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

 ** This article was written before NHL games took place on Thursday, March 14, 2013.*

Conference Bias

Don't worry, everything has returned back to normal. The Eastern Conference is back to having more than double the amount of "Best Bets" appearances than the Western Conference with a 24-11 advantage. The Eastern Conference also recovered in the "Steer Clear" section to the tune of 22-13 (the West with the 22). It's safe to go back to loading up on Eastern Conference talent once again.

Things are Looking Up on the Island

There's a notion that superstars make everyone around them better. John Tavares is no exception. If/When the Islanders finally get out of the cellar; it'll be on the back of JT. He's made guys like
Matt Moulson
and
Brad Boyes
look like true first liners. He was a major reason why
Lubomir Visnovsky
came back from the KHL quicker than expected.

The Isles really aren't that bad of a team, they have some good pieces; they just need to pull it all together. In the next few days, the Islanders start a nice little home stand against some opponents who may be vulnerable to surrender some goals. Before their four-game home stand starts, the Isles travel to Florida on Saturday to face a team who is in a complete free fall.

Their schedule brings them back to Nassau Coliseum with games against Ottawa, Montreal, Pittsburgh and Florida again. While they're all potentially playoff teams, except Florida, the Islanders have the second most goals for on the powerplay while at home (tied with a few other teams). Pittsburgh has the sixth worst penalty kill in the league and Florida is dead last (by almost a full four percent). Their fantasy-friendly schedule then takes them back on the road to face the second worst PK team in the Washington Capitals.

Expect the Islanders to put up some points in the next several games and maybe inch closer to a playoff spot.

Jets Prepare to Take Off

Winnipeg, much like the Islanders, is holding onto hope of still making the playoffs. They're tied for eighth in the East, but the Rangers have a game in hand. The end of March is incredibly busy for the Jets, so if you have any of their players, you're going to get a lot of use out of them.

They have a seven-day span where they play five games, which includes back-to-back home games against Washington. This is the time where we'll learn if the Jets will fly or crash and burn. Watch for guys like Blake Wheeler , Andrew Ladd , Evander Kane , Dustin Byfuglien and

Tobias Enstrom
(who will be back soon) to shine.
Ondrej Pavelec
is uninspiring, but he's a workhorse.

Winnipeg is a market that lives and dies by their team, so they really need a playoff run to satisfy the frenzied fan base. If you need to fill some lineup spots, Winnipeg is a great choice for the rest of the month.

Philly's Falling into a Black Hole

The Universe is a big place and the distance from the Earth to the Moon is about the same distance Philadelphia needs to travel to make their way back into a playoff spot. OK, not really, but it seems that way. It's pretty remarkable actually, Peter Laviolette is a great coach, but he's looking like he's on the hot seat with their GM, Paul Holmgren.

The Flyers have many great pieces, but their team is brutal right now. Danny Briere can't seem to do anything lately; Ilya Bryzgalov is a crazy mess (more than normal). While they have some good depth, past the known commodities of Briere, Jake Voracek,
Claude Giroux
,
Wayne Simmonds
and
Matt Read
, there's only

Brayden Schenn
who has double digits in points among forwards and that's it.

The Flyers need some time to clear their head and this is the week to do it. They have only two games in the next nine days. And in those nine days, they'll see their chances of making the playoffs shrivel up and die. Bench your Flyers if you can only make roster updates once a week, Giroux's two assists aren't going to help you.

All Downhill from Here

You never want to peak too early. Macaulay Culkin peaked really early with the Home Alone movies and look at him now. Although, he did date Mila Kunis for a while, so that's saying something. Now, I'm not saying the Hawks are going to have a fall like Macaulay did, but they haven't looked like the same team since their streak ended. That was to be expected, but now their mettle is going to be tested with a week of road games and injuries to deal with on top of that.

Visits to Dallas and Colorado are the appetizer before the main course showdown Wednesday night at Anaheim, which could help determine the Western Conference throne, right before Corey Perry
makes his return and Anaheim goes on their typical late-season charge.

A pretty sparse schedule for the Hawks coupled with the massive mental letdown that has to accompany coming off of a 24-game season-starting win streak makes starting some of their players less enticing in the near future. Steer clear until their ship has been righted.

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.

Vancouver: *Mason Raymond* *(7%)* – With Ryan Kesler out and David Booth slumping, Vancouver doesn't have a clear cut second line. Their most successful line (other than the Twins' line) is the Raymond-
Jannik Hansen
-
Chris Higgins
line. They're all less than 10% owned in Yahoo leagues. Personally, I'd go with Raymond.

NY Rangers: *Derek Stepan* *(29%)* – Eight points in his past seven games. Lining up with Ma

rian Gaborik
and
Ryan Callahan
. Top unit PP time. Second most average ice time among forwards on the team. Why is he only owned in less than a third of Yahoo leagues? He's owned in all the leagues I play in.

NY Islanders: *Brad Boyes* *(19%)* – On the top line with John Tavares and Matt Moulson at even strength and the man advantage. Three points in his past two and six in his past five. Dual eligibility. Enough said.

Winnipeg: *Bryan Little* *(20%)* – Three points in his last four. Skating with Blake Wheeler and An
drew Ladd
in all situations. Second on the team among forwards in average ice time. Plus, if you pick up him and Boyes, your team name possibilities are endless.

Los Angeles: *Jake Muzzin* *(6%)* – I don't normally suggest defensemen in this section, but Muzzin has been too good to ignore. Seven points in his past five, including four in his past three. He's +8 in the month of March and hasn't had a negative game since February 20th. In fact, he's only had two negative games all season.

