December 18, 2011

Coach Hitchcock on the play of Jaroslav Halak in tonight's game: “He was like our team. Flashes. Flashes of good. Flashes of ‘what the…’. He made some big saves in the second period and then there was some weird stuff going on. He didn’t handle the puck as well as he did previously and it kind of put [us] in trouble and then he would make a few saves in the third period when we needed him.

"This allows us to play Brian [Elliott] in Colorado and sets us up for that."

Alex Pietrangelo on the first two periods: "We know what we’re capable of in this room and those first two periods were not up to par [or] up to our standards."

Pietrangelo on the play of his defensive partner, Carlo Colaiacovo: "He’s a puck moving defenseman. Everyone can watch how well he moves the puck. We’ve played together for two years now and you develop a relationship together on and off the ice. We read off each other so well. You know where the other guy is going to go. Great shot by him and it’s another assist for him. He’s an elite defenseman and he’s playing like it right now."

END OF GAME: BLUES WIN! Jaroslav Halak improves to 6-7-4 while the Blues find themselves 4th in the Western Conference (2nd in the Central Division) and just four points behind the Chicago Blackhawks for 1st place in the West with one game in hand.

END OF 3RD PERIOD NOTES: Steen's goal was his 11th of the season, tying him with Oshie for the team-lead… Arnott scored his 6th of the season… Pietrangelo's goal was his 5th of the season, giving him the team-lead in goals by defensemen… Brassard's goal was his 3rd of the season… Berglund's ENG was his 8th of the season.

19:12 3rd period: BLUES EN GOAL! Patrik Berglund skates down the rink with Langenbrunner and Perron and puts the icing on the cake, 6-4. ASSISTS: LAngenbrunner, Perron.

15:51 3rd period: BLUE JACKETS GOAL. Columbus gets a little closer, getting a goal from Derick Brassard after he swiped the puck out of mid-air. It came off a rebound from a Tyutin shot from the point. 5-4 Blues with just over 4:00 to play. ASSISTS: Tyutin, Nash.

12:08 3rd period: BLUES GOAL! Alex Pietrangelo breaks in with Backes and Oshie. Backes slides it to Pietrangelo who picks his spot and beats Sanford low. 5-3 Blues lead. ASSIST: Backes

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9:55 3rd period:: BIG hit from Backes a moment ago got the Blues pumped up. You can see the extra jump in the Blues' step right after the collision.

7:45 3rd period: Ryan Reaves and Jared Boll square off for the 2nd fight of the game. Not an impressive fight considering the two contenders, but it got the benches and crowd moving. Both receive 5:00 fighting penalties.

6:43 3rd period: BLUES GOAL! Jason Arnott receives a pass from David Perron behind the net and he buries it 5-hole on Sanford to give the Blues a 4-3 lead. ASSISTS: Perron, Langenbrunner

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6:03 3rd period: Physical play has picked up since that Polak - Byers fight late in the 2nd period. Good to see since both of these teams will remain in the same division through next season.

4:49 3rd period: All penalties have expired. Even strength hockey.

2:49 3rd period: R.J. Umberger ends the Blue Jackets' PP as he takes a 2:00 roughing penalty while mixing it up with T.J. Oshie. 4-on-4 hockey.

1:20 3rd period: Roman Polak receives a 2:00 penalty for a hit to the head. Bad break as the Blues were maybe pushing for some momentum there. Jackets head to their 3rd PP.

0:58 3rd period: BLUES GOAL! Colaiacovo shovels the puck in front and it bounces off a few players before reaching Alex Steen, who buries it to tie the game at 3 apiece. ASSISTS: Oshie, Colaiacovo

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0:00 3rd period: Official 3rd period puck drop time: 7:54 pm.

2nd intermission: Tyutin's early period goal was his 3rd of the season and 14th point of the season. He is currently 2nd in Blue Jackets defensemen scoring, sitting behind James Wisniewski... Letestu's late period goal was his 5th goal and 4th PPG of the season. He now leads the Blue Jackets in PPGs.

End of 2nd period: This period's shots were 11-8 in favor of Columbus. They are out-shooting the Blues 24-20. The Jackets also lead the game, 3-2.

19:59 2nd period: BLUE JACKETS PP GOAL: Mark Letestu gets a pass in the slot from teammate R.J. Umberger in front and fires a wrist shot past Halak glove-side for the 3-2 lead late in the 2nd period. Bad officiating led to that goal. ASSISTS: Umberger, Brassard.

18:28 2nd period: Blues penalty to Kevin Shattenkirk - 2:00 for boarding. All that I can say is... What? Bad call by the officials

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17:38 2nd period: Fans are not happy about that miscall on Tyutin. Chants of "refs you suck" echo throughout the building. That was a blatant violation.

