



# WASHINGTON CAPITALS

WASHINGTON D.C. VERIZON CENTER, CAPACITY: 20,278

RECORD: 16-13-1

STARTING SIX

After starting the season off with seven wins, the caps have been falling in a downward spiral ever since. They're record in October was 7-2-0 and they're record in

November was 5-8-1. They have lost 10 of the last 15 games. The caps have dropped from the top of the conference to eighth place.

Bruce Boudreau is a great coach and even got his 200th win as a capitals coach on Monday, November 21st, 2011 against the Pheonix Coyotes. In fact, he won 200 games faster than any other coach.

If you watched the caps play in November, you were most likely thinking that something needed to change badly for Washington. Every time you looked, they were getting crushed 5-1, 7-1, 4-1. Coach Bruce Boudreau lost the locker room too. The caps had tuned out Bruce, including Ovechkin (team captain). Boudreau was fired November 29th, 2011 and was replaced by Dale Hunter, a former Capitals captain. It was hard to fire Bruce Boudreau. "He came in here and did a great job but his tank was empty",

said general manager, George McPhee.

In the first game with Dale Hunter, the caps fell in a disappointing loss against the Pittsburgh Penguins. The capitals played a good game but the scoreboard didn't show it. Jason Chimera scored his 10th goal of the season, which ended up being the only goal of the game. Penguins forward, Chris Kunitz scored the tiebreaking goal at 2:36 of the third period.

The Washington Capitals are currently in 2nd place in their division and 8th place in their conference with 25 points and are 3 games behind the division leaders, the Panthers.

What happened to the offense? What happened to the defense? What happened to all of the talent? Capitals' Alex Ovechkin is in a slump and is not producing any offense. This could be why the caps have been in this skid. Capitals need everyone to be playing their top game if the want to start winning again.

The Caps are only one good game from turning their season around. Under Hunter's eye, look for that to happen.



SEASON STATS 2011-2012						
#	POS	PLAYER	GP	G	A	P +/-
19	C	Nicklas Backstrom	28	11	20	31 -6
8	L	Alex Ovechkin	28	9	12	21 -8
25	L	Jason Chimera	28	11	6	17 9
21	C	Brooks Laich	24	4	9	13 -4
6	D	Dennis Wideman	28	5	14	19 -6
20	R	Troy Brouwer	24	6	7	13 0
90	C	Marcus Johansson	23	6	7	13 -2
74	D	John Carlson	28	5	15	20 7
28	L	Alexander Semin	23	5	5	10 -3
42	R	Joel Ward	23	4	4	8 4
22	R	Mike Knuble	24	2	5	7 -5
27	D	Karl Alzner	24	1	6	7 8
52	D	Mike Green	9	3	3	6 1
15	C	Jeff Halpern	23	1	4	5 -2
55	D	Jeff Shultz	23	0	5	5 2
85	C	Mathieu Perreault	13	3	2	5 2
50	C	Cody Eakin	13	2	3	5 3
26	C	Matt Hendricks	24	0	3	3 0
44	D	Roman Hamrlík	23	1	0	1 -10
4	D	John Erskine	13	0	2	2 0

## PLAYER TO WATCH: NICKLAS BACKSTROM



Jersey#: 19  
Position: C  
Height: 6'1"  
Weight: 210 lbs  
DOB: 11/23/87  
Country: Sweden  
Drafted: 2006

The loss was a far cry from Saturday's minus-4 in the game that may have cost Bruce Boudreau his job, but Backstrom continues to be the team's best source of offense with 32 points in 30 games. Backstrom potted Washington's only goal in Tuesday's (Tuesday, November 9th, 2011) loss to St. Louis, giving him three goals in the last five games and six points over that span. He is also currently leading the team with 11 goals, 21 assists, and 32 points.

Goals	Assists	Points
11	21	32



# PITTSBURGH PENGUINS

PITTSBURGH, CONSOL ENERGY CENTER, CAPACITY: 18,387  
RECORD: 17-10-4

## STARTING SIX

The Pittsburgh Penguins are having good 2011-2012 Season. The Pens are currently grouped in the top portion of the standings in the Eastern Conference with some familiar teams. As far as individual accomplishments the team is seeing some good numbers from James Neal, who has broken the twenty goal mark, Evgeni Malkin has 40 points, and very quietly Marc-Andre Fleury is having a stellar campaign.

