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A PERFECT

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PLAYOFFS

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REIGNS SUPREME

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THE STRETCH
WHAT DOES
IT MEAN?

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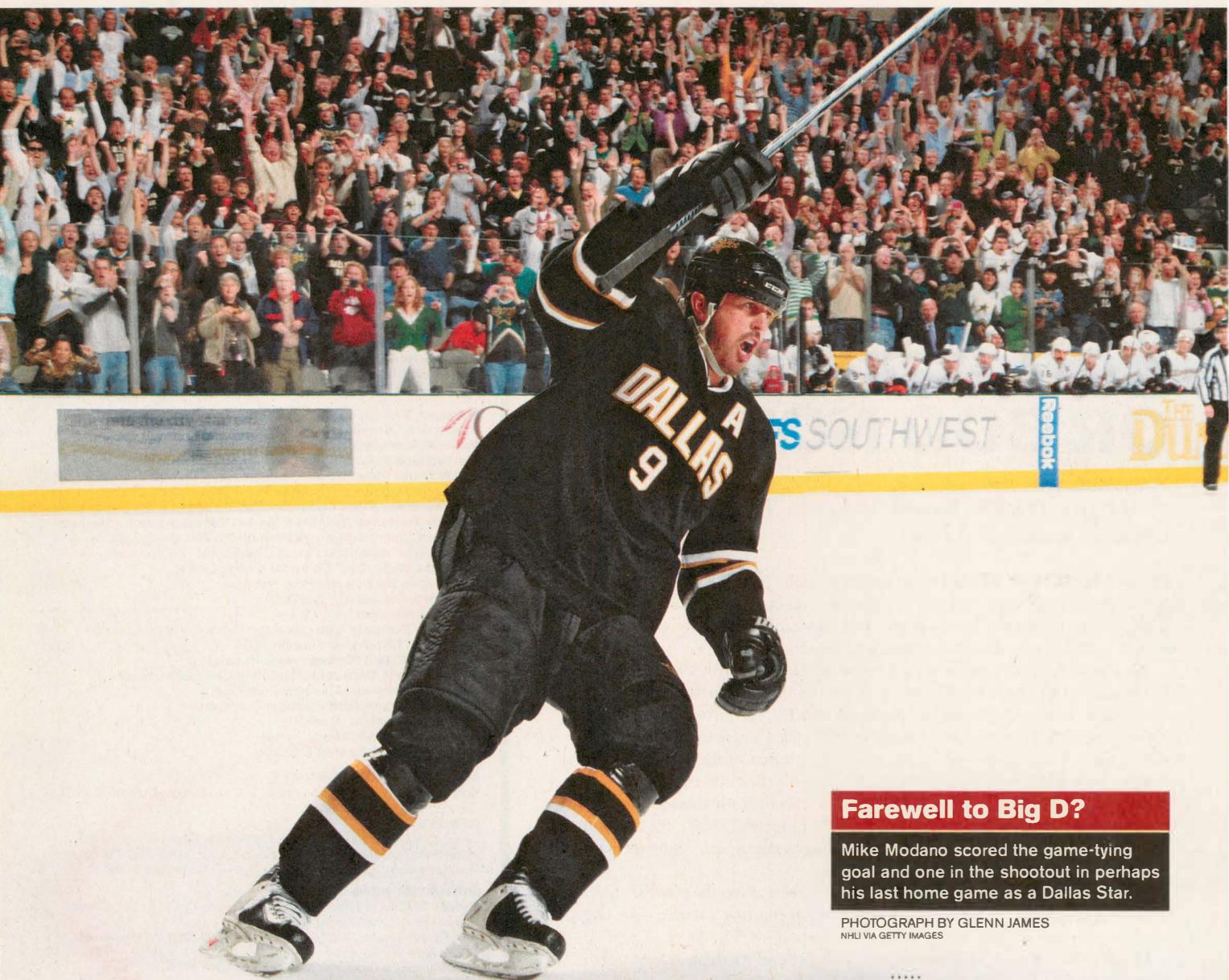
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Farewell to Big D?

Mike Modano scored the game-tying goal and one in the shootout in perhaps his last home game as a Dallas Star.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GLENN JAMES
NHLI VIA GETTY IMAGES

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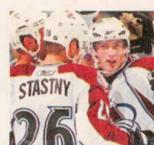
ON THE COVER
DANIEL ALFREDSSON BY
GRAIG ABEL/NHLI VIA GETTY IMAGES



DAN THE MAN 22

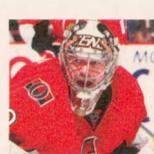
Daniel Alfredsson is without doubt Ottawa's favorite son – and increasingly Canadian.

BY KEN CAMPBELL



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Why would anyone want to alter a slice of hockey heaven?



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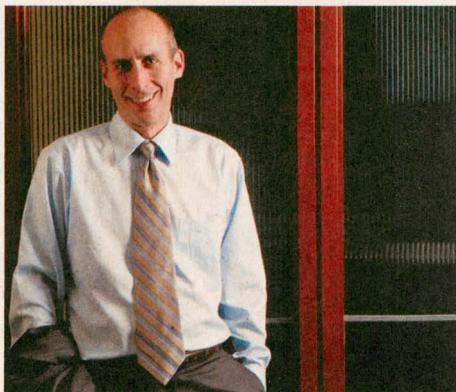


Sergei Fedorov is still trying to recover \$60 million from a former stable boy.

BY M.L. ELRICK

You Gotta Read This

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BOO YEAH! OR BOO NO?

Seat rage is becoming more trendy, giving rise to questions about decency, respect, fantasy and reality

IT'D BE TOUGH TO FIND a more unlikely 'Public Enemy No. 1' than Daniel Alfredsson. But the subject of Ken Campbell's cover story, so revered in Ottawa and widely respected around the rest of the NHL, is hated with the intensity of 1,000 suns in Toronto (according to one online group).

The vitriol dates back to the second round of the 2002 playoffs when, late in Game 5, Alfredsson delivered a borderline hit on the Leafs' Darcy Tucker, then proceeded to score the winner. (Incidentally, Alfredsson told THN's Murray Pam recently he got away with one; that the check would've been called a penalty in today's NHL). 'Alfie' amped things up two years later when, quite humorously, he mocked his pal Mats Sundin, who'd been suspended for throwing his stick into the crowd.

Since then, every time he touches the puck in Toronto's Air Canada Centre, the boos cascade. We get it, and it's good fuel for the provincial rivalry. It's also symptomatic of a growing trend to display hard feelings – disrespect, contempt, hatred, pick your negative emotion – at sporting events.

Catcalls are hardly new, but they are on the increase. Even the most benign villains – guys who had the audacity to leave as free agents or get traded – are targets. Pay for your ticket and get free reign to act like a boor.

Perhaps you have the right, but not everyone believes it's right, at least not to excessive levels. When and where should the line be drawn?

Player agent Mark Gandler says it's about decency. He knows a thing or two about having clients booted: Alexei Yashin became the poster boy for scorn in Ottawa following his notorious 1999 holdout. That reaction wasn't unexpected – though Gandler says the duration and intensity of it was surprising – but the agent is offended by the overall, ballooning trend.

"I find this disgusting," he said. "You pay \$100 a ticket and you wait for someone to touch the puck so you can boo him? Is that money well spent? It's ridiculous. Players are people just like the fans are. The players have no right to insult the fans and the fans have no right to insult the players."

Of course, anonymity and escapism are factors. We're invisible in the stands when we're acting out fantasies and are brave until confronted – as Alfredsson has discovered. "When I walk in Toronto," he said, "I feel nothing but respect towards me."

It's funny how even 1,000 suns can chill out once reality sets in.

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The fact THN has picked Washington to win the Cup is the kiss of death for them

KUDOS FOR DOWNIE

I just finished reading the article on Steve Downie in the March 29 issue of The Hockey News and it brought me to tears.

Steve played with my son on the York Simcoe Express AAA and also against him in the same league. Steve was the type of kid you hated to see your son play against because you never knew what he was going to do. But he was also the type of kid everyone wanted on their team.

When we got to know Steve, we were able to see what a great kid he was. Everyone on the team loved him.

A few years ago my son was also in a tragic car accident. Steve was the first person to call my son with kind and caring words.

It's nice to see some positive things happening for Steve and we wish him nothing but lots of success.

Steve might have a big temper, but he has a bigger heart.

W. Burkholder, Newmarket, Ont.

THE THN CURSE?

Two reasons why Washington won't win the Cup: first, almost 20 of their wins have come against teams in their own division, the weakest in the NHL; second, the fact THN picked Washington to

win the Cup in its Playoff Preview is the kiss of death for them.

Please do me a favor and do not pick my Flyers as Stanley Cup champs in your next Yearbook.

The THN curse - when was the last time the team you picked in the Yearbook won the Cup? (Editor's Note: Anaheim in 2007)

Rob Richardson, London, Ont.

THANKS 'TERRIBLE TED'

I wanted to send a thank you to Red Wings legend Ted Lindsay for taking time out of his schedule to sign his new book (*Seven: A Salute to Ted Lindsay*) at Joe Louis Arena. I think it's great that ex-players are still active in the world of hockey, whether it's signing books, being coaches or working to make the great sport of hockey even better.

Mike Demor, Canal Fulton, Ohio

COLOR-CODE THE ROAD

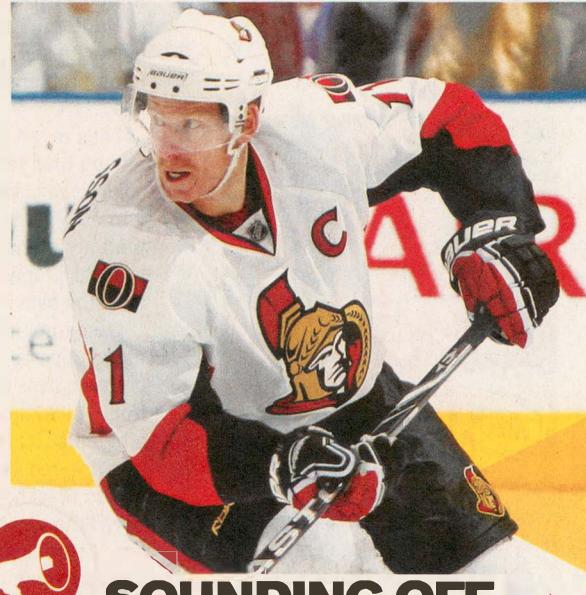
I'm one of those Americans that fell in love with hockey because of the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics (I was eight at the time). I've lived, breathed and played hockey ever since.

But over the past 10 years or so, some things about the NHL have been bothering me.

I am resigned to the fact I'll never see the Patrick, Norris,

FREE SWAG!

Each issue, we'll give a cool THN hat to the top letter.



SOUNDING OFF

OTTAWA LOVES ALFIE

Congratulations, Daniel Alfredsson! I'm so thankful and proud to have watched 'Alfie' play in Ottawa for 1,000 games. The city couldn't ask for a more humble, hard-working, selfless and inspiring ambassador. His combination of skill, grit, character and dedication set him apart from 90 percent of NHL players. We, as a city, are indebted to him - from bringing his all on every shift and his outstanding community service, to his pay cut years back to help management piece together a contender. As a teacher, I have trouble endorsing athletes as role models to my students. Not Alfie. In terms of sport, it's hard to find a bigger hero.

Devin Stratton, Carleton Place, Ont.

Roger Neilson's INSPIRATION

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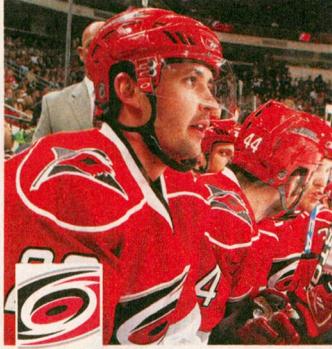
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FRESH LEGS



JAMIE MCBAIN

CAROLINA, D

DEBUT Mar. 16, 2010

VS. Boston (5-2 loss)

ICE TIME 19:42, 23 shifts

KEY STAT 1 assist, minus-1

"MY FIRST GAME was a pretty crazy day. It's good when you don't have time to think about it. But playing the game, the anticipation, it was very exciting.

It was special for me playing against a team like Boston – with the playoffs where they are everyone's fighting. My first shift was all a blur, trying to get the nerves out. I just kept things simple.

We lost 5-2, but it was a great game.

I got my first NHL point in the second period. We were on a power play and after Sergei Samsonov made a great pass, I just tried to get it on net. Erik Cole found the rebound and buried it. That was huge in keeping the game close early on.

Cole played great for us, popping in another in the third. Unfortunately we let the game slip.

Every road has its bumps and I made a couple mistakes. It doesn't feel good being out there when a goal is scored against you, let alone two. But I played nearly 20 minutes and that series always seems to be a tight fun game to be a part of."

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Smythe and Adams divisions ever again; or have my Jets back in Winnipeg, the Nordiques back in Quebec and the Whalers back in Hartford. These injustices make me sad. But I've got one other problem I think can be fixed.

Let's revert to the tradition of having road teams wear their color jerseys instead of their whites. When I raise this subject with my friends, they don't get it. I was wondering if anyone feels the same way as I do.

Case in point: I am a Winnipeg Coyotes (yes, I mean that) fan who lives about 45 minutes from Philadelphia. I miss seeing a blue No. 10 Jets jersey, a No. 19 brick-red Coyote one or a No. 27 red Blackhawks jersey flying down the ice. Now, for every fan, it's the same every night in every town – the same home colors and boring white jerseys from every team that comes to town.

Can we start a grassroots campaign to change this fiasco?

Tim Surov, Whitehall, Pa.

DITCH CHARITY POINT

It's insane to follow the NHL overall standings with the points mess the way it is.

Every game has one winner and one loser, so the overall league-wide record has to be .500. But the NHL has chosen to defy the laws of statistical science.

How to fix it? Stop thinking a team should get a charity point for being an overtime or shoot-out loser.

Jim Rosol, Martinsville, N.J.

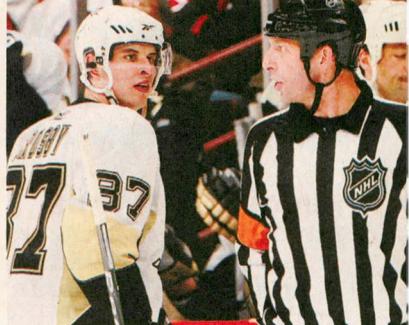
thehockeynews.com POLL RESULTS

Which playoff goalie would you want in net for Game 7?

Ryan Miller	40%
Martin Brodeur	27%
Marc-Andre Fleury	11%
Roberto Luongo	9%
Jimmy Howard	4%
Tuukka Rask	4%
Ilya Bryzgalov	3%
Evgeni Nabokov	2%

ASK Adam?

What's keeping you up at night, hockey fans? If you've got a question about the game, drop columnist Adam Proteau an email and he'll give you the inside scoop.



Adam,

Just curious what you think about the Penguins' seemingly cozy relationship with the refs and/or the league. From non-calls to non-suspensions to disallowed goals-against, the Pens sure seem to get more calls in their favor than pure chance would dictate. Any comments? Thanks.

Andrew Heffron, Seattle, Wash.

Andrew,

Were this directed to "Ask A Pens Fan," you'd be reading many examples of how the NHL conspires *against* the Pens. I don't believe the league works for any team; if a sport's managers or officials were caught conniving in that manner, each person involved would have their careers ended instantly and their reputations damaged beyond repair.

Mr. Proteau,

With the Flames officially being eliminated from playoff contention, where do they go from here? Looking at the top of the standings, I can't help but think they need to bottom out to stand any chance of ascending to their rightful place among the NHL's elite. Please tell me there is another way.

Adam Reid, Forest Grove, Ore.

Mr. Reid,

I think the run of GM Darryl Sutter should end. Like Doug Risebrough in Minnesota, he had a long kick at the can, but couldn't get it done. But given the onerous contracts Calgary has next year, it'll take a while for them to start from scratch.

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Inside the NHL

SHIFT CHANGE

There are a handful of officials leaving the NHL after this season. What does it mean for the league?

THERE'S A LITTLE roster re-shaping being done in the NHL Officials' Association this off-season with the retirements of veteran referees Dan Marouelli and Kerry Fraser, and linesmen Mark Pare and Lyle Seitz.

Much like an NHL team has its farm system to develop players, there are six contracted part-time officials who work some NHL games to gain experience, but mostly tackle the American League. Now, with two referees retiring, there are a couple full-time spots available in 2010-11. Being considered for the promotion as referees are David Banfield, Francis Charron, Chris Ciamaga, Ghislain Hebert, Freddy L'Ecuyer and Kyle Rehman, while Bryan Pancich is set to step in as the new linesman.

"It's still a competition," said Terry Gregson, the NHL's director of officiating. "Some guys have been down there longer and some guys are older, but that doesn't mean anything; it's about the skill set as far as I'm concerned."

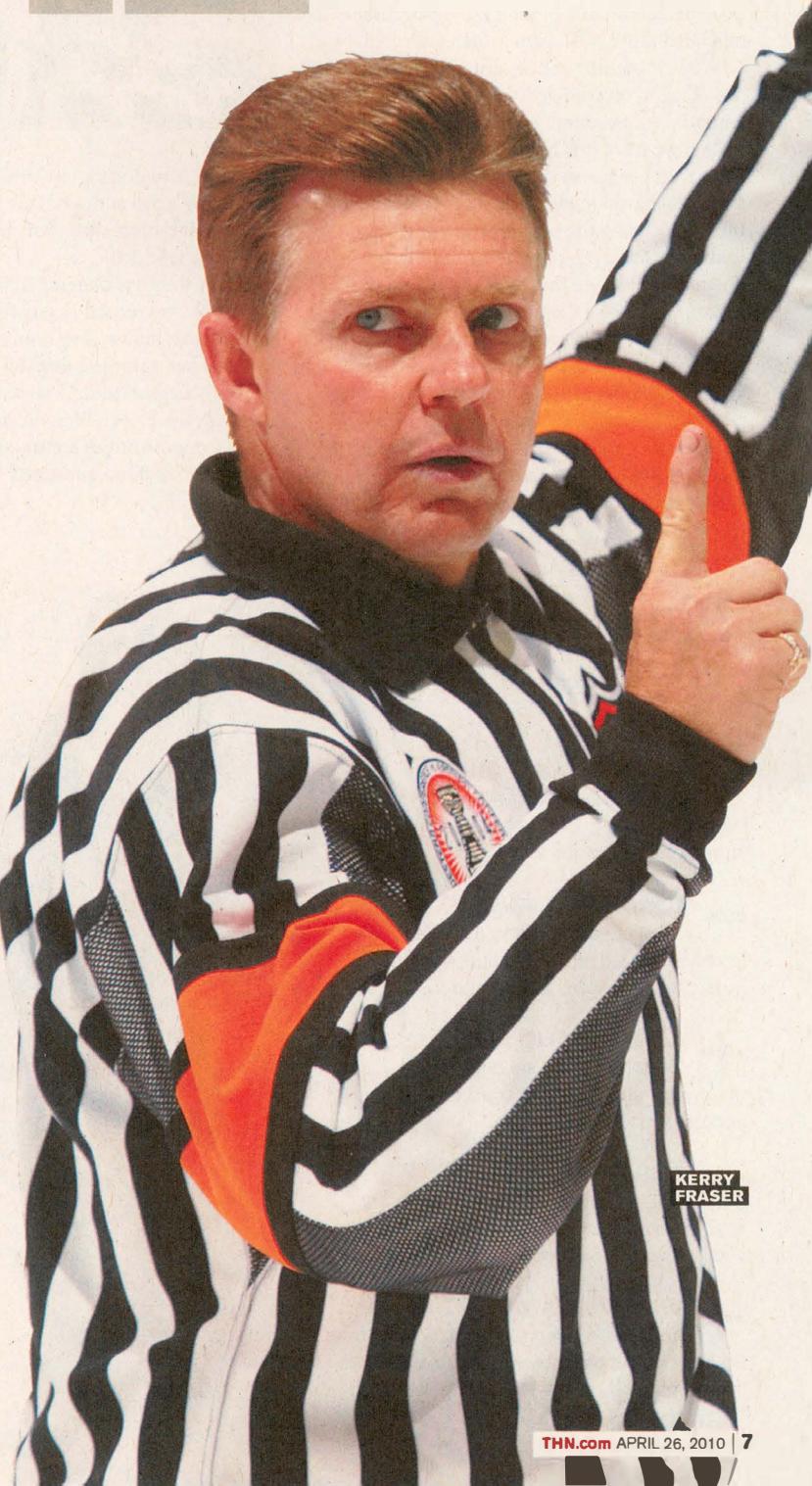
A lot of experience will be lost this off-season: Fraser has been doing NHL games since 1973, Pare since '79 and Marouelli since '82. Since experience is so crucial to success as a referee, these vets can't immediately be replaced.

"It's a tough gig," said Penguins coach Dan Bylsma. "It's difficult reading the game. Sometimes the older guys know, when it's a young coach behind the bench, when it's OK for him to yell and when it isn't. There's a lot to learn in managing your emotions and controlling the game. The older guys know when to speak up and how to patrol the game."

Another veteran official, Bill McCreary, was planning on hanging up the skates at season's end as well, but Gregson felt replacing three veteran guys at once was "a stretch," so after the Olympics he negotiated a one-season return for McCreary.

"I made the call just like a GM might approach a veteran player to stay on as well," Gregson said.

NHL players also know the new recruits have a long road ahead of them and won't immediately bring to the game what the retirees did, but they aren't overly concerned.





Inside the NHL

"For sure there will be a drop off," said the Flyers' Ian Laperriere. "You can't take that much experience (out of the game) and expect young guys to do the same job. But we do have a bunch of young guys in the league right now doing a fine job and they're just going to get better and better and they'll get more responsibility with those guys leaving. But these are big shoes to fill."

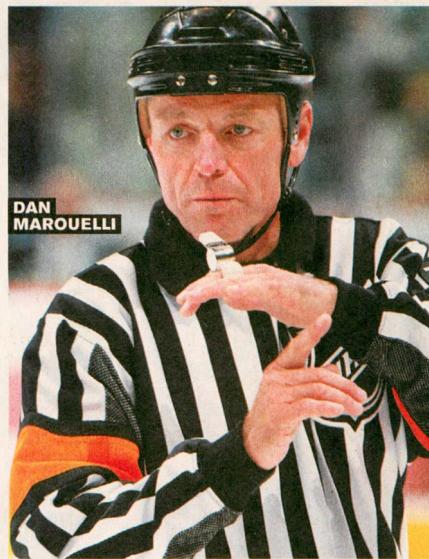
And while there will be an adaptation period, the NHL is prepared for turnover. The current development system provides new recruits with NHL game experience before being brought on full-time. And because three current full-time guys were forced out of action this season due to injury, the part-timers officiated more NHL games than expected.

When it comes time to ultimately making the decision on who gets the call, a lot of elements are considered and the process is fluid.

"A big part of it is how they conquer the American League in the playoffs," Gregson said. "We have a supervisory staff that'll be in the AHL during the playoffs watching these individuals and ranking them, and I'll drop down as well to see them and at the end of the season we'll make the decision."

For those concerned with how the new referees will take to full-time life in the NHL, Gregson compares this adjustment to ones GMs have to make all the time.

"How do I ensure they're going to be ready?" Gregson postulated. "How do GMs ensure their first round draft pick is going to



be ready? You don't know until they're under fire. Being a pro at the NHL level is doing it night in and night out. I run a hockey team just like a GM does."

As for the guys hanging up their blades, Gregson, who retired as an official in 2004 after 25 years, knows they'll miss hitting the ice.

"That last game is a difficult game because it is over," Gregson said. "I always tell people this isn't only a job, it's a lifestyle. You travel a lot, but the opportunities are tremendous. They're going to miss it, no question."

- RORY BOYLEN

Plus/Minus

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KEITH CALLS IT QUIT

One of the premier power forwards of his generation, Keith Tkachuk hangs 'em up after 17-plus seasons in the sun.

TORONTO TUMBLE

Maple Leafs miss the playoffs for a franchise record fifth consecutive year and guarantee the Bruins a top-three pick.

...ON THE FLIP SIDE

Detroit's strong second half extends the Wings' streak of consecutive playoff appearances to 19 seasons.

FLAME OUT

Calgary's offense dries up at crunch time, causing the Flames to miss the playoffs and putting the Sutters' future there in doubt.

WHY WE WATCH

For pure viewing pleasure, nothing tops Round 1 of the playoffs, with double-headers every night and upsets left and right.



KEITH TKACHUK

Starting from

5

This week we count down the top five Senators not named Daniel since 1992

5 **FIVE**

He may not have the best numbers, but **Ray Emery** led the Senators to a Stanley Cup final in 2007.

4 **FOUR**

Jason Spezza ranks third on the Sens' all-time assist list, notching 304 helpers while scoring 171 goals.

3 **THREE**

Dany Heatley wasn't a Senator for long, but he scored 180 goals and averaged more than a point per game.

