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## Chris Kelly joins Bruin's exodus to Europe

By Steve Conroy

It was another day crossed off the National Hockey League schedule yesterday, and another member of the Bruins headed off to Europe.

As the lockout stretched into its 46th day, forward Chris Kelly became the latest to bolt North America for the beauty of Switzerland, signing with HC Red Ice of the National League B, which was confirmed by agent Pat Morris and initially reported by Finnish reporter Matias Strozyk.

Kelly, who inked a four-year, \$12 million deal with the B's over the summer, signed for a month with HC Red Ice and the contract can be extended at the end of each month he spends with the team.

In Europe, Kelly will join Bruins forwards Patrice Bergeron and Tyler Seguin, who are playing in the top tier league in Switzerland, Rich Peverley (Finland) and David Krejci (Czech Republic), defensemen Andrew Ference (Czech Republic), Dennis Seidenberg (Germany) and Zdeno Chara (Russia's KHL), and goalies Tuukka Rask (Czech Republic) and Anton Khudobin (KHL).

Meanwhile, the hits may keep coming this week from the NHL, which has already canceled all games through November.

Canada's TSN yesterday reported that, barring any major progress in its stalemate with the Players Association regarding a new collective bargaining agreement, the league is expected tomorrow to cancel the Winter Classic, which is scheduled for Jan. 1 in Ann Arbor, Mich., between the Toronto Maple Leafs and Detroit Red Wings and expected to bring in more than 100,000 fans to Michigan Stadium.

In addition to the Winter Classic, there are also several other festivities planned for a second venue at Comerica Park in Detroit. A payment of \$250,000 is due to be paid by the NHL to the University of Michigan tomorrow.

It would be a major blow to the league if it had to cancel the Winter Classic, which has become a huge hit and the league's signature regular-season event since it began six years ago. The Classic has given the league some much-needed high visibility in the United States, especially with the advent of HBO's 24/7 series ramp-up to the outdoor event.

Another event that could be on the chopping block soon is the All-Star weekend scheduled to be held in January in Columbus, Ohio, an expansion market that has seen little on-ice success for its Blue Jackets and could surely use the boost.

Meanwhile, NHLPA counsel Steve Fehr and NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly reportedly spoke extensively on the phone Tuesday (Hurricane Sandy kept them from meeting in person), but no formal negotiations are scheduled. The last time the two sides met was Oct. 18, when the NHL contingent from the league quickly rejected three Players Association counter-proposals to a league offer delivered two days earlier.

Boston Herald LOADED: 11.01.2012

Lockout forces St. Francis/Buff State product to sit, wait

BY: John Vogl

Like most people, James Durham sees nothing but losers in the NHL labor fight. Players, owners, businesses and workers are all sustaining significant losses.

Unlike most people, Durham can trace his slide out of professional hockey directly to the lockout.

Durham was Buffalo State's captain last year. When the season ended, the former St. Francis and Junior Sabres forward signed with the Columbus Cottonmouths of the Southern Professional Hockey League. The team in Georgia was in the midst of a playoff run, and things went extremely well. Durham had one goal and three points in six games to help the Cottonmouths win their first championship in five years.

The 25-year-old trained all summer and traveled back to Columbus a few weeks before training camp last month, eager to start his first full season as a pro. Instead, he fell victim to the lockout trickle-down.

Players who should be in the NHL, like the Sabres' Cody Hodgson and Marcus Foligno, are instead stuck in the American Hockey League during the work stoppage. That, in turn, forced Rochester to send regulars from last year's team to lower leagues. The Amerks placed three players in the East Coast Hockey League and two in the Central Hockey League. Once those players claimed roster spots, guys who should have been in the ECHL and CHL had to find work in the SPHL.

That sent Durham home to Marilla as one of the Cottonmouths' final cuts. He's working and skating at Leisure Rinks in Orchard Park while waiting for jobs to open if the lockout ends.

"They said I looked really good, it just pretty much came down to a numbers thing is what [coach and General Manager Jerome Bechard] told me," Durham said. "Nearing the end of the camp, guys got sent down from higher camps, so honestly they were going to stay over me."

Alex McLeod, a Michigan Tech grad who started in camp with South Carolina of the ECHL, earned one of the forward spots in Columbus instead of Durham.

"That was probably the toughest cut I had," Bechard said this week by phone. "He comes in last year, fills a role that we needed and was part of a championship. I had him penciled in, and it's just unfortunate."

"A lot of guys that were going to the East Coast League or wherever are just not sticking because American League guys signed down there. It's a pretty good little trickle-down."

Bechard played parts of 16 seasons in the minors and has been coach and GM of the Cottonmouths since 2004-05. He said there is unprecedented competition for jobs at the lower levels of hockey.

"I had a free agent camp, which I'd never done before, and I had 23 people come for that," Bechard said. "Our training camp, I usually have only 22 guys here, and we ended up having 26. It's just more of an abundance."

It's a league-wide trend in the SPHL, which has a roster limit of 18 players, including goaltenders. Bechard, who kept his title-winning team mostly intact, figures three of his five new skaters could be at a higher level. The Fayetteville (N.C.) FireAntz boast six players who spent last year in the ECHL or CHL. There are nine teams in the SPHL, so there are dozens of roster spots being eaten up by the lockout.

So while the NHL and NHL Players' Association are turning their backs on \$3.3 billion in annual revenue, the trickle-down effect they've caused is costing minor-league hopefuls like Durham their jobs and paychecks of \$320 per week.

"It's just hurting so many people, people that are working the stadiums, that work parking lots, people that own restaurants in the cities that have teams," Durham said. "It's doing nothing but hurting them and the economy. You hate to see that."

643471 Buffalo Sabres

Sabres' Ennis returns to ice for Swiss team after missing time with injury

October 31, 2012 - 2:54 PM

Tyler Ennis, who was scheduled to center one of the Sabres' top two lines this season, is back on the ice in Switzerland after missing time with an undisclosed injury.

Ennis played for Langnau on Tuesday night and recorded an assist during the Tigers' 5-1 victory over Rapperswil-Jona. Ennis missed seven games with the ailment.

"He's healthy and he's playing and that's the main thing," Sabres General Manager Darcy Regier said by phone today.

Ennis is one of seven Sabres playing overseas, joining Thomas Vanek, Christian Ehrhoff, Tyler Myers, Andrej Sekera, Alexander Sulzer and Jhonas Enroth.

"We are keeping track from a distance," Regier said. "The biggest focus is making sure that we stay in touch, at least in the stats, who's playing, how they're playing, how they're doing and maybe even more importantly are they staying healthy?"

---John Vogl

Buffalo News LOADED: 11.01.2012

## Skinner back on ice with Canes

By Chip Alexander

RALEIGH Jeff Skinner was back in town Wednesday, back skating with some Carolina Hurricanes teammates at Raleigh Center Ice.

And, he said, he is still unsure where he will be skating next.

Skinner has been home in Markham, Ont., since the NHL lockout began Sept. 16. He has stayed busy, saying he has conditioning workouts five times a week with former Canes forward Gary Roberts while skating three times a week.

"I'm just taking it day by day, seeing how it goes," said Skinner, a forward. "It's tough to make plans because you don't know if things are going to change. So you just take it day by day."

Skinner, the 2011 Calder Trophy winner, was one of 28 players assigned by the Hurricanes to Charlotte of the American Hockey League on Sept. 15, the day the NHL's collective bargaining agreement expired. That made him eligible to play in the AHL, but he was given permission by the Hurricanes to remain home in Canada and train on his own rather than reporting to the Checkers.

Skinner said Wednesday he was not headed to the Checkers, who will play their home opener Sunday at Time Warner Cable Arena, but would skate a few times with the Canes at RCI and likely go back to Toronto.

"I'll see how these workouts go here," he said. "I had a good training program going on at home, so I'll probably head back within the next week. I'll just play with the guys (at RCI) until then."

Skinner said he drove to Raleigh with his father, Andy, to check on his apartment and to see some teammates at RCI. On Wednesday, he joined Eric and Jordan Staal, Jussi Jokinen, Jay Harrison and others, and appeared to be having fun.

Skinner, 20, also had a different look – longer hair. Maybe not a Justin Faulk-like flow, but a flow.

"I just figured to change it up and let it grow for a while," he said, smiling.

Like many NHL players, Skinner is getting antsy. He understands the need for player solidarity in insisting on a fair CBA, but he also wants to play.