15:21 2nd period: This has been a very sloppy period for the Blues (with the exception of the penalty-kill). Hopefully during this TV timeout, Hitchcock will have some words of encouragement to get the team rolling.

13:07 2nd period (UPDATE): Penalties on the play: **Blues**: Polak (5:00-fighting), Nichol (2:00-roughing). **Blue Jackets**: Byers (5:00-fighting), Mackenzie (2:00-roughing).

13:07 2nd period: Dane Byers and Roman Polak square off in a big fight that saw the two men still throwing punches as they both hit the ground. There was a lot going on before and during the fight; this will take awhile for the referees to figure out.

10:15 2nd period: Blues kill off the Backes penalty in great fashion. Columbus never got any strong pressure on Halak.

8:15 2nd period: 2:00 boarding penalty to David Backes. He's lucky it was a 2:00 minor. Columbus takes to their first PP of the game.

4:00 2nd period: BLUE JACKETS GOAL. Shot from the point bounces around in front and eludes Halak. That puck should have been knocked down before reaching the crease. Goal credited to Fedor Tyutin. Looked like it went off Polak. 2-2 game. ASSISTS: Nikitin, Vermette.

0:00 2nd period: Official time of first puck drop: 7:01.

1st intermission: Derek Mackenzie's goal was his 4th of the season... Kevin Shattenkirk's notch was his 5th goal and 17th point of the season... T.J. Oshie's goal was his 11th of the season, also giving him the lone-lead of the team in goals... David Backes' assist on the Oshie goal gave him 20 points on the season, placing him just one point behind Alex Steen for the team-lead.

End of 1st period: The Blues lead the Blue Jackets after 1 period of play, 2-1. Shots are 13-12 Blue Jackets.

17:07 1st period: Hard to keep up! 3 goals scored in 1:23 in this game. Before the scoring frenzy, the Vermette - Pahlsson - Dorsett line for Columbus was really pressuring the Blues in their own zone. Both Kris Russell and Roman Polak could not get the puck out. This may be the line to watch this game since they have brought it early and often.

13:29 1st period: BLUES GOAL! T.J. Oshie gets a feed in the slot from David Backes to give the Blues a 2-1 lead. The goal was the second goal in 1:05. 2-1 Blues late in the 1st period.
ASSIST: Backes

12:34 1st period: BLUES GOAL! Matt D'Agostini slides it in front of the net to a streaking Kevin Shattenkirk on a nifty breakout play from the Blues' zone. The goal comes just 28 seconds after the Mackenzie goal. 1-1 game. ASSIST: D'Agostini

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12:06 1st period: BLUE JACKETS GOAL. Columbus gets the first goal of the game as Derek Mackenzie buries a rebound right in front of the net. The original shot came from defenseman Fedor Tyutin after an offensive face-off win. That was one that Halak needed to stear to the corner. ASSIST: Tyutin

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12:01 1st period: Shots are 9-6 in favor of Columbus. There hasn't been a ton of scoring chances but the Blues have the majority in my book.

9:31 1st period: Matching minors to David Backes and Sami Pahlsson. Both go for cross-checking. Time for some 4-on-4 action.

7:01 1st period: Good pressure by the Blues early. Guys like Ryan Reaves and Chris Porter have been coming into Columbus' corners hard to win those puck battles. I would expect this to happen all night; Columbus is not the best transition team.

0:00 1st period: Official first puck drop at 6:08 pm.

Tonight's scratches:

Blue Jackets: 14 Grant Clitsome, 19 Ryan Johansen, 20 Kristian Huselius

Blues: 23 Ian Cole, 78 Evgeny Grachev

Warm-up thoughts: The Blues are tied for 5th in the Western Conference (3rd in the Central Division) at the start of this game with 40 points. The Blue Jackets are 15th in the Western Conference (5th in the Central Division)... The Blues are 8-1-1 in the last 10 games when playing at home against the Columbus Blue Jackets... The Blues have a strangle-hold on the series between the two teams, posting a 38-19-6 all-time record against Columbus. This includes a 23-7-2 record at home.

St. Louis Blues (18-9-4) vs. Columbus Blue Jackets (9-19-4) at Scottrade Center.

Blues are 7-1-2 in their last 10 games. Blue Jackets are 3-6-1 in their last 10 games.

Blues Lineup

Forwards:

Alex Steen - David Backes - T.J. Oshie

David Perron - Patrik Berglund - Chris Stewart

Matt D'Agostini - Jason Arnott - Jamie Langenbrunner

Chris Porter - Scott Nichol - Ryan Reaves

Defense:

Carlo Colaiacovo - Alex Pietrangelo

Barret Jackman - Kevin Shattenkirk

Kris Russell - Roman Polak

Goalie:

Jaroslav Halak

Starting in goal for Columbus: Curtis Sanford (per Aaron Portzline of bluejacketsxtra.com)