2 **TWO**

Despite the bittersweet relationship with Sens faithful, **Alexei Yashin** has the numbers, 491 points, that make him elite.



1 **ONE**

Wade Redden leads the Senators franchise with a plus-159 rating and was a fixture on the blueline for 11 seasons.



IS HOT HAND A BENEFIT?

The Penguins rode a late-season surge to a Stanley Cup championship last year, but so did the first-round-and-out Blues

AFTER A DUBIOUS start to the 2008-09 season, the St. Louis Blues went 13-5-2 in the final two months of the campaign to defy the odds and qualify for the NHL playoffs as the sixth seed in the Western Conference.

Their hot streak heading into the post-season didn't do the Blues much good, however, as the Canucks swept them in the first round.

The Pittsburgh Penguins, on the other hand, had a record during that same span (14-2-3) that was virtually identical to St. Louis'.

As most conscious hockey fans are aware, the Penguins performed a little bit better than the Blues did – they went on to claim the franchise's third Stanley Cup.

MASON/JEFF VANNICK/NHL VIA GETTY IMAGES

So if a team is playing well down the stretch, does that indicate they're about to embark on a deep playoff run and that the Blues' about-face was simply an aberration? Or is there something to be said for a franchise that backs into the post-season tournament and winds up surprising their opponents?

An examination of the March and April records of the league's champions after the 2004-05 lockout season doesn't do much to provide a clear answer.

The Carolina Hurricanes won it all in 2006, but they had a rather pedestrian 13-8-4 mark during the final couple months of the regular season schedule.

St. Louis proved in 2009 a hot stretch drive can be quickly doused.

The Anaheim Ducks were the next team to become Cup champs. Their 11-3-4 clip in March and April of 2007 was good for a .722 points percentage. Over an 82-game season, that translates to 118 points.

And the 2007-08 champion Detroit Red Wings were even better, with a scorchingly hot end to their regular season, posting a 12-3-1 record (.781 points percentage) before winning their fourth Cup in 11 seasons.

In addition, none of the teams that took on the Pens, Red Wings, Ducks and Canes in their respective Cup finals could be said to have stormed into the post-season, although their records weren't exactly middling.

The Edmonton Oilers went 11-8-5 in March and April of 2006 before ultimately falling to the Canes in seven games; the Ottawa Senators posted a 10-3-5 mark in the spring of 2007 before losing to Anaheim; the Penguins had an 11-5-1 record in their last 17 regular season games prior to their 2008 defeat at the hands of the Red Wings; and Detroit went 10-7-2 last spring before finding themselves on the wrong end of their Cup final rematch with Pittsburgh.

The lack of clear causality between late-season records and playoff performance should give hockey fans pause this year before they put stock in a team that's been hot this spring – such as the aforementioned Wings, who amassed a 14-3-2 mark between the beginning of March and early April; the upstart Phoenix Coyotes and their 13-4-1 record in that span; or the Eastern Conference-leading Washington Capitals and their recent 12-2-4 mark.

One or all of those teams might prove themselves able to build on that success.

But like the Blues last year, they also could be left wondering where the good times went.

- ADAM PROTEAU



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INJURIES NO EXCUSE

Man-games lost tell part of the story, but teams have reacted differently to adversity this season

'ON PAPER' MAY BE the trickiest phrase in pro sports. On paper, this year's edition of the Detroit Red Wings looked like a team that could challenge for the Presidents' Trophy – or at least a ninth-straight Central Division crown. On paper, the Edmonton Oilers looked like a halfway decent squad filled with intriguing components such as Ales Hemsky, Sheldon Souray and Nikolai Khabibulin.

In reality, those three Oilers had minimal positive impact on Edmonton's season, since the trio were all sidelined long-term by various ailments. Similarly, the Red Wings went without a raft of their players early on in the campaign, including vital cogs such as Johan Franzen, Valtteri Filppula and Niklas Kronwall. The result was an Oilers squad that finished dead-last in the NHL and a Red Wings team that was in tough to make the playoffs until the final weeks of the year.

Edmonton led the league in man-games lost to injury this year with a staggering 494 with a few games still to play. Detroit came in at third on the ignominious list with 307. Surprisingly, the second-place team in the equation, the Colorado

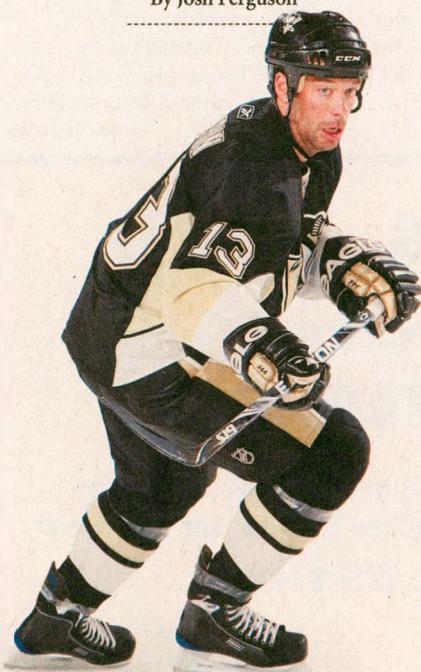


The hard-luck Oilers had to do without Ales Hemsky for 60 games.

Road Warrior

Pittsburgh's Bill Guerin offers some stories from the road

By Josh Ferguson



WHAT'S THE BEST ROAD CITY TO SPEND AN OFF-DAY IN?

New York City. One of my favorite spots is the Oak Room in the Plaza Hotel. It's just an old-school bar.

WHAT'S THE ONE THING YOU TAKE ON EVERY ROAD TRIP?

My laptop. It's a Mac and I chose that over a PC just because it looks cooler.

CAN YOU GIVE US A NIGHTMARE ROAD STORY?

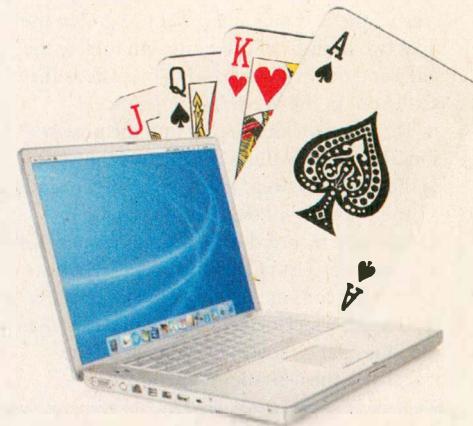
There's been a ton of travel stories, especially when I played in Edmonton; travel was tough. We flew commercial and it took us 19 hours to get to Denver one day. Through weather and fog and cancelled flights, it was tough.

WHAT'S THE WORST HOTEL YOU'VE STAYED IN AS AN NHL PLAYER?

It was a Ramada, I think it was in Miami. We stayed there and it was just awful. I mean, roach motel; it was terrible.

AS A FAMILY MAN, DOES IT GET HARD TO BE AWAY FROM HOME?

It does. You miss a lot of activities; you miss a lot of games. Everything falls on your wife, so it gets hard on everybody, not just from me being away. You know, kids miss their father.



WHAT'S THE WORST HECKLING YOU'VE EVER HEARD ON THE ROAD?

I saw a sign one night in Calgary and there were two pictures. One of a certain kind of dog and the other one of my teammates. And I'm not gonna tell you which teammate, but it said 'Separated at Birth' and it was bang-on. Ninety percent of the guys on our team were dying laughing; some were crying it was so funny...So accurate.

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THE GUYS TO PASS THE TIME?

Cards, although that's something I've had to give up. I used to play all the time on Long Island, but I was just brutal. They used to call me the 'human ATM machine.'

Avalanche (340), seemed practically unaffected by its afflictions, finishing well ahead of pre-season expectations by making the playoffs and even threatening to take the Northwest Division title from Vancouver before a tough stretch at the end of the regular season distanced them.

At the other end of the spectrum, the least affected teams this year weren't exactly world-beaters themselves. The Tampa Bay Lightning lost just 90 man-games to injury, but were light years away from a playoff spot. The New York Rangers, healthiest in the NHL with only 70 man-games conceded, didn't come close to any franchise win records, either.

Of course, injuries generally tend to have a negative impact, as the Carolina Hurricanes found out when they lost both Cam Ward and Eric Staal this year. The Canes' 288 man-games lost go a long way in explaining why Carolina fell short of the playoffs this season.

Washington, the Presidents' Trophy winner and a popular Stanley Cup pick, lost 210 man-games this season, but as coach Bruce Boudreau pointed out, most of them were at the beginning of the season. Having all his weapons at the ready lately has been a nice luxury for the coach.

"It helps with the continuity of the team," Boudreau said. "You can get your lines set and guys know when they're playing."

The average amount of man-games lost by teams this season was 212. The Western Conference, with its tougher travel schedule and rugged reputation, was more banged up than the East. Western teams lost an average of 230 man-games, Eastern squads 193.



Marian Gaborik's Rangers were the healthiest team, but results didn't always follow.

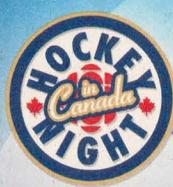
All numbers were gathered from the 30 NHL teams themselves and were accurate through April 3. Of the top 10 most injured franchises this season, five missed the playoffs, but perhaps more surprising is the fact a majority of the bottom 10 (or least injured) squads also finished out of contention for the post-season.

So for teams such as Toronto (175), Calgary (123) and St. Louis (121), the post-mortems for the season will be particularly dreary; those squads can't even blame injuries for causing them to fall short. On the other hand, all hail the Avs for making it work while shorthanded.

- RYAN KENNEDY

BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

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Nick Lidstrom's offense dipped, but his overall game is as solid as ever.

40 AND (STILL) FABULOUS

Reports of Nicklas Lidstrom's demise are greatly exaggerated. In fact, he may be playing the best hockey of his career

NICKLAS LIDSTROM LIKELY will not win his seventh Norris Trophy this season. The upside of that is at least it will prevent the geniuses who organize the NHL's awards ceremony from spelling his name "Lidstrom," the way they did two years ago.

The downside is those who have just finished voting for the award – a group of which this writer is a part – will have passed on the chance to recognize Lidstrom for quite possibly the most brilliant season of his Hall of Fame career.

In the last week of the NHL season, Lidstrom was on the verge of posting his lowest offensive totals since the lockout and the fourth-lowest production of his 18-season career. But those who have watched his game closely point out Lidstrom has been every bit as brilliant at both ends of the ice as he has been at any point in his tenure as an NHL player. To be sure, he did nothing this season to diminish his designation as the greatest European player of all-time.

And the fact he has done it at this stage of his career is remarkable. In fact, no defenseman and only one other skater – the incomparable Gordie Howe, who registered a career-high 103 points when he was Lidstrom's age – has played at the same high level as Lidstrom at this advanced an age. Lidstrom is already the oldest player to have won the Norris when he picked it up two years ago just after his 38th birthday and today he continues to display Norris form.

His first pass is as accurate as ever and his defensive zone coverage hasn't suffered one bit. His poise with the puck continues to be mind-boggling and his on-ice intelligence will never leave him. His pinpoint

shots still hit the mark almost every time, including when he misses the net on purpose knowing the puck is going to bounce right into a scoring area. And he's logging all kinds of ice time in every possible situation. With two games remaining in the Detroit Red Wings season, Lidstrom had not only played every game, but he had recorded 25 minutes or more of ice time on 43 occasions and had played fewer than 20 minutes in just two games.

And get this: Late in the season, there were 12 players who averaged more than 25 minutes of ice time per game this season. Taking Lidstrom out of the mix, the oldest of those players was 36-year-old Scott Niedermayer and the youngest was 22-year-old Jamie McBain. The average age of those 11 players was 29.8 years old, compared to Lidstrom, who

will blow out 40 candles at the end of April.

If anything, Lidstrom has been underappreciated outside of Detroit this season. He certainly isn't the sexy choice for the Norris Trophy since that designation already belongs to the likes of Mike Green, Shea Weber, Duncan Keith and Drew Doughty – average age, 24.1 years old. But while all those players have had periods of the season where they've faded, Lidstrom grew stronger and more dominant as the year progressed and saved his best play for when his team needed him the most.

When this year's regular season ended, the Red Wings had played their 291st game in less than three years. This season they were ravaged by major injuries to pivotal players and Lidstrom's steady play held the Wings

The Wings leaned on Lidstrom to help get them through rough stretches.

together through the difficult part of the season. Then he stepped up his play even more down the stretch as the Red Wings got healthy and played their way into a playoff spot for the 19th consecutive season.

And in doing so, Lidstrom has singlehandedly dispelled the possibility of retiring after this season. Of course, he could leave the NHL with

HIS POISE WITH THE PUCK CONTINUES TO BE MIND-BOGGLING

his level of play still high and avoid the inevitable decline that every great veteran faces, but does anyone see Lidstrom losing it in the next 12 months, or even the next two or three seasons?

Certainly the Red Wings want him back next season, likely at less than the \$7.45 million he earned this year. Whatever happens, it's a certainty Lidstrom will play out the rest of his career on a series of one-year deals, which makes him even more valuable to the Red Wings. The fact he would not insist on a multi-year pact won't leave the Red Wings with a large contract from which they have no way of extracting themselves if Lidstrom's game or his desire to play does dwindle.

And that is probably the biggest factor here. When it comes to a player of Lidstrom's age and experience, it's not the 82-game schedule that becomes a grind, it's the time that needs to be spent in the summer preparing for it. Will Lidstrom have the willingness to put in the two or three hours in the gym each day during the off-season that it takes to play at his level? Nobody knows that, probably not even Lidstrom just yet, but the betting is the Red Wings won't be faced with the prospect of life without him for at least another season.

And that's a good thing for the other guys who are hoping to get into the Hall of Fame in three years. Adding Lidstrom to a probable short list consisting of Scott Niedermayer, Teemu Selanne, Peter Forsberg, Mike Modano and Chris Chelios in 2013 would have at least two of those guys on the outside looking in.

Should Lidstrom do the unlikely and win the Norris this season, it certainly wouldn't be a parting gift for career achievements the way the Hart Trophy was in 1955 when Ted Kennedy was named MVP. Lidstrom will have earned this one, possibly with more merit than he ever has before. **THN**



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Lower seeds such as Colorado shouldn't be subjected to a play-in format.

FIRST ROUND PERFECT AS IS

Isles owner's idea to open up playoff field deserves credit for creativity, but 30 teams in the mix would cheapen the experience

IN THIS LINE OF WORK, I TAKE A LOT OF UMBRAGE.

In fact, after more than a decade of observing the NHL on behalf of THN, I currently lease a small industrial plaza 20 minutes northwest of Toronto to house more umbrage than you can imagine. Unless I can cut it up and sell it Snuggie-style to dopes with an excess of disposable income or convince Rihanna to write a song about it and pique the public's interest in purchasing it whole, umbrage and I always are going to be within "me-taking-more-of-it" proximity to one another.

However, I have to draw the criticism/skepticism line at and around the first round of the NHL playoffs.

Best intentions aside, everybody needs to keep their mitts off that thrilling springtime process. (That's as close as I get to embracing the naked fundamentalism and slavish devotion to dogma at the core of the hockey establishment.)

And that's why I very nearly wiggled out – and yes, took more umbrage – when I caught wind of Isles owner Charles Wang's recent proposal to extend the number of teams involved in the first round from the current standard of 16 to...all 30 of them.

Yes, you read that right – Wang concocted a plan that would allow each and every one of the league's franchises to have a late-season shot at playing past mid-April.

At the NHL's board of governors meeting in March, he suggested a new format that would feature a weeklong tournament after the end of each regular season and prior to the playoffs.

Wang's plan guaranteed the top seven post-season berths in the East and West to the squads that earned them over the course of an 82-game schedule. But the plan also would subject the remaining teams in each conference to a playdown series of games – one pitting Team No. 8 vs. Team No. 15, Team No. 9 vs. Team No. 14, etc. – that would continue in bracket format until only one of those bottom-feeding teams claimed the eighth and final playoff seed.

If Wang's concept were put into place this year, it would have provided consistent loss-amassers like the Edmonton Oilers and Toronto Maple Leafs as legitimate a shot at joining The Groups Of (Playoff-Bound) Seven as teams like the Colorado Avalanche, which had to scratch

and claw all season long just to make it to the eighth seed of their conference.

I'm sure that would make Leafs and Oilers fans ecstatic right now, but if the situational shoe were on the other foot – if Toronto or Edmonton finished eighth and were eliminated by the worst team in the league – there's little doubt that significant civil unrest would befall Southern Ontario and Northern Alberta.

To be honest, I could tolerate and even enjoy watching a play-in game between the eighth and ninth seeds in the East and West with the last two post-season seeds at stake.

At least that way, the affect would be limited only to four franchises; and playing two games before the playoffs

wouldn't require the league to add another week to what already is a ponderously long regular season.

But to open up the gates and let every team into the playoff mix is abjectly, unforgivably wrong – and not just because it would drastically dilute the impact and inherent drama of the regular season.

For example, don't you think the L.A. Kings' and Phoenix Coyotes' stirring pushes into the playoffs this year would fall flatter with their respective fan bases if each franchise hadn't missed the post-season for the grand majority of the past decade?

What I'm saying is, if hearts grow fonder after absence and if familiarity is a breeder of contempt, why would the NHL want to adopt a post-season system that virtually eliminates absence and makes its teams more contemptuous of the playoff experience?

You've got me. All I know is the NHL's first round is far and away the most thrilling of any pro sport and should be messed with only under the most peculiar of circumstances (i.e. late-season league contraction, spontaneous thousand dollar bill giveaway, or government decree).

If you want to make the playoffs, here's what you do: win a lot of games from October through April. It's that easy.

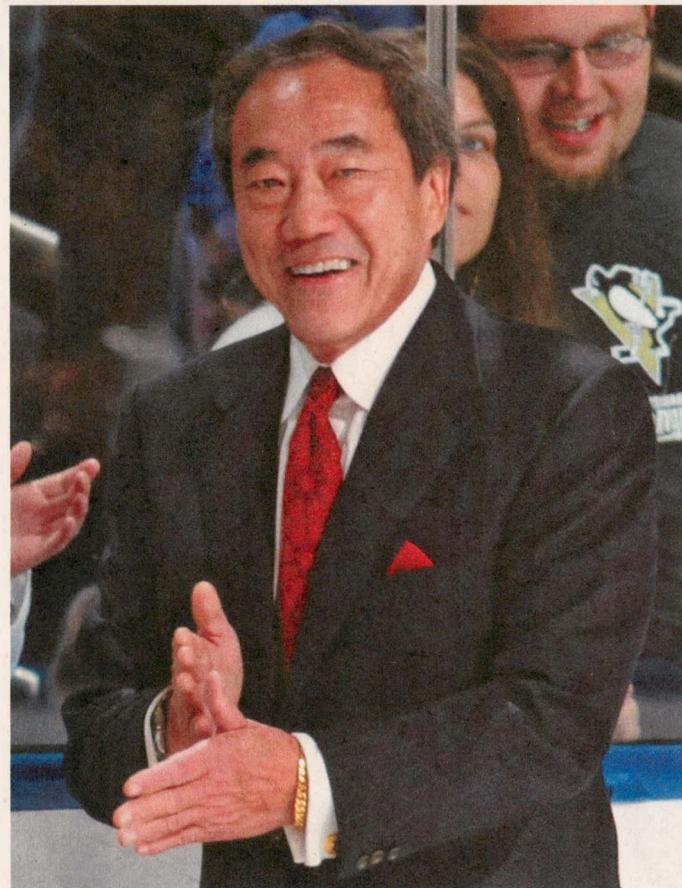
Besides, there is nothing quite like those first few nights of the first round, when all playoff teams have that new-car smell about them; when each involved fan base has reason for genuine optimism; when pre-series breakdowns and prognostications dissolve down the memory hole and the only moves that matter take place on the next on-ice shift.

The first round is when every playoff team's past – good or bad – is there for all its supporters to dissect, debate, promote or dismiss before reality and random puck bounces bash in the door and break up the party.

The first round sets the table for the intrigue of later series. It quickly establishes new heroes and goats to add to the pantheon of those already part of each franchise's history. It gives playoff poolies a good week of waking up every morning as if it were Christmas Day.

The fact of the matter is that no playoff format changes should reward perpetually mismanaged teams (you know, like Wang's Isles, or the nine-years-and-counting-without-a-playoff-appearance Florida Panthers), especially under the NHL's current standings system that values a regulation time win as much as a shootout victory.

I applaud Mr. Wang for bringing a heightened level of creativity and



Islanders boss Charles Wang is one of the more creative-minded NHL owners.

increased willingness to evolve the sport to the NHL's often crusty and bland ownership group.

However, there are other league issues that cry out for his attentions and ingenuities far more than a blueprint that's the equivalent of annual participant trophies for all the league's franchises.

In sum: Leave the first round alone. And you young kids – stay off my lawn! **THN**

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35

**JIMMY
HOWARD**

DETROIT RED WINGS

16

Number of recalls before
finally sticking in Detroit

THIS TIME LAST YEAR
AHL starter

2009-10 STATS

W-L-OTL 35-15-10

GAA 2.31 (7th)

SP .923 (5th)

SO 2 (T-24th)

UNDER PRESSURE

EVERY STOPPER IN THIS YEAR'S PLAYOFFS HAS SOMETHING TO PROVE, INCLUDING JIMMY HOWARD

BY RYAN DIXON

THE GENERAL PERCEPTION in the hockey world is metronomes don't have much on the Detroit Red Wings when it comes to consistency.

But there's a notable net exception to the Wings' straight-arrow ways, because for the third straight year – and fourth in five since the lockout ended – Detroit kicked off the most vital part of its calendar with a different person manning the most crucial spot on the ice.

Barring a dramatic turnaround, Jimmy Howard is the man the Wings will lean on in this year's spring dance. Last year it was Chris Osgood. In 2007 and '08, Dominik Hasek got the initial tap, while Manny Legace played all six of the first round games during Detroit's shocking dismissal at the hands of the Oilers in 2006.

How's that for a touch of havoc in the face of Hockeytown harmony?

While Howard's status as No. 1 may register as something of a surprise, the 26-year-old's long path to the NHL – including a four-year AHL apprenticeship – is completely consistent with the Wings' approach to cultivating prospects.

Howard said every season in the minors ended with some encouragement from GM Ken Holland and a re-assurance that essentially amounted to the hockey version of, "It's not you, it's me."

"He kept using the expression, 'I like my players overripe coming out of the minors,'" Howard recalled.

The just-right result is a season in which Howard, a native of Syracuse, N.Y., has established himself as a highly capable NHL stopper after entering the campaign with nine career big-league games on his resume spread over four years.

He didn't play much during the schedule's early stages, but when Osgood was slowed by the flu, Howard started four consecutive games, winning three of them, including a memorable victory over Roberto Luongo and the Vancouver Canucks.

"Playing Luongo early in the season, it was sort of like, 'Wow, I just beat one of the best in the game,'" Howard said. "That's where things started to click and I felt like I belonged out there."

He did. And out there is where he stayed. Osgood struggled to find his game after a stellar '09 playoff run, and didn't start back-to-back meaningful games the rest of the season.

Howard grabbed the No. 1 job by December and started 25 consecutive contests from late January

through the beginning of April, as Detroit finally found the winning form to which it has been accustomed for so long.

"It's been pretty surreal," Howard said of his breakout year. "Coming into the season, I wasn't really expecting to play 60 games."

Look around the league and you'll find Howard isn't the only goalie breaking new ground; nearly half of the 16 teams are going green in net for the post-season. In 2009, only two netminders had zero games of playoff experience.

So in one respect, many squads have finally achieved their goal of being more like Detroit, just not necessarily in the context they'd hoped. The value of experience is rarely underplayed this time of year, but as Howard pointed out, everybody battles a new set of butterflies somewhere along the line.

"Growing up, every single one of us have played in pressure situations and won big games," Howard said. "That's why we're here in the NHL (to begin with)."

"Experience does go a long way, but the only way you get it is by playing. So you know what, you've got to go out there and even though it's your first time you've got to perform."

It's not just the newbies who are under the gun. From goaltending legends such as Martin Brodeur, to gold medal winners such as Luongo, to potential and past league MVPs, every masked man has something to prove this spring. We detail why in the ensuing pages.



41

CRAIG ANDERSON

COLORADO AVALANCHE

Age 28
Height 6-2
Weight 180
Drafted 73rd, '01, Chi
Playoff Record N/A

PROVE IT A huge, pleasant surprise in the first half, Anderson flagged down the stretch, going 3-7 after St. Patrick's Day. Having never played more than 31 games in an NHL season – including none in the post-season – he has to prove he can handle the increased workload and intensity.