"We're all hockey players, so that's what we want to do," he said. "Everyone, I think, is pretty anxious and everyone is ready to go."

If the lockout lingers, he might look to join the exodus of players going overseas. More than 200 NHL players have made the move and there will be more to follow.

"I'm not really ruling out any options right now," Skinner said. "I'm just looking into everything. It's something my agent (Rick Curran) is going to explore. He'll get back to me when he has something me and my family can talk about, and we'll go from there."

Living in the Toronto area, Skinner is inundated with constant stories and media reports about the lockout, about the CBA talks. He said he tries to keep up with the latest news, but only to a point.

"You don't want to get caught up in all the rumors and speculation, but at the same time I want to be informed," he said. "I'm pretty up to date on what's going on, but my focus has been on my training."

Alexander: 919-829-8945

News Observer LOADED: 11.01.2012

NHL lockout drain on more than just players and owners

Even with Bulls opening, workers and businesses in and around United Center feeling pinch

By Chris Kuc and Jennifer Delgado, Chicago Tribune reporters

Don Lonergan had a message for his family as the holidays approach.

"I told my wife, 'We're going to have a Christmas, but it's not going to be like it was,'" Lonergan said.

Like many others who don't lace up skates or sign the paychecks for those who do, Lonergan is caught up in the sway of the NHL lockout that continues to drag on with no end in sight. The 51-year-old from the South Side is in his 24th year as a vendor, selling "whatever they need" during Hawks, Bulls, Cubs and White Sox games.

On Wednesday night at the United Center, Lonergan was situated just inside Gate 6, selling programs to fans pouring in for the Bulls' season opener against the Kings. The start of the NBA season is welcome work for those who make a living in and around arenas.

"(The lockout) affects everybody," Lonergan said. "It's like a domino effect. Players, the people working the building (like) the ushers, cooks, police ... (those) who make deliveries and sell food and souvenirs. It goes on and on."

Thus far, the lockout has meant lost revenue for three exhibition and five regular-season Hawks games as well as the training camp festival. With the NHL having canceled the schedule through November, at least five more home games will not be played.

Many owners of bars and restaurants on Madison Street near the United Center say business has been poor since the lockout began. The start of the Bulls season offers some relief, but only some.

"It's a totally different demographic, NHL fans and NBA fans," said George Lemperis, owner of Palace Grill, 1408 W. Madison St. "It's an event going to Blackhawks games — it's a party atmosphere. Bulls fans, they just come in right before the game and they leave right after."

Lemperis said a typical Bulls game fills about eight tables while Hawks games pack the 80-seat diner. He estimates he has lost thousands of dollars for each canceled Hawks game.

"It's a terrible time," he said.

Not far away, Billy Goat Tavern owner Sam Sianis said his employees have been feeling the pinch with many taking fewer orders and getting fewer tips.

Even regulars of the hamburger joint at 1535 W. Madison have noticed the empty chairs and tables. Still, Sianis is hopeful Bulls games will draw a large gathering, especially after a victory.

"When they play, everyone wins," he said.

Until the Hawks play again, it will mean leaner paychecks for those who rely on income from the events.

"It's a drain on your finances," said one vendor who wished to remain anonymous. "You just have to weather it out."

Chicago Tribune LOADED: 11.01.2012

643474 Chicago Blackhawks

Hawks' Carcillo buys Lincoln Park penthouse

By Bob Goldsborough

Special to the Tribune

1:06 PM CDT, October 31, 2012

With the 2012 NHL lockout closing in on seven weeks, there's no Chicago Blackhawks hockey being played. But, that hasn't stopped one Blackhawk from putting down roots, with left winger Daniel Carcillo paying \$640,000 for a two-bedroom, multilevel penthouse unit in a vintage building in Lincoln Park.

Carcillo, 27, joined the Blackhawks in the summer of 2011. Last season ended early for him as he tore his ACL in January and needed surgery. He is under contract with the team through the summer of 2014.

The eight-room, 2,500-square-foot unit that Carcillo bought has three bedrooms, a wood-burning fireplace, a sunroom with skyline views, soaring ceilings, large windows, a media room, a gym, an office, a deck with 360-degree views, and a kitchen with granite countertops, stainless steel appliances and 42-inch cabinets.

The unit had been listed for \$725,000.

Doug Horwich of Prudential Rubloff represented Carcillo.

Chicago Tribune LOADED: 11.01.2012

NHL lockout: Cancellation of Winter Classic is expected

By Aaron Portzline

The Columbus Dispatch Thursday November 1, 2012 5:04 AM

With no end in sight and the NHL lockout well into its seventh week, the league is expected to cancel one of its marquee events today or Friday.

According to several reports, including ESPN, the NHL is poised to pull the plug on the Winter Classic, its annual Jan. 1 outdoor game that has helped league revenues soar from \$2.1 billion to \$3.3 billion during the previous seven seasons.

This year's game was to involve the Detroit Red Wings and Toronto Maple Leafs and be played at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor, drawing a crowd of more than 100,000.

The NHL, which has canceled 26.5 percent of its regular-season schedule, has said the massive logistics of setting up a scene for the Winter Classic makes an early cancellation date necessary.

The league's other marquee event — the All-Star Game, to be hosted by the Blue Jackets at Nationwide Arena this season — will not be canceled today or Friday, sources have told The Dispatch.

During the last NHL lockout (2004-05), the All-Star Game in Atlanta was canceled on Nov. 3.

The NHL and NHL Players' Association haven't talked since the NHLPA made three proposals to the league on Oct. 17. The NHL dismissed all three in less than 15 minutes.

NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr spoke via phone yesterday, but no official negotiations are scheduled.

Columbus Dispatch LOADED: 11.01.2012

643476 Columbus Blue Jackets

If the powers that be do not care about the overall health of the game, why should Columbus?

Michael Arace commentary: Blue Jackets fans, it's time to root for a canceled NHL season

Jackets fans should not rue this lockout, they should root for it, with the hope that next year is not also killed.

Columbus Dispatch LOADED: 11.01.2012

By Michael Arace

The Columbus Dispatch Thursday November 1, 2012 5:03 AM

The NHL and the NHL Players' Association remain stalemated in negotiations for a new collective-bargaining agreement. To the fans, they have been serving up lemons and guano for months now, with no end in sight. So, let us make lemonade and bat salad.

Here is a heaping helping: For Columbus, this could be the greatest lockout ever.

There has been one major transaction since the owners shuttered the league on Sept. 16. It went down last week, when the Blue Jackets hired John Davidson as president of hockey operations. It would have been a bigger story had not the rest of the league been otherwise occupied.

Commissioner Gary Bettman announced the cancellation of another chunk of the season, shrugged and said, "It's not our fault." Union chief Donald Fehr whined about the unfairness of it all. Players released a torrent of tweets that trumpeted the evil nature of the owners. Fans in 29 cities cursed quietly, went back to watching football and geared up for basketball.

Here, it was different. The Jackets stirred their angst-ridden followers by actually doing something smart and proactive. Imagine that. They paid big money to hire a man with the intelligence, know-how and experience to change a culture of losing. Davidson's hiring might be the most significant in franchise history.

Suddenly, the lockout was not so dark, not in the Arch City. (Point of fact: Columbus was called the "Arch City" — for its lighted arches over High Street — seven decades before the Gateway Arch opened in St. Louis in 1965.) Jackets fans have endured more misery than any other group of fans in the league over the past 13 years. In Davidson, they were given the gift of hope.

Suddenly, this lockout looks good. The Davidson family can get the lay of the land, figure out where they want to live and settle comfortably. More important, the man can roll up his sleeves and take measure of the operation. He can see what is on hand and decide what he wishes to add and subtract. He can clarify his vision and chart a direction. He has done this before, in the Mound City (Point of fact: A thousand years before the arch went up, St. Louis was known for its earthen mounds. Goodness, but I digress.)

Go ahead and wipe out the season. Davidson and his staff can have unfettered months to study, analyze and scout the minors, juniors and colleges in preparation for the draft. Remember, the Jackets have three first-round picks next year — their own as well as the Los Angeles Kings' and the New York Rangers'. It could be a windfall.

Sitting out there is Nathan MacKinnon, the consensus No. 1 prospect and a potential franchise player. He is projected to be better than Rick Nash. So, why play games now? That could be dangerous.

The Jackets were the worst team in the league last season, but they are deeper now. What if they strung together a couple of winning streaks? What if Sergei Bobrovsky stops pucks? Their chance at winnin' MacKinnon would dwindle. They would end up with Pascolai Picardatov.

