



In case you haven't noticed, and judging by the TV ratings, you haven't, the Jackets have managed to win a few and are threatening to climb out of the cellar.

With a tough four-game stretch featuring two against the rival Red Wings and a Florida trip to face one of the best young teams in hockey and then another pesky opponent, the Blue Jackets came away with six of eight possible points and are now just one point behind St. Louis for fourth place in the Central Division.

All four games needed extra time to be decided as both Jackets wins came in overtime and one loss came in OT while another came in a shootout. Goal scoring was again at a premium, with the Jackets getting three or less in three of the four, but the goaltenders have played well over the last week. In last week's column, I noted that the Blue Jackets were allowing 30.3 shots per game and that the goaltenders needed to stop 28 of 30 (.933 sv%) to give the team a chance.

In the team's win over Detroit, Steve Mason was 26/28 (.929) and the win over Florida, Mason was 29/31 (.935) including an early barrage of shots where Mason had to keep the team in the game. In the loss to Detroit, Mason was 28/34 (.823) and in the Tampa shootout loss, Mathieu Garon was 20/22 in regulation and 23/26 overall (.884). In conclusion, the margin of error is slim.

At this point in the season, little morale boosters are always welcomed. Case in point, the Blue Jackets were 2-16-4 when trailing after two periods. They came from behind to beat Florida. It was also just their second road win since November 24. With a young roster and not too many vocal leaders, sometimes all it takes is bucking the trend to kickstart a turnaround.

On a couple final Blue Jackets notes, this week marked the annual “Fathers’ Trip” for the Blue Jackets where the players’ dads accompany them to the rink, get to participate in morning skates and go through the routines that their sons go through every day.

With that in mind, former Ohio State Buckeye and current Blue Jacket RJ Umberger and his father left the team to head back to Columbus to be there for the birth of the Umberger family’s second child. He scored the game winner against Florida and hopped a flight back home in the same night. Good luck to the Umberger family.

### Other news from around the NHL:

It may not be NHL news, but you are a heartless, soulless person if [this article and accompanying video](#) does not get you emotional. Godspeed young Zach Bennett.

In this week’s “Pile on the Devils” section, the team has found its offensive stride, scoring 18 goals over their last four games. They now are averaging two goals-per-game and should be able to avoid the dubious distinction as the worst offensive hockey team in NHL history.

Marian Gaborik of the New York Rangers was benched for the team’s game on January 16 against Philadelphia. He responded to his coach’s challenge by scoring four goals in the first two periods against Toronto on Wednesday night.

Eric Staal and Nick Lidstrom have been voted the captains for the 2011 NHL All-Star Game. This year’s game features a new format where the captains pick teams. Unlike grade school dodgeball where if you were picked last, odds are you had the motor skills of an amoeba, the guy picked last for this game is still an incredible hockey player.

This week's [awesome Youtube clip from the world of hockey](#) comes from Utah Grizzlies coach Kevin Colley who was not happy with the officiating. My favorite parts of these clips are always the players trying to hide their laughter.

In a follow-up, let's watch [Drew Doughty explain to Taylor Hall why you should keep your head up](#)

### **A minor league update on the Lake Erie Monsters:**

The Monsters ended their lengthy road trip sweeping a weekend of games against Rochester and Hershey. They followed it up with a 3-1 home win on Tuesday night over Oklahoma City. That gives the Monsters their longest winning streak of the year.

### **Upcoming schedules:**

**Columbus:** 1/22 @ STL, 1/25 v. ANA

**Lake Erie:** 1/20 v. Rochester, 1/22 v. Houston, 1/23 v. Peoria, 1/26 v. Toronto