Fisher takes a look at the schedule for next week and breaks down the teams with favorable/unfavorable workloads

Conference Bias

The Eastern Conference felt that last week it was too close in the “Best Bets” section, so they decided to pull away to 22-13 this week. However, in a rare upset, the East is also the predominant Conference in the “Steer Clear” section, taking it 19-16. So be careful what Eastern teams you load up on this week! A lot of Eastern teams with only two games, depending on which timeframe you’re focusing on, could be the major culprit.

Boston Theory

I have a theory, and this is not a popular theory, or even a theory that I'm totally convinced of, even though I'm the one saying it. Chicago has been unreal this year, they're in the midst of a never before seen winning streak and they are head and shoulders above everyone else they've played. But I think Boston is better.

Boston's record isn't as gaudy, but their team is unbelievably strong. No more Tim Thomas drama, no concussions weighing on their psyche, only big bad Bruins hockey. The Bruins team just screams depth.
Brad Marchand
and
Patrice Bergeron
are leading the way.
Tyler Seguin
,
Nathan Horton
and
Milan Lucic
all have more to give.
Tuukka Rask
is going to be everything
Andrew Raycroft
wasn't and
Dougie Hamilton
is just another nightmare for the Toronto organization of an opportunity potentially wasted.

With rivalry matchups against Philly, Ottawa and Pittsburgh, followed by defensively-challenged teams like Florida, Washington and Winnipeg, and another visit to Pittsburgh – the Bruins are primed to put their stamp on the Eastern Conference. Marchand has 40-goal abilities – I'm expecting four goals in his next four games.

Washington Finally Turning It Around

Going into every NHL season, I routinely do my own stat projections. I go team by team and try to be as thorough as possible. When projecting Washington, I obviously had Troy Brouwer leading the team in goals and Mike Ribeiro leading the team in points, it only seemed natural.

All kidding aside, the Caps have finally started to turn it around. Their goaltending is still brutal, but slightly less brutal. Alex Ovechkin has shown flashes of his old self and Adam Oates has finally started to get his system in place.

With games against the Islanders, Rangers and a home-and-home with the Canes on the horizon, the Caps have a chance to make up some ground. The second line of Nicklas Backstrom, Brouwer and Eric Fehr has been very solid lately. Ribeiro should continue his stellar season and I'm expecting John Carlson to have a good week as the Caps powerplay should get going. Ovechkin will still finish with 20 goals this year, at least – so look for a few good games from Ovy.

Firing Your Coach Doesn't Always Work

You wonder if this was what the Sabres management thought would happen when they fired Lindy Ruff. The fans called for his head, they axed him, now he's gone and the team still sucks. There's a transition period for the team, but for fantasy owners there is going to be some growing pains.

Thomas Vanek started off strong, but has cooled off from his torrid pace at the beginning of the year with three points in his last six and one goal in his past ten. Cody Hodgson has definitely shown that the Sabres got the better end of the deal for Zack Kassian, but he isn't a guy who can lead a team's offense when others go cold. Ryan Miller still hasn't been the same guy who won the MVP at the Olympics and Christian Ehrhoff's second year of his lifetime deal has been awful to say the least.

Philly on Sunday, the Rangers on Tuesday and then nothing until Saturday (against a stingy Ottawa team), I see the Sabres turning ice cold this week, so hopefully you Vanek owners were able to cash in while his value was at its peak.

Going for a Fourth Consecutive #1 Pick

Remember last year when Sam Gagner stamped his ticket into the Hall of Fame with an eight point night? We all thought he would lead the team in points the following year, right? Wrong. I'm not bashing Gagner, he's a good player, but if your team full of first overall picks is being led by Sam Gagner (yes, I know he was only drafted sixth overall), you're in trouble.

The Oilers still haven't taken that next step, and it's not going to happen this week. Games at Nashville, Chicago, Colorado and then home versus Detroit and Nashville, this is the week where Edmonton drops out of the playoff race permanently.