Best Bets
NY Rangers (4.26) - 4 Games: @PIT, CAR, @NJ, FLA
Los Angeles (4.20) - 4 Games: SJ, PHX, PHX, DAL
Nashville (4.20) - 4 Games: @CGY, @EDM, @CLB, CGY
Carolina (4.16) - 4 Games: @TB, @NYR, FLA, NJ
Ottawa (4.14) - 4 Games: @BUF, WPG, @NYI, BOS
Steer Clear
Columbus (2.00) - 2 Games: PHX, NSH
St. Louis (2.00) - 2 Games: ANH, @VAN
Philadelphia (2.05) - 2 Games: NJ, @TB
Calgary (2.80) - 3 Games: NSH, @DAL, @NSH
San Jose (2.85) - 3 Games: @LA, @ANH, @EDM

Friday, March 22

Best Bets
Winnipeg (4.96) - 5 Games: @TOR, @OTW, BOS, WSH, WSH
Washington (4.95) - 5 Games: @BOS, BUF, @PIT, @WPG, @WPG
NY Rangers (4.26) - 4 Games: @PIT, CAR, @NJ, FLA
Los Angeles (4.20) - 4 Games: SJ, PHX, PHX, DAL
NY Islanders (4.19) - 4 Games: @FLA, OTW, MTL, PIT
Steer Clear
Philadelphia (1.00) - 1 Games: @TB
Edmonton (1.94) - 2 Games: NSH, SJ
St. Louis (2.00) - 2 Games: ANH, @VAN
Calgary (2.85) - 3 Games: @DAL, @NSH, @CLB
San Jose (2.85) - 3 Games: @LA, @ANH, @EDM

Saturday, March 23

Best Bets
Nashville (4.25) - 4 Games: @EDM, @CLB, CGY, CLB
Los Angeles (4.25) - 4 Games: PHX, PHX, DAL, VAN
Ottawa (4.24) - 4 Games: WPG, @NYI, BOS, TB
Dallas (4.16) - 4 Games: CGY, @COL, @LA, COL
Washington (4.10) - 4 Games: BUF, @PIT, @WPG, @WPG
Steer Clear
Philadelphia (1.00) - 1 Games: @TB
Chicago (1.95) - 2 Games: @COL, @ANH
Detroit (1.95) - 2 Games: MIN, @ANH
St. Louis (1.95) - 2 Games: @VAN, @EDM
Calgary (2.85) - 3 Games: @DAL, @NSH, @CLB

Sunday, March 24

Best Bets
Vancouver (4.95) - 5 Games: MIN, STL, @PHX, @LA, @COL
NY Rangers (4.36) - 4 Games: CAR, @NJ, FLA, WSH
NY Islanders (4.31) - 4 Games: OTW, MTL, PIT, FLA
Winnipeg (4.25) - 4 Games: BOS, WSH, WSH, TB
Los Angeles (4.25) - 4 Games: PHX, PHX, DAL, VAN
Steer Clear
Chicago (1.95) - 2 Games: @COL, @ANH
Philadelphia (2.00) - 2 Games: @TB, @PIT
Edmonton (2.10) - 2 Games: SJ, STL
Boston (2.80) - 3 Games: @WPG, @OTW, @TOR
San Jose (2.85) - 3 Games: @ANH, @EDM, @MIN
Monday, March 25
Best Bets
Nashville (4.36) - 4 Games: @CLB, CGY, CLB, EDM
NY Islanders (4.31) - 4 Games: OTW, MTL, PIT, FLA
Winnipeg (4.25) - 4 Games: BOS, WSH, WSH, TB
Ottawa (4.19) - 4 Games: @NYI, BOS, TB, NJ
New Jersey (4.06) - 4 Games: NYR, @CAR, FLA, @OTW
Steer Clear
Philadelphia (1.00) - 1 Games: @PIT
Chicago (1.95) - 2 Games: @ANH, LA
Carolina (2.26) - 2 Games: FLA, NJ
Tampa Bay (2.80) - 3 Games: @TOR, @OTW, @WPG
San Jose (2.85) - 3 Games: @EDM, @MIN, @ANH
to Tuesday, March 26
Best Bets
Toronto (5.11) - 5 Games: TB, @BUF, BOS, @BOS, FLA
NY Islanders (4.36) - 4 Games: MTL, PIT, FLA, @WSH
Winnipeg (4.31) - 4 Games: WSH, WSH, TB, @CAR
Washington (4.11) - 4 Games: @WPG, @WPG, @NYR, NYI
Anaheim (4.04) - 4 Games: CHI, DET, DET, SJ
Steer Clear
Philadelphia (2.00) - 2 Games: @PIT, NYR
Phoenix (2.10) - 2 Games: VAN, DET
Carolina (2.15) - 2 Games: NJ, WPG
San Jose (2.85) - 3 Games: @EDM, @MIN, @ANH
Boston (2.86) - 3 Games: @OTW, @TOR, TOR
Wednesday, March 27
Best Bets

Calgary (4.91) - 5 Games: @NSH, @CLB, STL, @CHI, COL
NY Islanders (4.36) - 4 Games: MTL, PIT, FLA, @WSH
Winnipeg (4.31) - 4 Games: WSH, WSH, TB, @CAR
Washington (4.11) - 4 Games: @WPG, @WPG, @NYR, NYI
Montreal (4.05) - 4 Games: @NYI, BUF, @PIT, @BOS

Steer Clear

Philadelphia (2.00) - 2 Games: @PIT, NYR
Carolina (2.15) - 2 Games: NJ, WPG
Chicago (2.15) - 2 Games: LA, CGY
Detroit (2.85) - 3 Games: @ANH, @ANH, @PHX
San Jose (2.90) - 3 Games: @MIN, @ANH, ANH