With most teams nearing the quarter pole of the NHL season, I thought it would be appropriate to take a look at the teams and see how they have fared so far. Obviously, a lot has been made of the Blue Jackets' struggles and their historically bad start. They're coming off yet another embarrassing defeat on Wednesday night.

So, let's shift gears for this week's article. I'll try to do one of these every 15-18 games. Just a short blurb; 30 words or less per team. Here's the inaugural TCF NHL 30 for 30, done in division standings order starting with the Eastern Conference Atlantic Division.

Atlantic Division

Pittsburgh Penguins (11-4-3, 25 pts): Life goes on without Sidney Crosby. They've been led by veteran role players, special teams and goaltending with Marc-Andre Fleury sporting a goals-against-average under two.

New York Rangers (10-3-3, 23 pts): Typical Rangers team: Hard time scoring goals, but tremendous goaltending. Best in NHL allowing just 34 goals in 15 games. Offensive defenseman away from being legit playoff threat.

Philadelphia Flyers (10-4-3, 23 pts): Speed, skill, scoring, and toughness. If they get consistent defensive play, they're a Stanley Cup threat. Lead the league in penalty minutes and are a nightmare to play.

New Jersey Devils (8-6-1, 17 pts): Winning record despite averaging less than 2.5 goals per game. Currently overachieving with strong play of Hedberg as last drops in Brodeur's tank are evaporating.

New York Islanders (4-8-3, 11 pts): Last in league in goals scored with one of league's best players, Jonathan Tavares, having zero offensive help. Still uncertain future with failure of offseason arena vote.

North Division

Buffalo Sabres (11-6, 22 pts.): Should keep rolling despite Ryan Miller concussion. Backup Jhonas Enroth hasn't lost in regulation since November 24, 2010. Pillow soft at forward and desperate for toughness.

Toronto Maple Leafs (10-6-2, 22 pts.): Seriously overachieving with minus-7 goal differential. Skilled forwards, inconsistent goaltending. Phil Kessel becoming player that team expected when acquired from Boston for first round pick.

Ottawa Senators (9-9-1, 19 pts.): Daniel Alfredsson just returned three games ago from concussion; could provide a big boost. Very weak goaltending going to be downfall of fairly

skilled team.

Boston Bruins (9-7, 19 pts.): Plus-21 goal differential in November. Stanley Cup hangover from October appears to be over. Excellent defense and goaltending again this year. They'll be there at crunch time.

Montreal Canadiens (7-7-3, 17 pts.): 2-7 at home but 5-3 on road. Lack of offensive firepower and one of league's worse powerplays hurting good defensive team with solid goaltending. Still a threat in East.

Southeast Division

Washington Capitals (10-5-1, 25 pts.): We've seen this script before. Is this the year that the Capitals finally put it all together? Tomas Vokoun's been brilliant; Alexander Ovechkin has not been as dominant.

Florida Panthers (9-5-3, 21 pts.): Biggest surprise of early season? Very young team anchored so far by Jose Theodore. Overachieving, but could hang for the long haul with former Blackhawks GM Dale Tallon.

Tampa Bay Lightning (8-7-2, 18 pts.): Played just six home games to 11 road games so should improve in standings shortly. Very shaky goaltending handicapping very talented team. Can defense improve enough to contend for Cup?

Carolina Hurricanes (6-9-3, 15 pts.): Standard Carolina slow start. Carolina captain Eric Staal a league-worst minus-17 with just eight points. Cam Ward really struggling as byproduct of bad team play. Team burying themselves already.

Winnipeg Jets (6-9-3, 15 pts.): Brutal East Coast travel schedule leading to 3-9 on road. Jets lacking talent at several positions, including goaltender. One of few teams that can be determined non-playoff contender already.

Central Division

Chicago Blackhawks (11-4-3, 25 pts.): Scoring lots of goals but also giving up too many for comfort. Good, physical role players and top notch talent. They are entrenched as a Stanley Cup threat this year.

Nashville Predators (9-5-3, 21 pts.): Status quo for Nashville. Can't score much, don't give up much. Need backup for Rinne who is on pace to play 73+ games, something that hurt Preds last playoff.

Detroit Red Wings (9-6-1, 19 pts.): Would argue that Wings benefit from 10 home games to five road games, but doesn't matter for them. Solid team yet again and a Cup contender. Howard excellent so far.

St. Louis Blues (9-7-1, 19 pts.): New coach Ken Hitchcock is 3-0-1 so far. Blues need consistent scoring threat to emerge with solid defense and adequate goaltending. Roster built for coach like Hitchcock.

Columbus Blue Jackets (3-13-1, 7 pts.): Complete mess. Lack of accountability from ownership to locker room and a clear disconnect between coach and GM. Insufficient goaltending, defense, and secondary scoring. Will it get better?

Northwest Division

Minnesota Wild (10-5-3, 23 pts.): Tied for second-lowest goal output in Western Conference, but also allowed the second fewest goals. Typical Minnesota Wild team with trapping style and low scores.

Edmonton Oilers (9-6-2, 20 pts.): Another early season surprise, like Minnesota and Florida. Tons of talent, but how long can soon-to-be 39-year-old Nikolai Khabibulin keep team on his shoulders?

Vancouver Canucks (9-8-1, 19 pts.): Like the Bruins, suffering a little Stanley Cup hangover. Defensive lapses and bad goaltending have led to mediocre start. Team has played better of late and will be playoff factor.

Colorado Avalanche (8-9-1, 17 pts.): Big offseason addition Simeon Varlamov struggling out of gate allowing over three goals per game. Young team having lots of trouble playing at even strength. Hard to expect a turnaround.

Calgary Flames (7-9-1, 15 pts.): Still a stingy defensive team, but really hurting from a lack of scoring. Jarome Iginla not playing well and he must be best player for team to make playoffs.

Pacific Division

Dallas Stars (11-6, 22 pts.): Everything going right so far, but will injury prone goalie Kari

Lehtonen stay healthy? Do they have enough goal scoring? More questions than answers in Big D.

Phoenix Coyotes (9-4-3, 21 pts.): Same story for Phoenix as in years past. No goaltending drop-off despite losing Ilya Bryzgalov thanks to defensive system. But, the million-dollar question: Can they score enough?

San Jose Sharks (9-5-1, 19 pts.): Is Antti Niemi good enough to repeat 2010 performance? Sharks need to find out because roster is good enough to secure high playoff seed. Battled back from slow start.

Los Angeles Kings (8-6-3, 19 pts.): Possibly best team in Western Conference on paper but inconsistent out of the gate. Lack of offense is incredibly surprising, but look for team to get on a roll.

Anaheim Ducks (6-8-3, 15 pts.): Scoring just a tick over two goals per game makes it very hard to win Western Conference games. Too much talent to struggle offensively, but is goaltending even good enough?

Certainly, it’s premature to talk about the playoffs with every team in the NHL, but the number of overtime losses shows how many three-point games there are in the NHL. What that essentially means is that the playoffs start closer to February or March for most teams because every game is a fight to secure a playoff spot. Some teams have been surprises, others have been disappointments.

However, with the gap between first and fourteenth being just eight points in the Eastern Conference and just ten points in the Western Conference means that parity is clearly apparent in the NHL and that makes every game night that much more important.