Some familiar faces are still around in the state capital, but it is the new faces that will have to carry the flag for the team this season if they wish to make the playoffs. The Columbus Blue Jackets enter the 2011-12 campaign with a lot of optimism and with good reason. Offseason acquisitions of Jeff Carter, James Wisniewski, Vaclav Prospal, and Radek Martinek have made this the strongest group the Blue Jackets have had in the franchise's history. One new face whose fate has yet to be determined is that of Ryan Johansen and he could be the key to the season for the team.

The Blue Jackets won at home and lost on the road during the first preseason night against the Winnipeg Jets. It was a split-squad game, something I have never seen before in the NHL preseason. The most concerning development of the day was a lower body injury to new backup goaltender Mark Dekanich. While projected AHL starter Curtis Sanford had a miniscule 1.93 goals against average with Hamilton last season, he has not been able to be a regular NHL backup over his 11 professional seasons. Dekanich has potential at just 25 years old. A long-term injury to Dekanich would require the Jackets to search for experienced goaltenders or bide their time until cuts start coming from other training camps. Leg injuries can really linger for goaltenders so this is a concern.

In any event, the Blue Jackets main components are set in stone, but other players will be using training camp to try and solidify their attempts to make the team. There are important position battles in preseason because injuries are inevitable. Here are some of the names to keep an eye on that may fly under the radar:

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