

Premier Division



juniors and

Goaltending that continues to put up stats, a mammoth defenceman, and forwards that combine grit with the ability to light the lamp consistently mean that this team should be able to overcome a cup hangover and make another considerable run this year, while being prepared to compete for years to come after a long spell in hockey's hinterland.

In addition to being a storied franchise on the heels of a winning a championship, this organization represents a case of the rich getting richer - largely on the backs of the poor. With a strong deep lineup, one would think this franchise would rest on its laurels and prepare for another cup run. Instead, they continue to pile up blue-chip prospects that are dominating in

This franchise



is consistently dominant and has long been both the envy and model for many GMs. In fact, they've won everything there is to be won. However, many GMs are now wondering if there's a sustainable enough pipeline to support this always competitive team, as some of its top players in Datsyuk and Zetterberg enter the latter half of their careers. Fortunately, the emergence of Jimmy Howard as a top tier 'tender leaves them in the action most weeks- and they've made snipes at the tail end of the draft that may give them what it takes to remain among the leagues élite. This team will face both high expectations, as well as a few question marks in the years upcoming.

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After an ultimately unsuccessful championship run, this team has undergone a retooling with some unexpected big moves in the off season. This top-tiered team is anchored by élite goaltending and loaded with a cast of characters that have loads of potential, but could go any-which-way each year. They believe their mix of aging superstars, breakout scorers, and potent depth players are the right mix, but also know that consistant performances from enigmatic forwards like Hartnell could be difference between victory and defeat. Longterm, they've thrown some important assets overboard recently and invested in potentially exciting young prospects. Will those moves cost them a run at the cup this year, or be just the youthful energy they've long needed?



Here we have a team that went from the greatest glory, hoisting the cup under the leadership of a generational talent - only to fall from grace for a spell before rebuilding under a pair of new superstars. These two young studs led them back to the promise land in recent years, with an another amazing championship in an entirely different era and a

completely different roster. Last year however their top star took an unexpected step back. Could this be the year where he pieces it back together to make another run at the cup? They certainly have the goaltending, defence and star forwards to make it happen, but now there are other teams on the radar that are bulking up and won't be easy to catch. However, this team - already atop the standings in the early going - is poised to get a substantial boost with a key leader nearing return from injury.



This local fan favorite franchise has yet to hoist the holy grail of hockey despite having some of the best players on the planet in the Sedins. For them there's a sense of destiny that, more than any other time in their history, now is their chance to break through and make something happen.

There are some question marks about the depth of their talent pool, but management is making trades furiously to fill them and nobody denies that their top end players have all the tools to get the job done. They'll stop at nothing to win, and the rest of the league dreads facing them. Luongo gets continually ribbed, but always seems to put up the stats to indicate there's enough talent there to win a championship.

Gold Division



This recently relocated team surpassed everyone's expectations last year with a tremendous run. A team with a considerable depth and young guns in the pipeline it's not reliant on major stars so will need to lean on a solid team defence and goaltending if they are going to do well again this year. Recent ownership issues did not appear to

have any impact on this team's performance, however fans who aren't ready to wait on the development of the young players in their farm system are often left wondering aloud whether players like Shane Doan and Radim Vrbata will be enough to get them to the promise land in the meantime.



A marginal playoff team last year, they've opted to go through a competitive-rebuild bolstered by ownership that seems unafraid to make bold moves. Surprisingly, they're off to a hot start this year despite the re-jig. Nevertheless, questions abound about whether or not the franchise will continue to

rely on the talented Ryan Miller to do the heavy lifting, or if some of the new faces on the team will emerge to the fore. While this team has never won a championship, fans know these recent moves, and perhaps some future ones are aimed at an eventual engraving ceremony, or bust.



This high performing team of recent years, is laden with should-be stars but many believe will not fire on all cylinders until Eric Stall figures out his game. However, sprits remain high at huge early point totals generated by a young sniper who seems willing to carry the team on its back. Many are questioning the

off season acquisition of an aging veteran d-man who has been off to a rocky start, but management believes they've made the right move there and point to breakout seasons by players such as Ruutu as well as their franchise defenseman as signs they are on the right track overall.



