Santa in a Flames Jersey

For the record it appears that Santa Clause is a Calgary Flames fan this year. Christmas finds them in the middle of a 5 games home stand stretches out over more than two week. If they didn't play the Ducks on December 23 they would have 7 full days off right over Christmas. So Flames fans have no excuses not to spend lots of times with the in-laws. Sorry.

Goals Against Numbers

There are two basic assumptions behind the Looking Ahead numbers in the chart and for injury replacement. First, skaters at home score more points than skaters on the road. And second playing teams that allow most goals against is better for your skaters. In general this means that playing bad teams is good and playing good teams is bad. This week when I updated each team's goals-against rating I thought it would be interesting to point out the few anomalies. Detroit and Philadelphia are both in the top half of the standings but on average allow more goals against then most teams. At the other end Ottawa have been losing a lot of games but they have been doing it with a relatively strong goals against average. So until things turn around this season has shown that you should rather have your skaters player Detroit then Ottawa. Doesn't work that way for your goalies unfortunately.

Injury Replacements

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 December 19. The rating is shown in brackets.

Two weeks

High ratings: Maple Leafs (7.75), Thrashers (7.74)

Low ratings: Stars (4.73), Flames (4.73), Rangers (4.02)

Three weeks

High ratings: Thrashers (11.64), Devils (11.23),

Low ratings: Sharks (7.05), Rangers (6.96)

Four weeks

High ratings: Canucks (14.09), Penguins (13.93), Devils (13.89)

Low ratings: Flames (10.55), Rangers (9.91)

Best Bets
Atlanta 3.46 - three games TB, TOR, NYI
Pittsburgh 3.46 - three games TOR, BUF, TB
Minnesota 3.26 - three games NYI, STL, CAR
New Jersey 3.26 - three games OTT, PHI, BOS
NY Islanders 3.16 - three games MIN, NAS, ATL
Steer Clear
Chicago 1.81 - two games CGY, VAN
Washington 1.81 - two games PHI, NYR
NY Rangers 1.18 - two games SJ, WAS
Calgary 1.89 - two games CHI, NJ
Edmonton 1.89 - two games ANA, PHX

Best Bets
Atlanta 4.62 - four game TB, TOR, NYI, CAR
Pittsburgh 4.32 - four games TOR, BUF, TB, NJ
Phoenix 4.19 - four games CBJ, EDM, COL, LA
Philadelphia 4.01 - four games WAS, NJ, OTT, CHI
Carolina 3.99 - four games BOS, MTL, MIN, ATL
Steer Clear
Calgary 0.84 - ONE game ANA
Anaheim 1.81 - two games VAN, CGY
NY Rangers 1.81 - two games SJ, WAS
San Jose 1.89 - two games NYR, VAN
Ottawa 1.90 - two games DAL, PHI

Best Bets
Florida 4.50 - four games COL, NAS, TB, TB
Phoenix 4.40 - four games EDM, COL, LA, LA
Pittsburgh 4.21 - four games BUF, TB, NJ, MTL
Carolina 4.09 - four games MTL, MIN, ATL, BOS
Philadelphia 3.91 - four games NJ, OTT, CHI, CBJ
Steer Clear
Chicago 1.05 - ONE games PHI
Minnesota 1.16 - ONE game CAR
Dallas 1.89 - two games TOR, ANA
Nashville 1.90 - two games FLA, DET
San Jose 1.90 - two games VAN, STL

Best Bets
Toronto 4.49 - four games ATL, DAL, NYI, WAS
Atlanta 4.40 - four games TOR, NYI, CAR, BOS
Phoenix 4.40 - four games EDM, COL, LA, LA
Pittsburgh 4.21 - four games BUF, TB, NJ, MTL
Anaheim 3.99 - four road games VAN, CGY, DAL, STL

Steer Clear
Montreal 0.95 - ONE games PIT
Calgary 1.89 - two games ANA, OTT
Chicago 1.92 - two games PHI, MIN
San Jose 1.99 - two games VAN, STL
NY Rangers 2.00 - two games WAS, NJ