10

His 10 October wins tied the NHL record for that month

THIS TIME LAST YEAR

NHL backup (Fla)

2009-10 STATS

W-L-OTL 38-25-6
GAA 2.64 (T-21st)
SP .916 (12th)
SO 7 (T-3rd)



BRIAN BOUCHER

► PHILADELPHIA FLYERS

Age 33
Height 6-2
Weight 200
Drafted 22nd, '95, Phi
Playoff Record 11-8

PROVE IT Boucher already wasn't the answer in Philly once this season, going 3-9-1 when starter Ray Emery was hurt in late November. Waiver pickup Michael Leighton was solid, but was injured late in the season. Boucher's last playoff win came 10 years ago when Philly made the East final.

127

Number of total playoff minutes for Boucher since 2000

THIS TIME LAST YEAR

NHL backup (SJ)
2009-10 STATS
W-L-OTL 8-17-3
GAA 2.78 (31st)
SP .899 (42nd)
SO 1 (T-33rd)



MARTIN BRODEUR

► NEW JERSEY DEVILS

Age 37
Height 6-2
Weight 215
Drafted 20th, '90, NJ.
Playoff Record 98-78

PROVE IT Brodeur is one of the best ever to man his position, no doubt. But since his last Cup triumph in 2003, the face of the Devils holds a 15-22 post-season mark and his team has not advanced beyond the second round, three times falling in Round 1. Is there another big run left?

7

Brodeur's seven shutouts in 2003 is a playoff record

THIS TIME LAST YEAR

NHL starter (NJ)
2009-10 STATS
W-L-OTL 43-25-6
GAA 2.27 (5th)
SP .915 (T-13th)
SO 9 (1st)



ILYA BRYZGALOV

► PHOENIX COYOTES

Age 29
Height 6-3
Weight 199
Drafted 44th, '00, Ana
Playoff Record 9-5

PROVE IT When your team finishes in the bottom-third in goal-scoring, there isn't much room for error. Despite a stellar season, many people still expect Phoenix to go up in a puff of playoff smoke. Bryzgalov's play will be the biggest factor if the Coyotes are to prove they're no desert mirage.

1.68

Bryzgalov's career GAA in 16 post-season contests

THIS TIME LAST YEAR

NHL starter (Phx)
2009-10 STATS
W-L-OTL 42-20-5
GAA 2.30 (6th)
SP .920 (T-8th)
SO 8 (2nd)



BRIAN ELLIOTT

► OTTAWA SENATORS

Age 25
Height 6-2
Weight 199
Drafted 291st, '03, Ott
Playoff Record N/A

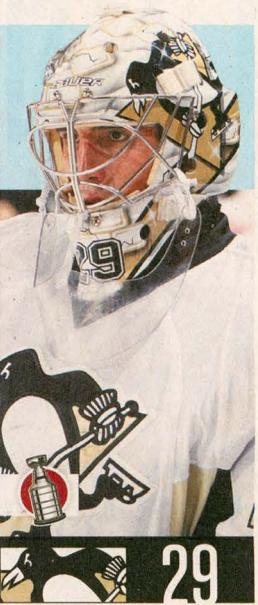
PROVE IT Elliott has come a long way since being the second-last player drafted in 2003, wresting the starting job from Pascal Leclaire. The Sens' points percentage in 26 games he started after Jan. 26 was a stellar .731. Still, he has no professional playoff experience, NHL or AHL.

9

Elliott set a franchise mark with nine consecutive wins this year

THIS TIME LAST YEAR

NHL starter (Ott)
2009-10 STATS
W-L-OTL 29-18-4
GAA 2.57 (20th)
SP .909 (T-24th)
SO 5 (T-7th)



MARC-ANDRE FLEURY

► PITTSBURGH PENGUINS

Age 25
Height 6-2
Weight 180
Drafted 1st, '03, Pitt
Playoff Record 31-18

PROVE IT Prove it again, that is. Fleury's diving save on Nicklas Lidstrom to secure Pittsburgh's win in the dying seconds of Game 7 was one of hockey's all-time moments. His save percentage this year was his worst since his sophomore season, so he needs to amp things up a bit.

.960

Fleury's SP in Games 6 and 7 of last year's Cup final

**41****JAROSLAV HALAK**

► MONTREAL CANADIENS

Age 24
Height 5-11
Weight 182
Drafted 271st, '03, Mtl
Playoff Record 0-1

PROVE IT There's a long history of hot playoff goalies in Montreal and Halak, who has 97 minutes of post-season experience to his credit, will have to be the next one for the Habs to go anywhere. He's not big, but beating him down low is a tough task and he has proven to be reliable.

32.2

No playoff team allows more shots per game than the Habs

THIS TIME LAST YEAR

NHL backup (Mtl)

2009-10 STATS

W-L-OTL 26-13-4

GAA 2.36 (8th)

SP .926 (3rd)

SO 5 (T-7th)

**30****HENRIK LUNDQVIST**

► NEW YORK RANGERS

Age 28
Height 6-1
Weight 195
Drafted 205th, '00, NYR
Playoff Record 14-16

PROVE IT The Rangers' playoff hopes were hanging by a thread as the season drew to a close. Few teams rely on their goalie the way the Blueshirts do and Lundqvist would have to be out of this world for New York to steal a series. He almost did it last year, before ultimately losing Game 7 to the Capitals.

2

Lundqvist has two series wins in four trips to the playoffs

THIS TIME LAST YEAR

NHL starter (NYR)

2009-10 STATS

W-L-OTL 34-27-9

GAA 2.40 (9th)

SP .920 (T-8th)

SO 4 (T-12th)

**1****ROBERTO LUONGO**

► VANCOUVER CANUCKS

Age 31
Height 6-3
Weight 205
Drafted 4th, '97, NYI
Playoff Record 11-11

PROVE IT Don't let the glare from that gold medal fool you; Luongo still has some proving to do. He passed a threshold by finally making the playoffs in 2008, posting a 1.77 GAA. Now, after unraveling in his final game against Chicago in the second round of 2009, the heat is back on.

.912

Luongo's SP hasn't been this low since he was an Islander

THIS TIME LAST YEAR

NHL starter (Van)

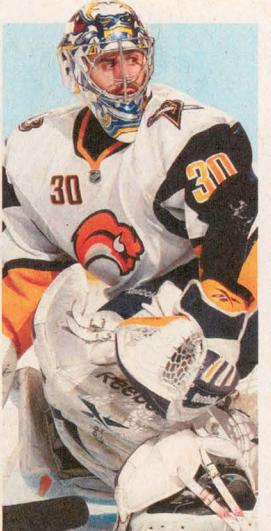
2009-10 STATS

W-L-OTL 39-22-4

GAA 2.56 (18th)

SP .912 (T-20th)

SO 4 (T-12th)

**30****RYAN MILLER**

► BUFFALO SABRES

Age 29
Height 6-2
Weight 170
Drafted 138th, '99, Buf
Playoff Record 20-14

PROVE IT His first two trips to the playoffs resulted in conference final showings for Buffalo. Now, after a two-year absence, he's back and a bigger part of the Sabres' success than ever. The name of the game in Buffalo will continue to be grinding out a couple goals and hoping Miller can do the rest.

16

The number of goalies selected before Miller in 1999

THIS TIME LAST YEAR

NHL starter (Buf)

2009-10 STATS

W-L-OTL 40-18-8

GAA 2.23 (T-2nd)

SP .928 (2nd)

SO 5 (T-7th)

**20****EVGENI NABOKOV**

► SAN JOSE SHARKS

Age 34
Height 6-0
Weight 205
Drafted 219th, '94, SJ
Playoff Record 32-31

PROVE IT In keeping with San Jose's universal theme, Nabokov has to be better in the playoffs. He's a prime example of the kind of goalie who doesn't have to be brilliant, he just has to avoid letting in the back-breakers. Nabokov can become a UFA July 1, so this might be his last shot with San Jose.

2,107

Total shots face by Nabokov this year, second in the NHL

**31****ANTTI NIEMI**

CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS

Age **26**
Height **6-1**
Weight **200**
FA Signing **Chi, 2008**
Playoff Record **N/A**

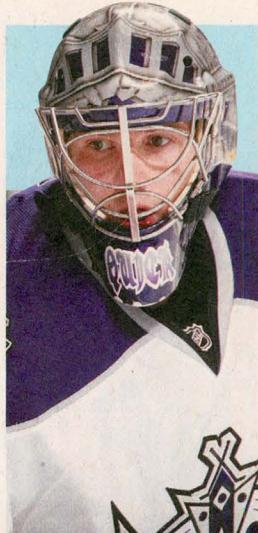
PROVE IT No contender comes with a bigger masked asterisk than the Hawks. For the second year running, highly paid Cristobal Huet is the second-best option entering the playoffs, leaving the door open for Niemi. The Finn went back and forth with Huet all year, but got hot last. Antti up.

3

Niemi had three games on his NHL resume prior to this year

THIS TIME LAST YEAR

AHL goalie

2009-10 STATSW-L-OTL **25-7-3**GAA **2.23** (T-2nd)SP **.913** (T-16th)SO **7** (T-3rd)**32****JONATHAN QUICK**

LOS ANGELES KINGS

Age **24**
Height **6-1**
Weight **216**
Drafted **72nd, '05, LA**
Playoff Record **N/A**

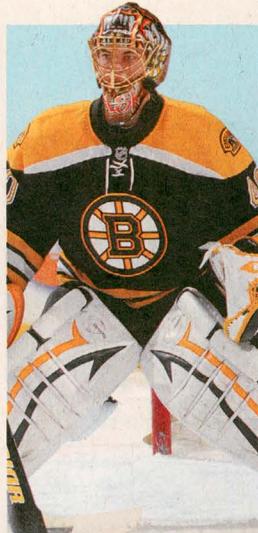
PROVE IT Quick set a single-season Kings record for wins, which helped L.A. return to the post-season for the first time since 2002. Quick has progressed sharply the past three years, going from ECHLer, to AHLer, to bona fide NHL starter this campaign. Guess what the next big challenge is?

68

Quick started 68 of the Kings' first 75 games

THIS TIME LAST YEAR

NHL starter (LA)

2009-10 STATSW-L-OTL **39-24-5**GAA **2.53** (13th)SP **.907** (T-29th)SO **4** (T-12th)**40****TUUKKA RASK**

BOSTON BRUINS

Age **23**
Height **6-2**
Weight **169**
Drafted **21st, '05, Tor**
Playoff Record **N/A**

PROVE IT Bumping the reigning Vezina winner is no easy task, but that's what Rask did when he supplanted Tim Thomas. In a year where little went right for Boston, Rask was a season-saving surprise. The B's offense is anemic, so the young Finn carries a huge burden into his first playoff run.

19

Started 19 of 26 down the stretch to become the No. 1

THIS TIME LAST YEAR

AHL starter

2009-10 STATSW-L-OTL **21-12-5**GAA **1.97** (1st)SP **.931** (1st)SO **5** (T-7th)**35****PEKKA RINNE**

NASHVILLE PREDATORS

Age **27**
Height **6-5**
Weight **206**
Drafted **258th, '04, Nsh**
Playoff Record **N/A**

PROVE IT Nashville has never won a playoff series, so Rinne is working against history. He went back and forth with Dan Ellis in the first half as the team's go-to, but the Preds rode Rinne down the stretch. Defense and goaltending are Nashville's bread and butter, so the pressure is on.

4

Rinne's four shutouts in March propelled the Preds forward

THIS TIME LAST YEAR

NHL starter (Nsh)

2009-10 STATSW-L-OTL **31-16-5**GAA **2.57** (T-19th)SP **.910** (T-22nd)SO **7** (T-3rd)**60****JOSE THEODORE**

WASHINGTON CAPITALS

Age **33**
Height **5-11**
Weight **182**
Drafted **44th, '94, Mtl**
Playoff Record **19-27**

PROVE IT He's the only active goalie who holds a Hart Trophy and he's won series on his own in the past, but Theodore can't shake the questions. He was removed as the starter after one playoff game last year. Theo's task this spring is eliminating groaners and a timely save here and there.

18-0-2

Theodore's record from Jan. 13 through April 5

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STEEELY DAN

IF YOU WANT TO SEE DANIEL ALFREDSSON'S BAD SIDE, BEAT HIM AT SOMETHING. OTHER THAN THAT, HE'S AS HONEST A SENATOR AS YOU'LL EVER FIND.

BY KEN CAMPBELL

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRE RINGUETTE
/NHLI VIA GETTY IMAGES





ALFREDSSON HAS NEVER BEEN MORE LOVED, HIS STATUS NEVER MORE ICONIC THAN IT IS IN HIS 14TH NHL SEASON



IT'S DEBATABLE WHICH WAS MORE AMUSING, THE PRACTICAL JOKE OR WHAT FOLLOWED IT. ON THE MORNING OF APRIL 1, DANIEL ALFREDSSON ANNOUNCED ON THE LOCAL CBC RADIO STATION HIS INTENTION TO RUN FOR MAYOR OF OTTAWA WITH THE SLOGAN 'NO. 11 IN 2011'.

He certainly sounded convincing enough. He said he was inspired to run for mayor after reading the biography of former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, who decided to step down in 1984 after a very famous long walk in the snow. Alfredsson said he was skating one day on the Rideau Canal when his political epiphany occurred.

"I can do that," Alfredsson said. "One day my face won't be plastered all over this town as a hockey captain, so I thought, 'Why not become captain of the city?' Mayor Alfredsson...it definitely has a nice ring to it."

The horse manure detector should be operating on overdrive right about now. If not, wait until you hear about his platform.

Eleven percent tax increase; 11 percent wage cut for city employees and 11 new arenas to be built in the city. As well, Alfredsson said he would establish a policy of trilingualism, forcing every city employee to learn Swedish, along with English and French. Defending his tax increase, he said he recently co-authored

a study with a university professor for some policy wonk magazine that proves, "higher taxes encourage teamwork among citizens."

When asked how he would juggle his hockey career with the full-time job of running a major city, he pointed out that Sean Avery did an internship with *Vogue* magazine recently. He also said he could monitor meetings from his hotel room on the road and, "from the bench between shifts. One shift is only 45 seconds long. And I could manage a few ticket giveaways for my most loyal supporters."

After practice that day, Alfredsson and his brother, Henric, met up at a Starbucks to celebrate Henric's 31st birthday. Apparently, there wasn't enough baloney in Alfredsson's proclamation to tip the baristas off that the bid for mayor was an April Fool's Day gag.

As they were waiting for their order, one of the baristas recognized Alfredsson and told the other that Alfredsson was running for mayor. The other barista asked him, "What are you doing now before becoming mayor?"

"I was just laughing my head off," Henric recalled.

Actually the notion of Alfredsson running for mayor of Ottawa and winning isn't that much of a stretch these days. As is the case in a lot of major cities, municipal politics in Canada's capital has its share of follies. In fact, the sitting mayor was acquitted last summer on two counts of influence peddling.

At the same time, Alfredsson has never been more loved, his status never more iconic than it is in his 14th NHL season. He is easily the greatest player in the modern history of the franchise and is a cinch to have his No. 11 hung from the rafters of Scotiabank Place shortly after he retires. On April 10, the night of the Senators' last game of the regular season, the team was scheduled to honor Alfredsson for playing his 1,000th NHL game and that day was declared Daniel Alfredsson Day in Ottawa by a city proclamation. On the day he played his 1,000th game, one of the local newspapers dubbed itself the Ottawa *Alfred-Sun* and on its website posed the following question for a reader poll:

WHO IS THE GREATER ATHLETE?

- DANIEL ALFREDSSON
- TIGER WOODS



Ottawa has become home for Daniel Alfredsson and his family – perhaps permanently.

There's little doubt Alfredsson has it over on Woods, at least in the character department. The 37-year-old captain doesn't appear to have too many serious skeletons in his closet, unless of course you count that he's a big suck when it comes to losing. (Cynical Toronto Maple Leafs fans counter that Alfredsson should be accustomed to losing by now.)

"You can be playing cards with him and if he loses, he just turns around and walks away from it because he gets so mad," said Alfredsson's father, Hasse. "Every time he loses, it's so fun for me because I like it. You reach a point where you can see he is losing his temper and everyone is laughing."

Henric, who played junior hockey for the

An advertisement for the MeiGray Vintage Game-Worn Jersey Auction. It features a red Chicago Blackhawks jersey with the number 4 and the name 'Bobby Orr' on the back. The MeiGray logo is prominently displayed in the center, with the text 'MeiGray Vintage Game Worn Jerseys'. Below the jersey, a dark banner contains the text 'MeiGray Vintage Game-Worn Jersey Auction' and '#4 Bobby Orr 1976-77 Chicago Blackhawks'. The background is a light gradient.

BID NOW at auction.nhl.com

Auction ends Thursday, April 29

Ottawa 67's and has lived and worked in the city for the past 12 years, often plays golf with his older brother and sees a sometimes ugly competitive streak in Daniel.

"If Daniel and I are playing golf head-to-head or in match play, there have been times where I have said to myself, 'I'm going to make a bogey on this hole because I don't want to see him get too pissed off.' I'm 100 percent honest," Henric said. "Sometimes you think, 'Come on, Daniel. Loosen up a bit.' But he's like a drug addict. If you know someone who's a drug addict, you tell them they have to quit, but if he's not ready to quit, he's not going to do it. It's the same with Daniel. I don't think he's going to soften up until he retires."

If all goes according to plan, that will be after the 2012-13 season when his current contract with the Senators runs out. He'll be 40 years old by that time and will have earned \$62.1 million playing hockey. Not a bad haul for the 133rd pick of the 1994 draft, who thought he would play a couple of years in North America before returning home.

But now Ottawa is home, so much so that Alfredsson is almost certain he and his wife, Bibi, will retire and settle in Ottawa after his career ends, something that is an extremely rare departure for a Swedish player.

All three of his sons – Hugo, Loui and Fenix – were born in Ottawa and yearn to return there by the end of the trip when the family goes to Gothenburg every summer. In fact, it wouldn't bother Alfredsson one bit if one of his sons ended up playing for Canada in international competition one day.

"I hope they're proud of their Swedish heritage," he said, "but they're Canadian."

Alfredsson is not exactly at the point where he ends his sentences with "eh," although it does creep in sometimes. He acknowledges that most of his thinking is done in English, not Swedish anymore. He feels a connection to Canada that he probably wouldn't have had he played his career in the United States, in that Canada and Sweden are very similar in their social democratic attitudes and have a common theory on providing a similar standard of living regardless of education and income.

"I struggle sometimes now doing interviews about hockey in Swedish," Alfredsson said. "I have a tough time articulating myself sometimes in Swedish because I've been doing everything in English for the past 15 years. It becomes ingrained in you."

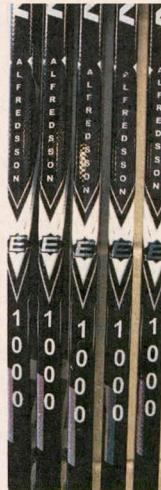
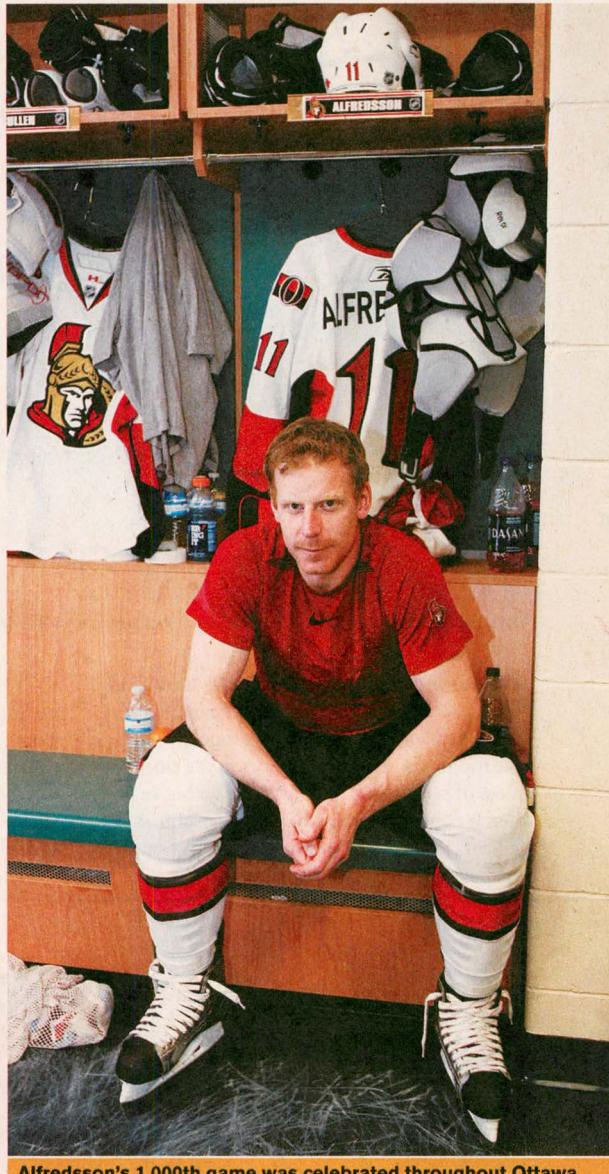
Yes, the times have been very good for Daniel Alfredsson in Ottawa and the Sens have had some tremendous success with Al-

Alfredsson's 1,000th game was celebrated throughout Ottawa.

fredsson as their leader. Even now, he remains one of the better two-way players in the game and despite losing linemate and triggerman Dany Heatley prior to the season, Alfredsson surpassed the 50-assist mark this season for the fifth time in his career. He led the Senators in scoring for the second straight year and for the fourth time in his career.

But it hasn't all been the big love-in between Alfredsson and Ottawa. He has been a major cog in Senators teams that have been major playoff disappointments, particularly in the form of some classic choke jobs against the Leafs. And there were calls for him to be run out of town in 2006 when, despite winning the Eastern Conference regular season crown, the Senators were defeated in five games by the Buffalo Sabres in the second round of the playoffs.

To make matters worse, Jason Pominville stepped around Alfredsson to score short-handed in overtime to end the series.



But Alfredsson came back the next year and led all players in the playoffs with 14 goals and 22 points as the Senators advanced to the Stanley Cup final. In the East final, the Senators turned the tables on the Sabres and beat them in five games. Alfredsson provided the overtime winner to decide the series.

"He's an example for guys like me," said Daniel Briere of the Philadelphia Flyers. "I was with Buffalo in that playoff series and I don't think it was justified that a lot of people got on his case. I was so impressed the next year when he came back and the year he had in the playoffs. I just love his character and the way he plays the game. I really look up to him."

Since then, his place as an icon in Ottawa has been secure. The Senators would not dream of ever trading him and must be ruined the day he will no longer be able to perform for them. For his part, Alfredsson is wholly devoted to the Senators and wouldn't consider ever playing anywhere else.

To fully understand Daniel Alfredsson, you have to trace his lineage about 4,000 miles east to Gothenburg, the birthplace of Volvo cars and the second-largest city in Sweden.

It's also where Hasse and Margareta Alfredsson raised their three children in their modest home. A carpenter by trade, Hasse played semi-professional soccer and hockey and was a junior teammate of future NHLer Juha Widing. Margareta was a hairdresser until she was struck about 30 years ago by multiple sclerosis, an incurable disease that attacks the brain and spinal cord. She has been confined to a wheelchair for the past 15 years, but what the disease has robbed from her body, it has not been able to take from her spirit. Daniel derives all kinds of inspiration from his mother, who stubbornly continues to perform beyond what should be her physical capabilities.

Margareta can eat on her own, but cannot bathe herself or go to the bathroom without

assistance. Before being confined to a wheelchair, she fell several times, breaking her arm on one occasion and her leg on another.

Both Daniel and Hasse said the Alfredsson children were initially ashamed of their mother because she couldn't walk properly and her body was failing her for reasons they couldn't pinpoint at first.

"Sometimes you would wonder, 'Why is my mom not normal?'" Alfredsson said. "Then you look back at it and they weren't that open with it either. She wanted to be like anybody else and she tried to compensate. She wouldn't say, 'I have MS and I can't do this.' She tried to do everything. There is a lot of stigma attached to things like that."

Alfredsson knows all about stigma. His younger sister, Cecilia, was diagnosed 10 years ago with general anxiety disorder, which has at times crippled her emotionally. She is doing much better now and has two children, but her situation prompted Alfredsson to become involved in a high-profile campaign with an Ottawa hospital aimed at easing the stereotypes associated with mental illness.

"I haven't been able to give her the support a brother should because I've been on another continent," Alfredsson said wistfully.

With respect to his wife, Hasse Alfredsson can see why she would be so instrumental to her son's character.

"If you get injured, you don't complain because you know if you take it easy, you'll get better again," Hasse said. "But my wife, she's always getting worse and worse."

If Alfredsson inherited his stubbornness from his mother, his father passed down the competitive gene to his oldest son. In today's everybody-gets-a-trophy culture surrounding children, most parents think allowing their kids to win in games is a good way to boost their sense of self-esteem.

Not Hasse. Even when his children were young, he would never, ever allow them to win at anything, so they never experienced the sense of victory against their father until they had truly earned it. It often resulted in Daniel coming home with a broken tennis racquet after playing against his father. He would say that he dropped it, expecting his father to be gullible enough to believe it.

