

Ten Games In – Playoff Chances

Every team has played at least ten games. The Jets started 9-1-0 while San Jose’s start was just a little worse than hoped: 2-8-0. What does recent history say about a team’s chances of making the playoffs, based on their start? I’ll start with the results.

Details of how playoff chances were calculated can be found in the article *Five Games In*.

Historical Perspective on Playoff Chances After Ten Games Played

Playoff Chances Based on Ten Games Played				
Team	Division	Pts At 10 Gms	Hist Made Plyf	Change From 5 GP
Tampa Bay Lightning	Atlantic	14	76%	22%
Florida Panthers	Atlantic	13	61%	7%
Toronto Maple Leafs	Atlantic	11	49%	-5%
Ottawa Senators	Atlantic	10	49%	-5%
Boston Bruins	Atlantic	9	49%	-5%
Buffalo Sabres	Atlantic	9	49%	19%
Detroit Red Wings	Atlantic	9	49%	0%
Montreal Canadiens	Atlantic	9	49%	0%
Winnipeg Jets	Central	18	88%	5%
Minnesota Wild	Central	16	88%	24%
Dallas Stars	Central	14	76%	12%
Utah Hockey Club	Central	13	61%	-3%
Colorado Avalanche	Central	10	49%	19%
St Louis Blues	Central	10	49%	-5%
Chicago Blackhawks	Central	7	17%	-32%
Nashville Predators	Central	7	17%	17%
Carolina Hurricanes	Metropolitan	16	88%	34%
Washington Capitals	Metropolitan	16	88%	24%
New York Rangers	Metropolitan	15	76%	12%
Columbus Blue Jackets	Metropolitan	11	49%	0%
New Jersey Devils	Metropolitan	11	49%	-15%
New York Islanders	Metropolitan	8	17%	-37%
Philadelphia Flyers	Metropolitan	7	17%	-13%
Pittsburgh Penguins	Metropolitan	7	17%	-37%
Vegas Golden Knights	Pacific	15	76%	22%
Vancouver Canucks	Pacific	13	61%	7%
Los Angeles Kings	Pacific	12	61%	7%
Calgary Flames	Pacific	11	49%	-15%
Seattle Kraken	Pacific	11	49%	-5%
Anaheim Ducks	Pacific	10	49%	0%
Edmonton Oilers	Pacific	9	49%	0%
San Jose Sharks	Pacific	4	17%	-13%

I guess I should make it clear that I am not making a prediction about the chances of teams making the playoffs. For each team, I show how frequently teams who started the season with similar records made the playoffs.

The structure of this table is the same as was used in the *Five Games In* article with one additional column that shows how the team’s chances have changed after five more games have been played.

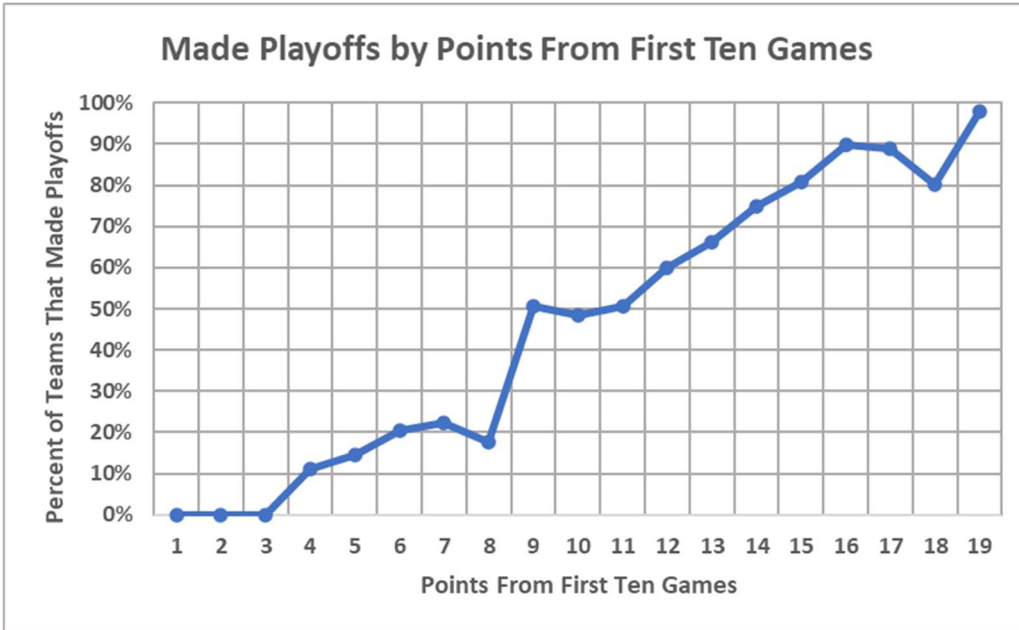
Winnipeg started the season 5-0-0, so their second five-game record of 4-1-0 represents both a drop in their results and very good results.

San Jose has had a rough start to the season. It is as if they spontaneously channelled the spirit of the 2020-21 Ottawa Senators, who started 1-8-1.

Ten Games In – Playoff Chances

Historical Data

The following chart shows how teams have done in a season based on what they did in their first ten games.



The reason the line in the chart has dips in it (from 7 to 8, from 9 to 10, from 16 to 17 to 18) is a lack of data. Seventeen seasons worth of starts is a pretty small sample.

Groups of teams were formed in order to have playoff chances based on larger samples. The groups were determined based on a visual examination of the chart above: I can appreciate that the groups 12-13 and 14-15 could be handled differently by other people. In my defense, I am not other people.

The historical playoff chances are in the following table.

Start	0-3	4-8	9-11	12-13	14-15	16-20
Playoff%	0%	17%	49%	61%	76%	88%

Ten Games In – Playoff Chances

Summary

Six teams have starts that, historically, give them a 17% chance of making the playoffs: New York Islanders, Chicago Blackhawks, Nashville Predators, Philadelphia Flyers, Pittsburgh Penguins, and San Jose Sharks. Mathematically speaking, that implies that one of them should make the playoffs. Which of those six teams is most likely to make the playoffs?

Here’s my thoughts on that question. It cannot be Chicago or San Jose. The historical teams that made the playoffs started their seasons unexpectedly poorly: there is nothing unexpected about the bad starts of the Hawks and the Sharks.

That leaves Nashville, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and the Islanders. The following table shows the current goal-scoring data of those four teams (as of the morning of November 4, 2024).

	All GF	All GA	PP GF	PP GA	PK GF	PK GA	EV GF	EV GA
New York Islanders	18	19	5	2	2	8	11	9
Nashville Predators	12	28	9	0	1	3	2	25
Philadelphia Flyers	16	31	8	2	1	5	7	24
Pittsburgh Penguins	25	37	8	1	1	5	16	31

I guess I’d lean towards the Islanders being the most likely team to make the playoffs from this group of six.

Two other articles are in the category of playoff chances based on the number of games played: one shows teams’ playoff chances based on their results after five games played, and the other shows teams’ playoff chances based on results from five consecutive games played.

Related Articles

Five Games In – Playoff Chances

Any Five Games – Playoff Chances