



With every team slightly past the halfway point of the 2011-2012 NHL season, I thought it would be appropriate to take a look at the teams and see how they have fared so far. Some of the teams from the [first installment of this article](#) are still in the same spots and could be considered surprises. Others have fallen and others like the Blue Jackets continue to be described as disappointments.

So, let's go with installment number two of the TCF NHL 30 for 30, done in division standings order starting with the Eastern Conference Atlantic Division.

Atlantic Division

New York Rangers (29-11-4, 62 pts): Goaltenders combine for 1.89 goals against average and six shutouts. Overachieving role players and could use a little more offense. Winners of 2012 Winter Classic in Philadelphia.

Philadelphia Flyers (27-13-4, 58 pts.): Big goaltending issues with high-priced starter Bryzgalov. Balanced goal scoring team in need of another solid defenseman. Losers of 2012 Winter Classic on home ice.

New Jersey Devils (26-17-2, 54 pts.): Strong surge of late with team staying mostly healthy. Questions about aging Brodeur who has been pulled four times in starts. Zajac back from injury will be trade deadline move.

Pittsburgh Penguins (24-17-4, 52 pts.): Crosby still out with concussion symptoms. Malkin putting team on shoulders. Could use more competent backup goalie to spell Fleury. Lead league in shots on goal but eighth in goals.

New York Islanders (17-21-6, 40 pts.): Potential there as seen with 3-0 shutout of Washington this week. China doll DiPietro injured for season yet again. Have played five different starting goaltenders this season.

Northeast Division

Boston Bruins (29-13-1, 59 pts.): Again lead league in goals against. Very balanced offense also leads league in goals. Current favorite to represent Eastern Conference in Stanley Cup Final. Lead East with 16 home wins.

Ottawa Senators (26-16-6, 58 pts): One surprise of Eastern Conference. Only team to have given up 150 goals so far, but 8-1-1 last ten to vault to second in division. Lead league in penalty minutes.

Toronto Maple Leafs (22-18-5, 49 pts.): Really good start has leveled off a bit. Top heavy scoring with Kessel and Lupul but they lack help. Goalies combine to be 26th in team goals against average.

Buffalo Sabres (19-21-5, 43 pts.): Team in complete turmoil. Ravaged by injuries and nobody is on the same page. Desperately need some kind of change in front office or behind bench. Miller really struggling.

Montreal Canadiens (17-20-8, 42 pts.): Just three guys in double figures in goal scoring. Slightly above average goaltending, average defense, below average offense is recipe for mediocre team.

Southeast Division

Florida Panthers (21-14-9, 51 pts.): The biggest surprise of the Eastern Conference, despite being 25th in goals scored. Three capable goaltenders and good mix of vets and rookies. Could use another forward.

Washington Capitals (24-18-2, 50 pts.): Critical injuries to Backstrom and Green could prove difficult to play through. Team has responded to new coach Dale Hunter to erase bad start under Bruce Boudreau.

Winnipeg Jets (21-20-5, 47 pts.): Climbed back into playoff contention with a friendly schedule of home games. Home/road splits clearly show travel issues for Eastern Conference team in mountain time zone. Nightly struggle offensively.

Tampa Bay Lightning (18-23-4, 40 pts.): Giving up goals in bunches with league-worst 159 goals allowed. Major goaltending issues with no true starter. Third-lowest powerplay goal output. Perfect storm of issues combine to make disappointing team.

Carolina Hurricanes (16-24-8, 40 pts.): Awful defensive zone play not helping one of league's best goaltenders Cam Ward. Team is a combined -124 and an atrocious 5-15-3 on the road.

Central Division

Detroit Red Wings (30-15-1, 61 pts.): Absurd 18-2-1 record at home. Again, the class of the Western Conference. Jimmy Howard developing into one of league's best netminders. Team staying healthy has been key.

St. Louis Blues (27-12-6, 60 pts.): Ken Hitchcock has resurrected Blues team. Like Detroit, boasting a sick home record of 19-3-3. Halak and Elliott combine for eight shutouts and a 1.89 goals against average.

Chicago Blackhawks (27-13-6, 60 pts.): Blackhawks do have goaltending issues but can usually outscore them. Balanced goal scoring and one of most talented rosters in NHL. Another team that has stayed very healthy.

Nashville Predators (26-16-4, 56 pts.): Same story with Nashville offensively and defensively. Having to overcome key injuries to Weber and Suter. Not most talented team, but not a team anyone wants to play in playoffs.

Columbus Blue Jackets (13-27-5, 31 pts.): Almost guaranteed a lottery pick. Nail Yakupov would be best offseason acquisition. Fired Arniel and instructed Richards to let the kids play. Johansen shows superstar potential.

Northwest Division

Vancouver Canucks (28-15-4, 60 pts.): Going to coast to top three playoff seed by winning

weak division. Second in league in goals scored and tremendous depth. Will turn it up a notch late in year.

Minnesota Wild (22-17-7, 51 pts.): Very good start could propel them into low playoff seed. Mikko Koivu injury could be extremely costly. Team lacks talent everywhere but in net. Second-last in league in goals scored.

Colorado Avalanche (24-21-2, 50 pts.): Young team hanging around trying to learn how to win. Team lacks a dominant presence, both offensively and physically. Matt Duchene return will be trade deadline move.

Calgary Flames (21-20-6, 48 pts.): Fired long-time coach Darryl Sutter and added scorer in Mike Cammalleri. Team lacks depth with ability to contribute offensively. Can Miikka Kiprusoff keep carrying load?

Edmonton Oilers (17-24-4, 38 pts.): Ravaged by injuries to very key skill players. Goaltending tandem really isn't up to league standards. Really lacking impact defenseman. Couple years away from contention.

Pacific Division

San Jose Sharks (26-12-5, 57 pts.): Typical Sharks regular season with a lot of contributions and solid goaltending. Very little physicality in their style of play could hurt them again come playoff time.

Los Angeles Kings (23-15-9, 55 pts.): Quite possibly the scariest potential playoff opponent in the Western Conference. Playing well under Darryl Sutter and Jon Quick is having solid year. Need to find consistent goal scoring.

Dallas Stars (24-19-2, 50 pts.): Were one the league's biggest surprises before injury bug bit

them. Solid depth but lacking top end skill as evidenced by third lowest powerplay goal output.

Phoenix Coyotes (21-18-7, 49 pts.): Mike Smith has been playing out of his mind lately but team still struggles to score. Will definitely hang around playoff picture until the end.

Anaheim Ducks (15-22-7, 37 pts.): Hired Bruce Boudreau from Washington day after he was fired. Plenty of underachieving talent and Jonas Hiller is having a hard time returning from last season's head injury. Lottery team.

Unlike the last few years, there is a clearer divide between the teams who will be in the hunt and those who will fade into the night. Injuries are dictating the fates of some teams and others are simply not performing up to their capabilities. Regression to the mean has begun for some of the teams who started out really hot and the cream of the crop is rising to its regular position in the standings.

At just past the midpoint of the NHL season, most of the league's divisions look pretty status quo as we near the All-Star Break.