"As long as I could beat him, I did it," Hasse said. "He had to learn to fight for everything. If he wanted to win, and sometimes he could do it, it was on his own terms. And because of that, he was always so determined. He could break you. Even if he was tired, he never showed anything in his face that he was tired."

In fact, Hasse remembered the first time Daniel ever beat him at something. Daniel was 15 years old and the two would run through the woods to a track near their home. One day, Daniel ran two laps around the track and his father ran one-and-a-half.

"It was then that I realized," Hasse recalled, "I didn't have anything to give him anymore."

Just so you know, Alfredsson isn't perfect.



Alfredsson's focus and intensity are always on display when he hits the ice.

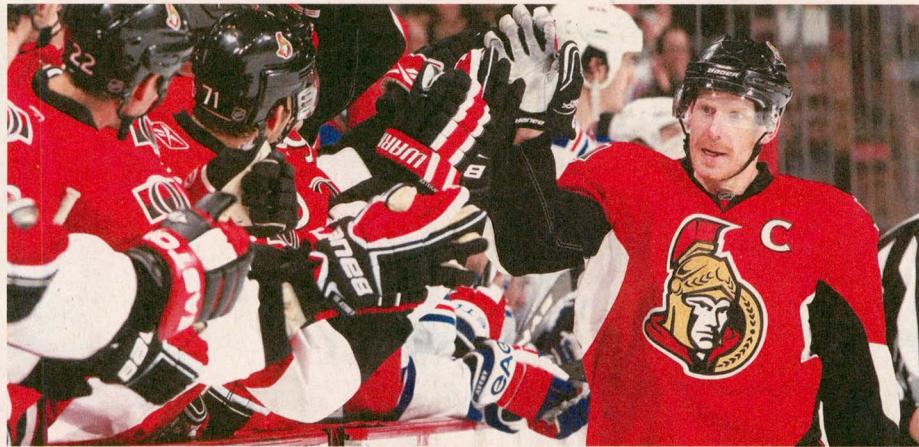
He is reviled in Toronto and is even booed in his own building when the Maple Leafs are the visitors. Much of that has to do with his hit from behind on Darcy Tucker in the 2002 playoffs, which came just seconds before he scored the winning goal. During the 2007 Stanley Cup final, Alfredsson deliberately drilled the puck at Anaheim defenseman Scott Niedermayer in the dying seconds of a period.

"It didn't bother us because right there, we knew we had them where we wanted them," said Flyers defenseman Chris Pronger, who was playing for Anaheim at the time. "He was frustrated."

Much of the vitriol for Alfredsson stems from one of the most innocuous events of his career. Just prior to the all-star break in 2004, Alfredsson infuriated Leaf fans by motioning to throw a broken stick in the crowd during a game at the Air Canada Centre in which Leafs captain Mats Sundin was suspended for doing that very thing in the previous game.

The fans were livid with Alfredsson and the Leafs players were enraged after the game, with the exception of Sundin. When Henric showed up with his brother at the all-star festivities in Minnesota a few days later, one of the first things Alfredsson had to do was go to a room and sign memorabilia. It was there that he had a chance meeting with Sundin.

"Mats got there pretty much the same time we did and the first thing Mats did was give



When he was a kid, Alfredsson only got high-fives from his dad if he earned them.

him this great big smile and laughed his head off and gave Daniel a big high-five," Henric said. "Mats was saying, 'Oh my God, that was the funniest thing ever.' I remember reading in the newspapers that this was the biggest insult ever. They wrote in (Swedish newspaper) *Aftonbladet* that Daniel and Mats Sundin hate each other. They're supposed to be teammates with Team Sweden and they hate each other. Some people's perspectives are completely different than reality."

For the most part, though, that's not really the case with Daniel Alfredsson. There are no airs about him and what you see is pretty

much what you get. He's as comfortable with heads of state as he is with his engineer and pharmaceutical salesman buddies back in Gothenburg. His home in suburban Ottawa is modest, not nearly as opulent as the one owned by Senators grunt Shean Donovan in the same neighborhood. He's private, but not to the point of where he's obsessed. As his father said, he doesn't have his nose in the air.

"You always treat people with respect," Alfredsson said, "and you don't take anything for granted."

Sounds as though he'd make a great mayor someday. **THN**

ANDRE RINGUETTE/NHLI VIA GETTY IMAGES

The Hockey News

PICK TO WIN

WEEKLY WINNERS

**WEEK 22 - BILL KIRSCHNER 25pts
OF PORT ALBERNI, BC**

**WEEK 23 - DEREK SCHULTZ 30pts
OF ORLEANS, ON**



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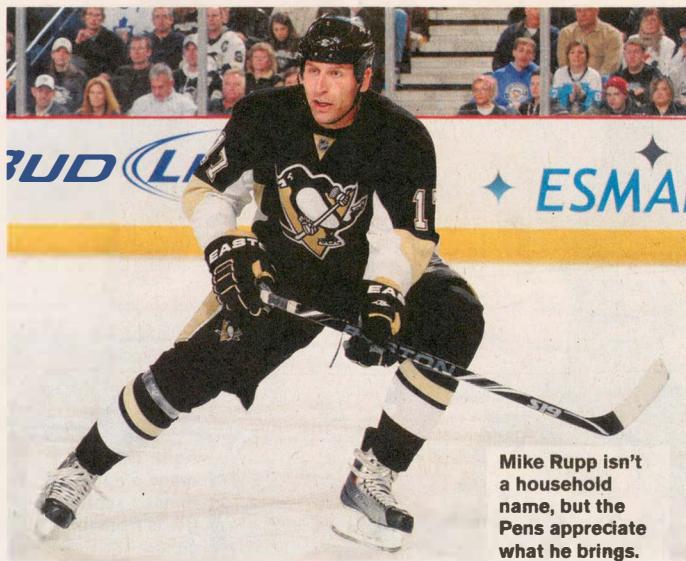
Pittsburgh

WHEN YOUR forward corps is anchored by marquee names such as Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin, you know offense won't be a problem.

But having the muscle to back up those stars is also important, which is why the Penguins looked to former New Jersey Devils center Mike Rupp to fill out their lineup this season.

"Having played against Mike Rupp in the same division, we knew he was a big guy and a physical guy," said Pittsburgh coach Dan Bylsma. "He's a presence on the ice and adds a growl. Our scouts saw it and a guy like Sidney Crosby saw it."

Rupp, who did two tours of duty in New Jersey with stops



Mike Rupp isn't a household name, but the Pens appreciate what he brings.

in Phoenix and Columbus in between, is having a career year with the Pens. His 13 goals through 78 games were more than double his previous best in a season, while his 10 fights have been much appreciated by his teammates. Not bad for a 30-year-old who

trades off ice time with a bevy of specialists and grinders on the Penguins' fourth line.

"He has accepted a role and taken a lot of pride in that role," said assistant coach Tony Granato. "He shows up at the rink every day, very appreciative of the opportunity."



New Jersey

HIS NHL career was in limbo and Dean McAmmond wasn't sure what his immediate future held as none of the 30 GMs seemed interested in the 36-year-old center.

So, as the NHL season was about to begin, he went elk hunting in northern Alberta.

"I was with my brother," McAmmond recalled. "We had gone back into town and the call came on my cell phone."

Devils GM Lou Lamoriello wanted to know if he'd been skating. The answer was no, but that it wouldn't take long.

A stint in the minors and a severe sinus infection later, McAmmond found a spot on the Devil's fourth line and has a shot at his first Stanley Cup.

FYI: He didn't get any elk.

- RICH CHERE



NY Islanders

A NINTH round pick who had never scored more than 28 goals in college or the minors, Matt Moulson was set to reach that total in his first stab at a full NHL season. How? In part from his willingness to stand in front of the net.

"If you add up all his goals in distance, they probably don't reach from one goal line to the other" said his coach, Scott Gordon. "That's not a knock, that's a compliment."

Moulson credits his work ethic, too.

"I've never been complacent" he said. "Someone asked me, 'If someone told you before the season you'd get 20 goals, wouldn't you have taken that?' I said no. I've always expected more and I always want more."

- PETER BOTTE



NY Rangers

WITH A lucrative long-term contract and underwhelming numbers, Wade Redden is the most vilified of the Rangers by the denizens of Madison Square Garden. But about 300 metropolitan-area kids and their relatives beg to differ.

Thanks to "Wade's World," a foundation established in 1997 by the then-Sens defenseman to host critically-ill children in an Ottawa suite, Redden now provides a dozen seats a game for kids in hospitals and Make-A-Wish foundations.

Redden grew up going to Oilers games thanks to a family friend in the organization.

"I'd go into the dressing room and it was such a thrill," he said. "I want these kids to have a chance to do that."

- STEVE ZIPAY

That opportunity, of course, is a shot at another Stanley Cup. Rupp has one ring from his rookie season in New Jersey (2002-03), but wants another title.

"As the years have passed, I've learned to respect what it takes to get there," Rupp said. "Since then, everything else has fallen short. You get that hunger to get back there."

The fact Rupp can use his body to rough up opponents as well as create offensive chances has been a boon to the Pens and the perfect location for the 6-foot-5, 230-pound Cleveland, Ohio, native to ply his trade, which is why he signed a two-year contract in the summer.

"It was a decision to go to a contending team that was built to go deep in the playoffs," Rupp said. "I love Pittsburgh. I haven't seen more passionate fans in the States in any other city."

- RYAN KENNEDY



Philadelphia

ON THE ICE, Riley Cote is a no-holds-barred enforcer. But after the final horn, no one is a more caring person.

Cote began a quest to help fight multiple sclerosis because of a personal connection to the affliction.

The veteran Flyer started the 'Cote Carnival,' a fund-raiser (autographs, photos, auctions, etc.), because he saw first-hand the effects of multiple sclerosis after his older sister, Jaime, was diagnosed with the disease.

"The Cote Carnival shows my commitment to raising awareness for multiple sclerosis," Cote said. "I am going to do what I can to reach out and make people aware of the disease."

- WAYNE FISH





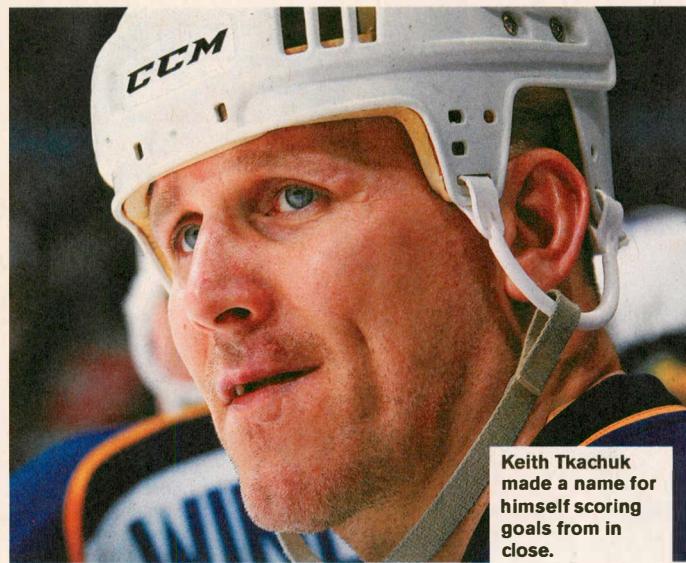
St. Louis

AS HE prepped to pick his team for the Vancouver Winter Olympics, Team USA GM Brian Burke paused to tip his hat toward some of the legends of USA Hockey – Chris Chelios, Bill Guerin, Mike Modano, Jeremy Roenick and Keith Tkachuk – players, who, as it turned out, weren't part of the 2010 squad.

"They've been some of the finest players to ever pull on the red, white and blue jersey," Burke said. "They've given their country everything they've got."

They are also a thinning herd.

After 18 NHL seasons, St. Louis Blues forward Tkachuk, 38, announced his retire-



Keith Tkachuk made a name for himself scoring goals from in close.

ment April 7, joining Roenick on the sidelines. Chelios, 48, is expected to follow suit at season's end.

"It's always tough after you've played that long, but I know it's the right decision," Tkachuk told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. "I'm honored

that I was able to play that long, and the thing I'm most proud of, I get to retire as a St. Louis Blue. That means the world to me."

For someone who played his whole career in the dirty areas of the rink – Tkachuk estimated he scored the vast majority



Chicago

HAWKS D-MAN Brent Sopel doesn't like a lot of attention.

On a team stacked with stars, Sopel flies under the radar as the Blackhawks' fifth defenseman and a key part of the penalty kill.

But Sopel is also involved in a special program that doesn't get a lot of attention.

Over Christmas, Sopel and his wife, Kelly, hosted 20 families with a loved one who couldn't be home for the holidays due to military service.

Working with 'Operation Homefront,' Sopel and other Hawks, including Jonathan Toews, Duncan Keith and Colin Fraser, adopted military families in need and provided them with food and gifts during the holiday season.

- TIM SASSONE



Columbus

CLAUDE NOEL was good cop to Ken Hitchcock's bad cop. He was the Blue Jackets' optimistic, goofy assistant, who called everybody 'Shooter' and fetched Gatorade after losing practice bets with players.

So when Noel became interim coach after Hitchcock was fired in February, there were a lot of raised eyebrows around the Jackets dressing room.

Noel, a former minor league coach in the ECHL, IHL and AHL, made sweeping changes that saw the young players thrive and directed the team to a 10-6-4 record in his first 20 games.

It's unclear if Noel will keep the job. But after waiting a long time for his NHL shot, he sure made a statement.

- AARON PORTZLINE



Detroit

HE LOST his right arm and shoulder in the service shortly after the D-Day during WWII, but as Budd Lynch puts it, "As long as the voice holds up, I guess you can hang around."

Lynch, 92, has spent 61 years with the Red Wings organization. He was hired by Jack Adams in 1949 to do radio play-by-play and planned on retiring in 1975, but was convinced to stay on as the team's director of publicity. He again attempted to retire in 1982, but was asked to stay as the PA announcer.

Inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1985 as a media honoree and winner of the Foster Hewitt Memorial Award, Lynch will continue to man the mike for the foreseeable future.

- ANSAR KHAN

of his 538 NHL regular-season goals from the slot – the 2009-10 campaign proved to be a difficult one.

Caught in the mouth by a T.J. Oshie shot during a Jan. 2 game against Chicago, he lost four front teeth and underwent extensive dental surgery to repair the damage.

Amazingly, until that fateful night, he'd survived 17-plus NHL campaigns without sacrificing a single molar.

"It's been a tough year with my health, so it's definitely the right decision to step away after this season," Tkachuk said.

In the final year of his contract, as the season progressed, Tkachuk's ice time dwindled and he surrendered his alternate captain's 'A' to David Backes.

"You get older and you're just not the same way you used to be," Tkachuk said. "It gets a lot harder. Guys are bigger, faster, stronger."

- BOB DUFF



Nashville

WHEN PRED GM David Poile sought advice when hiring the franchise's first coach, the phrase he heard most often was "NHL experience."

Poile picked Barry Trotz – a man with none.

A dozen years later, Trotz continues to hit milestones. In early April, he coached his 900th game with one team, joining a club with Al Arbour, Billy Reay, Lindy Ruff, Jack Adams and Toe Blake. He also tied Scotty Bowman for wins with a single team at 410.

Trotz works hard both on and off the ice. In mid-March, Trotz, whose youngest son Nolan has Down Syndrome, helped raise more than \$30,000 for people with intellectual disabilities.

- JOHN GLENNON





Ottawa

MATT CARKNER'S story has gone unnoticed across the NHL, but it hasn't in Ottawa or the Senators dressing room.

As the Sens prepared for a return to the Stanley Cup playoffs after missing the post-season for the first time since 1996 last spring, the 29-year-old Carkner was looking forward to his first taste of the NHL's second season.

It has been a long road to becoming an NHL regular. Selected in the second round (58th overall) by the San Jose Sharks in the 1999 draft, the native of nearby Winchester, Ont., bounced around the minor leagues, but not once did Carkner give up on his NHL dream.



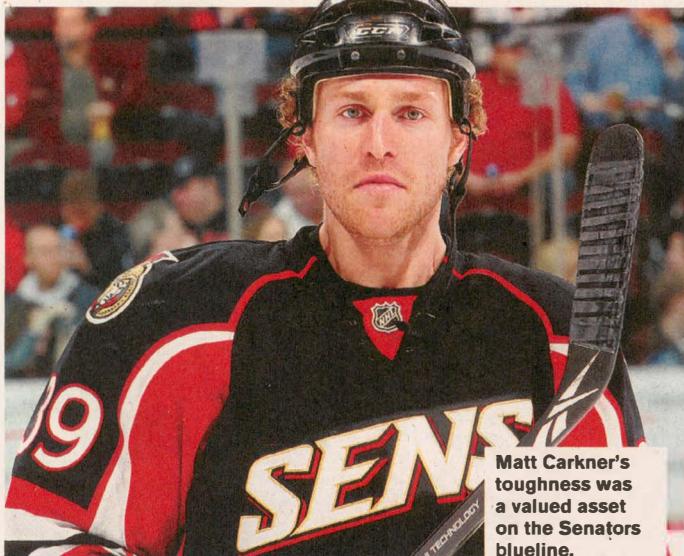
Boston

PATRICE BERGERON

looked out for sick kids even before a concussion cost him almost all of 2007-08. In '06-07, the Bruins and Bergeron established 'Patrice's Pals,' which brings kids from Boston-area hospitals to a TD Garden suite for a game and a visit from the Bruins center.

Bergeron and the B's recently took up the cause of Matt Brown, who sustained severe spinal cord injuries during a Boston-area high school game in January. Paralyzed from the chest down, Brown was transferred to Atlanta's Shepherd Center, where Bergeron visited him before a game against the Thrashers. Brown then watched Boston's 4-0 victory from a Philips Arena suite.

- MIKE LOFTUS



Matt Carkner's toughness was a valued asset on the Senators blueline.

His career included stops in Cleveland, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton and the past two seasons with Ottawa's AHL affiliate in Binghamton. Through those eight years, he only suited up for two NHL games.

When he arrived at training camp, he was supposed to

be a winger. But early in the team's first pre-season game in Halifax, coach Cory Clouston moved Carkner back to defense and the rest, as they say, is history.

Not only did Carkner perform above expectations, he earned himself a regular

spot and a two-year contract extension.

Carkner doesn't do anything spectacular on the team's third pairing, but he does his job. He gets the puck in, he gets the puck out and he covers his angles well. He's not the most gifted skater in the world, but he plays within his limitations.

The biggest element Carkner has brought to the blueline is toughness. He's willing to take on all comers, doesn't back down and has had an ongoing feud with Toronto enforcer Colton Orr, having dropped the gloves four times with him this season.

When it came time for members of the local chapter of the Professional Hockey Writers' Association to select the Ottawa nominee for the Masterton Trophy, they didn't need to look any further than Carkner. It took a lot of dedication and perseverance for him to get to the NHL.

- BRUCE GARROCH



Buffalo

WITH THE milestone puck in Patrick Lalime's glove, his Sabres teammates were more thrilled than their goaltender after he became the 66th netminder in league history to reach 200 career victories.

"It's a big plateau and he was able to reach it," said right winger Jason Pominville. "Everyone is so excited for him."

The win came March 27, nearly four months after the 35-year-old accepted a conditioning stint in the minors after not getting much work behind Ryan Miller.

"It's really nice to get there," Lalime said. "It was a hard one to get. The best part about that is the team wins and they just add up."

- JOHN VOGL



Montreal

AT 33, there was little reason for Mathieu Darche to believe he'd get another shot at the NHL — let alone play for the team he grew up idolizing.

"It's an honor for me to be playing for this team," the Montreal native said. "All my buddies tell me I'm living their childhood dream."

Darche has spent most of his nine pro seasons in the minors. But since being recalled in early January, he's become a dependable fourth-liner, averaging about 11:00 per game.

"He has an appreciation of what he has here," said coach Jacques Martin. "He never takes it for granted. Whether he plays one shift or 15, you're going to get the same attitude and determination from him."

- HERB ZURKOWSKY



Toronto

WHEN THE Maple Leafs acquired J-S Giguere from the Anaheim Ducks prior to the Olympic break, the veteran goaltender had an immediate off-ice impact.

When Brian Burke's son Brendan was killed in a horrifying car crash in early February, Giguere, who won a Stanley Cup with Burke's Ducks in 2007, helped organize his new teammates to go and show their support for their GM in his time of need.

As a result, the team joined front office staff and flew to Canton, Mass., just outside Boston, for the funeral.

"It's great we could be here for him," Giguere said after the emotional service for Brendan. "The turnout is super."

- MIKE ZEISBERGER





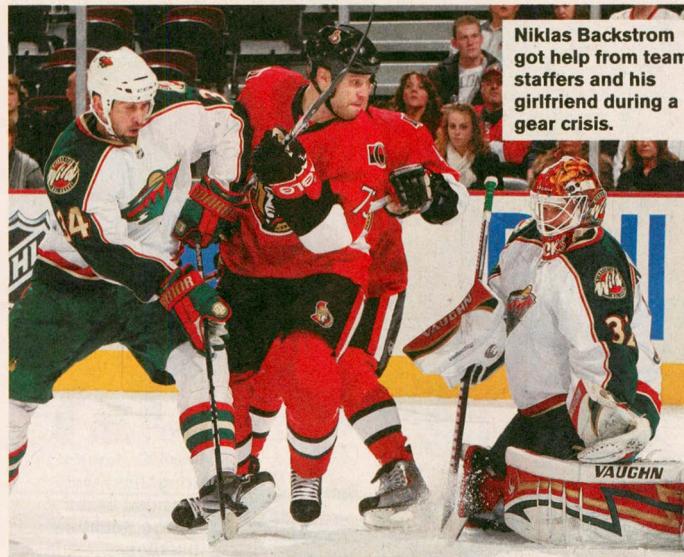
Minnesota

IT WAS a major league scavenger hunt during the crazy, panicked hours before the opening faceoff of the Wild's game on Dec. 19 in Ottawa.

With most of their equipment burned to a crisp in an equipment truck fire and less than 24 hours until they were scheduled to take on the Senators, Wild players found themselves in an impossible position.

Only nine players' gear made it through the fire without any damage; everyone else had lost most, if not all, of their equipment.

The NHL told them the show must go on, so their fate rested entirely in the hands and hustle of their equipment guys.



Niklas Backstrom got help from team staffers and his girlfriend during a gear crisis.

Brent Proulx raced to the airport and, after two flight delays, landed in Minnesota well after midnight. He drove straight to the rink and met up with Matt Benz, who was already there. They needed everything — skates, sticks, equipment, medical supplies.

They worked all through the night, grabbing whatever they could from wherever they could. Game-night equipment staffer Dylan O'Connell drove to defenseman Nick Schultz's house to pick up skates he wears for pond hockey. Goalie Niklas Backstrom's girlfriend



Calgary

YEARS AGO, David Shantz had a bright future.

Drafted No. 37 by Florida in 2004, he had a chance to be Canada's 2005 world junior goalie and an '06 Memorial Cup winner, but neither happened. Then after a few seasons with the Panthers organization, he was cast adrift.

But he's been rejuvenated with the Flames organization. Shantz, 23, took the No. 1 job with the club's AHL affiliate, Abbotsford, and carried the Heat to the playoffs. Now he has a shot at the No. 2 role with the Flames next season.

Shantz — who admitted to maturing after humanitarian work in Tanzania last summer — has shown goalies can surprise when given a chance.

— RANDY SPOTAK



Colorado

LIKE MANY Canadian boys, T.J. Galiardi dreamed of being a hockey player. But he gave serious thought to an arts career, too, almost declaring a major in studio art in college because of a love of sculpture.

But the Calgary native is happy he carved out an NHL career instead. He left college after his freshman year and opted for the traditional route to the NHL through major junior. With three games to play, Galiardi was fifth among rookies in goals (15), assists (24) and points (39).

"I haven't played on one team more than two years in a row," Galiardi said. "It would be a dream come true to stay in Denver a long time and help us win a Stanley Cup."

— ADRIAN DATER



Edmonton

FERNANDO PISANI has gone from Conn Smythe candidate during the Oilers 2006 Cup-final run, to the toughest run of luck he can imagine.

First came the career-threatening bout of ulcerative colitis in '07-08, when he lost 30 pounds and six pints of blood and missed 26 games.

Last year, a broken ankle shelved him for 44 contests.

This season, he injured his back in camp, missed 13 games, then had the colitis flare up again, costing him 23 more games.

Still, he's remained positive. "You have to look at it like it could be a lot worse," Pisani said. "There are people who go through a lot more difficult things than I'm going through."

— ROB TYCHOWSKI

dropped off some equipment the Finnish star had around their condo.

"We went to (the practice rink), where we have used equipment stored," Proulx said. "Then we put every stall together in our dressing room at home, looked it over to make sure we had everything, then packed 30 bags of stuff. Just crazy."