The Jackets have never won the draft lottery (oh-for-12). If the next one is anything like the post-lockout lottery in 2005 — when the Jackets were among four teams with the best shot at Sidney Crosby — they might just catch a break. The league is about to screw Columbus out of the All-Star Game. Jobbing the Jackets on the lottery would be bad form, even by NHL standards.

Collective bargaining is going nowhere. Bettman will not even sit down with the union. Both sides are dug in, waiting for someone to blink. There are reports that the Winter Classic — a financial windfall and arguably the biggest hockey game of the year among U.S. viewers — is about to be canceled. The All-Star Game will go next.

Blue Jackets: Prospal joins hometown team in Czech Republic

By Aaron Portzline

The Columbus Dispatch Wednesday October 31, 2012 5:48 AM

With no end in sight to the NHL lockout, another Blue Jackets player has headed overseas.

Vinny Prospal, who is enduring his third lockout since coming to North America in the early 1990s, already has played one game with Ceske Budejovice of the Czech Elite League. Prospal, 37, said last month that he would sign with his hometown team only if he felt the lockout would be prolonged, possibly wiping out the entire season.

"I can't believe it's three of these for me now," Prospal said when the lockout began. "I feel bad for the fans of this game. I feel bad for the game. It's just unbelievable."

He was not available for comment yesterday.

Prospal is the fifth Blue Jackets player to play outside the organization during the lockout. Forward Artem Anisimov, defenseman Nikita Nikitin and goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky are playing in Russia's Continental Hockey League. Forward Brandon Dubinsky is playing with Alaska of the ECHL. A handful of other Blue Jackets — and scores of players across the NHL — seemed poised to sign with clubs in the next week or 10 days, according to agents.

The NHL is expected to cancel the Winter Classic this week, according to multiple reports. The All-Star Game, scheduled for Nationwide Arena on Jan. 27, could be canceled this week, too.

Columbus Dispatch LOADED: 11.01.2012

643478 Dallas Stars

Rolling newsletter: Hard to imagine eight smaller market teams can control Gary Bettman

MIKE HEIKA Staff Writer

mheika at dallasnews.com

Published: 31 October 2012 10:08 PM

Since we don't have the regular Stars Newsletter during the lockout, I'll answer reader questions on the blog here. If you have any questions, e-mail mheika at dallasnews.com

Q: Mike, Since the lockout began I have wondered, where is owner Tom Gaglardi and the Stars in this discussion? Is he a hardliner demanding concessions? Is he so new that he just needs a team on the ice to recoup some of his investment? A story on CBC sports lists him/Dallas as a hardliner on the issue and one of the hold out votes to ensure there are significant concessions. Would that position him as a player among owners already or more of an organization Bettman can be assured of support from whatever he decides?

I would appreciate your thoughts.

Thanks,

Rob S.

HEIKA: Hey Rob, Elliotte Friedman said it was an educated guess that Dallas was a hardliner in his CBC Sports article.

We are all guessing right now because the owners and management are not allowed to talk.

I have a difficult time believing that Gary Bettman would allow markets who are not among the league's top revenue producers (Friedman's guess of Anaheim, Columbus, Florida, the Islanders, Phoenix, St. Louis, Washington and Dallas) to steer the ship. If this is all about Bettman and he simply wants eight teams to share his view of total domination over the players, then yeah, that makes sense. But why would he supposedly go against teams like Boston, the Rangers, Philadelphia, Toronto, Montreal, Detroit, Chicago and Vancouver in the process simply to make the small-market teams happy? That makes no sense to me. I personally think Bettman would love to get a deal done and get the season going and be hailed as some sort of hero. I think he's terrified of the possibility of killing another season. I personally believe most of the owners are on board with the lockout, and that Bettman simply is acting as the attorney for most of the owners. Is Gaglardi a hardliner? Maybe, but he's also a huge proponent of revenue sharing, and I'm not sure how that fits into the description of a hardliner. Because the players are pushing hard for revenue sharing, it would make sense that Gaglardi would be leaning toward that kind of deal that allows the Stars to benefit from revenue sharing with the richer teams — the kind of deal that the NHLPA has been pushing. I think the bottom line is he's a rookie owner who has an opinion but is probably keeping it to himself most of the time. From a business standpoint, the Stars lose less than other teams during a lockout, because they would have half-empty buildings if they were playing (so let's say an estimated loss of \$10 million if they are not playing vs. a loss of \$25 million if they were playing). However, taking "less of a loss" might sound good this year, but it slows the long-term recovery in Dallas. If the Stars play this season and make the playoffs, that makes it easier to sell tickets next summer. If they lock out for the entire season, that means it will be difficult to sell tickets next summer, and the rebuild will be a year behind. To me, that should make Gaglardi and the Stars a team that would like to solve this and get playing so that next year can be better — but they do need a good deal to do that, a deal that will help them succeed while not spending to the salary cap. I can see both sides of it, but I do not believe there are only eight teams driving the bus — and certainly not eight teams in markets that should not be bossing Gary Bettman around. But that's just me.

Dallas Morning News LOADED: 11.01.2012

Sherrington: Hockey interest will always be a 'mixed bag' in the South

SportsDay columnist Kevin Sherrington answered reader questions during a live chat Wednesday. Here are some highlights:

Do you agree with your co-writer Gooselin that the NHL has virtually killed interest south of the Mason Dixon line?

Kevin Sherrington: I always agree with Goose. Or usually. Maybe sometimes. Anyway, hockey was always going to be a mixed bag in the South. It's caught on here and other places, but it's not a natural. Let me use an arborist's example: If your tree doesn't have a deep root system, the drought is going to kill it. Same with hockey. No long traditions in the South, so as soon as something like the labor situation comes up, people lose interest.

Can you provide any insights as to how negotiating between unions and leagues work? I don't understand why the NHL and players go for weeks without talking.

Kevin Sherrington: Lots of posturing. Neither side wants to look like it's giving in. For further insight, look up Congress, and see who crosses the aisle first in any attempt at non-partisan action.

Dallas Morning News LOADED: 11.01.2012

Ticker: Pavel Datsyuk misses Detroit, too

By Steve Schrader

As much as he loves playing in Russia during the NHL lockout, be relieved that Pavel Datsyuk does miss Hockeytown.

"Yes," he said. "A lot.

"Hockey. Fans. Locker room. People. It's tough a little bit. After over 10 years, you kind of change atmosphere, it's a little bit different."

Datsyuk talked to yahoo.com's Nicholas J. Cotsonika, who used to cover the Red Wings for the Free Press and is filing stories from Russia.

Of course they love him in Russia, too, where he plays for CSKA Moscow, and general manager Sergei Fedorov dreads the day the lockout ends.

"Everybody saying, 'What you gonna do without Pavel?' " Fedorov said. "My answer: 'We're gonna just die here without him.' We're gonna fight, fight, fight. But we're gonna die here without him."

Datsyuk also has retained his sense of humor. He addressed other subjects with Cotsonika:

- On the big ice surface: "It's too much skating. I'm not too young anymore. ... I have too much room. After I make a move, I have long way to skate to net."

- On why he doesn't follow lockout news: "Remember, Russia is closed country. Nobody knows what's going on."

No Internet? "No. Too expensive in Russia."

But, seriously, he says he can't do anything about the lockout, so why bother?

Quick hits

- Jaguars quarterback Blaine Gabbert -- who's facing the Lions on Sunday - - on rumors they're interested in hometown hero Tim Tebow: "Whatever moves, I guess, people want to make, but I think we're pretty satisfied here at quarterback."

- Maryland pro Greg Merson won the \$8.53-million title in the World Series of Poker just before dawn Wednesday after nearly 12 hours of play in the final session at Las Vegas.

- I'm going to go out on a limb here and say this is going too far, no matter how you feel about Gary Bettman: A British Columbia shooting center is offering a caricature of him as a target. "Everyone knows it's just for fun," manager Wes Yen told yahoo.com, adding it has been popular with hockey fans.

Compiled from staff reports and news services by STEVE SCHRADER,

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.01.2012

Red Wings concerned once Winter Classic cut, entire season might be next

By Helene St. James

Given the death knell imminent for the Winter Classic, several Red Wings wonder if losing such a marquee event is an omen.

