It's no secret that the St. Louis Blues cannot expect to head into 2011-12 with their current roster. Players have to be re-signed and other changes have to be made.

T.J. Oshie is still basically unsigned, while the backup goaltender role and many positions spots are currently vacant. Here are the top-5 things that need to take place in order for the Blues to be a competitive team in 2011-12:

1. Qualified RFAs have to accept offers.

It was announced on Monday that the Blues had sent qualifying offers to T.J. Oshie, Ryan Reaves and Ben Bishop. What does this mean? Oshie would make about $892,500 (a $42,500 raise), Reaves would make $588,500 next season (a $53,500 raise) and Bishop would earn around $892,500 (a $42,500 raise). While each player would receive more money if they accept these offers, it is doubtful that all three would commit to the Blues on such a miniscule raise.
All three players are available to receive offer-sheets from other teams come July 1, meaning that the Blues could lose these three players if the player decides to accept the offer-sheet (if the Blues decide not to match the offer).
Reaves would not be a major loss to this club, but Bishop is slated to be the next backup to Halak and Oshie is an important element to the offense.
The Blues need to continue talks with these players and get a deal worked out soon.

2. Fill the backup goaltender spot.

Jaroslav Halak's play will ultimately determine the Blues' fate in the coming season… but he can't do it all alone. A backup goalie is more important than most people may think. He is a guy

that can step in when the starting goalie is injured or when the starter is not having a good stretch of games.
As stated above, Ben Bishop is expected to be the backup goaltender next season but his contract is still in doubt.
Things will likely be settled before arbitration, but this is never a certainty.
Blues management needs to have a backup-plan in case things don't work out with Bishop.

Possible UFAs that could be the backup goaltender: Josh Harding (MIN), Mathieu Garon (CBJ), Brian Boucher (PHI)

3. Fill D'Agostini's role.

When reviewing the RFAs that the Blues qualified, Matt D'Agostini's name was nowhere to be found. The Blues opted to let D'Agostini hit the free-agent market, as he was reportedly looking for a lot more money than for what he would have been qualified. D'Agostini had a career-season, scoring 46 points (21G-25A—46P).
He was a very important part of the Blues' offense down the stretch; the team needs his production next season.
Rumors are that Armstrong is still attempting to sign the 24-year old winger but if things don't work out, the Blues will have to find a replacement.
D'Agostini spent most of the season on the third line with Vladimir Sobotka, Jay McClement or B.J. Crombeen.
A substitute for him would have to have the potential to put up a good amount of goals and would be able to fight well in the corners and along the boards.

Possible UFAs that could fill D'Agostini's role: Jarkko Ruutu (ANA), Clarke MacArthur (TOR), Jamal Mayers (SJS)

4. Pick up a veteran defenseman

Last season, the Blues made quite a few changes to their back-line. Why stop now? Former captain Eric Brewer and young-defenseman Erik Johnson were shipped away in trades. Youngster Kevin Shattenkirk was the only defender brought back in the deals, leaving a vacant-spot for a veteran.

Barret Jackman (30) and Carlo Colaiacovo (28) are the current veterans, while Nikita Nikitin (25), Roman Polak (25), Kevin Shattenkirk (22) and Alex Pietrangelo (21) make up the rest of the defensive core.
This obviously makes the top-six defensemen for the Blues, which means there is little room for another veteran and for young players to crack the lineup (guys like Ian Cole and Mark Cundari).
It may be in the Blues' best interest to trade a defenseman to make room for a UFA defenseman, or trade a defenseman in a package-deal to acquire a more-proven defenseman. After all, many goals scored against the Blues last season were due to immaturity in the defensive zone.
If Blues management wants their young defensemen to prosper effectively, they may want a stronger veteran brought in to take the load off Jackman and Colaiacovo.

UFA defensemen to consider: Sami Salo (VAN), Ian White (SJS), Brent Sopel (MON)

5. Get to the salary-floor… and beyond!

Currently, the Blues are approximately $8.22 million below the salary-floor. Obviously, re-signing Oshie, Reaves and Bishop will help the Blues gain salary but the goal should not be to hit the minimum salary.
Yes, this team is currently without an owner, but to attract owners the Blues must have an attractive team on the ice.
Just overpaying players won't do it; Doug Armstrong needs to be active the first day of free-agency and get his club a few key players to have the team make the lunge to the playoffs. They are on the verge of being a playoff team but a few additions may solidify their chances.
If the Blues address all of the problems I listed above, this should be a simple task.

Updates will be given to-the-minute by LetsGoBlues writer Jeff Ponder via Twitter on the first day of free-agency. Follow him @jponder94 for these updates on July 1.

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