From there, it was back to the airport for a 5:30 a.m. flight back to Ottawa. They arrived at 9 a.m. and had the Wild on the ice for a morning skate.

"(The equipment staff) did a great job on very little sleep," said GM Chuck Fletcher.

The Wild lost 4-1 that night, but just making it to the starting line was a miracle.

"It's not the way you want to prepare for a game," Backstrom said. "But the trainers did an unbelievable job to even make this game possible."

— ROB TYCHOWSKI



Vancouver

FOR HALF the season, the Canucks looked for a third-line center. The answer turned out to be right in front of them.

Kyle Wellwood went to camp in shape and worked out hard (for him, anyway), but couldn't produce. Then he realized his dieting and weightlifting were hindering him. He put on a few pounds, took a few less reps in the gym and the goals started to come.

"At the start of the year, I was a real lean 181 (pounds)," Wellwood said. "Now, I'm not thick, but I have a little more weight. I feel great."

After needing 20 games to score once, the lighter Wellwood scored seven times in 19 post-Olympics games, the equivalent of a 30-goal pace.

— ELLIOTT PAP





San Jose

NOW IN his fifth season in the NHL, Sharks assistant coach Jay Woodcroft has been a part of NHL teams that have won more than 250 regular season games, three Presidents' Trophies, 30 playoff games and one Stanley Cup. Not a bad resume, yet Woodcroft has remained under the radar around the league.

Woodcroft spent three seasons as Mike Babcock's video coach in Detroit and made the jump to San Jose in 2008 to join Todd McLellan's staff. Part of his mystery man status comes from the fact he spends the first two periods of the game taking notes in the coach's room while staying on the radio with the bench.



Anaheim

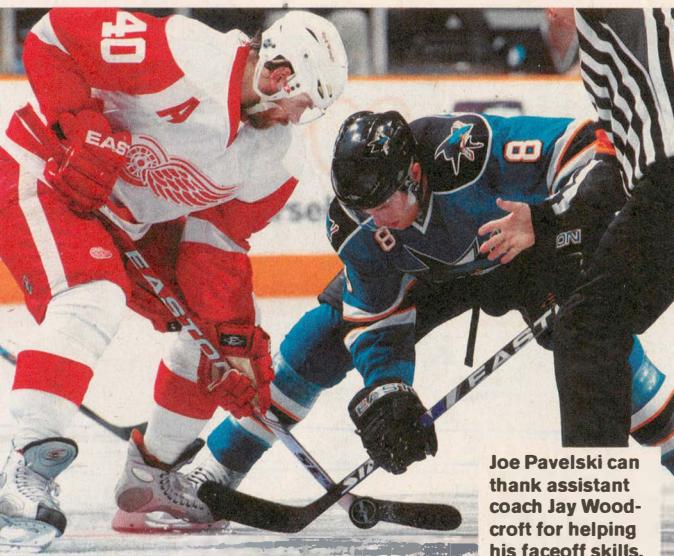
EVERY DAY, Sheldon Brookbank must prove he can be an everyday NHLer.

Brookbank, 29, toiled in the American League for five-plus seasons before getting a shot with Nashville in 2006-07. It lasted just three games. Then Columbus signed him and promptly waived him. Then New Jersey picked him up and he played 59 games as a Devil in a season and a half.

But a trade to the Ducks has rejuvenated his career. Brookbank played more than 60 games this season, a career-high, and was one of the team's most reliable blueliners.

"I know that I'm not allowed to make too many mistakes," he said. "For me, the less I get noticed is usually the better."

- ERIC STEPHENS



Joe Pavelski can thank assistant coach Jay Woodcroft for helping his faceoff skills.

"There is a calm detachment watching the game in the office," Woodcroft said. "I can see things that maybe Todd and (assistant coach) Trent (Yawney) can't. Once you get to the bench, things become much more intense and fast-paced."

Joked center Joe Pavelski: "I'm sure he's pretty pumped to join us on the bench after being locked up for two periods."

In addition to being 'Captain Video,' Woodcroft's biggest contribution comes from teaching the art of penalty-killing and faceoffs. Under his



Dallas

LES JACKSON helped build the franchise's first ever Stanley Cup champion in 1999. And he's helped reshape today's Stars by drafting more skill with the likes of James Neal, Jamie Benn, Tom Wanol and Scott Glennie.

But after becoming co-GM with Brett Hull in 2007, Jackson was demoted last year when owner Tom Hicks hired Joe Nieuwendyk as GM. Instead of taking the demotion personally, he's played a big role in helping Nieuwendyk.

"To have guys like Les around is huge for me," Nieuwendyk said. "I've never done this before, so things come up every day and it's great to have a sounding board. He's been terrific."

- MIKEHEIKA



Los Angeles

ON THE ice Dustin Brown is never one to play under the radar. He is the Kings' leader in hits and ranks among the top three in the NHL. So it should come as no surprise when the Kings captain decided to donate \$50 for every bodycheck he lays to a local charity, fittingly called KaBOOM!, which builds playgrounds in local communities.

Last season Brown's 285 hits amounted to \$14,250. As this season wound down, he was on a similar pace.

"We were fortunate to have built a playground with KaBOOM! and the Kings last season," Brown said. "I saw with my own eyes the importance of this organization and its mission."

- JONATHAN DAVIS

direction, the Sharks have gone from 11th-best on draws in 2006 to No. 1 in the league this season. Meanwhile, the team's penalty-killing numbers have gone from 14th to fourth in the same time period.

"Most guys are icing knees, legs or shoulders after practices," Pavelski said. "I'm icing my arms because they get so sore from working on faceoff drills."

Added Woodcroft: "Faceoffs and penalty-killing are all about competition and desire. In the case of faceoffs, it's about the ability to look your opponent right in the eye and know that you are going to win the battle, while penalty-killing focuses on desire and proper positioning."

The Sharks have fed off Woodcroft's hard work and desire, and though he enjoys being 'under the radar,' continued success will earn him more notoriety in the NHL.

- JONATHAN DAVIS



Phoenix

SHANE DOAN didn't expect much from Coyotes' power skating coach Mark Ciaccio.

"I really didn't think there was a lot that a power skating coach could do," he said. "I hurt my back a few years ago and had to skate with Ciaccio. I couldn't believe the difference that I noticed (after) about three weeks and ever since then I've been his biggest fan."

Ciaccio, who has been coaching for 17 years, said some players have to go back to square one.

"It's just mechanics sometimes," he said. "A guy like me comes in, I can pick out a flaw...and I get their technique back to where it makes them comfortable and get it going."

- JIM GINTONIO





Tampa Bay

THERE CONTINUE to be days when Kurtis Foster receives a painful reminder that he suffered a potentially career-ending injury just more than two years ago.

When the screw that is in the ball of his left femur rubs against his hip, Foster is reminded of the scary events of March 19, 2008, when he shattered his leg while with the Minnesota Wild in a collision with Torrey Mitchell of the San Jose Sharks as the two were chasing down a potential icing call.

Amid the constant three-ring circus that has been the Tampa Bay Lightning this season, it's fair to say Foster's terrific comeback season has



Kurtis Foster led the Lightning defense corps in scoring this season.

gone somewhat under the radar.

When the disastrous ownership tenure of Oren Koules and Len Barrie, and the sale of the team to Boston hedge-fund manager Jeffrey Vinik wasn't dominating the headlines, they were usually occupied

by Steven Stamkos' pursuit of his first 50-goal season and the Rocket Richard Trophy, the uncertainty around Vincent Lecavalier's status and the front-office follies.

Foster, meanwhile, went about putting together a terrific season after signing



Atlanta

CHRIS CHELIOS had done it all, but still wasn't ready to retire. He wanted one more year and was willing to sign with the Chicago Wolves, Atlanta's American League affiliate.

Drawing on Chelios' 24 seasons of playoff experience, Atlanta recalled him in March. His contributions were limited, but he served as a mentor for Zach Bogosian and his leadership and dedication were examples to teammates.

Chelios says he's not interested in playing into his 50s like Gordie Howe, so he expects his 27th season to be his last. The Hall of Fame is ahead after starring for three Original Six teams and winning three Stanley Cups and three Norris Trophies.

- GUY CURTRIGHT



Carolina

WHEN THE Hurricanes took the Stanley Cup in 2006, Cam Ward may have won the Conn Smythe, but it was Rod Brind'Amour's team. His leadership after taking over as captain that fall was critical to Carolina's success.

A severe knee injury in the spring of 2008 hampered his game, but as his performance declined, Brind'Amour continued to provide guidance. In January, with the Hurricanes last in the NHL, he willingly stepped aside as captain to let Eric Staal take his place.

The Hurricanes won 19 of their next 30 games after the switch. Brind'Amour, who has another season remaining on his contract, is undecided whether to return next fall.

- LUKE DECOCK



Florida

BRYAN ALLEN has had seven surgeries on his left knee, including one that cost him all but two games last season.

When he reported to training camp, coach Pete DeBoer didn't know what to expect.

Allen, 29, told him he'd do anything to play. And he did just that, playing in more than 70 games this season.

"This guy won't take no for an answer," DeBoer said. "He wants to play badly and help the team badly. He's sacrificing his body to do that."

With the Panthers out of the playoffs in early April, Allen could have opted to rest a rib injury, but that isn't his style.

"If there's a chance you could be playing, you should be," Allen said.

- GEORGE RICHARDS

with the Lightning on a one-year deal worth \$600,000. Despite playing in just 10 NHL games last season because of the injury, Foster was the Lightning's highest-scoring defenseman while playing 17 minutes a game.

Some of that time was spent as a forward when the Lightning was shorthanded up front, an opportunity Foster embraced.

"It took a while, but I got to the point where I realized that I could not only play in the league, but that I could really help this team win games," Foster said. "For a couple of years I really didn't know whether I could do that."

Foster enters the off-season with the uncertainty of unrestricted free agency, but that is nothing compared to what he has endured.

"We have a great group of guys and I'd love to stay here," he said.

- KEN CAMPBELL



Washington

ENDING UP deep in the Stanley Cup playoffs might erase that black cloud hovering over well-liked Washington winger Quintin Laing.

Laing's ice time has been limited this season – because of bad luck and the gritty 30-year-old's fearless style.

In October, Laing was diagnosed with swine flu.

On Nov. 17, he broke his jaw in two places blocking a shot. It was wired shut for three weeks and he lost 11 pounds, despite consuming 3,500 liquid calories daily.

Doctors predicted up to six weeks off. Laing – who tore his spleen in his only game with the Caps last season – was back Dec. 19, sporting a protective cage.

- PETER KERZEL





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WESTERN CONFERENCE

ANAHEIM DUCKS

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Jonas Hiller	2. Curtis McElhinney	Wisniewski
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Niedermayer
1. Scott Niedermayer	Steve Eminger	Koivu
2. B. Mikkelson	James Wisniewski	Selanne
3. Aaron Ward	Sheldon Brookbank	Perry
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Jason Blake	Saku Koivu	Teemu Selanne
2. Bobby Ryan	Nick Bonino	Corey Perry
3. Matt Beleskey	Todd Marchant	Troy Bodie
4. Mike Brown	Kyle Chipchura	George Parros
SPARES	Ryan Carter, C; Brett Festerling, D	
INJURIES	J. Lupul, LW; R. Getzlaf, C; L. Visnovsky, D	
NEXT IN LINE	Mark Mitera, D; Luca Sbisa, D; Jake Newton, D; Joey MacDonald, G; Rob Bordon, D	

COLORADO AVALANCHE

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Craig Anderson	2. Peter Budaj	Liles
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Stastny
1. Kyle Cumiskey	Adam Foote	Hejduk
2. J-M Lites	Scott Hannan	Duchene
3. Ryan Wilson	Kyle Quincey	Stewart
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. T.J. Galiardi	Paul Stastny	Chris Stewart
2. Brandon Yip	Matt Duchene	Milan Hejduk
3. Cody McLeod	Ryan O'Reilly	Matt Hendricks
4. Darcy Tucker	Stephanie Yelle	Kevin Porter
SPARES	Durno, LW; Clark, D; Stoa, C; Svatos, RW	
INJURIES	Peter Mueller, C; David Jones, RW	
NEXT IN LINE	Derek Peltier, D; Darren Haydar, LW; Brian Willsie, RW	

DETROIT RED WINGS

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Jimmy Howard	2. Chris Osgood	Lidstrom
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Rafalski
1. Nicklas Lidstrom	Brian Rafalski	Holmstrom
2. Niklas Kronwall	Brad Stuart	Datsyuk
3. J. Ericsson	Andreas Lilja	Franzen
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. John Franzen	Pavel Datsyuk	Tomas Holmstrom
2. Todd Bertuzzi	H. Zetterberg	Valteri Filppula
3. Dan Cleary	Darren Helm	Patrick Eaves
4. Kris Draper	Drew Miller	Jason Williams
SPARES	Derek Meech, D; Brett Lebeda, D	
INJURIES	Kirk Maltby, RW	
NEXT IN LINE	Jakub Kindl, D; Mattias Ritola, C; Justin Abdelkader, C; Brad May, LW	

MINNESOTA WILD

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Niklas Backstrom	2. Wade Dubielewicz	Zidlicky
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Havlat
1. Greg Zanon	Marek Zidlicky	Brunette
2. Cam Barker	Brent Burns	Koivu
3. Nick Schultz	Shane Hnidy	Miettinen
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Andrew Brunette	Mikko Koivu	Antti Miettinen
2. G. Latendresse	Kyle Brodziak	Marlin Havlat
3. Owen Nolan	J. Sheppard	Cal Clutterbuck
4. Robbie Earl	Cody Almond	Chuck Kobasew
SPARES	John Scott, D; Derek Boogaard, LW	
INJURIES	Stoner, D; Bouchard, RW; Harding, G; Ebbett, C	
NEXT IN LINE	Anton Khudobin, G; Jaime Sifers, D; Nathan Smith, C; Danny Irmie, RW	

ST. LOUIS BLUES

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Chris Mason	2. Ty Conklin	Johnson
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Kariya
1. Eric Brewer	Erik Johnson	McDonald
2. Carlo Colaiacovo	Roman Polak	Backes
3. Darryl Sydor	Mike Weaver	Boyes
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Paul Kariya	David Backes	T.J. Oshie
2. Andy McDonald	Patrik Berglund	David Perron
3. Alex Steen	Keith Tkachuk	Brad Boyes
4. B.J. Crombeen	Jay McClement	Matt D'Agostini
SPARES	C. Janssen, RW; D.J. King, LW; B. Winchester, LW	
INJURIES	Barret Jackman, D	
NEXT IN LINE	Derek Armstrong, C; Tyson Strachan, D; Jonas Junland, D; Lars Eller, C	

CALGARY FLAMES

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Miikka Kiprusoff	2. Vesa Toskala	Bouwmeester
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Giordano
1. Ian White	Robyn Regehr	Iginla
2. Jay Bouwmeester	Steve Staias	Stajan
3. Mark Giordano	Cory Sarich	Bourque
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Niklas Hagman	Matt Stajan	Jarome Iginla
2. Rene Bourque	M. Backlund	Ales Kotalik
3. Nigel Dawes	Craig Conroy	David Moss
4. Brett Sutter	Erik Nystrom	Jamal Mayers
SPARES	Adam Pardy, D; Brian McGrattan, RW	
INJURIES	Higgins, LW; Langkow, C; Glencross, LW	
NEXT IN LINE	Jason Jaffray, C; Staffan Kronwall, D; David Shantz, G	

CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Antti Niemi	2. Cristobal Huet	Keith Byfuglien
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Toews
1. Duncan Keith	Dustin Byfuglien	Kane
2. N. Hjalmarsson	Brent Seabrook	Brouwer
3. Jordan Hendry	Brent Sopel	
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Patrick Sharp	J. Toews	Marian Hossa
2. Troy Brouwer	Dave Bolland	Patrick Kane
3. Andrew Ladd	John Madden	Kris Versteeg
4. Ben Eager	Colin Fraser	Tomas Kopecky
SPARES	Nick Boynton, D; Adam Burish, RW	
INJURIES	Brian Campbell, D; Kim Johnsson, D	
NEXT IN LINE	Jake Dowell, C; Bryan Bickell, LW; Jack Skille, RW; Corey Crawford, G	

COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Steve Mason	2. Mathieu Garon	Tytu
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Strlman
1. Fedor Tyutin	Marc Methot	Umberger
2. Kris Russell	Mike Commodore	Huselius
3. Grant Clitsome	Anton Stralman	Nash
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Kristian Huselius	A. Vermette	Rick Nash
2. R.J. Umberger	D. Brassard	Jake Voracek
3. Tomas Kana	S. Pahlsson	Derek Dorsett
4. Mike Blunden	Greg Moore	Chad Kolarik
SPARES	Nathan Paetsch, D	
INJURIES	Klesla, D; Hejda, D; Boll, RW; Murray, LW; Clark, LW	
NEXT IN LINE	Brendan Bell, D; Maksim Mayorov, LW; Nick Holden, D; Trevor Frischman, C; Jordan Sigalet, D	

DALLAS STARS

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Kari Lehtonen	2. Marty Turco	Robidas
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Richards
1. Nicklas Grossman	Stephane Robidas	Modano
2. Mark Fistric	Trevor Daley	Neal
3. Karlis Skrastins	Matt Niskanen	Eriksson
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. James Neal	Brad Richards	Lou Eriksson
2. Brenden Morrow	Mike Ribeiro	Brandon Segal
3. Jamie Benn	Mike Modano	Jere Lehtinen
4. Toby Petersen	Steve Ott	Toby Petersen
SPARES	Fabian Brunnstrom, LW; Jeff Woywitka, D	
INJURIES	Krys Barch, RW; Tom Wandell, C	
NEXT IN LINE	Maxime Fortunus, D; Ray Sawada, RW; Aaron Gagnon, D; Philip Larsen, D	

LOS ANGELES KINGS

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Jonathan Quick	2. Erik Ersberg	Doughty
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Stoll
1. Rob Scuderi	Drew Doughty	Smyth
2. Matt Greene	Sean O'Donnell	Kopitar
3. Jack Johnson	Randy Jones	Handzus
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Ryan Smyth	Anze Kopitar	Justin Williams
2. Alexander Frolov	Jarret Stoll	Dustin Brown
3. Fredrik Modin	M. Handzus	Wayne Simmonds
4. Scott Parse	B. Richardson	Raitis Ivanans
SPARES	P. Harold, D; D. Drewiske, D; R. Clune, LW	
INJURIES	Jeff Halpern, C	
NEXT IN LINE	Oscar Moller, C; Jonathan Bernier, G; Alec Martinez, D; Brayden Schenn, C; Andrei Loktionov, C	

PHOENIX COYOTES

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Ilya Bryzgalov	2. Jason LaBarbera	Morris
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Aucoin
1. Keith Yandle	Derek Morris	Doan
2. Zbynek Michalek	Ed Jovanovski	Lombardi
3. Adrian Aucoin	Mathieu Schneider	Wolski
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Shane Doan	Vernon Fiddler	Taylor Pyatt
2. Radim Vrbata	Martin Hanzal	Petr Prucha
3. Wojtek Wolski	M. Lombardi	Lee Stempniak
4. Lauri Korpikoski	Daniel Winnik	P. Nokelainen
SPARES	Lepisto, D; Bissonnette, LW; Lang, C; Tikhonov, RW	
INJURIES	Scottie Upshall, RW; Kurt Sauer, D	
NEXT IN LINE	Mikkel Boedker, RW; David Schlemko, D; Shaun Heskida, D; Joel Perrault, C	

VANCOUVER CANUCKS

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Roberto Luongo	2. Andrew Raycroft	Bieksa
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Salo
1. Alex Edler	Sami Salo	D. Sedin
2. Shane O'Brien	Andrew Alberts	H. Sedin
3. Aaron Rome	Kevin Bieksa	Burrows
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Daniel Sedin	Henrik Sedin	Alex Burrows
2. Michael Grabner	Ryan Kesler	Pavol Demitra
3. Mason Raymond	Kyle Wellwood	Mikael Samuelsson
4. Darcy Hordichuk	Ryan Johnson	Jannik Hansen
SPARES	N. Baumgartner, D; T. Glass, LW; R. Rypien, RW	
INJURIES	W. Mitchell, D; S. Bernier, RW; C. Ehrhoff, D	
NEXT IN LINE	Cory Schneider, G; Evan Oberg, D; Matt Pettinger, Mario Bliznak, C	



EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTA THRASHERS

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Johan Hedberg	2. Ondrej Pavelec	Enstrom
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Oduya
1. Johnny Oduya	Ron Hainsey	Afninovgenov
2. Tobias Enstrom	Zach Bogosian	Antropov
3. Mark Popovic	Chris Chelios	Bergfors
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Niclas Bergfors	Nik Antropov	Maxim Afninovgenov
2. Evander Kane	Rich Peverley	Bryan Little
3. Jim Slater	Tim Stapleton	Colby Armstrong
4. Chris Thorburn	Marty Reasoner	Evgenny Artyukhin
SPARES	E. Boulton, LW; S. Kozlov, LW; C. MacArthur, LW	
INJURIES	Schubert, D; Valabik, D; Kubina, D; White, C	
NEXT IN LINE	Arturs Kulda, D; Peter Mannino, G; Spencer Machacek, RW; Ivan Vishnevskiy, D	

CAROLINA HURRICANES

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Cam Ward	2. Manny Legace	McBain
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Rodney
1. Brett Carson	Joni Pitkanen	Whitney
2. Brian Pothier	Jay Harrison	Staal
3. Jamie McBain	Bryan Rodney	Jokinen
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Ray Whitney	Eric Staal	Erik Cole
2. Chad LaRose	Brandon Sutter	Jussi Jokinen
3. Zach Boychuk	Pat Dwyer	Drayson Bowman
4. Sergei Samsonov	R. Brind'Amour	Tom Kostopoulos
SPARES	None	
INJURIES	T. Gleason, D; A. Picard, D; T. Ruutu, RW	
NEXT IN LINE	Tim Conroy, D; Oskar Osala, LW; Justin Peters, G; Jerome Samson, RW	

NEW JERSEY DEVILS

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Martin Brodeur	2. Yann Danis	Kovalchuk
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Martin
1. Martin Skoula	Paul Martin	Parise
2. Bryce Salvador	Andy Greene	Elias
3. Colin White	Mike Mottau	Lang'brunner
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Zach Parise	Travis Zajac	Dainius Zubrus
2. Ilya Kovalchuk	Patrik Elias	J. Langenbrunner
3. Brian Rolston	R. Niedermayer	David Clarkson
4. P-L Leblond	D. McAmmond	Rod Pelley
SPARES	Fraser, D; Pandolfo, LW; Salmela, D; Zharkov, RW	
INJURIES	Paul Martin, D	
NEXT IN LINE	Matt Corrente, D; Michael Swift, C; Patrick Davis, RW; Ben Walter, C; Rob Davison, D	

OTTAWA SENATORS

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Brian Elliott	2. Pascal Leclaire	Karlsson
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Fisher-Alfredsson
1. Chris Phillips	Anton Volchenkov	Spezza
2. Andy Sutton	Erik Karlsson	Kovalev
3. Matt Carkner	Chris Campoli	
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Peter Regin	Jason Spezza	Daniel Alfredsson
2. Nick Foligno	Mike Fisher	Alex Kovalev
3. J. Winchester	Matt Cullen	Ryan Shannon
4. Jarkko Ruutu	Chris Kelly	Chris Neil
SPARES	Shean Donovan, RW; Bobby Butler, RW	
INJURIES	Filip Kuba, D; Milan Michalek, LW	
NEXT IN LINE	Zack Smith, C; Mike Brodeur, G; Brian Lee, D	

TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Antero Niittymaki	2. Mike Smith	Foster
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	St-Louis
1. Mattias Ohlund	Mike Lundin	Stamkos
2. Andrej Meszaros	Kurtis Foster	Lecavalier
3. Matt Walker	Victor Hedman	Downie
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Martin St-Louis	S. Stamkos	Steve Downie
2. Ryan Malone	V. Lecavalier	Teddy Purcell
3. Alex Tanguay	Nate Thompson	Mark Parrish
4. Stephane Veilleux	Zenon Konopka	Brandon Bochenski
SPARES	Todd Fedoruk, LW	
INJURIES	Paul Ranger, D; David Hale, D; Matt Smaby, D	
NEXT IN LINE	Ryan Craig, C; Ty Wishart, D; Paul Szczecur, RW	

BOSTON BRUINS

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Tuukka Rask	2. Tim Thomas	Chara
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Wideman
1. Zdeno Chara	Johnny Boychuk	Sturm
2. Matt Hunwick	Dennis Wideman	Bergeron
3. A. Bodnarchuk	Adam McQuaid	Recchi
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Milan Lucic	P. Bergeron	Mark Recchi
2. Marco Sturm	David Krejci	Miroslav Satan
3. Blake Wheeler	V. Sobotka	Michael Ryder
4. Daniel Paille	Steve Begin	Brad Marchand
SPARES	Shawn Thornton, RW; Trent Whitfield, C	
INJURIES	Ference, D; Savard, C; Seidenberg, D; Stuart, D	
NEXT IN LINE	Mikko Lehtonen, RW; Jeff Penner, D; Dany Sabourin, G; Andy Wozniak, D	