The outdoor game between the Wings and Toronto Maple Leafs at Michigan Stadium is expected to be canceled today or Friday, the latest casualty of a lockout that began Sept. 16 when the NHL and the NHL Players' Association failed to agree on a new collective bargaining agreement. While this week's lack of meaningful talks can be blamed partly on the hurricane that for two days shuttered New York, site of NHL headquarters, the fact is, negotiations weren't scheduled anyway.

That has left some of the players skating at Troy with little optimism.

"It's fading," Johan Franzen said. "The longer it goes, the more likely it is there's not going to be a season."

Todd Bertuzzi said, "Obviously, they've got to take care of their staff in New York, and rightfully so. I'm sure after things get taken care of, hopefully they can start meeting after that."

What bothers others is why so little has happened for so long.

"It's kind of getting past that point of being frustrating now," Darren Helm said. "Everyone knew the situation before the season even ended last year, and it took forever for any kind of proposal to be made. It's been such a slow process, where I think, just nothing is getting taken really serious right now."

Staging the Winter Classic, especially this season with 120,000 fans expected, takes massive preparation. In addition to the logistics, the NHL is under a fiscal deadline, as Saturday marks the last day to cancel before incurring more than a \$100,000 loss.

It's certainly possible to cancel the Winter Classic and still start a protracted season in December, but expunging the regular season's biggest game doesn't portend well.

"If they do cancel it," Helm said, "it doesn't look very good for a season to be played."

As tough as it would be to hear the Winter Classic is gone, players worry it'll get worse.

"Losing a season," Franzen said, "is more disappointing than losing a game."

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.01.2012

643482 Detroit Red Wings

Gary Bettman a popular target at Vancouver gun range

Posted by Brian Manzullo

The DVC Indoor Shooting Center in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, recently began giving shooters the option to shoot at a target with NHL commissioner Gary Bettman's cartoon face on it.

Above his face says: "Let us express how we feel about the lockout!", referring to the NHL work stoppage that is now several weeks into effect and is jeopardizing the 2012-13 season.

Obviously, it's in good fun; it gives hockey fans a chance to express their various frustrations... and isn't that one big reason people go to gun ranges? Then again, is it in poor taste to use an actual person as a target, even if it's not a photo?

"It seems to be one of our more popular targets. It's actually been a pretty big hit for us," Wes Yen, the gun range manager, told Yahoo! Sports.

Yen later said he didn't hesitate to use a living, breathing public figure as a target rather than, say, a zombie from the AMC show "The Walking Dead," which his gun range also offers.

"It's an animated target. We're not using real people. Everyone knows it's just for fun," he said.

You can read more about it [here](#).

So what do you think? Is using a public figure as a target too over the line, or does it seem like a great way to relieve frustration during what could be a lengthy lockout?

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.01.2012

643483 Detroit Red Wings

NHL Winter Classic could be canceled Friday

By Ted Kulfan The Detroit News

Captain Niklas Kronwall and his Red Wings teammates will not take part in a Winter Classic game this season if the NHL scraps the Jan. 1 event Friday.

The NHL Winter Classic, scheduled for Jan. 1 at Michigan Stadium, could be canceled Friday.

No meetings have taken place between the NHL and the union representing the locked-out players this week, and none are planned.

The Red Wings and Maple Leafs were scheduled to play in the annual New Year's Day game, and a crowd of about 120,000 was expected.

Friday is a key day for the NHL in its contract with U-M. The league would owe U-M \$250,000 Friday, with another \$1 million on Dec. 7 and Dec. 28, and \$650,000 on Jan. 18.

If the cancellation occurs before Friday, the league is only responsible, as part of a "work stoppage cancellation" clause, for the \$100,000 deposit it already has paid. The league would be responsible, beginning Saturday, for any expenses in connection with the game.

The NHL has said if the Winter Classic were scrapped, there would be no chance of a rescheduled game this season following a settlement.

Also to be canceled would be the Hockeytown Winter Festival at Comerica Park.

Detroit News LOADED: 11.01.2012

With Winter Classic cancellation imminent, players frustrated with lack of CBA talks, progress

Ansar Khan | akhan1 at mlive.com

TROY – With the Winter Classic on the verge of being canceled, players expressed frustration with the lull in labor talks.

The sides have not met since Oct. 18, when the league rejected three counter-proposals from the NHL Players Association.

NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and union special counsel Steve Fehr spoke extensively by phone Tuesday, according to reports, but no formal talks are scheduled.

"It's really disappointing nothing's being done right now," Detroit Red Wings center Darren Helm said. "There's issues going on with (the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy in New York), so they haven't been talking, but even before that it seems like nobody's stepping up to the plate and negotiating.

"It's kind of getting past that point of being frustrating now, you want to just get something done."

The NHL is expected to announce on Thursday or Friday the cancellation of the Jan. 1 Winter Classic between the Red Wings and Toronto Maple Leafs at Michigan Stadium. That move will result in the cancellation of the Winter Festival at Comerica Park, a series of events scheduled between Dec. 15-31.

"I still think things can get hammered out that they can put (the Winter Classic) up in weeks, I think," Red Wings forward Todd Bertuzzi said. "Hopefully, they can get meeting and figure this out."

NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr, in a letter obtained by tsn.ca, updated players on the union's attempt to continue negotiations.

"At every opportunity we have continued to state that we are ready to meet and willing to discuss all open issues, including the owners' last offer," Fehr wrote. "Nonetheless, to date, their group has declined to commit to a meeting unless it can dictate what the agenda is."

Daly disputed Fehr's assessment of the situation.

"We obviously don't agree with their characterization of the negotiation," Daly wrote in an email to MLive.com. "Our last proposal was formally withdrawn last Friday. We are considering ways to make progress and move the process forward. If the Union wants to meet with us, they should ask to meet with us."

A half-dozen or so Red Wings continue to skate three times a week at Troy Sports Center, fighting boredom and hoping to hear of a breakthrough that does not appear on the horizon.

"It is (frustrating), but you can't do anything about it," Justin Abdelkader said. "It's how (the NHL is) negotiating, it's their strategy. They have a timetable and dates set up of when they want to get things done. We just have to be patient."

The league last Friday canceled all games through Nov. 30. Once the Winter Classic is scrapped, many wonder if the motivation for labor talks will wane, and whether this will lead to the cancellation of the entire season.

"Hopefully, they don't even cancel the Winter Classic and come back and say they really want to get a deal done and keep it on," Helm said. "But if they do cancel it, it's very disappointing and doesn't look good for the season to be played."

Follow Ansar Khan on Twitter at [twitter.com/AnsarKhanMLive](https://twitter.com/AnsarKhanMLive) and like MLive.com's Red Wings page on Facebook.

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Michigan Live LOADED: 11.01.2012

Hall to play left-wing with Barons on Friday

Oilers forward skated with VandeVelde and Paajarvi during practice

By Jim Matheson, Edmonton Journal October 31, 2012

EDMONTON - After Edmonton Oilers forward Taylor Hall officially signs his one-year American Hockey League contract Thursday in Oklahoma City, he will suit up for his first game since March at his usual left-wing position on the farm team's second line Friday night.

Hall will not be auditioning at centre, even though the Oilers have been intrigued by the idea of a Ryan Nugent-Hopkins/Hall tag-team like the Wayne Gretzky-Mark Messier tandem in Edmonton's glory days.

Messier started his NHL career on left-wing and made two NHL all-star teams in 1981-82 and '82-83, in both cases with Gretzky at centre and Mike Bossy on right-wing, before moving to centre to counteract Bossy's New York Islanders' linemate Bryan Trottier.

Hall told Oilers radio colourman Bob Stauffer on Wednesday that he skated earlier in the day with underrated centre Chris VandeVelde and right-winger Magnus Paajarvi, which should be an attacking line against the Houston Aeros on Friday.

VandeVelde, who may have surpassed Anton Lander in the Oilers' organizational chart at centre because he's got more offensive juice, and Paajarvi played together in the AHL playoffs last spring along with Teemu Hartikainen. It was the Barons' most productive unit, but the burly Hartikainen will be with Nugent-Hopkins and Jordan Eberle against the Minnesota Wild affiliate.

Hall feels he's been away from game action for too long to try centre, at least for now. He's more comfortable on the wing after two NHL seasons there, so that's where he'll be. And, with the chemistry of Nugent-Hopkins, Eberle and Hartikainen for much of the first three weeks of the AHL season, farm team coach Todd Nelson will stick with that line.

Hartikainen will almost certainly make the Oilers when the NHL lockout ends.

