Written by Jeff Ponder Monday, 16 January 2012 17:15

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Despite having the 4th-best record in the NHL through Sunday, the St. Louis Blues have just one representative headed to the All-Star Game on Sunday, January 29. Some feel that the Blues have been left out of the festivities.

Here is the positive: The NHL did name goaltender Brian Elliott as the lone Blues representative. This is well deserved considering the season that Elliott has had thus far. Curr ently, Elliott is 2nd in the league in GAA (1.68), 3rd in save percentage (.937) and 2nd in shutouts (5). Needless to say, the surprise netminder is very deserving of the honor.

Did the NHL overlook the rest of the Blues' roster?

While the Blues are playing very well as a team, it is difficult to pinpoint a player or group of players that is the absolute reason for the success. In short, the Blues have played the best team game in the league. This has been the reason that the Blues are just two points behind the Chicago Blackhawks for the Western Conference lead.

Every game someone new has been stepping up to win games. This week, the Blues were 2-0-1 with games played against the Montreal Canadiens, Vancouver Canucks and Minnesota Wild. While the team only put up seven goals outside of the shootout, they saw five different goal-scorers in the three games (Jason Arnott was the only one with multiple goals). Last week, in wins over the Phoenix Coyotes, Edmonton Oilers and Colorado Avalanche, the Blues had nine different goal-scorers, with only Patrik Berglund, David Backes and Chris Stewart scoring two goals in the week. That attributed for 12 goals in the three games.

Only four players scored in both weeks.

A team that is well represented, such as the Ottawa Senators, have been putting up much more impressive offensive numbers than the Blues. With the dynamic play of All-Star Milan Michalek (23 goals, tied-5th in the NHL) and the crafty puck movement by Erik Karlsson (38 assists, 2nd in the league), it is easy to see why the fans voted four Senators in as starters.

Here are some other things to consider when comparing the two teams:

The Senators are the 6th-highest scoring team in the league. The Blues are 16th in scoring.

The Senators

have two players in the top-15 goal-scoring leaders. \square

The Blues have one player in the top-60 goal-scorers (David Backes - 14 goals).

The Senators have two players in the top-20 scoring defensemen.

The Blues have one in the top-20 (Kevin Shattenkirk - 23 points).

Were the Blues Snubbed in the All-Star Game?

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This game is used by the NHL as a promotion tool for the game. The league wants to represent itself with the best individual offensive players that the game has to offer. Unfortunately for the Blues, there just is not enough individual star-power to warrant sending a large number of players.

The only argument that the Blues may have is the decision to not send defenseman Kevin Shattenkirk to the mid-season classic. Not only is Shattenkirk tied for 18th in defensive scoring, his plus-17 ranks him fourth among Western Conference defensemen. He has been a solid defenseman this season who has logged a lot of deserved ice-time. Shattenkirk has to be considered as one of the first replacements if an All-Star defenseman goes down with an injury.

That argument may be splitting hairs, though. Looking at the other defensemen that made the All-Star Game, it is hard to pick one out as not being deserving.

Also, all teams send at least one representative and many defensemen selected are the lone-representative for their team (Dustin Byflugien, Winnipeg; Brian Campbell, Florida; Keith Yandle, Phoenix). The NHL probably took into consideration that Elliott would represent the Blues and other teams had to have a representative.

The only fair way to represent the Blues any more than what they already are would be to send the entire roster to All-Star Weekend. While it may be deserving, that is not how the NHL operates.

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