Many were surprised when this star studded team didn't make the playoffs last year and were then faced with ownership issues. After all, they had been a consistently strong franchise that had the depth that traditionally led to long term success. Management however, knew they were close and they are off to a strong start this year led by a cannon from the point from an experienced veteran dman,

exceptional goaltending from Kari Lehtonen, and a forward corps that features both high end goal scoring as well as depth players like the consistent Brendan Morrow. This team has the depth to make a run at things this year if they can prove this solid start isn't just a fluke.



When this perennial playoff contender was left on the sidelines and rebuilding last year, everyone was left scratching their heads wondering how it happened. With emerging studs like Duchesne and Stastny, most columnists thought it was impossible, particularly with a surprise breakout season from young rookie O'Reilly. However, problems at the all important D position forced some substantial franchise moves. Management went out and made the changes some believe will be the key to long term success, after a major trades with a conference rival. Now, there's a highly drafted young defenceman in town, some injury issues are in the past, and it perhaps those off season question marks in net have been sorted out. Longterm, the direction of this club is clear and there's a feeling they'll be a perennial contender again.

Silver Division



There was a time when the red and black had everyone's boots shaking, but out of the gate last year they were a laughing stock, made worse by a season long injury to purported stud Zach Parise. For years, this franchise collected championships like they were going out of style, backstopped by arguably the best goaltender in history. Now a huge, yet ultimately unsuccessful, push at the end of last year leaves questions abounding. The good news is they have one of the brightest young dmen in the league, and the sniper they acquired last year is putting up solid numbers. Additionally, a surprise breakout campaign from a young rookie has fans hopeful for the future. On the flip side however, goaltending injuries and questionable trades leave management open to a lot of questions about team depth, particularly at the forward position, that may not be resolved anytime soon.



Everyone's favorite whipping boy, this franchise tries to compete every year but continues to come up short; often missing the playoffs altogether. To make matters worse, their detractors are continuously on their tail for making the strategic decision to trade highly

sought after first round picks before there is clarity on the true value of those assets. Constant injuries to Tim Connolly only make matters worse. However, lately there's been cause for optimism. In addition to bringing in a young dominant top line scorer and a high scoring help from the blue line, there's reason to believe that their goaltending issues are close to being resolved as well. After a seemingly failed experiment of bringing in an expensive former cup winner, a young star has emerged behind the pipes that may be able to lead this team in the future. Fans anxiously want to know how long it take before that happens, and what will the long term cost will be of moving those top picks. After all, it was a completely different era, and totally different league the last time they won a cup, and for this original franchise and their ownership that's simply not good enough.



After years of ups and downs and management issues, this off season brought even more changes to the cast of characters that make up this franchise. Some questioned whether there was any hope at all, but the early signs are that the changes are working and the chemistry they could never deliver on, may in fact be close. Consecutive years of drafting high have garnered them a bright young potential star at forward and one at D near the top of the draft for consecutive years. In addition, they've gone and added veteran depth throughout their forward crops. Years of controversial moves may have robbed this franchise of some potential gems, but there's a new swagger in their step these days and the wins keep adding up. Everyone's waiting for it all to fall apart or for management to make a misstep.



No matter which way you cut it the fate of this franchise largely rests upon the shoulders of a superstar forward who hopes to put last year behind him and an offensive defenseman with gobs of potential who continues to face injury trouble. If there's one thing this team has in spades though, it's talent and it can beat any opponent anytime, and many believe it has all the tools to win it all. Strong stable goaltending, the best player in the world, and an offence minded defence that includes a new kid that is already raising eyebrows are the hallmarks of this team. However, we would be remiss if we didn't point out that there is much more depth at forward than they often get credit for. If there's one team in this otherwise mediocre division that nobody ever wants to face in the playoffs, it's this team and their superstar guns a blazing.



Despite years of trying, it has yet to all come together for this franchise and some are starting to wonder if trading their purported star winger will be what is required to boost this team forward in the long run. Of recent, they've relied on veteran signings, and great goaltending to give their

team a shot each week, but fans and ownership are getting restless as they wonder if they've got themselves a perennially middling team on their hands. Is building a team that compete for a playoff spot enough for these fans, or is it time to think about competing for a championship. If they choose the latter, it may mean a few years in the leagues hinterland and that might be too much to ask from this proud management team.