BUFFALO SABRES

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Ryan Miller	2. Patrick Lalime	Lydman
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Pominville
1. Henrik Tallinder	Tyler Myers	Ennis
2. Toni Lydman	Steve Montador	Roy
3. Chris Butler	Andrej Sekera	Stafford
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Tyler Ennis	Jochen Hecht	Jason Pominville
2. Tim Kennedy	Derek Roy	Drew Stafford
3. Nathan Gerbe	Paul Gaustad	Mike Grier
4. Raffi Torres	Matt Ellis	Adam Mair
SPARES	None	
INJURIES	T. Connolly, C; P. Kaleta, RW; T. Vanek, LW	
NEXT IN LINE	Mike Weber, D; Marc-Andre Gragnani, D; Mark Mancari, RW; Brad Larsen, LW	

MONTREAL CANADIENS

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Jaroslav Halak	2. Carey Price	Bergeron
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Markov
1. Andrei Markov	Ryan O'Byrne	Plekac
2. Roman Hamrlik	Josh Gorges	A. Kostitsyn
3. Hal Gill	Jaroslav Spacek	Cammalleri
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Benoit Pouliot	Scott Gomez	Brian Gionta
2. Mike Cammalleri	Tomas Plekanec	Andrei Kostitsyn
3. Travis Moen	Dominic Moore	Sergei Kostitsyn
4. Tom Pyatt	Maxim Lapierre	M-A Bergeron
SPARES	Ben Maxwell, C; Mathieu Darche, RW	
INJURIES	Paul Mara, D; Glen Metropolit, C	
NEXT IN LINE	Cedrick Desjardins, G; P.K. Subban, D; David Desharnais, C	

NEW YORK RANGERS

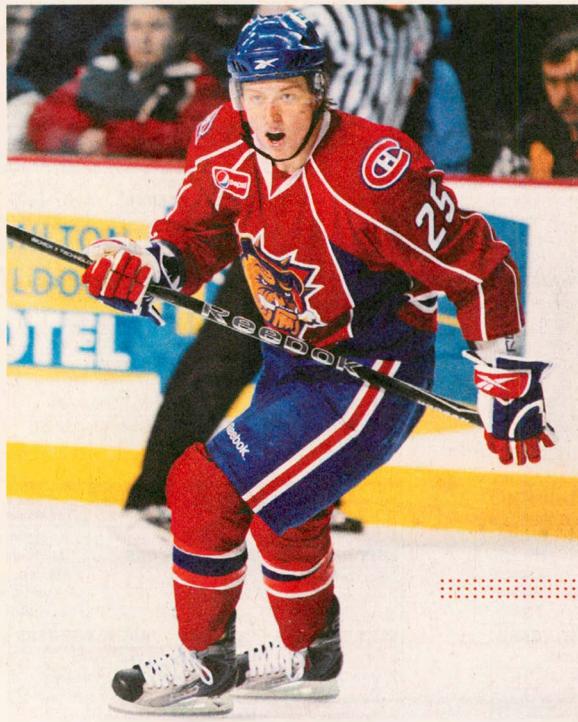
GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Henrik Lundqvist	2. Alex Auld	Del Zotto
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Rosival
1. Marc Staal	Dan Girardi	Christensen
2. Michael Del Zotto	Michal Rosival	Dubinsky
3. Wade Redden	Anders Eriksson	Gaborik
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Brandon Dubinsky	E. Christensen	Marian Gaborik
2. Vaclav Prospal	Olli Jokinen	P-A Parenteau
3. Aaron Voros	Chris Drury	Ryan Callahan
4. Jody Shelley	A. Anisimov	Brandon Prust
SPARES	Enver Lisin, RW; Matt Gilroy, D	
INJURIES	Sean Avery, LW; Brian Boyle, C	
NEXT IN LINE	Dane Byers, RW; Bobby Sanguinetti, D; Kris Newbury, C; Corey Potter, D	

PITTSBURGH PENGUINS

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. M-A Fleury	2. Brent Johnson	Goligoski
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Gonchar
1. Kris Letang	Brooks Orpik	Malkin
2. Sergei Gonchar	Mark Eaton	Crosby
3. Alex Goligoski	Jordan Leopold	Guerin
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Pascal Dupuis	Sidney Crosby	Alex Ponikarovsky
2. Ruslan Fedotenko	Evgeni Malkin	Bill Guerin
3. Matt Cooke	Jordan Staal	Tyler Kennedy
4. Mike Rupp	Max Talbot	Craig Adams
SPARES	Jay McKee, D; Eric Godard, RW	
INJURIES	Chris Kunitz, LW	
NEXT IN LINE	Ben Lovejoy, D; Eric Tangradi, LW; Robert Bortuzzo, D	

WASHINGTON CAPITALS

GOALIE	GOALIE	1ST PP UNIT
1. Jose Theodore	2. Semen Varlamov	Corvo
LEFT DEFENSE	RIGHT DEFENSE	Ovechkin
1. Jeff Schultz	Mike Green	Knuble
2. Tom Poti	Joe Corvo	Backstrom
3. John Erskine	Shaone Morrison	Laich
LEFT WINGERS	CENTERS	RIGHT WINGERS
1. Alex Ovechkin	N. Backstrom	Mike Knuble
2. Brooks Laich	T. Fleischmann	Alexander Semin
3. Scott Walker	Eric Belanger	Eric Fehr
4. Jason Chimera	David Steckel	Matt Bradley
SPARES	Tyler Sloan, D; Quintin Laing, LW	
INJURIES	Jurcina, D; Gordon, C; Morrison, C; Carlson, D	
NEXT IN LINE	Chris Bourque, LW; Keith Aucoin, C; Michal Neuvirth, G; Karl Alzner, D	



NOTES FROM THE WEST

PLAYFAIR HEATS UP

There's no such thing as bad publicity and the Abbotsford Heat have proved that.

The team posted its own coach's March 27 meltdown on YouTube and Jim Playfair's double stick-smashing rant had well over a million views within the week. Hundreds of thousands more views were recorded on copied postings.

Playfair, who lost his temper after a call by referee Jamie Koharski in a loss to Hamilton, was only fined by the AHL. An official said the league opted to let Playfair stew in his own embarrassment.

The coach, in the end, was a reluctant video star.

"My kids liked it, though," he said. "They thought it was kind of cool. My friends liked it. Paul Coffey told me they don't make sticks like they used to."

UNFAMILIAR TERRITORY

Grand Rapids coach Curt Fraser missed the playoffs for the first time in seven seasons as a head coach in the AHL and International League.

Fraser's teams had never missed the playoffs nor finished worse than 12 games above .500.

LONE STARS Texas skated to a playoff berth thanks largely to a late-season 14-4-0 run which included winning seven of eight road games.

- TIM CAMPBELL

THE WHITE STUFF

BY TIM CAMPBELL

RYAN WHITE HAS had his taste of the NHL and now the Montreal Canadiens are going to find out its power to motivate a promising prospect with borderline quickness.

Guy Boucher, White's coach with the Western Conference-champion Hamilton Bulldogs, wasn't painting the second-year center as out of shape and desperate, but suggested that after three recalls worth 16 NHL games this season, the Habs' third round pick (66th overall) in 2006 has the conditioning ball in his court.

"We know Ryan can play up there with the big boys and he's got the grit to play along the boards and in front of the net - he fights and he fights for the puck - but what we know from over the years is his shape has to get better for the NHL," Boucher said.

"He doesn't have an easy stride, so it takes a lot of out of him to get the speed he needs for the NHL."

White, 22, spent a month with the Habs before Christmas and was back twice more early in the New Year.

He's familiar with the talk about his quickness and his skating, and he doesn't ignore it.

"I think my skating's come a long ways in the last two years and I've had a lot of help," he said. "My goal is to keep getting quicker. At the next level, I know it's faster up there."

While skating remains a priority, White is

determined the responsible side of his game will win him allies.

"When I was up there, Jacques (Martin, Montreal's coach) was giving me quite a bit of opportunity," said White, who played as much as 17:02 one night. "As long as I was playing well defensively, it seemed like I was getting on the ice more and more."

"That's kind of what got me there in the first place, just being responsible in camp, making sure I was good to play in my own zone."

In the meantime, White has upped the ante offensively with the Dogs in his second year, going from 11 goals and 29 points in 80 games last season, to 17 goals and 32 points in just 60 late this season.

"He's a player that has a lot of leadership and is extremely respected by the others," said Boucher, who was clearly glad to have White back in his lineup. "He's one of those guys when things don't go well, he'll take the flag and say, 'Follow me.'

"He works harder and wants it more than everybody else."

Ryan White

Hamilton Bulldogs
Ht. 6-0
Wt. 202
Pos. C
Age 22

AND COUNTING
239

White's career penalty minutes in 140 games with Hamilton



VICTORY VECTOR

Alex Stalock

Worcester Sharks

37

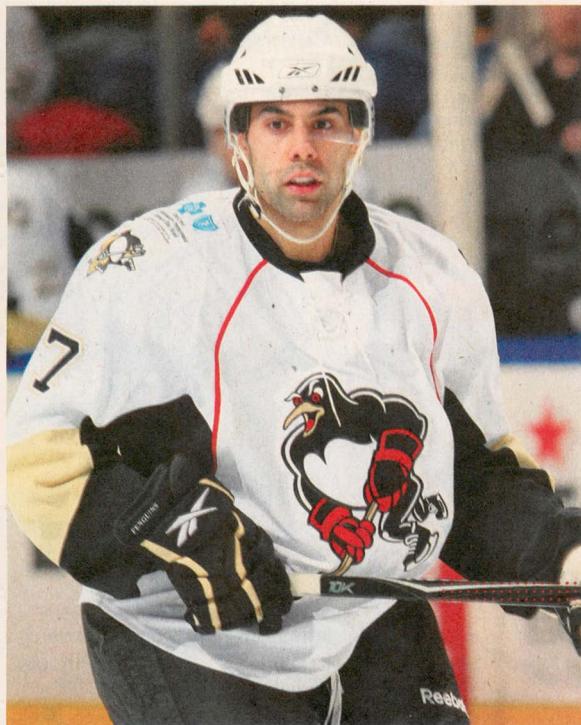


WINS

Cory Schneider, Mtb	32
Jonathan Bernier, Man	30
Cedrick Desjardins, Ham	28
Alexander Salak, Rch	28
Jhonas Enroth, Por	28
Dany Sabourin, Pro	27



ON TOP



PLAYING IT STRAIT

BY KEVIN OKLOBZIJA

WHEN DEFENSEMAN Brian Strait decided to leave Boston University a year early to sign a contract with the Pittsburgh Penguins, most of the people closest to him didn't like it.

"I was getting criticized at the time," he said. "Even my parents thought it might be better to stay and get my degree. I had a good thing going at BU. I was in my hometown and I had dreamed all my life of playing at BU."

But he also dreamed about playing in the NHL and, having just won an NCAA championship with the Terriers, Strait knew the sooner he started learning the pro game, the better.

Is there any way he can get college credit for all the learning he has done this season?

As the American League's regular season wound down, Strait was content with his progress with the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins.

"It's been a challenge for me, but I'm growing into what I want to someday be," said Strait, the Penguins third round pick (65th overall) in 2006. "The American League is a giant step above college hockey. I've learned as much this year as I did in three years playing at BU. And that's not because BU had bad coaches; we had great coaches there."

"But there is just so much to learn in the pro game. Now I understand why Pittsburgh wanted me to turn pro."

Strait, 22, plays defense first, as his scoring

totals indicated: three goals, 14 points in 74 games.

But what leapt off the stats page was his plus-20 mark, second-best on the team. And the 6-foot-1, 200-pounder's growth has been evident. In the 25 games from Feb. 12 through April 2, Strait was a minus player just twice and was plus-14 in that span.

That's why Penguins coach Todd Reirden isn't afraid to use Strait against the opposition's top lines.

But Strait knows consistency is the key to playing in the NHL.

"There are so many games, so many shifts," Strait said. "I've always been a guy that if I made a mistake, it stuck with me. The thing I noticed is that the veterans, if they make a mistake, they're able to learn from it and move on. They're able to bring their best every night."

"There was a lot of frustration at first, when I couldn't get the things they wanted me to do. But the repetition here is so important. You do things over and over again and again."



Brian Strait

W-B/Scr. Penguins

Ht. 6-1

Wt. 200

Pos. D

Age 22



AND COUNTING

+20

Strait's plus-minus rating ranked second on the Penguins

NOTES FROM THE EAST

BERNIER REBOUNDS

When Jonathan Bernier was going through a trying rookie season with Manchester, he wasn't having much fun.

Now, however, the Monarch will tell you those growing pains were the best thing that could have happened.

And he now has the 2010 Bastien Memorial Award as the AHL's best goalie to prove it.

"It was a season that mentally was good for me," said Bernier, the 11th overall pick by Los Angeles in 2006. "It was good to go through the ups and downs and learn to control what I can control."

FIGHTING BACK

Albany River Rats defenseman Casey Borer is just happy to be back playing hockey, but the AHL's coaches, players and media recognized his comeback by voting him winner of the Fred T. Hunt Memorial award for sportsmanship, determination and dedication to hockey.

On Feb. 23, 2009, Borer suffered a broken vertebra in his neck when Albany's bus crashed on a snowy Massachusetts Turnpike. He returned to the ice Jan. 19.

WHAT A PARTY The Hershey Bears will host the 2011 All-Star Classic – the crown jewel of the AHL's 75th anniversary celebration during what will also be Hershey's 75th anniversary season.

— KEVIN OKLOBZIJA



SETUP MEN

Keith Aucoin
Hershey Bears

67



ASSISTS
Jason Krog, Chi 60
Charles Linglet, Spr 55
Alexandre Giroux, Her 53
David Desharnais, Ham 51
Corey Locke, Har 51
Danny Groulx, Wor 51

ON TOP



ASSISTS



Josef Vasicek has revived his career in the KHL, leading his team in scoring this year.

VASICEK ON TRACK

THE SKATES JOSEF VASICEK were expected to fill were perhaps a bit too big.

When the Carolina Hurricanes drafted him 91st overall in 1998, they did so with an eye to him replacing 30-goal center Keith Primeau.

Vasicek did help the Canes make the Stanley Cup final in 2002 and earned a Stanley Cup ring in 2006, despite playing only 31 regular season and playoff games combined after suffering a knee injury early in the campaign. But he never materialized into the No. 1 center the Canes expected him to be.

In the summer of 2006, Vasicek took the Stanley Cup to Hotel Hurricane in his hometown. He owns the hotel and lives in it during the off-season when he's back in the Czech Republic. The hotel includes a bar, appropriately named Cafe 63, after his jersey number.

Carolina traded Vasicek to Nashville in July 2006 before reacquiring him from the Predators in February of 2007. After spending the '07-08 season with the New York Islanders, the 29-year-old native of Havlickuv Brod in the former Czechoslovakia headed to Russia.

As of early April, the 6-foot-4, 205-pounder was in the engineer's seat with Lokomotiv Yaroslavl, which led HC MVD 3-2 in their seven-game playoff semifinal series. Vasicek had a chance to become the first player to win the Stanley Cup and the Gagarin Cup.

The line of Vasicek, Zbynek Irgl and Alexei Mikhnov was the best unit in Lokomotiv's quarterfinal series victory against Spartak Moscow. Mikhnov, Edmonton's first pick in the 2000 draft (17th overall), played only two NHL games for the Oilers. Irgl was selected by Nashville in the 2000 draft (197th overall), but never played in North America.

Vasicek has one year left on his contract with Yaroslavl. In the low-scoring KHL, he led the team in scoring during



the regular season with 21 goals and 48 points in 56 games and had six goals and 13 points through 15 playoff games.

"In the NHL, you're closer to the net and it's easier to shoot," he said.

Vasicek may return to the NHL, but he won't decide his future until his contract with Lokomotiv expires at the end of next season.

"We'll wait to see if there's any genuine interest from NHL clubs," he said.

For now, Vasicek is happy in Yaroslavl, where he and his fiancee, Misa, have an apartment together.

"The team takes care of us very well, we get everything we need," he said.

During the Olympics with the Czech Republic, Vasicek played mostly on a checking line between Ottawa's Milan Michalek and Metallurg Magnitogorsk's Tomas Rolinek. The Czechs lost 2-0 to Finland in the quarterfinal. Vasicek averaged just 9:21 of ice time per game, but, at better than 61 percent, was his team's top faceoff man.

"I thought we played solid hockey," Vasicek said. "In the quarterfinals, we just couldn't score enough. We couldn't convert our chances."

The Olympic experience added to a Vasicek resume that boasts a total of 460 NHL games with Carolina, Nashville and the Islanders, three World Championship appearances and one game at the 2004 World Cup of Hockey.

- DENIS GIBBONS

EYE ON EUROPE



AIK FANS FREAK OUT

In late March, a group of Skelleftea AIK fans stormed toward Rogle BK's bench after AIK lost its home game in the qualification series for two spots in the Elitserien next season.

One fan managed to get close enough to Rogle's coach to take a swing at him.

The Swedish federation's competition committee fined AIK 25,000 Swedish kronor (about \$3,500) and a week later the competition committee slapped the club with a further 75,000 kronor fine for a lack of security measures.

"The club's representatives think that they have taken the necessary measures, but we thought there was negligence," the committee chair, Cecilia Hager, told Swedish daily *Svenska Dagbladet*.

Swedish fans have been creating havoc in and outside arenas during the post-season.

In the quarterfinal series between the Frolunda Indians and Linkopings HC, Linkoping fans vandalized Frolundas's bus and broke its windshield.

During the semifinal series between Linkoping and Djurgarden, an arena window was broken and a Djurgarden fan threatened Linkoping coach, Slavomir Lener, verbally abusing the former coach of the Czech national team.

The incident prompted the police and arena security to hold a special meeting to discuss the events and their fallout.

- RISTO PAKARINEN

BAD START, BIG FINISH

ENTERING THIS season, expectations couldn't have been higher for Michigan junior center Louie Caporusso.

After a breakout sophomore campaign in which he led the Wolverines with 24 goals and was named an all-American and a Hobey Baker Award finalist, Caporusso was a pre-season first team all-CCHA selection and the go-to goal-scorer for a team that lost leading sniper Aaron Palushaj over the summer when he signed with the St. Louis Blues.

A pure goal-scorer with slick hands and a quick wrist shot, Caporusso struggled mightily out of the gate, taking five games to get his first point and scoring just five goals in his first 20 contests. He caught a bug and didn't practise much in the first two weeks of the season. Making matters worse, the rest of the Wolverines couldn't get it going either, losing five straight games at one point and having to fight to stay out of last place in the conference.

"It wasn't a fun time," Caporusso said. "I was sick, I missed practices and I got off to such a slow start.

"Last year I was able to surprise people and do better than what people thought I would do, as opposed to coming in this year with the bar raised a lot higher. I put a ton more pressure on myself."

Playing on a line with sophomores David Wohlberg and Luke Glendening, Caporusso turned it around at the beginning of 2010 by getting back to basics.

"I just tried to work harder, win all of my draws and be better defensively – things that would still help the team," he said. "That helped create scoring chances and I started to get some bounces and it helped my confidence. It was a learning experience."

Caporusso scored 16 goals in his final 25 games of the season, including both goals in a 2-1 win over Northern Michigan in the CCHA championship game. That victory gave the Wolverines a berth in the NCAA tournament



Louie Caporusso

Michigan Wolverines

Ht. 5'10

Wt. 185

Pos. C

Age 20

GP	G	A	Pts
45	21	22	43

Draft Status

Drafted 90th overall by Ottawa in 2007



AND COUNTING

57

Number of goals in three seasons with the Michigan Wolverines

for a record 20th consecutive campaign.

"He's got a nose for the net, but his confidence was at rock bottom the first half of the year," said Michigan coach Red Berenson. "We were after him to shoot the puck more and he started playing better because he started working harder and was rewarded for it."

– PHILIP COLVIN



MIAMI HOPES TO ERASE LOSS

After Miami's nightmare finish last year – blowing a last-minute, two-goal lead and losing in overtime to Boston University for the NCAA national championship – the team could've struggled this season. Instead, the RedHawks won the league title. "The way things ended last season was tough on the team, but at the same time it was good because it made us work harder," said captain Tommy Wingels. Back in the Frozen Four, the players wanted redemption, but unfortunately found only pain. The RedHawks were blown out 7-1 by Boston College in the semifinal.

– PHILIP COLVIN



NEXT YEAR FOR MAINE

The future looks bright for the University of Maine despite missing the NCAA tourney for the third straight year after losing to Boston College 7-6 in overtime in the Hockey East final. The team iced a freshman- and sophomore-laden lineup and still finished 19-17-3. "I was really impressed with the resiliency of this team," said coach Tim Whitehead. "We took a good step this year, but we aren't where we want to be yet." Most of the team will return next season, including Hobey Baker Award finalist Gustav Nyquist, the nation's leading scorer. "We can't wait until next year," Whitehead said.

– LARRY MAHONEY



10 MINUTES FOR SMILING

Going into the final game of his college career, Brown senior winger Aaron Volpatti needed five penalty minutes to break the Bears' single-season record. So when he drew a slashing penalty with 4:33 to play and the Bears holding a 2-0 lead over St. Lawrence, Volpatti got himself slapped with a 10-minute misconduct and left the game with a smile on his face and 115 PIM to break the old mark of 108 set by Ryan Mulhern in 1996. The 6-foot-2, 215-pound Volpatti, who can also score (17 goals in 37 games), signed a multi-year contract with Vancouver after his collegiate career ended.

– TOM BOGGIE



BEAT 'EM ONCE BUT NOT TWICE

Wisconsin will represent the WCHA in the Frozen Four final thanks to its remarkable sense of consistency. Of the 58 NCAA Division I teams, the Badgers were the only one to reach the national tournament without losing back-to-back games. That's only happened one other time in program history, which dates to 1921. The 1977 team did it en route to the NCAA title. The last school to win a national championship without losing consecutive games was another WCHA entry, Minnesota. The Gophers won NCAA titles in 2002 and '03 without losing back-to-back games either year.

– ANDY BAGGOT

GORMLEY'S GOT GAME

IT WAS NO surprise when Moncton Wildcats defenseman Brandon Gormley won the Michael Bossy Trophy as the Quebec League's top prospect.

"He doesn't make mistakes," said a scout. "He's not flashy. He's a Nicklas Lidstrom-type of player. He has that calmness, great first pass, pinches well, makes great decisions and moves the puck well."

"He'll be a top-10 pick. He's so smart with and without the puck. He's the best defenseman I've seen coming out of this league in a while."

Gormley, 18, was the first overall pick in the 2008 QMJHL draft and was named to the league's rookie all-star team last season. He's the No. 4 draft-eligible prospect in THN's Future Watch and was ranked fifth in the International Scouting Services' March report.

The native of Murray River, P.E.I. played in two world under-17 championships, captained Canada to gold at the 2009 Ivan Hlinka Memorial under-18 tournament

and suited up for Team QMJHL against Russia in the past two Subway Super Series.

Gormley, 6-foot-2 and 190-pounds, played bantam AAA and midget AAA at ages 14 and 15 for the prestigious Notre Dame Hounds program in Saskatchewan. He's a top-four blueliner on a Moncton team that's been No. 1 defensively in the QMJHL for two straight seasons.

"I'm surrounded by great veteran defensemen here and that's made all the difference in the world in my game," he said.

"I take pride in being able to play in all situations whether it's 5-on-5, power play or penalty-kill. I want to play in all key situations and be that go-to guy."

Gormley had 43 points in 58 games this season and was plus-31. He also played in the 2010 CHL Top Prospects Game.

"He's not going to wow you with end-to-end rushes or run guys through the boards," said Moncton coach Danny Flynn. "But he's very



Brandon Gormley

Moncton Wildcats

Ht. 6-2

Wt. 190

Pos. D

Age 18

GP	G	A	Pts
58	9	34	43

Draft Status

Ranked fifth by ISS for the 2010 NHL draft



AND COUNTING

70

Number of points in two seasons with the Moncton Wildcats.

mobile, he's got great poise with the puck, he's got a lot of quiet grit and great composure.

"I think he's been quietly on the NHL scouting radar since bantam. When you have a tall, rangy, defenseman with good feet, great poise and plays a really intelligent game, if you watch the game you keep coming back to him."