But don't fret, while the points may dry up this week, the Oilers still have a great young team. We should see a version of the mid-2000's Washington Capitals in the West fairly soon.

Possible Pickups

Here's a list of some players, owned in less than 30% of Yahoo leagues, to target during the upcoming Monday through Sunday week.

Boston: Rich Peverley (4%) – All of Boston's top six are more than 30% owned (for good reason), so if Boston meshes with your current roster setup, Peverley is the guy to target as he receives the most ice time of any non-top six Boston forward and sees regular second powerplay time.

Washington: Troy Brouwer (26%) – Leads the Capitals in goals. Yeah. Clicking with Nicklas Backstrom
and
Eric Fehr
on the second line. Also gets a good amount of powerplay ice time.

Ottawa: Colin Greening (5%) – It's slim pickings in Ottawa with Erik Karlsson and Jason Spezza
out with injuries and
Milan Michalek
just returning from one. Greening does have six points in his last seven. His C/W dual eligibility doesn't hurt either.

Nashville: Patric Hornqvist (18%) – I was slightly surprised when I saw that everyone on Nashville's roster, not named Weber or Rinne, was less than 30% owned in Yahoo. But scoring less than two goals per game, on average, will do that. So if you're going to bet on Nashville to buck that trend, I'd go with the guy averaging over four shots per game. His current shooting percentage (3.8%) is less than half of his career average (9.4%), so look for that to improve.

Los Angeles: Dustin Penner (1%) – Pancake Boy is on a three-game point streak and has five in his past six games. Jeff Carter and Mike Richards are the only reason he is fantasy worthy at all, but as long as he continues to line up with them, he's got

to be mentioned.

Friday, March 8 to Thursday, March 14

Best Bets

Washington (4.19) - 4 Games: @NYI, NYR, CAR, @CAR
Florida (4.16) - 4 Games: WPG, MTL, TB, @BOS
Boston (4.16) - 4 Games: PHI, @OTW, @PIT, FLA
Anaheim (4.16) - 4 Games: CGY, STL, @MIN, @DAL
Los Angeles (4.12) - 4 Games: CGY, CGY, @PHX, @SJ

Steer Clear

Buffalo (2.00) - 2 Games: @PHI, NYR
Edmonton (2.71) - 3 Games: @NSH, @CHI, @COL
Ottawa (2.80) - 3 Games: @NYR, BOS, @MTL
Vancouver (2.89) - 3 Games: @MIN, @CLB, NSH
Philadelphia (2.96) - 3 Games: @BOS, BUF, @NJ

Saturday, March 9 to Friday, March 15

Best Bets

New Jersey (4.25) - 4 Games: @CAR, WPG, PHI, @PHI
Detroit (4.24) - 4 Games: @CLB, CLB, @CGY, @EDM
Washington (4.19) - 4 Games: @NYI, NYR, CAR, @CAR
Boston (4.16) - 4 Games: PHI, @OTW, @PIT, FLA
Los Angeles (4.12) - 4 Games: CGY, CGY, @PHX, @SJ

Steer Clear

Ottawa (1.90) - 2 Games: BOS, @MTL
Buffalo (2.00) - 2 Games: @PHI, NYR
Chicago (2.15) - 2 Games: EDM, @CLB
Vancouver (2.89) - 3 Games: @MIN, @CLB, NSH
Edmonton (2.90) - 3 Games: @CHI, @COL, DET

Sunday, March 10 to Saturday, March 16

Best Bets

New Jersey (4.31) - 4 Games: WPG, PHI, @PHI, MTL
Minnesota (4.25) - 4 Games: VAN, ANH, COL, @COL
Florida (4.22) - 4 Games: MTL, TB, @BOS, NYI
Boston (4.16) - 4 Games: @OTW, @PIT, FLA, WSH
Detroit (4.15) - 4 Games: CLB, @CGY, @EDM, @VAN

