

What will happen this year in the NHL

By Frank Denis

Every year at this time magazines are published that tell you all you need to know about the upcoming NHL season. This year the predictions range from a Calgary-New Jersey final to the Oilers winning back to back cups.

In this weeks issue we have put together what we think will be the final standings in the Adams and Patrick divisions and the reasons why. Next week we'll do the Smythe and Norris division.

Wales Conference

Adams Division

1. Montreal Canadiens

Management was under a tremendous amount of pressure last season to make a deal and obtain a quality goal scorer but GM Serge Savard believed they could win with what they had. Problem is: they didn't. So he silenced the critics by trading four veterans including Norris Trophy winner Chris Chelios. With Denis Savard and Stephane Richer as the two big offensive stars and Patrick Roy in the nets the Canadiens will be a better team. Throw in Shayne Corson who will show superstar status this season and Matt Schneider, only a rookie but still being heralded as Chelios' replacement and you have a serious contender for the cup.



2. Buffalo Sabres

If a team in the Adams will challenge Montreal, it will be the Sabres. Having obtained a previously unhappy Dale Haverchuk from Winnipeg will help a team that

finished 14th overall in goals scored last year. However, by giving up defenceman Phil Housley they won't be as strong on defence. Watch for Pierre Turgeon and Alexander Mogilny to also lead the team in points.



3. Boston Bruins

The big, bad Bruins under coach Mike Milbury are no longer big nor bad although the acquisition of Chris Nilan will restore some of that tradition. They won't win because while their opponents were making deals they stayed the same. Their goaltending duo of Andy Moog and Reggie Lemelin is good but old with their average age at 33. The Bruins will disappoint this season.

4. Hartford Whalers

The Whalers have one big problem year in and year out. They're in the wrong division!

Despite having good years they never seem to be able to advance further than the second round. Put them in the Patrick Division and they'd be a top team. Remember the name Robert Holik as he will be a big part of the team's success both this year and in years to come.

5. Quebec Nordiques

The Nords are truly a distinct society. Having won the Adams Division four years ago they have dropped like a rock. Joe Sakic, Mats Sundin, Tony Hrkac, Owen Nolan and perhaps Eric Lindros will lead the team back to the top in five years time. Until then they'll have to settle for the basement.

Patrick Division

1. New York Rangers

In a division where last year only 14 points separated the six teams, it would seem that anyone is capable of being on top at the end of the regular season. This year the Rangers begin with two very talented players in Bernie Nicholls and Mike Gartner both of whom were acquired late last year. Those two should allow the Rangers to run away with the division.

2. Washington Capitals

Having lost all star defenceman Scott Stevens to free-agency, the team looks pretty thin on defence. Mike Lalor, Rod Langway and Kevin Hatcher will have to bring their game up a notch if they are to win consistently. Up front they have Peter Zedel, Geoff Courtnall and Dino Ciccarelli not to mention John Druce who was exceptional in last years playoffs. A solid second choice.

3. New Jersey Devils

Last year, one of the most improved teams, the Devils have decided to basically go with the same lineup except for the addition of Claude Lemieux from the Canadiens. The Devils gave up a lot by sending Sylvain Turgeon, a 30 goal man last year, to the Canadiens. If the Devils don't

get off to a quick start, they'll have trouble making the playoffs.



4. Philadelphia Flyers

The Flyers had one of their worst seasons last year and decided to clean house by getting rid of General Manager Bobby Clarke and replacing him with Russ Farwell. The team will rebound and make the playoffs. As soon as Ron Hextall proves he can still play, he'll be traded as Ken Wreggett and Pete Peeters are capable of handling the goaltending. First round draft pick Mike Ricci should make the lineup and be a quality player.

5. New York Islanders

After Pat LaFontaine the Isles don't really have much to go on. They seem to have the same problem as the Nordiques; their players are still too young but watch out in a few years time. Craig Ludwig will give them more muscle on defence.

6. Pittsburgh Penguins

A team in turmoil. Mario Lemieux will be on the

disabled list for most of the year while Paul Coffey is upset at management for not making him a millionaire. Without these two the team will slide. They'll have to count on the likes of John Cullen and Rob Brown to fill the gap. Their goaltending will be better with a healthy Tom Barrasso and Wendell Young. New coach Bob Johnson will help the team but not nearly enough.

Next week: The Campbell Conference and The Brunswickan's Stanley Cup Champion.



MOOSEHEAD
Varsity Schedule

Saturday, September 29

Soccer(M)	UCCB at UNB Chapman Field 3:00
Field Hockey	UNB at UPEI
X-Country	UNB at DAL

Sunday, September 30

Field Hockey	UNB at UPEI
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