Hall's agent, Paul Krepelka, said in an email that his client's insurance issues had been taken care of. Hall has to insure not only this hockey season but, more importantly, his seven-year, \$42-million extension against a cataclysmic injury in the minors.

His Barons' contract will be a standard AHL deal, which becomes null and void if the NHL and the players get a new collective bargaining agreement.

Hall has been skating hard, but he hasn't even played an exhibition game, never mind a league game, since the Oilers shut him down in late March. At the time, they said his recovery time was five to six months, but he's long past that time frame. It's already November and he's late to the party.

Hall watched the recent Barons games from the stands in Oklahoma City, and got an eyeful of opponents going after Nugent-Hopkins, Eberle and Justin Schultz. It likely won't be any different with him, although he likely won't play anywhere near their minutes to start.

Edmonton Journal: LOADED: 11.01.2012

643486 Edmonton Oilers

Oilers prospect Chris VandeVelde is making a hard push for an NHL job over Anton Lander

Posted by: David Staples

If there is one disappointment so far this year down on the Edmonton Oilers farm in Oklahoma City it's the play of prospect Anton Lander.

Lander, 21, was a second round draft pick, who cracked the Swedish elite league when he was just 16. He comes with the reputation of being a leader, a two-way player, and a hard worker. However that may be, his offence just isn't there, not even at the Oklahoma City level.anton lander cgy e1351662240270 Oilers prospect Chris VandeVelde is making a hard push for an NHL job over Anton Lander

In fact, if the season were to start today and the Oilers were to decide to go with a more youthful player than Eric Belanger as fourth line centre, the superior pick to Lander would be Chris VandeVelde. The big American centre has shown himself to be tougher, stronger defensively, better on the penalty kill and better on offence than Lander.

VandeVelde, a favourite of sage Barons TV colour man Doug Sauter, looks like a big, gritty player who might be able to help an NHL team's fourth line, forechecking hard, hitting, helping to kill off penalties.

Lander's grit and skill isn't at the same level, even though he was the one favoured to play 56 games with the Oilers last season, while VandeVelde spent almost the entire year in Oklahoma. In the 2012 AHL playoffs, however, both centres were on the Barons, and it looks like VandeVelde had the bigger role and better performance, scoring six goals, with Lander scoring two.

Of course, VandeVelde is 25, four years older than Lander, but, in all honesty, it's not close between the two players right now. VandeVelde is far more effective, and you can see that if you look at their contributions to individual scoring chances.

In six games, VandeVelde has contributed to 15 scoring chances, 11 at even strength, four on the penalty kill, while Lander has contributed to just ten.

On defence, Lander has made eight mistakes that have contributed to scoring chances against the Barons, while VandeVelde has made just five such miscues.

Perhaps Lander can crank it up, but his lack of offence is beginning to define his limits. Even a fourth-liner has to be able to add some amount of offensive oomph.

As for the rest of the centres, well, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins is Ryan Nugent-Hopkins.

Little was expected of long-shot prospects Mark Arcobello, Tanner House and Ryan Martindale heading into the 2012-13 season. Jonathan Willis and Bruce McCurdy had them all listed as long shots, not promising enough to make the on Top 25 list (VandeVelde was 25th overall). They've all delivered about what was to be expected seven games into season.

Arcobello looks to be a solid minor league attacker, House a solid minor league defender and Martindale a marginal prospect overall. Martindale has especially struggled on defence so far this year at Oklahoma City.

If a centre is doing his job well, he will create about two scoring chances at even strength for every one he makes a mistake on. By that test, Arcobello is holding his own, House is doing fine in a low-event kind of way, while Martindale is in over his head, contributing to eight scoring chances so far, while making mistakes on 17. That's more than twice as many scoring chances against at even strength where he's made some mistake than any other OKC centre. Not good. Not even close to good.

P.S. Here is Bruce McCurdy's report card on Lander from last season.

McCurdy wrote of him: "Lander is an all-ice player with an aptitude for the transition game in both directions. While not a banger per se, he has a strong competitive streak and doesn't mind getting his nose dirty. He seems especially comfortable battling along the boards and working the puck out from there. As with many young players, the watchword is "patience". While

Anton Lander has a long way to go, he made an important step in 2011-12. Given his track record of year-over-year development, his skill set as a support player, and his reputation for character and leadership, he remains an important prospect for the Oilers."

Edmonton Journal: LOADED: 11.01.2012

Yakupov strikes again, and again — the Nail nets two goals, one assist to lead Neftekhimik win

Posted by: Bruce McCurdy

Edmonton Oil Kings beef up blueline, acquire Oilers prospect David Musil in trade with GiantsPosted on Oct 31, 2012

Key words: "In case you're wondering, [Alex] Ovechkin had 13 goals in 37 games as a 19-year-old [in the Russian League during the last lockout]." Judging by the response of the crowd in the closing segment of the video, it's clear that Nail Yakupov is a popular young man in Tatarstan these days.

Ten goals in 13 KHL games for red-hot Oilers prospect

Edmonton Oilers top prospect Nail Yakupov continues to light it up over in the KHL. He closed out a superb October with another lights-out performance on Halloween night, scoring twice and setting up a third to delight the home crowd as Neftekhimik repelled Torpedo, 4-2.

Yakupov's first goal tied the affair at 1-1, finally breaking the ice against Matt Dalton more than half way through the game. He got the primary assist on Alexander Salayunov's powerplay marker late in the second that gave the home team its first lead. The cherry on top came in the last minute of play with Dalton on the bench for an extra attacker. The empty-netter was Yakupov's 10th goal of the season, in just his 13th KHL game.

As has become his custom, Yakupov also led his team in shots on goal, with 6. He now has a whopping 57 shots on the season, an average of 4.4 per game.

There are a couple of other good signs in the fairly decent stats package that the KHL provides. Yakupov saw more ice time in this one, as his 18:10 ranked third on the club. His line with Petr Koukal and Tomas Netik started the game, and saw equal ice time to the usual first line of Martin Cibak, Oscar Oskala, and Yegor Milovzorov. Moreover, Yak saw his ice time rise by the period, playing nearly 7 minutes of the final frame even as Neftekhimik clung to a one-goal lead down the stretch.

As for that empty-netter, while in some senses such are cheap goals, it speaks to the coach's confidence in putting his young sniper on the ice with a one-goal lead and 30 seconds to go. It's clear evidence that Yakupov is emerging as a go-to player in the grand scheme of things.

Yakupov now has the team lead outright in goals, while his 14 points in 13 games make him the only point-per-game scorer on the club.

Edmonton Journal: LOADED: 11.01.2012

Panthers players making the best of difficult situation during NHL owners' lockout

Jovanovski, Theodore and others remain optimistic that there will be a season

October 31, 2012|By Harvey Fialkov, Sun Sentinel

POMPANO BEACH — In case you're thinking that zombie knocking at your door in Parkland asking for candy on Halloween looked a lot like Panthers out-of-work defenseman Ed Jovanovski, odds are it probably was.

A few doors away, a slightly built gentleman with a French accent, possibly wearing a goalie mask, was actually going as himself and not cinematic psycho killer Freddy Krueger.

Veteran goalie Jose Theodore and several Panthers teammates who participated in a self-run practice Wednesday morning at Glacier Ice and Snow Arena are upset at the owners for locking them out during acrimonious negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement.

However, they're trying to make the best of an exasperating situation.

"I will go trick-or-treating with my daughter, Romi [6], and she will be dressed as a homeless person," Theodore said, smiling. "I've been through [a lockout] before in 2004, so I know what to expect. I was in the cold weather of Montreal then, and now I'm here and am using it to make up spending time with my daughter, time that I missed over my career.

"It could change very quickly. We need more cooperation from the owners. We're willing to talk, but it seems like they don't want to dance right now."

Theodore was being rushed by Jovanovski, who was in a hurry to get to the golf course, where they've been making up for their missed paychecks by relieving their teammates of some green on the greens.

"We need to find a way to pay the bills," Theodore joked.

"They're like human ATM machines," Jovanovski cracked of his bogey-prone pals.

With games through November already wiped out and the owners threatening to cancel the popular Jan. 1 Winter Classic outdoor game at Michigan Stadium on Thursday, Jovanovski's expression changed.

"Anytime you have extra time with family is good, but we're creatures of habit and are used to coming to the rink every day," said Jovanovski, 36. "To have it taken away from us is very frustrating, but I'm optimistic it will work out."

Panthers forward Scottie Upshall, who lives in Newport Beach, Calif., isn't interested in any more down time.