- NEIL HODGE



BRANDON BOY GLAD HE STAYED

When it came to Crunch time, Matt Calvert opted to spend 2009-10 with the Western League's Brandon Wheat Kings. The 20-year-old could have played for the AHL's Syracuse Crunch, but the allure of the 2010 Memorial Cup – which Brandon is hosting – was irresistible. "The Memorial Cup is one of the big reasons I decided to come back to play one more year here," Calvert said. "Brandon's my hometown and we have a great group of guys, so that was a huge calling card for me." Columbus drafted the left winger in the fifth round of '08 and signed him to a three-year contract in March after a 47-goal, 99-point regular season. *Editor's note: Jeff Skinner, not Jeff Shannon as stated in the April 12 issue, scored 50 goals for Kitchener this season.*

- ROB VANSTONE



SPITFIRES ROLL, NO MATTER WHAT

Windsor coach Bob Boughner is a master of the understatement. "We usually find a way to win," he said after the Spitfires cruised to their second straight Western Conference regular season title, despite manpower issues. The defending Memorial Cup champs lost 140 man-games to injury and not one player dressed for all 68 games. That trend continued into the playoffs after some late-season suspensions. They were also without six of their top players, including an entire line, during the World Junior Championship. "This has been a great learning experience for these guys," Boughner said, as Windsor became only the second OHL team with back-to-back 50-win seasons. The London Knights did it in '03-04 and '04-05.

- JIM CRESSMAN



MAYOR CALLS OUT COURTEAU

Rouyn-Noranda mayor Mario Provencher has asked for the resignation of Quebec League commissioner Gilles Courteau. In a radio interview, Courteau admitted the league should've given Huskies center Patrice Cormier a suspension for a specific number of games instead of for the rest of the regular season and playoffs. "I find this situation extremely unjust and shocking, especially after the comments of Mr. Courteau," Provencher said. "In this case, I have the impression that the decision was made rapidly without taking the time to evaluate." Cormier, Atlanta's top prospect in THN's Future Watch, knocked out Quebec Remparts defenseman Mikael Tam with an elbow in January. Rouyn-Noranda lost two appeals to have his suspension reduced.

- NEIL HODGE



ECHL

GRIZZLED VET LEADS THE WAY

Utah left winger Ryan Kinasewich was named a first-team all-ECHL selection after scoring 48 goals and 103 points in 59 games, including 30 multiple-point contests and 13 with three or more points. The Grizzlies captain led the league in goals, shots (332) and power play points (41). Kinasewich's banner year also included a starting spot in this year's all-star game. The 6-foot-2, 202-pounder's play helped Utah lock up a playoff spot for the fourth time in his five seasons with the team. Kinasewich, 26, is Utah's all-time scoring leader with 156 goals and 356 points.

- MIKE MASTOVICH

UNITED STATES LEAGUE

ICES'S DOWD OFF TO CLOUDS

Center Nic Dowd's was almost over after he was cut by Des Moines then let go by the North American League's St. Louis Bandits last season. But after a trade to NAHL Wenatchee, he scored 49 points in 43 contests and 22 points in 13 playoff games, prompting Los Angeles to draft him in 2009 (198th overall). This season with the Indiana Ice, Dowd had 16 goals and 39 points in 46 games and will move on to St. Cloud State in the fall. "I can always improve offensively," Dowd said, "but I'm working on defense. That's how (Indiana) coach (Jeff) Blashill is trying to make me the best player I can be."

- PAUL SHAHEEN

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE

BOUCHARD ALL-TIME BEST

It happened quietly, but Muskegon's Robin Bouchard became the all-time leading minor league scorer this season with 683 goals. "It's something, absolutely, that I'm proud of," Bouchard said. "I've scored a lot of goals and managed to mix in five championships... That's a pretty good combination." Bouchard, 37, tied the record with a hat trick against Fort Wayne, the team he walked out on in '96, a decision he regrets. "Of course, it was a bad decision for my career," he said. "I could have stayed at a higher level. You never know what could have happened... But it turned out pretty well."

- JUSTIN COHN

CENTRAL LEAGUE

MORE WOES IN ARIZONA

The Arizona Sundogs lost a franchise record 34 games in '09-10. And that's not all they lost. The league removed Consolidated Sports Holdings Inc. as the Sundogs' ownership group. "(CSHI) had not been living up to the terms of its operating and licensing agreement in both monetary and non-monetary ways, and thereby defaulted on its license," CHL director of operations Bob Hoffman told the *Arizona Republic*. The league reluctantly assumed control of the franchise while seeking new ownership. Arizona's attendance dropped from 4,310 in '07-08 to 2,647 this season.

- DAVID HENRY



SOUTHERN PRO LEAGUE

RECORD YEAR, RARE DOUBLE

For the second time in four years, Fayetteville's Rob Sich was named the league's MVP. The 26-year-old set a league record with 63 goals, shattering the old mark of 44. Sich also had nine game-winning tallies, 98 points, a plus-19 rating and 213 penalty minutes while scoring in 39 of his team's 56 games. He joins Knoxville's Kevin Swider as the league's only two-time MVPs. Mississippi teammates Steve Weidlich and Bill Zaniboni were named defenseman and goalie of the year. Weidlich led all D-men with 42 points while Zaniboni tied for most wins (23) and led in GAA (2.48).

- BRETT FRIEDLANDER



CANADIAN JR. A

DAUPHIN FANS READY TO ROLL

Manitoba will be a junior hockey Mecca in May. Not only is Brandon hosting the Memorial Cup, but Dauphin, the Manitoba League champion, hosts the RBC Cup May 1-9. "It's pretty big, the community's really excited about it," said Steven Shamanski, the Dauphin Kings captain. "It's pretty loud, they all bring horns and noisemakers, they're very supportive." Dauphin had a team-record 50 wins this season and two alumni – Jeff Penner and Brock Trotter – made their NHL debuts. "People enjoy their hockey here," said Kings coach-GM Marlin Murray. "It's a great place to coach."

- NATHAN WHITE



CANADIAN UNIVERSITY

HOTHAM GOLD FOR HUSKIES

Andrew Hotham, a first-team all-Canadian defenseman, received the Major W.J. (Danny) McLeod award as University Cup MVP after leading the Saint Mary's Huskies in scoring with five points en route to the university's first ever CIS championship. The Barrie, Ont., native had two goals and three assists, including a goal in a 3-2 overtime win in the final over the Alberta Golden Bears. Saint Mary's was playing for CIS gold for the fifth time in school history. The Huskies played in four consecutive University Cup finals from 1970 to 1973, but lost all of them to the Toronto Varsity Blues.

- JEFF RENAUD



THE WOMEN'S GAME

WHITECAPS WIN WITH 11

U.S. Olympians Jenny Potter and Julie Chu were two of only 11 skaters available to the Minnesota Whitecaps when they beat the Brampton Thunder 4-0 to win the Clarkson Cup. The Whitecaps and 10 other senior women's teams in North America are still searching for a winning financial formula so teams can pay players. Canadian veteran Jayna Hefford, who plays for the Thunder, said she's not giving up hope. "This is the best hockey we can play," she told the *Toronto Star* after the Cup final in Richmond Hill, Ont. "It's huge for us and we need to keep the league growing as well."

- CHRISTINE RIVET

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Inside the Numbers

American Hockey League

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division	GP	W	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	P
Worcester (SJ)	77	48	23	3	3	268	231	102
Portland (Buf)	77	44	22	7	4	234	203	99
Manchester (LA)	77	42	26	3	6	206	188	93
Lowell (NJ)	77	37	30	4	6	225	221	84
Bridgeport (NYI)	77	36	31	4	6	192	215	82
Hartford (NYR)	77	33	33	6	5	219	243	77
Providence (Bos)	77	35	36	5	1	201	215	76
Springfield (Edm)	77	24	38	11	4	193	283	63
East Division	GP	W	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	P
Hershey (Wsh)	78	59	16	0	3	334	192	121
Albany (Car)	78	42	28	3	5	238	225	92
WB/Scranton (Pit)	77	39	33	2	3	231	223	83
Norfolk (TB)	78	38	34	3	3	202	206	82
Binghamton (Ott)	77	34	34	6	3	242	251	77
Syracuse (Cib)	78	33	39	3	3	218	265	72
Adirondack (Phi)	78	32	39	3	4	192	242	71

Western Conference

North Division	GP	W	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	P
Hamilton (Mtl)	78	51	17	3	7	264	175	112
Rochester (Fla)	78	43	32	2	1	247	239	89
Abbotsford (Cgy)	78	37	29	5	7	208	226	86
Manitoba (Van)	78	38	33	5	2	199	229	83
Lake Erie (Col)	78	34	36	1	7	230	247	76
Toronto (Tor)	77	32	34	6	5	185	250	75
Grand Rapids (Det)	77	32	38	3	4	232	257	71
West Division	GP	W	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	P
Chicago (All)	78	48	23	1	6	257	202	103
Texas (Dal)	78	46	25	3	4	235	189	99
Rockford (Chi)	78	43	29	3	3	219	221	92
Milwaukee (Nsh)	78	40	29	2	7	228	217	89
Peoria (StL)	78	38	32	2	6	230	243	84
San Antonio (Phx)	77	34	31	5	7	225	235	80
Houston (Min)	77	32	33	7	5	195	216	76

ECHL

American Conference

East Division	GP	W	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	P
Elmira (Ott)	72	37	26	6	3	275	231	83
Reading (Tor/Bos)	72	37	29	1	5	254	275	80
Trenton (NJ)	72	33	30	4	5	244	252	75
Johnstown (Min)	72	18	43	7	4	215	307	47
North Division	GP	W	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	P
Kalamazoo (Phi/SJ)	72	42	20	6	4	273	243	94
Cincinnati (Mil/Nas)	72	44	25	1	2	235	200	91
Toledo (Det/Chi)	72	35	30	2	5	254	274	77
Wheeling (Pit)	72	33	32	2	5	240	249	73
South Division	GP	W	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	P
Charlotte (NYR/Col)	72	43	21	4	4	253	223	94
S. Carolina (Wsh)	72	41	19	6	6	248	216	94
Florida (Car/Fla)	72	38	25	4	5	234	221	85
Gwinnett (At/Clb)	72	31	33	5	3	243	277	70
National Conference	GP	W	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	P
Pacific Division	GP	W	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	P
Bakersfield (Ana)	72	38	29	4	1	232	243	81
Las Vegas (Phx)	72	34	30	4	4	234	257	76
Stockton (Edm)	72	33	29	2	8	235	241	76
Ontario (LA)	72	31	31	3	7	214	229	72
West Division	GP	W	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	P
Idaho (Dal)	72	48	17	2	5	260	191	103
Alaska (StL)	72	36	28	4	4	232	240	80
Utah (NYI/Cgy)	72	34	29	4	5	260	253	77
Victoria (Van)	72	34	32	4	2	230	243	74

ECHL scoring leaders

	GP	G	A	P	PIM
1. Keith Aucoin, Her	70	35	67	102	43
2. Alexandre Giroux, Her	67	46	53	99	34
3. Corey Locke, Hfd	74	29	51	80	44
4. Jerome Samson, Alb	74	37	41	78	66
5. David Desharnais, Ham	59	27	51	78	34
6. Brock Trotter, Ham	74	36	41	77	56
7. Charles Linglet, Spg	75	19	55	74	36
8. Jason Krog, Chi	76	14	60	74	32
9. Mark Mancari, Por	72	27	44	71	55
10. Andrew Gordon, Her	77	36	34	70	57
11. Martin St-Pierre, Bin	74	24	46	70	50
12. Dustin Jeffrey, WBS	74	23	47	70	16
13. T.J. Hensick, LE	56	20	50	70	25
14. Jamie Johnson, Roc	78	26	43	69	24
15. Ryan Keller, Bin	70	34	34	68	48
16. Josh Hennessy, Bin	75	30	37	67	26
17. Chris Bourque, Her	47	22	44	66	24
18. Tyler Ennis, Por	69	23	42	65	12
19. Danny Groulx, Wor	77	12	52	64	76
20. Brett MacLean, SA	73	30	33	63	38
21. Darren Haydar, LE	64	23	40	63	60
22. Jon Matsumoto, Adi	78	29	32	61	48
23. Steven Zalewski, Wor	75	21	39	60	18
24. Clay Wilson, Roc	74	14	46	60	58
25. Kyle Turris, SA	73	22	37	59	56
26. Chris Taylor, Roc	78	16	43	59	89
27. Tim Stapleton, Chi	71	29	29	58	18
28. Aaron Gagnon, Tex	77	27	31	58	42
29. Brian Willsie, LE	74	26	31	57	44
30. Mike Santorelli, Mil	55	25	32	57	20
31. Lars Eller, Peo	70	18	39	57	84
32. Pascal Pelletier, Peo	78	17	40	57	62
33. Brett Sterling, Chi	55	34	22	56	38
34. Jeremy Williams, GR	74	26	30	56	55

	GP	G	A	P	PIM
26. James Sixsmith, Uth	41	24	40	64	27
27. Andrew Sarauer, Rea	71	28	35	63	65
28. Keith Johnson, SC	72	28	35	63	34
29. Barret Ehgoetz, Cin	69	23	40	63	48
30. Wes Goldie, Vic	72	44	18	62	31
31. Connor Shields, Joh	70	28	34	62	56
32. Jeff Prough, Tre	61	30	31	61	60
33. Colin Hemingway, Sto	62	24	37	61	54
34. Gregg Johnson, SC	70	21	40	61	50
35. Chanse Fitzpatrick, Joh	66	30	30	60	160
36. T.J. Fox, Whe	64	26	34	60	42
37. Greg Hodgeboom, Ont	72	32	27	59	48
38. Sam Fforek, Kal	71	26	33	59	41
39. Dustin Sproat, Cin	66	24	35	59	71
40. Oren Eizenman, Sto	61	21	38	59	61

ECHL goaltending leaders

	GP	W-L-OT	SO	GAA	Sv%
1. Ryan Mince, Cha	44	26-14-3	1	2.77	.913
2. Todd Ford, SC	28	18-7-2	1	2.79	.910
3. David Shantz, Vic	28	18-5-4	2	2.88	.910
4. Richard Bachman, Ida	35	22-7-4	4	2.28	.910
5. Andrew Perugini, Sto	47	22-15-5	3	2.94	.908
6. Curtis Darling, Ont	59	21-25-7	3	2.86	.908



Ontario Hockey League

Easter Conference									
East Division		GP	W	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	PTS
Ottawa	68	37	23	5	3	246	219	82	
Kingston	68	33	30	2	3	229	251	71	
Peterborough	68	29	35	1	3	231	277	62	
Oshawa	68	24	39	3	2	216	299	53	
Belleville	68	20	40	2	6	189	263	48	
Central Division		GP	W	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	PTS
Barrie	68	57	9	0	2	327	186	116	
Mississauga	68	42	20	4	2	222	175	90	
Brampton	68	25	29	7	7	167	181	64	
Niagara	68	26	34	2	6	191	233	60	
Sudbury	68	26	35	4	3	193	267	59	

Western Conference									
Midwest Division		GP	W	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	PTS
London	68	49	16	1	2	273	208	101	
Kitchener	68	42	19	4	3	286	236	91	
Guelph	68	35	29	3	1	242	255	74	
Erie	68	33	28	5	2	257	259	73	
Owen Sound	68	27	33	4	4	221	276	62	
West Division		GP	W	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	PTS
Windsor	68	50	12	1	5	331	203	106	
Plymouth	68	38	27	1	2	245	201	79	
Sault Ste. Marie	68	36	27	1	4	237	213	77	
Saginaw	68	34	27	4	3	240	230	75	
Sarnia	68	17	46	3	2	184	295	39	

OHL scoring leaders

	GP	G	A	P	PIM
1. Tyler Seguin, Ply	63	48	58	106	54
2. Taylor Hall, Wsr	57	40	66	106	56
3. Luke Pither, Bar [Phi]	67	36	58	94	44
4. Taylor Beck, Gue (Nsh)	61	39	54	93	54
5. Nazem Kadri, Lon [Tor]	56	35	58	93	105
6. Zack Torquato, Erie	68	31	62	93	72
7. Jeff Skinner, Kit	64	50	40	90	72
8. Chris MacKinnon, Kit	64	29	61	90	78
9. Jordan Skellert, Sag	66	26	62	88	16
10. Mike Cazzola, Erie	68	36	50	86	74
11. Greg McKegg, Erie	67	37	48	85	32
12. Jeremy Morin, Kit [Atl]	58	47	36	83	76
13. Cody Lindsay, Ott	68	39	43	82	57
14. Alex Hutchings, Bar [TB]	68	47	34	81	58
15. Peter Holland, Gue (Ana)	59	30	50	80	40
16. Jason Akeson, Kit	65	24	56	80	24
17. Justin Shugg, Wsr	67	39	40	79	43
18. Tyler Toffoli, Ott	65	37	42	79	54
19. Bryan Cameron, Bar	62	53	25	78	68
20. Adam Henrique, Wsr [NJ]	54	38	39	77	57
21. Michael Letta, Gue (Nsh)	58	33	40	73	157
22. Pat Daley, Pbg	64	28	45	73	32
23. Greg Nemisz, Wsr [Cgy]	51	34	36	70	50

	GP	G	A	P	PIM
24. Nick Crawford, Sag/Bar [Buf]	68	11	59	70	24
25. Nathan Moon, Kgn [Pit]	65	27	42	69	90
26. Anthony Luciani, Erie	68	38	30	68	67
27. Eric O'Dell, Sby [Atl]	68	33	35	68	63
28. Eric Wellwood, Wsr [Phi]	65	31	37	68	36
29. Bobby Mignardi, OS	67	32	35	67	58
30. Steven Tarasuk, Lon	67	19	48	67	59
31. Jacob Muzzin, SSM [LA]	64	15	52	67	76
32. Christian Thomas, Osh	64	41	25	66	27
33. Andrew Agozzino, Nia	66	37	29	66	95
34. Brett Thompson, SSM	67	42	23	65	34
35. Mathew Sisca, Gue	68	35	30	65	59
36. Josh Shalla, Sag	68	32	33	65	62
37. Vern Cooper, SSM	61	25	40	65	31
38. Alexander Burmistrov, Bar	62	22	43	65	49
39. Matt Puempel, Pbg	59	33	31	64	43
40. Ethan Werek, Kgn [NYR]	57	30	34	64	68

OHL goaltending leaders

	GP	W-L-OT	SO	GAA	Sv%
1. Mavric Parks, Kit/Bar	33	25-5-2	2	2.34	.930
2. Matt Hackett, Ply (Min)	56	33-18-3	4	2.62	.925
3. Robin Lehner, SSM [Ott]	17	27-13-3	5	2.80	.918

WHL scoring leaders

	GP	G	A	P	PIM
1. Brandon Kozun, Cgy [LA]	65	32	75	107	50
2. Jordan Eberle, Reg [Edm]	57	50	56	106	32
3. Jordan Weal, Reg	72	35	67	102	54
4. Matt Calvert, Bra [CBJ]	68	47	52	99	70
5. Brayden Schenn, Bra [LA]	59	34	65	99	55
6. Craig Cunningham, Van	72	37	60	97	44
7. Mitch Wahl, Spo [Cgy]	72	30	66	96	96
8. Dustin Sylvester, Koo	68	35	58	93	41
9. Cody Eakin, SC [Wsh]	70	47	44	91	71
10. Scott Glennie, Bra [Dal]	66	32	57	89	50
11. Kyle Beach, Spo [Chi]	68	52	34	86	186
12. Aaron Lewandowski, Bra	65	37	49	86	46
13. Derek Hulak, Sask	72	31	53	84	71
14. Brendan Shinnimin, TC	70	27	55	82	82
15. Chris Francis, Por	72	26	56	82	20
16. Brendan Gallagher, Van	72	41	40	81	111
17. C.J. Stretch, Kam	68	30	51	81	81
18. Willie Coetzee, RD [Det]	72	29	52	81	32
19. Shane Harper, Eve [Phi]	72	42	38	80	38
20. Jay Fehr, Bra	66	26	54	80	45
21. Justin Dowling, SC	72	32	46	78	19
22. Tyler Shattock, Kam/Cgy [StL]	72	30	48	78	91
23. Linden Vey, MH [LA]	72	24	51	75	34
24. Walker Wintoneak, Sask	70	25	49	74	36
25. Joel Broda, Cgy [Wsh]	66	39	34	73	65

	GP	G	A	P	PIM
26. Justin Feser, TC	72	36	37	73	28
27. Brooks Macek, TC	72	21	52	73	26
28. Ryan Howse, Chi [Cgy]	72	47	25	72	27
29. Craig McCallum, PA	72	27	45	72	28
30. Kevin Connauton, Van [Van]	69	24	48	72	107
31. Tyson Barrie, Kel [Col]	63	19	53	72	31
32. Johnny Lazo, TC	72	39	32	71	27
33. Tyler Johnson, Spo	64	36	35	71	32
34. Wacey Hamilton, MH	67	24	47	71	100
35. Prab Rai, Sea [Van]	67	41	28	69	20
36. Tyler Maxwell, Eve	72	33	36	69	43
37. Shane McColgan, Kel	71	25	44	69	45
38. Ryan Johansen, Por	71	25	44	69	53
39. Kellan Tochkin, Eve [Van]	72	28	40	68	64
40. Brad Ross, Por	71	27	41	68	203

WHL goaltending leaders

	GP	W-L-OT	SO	GAA	Sv%
1. T. Heemskerk, Eve [SJ]	42	24-12-4	4	2.34	.927
2. Kent Simpson, Eve	34	22-9-1	1	2.26	.925
3. James Reid, Spo	60	38-16-5	5	2.41	.920
4. Martin Jones, Cgy [LA]	48	36-11-1	8	2.21	.919
5. Drew Owsley, TC	50	33-11-2	4	2.51	.918
6. Calvin Pickard, Sea [Nsh]	62	16-34-12	3	3.09	.914

QMJHL scoring leaders

	GP	G	A	P	PIM
1. Sean Couturier, Dru	68	41	55	96	47
2. N. Deschamps, Chi/Mct [Ana]	64	39	57	96	40
3. Gabriel Dumont, Dru [Mtl]	62	51	42	93	127
4. Philip-Michael Devos, Vic	68	35	58	93	49
5. Luke Adam, CB [Buf]	56	49	41	90	75
6. Dmitri Kugryshev, Que [Wsh]	66	29	58	87	52
7. Mike Hoffman, SNB [Ott]	56	46	39	85	38
8. Felix Lefrancois, Rim	66	39	44	83	69
9. Michael Kirkpatrick, SNB	67	29	54	83	38
10. Gabriel Levesque, RN	67	24	58	82	16
11. Nicholas Petersen, SNB [Pit]	59	39	40	79	55
12. J. Champagne, PEI/Vic [Tor]	65	38	41	79	47
13. Eric Faille, Bat	68	31	46	77	26
14. Philippe Cornet, RN [Edm]	65	28	49	77	32
15. David Savard, Mct [CBJ]	64	13	64	77	36
16. Brandon Hynes, Vic	68	41	34	75	65
17. Marc-Olivier Vallerand, Que	68	34	41	75	83
18. Tomas Kubalik, Vic [CBJ]	58	33	42	75	95
19. P-A Vandall, Sha	55	31	44	75	36
20. Simon Olsson, BC	64	26	49	75	33

QMJHL goaltending leaders

	GP	W-L	SO	GAA	Sv%
1. Jake Allen, Dru [StL]	45	29-14	4	2.20	.922
2. Kevin Poulin, Vic [NYI]	54	35-16	7	2.63	.916
3. M-A Gelinas, Sha	47	30-15	4	2.60	.915



Inside the Numbers

Atlantic Hockey

Conference standing	GP	W	L	T	GF	GA	PTS
RIT	28	22	5	1	109	51	45
Sacred Heart	28	16	9	3	99	86	35
Air Force	28	14	8	6	86	70	34
Mercyhurst	28	15	10	3	103	70	33
Canisius	28	13	11	4	97	89	30
Army	28	10	12	6	80	83	26
Holy Cross	28	10	13	5	70	74	25
Bentley	28	10	15	3	78	105	23
Connecticut	28	6	19	3	48	91	15
American Int'l	28	5	19	4	59	110	14

Hockey East

Conference standing	GP	W	L	T	GF	GA	PTS
New Hampshire	27	15	6	6	98	77	36
Boston College	27	16	8	3	99	61	35
Boston University	27	13	12	2	93	91	28
Maine	27	13	12	2	95	90	28
Mass.-Lowell	27	12	11	4	82	72	28
Massachusetts	27	13	14	0	72	86	26
Merrimack	27	12	13	2	82	85	26
Vermont	27	9	11	7	78	82	25
Northeastern	27	11	14	2	70	87	24
Providence	27	5	18	4	46	84	14

Western Collegiate

Conference standing	GP	W	L	T	GF	GA	PTS
Denver	28	19	5	4	92	65	42
Wisconsin	28	17	8	3	109	76	37
St. Cloud State	28	15	9	4	92	84	34
Minnesota-Duluth	28	16	11	1	90	77	33
North Dakota	28	15	10	3	89	61	33
Colorado College	28	12	13	3	88	85	27
Minnesota	28	12	14	2	80	76	26
Alaska-Anchorage	28	9	17	2	66	106	20
Minnesota State	28	9	17	2	75	92	20
Michigan Tech	28	4	24	0	59	118	8