Bronze Division



Hope springs eternal for this franchise where a rich owner has come in and seemingly saved this franchise after years of some of the most criticized GMing in history and years of bottom feeding. Last year's excitement with the blossoming of John Tavares was bolstered by a breakout season from Matt Moulson and unexpected rookie sensation Michael Grabner. Now, with them alongside

another top draft choice at forward, and a ramshackle crew of depth players, it seems unlikely this team will be picking first again anytime soon. However, avoiding more injury issues from one of their top defenceman will be necessary if this team wants to compete week in and week out. Fortunately, after a wild ride between the pipes the past few years, it looks like they've made the moves necessary to provide stability in net. Now, for this GM it's a development phase, and if ownership can remain in this city long enough for these kids to develop, they'll likely be rewarded.



After a series of moves over the past year, many had thought this franchise was positioned to compete steadily this year, but early returns have brought more questions than answers. The new year has seen a goaltender, that many believed would be one of the best around this year, struggle to make his mark. There are bright spots for this franchise, including a defence corps that, in the past has

featured talent many teams would salivate for, led by rising star Kevin Shattenkirk. In the addition, a bevy of veteran forwards like Andy McDonald gives this team both tools to compete every night, as well as potential assets they could move for fair value should the need arise. While management continues to wait what feels like an eternity for TJ Oshie to breakout and become the prime asset they hope for, they've also got one of the best kept secrets of the 2010 NHL draft developing in the background and waiting to make his mark in the big leagues in the coming years.



Wasn't Joe Thornton supposed to lead this team to the promise land? After what seemed like a break out year last year, it's not quite been a land of roses for this franchise this year - and that has management doing a bit of head scratching. After all, with a defence that could seemingly score at will, and star forwards making millions - the playoffs should be a gimmie. Ultimately, there's

nobody who wants to go up against this potentially high scoring opponent, and its unlikely management will settle for mediocracy. After all, in addition to a talented roster, they have multiple assets in net, one of which could safely be moved to fill any holes at trade deadline if that's the trick they think is needed to put this team into the post season.



As Daniel Alfredsson enters the twilight of his career, this franchise went through considerable effort to surround him with other pros in the later parts of their career that wanted to make a push for the cup. While occasionally there's been cause for optimism this year, injuries, and lack of scoring have sometimes gotten in the way of making this team look like the contender management had though they'd built. Craig Anderson's solid work in the pipes means that a major organizational need of the past is now filled, and the combination of a high scoring veteran dman with a bright young defenseman means the back end of this team appears to be a team strength. But do they have the forward heft to deliver week-in week-out? Will they be able to shake off the injury bug? And, if this isn't the year for this franchise to compete, will they be able to retool in time to save next year?



The off-season aquisition of a star forward left many in this organization feeling that this year would be different. A quarter of the way into this season and it's getting tougher and tougher to sell optimism for this year, and filling seats without putting up any W's continues to be an issue. Problems in net have been the source of scorn for this organization, and aside from one offensive defenceman and an up and coming reargaurd, defence appears to be a liability. At forward, it continues to be a waiting game. Over the years this organization has developed a reputation

for selecting players in the first round that haven't been able to blossom into dominant players in the bigs. After making big trades aimed at bring in the star power support they've always wanted, management is scratchign their heads wondering what more they have to do to turn this franchise around.



For so many years this franchise has been the subject of scorn and the victim of questionable drafting & poor results. However, that tide appears to be turning. The years at the bottom appear to have paid off in high draft choices, which feature Recent a blossoming former top-5 pick playing along a breaking out Burmistrov. The franchise has made some management changes, has a strong corps of young highly touted defensemen and a new swagger in their step overall. While their crop of young forwards provide mixed results each night this year and goaltending occasionally gives ownership the fits, there's plenty of reason to believe that this team will develop into a winner in the near future.



Led by Steven Stamkos and supported by one the top dmen in the league, it only seems a matter of time before this team breaks out and erases the question marks it's faced in recent years. The move to Florida has been great for players like Versteeg and an up and coming young forward selected 4th overall in the NHL draft might jsut be the ticket they need to put them over the top in the years to come. In recent years inconsistant goaltending has plagued this team, but moves in the past year aimed at shoring up this position has created a 1A/1B situation that could work for them. For ownership, they've had enough of being among the first to the podium on draft day and now believe they have a team primed for the kind of success that will keep them off the links until deep into the spring.