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NHL BETTING GUIDE

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ADAM BURKE'S

BEST BETS

The start of a new season is always exciting. It gets even more exciting when you start looking at all of the betting options available. The usual staples are all there - Stanley Cup odds, conference and division futures, Over/Under points, Yes/No to Make The Playoffs, and Awards markets. But there are a ton of player season-long props to examine as well.

With so many options, it can be tricky to narrow down your focus and figure out just how much of your bankroll to allocate to these bet types. Remember, the NHL season is a long one. Opening Night is October 4 and the final day of the regular season is April 17. That is a long year and a long time to tie up money, especially if you have Stanley Cup futures that run deep into June.

DIVISION WINNERS

I have a few suggestions spread across the different betting markets that are out there. I already tackled the Stanley Cup futures separately and I don't do conference winners, so let's look at some division winner markets first.

LOS ANGELES KINGS TO WIN THE PACIFIC DIVISION (+600)

The Oilers are the only odds-on favorite in the NHL division futures market. Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl, and Zach Hyman is quite a Big Three, but the Oilers have goaltending issues. Stuart Skinner was a little above average in the regular season, but he did not play well statistically in the postseason. I'm not sure how good he truly is.

Edmonton also had a long year and a short offseason, which tends to affect teams. The Kings, meanwhile, made the playoffs and actually got bounced by the Oilers, but they have a solid goaltender in David Rittich and a potential bounce back candidate in Darcy Kuemper, who was terrible for the Capitals last season, but was a top-25 netminder the previous year.

The Kings have some young, emerging forwards and the same, productive grizzled vets. They also seemed to respond well to new head coach Jim Hiller as the interim last season. Not as well as the Oilers responded to Kris Knoblauch, but hey, I think the Kings are worth a look at +600.

The regular season points market is the NHL's version of a win total market. You can bet on wins as well, but with the points system in the NHL (2 for a win, 1 for an OT/SO loss, 0 for a regulation loss), it needs to be a little bit different.

I like this market because you can isolate some teams in line for positive or negative regression or some teams where the depth is a bit of a question.

POINTS OVER/UNDERS

Here are a couple regular season points Over/Unders that I like.

ANAHEIM DUCKS UNDER 70.5 POINTS

The Ducks have some exciting young players, a byproduct of picking high in the draft with high frequency. What they still don't really have is a goalie. John Gibson is an old 31 and Lukas Dostal has not been very impressive to begin his NHL career. Gibson was actually one of the three worst goalies in the NHL last season by goals saved above average (GSAA).

I think the Kraken will improve and the Sharks are at least going to be more dangerous offensively. Add in four pretty clear playoff teams that will be very aware of the importance of beating up on the bottom-feeders and I can't see how Anaheim improves by 12 or more points after being -46 in 5-v-5 goal differential last season.



PHILADELPHIA FLYERS UNDER 85.5 POINTS

Carter Hart's legal problems are a problem for the Flyers. Samuel Ersson looks to be in line to start the majority of games and he was a bottom-five netminder by GSAA last season. Philadelphia was -21 in goal differential at 5-v-5 last season and outshot the opposition by over 300 shots on goal and had 100 more high-danger chances in that game state.

So, they don't have enough finishers and they have bad goaltending. Rookie of the Year co-favorite Matvei Michkov could help in that department, but he's a 19-year-old kid playing in the NHL for the first time and GM Daniel Briere already downplayed expecting too much from him.

Head coach John Tortorella is a curmudgeon, to put it nicely, and I'm not sure he loves the roster or the situation that he's in. I would argue that the Flyers had as good of a season as they could at 5-v-5 and still managed just 87 points last year.

Awards markets are a bit of a crapshoot because they are predicated on opportunity and health. Players aren't wholly interchangeable when you compare their stats, but the stars will put up numbers so long as they stay healthy.

VEZINA TROPHY

Here are a couple Vezina Trophy picks I like.

PYOTR KOCHETKOV (CAR) TO WIN THE VEZINA TROPHY (+5000)

Carolina is a team I'm extremely high on for this season and Kochetkov is a big reason why. He's played well at every stop in his career and I think he's ready to take the next step. He already has eight shutouts in 65 NHL starts with a 2.37 GAA and a .910 SV%. The Hurricanes are a terrific puck possession team, so the concern here is that he won't stand out as much as a Connor Hellebuyck type, who steals games on the regular.

But, this is more of an Andrei Vasilevskiy type situation where he has a really good team, but is also a really good goalie. It does take some really special numbers to win this award, but it can be done, as Kochetkov plays for a good team and is only 25, so he's still learning on the job.

I think the 50/1 price is a little bit extreme. I guess we'll have to see how much he shares the net with Frederik Andersen, because, like I said, awards are about opportunity, but I think Andersen's health limits how much he plays. He only played 16 games last season and 34 the year before.

JOEY DACCORD (SEA) TO WIN THE VEZINA TROPHY (+10000)

The Kraken would need to exceed expectations for this to have a chance at happening, but I think Seattle upgraded with head coach Dan Bylsma, who led the AHL Coachella Valley Firebirds to back-to-back Calder Cup Finals. Bylsma, of course, won the Stanley Cup with the Penguins in 2009 when he took over on an interim basis and took the Penguins to the playoffs in six straight seasons.