Czech Republic

GP	W	L	OTW	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	
Plzen	52	29	10	6	7	162	128	106
Zlin	52	25	15	9	3	154	129	96
Pardubice	52	27	14	4	7	179	131	96
Votkovice	52	21	15	9	7	161	136	88
Sparta Praha	52	21	16	9	6	157	132	87
Trinec	52	20	17	8	7	153	148	83
Slavia Praha	52	20	24	6	2	142	151	74
Liberec	52	21	24	2	5	141	151	72
C. Budejovice	52	15	18	7	12	130	151	71
Litvinov	52	19	24	4	5	152	193	70
Karlovy Vary	52	17	23	3	9	135	152	66
Brno	52	16	26	5	5	123	150	63
Ml. Boleslav	52	12	24	10	6	135	148	62
Kladno	52	15	28	4	5	133	157	58

Finland

JYP	GP	W	L	OTW	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
KalPa	58	31	15	6	6	173	132	111
Lukko	58	31	16	5	6	164	135	109
HIFK	58	30	20	6	2	185	152	104
HPK	58	26	22	3	7	153	154	91
TPS	58	25	25	6	2	169	169	89
Tappara	58	24	24	4	6	181	181	86
Blues	58	19	23	9	7	145	155	82
Karpat	58	21	26	7	4	150	163	81
Jokerit	58	22	28	4	4	144	157	78
SaiPa	58	20	27	6	5	154	176	77
Pelicans	58	18	27	6	7	166	197	73
Assat	58	18	29	7	4	151	170	72
Ilves	58	17	34	0	7	155	191	58

Sweden

HV 71	GP	W	L	T	OTW	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Djurgarden	55	25	16	14	6	3	188	155	95
Linkoping	55	26	17	12	2	3	161	130	92
Skelleftea	55	27	20	8	3	2	163	139	92
Farjestad	55	25	20	10	2	5	132	144	87
Brynas	55	20	17	18	6	1	144	124	84
Frolunda	55	22	22	11	1	1	155	156	78
Timra	55	18	19	18	3	7	138	150	75
MODO	55	16	20	19	7	4	161	150	74
Lulea	55	19	23	13	4	7	139	143	74
Sodertalje	55	14	27	14	7	3	131	176	63
Rogle	55	13	30	12	4	6	125	175	55

Central Collegiate

Conference standing	GP	W	L	T	SW	GF	GA	PTS
Miami	28	21	2	5	2	100	39	70
Michigan State	28	14	8	6	2	73	64	50
Ferris State	28	13	9	6	4	79	66	49
Northern Michigan	28	13	9	6	3	86	72	48
Alaska	28	11	9	8	4	73	70	45
Nebraska-Omaha	28	13	12	3	2	85	83	44
Michigan	28	14	13	1	0	83	69	43
Ohio State	28	10	12	6	4	81	93	40
Notre Dame	28	9	12	7	2	65	76	36
Lake Superior	28	10	15	3	2	66	90	35
Bowling Green	28	4	18	6	5	58	102	23
Western Michigan	28	4	17	7	2	62	87	21

Eastern College

Conference standing	GP	W	L	T	GF	GA	PTS
Yale	22	15	5	2	92	72	32
Cornell	22	14	5	3	74	43	31
Union	22	12	6	4	81	60	28
Colgate	22	12	8	2	78	70	26
Rensselaer	22	10	9	3	64	58	23
St. Lawrence	22	9	8	5	62	61	23
Quinnipiac	22	11	11	0	71	63	22
Princeton	22	8	12	2	65	76	18
Dartmouth	22	7	12	3	69	79	17
Harvard	22	7	12	3	61	70	17
Brown	22	6	12	4	64	95	16
Clarkson	22	4	15	3	50	84	11

College Hockey America

Conference standing	GP	W	L	T	GF	GA	PTS
Bemidji State	18	14	3	1	71	40	29
Robert Morris	18	6	9	3	47	60	15
Alabama-Huntsville	18	6	10	2	42	54	14
Niagara	18	6	10	2	53	59	14

Germany

GP	W	L	OTW	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	
Eisbaren Berlin	36	36	11	2-1	4-2	209	156	123
Frankfurt	56	28	20	2-1	4-1	191	161	98
Wolfsburg	56	27	19	3-2	3-2	192	152	97
Hannover	56	24	14	2-4	2-1	169	177	94
Thomas Sabo	56	27	20	1-4	0-4	152	158	91
DEG	56	25	21	2-3	3-2	181	181	89
Ingolstadt	56	24	22	5-3	2-0	105	181	87
Augsburger	56	24	21	2-1	5-0	201	188	87
Mannheim	56	23	22	2-4	2-3	177	177	84
Kolner	56	19	26	3-4	3-1	178	190	74
Iserlohn	56	18	26	4-3	4-1	166	183	74
Krefeld	56	20	28	1-0	3-4	167	173	72
Poprad	47	24	18	0	5	155	132	77
Nitra	47	21	18	5	3	127	130	76
Zvolen	47	20	19	3	5	132	126	71
Trenčín	47	17	23	3	4	159	167	61
Zilina	47	12	23	8	4	126	158	56
Spis. N. Ves	47	13	27	2	5	125	168	48
L. Mikuláš	47	12	28	2	5	129	185	45
Orange 20	36	4	31	1	0	70	178	14

Switzerland

GP	W	L	OT	SO	GF	GA	PTS

</tbl_r



Inside the Numbers

KHL

	GP	W	L	OT	SO	GF	GA	PTS
Salavat Yulaev	56	37	8	4-1	3-3	215	116	129
SKA	56	36	10	1-3	3-3	192	118	122
Metallurg Mg	56	34	15	2-0	4-1	167	111	115
HC MVD	56	30	15	1-4	0-6	160	135	102
Dyn. Moscow	56	28	16	2-3	3-4	166	151	101
Atlant	56	24	16	4-2	9-1	173	137	101
Lokomotiv	56	26	17	3-4	2-4	163	132	96
Ak Bars	56	25	18	4-2	4-3	159	128	96
Neftekhimik	56	27	21	3-0	1-4	176	166	93
Spartak	56	24	20	4-0	4-4	178	168	92
Avangard	56	24	18	2-4	2-6	152	128	90
CSKA	56	22	21	3-1	5-4	148	135	87
Din. Riga	56	23	22	1-3	3-4	174	175	84
Barrys	56	20	23	5-1	1-6	169	173	79
Torpedo	56	22	27	1-4	1-1	154	163	75
Severstal	56	16	23	2-2	7-6	151	162	74
Din. Minsk	56	17	31	1-0	5-2	139	164	65
Traktor	56	18	31	0-2	3-2	137	192	64
Avtomobilist	56	14	28	2-4	6-2	127	159	64
Sibir	56	15	30	2-1	5-3	147	190	63
Amur	56	12	29	3-2	6-4	129	187	60
Lada	56	14	31	0-3	2-6	115	173	55
Vityaz	56	13	33	3-3	2-2	142	216	54
Metallurg Nk	56	13	33	1-5	2-2	105	159	52

KHL scoring leaders

	GP	G	A	P	PIM
1. Sergei Mozyakin, Atl [Clb]	56	27	39	66	44
2. Maxim Sushinsky, SKA	56	27	38	65	87
3. Alexei Yashin, SKA	56	18	46	64	38
4. Alexander Radulov, Sal [Nsh]	54	24	39	63	62
5. Mattias Weinhandl, DyM	56	26	34	60	36
6. Patrick Thoresen, Sal	56	24	33	57	71
7. Marcel Hossa, DiR	56	35	20	55	44
8. Branko Radivojevic, Spa	56	18	37	55	115
9. Jiri Hudler, DyM	54	19	35	54	18
10. Sergei Zinov'yev, Sal	47	17	36	53	83
11. Jozef Stumpel, Bar	54	13	39	52	26
12. Maxim Spiridonov, Bar	56	24	26	50	48
13. Alexei Morozov, AkB	50	26	23	49	24
14. Josef Vasicek, Lok	56	21	27	48	54
15. Geoff Platt, DiM	56	26	18	44	77
16. Vadim Shipachev, Sev	55	14	30	44	30
17. Jan Bulis, Atl	56	25	18	43	68
18. Josef Straka, Sev	53	21	22	43	65
19. Denis Parshin, CSK [Col]	56	21	22	43	28
20. Jaromir Jagr, Ava	51	22	20	42	50
21. Danis Zaripov, AkB	52	16	26	42	58
22. Sergei Zubov, SKA	53	10	32	42	32

	GP	G	A	P	PIM
23. Petr Cajanek, SKA	52	21	20	41	74
24. Kevin Dallman, Bar	55	14	27	41	90
25. Stanislav Chistov, MMg	47	18	21	39	28
26. Nikolai Zherdev, Atl	52	13	26	39	79
27. Jarkko Immonen, AkB	56	13	26	39	26
28. Niklas Persson, Nef	55	13	25	38	30
29. Pavel Brendl, Tor	51	27	10	37	67
30. Alexander Boykov, Sib	56	16	21	37	50
31. Evgeny Lapenkov, Spa	54	13	24	37	18
32. Evgeny Schachkov, Tra	51	22	14	36	143
33. Igor Grigorenko, Sal	55	22	14	36	40
34. Linus Omark, DyM (Edm)	56	20	16	36	34
35. Stefan Ruzicka, Spa	56	16	20	36	72

KHL goaltending leaders

	GP	W-L-SO	SO	GAA	Sv%
1. Petri Vehanen, AkB	25	15-5-5	3	1.73	.935
2. A. Yeremenko, Sal	32	24-5-0	2	1.76	.931
3. V. Koshechkin, MMg (TB)	49	25-16-8	8	1.96	.927
4. Ilya Proskuryakov, MMg	32	19-8-4	4	1.92	.927
5. Maxim Sokolov, SKA	16	8-6-1	3	1.88	.927

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OUTRAGEOUS MISFORTUNE

When a judge awarded Sergei Fedorov \$60 million the story didn't end. He still has to collect from the mysterious Joe Zada

BY M.L. ELRICK

IN HIS PRIME, Sergei Fedorov was an ultra-slick skater, but in terms of elusiveness he has nothing on a mysterious former stable boy from whom he's trying to collect a lost fortune.

A lawsuit won last August by Fedorov brought into prominence an unlikely friendship between the former NHL star and Joe Zada, the jet-setter whose wealth materialized almost overnight.

Prior to their meeting at a Porsche dealership more than a decade ago, the only connection between Fedorov and Zada would have been Lakeshore Drive, one of the most prestigious addresses in metro Detroit. A winding boulevard on the banks of Lake St. Clair, it has for years been home to auto executives, Motown divas and others with deep pockets.

The only thing separating the mansions from Canada is a ribbon of asphalt and a big body of water filled with sailboats and freighters. Zada lives on the street, which changes name to Jefferson Avenue as it approaches Detroit and eventually runs alongside Joe Louis Arena, where Fedorov worked for the first 13 years of his NHL career.

But no one is exactly sure how Zada came to afford his massive home on the lake or amass the rest of his fortune.

Fedorov and his lawyers accused Zada of running a Ponzi-like scheme. They also alleged Zada conspired with bankers to put him on the hook for millions in loans.

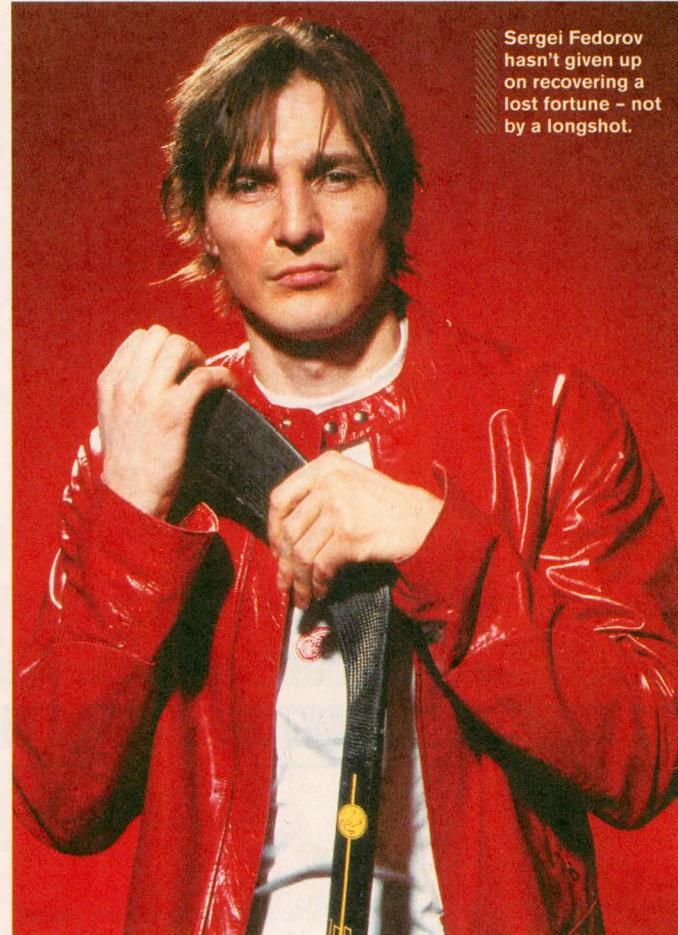
Lawyers for the banks have denied wrongdoing. Ditto for Zada, who says the millions he owes Fedorov is a loan, one he hopes to repay soon. In the meantime, Zada refuses to say where Fedorov's money went, where his own wealth came from and how he can pay the

\$75 million in judgments others have won against him in Michigan and Florida courts.

Zada said in July he considers Fedorov a friend, that he is still committed to that friendship and that he will repay his debt. Since then, a judge ordered Zada to pay Fedorov \$60 million. Fedorov attorney Marc Beginin says he's still trying to collect.

Mark Kriger, an attorney for Zada, told The Hockey News: "We don't feel that the press is the appropriate forum to address these allegations. We feel the appropriate forum is the courtroom."

Zada's backstory is shrouded with intrigue. He was the youngest child of an immigrant family who was raised, according to his niece, by his mother in Detroit, while his father tried to support them by working in Cameroon. It was in high school, while helping out at a local stable, that Zada decided on an equestrian career. He gave lessons and eventually managed stables. If the job was spiritually rewarding, it was not lucrative. In 1988, at age 30, he filed for bankruptcy, claiming he earned \$640 a month while trying to pay off a Toyota Tercel with 270,000 miles on it.



Sergei Fedorov hasn't given up on recovering a lost fortune – not by a longshot.

"I used to bring him my leftover food," said Jane Nutter, a friend at the time. "He truly, truly had no money."

Ten years after filing for bankruptcy, Zada bought the biggest home in Wellington, Fla., an exclusive community catering to polo players and the equestrian elite. After renovations, the home measured in at more than 22,600 square feet and eventually sold for \$12.5 million. He also built a marble-floored, \$12-million horse-training estate.

Zada quickly established himself in Wellington as a generous benefactor of charities and equestrian events and began doing business with new friends.

One such associate, Olympic equestrian Robert Dover, said Zada didn't offer many details about their dealings, just a promise of a sizable score.

"He would say, 'If you give me \$100,000... I'll give you \$130,000 in 30 days,'" Dover said. "You can't beat that."

Zada's former friends and associates have speculated he

got the money from his mother, from buying oil cheap and selling it when the price shot up, or from a Saudi lover who died and left him a fortune worth up to \$1.5 billion. One bank executive claimed to have flown to London and met with a representative of the Saudi's family, who confirmed that Zada's ship would be coming in soon. But while Zada continues to say he will settle his debts, no checks have been cut.

For Fedorov, the wait has caused trouble. While playing in the KHL, banks tried to seize Fedorov's 2008 and 2003 Ferraris, his 2008 Maybach, 2007 Maserati and 2006 VW Touareg.

The FBI has indicated it is investigating Zada, while Fedorov's lawyer said he is not giving up on getting his money back.

"This is a guy who plays to win. He is a competitive athlete and he's tenacious on obtaining justice," Beginin said. "What do you do when you're two (goals) down in a hockey game? You play harder. And that's Sergei's style." **THN**

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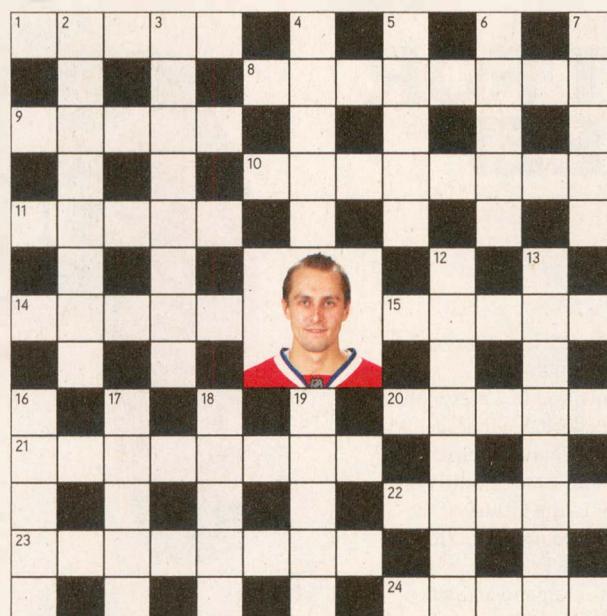
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CROSSWORD

By Larry Humber



ANSWERS AVAILABLE IN THE NEXT ISSUE AND AT thn.com/crossword

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTION **ACROSS** 1. STEVE, 8. CAROLINA, 9. COACH, 10. HARTFORD, 11. ANTON, 14. BORIS, 15. BROAD, 20. HAPPY, 21. RELEASES, 22. COVER, 23. ST. PIERRE, 24. NEELY **DOWN** 2. THORNTON, 3. VICTORIA, 4. LAVAL, 5. COLTS, 6. MINOR, 7. BANDY, 12. GREAT ONE, 13. CAMPBELL, 16. FROSH, 17. FLOPS, 18. BAKER, 19. HENRI

ACROSS

- First name of hockey's 'Golden Jet'
- He was captain in Montreal from 1961-71
- Clinch: 2 words
- They play at the Verizon Center
- Rob Blake is one
- Boston's ___ Lucic
- ___ Krejci is another Bruin
- Fire up, ___ up
- He's GM in Pittsburgh
- Montreal netminder Jaroslav ___, pictured
- The Isles play at Nassau ___,
- Buffalo's Jochen ___

DOWN

- Russia's main threat at Vancouver 2010
- He coaches 2 Down in Washington
- Olympic Games prize
- Deflected goal: 2 words
- State that's had NHL hockey since 1993
- Visitor
- Site of the 2002 Olympics
- A member of Canada's 2010 Olympic team
- A hat ___ is three goals in a game
- Pass the puck around in the other team's end
- Kind of protector (worn by goalies)
- Milt Schmidt centered 'The ___ Line'

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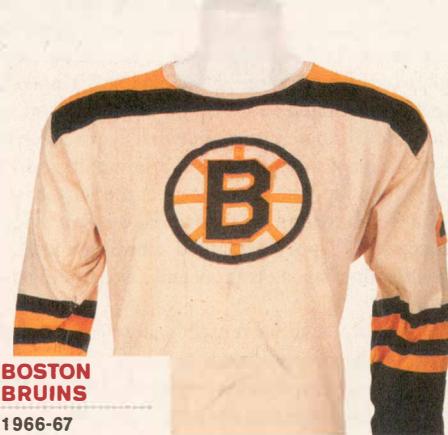
JERSEY Hound

What does a \$100,000 hockey jersey look like? Peek to your right. That's what a rare Bobby Orr rookie sweater was expected to fetch at auction this month.

Back then, jerseys weren't produced and stockpiled the way they are today, so getting your mitts on such a keepsake will cost. But think of the history.

Aesthetically, the Bruins have almost always been on point and the spoked-B that dominates this jersey is as classic as they come. Simple stripes on the shoulders and arms fill it out.

- RYAN KENNEDY





BLUEPRINT FOR BLACK SHEEP

The Coyotes took a most unusual route to a successful season. Will others now follow their cheap-and-cheerful lead?

IN THE LONG annals of NHL team-building, rarely has an organization adopted the following blueprint and lived to tell the tale.

First, you file for bankruptcy. Then you get involved in a messy off-ice ownership struggle. Next, you sign a handful of affordable free agents late in the summer when they're hungry, motivated and comparatively cheap. In training camp, you muddle along without a coach until you finally land a replacement for the greatest player in the history of the game. When exhibitions end, you farm out all the young talent that's supposed to provide you with reasons for optimism. From there, with everyone on the outside debating if you're good enough to at least escape the conference basement, you defy all odds by making the playoffs and establishing all kinds of franchise records for success.

Not exactly the approved Sam Pollock method for constructing a winner, is it?

But this is exactly what the Phoenix Coyotes achieved this year and the only possible parallel is the mid-1980s St. Louis Blues, under the ownership of Harry Ornstein. That team, for a time, cut every imaginable

financial corner. They routed the team all over the country to get discounts on airfares, traded away players deemed too expensive and still came within one victory of qualifying for the 1986 Stanley Cup final.

There's nothing tried-and-true about what Phoenix accomplished this season, which begs the question: If the Coyotes can make it work, is this a formula others may want to co-opt? After all, it's relatively cheap. Phoenix operated with a league-imposed budget this season and even after GM Don Maloney's trade-deadline spree brought in a handful of reinforcements, there were no Ilya Kovalchuk or Dion Phaneuf – just a couple of square pegs (Lee Stempniak, Wojtek Wolski, Derek Morris) in round holes elsewhere, who found a home with the Coyotes.

The one misplaced perception about Phoenix is they're a young team. In fact, just the opposite is true. Their youth – primarily Kyle Turris, Mikkel Boedker and Viktor Tikhonov – spent the year developing in the minors or Russia, learning to become pros outside the pressure and glare of the NHL spotlight. What Dave Tippett and staff did was take the talent at hand and turn it into a successful, solid team from top to bottom. Ultimately, they did what every coach hopes he can accomplish – make his team more than the sum of its individual parts.

"When I looked at this team at the start, basically, you diagnose what you have and try to formulate a plan as to how this group can be successful," Tippett explained. "It was going to have to be with strong goaltending, strong team defense and finding a way to win a lot of close games."

"If you look at our record in close games, it's very good. Our goaltending has been very strong. As for our consistency, I put a lot of that on the leadership in the dressing room – to make sure that's in place every night and recognizing the need for urgency every night."



Shane Doan remained a respected leader despite a brutal scoring slump.

"They've done a great job for us – Shane Doan, Ed Jovanovski, Adrian Aucoin, Vernon Fiddler."

Doan represents an interesting case, if only because of how little impact his two-month goal-scoring drought had on the team's cumulative results. Coaches always pay lip service to the notion that as long as a player does the little things right, he doesn't necessarily need to score. Nobody ever really believes that, though. Players in Doan's category – the only real star on the team outside of goaltender Ilya Bryzgalov – are supposed to produce at least 30 goals every year. Doan didn't score a single goal in either February or March – a long and potentially soul-destroying slump that, had it happened anywhere else, would've resulted in a daily diet of questions about what was going wrong. In Phoenix, it was enough that Doan provided the aforementioned leadership and didn't fret too much about his own personal goals.

"Everyone questions our forwards whenever anyone talks

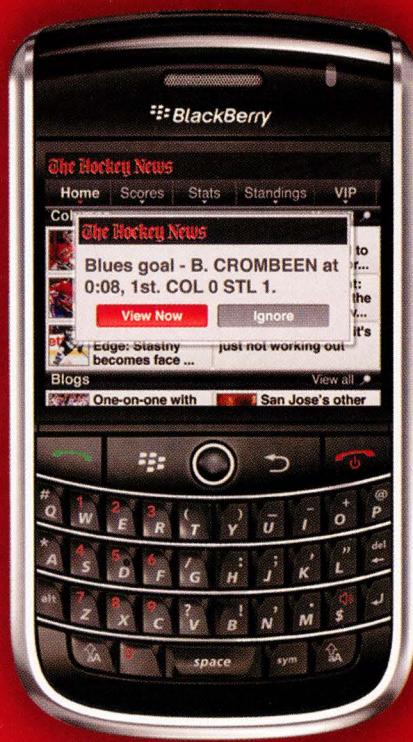
about us," Doan said, "but on any night, somebody can contribute for you and help you out and that's the difference on our team."

"We understand there are teams with more talent than us, but we have a lot of confidence in Tip's system and we think, over 82 games, we're going to be consistently good. We might get beat every now and then because some teams just have more talent, but we're going to beat a lot of teams because our average is pretty solid. It might not be great, but it's solid."

It's hard to build a marketing campaign around solid. Solid isn't sexy; solid doesn't lift you out of your seat. Solid doesn't even guarantee you a playoff series win, which would be the first for the franchise since 1987 when they were based in Winnipeg.

Tippett understands that nothing about the Coyotes' future, on or off the ice, is secure. But that's just one more challenge to overcome in a year when they have risen to the occasion more times than anyone can remember. **THN**

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