONE games NYI
Phoenix 1.64 - two road games BOS, BUF
Anaheim 1.95 - two games CHI, DAL
Montreal 2.05 - two games BUF, ATL
Atlanta 2.07 - two games FLA, MTL