Last season, the Blues finished with 225 goals scored. An average of 2.74 goals per game, which was only better than 11 other teams. The offense last season was the primary reason why this team failed to make the playoffs and it needs to be better. The fans know it, the players know it, even the ice girls know it. The only people that don't seem to know it, is the ownership group.

From last season's team, subtract Keith Tkachuk's 13 goals due to his retirement and subtract Paul Kariya's 18 goals since he left via free agency. Next season, you can add...uh...well...nobody. With the Blues snobbily saying that this offseason's list of available free agents, "weren't the right fit for our organization at this time", the rest of the team has to pick up the slack. Granted, neither Tkachuk or Kariya had a good season last year, but combined they scored 31 goals...so the Blues not only have to replace those 31 goals, but they have to get even more scoring elsewhere if they want to make the playoffs.

A goals scored total for next season in the 245 range would probably have them comfortably in the playoffs, assuming our goaltending is solid enough and the two-headed monster of Brewer-Jackman don't give away too many goals.

So the 225 goal total from last year, minus the 31 goals lost by Tkachuk and Kariya leaving, puts last year's total at 194. That means we need to find a 51 goal improvement amongst our current group of forwards.

Ouch.

Let's see if we can find a plausible way for this to happen, shall we?

| '09-'10 | Projected for '10-'11 | |
|---|---|---|
| **Player** | **G** | **G** |
| McDonald | 24 | 26 |
| Oshie | 18 | 22 |
| Backes | 17 | 24 |
| Steen | 24 | 21 |
| Perron | 20 | 26 |
| Boyes | 14 | 28 |
| Johnson | 10 | 16 |
| Colaiacovo | 7 | 9 |
| McClement | 11 | 10 |
| Berglund | 13 | 18 |
| Polak | 4 | 4 |
| Jackman | 2 | 2 |
| Brewer | 8 | 5 |
| Crombeen | 7 | 5 |
| Winchester | 3 | 3 |
| Pietroangelo | 1 | 8 |
| D'Agostini | 0 | 6 |
| Janssen | 0 | 2 |
| **GOAL DIFF:** | **52** | |

Well there you go.

A 52 goal increase from last season would put the Blues at 247 goals scored next season, which, according to last year's standings, would be good for 6th best in the NHL and a sure ticket to the playoffs.

I don't think any of the individual goal increases are unrealistic. But what is unrealistic is that according to this list, is that 11 players will be contributing more goals than they did last year...which seems quite unlikely. Which is why it would have been a huge boost to add some scoring through free agency.

To be fair, Boyes could net 40 goals again, and that would allow for a few other players to not be required to score quite as much, but I don't think anyone expects Boyes to put up 40...but he's done it in the past, so it's conceivable he could do it.

However, there is one thing that could work out in our favor because a few players whom Blues fans feel could have big seasons, may have an extra incentive to put up big numbers this year.

Money.

Backes, Oshie and Berglund are free agents after this season, so they will be playing for contracts...and players tend to have surprisingly good years in their walk year. But Backes won't just be a free agent, he'll be an unrestricted free agent. So a big year could mean very big bucks for Mr. Backes and it could mean playoffs for the Blues.

Sure, adding a guy who would be expected to put up 35 goals would do wonders to the makeup of this offense and would take the pressure off some of the other players to not only improve their goal production over last season, but to carry the load and be the "go to guy", but the owners don't see it that way. It's a hard pill to swallow for Blues fans, especially since there is all kinds of cap space available since this team is near the minimum salary cap and has plenty of room to add players. Maybe they are saving this cap space to resign Oshie, Berglund and Backes after their monster year this year, followed by a playoff berth and long playoff run?

It could happen.