In a shortened 48-game schedule, every game becomes an important one. That one loss in late January could be the difference between making the playoffs and hitting the golf course in May.

That is not to say that there aren't plenty of noteworthy games strung throughout the season. Here are the highlights of the Blues' 2012-13 NHL season:

•**Saturday, January 19**: The Blues open the season at home against the Detroit Red Wings.

•**Saturday, January 19 – Thursday, January 24**: After the season opener, the Blues will travel to Nashville to play the Predators on January 21, then to Chicago to play the Blackhawks on January 22 (Chicago's home opener), and then the Predators in St. Louis on January 24. These are three of the four rivals in the Central Division.

•**Sunday, January 27**: The Blues will host the team that signed superstar UFAs Zach Parise and Ryan Suter over the summer, the Minnesota Wild. This is also scheduled to be the Blues' first game of the season to be shown on NBC Sports Network.

•**Monday, February 11**: The reigning Stanley Cup Champion Los Angeles Kings will play the Blues at Scottrade Center for the first time since the Western Semifinals in the 2012 Stanley Cup Playoffs.

•**Saturday, February 23 – Thursday, February 28**: After playing Columbus at home on February 23, the Blues will see their longest break of the season between games. They will continue action on February 28 at home against Chicago.

•**Sunday March 3 – Sunday, March 10**: The Blues will embark on their longest road trip of the season, totaling five games. They will play the Dallas Stars on March 3, the Kings on March 5, the Phoenix Coyotes on March 7, the San Jose Sharks on March 9 and the Anaheim Ducks on March 10. This will also be the only time the Blues will play in California during the regular

season.

•**Thursday, April 4 – Saturday, April 27**: The Blues have their most grueling stretch of games, playing 14 games in 23 calendar days. This includes two times where games will be played back-to-back (April 4 at Chicago & April 5 vs. Columbus; April 11 at Minnesota & April 12 at Columbus).

•**Sunday, April 14 – Saturday, April 27**: The Blues will close out the regular season with 7 of their last 8 games at home. Some of the Blues' opponents will be the Chicago Blackhawks (April 14 & 27), Vancouver Canucks (April 16) and the Phoenix Coyotes (April 18).

•**Saturday, April 27**: The Blues close out the season at home against the Chicago Blackhawks.

Other important dates:

•**Monday, April 29**: NHL Draft Drawing

•**Tuesday, April 30**: 2013 NHL Playoffs begin.

•**Friday, June 28**: Last possible day for Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Finals to be played (if necessary).

•**Sunday, June 30**: All 7 rounds of the NHL Entry Draft will be held in Newark, New Jersey.

For a complete list of the Blues' schedule, please visit their official website.