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Either the Blues picked the perfect time to hit a small snag or they picked the most inopportune time to not be playing like the first overall team in the NHL. How is it that it can be either extreme?

It really depends on if you are a glass-full or glass-empty kind of person.

The optimist would look at the Blues' recent play and say that it came at a good time because the Blues pulled away from the rest of the league then hit a minor slump. After a win in Columbus on March 11 that capped off a four-game winning streak, the St. Louis hockey club found themselves three points ahead of the Vancouver Canucks for the NHL-lead. After a shootout loss in Chicago and a 3-1 win in Tampa Bay on March 17 (with a loss to Carolina in the middle), the Blues were the first team to reach the 100-point plateau and held a commanding five-point lead over the New York Rangers atop the standings. There was some room for the Blues to have a few slip-up games.

The pessimist does not see it this way. Even though the Blues are still on top of the leaderboard with 101 points, this is no time to be losing games. Teams want to head into the playoffs with as much momentum as possible. Going into the NHL playoffs with a few recent losses can hurt any team's chances of getting past the first round.

This is especially true in the Western Conference where only three points separate seventh and eleventh place. These teams are battling hard every day; whoever grabs the seventh and eighth seeds will have plenty of momentum to carry them through the first round of the playoffs.

I will take a different outlook than both of these views. There are still seven games left in the season for the Blues and four of them will be played at Scottrade Center. This is plenty of time for the Blues to turn it around.

The Blues are in the midst of a seven-game road trip, which is the longest the Blues have gone without playing at Scottrade Center all season. Currently on the trip, the Blues have posted a 2-2-2 record, snatching 6 of a possible 12 points. The most troubling part in this may not be the fact that they have half of the possible points, but the defense has not been as strong as they have been all season.

Before the road trip, the Blues had a league-best 26.4 shots-against-per-game (SA/G). In the six games on the trip, they have allowed 32.0 SA/G, including the shootout loss in Chicago where goaltender Jaroslav Halak saw a season-high 46 shots against. This was also the night that the Blues' successful penalty-kill streak was snapped, ending at 51 straight kills.

It has also been a rarity to see the Blues total fewer shots than the opposing team. They have been out-shot in a game four times this trip.

Don't worry, I am getting to the good news.

Remember when the Blues had 9 of their 11 games in January at home? They posted an amazing 7-0-2 record in those games.

The Blues have also received 62 of a possible 74 points while playing in their home arena this season (37 games). Winning all of those home games early helped cushion any lead that they needed late in the season.

Losing games while on the road was already factored in to the Blues' mathematical equation for success.

Still not enough good information for you to be happy? How about the fact that this team is finally getting healthy.

There was a small snag in the overall healing process in the third game of the road trip.

Veteran forward and offensive leader Andy McDonald went back to street clothes in the Blues' 2-0 loss to the Hurricanes, after taking a hit from Tuomo Ruutu late in the second period. He was listed as week-to-week by Head Coach Ken Hitchcock with a shoulder injury, but he has continued to skate with the team. He is expected to make a full recovery by the time the playoffs roll around.

For the first time all season, the Blues skated with all 26 players Wednesday morning in Anaheim. Forwards Matt D'Agostini and Alex Steen, both former 20-goal scorers who also see time on the penalty-kill, have been out with concussion problems but show improvement on a weekly basis. Defenseman Kris Russell, a strong puck-moving defenseman who rounds out a speedy defensive team, has missed the last 14 games for the same reason as the two aforementioned players. Russell has also been reported as close to returning to the lineup.

The Blues will close out their seven-game road trip Sunday night in Phoenix, then they will travel back to St. Louis to battle the Nashville Predators. They face all of their Central Division rivals, then finish out the season at home against the Phoenix Coyotes on April 6 and take to the road to battle the Dallas Stars the very next evening. These last two games will be a good test for the Blues, since it is a big possibility that either of these teams could be who they face in the first round of the playoffs. Getting a win or two there may be all this team needs to motivate them for the playoffs.

Of course, the pendulum swings both ways. Momentum either works for or against you.

Just ask the optimist and the pessimist.

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