It's time to put the excuses away for a few minutes. This team has to get better in the coming weeks and excuses are just slowing them down.

Injuries are devastating. If any two roster players go down with an injury, it will affect the team's play. We all know this. We've all heard this from the Blues management, coaching staff, players, media, fans and custodial staff. I'm included somewhere in there.

It's time to stop asking "Why is this happening?" and start asking "How can we fix it?"

After dropping their last game before the All-Star break to the Flames in an undesirable fashion (scoring on their own net has added a new element to the formula of losing), the Blues have gone winless in their last four games, and have won just twice since the start of the new year (2-9-2 record in January). This has caused the Blues to drop to 14th in the NHL standings, five points out of the 8th and final playoff spot. Something has to change.

Firing the head coach will put the team in the wrong direction. About 13 months ago, the Blues tried that. John Davidson let veteran coach Andy Murray go and brought in Davis Payne to lead this team to victory. It was working for awhile, but even that has gone sour. So blame Payne for that? No way. He is working with what he is given; it just so happens that what he is given is not producing.

New general manager? That's the wrong path as well. Former GM Larry Pleau retired over the summer, leaving the job to another veteran GM, Doug Armstrong, to fill his office. So letting the new guy go would probably not be a productive move either.

It's time to look at the players.

Signing a player from the KHL is not going to do anything. Davidson can attest to that.

Trade movement is always an option. But with the Blues currently questioning who will finance them, it can be a tricky process. Another problem the Blues could face is that they are just a couple million dollars over the salary floor. So moving a player could be a very tedious process that Armstrong will have to monitor closely.

So we could trade Erik Johnson for Evgeni Malkin, right? Yes, this is currently a real rumor. I will silence these theories right now; while the trade would make sense for the Blues, the Penguins would never take this deal. Not only does the team have Kris Letang to muscle shots from the point, but they met any defensive questions this summer when they added key free-agents Paul Martin and Zbynek Michalek. This team is set defensively. They would need a winger to play alongside Crosby and the Blues just do not have the type of player that would warrant getting Malkin in return.

So take a look at the free-agents that are coming up this summer. Alex Semin has signed a one-year contract extension with Washington and Brad Richards will probably be untradeable since Dallas has Stanley Cup hopes.

The Carolina Hurricanes are currently in a playoff-battle in the Eastern Conference, but if they start to slip they have a potential free-agent coming up in July that could be some trade bait. Erik Cole is not exactly a superstar, but he has veteran-presence that could be a factor in the playoff hunt. His 13 goals in 2010-11 is not something to take a second look at, but he is a former-30 goal scorer that thrives off a good set-up man. With Andy McDonald on his way back into the lineup, this could be a formidable duo for the Blues.

We heard this rumor before; Alexei Kovalev is an upcoming free-agent that will most likely be calling it quits over the summer. He is on a falling team in Ottawa and he could be looking for a less-harsh atmosphere to end his career. He does only have eight goals on the season, but his booming shot on the power-play could boost the Blues in the special-teams rankings.

Other free-agents that could be moved include Tim Connolly (Buffalo), Jason Arnott (New Jersey), Cory Stillman (Florida), Steve Sullivan (Nashville), Justin Williams (Los Angeles), and Scottie Upshall (Phoenix).

While none of the aforementioned players jump out of the screen at you, they are serviceable players that could come cheap from now until the trade deadline. Shaking up the roster at forward could be just what this team needs.

Something has to be done because the Blues are falling fast. McDonald will be back and David Perron is working on his return, but that may not be all this team needs. A deal may have to be made if this team wants to keep their promise of being a playoff-team in 2011.

The Blues do not want to let the fans pay for only half their season tickets this year. They better do whatever it takes to be in the West's top eight teams.

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