However, just like any other NHL team, the Penguins will have to have some good fortune and possibly tweak the lineup a bit to make the coming playoffs. Hockey can be an unpredictable sport, but making predictions for the Penguins in 2012 is actually a simple process.

The Sidney Crosby concussion is getting a lot of attention. For a guy who had been the face of the franchise, and even the face of the NHL, to go out like this is just plain unfair. However, Sidney Crosby will be back in 2012.

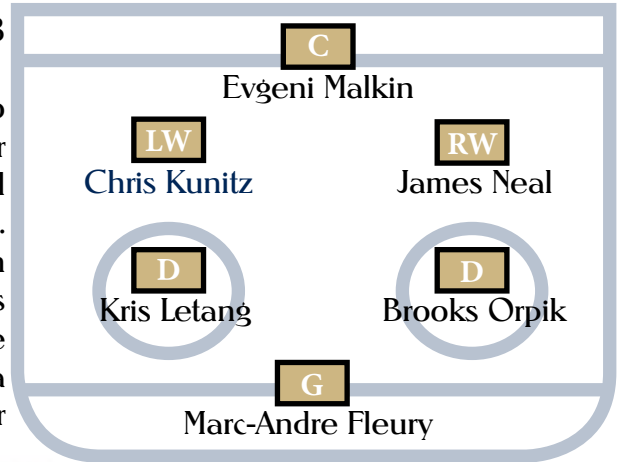
The question is whether the star center will be back in time for a playoff run or whether he will ride the injury wave

until the start of the 2012-2013 season.

The Penguins have had to make regular call ups from their minor league affiliate just to fill their defense spots this season. The injury bug has not been kind to the regular Penguins defensive corps. However, the team will probably move a forward at the trade deadline for a defenseman.

The parade of blueliners that has been featured for the Penguins has done so impressively, but the team will probably look to add a bit of experience to the defense.

The question lingering on the minds of Penguins' fans across the globe deals with success in the 2012 NHL Playoffs. The team will be energized by Malkin's soring championship and the return of Sidney Crosby to have some success in what is essentially the second NHL season of the year. Will they win the Stanley Cup? They definitely are in the groups of teams that have enough firepower to make a serious run, but it all rides on goalie Marc-Andre Fleury, and he is playing better right now than he has all season.



## SEASON STATS 2011-2012

#	POS	PLAYER	GP	G	A	P	+/-
71	C	Evgeni Malkin	23	10	18	28	5
18	L	James Neal	30	17	11	28	0
9	R	Pascal Dupuis	30	9	13	22	10
58	D	Kris Letang	22	3	16	19	5
11	C	Jordan Staal	27	12	6	18	5
14	L	Chris Kunitz	30	9	8	17	4
26	L	Steve Sullivan	30	5	9	14	-1
24	L	Matt Cooke	30	7	6	13	4
87	C	Sidney Crosby	8	2	10	12	7
48	C	Tyler Kennedy	19	3	9	12	4
7	D	Paul Martin	30	1	9	10	-6
45	R	Arron Asham	29	2	7	9	-5
2	D	Matt Niskanen	29	1	8	9	12
5	D	Deryk Engelland	28	1	7	8	6
12	R	Richard Park	21	2	5	7	-1
27	R	Craig Adams	30	3	3	6	-5
46	C	Joe Vitale	26	1	5	6	-4
44	D	Brooks Orpik	22	2	3	5	2
4	D	Zbynek Michalek	14	1	3	4	-8
54	D	Alexandre Picard	10	0	1	1	3

## PLAYER TO WATCH: JAMES NEAL



Jersey#: 18  
Position: LW  
Height: 6'2"  
Weight: 208 lbs  
DOB: 9/3/87  
Country: Canada  
Drafted: 2005

He now has 17 goals and 11 assists in 3 games, including nine on the power play. It's hard to believe that Neal netted but one goal in 20 games for Pittsburgh last spring. Neal is on a six-game point streak (five goals, three assists) since Sidney Crosby went back on the injury list. He had just two goals and three assists in the eight games that he played with Sid, but 28 points in 26 games without him. Neal obviously has good chemistry with Evgeni Malkin.

Goals	Assists	Points
17	11	28