"There's no real positives to things you're able to do during this lockout," said Upshall, fully recovered from abdomen surgery that reduced his first season with the Panthers to 26 games.

"At the end of the day we're not going to be in the same situation we were the last couple of years, but we've got to find common ground, a line of reality where they can't have us overcompensating that much."

Upshall, who rejoined his teammates for the first time Wednesday, has no interest in playing overseas like several of his teammates (Tomas Kopecky, Jack Skille, Mike Santorelli and Marcel Goc). Neither do Stephen Weiss nor Tomas Fleischmann, both regulars at the Pompano rink.

The fear of injury is there, particularly since Panthers forward Sean Bergenheim played just two games for his hometown team in Finland before re-aggravating a groin injury.

"I enjoy the family time," defenseman Mike Weaver said. "But the NHL needs to realize how much this is hurting the game and the bad taste it's leaving in people's mouths. Out of sight, out of mind."

The lockout won't stop Weaver from escorting his candy-seeking son, Owen, 4, who will be dressed as a policeman.

Galchenyuk working hard in Sarnia

By Pat Hickey, The Gazette October 31, 2012

SARNIA, Ont. — The morning skate for the Sarnia Sting ended 20 minutes ago, but there are still four figures on the ice at the RBC Centre.

Defenceman Connor Murphy is at one end working with father, former National Hockey League defenceman Gord Murphy. The elder Murphy is an assistant coach with the Florida Panthers, but the NHL lockout has left him with some free time and he's working with the Sting.

At the other end of the ice, the Galchenyuks, père et fils, go through a series of puck-handling drills. Alex Jr., the Canadiens' first-round draft pick in June, seems to be imitating a Japanese chef as he rapidly swings his CCM RBZ stick from one side to another, chopping at the puck under the watchful eye of Alex Sr., an assistant coach with the Sting.

"Junior's always the last person off the ice," Mark Glavin, the team's assistant general manager, says.

"I don't think about being out there longer than anyone else," Galchenyuk explains later. "I just feel there's always something I can do a little better, something I can work on."

That attitude is one of the reasons why the Canadiens selected Galchenyuk with the third overall pick at this year's NHL draft. In fact, it's the reason why Trevor Timmins, the Canadiens' director of amateur scouting, would have selected Galchenyuk if he had the first overall pick.

"He was our guy all along," Timmins said on draft day in Pittsburgh.

Galchenyuk may have been available at No. 4 because there was gaping hole in his resumé. He suffered a knee injury in an exhibition game last September and missed most of the 2011-12 Ontario Hockey League season. He returned for two regular-season games and six playoff games.

"That was important to show teams that the knee was good, but it was also important for me and my family," Galchenyuk said. "It was difficult at first because I couldn't do anything with my leg and then it was just a lot of hard work. Every week, I felt a little better and I was glad I was able to play."

The Canadiens had a good look at Galchenyuk at the NHL combine in Toronto and then later at their pre-draft testing day in Montreal. Both sides came away happy from the Montreal combine. The Canadiens were convinced that the knee was sound and Galchenyuk was blown away by the team's training facility in Brossard.

"It had everything you could want," he said. "I went back there for the development camp and it was great to spend three or four days and walk around the city and meet the other players."

But Galchenyuk said he was surprised when the Canadiens called his name on draft day.

"I didn't know what to expect when I went to the draft," he said. "You hear a lot of rumours, but I was happy when the Canadiens picked me."

The injury wasn't the only question mark about Galchenyuk. He was born in Milwaukee, where his father — who is Belarusian — was playing in the International Hockey League. Galchenyuk spent time in Italy, Switzerland and Russia while growing up, and he was lumped into a group of Russian players along with Sarnia teammate Nail Yakupov and Mikhail Grigorenko.

NHL teams feared these players would bolt for the Kontinental Hockey League if there was a lockout or they didn't catch on immediately in the NHL. Yakupov has returned to Russia, but Galchenyuk and Grigorenko are still in Canada.

"I knew (Yakupov) was not coming back," Galchenyuk said. "He's playing in his hometown and, if you live in Russia, you have a dream to play with a KHL team. For me, the NHL is the big picture where I saw myself since I was a little kid. You want to compete with the best players, you want to play for the best fans. It's different from every other league."

Galchenyuk, who returned to the U.S. at age 16 to play midget hockey in Chicago, describes himself as an American. He was one of the best players at the U.S. junior national camp this summer and will represent the U.S. at

the upcoming world junior championship unless, of course, the NHL lockout ends and he earns a job in Montreal.

That's a long-shot, but the lockout has actually improved Galchenyuk's chances of making the jump to the NHL. The U.S. junior camp provided him with ice time and competition against top players from Sweden and Finland.

"I think the lockout is definitely good for me because I missed a lot of games," he said. "I'm playing a lot of games here and getting a lot of ice time. I'm getting better and working on the things I need to improve."

When asked what areas of his game need work, Galchenyuk replied: "There's no specific thing. It's getting better in everything and getting that game feeling back in your body. I missed a lot of time last year."

Getting that game feeling back took some time this season, but Galchenyuk has been on a roll lately with 18 points in his last 11 games. He's tied for sixth in the OHL scoring race with 21 points.

On this night against Windsor, he scores two goals, but it's his third point — an assist — that highlights his greatest asset. A natural centre, he lines up on right wing and shows an ability to find the open man time and again. He's an unselfish player who uses his size — 6-foot-1 and 200 pounds — to battle in the corners.

"He has all the tools, but he's also a hard worker," Sarnia coach Jacques Beaulieu said.

It remains to be seen how long it will be before Galchenyuk tests those skills in the NHL.

"I don't know what's going to happen if the lockout ends," he says. "I heard on TSN that I'm on the list of junior players who can go to training camp, but right now I'm playing in Sarnia and I have to focus on here."

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.01.2012

Dinner with Habs raises \$3,300

Dave Stubbs-Colby Armstrong exchange morphs into a feel-good fundraiser

The Gazette October 31, 2012

MONTREAL — What began as a somewhat goofy, spur-of-the-moment tweet from The Gazette's Dave Stubbs aimed in the direction of new Canadiens forward Colby Armstrong has spawned a \$3,300 donation to The Gazette Christmas Fund.

And it's ultimately produced an evening for a generous woman and her guest to dine in the company of six Canadiens and a popular former Hab at one of the city's finest restaurants.

So who said social media is a waste of time and effort?

Caroline Tardif of Montreal came in with a bid of \$3,300 in our Hockey Inside/Out auction 25 minutes before its 11 a.m. close on Tuesday, every penny of this sum going to the fund that for 47 years has helped less privileged Montrealers with a helping hand during the holidays.

Stubbs's Oct. 11 tweet to the locked-out Armstrong offered the gregarious winger a dinner at Montreal landmark Moishes if he took a photograph from the bench during a Tournée des joueurs exhibition game in Quebec City and tweeted it from rinkside.

Prompted by Mathieu Darche that night, Armstrong delivered — if bending the rules a little — and a dinner for two quickly morphed into the significant charity event it has become.

Tardif jumped into the eBay auction late, bidding just twice — an offer of \$3,100 at 10:31 a.m. on Tuesday, then her winning bid four minutes later, leaping by \$50 the \$3,250 maximum posted by an earlier bidder.

A total of 52 bids, starting at \$300, were made by 11 bidders over the five-day online auction.

The dinner, to be held soon at Moishes, will be attended by Tardif and her guest along with Canadiens Armstrong, captain Brian Gionta, Josh Gorges, Travis Moen, Carey Price and Brandon Prust, as well as Darche, the former Habs forward who now is an unsigned free agent.

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.01.2012

Not just another brick in the plaza

Ubisoft locks out questions on hockey as goalie helps launch Assassin's Creed III

By Brenda Branswell, The Gazette October 31, 2012

MONTREAL — When construction starts on the condo tower beside the Bell Centre, the 12,000 engraved bricks that line the same spot will be removed and carted away for probably close to three years.

Ditto for the four statues in Centennial Plaza of Canadiens' legends Howie Morenz, Jean Béliveau, Maurice Richard and Guy Lafleur.

To protect them from damage, the bricks bought by fans won't resurface until after the 48-storey tower is built — work that is expected to take about 30 months. The developers hope construction is underway by next spring or summer.

For the Canadiens, the new condo project in which they are a partner means uprooting and finding a new, permanent outdoor home for the plaza they unveiled with fanfare just four years ago.