Daccord was masterful last season for the Kraken. He finished fourth in goals saved above average behind Sergei Bobrovsky, Thatcher Demko, and winner Connor Hellebuyck. Daccord was sixth in GAA and tied for fifth in SV%. And he did that with just 15 previous starts under his belt.

You can question the sustainability of that performance from Daccord, but if the Kraken are a playoff contender or even make it, it will likely be because he was able to maintain or even surpass last season's play.

SEASON-LONG PLAYER PROPS

Lastly, let's look at a few season-long player props. These can be found at DraftKings Sportsbook at time of print.

TYLER TOFFOLI (SJ) OVER 30.5 GOALS

Toffoli is going to get more ice time than ever for a bad Sharks bunch. Obviously he won't be surrounded by as much talent, but he should get some good power play time with guys like William Eklund, Mikael Granlund, and Macklin Celebrini.

Toffoli has three 30-goal seasons to his name, scoring 33 last season across stops with New Jersey and Winnipeg and 34 two years ago with Calgary. He's played at least 74 games the last three seasons, so he should be able to stay healthy and has even played all 82 games four times in his career.

Rookie head coach Ryan Warsofsky should tighten the Sharks up a bit on defense, creating a few more turnovers and a bit of a transition game. That should benefit all of the forwards, including Toffoli.

WILLIAM KARLSSON (VGK) OVER 23.5 GOALS

Again, opportunity is the most important factor in any player prop and Karlsson's opportunities should go up for the Golden Knights this season. Vegas let Jonathan Marchessault walk and also William Carrier. As it is, Karlsson had seven power play goals last season, but I would expect Wild Bill to get more ice time on the man advantage now.

Karlsson also had the second-most shots of his career last season and only played 70 games. His 30 goals were second and he missed 12 games. He's also a really good faceoff guy, so he's able to help his line establish possession while he's on the ice. I think there are a lot of positives for him and a good season is in store.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

While they aren't the division favorite, the Hurricanes have one of the heaviest "Yes" prices to make the playoffs in the Eastern Conference. Rod Brind'Amour's team has been as consistent as they come over the last three seasons with 111, 113, and 116 points. However, they haven't gotten over the playoff hump, with their last Stanley Cup Finals appearance coming back in 2006.

The departures are more noteworthy than the arrivals, as the Canes bid adieu to Jake Guentzel, Teuvo Teravainen, Evgeny Kuznetsov, and Antti Raanta, among others. The newcomers maybe aren't household names all the same, but William Carrier, Jack Roslovic, and Tyson Jost are all good players.

Frederik Andersen only played 16 games for Carolina, but he was +11.61 GSAA, so he was outstanding while he was out there. He had a 1.84 GAA and a .932 SV% to go with his 13-2 record. Pyotr Kochetkov had a 2.33 GAA and a .911 SV% in 42 games and ranked 20th in GSAA. As long as both guys stay healthy and can handle the workload, this looks like a top-tier tandem. It isn't quite Jeremy Swayman-Linus Ullmark in Boston, but Brind'Amour should be able to spread out the playing time.

Carolina actually underperformed at 5-v-5 relative to the expected stats. They were +23 in goal differential, but their expected metrics projected more like +48 in that split, as they were second in 5-v-5 scoring chances for and allowed the fewest against. Only Minnesota allowed fewer high-danger chances and the Canes were one of five teams with at least 800 such scoring chances.

This team also had the league's top PK and second-best PP. Even with a reshuffling of the lineup, I see no reason to believe Carolina drops off much, if at all.

STANLEY CUP
13-1

DIVISION
+250

POINTS
100.5

PLAYOFFS
YES -350; NO +270

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATINGS

| TEAM | POWER RATING | TEAM | POWER RATING | TEAM | POWER RATING |
|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| EDMONTON | 3.90 | CAROLINA | 3.02 | BUFFALO | 2.51 |
| DALLAS | 3.87 | NASHVILLE | 3.01 | ST LOUIS | 2.42 |
| FLORIDA | 3.76 | WINNIPEG | 2.92 | PHILADELPHIA | 2.29 |
| NY RANGERS | 3.75 | LOS ANGELES | 2.87 | MONTREAL | 2.19 |
| COLORADO | 3.68 | DETROIT | 2.83 | SEATTLE | 2.18 |
| NEW JERSEY | 3.64 | WASHINGTON | 2.83 | ANAHEIM | 2.01 |
| VANCOUVER | 3.63 | NY ISLANDERS | 2.79 | CALGARY | 1.81 |
| TORONTO | 3.45 | OTTAWA | 2.78 | CHICAGO | 1.77 |
| BOSTON | 3.33 | MINNESOTA | 2.75 | COLUMBUS | 1.70 |
| VEGAS | 3.18 | UTAH | 2.68 | SAN JOSE | 1.63 |
| TAMPA BAY | 3.03 | PITTSBURGH | 2.56 | | |

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