Best Bets
NY Islanders 4.33 - four games ATL, TOR, BUF, NYR
Nashville 4.01 - four games FLA, DET, EDM, COL
Los Angeles 4.00 - four games CBJ, PHX, PHX, CBJ
Florida 4.20 - four games NAS, TB, TB, MTL
Toronto 3.35 - three games DAL, NYI, WAS
Steer Clear
Montreal 1.90 - two games PIT, FLA
Edmonton 1.91 - two games VAN, NAS
Chicago 1.92 - two games PHI, MIN
Buffalo 2.21 - two games WAS, NYI
Calgary 2.73 - three games ANA, OTT, MIN

Best Bets
Toronto 3.35 - three games NYI, WAS, ATL
Buffalo 3.26 - three games WAS, NYI, WAS
Washington 3.26 - three games BUF, TOR, BUF
Vancouver 3.15 - three games EDM, OTT, PHI
Florida 3.15 - three games TB, TB, MTL
Steer Clear
Calgary 1.79 - two games OTT, MIN
Dallas 1.79 - two games ANA, SJ
Minnesota 1.90 - two games CHI, CGY
Carolina 1.98 - two games ATL, BOS
Phoenix 2.00 - two games LA, LA

Best Bets
Florida 4.29 - four games TB, TB, MTL, NYI
Atlanta 4.18 - four games CAR, BOS, TOR, CAR
NY Islanders 4.13 - four games TOR, BUF, NYR, FLA
New Jersey 4.09 - four games PIT, NYR, STL, DAL
Edmonton 3.80 - four games VAN, NAS, OTT, CGY
Steer Clear
NY Rangers 2.21 - two games NJ, NYI
Pittsburgh 2.64 - three games NJ, MTL, STL
Philadelphia 2.66 - three road games CHI, CBJ, VAN
St. Louis 2.73 - three home games SJ, ANA, NJ
Dallas 2.73 - three home games ANA, SJ, NJ

Best Bets
Washington 4.42 - four games BUF, TOR, BUF, TB
Buffalo 4.40 - four games WAS, NYI, WAS, TOR
Toronto 4.40 - four games NYI, WAS, ATL, BUF
Florida 4.29 - four games TB, TB, MTL, NYI
Boston 4.19 - four games CAR, ATL, PIT, PIT
Steer Clear
NY Rangers 2.21 - two games NJ, NYI
Philadelphia 2.66 - three road games CHI, CBJ, VAN
St. Louis 2.73 - three home games SJ, ANA, NJ
Dallas 2.73 - three home games ANA, SJ, NJ
Minnesota 2.74 - three games CHI, CGY, SJ

Best Bets
Anaheim 4.39 - four games DAL, STL, CBJ, PHI
Colorado 4.21 - four games DET, NAS, PHX, CBJ
Vancouver 4.19 - four games OTT, PHI, NAS, ATL
Boston 4.19 - four games CAR, ATL, PIT, PIT
New Jersey 3.99 - four games NYR, STL, DAL, MTL
Steer Clear
Los Angeles 2.00 - two games PHX, CBJ
NY Rangers 2.21 - two games NJ, NYI
Pittsburgh 2.55 - three games MTL, BOS, BOS
Philadelphia 2.66 - three games CBJ, VAN, ANA
Dallas 2.73 - three games ANA, SJ, NJ

Best Bets
Washington 4.31 - four games TOR, BUF, TB, NYR
Edmonton 4.21 - four games NAS, OTT, CGY, DAL
Toronto 4.21 - four games WAS, ATL, BUF, OTT
Vancouver 4.19 - four games OTT, PHI, NAS, ATL
Boston 4.19 - four games ATL, PIT, PIT, BUF
Steer Clear
Los Angeles 2.21 - two games CBJ, PHI
NY Rangers 2.21 - two games NYI, WAS
Phoenix 2.31 - two games COL, NYI
Detroit 2.56 - three games CHI, CHI, MIN
Pittsburgh 2.65 - three games BOS, BOS, FLA