The Canadiens won't reveal the plaza's future site adjacent to the Bell Centre. (They hope to make an announcement soon.) One of the likely spots is the courtyard space between the Bell Centre and Windsor Station — a good chunk of which the Canadiens own.

"It was very important for us when we looked at where to relocate Centennial Plaza to ensure that it remains a very important and powerful symbol of attachment and support of our fans toward their hockey club," Kevin Gilmore, the Canadiens' chief operating officer said last week.

Fans paid from \$175 to \$799 plus tax for the bricks with personalized messages and also received a replica. They also helped directly fund the building of the plaza, the club noted in a statement to fans in July about the move.

The plaza wasn't created with the idea of making a profit and, in fact, has been a money-losing proposition from the start, said Donald Beauchamp, the Canadiens' senior vice-president, communications and community relations.

"It was extremely expensive to build it and it's even more now to move it," Beauchamp said.

The plaza's current location is on land owned by Cadillac Fairview Corp. Ltd., one of the developers in the Tour des Canadiens condo project. But at the time when it was launched there was no development on the radar screen, Beauchamp said.

The agreement that brick-buyers signed contained a provision that said the location of the plaza was subject to change, Beauchamp added. It said the club couldn't guarantee the preservation of the plaza beyond July 1, 2018.

When the condo project came along, Beauchamp said the Canadiens' majority owner, Geoff Molson, had two things on his mind — that the plaza needed to be preserved and permanent.

"It's going to be a first-class operation," Beauchamp said of the new plaza.

One mid-afternoon this week, a few people snapped photos in the plaza as commuters hurried through en route to the Lucien L'Allier train station.

The bricks are fun to read — a glimpse of history and shared passion for the team. Some mention memorable games they attended — like Kelly Mounce of Ottawa, who bought standing-room tickets from scalpers with her friends in 1993 and watched the Canadiens win the Stanley Cup.

Like several brickholders contacted by The Gazette, Mounce wasn't riled by the relocation, saying she understands why they're doing it.

"You've got to maximize your property downtown and that sort of stuff," Mounce said.

"I'm a little disappointed because my brick is so easy to find. Several of my friends have them and we've not found their bricks yet. Every game we go to we do like another row," she said with a laugh.

The brick that Mike Sabodach bought was a surprise for his daughter.

"I guess I kind of brainwashed her into being a Habs fan along the way," Sabodach said from his home in Hamilton, Ont.

The inscription on their brick is a more succinct version of the rub-it-in-their-face chant once popular with Habs' fans: "Na Na Na Na, Na Na Na Na, Hey Hey Hey, Goodbye." Sabodach was thrilled to discover it was located in the cluster of bricks near the statue of his favourite player, Jean Béliveau.

That was his only disappointment when the Habs announced they were going to move the bricks, said Sabodach, who wondered "is it still going to be with my childhood hero?"

"I couldn't have picked a better spot for it, to be honest."

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.01.2012

643492 Montreal Canadiens

For Beaulieu, father knows best

Sarnia coach has some tough words about his son's play

By Pat Hickey, The Gazette October 31, 2012

HAMILTON — If there's a knock against Canadiens defence prospect Nathan Beaulieu it's the complaint he can't play defence.

But his father, Sarnia Sting head coach Jacques Beaulieu, says that's not true.

"Nathan knows how to play defence; he just has to be willing to do it," Jacques Beaulieu said in a candid appraisal of his son. "He has good offensive skills, but now he's going to have to play more defence if he's going to succeed at the next level."

A 19-year-old rookie with the Hamilton Bulldogs, Beaulieu agrees with his father.

"It's about always getting better defensively," Beaulieu said after the Bulldogs beat the Abbotsford Heat last Sunday at Copps Coliseum. "Concentrating on defence and getting bigger and stronger — those are three things I've dialed in on."

"When it comes to defence, it's mentally maturing and knowing I have to do it. That's another part of the game that can be improved upon."

Hamilton head coach Sylvain Lefebvre said he's happy with Beaulieu's early transition to the pro game, but has identified areas in which the youngster needs improvement.

"There are times when he has the puck in our end and he's too casual bringing it out," Lefebvre said. "And there are times when he makes mistakes late in a game because he's tired. Those are things you can work on, and he'll get better as he gets stronger."

Lefebvre has paired Beaulieu with Frédéric St. Denis, the most experienced member of the Hamilton defence corps, and has given him the opportunity to get plenty of ice time.

Beaulieu was a standout in junior with the Saint John Sea Dogs, helping the team win the Memorial Cup in 2011 — he was a tournament all-star — and reaching the final in 2012 before losing to Shawinigan. The Canadiens drafted him in the first round (17th overall) in 2011 and project him as a possible complement to the more physical Jarred Tinordi.

Surprisingly, it's Beaulieu's defence that has stood out in the early going with the Bulldogs. He's still looking for his first professional point, but he has been even or better in the plus-minus ratings in five of his six starts and is plus-2 for the season.

"Everyone's good," Beaulieu said when asked about the differences between the AHL and the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League. "There are no bad teams. You have to bring your 'A' game every night. In junior, there's a couple of teams that are rebuilding and aren't as skilled. You have to be prepared."

Beaulieu's one shaky performance was the night Jacques got away to see his son play against the Rochester Americans in Buffalo. The Bulldogs dropped a 3-1 decision and Beaulieu got burned when he pinched in with the score tied 1-1.

"In junior, he might have gotten away with that, but when you're in the pros you have to be careful," Jacques said. "Rochester came back and scored on that play. But the thing to remember is that we're talking about a 19-year-old kid. He's going to learn."

Beaulieu credits his father for much of his success.

"He coached me when I was growing up and I liked it," the young defenceman said. "He did a good job of separating the father and coach roles and he taught me a lot."

When Jacques went to Saint John as coach and general manager, he selected his 15-year-old son in the fourth round of the QMJHL midget draft.

"I remember one of the owners wasn't too happy with the selection, but he turned out to be the 17th player selected in the NHL draft, so I guess I made a good choice," Jacques said.

That wasn't the only time Jacques clashed with Sea Dogs ownership. He was dismissed in 2009, but not before he put together the nucleus of the team that would go to two Memorial Cup finals.

The Sea Dogs roster included first-round NHL draft picks Jonathan Huberdeau, Simon Després, Zack Phillips and Beaulieu, as well as second-rounder Tomas Jurco.

"I built that team," Jacques said.

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.01.2012

## Habs' Diaz impresses coach in Switzerland

By Stu Cowan

Canadiens defenceman Raphael Diaz has impressed coach Doug Shedden while playing with Switzerland's EV Zug during the NHL lockout.

In 15 games, Diaz has 16 points (three goals, 13 assists) and is plus-11. Diaz spent eight seasons in Zug before joining the Canadiens a year ago.

"He's just a great kid to be around, he works hard and I can't say enough about the guy," Shedden told The Canadian Press. "He's a classy kid and in my eyes, he's a great player. I hope he goes to Montreal and continues to succeed."

Another Canadiens defenceman, P.K. Subban, has been looking for work during the lockout and was hired by CTV Montreal to do the weather report with Lori Graham on the 6 p.m. newscast on Tuesday. Read more by clicking [here](#).

Three members of the Canadiens family are celebrating birthdays on Halloween: Tomas Plekanec turns 30; former Hab Mats Naslund turns 53 and Phil Goyette, another former Hab, turns 79.

The Gazette's weekly Hockey Inside/Out section will be published in Thursday's paper (and on HIO). Stories you can look for include:

Brenda Branswell on what's going to happen to the bricks Canadiens fans bought (paying between \$175 and \$799 plus tax) at Centennial Plaza outside the Bell Centre, which are now being taken out to make room for a new condo tower. Branswell will also have a story on Carey Price and a new video game he is involved with for charity.

Pat Hickey will have features on top Habs prospects Alex Galchenyuk, who is playing for the Sarnia Sting, and Nathan Beaulieu, who is with the Hamilton Bulldogs. Hickey caught up with both of them recently.

Dave Stubbs will have a feature on Hall of Fame goalie Bernie Parent, who was in Montreal last weekend, and his love of the Three Stooges. Stubbs will also have a story on the woman who won the HIO auction for a dinner at Moishes with a number of Canadiens players, paying \$3,300 that will go to The Gazette Christmas Fund.

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.01.2012

643494 Nashville Predators

Nashville Predators, St. Louis Blues alumni to play for charity

Written by Josh Cooper

The Tennessean

Those starved for professional-like hockey will have an outlet to watch some soon.