Steer Clear

Calgary (2.90) - 3 Games: @LA, DET, NSH

Edmonton (2.90) - 3 Games: @CHI, @COL, DET
Buffalo (2.94) - 3 Games: @PHI, NYR, OTW
Ottawa (2.94) - 3 Games: BOS, @MTL, @BUF
Montreal (2.99) - 3 Games: @FLA, OTW, @NJ

Monday, March 11 to Sunday, March 17

Best Bets

Boston (5.16) - 5 Games: @OTW, @PIT, FLA, WSH, @PIT
Washington (4.11) - 4 Games: CAR, @CAR, @BOS, BUF
Ottawa (4.10) - 4 Games: BOS, @MTL, @BUF, WPG
Nashville (3.99) - 4 Games: @DAL, @VAN, @CGY, @EDM
Los Angeles (3.91) - 4 Games: CGY, @PHX, @SJ, SJ

Steer Clear

Montreal (1.90) - 2 Games: OTW, @NJ
Philadelphia (2.00) - 2 Games: @NJ, NJ
Chicago (2.04) - 2 Games: @CLB, @DAL
NY Islanders (2.09) - 2 Games: @TB, @FLA
Anaheim (2.90) - 3 Games: @MIN, @DAL, @STL

Tuesday, March 12 to Monday, March 18

Best Bets

Tampa Bay (4.51) - 4 Games: @FLA, NYI, CAR, PHI
Boston (4.31) - 4 Games: @PIT, FLA, WSH, @PIT
NY Rangers (4.19) - 4 Games: @BUF, @WPG, @PIT, CAR
Minnesota (4.15) - 4 Games: ANH, COL, @COL, @VAN
Dallas (4.15) - 4 Games: NSH, ANH, CHI, CGY

Steer Clear

Montreal (1.90) - 2 Games: OTW, @NJ
NY Islanders (2.09) - 2 Games: @TB, @FLA
Buffalo (2.94) - 3 Games: NYR, OTW, @WSH
Calgary (2.99) - 3 Games: DET, NSH, @DAL
Detroit (2.99) - 3 Games: @CGY, @EDM, @VAN

Wednesday, March 13 to Tuesday, March 19

Best Bets

Boston (4.35) - 4 Games: FLA, WSH, @PIT, @WPG
Ottawa (4.24) - 4 Games: @MTL, @BUF, WPG, @NYI
Carolina (4.21) - 4 Games: WSH, @TB, @NYR, FLA
New Jersey (4.15) - 4 Games: PHI, @PHI, MTL, NYR
Vancouver (4.10) - 4 Games: NSH, DET, MIN, STL

Steer Clear

Edmonton (2.00) - 2 Games: DET, NSH
Toronto (2.26) - 2 Games: PIT, WPG

Colorado (2.85) - 3 Games: @MIN, MIN, CHI
Buffalo (2.89) - 3 Games: OTW, @WSH, @MTL
San Jose (2.90) - 3 Games: LA, @LA, @ANH

Thursday, March 14 to Wednesday, March 20

Best Bets

Tampa Bay (4.36) - 4 Games: NYI, CAR, PHI, @TOR
Boston (4.35) - 4 Games: FLA, WSH, @PIT, @WPG
Carolina (4.21) - 4 Games: WSH, @TB, @NYR, FLA
Dallas (4.20) - 4 Games: ANH, CHI, CGY, @COL
Vancouver (4.10) - 4 Games: NSH, DET, MIN, STL

Steer Clear

Calgary (1.94) - 2 Games: NSH, @DAL
Philadelphia (2.05) - 2 Games: NJ, @TB
Montreal (2.11) - 2 Games: @NJ, BUF
Buffalo (2.89) - 3 Games: OTW, @WSH, @MTL
Columbus (2.94) - 3 Games: CHI, PHX, NSH