The Predators and St. Louis Blues will play a charity alumni game at A-Game Sportsplex in Franklin on Nov. 10 from 5:30-6:30 p.m.

The Predators' side will include former forward J.P. Dumont, radio commentator and former enforcer Stu Grimson, assistant coach Lane Lambert and former Predator Dan Kecmer, among others. Predators TV commentator Terry Crisp and hockey operations adviser Brent Peterson will coach the team.

The Blues' team will include television analyst Darren Pang, radio analyst and former Blues forward Kelly Chase, Coyotes radio analyst and former Blues forward Tyson Nash, and former Blues defensemen Bob Plager and Jeff Brown.

The game will benefit Hurricane Sandy relief and Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt. A suggested \$5 donation will be collected at the door.

The NHL locked out its players on Sept. 15 and has since canceled all regular-season games through November.

Reach Josh Cooper at 615-726-8917

Tennessean LOADED: 11.01.2012

643495 Nashville Predators

Predators, Blues to hold alumni game for hurricane relief

Wednesday, October 31, 2012 at 11:12am

Staff reports

J-P Dumont and Stu Grimson are among a group of former Nashville Predators who will take part in an alumni game against former St. Louis Blues players, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Nov. 10 at A-Game Sportsplex in Franklin.

The event will raise money for Hurricane Sandy relief efforts as well as Monroe Carrell Jr. Children's Hospital. Donations will be accepted at the door with a suggested minimum of \$5.

Also confirmed to play for Nashville is former defenseman Dan Keczmer and current assistant coach Lane Lambert.

Color analyst Terry Crisp and hockey operations advisor Brent Peterson will coach the Predators team.

Among those committed to play for the St. Louis Side are Kelly Chase, Tyson Nash, Darren Pang and Bob Plager.

Nashville City Paper LOADED: 11.01.2012

NHL lockout links: Donald Fehr tells players that owners group won't meet without 'agenda'

Charles Curtis, NJ.com

With one more day to go before a possible cancellation of the Winter Classic is announced, the owners and players aren't close to another meeting.

Yesterday, TSN revealed a letter from Donald Fehr to the players to update them on the lack of progress.

"At every opportunity we have continued to state that we are ready to meet and willing to discuss all open issues, including the owners' last offer," Fehr said "Nonetheless, to date, their group has declined to commit to a meeting unless it can dictate what the agenda is."

Fehr also spoke to players in the Minnesota area this week and gave the Star Tribune's Michael Russo some time. "We gave them three different approaches to have the player share fall over time," Fehr said. "It's an eminently reasonable position, and their position seems to be to cut the share immediately, which has the effect of cutting the individual contracts, including one's they just signed a few weeks ago. And you've got to wonder how somebody can look at themselves in the mirror when they do that."

In other words, nothing much has changed, though it's not as if the sides aren't in discussions. TSN's Darren Dreger reported Steve Fehr and Bill Daly "talked extensively" yesterday over the phone, but there's still no meeting scheduled.

In other lockout news:

•Sean Fitz-Gerald of the National Post noticed there hasn't been "significant dissent" in the players' union, unlike the reaction by the NHLPA in 2004. That's probably due to the fact that everyone has been kept in the loop as well as increased participation by more players.

"There are plenty of differences between then and now," Fitz-Gerald said. "The economic system is not set to undergo a complete overhaul with the introduction of a salary cap, for one. But some point to Fehr, who became executive director two years ago, and the method in which he communicates with players."

•ESPN's Scott Burnside wrote about what the loss of the Winter Classic will mean to the NHL. Obviously, it's extremely significant.

"As the buzz surrounding the first Winter Classic involving a Canadian team and the wildly popular alumni events goes mute, as the expected record television audience reaches for the remote to switch to other programming, as the revenues ... vanish, the implication will be clear to anyone still paying attention: Both sides in this ludicrous dispute are royally screwed," he wrote.

•Because of a lack of a collective bargaining agreement, the Phoenix Coyotes have laid off Tim Bulmer, their media relations manager. That's notable, as The Sporting News' Sean Gentile said, because the league owns the franchise. "Wednesday's news is bitterly sad, if not ironic," Gentile wrote. "They're the same guys that have endangered the season largely because they don't want to pay players the full value of their existing contracts."

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.01.2012

## Del Zotto to Play in Swiss League

By JEFF Z. KLEIN

Updated Rangers defenseman Michael Del Zotto has signed to play for Rapperswil-Jona Lakers of the Swiss National League A for the remainder of the lockout, his agent confirmed Wednesday. The signing was announced on the Web site of the Swiss club, currently fifth in the 12-team league and also the lockout home of Ottawa forward Jason Spezza.

Del Zotto left for Switzerland from Toronto on Wednesday, his agent, Mark Guy, said.

Del Zotto, 22, becomes the fourth Ranger to head overseas during the N.H.L. lockout, after Rick Nash (HC Davos in the Swiss N.L.A.), Ryan McDonagh (Barys Astana of the K.H.L.) and Carl Hagelin (Sodertalje SK of the Swedish Allsvenskan).

Del Zotto is coming off an excellent third N.H.L. season in which he scored 10 goals and 41 points and registered a plus-20 mark in the Rangers' second defense pairing.

But he is a restricted free agent, after failing to come to terms with the Rangers on a contract renewal last summer. General Manager Glen Sather said in September that Del Zotto would "come to his senses" and meet the Rangers' offer to sign a new contract.

However, no deal was reached by Sept. 15, when Commissioner Gary Bettman locked out the players and shut down all N.H.L. business.

In an interview with the Canadian network Sportsnet on Wednesday, Del Zotto said he signed with Rapperswil-Jona because it was "depressing" to stay in Toronto and work out by himself.

Del Zotto said he had been reluctant to go overseas because his status with the Rangers was unclear, but "it's gotten to the point now where I need to play," especially with no end to the lockout in sight. "It just doesn't look like we have a willing negotiating partner right now, and that's frustrating," he said.

Guy said Del Zotto's signing with Rapperswil-Jona "has no bearing on his contract situation with New York." He added, "He is simply going to play in order to stay in ice shape and get game competition during the lockout."

Reports in September put Sather's offer to Del Zotto at \$2.2 million to \$2.5 million per year. But Guy disputed those figures.

"I won't get into what the negotiations were at prior to the lockout," Guy said. "We never do, but I can tell you that the previous reports of an offer in that range are erroneous."

Del Zotto has finished his third and final season of his entry-level contract. That contract was worth \$875,000 a year but, with bonuses, could go as high as \$1.09 million per year.

No details were given on the terms of his deal with Rapperswil-Jona, but Guy said Tuesday that the club would cover Del Zotto's insurance costs.

New York Times LOADED: 11.01.2012

NHL's Winter Classic scheduled for Michigan Stadium next up on the  
lockout chopping block

By Pat Leonard

Classic NHL.

On Thursday or Friday, days 47 and 48 of hockey's lockout, the league is poised to cancel its Winter Classic scheduled for New Year's Day at Michigan Stadium, annually the league's highest-grossing individual game, as it slips closer toward a completely canceled season.

The NHL will owe an additional \$250,000 to the University of Michigan if it does not cancel the Detroit Red Wings-Toronto Maple Leafs showdown by Friday, according to AnnArbor.com. The league's contract with the university reportedly states that it will owe Michigan \$100,000 if canceled by Friday, \$350,000 if canceled by Dec. 7, and an additional \$1 million if canceled after.

The Daily News reported last week that the NHL could cancel the Winter Classic as early as Thursday with no collective bargaining agreement in place.

The NHL has the right to cancel the Winter Classic up until the day of the game, but events and sponsorships and plans that accompany the league's signature event place a premium on advance notice. Canceling the Winter Classic, then the All-Star Game, then perhaps one more chunk of regular season games – costing players more paychecks – are the only remaining actions the league and owners can use to create leverage against the players' association before canceling the entire regular season.

This would be the second full season in eight years lost to a lockout imposed by commissioner Gary Bettman and the league's owners. The NHL waited until Feb. 2005 to cancel the full 2004-05 schedule, so this year's announcement still is, or would be, months away.

The players' association says it is not having any problems staying in contact with league officials; the NHL simply is not willing to sit back down at the bargaining table. The NHL, of course, disputes that it is to blame for the latest standoff, even though Bettman and the 30 NHL owners imposed this lockout on Sept. 16 and, at the last bargaining session in Toronto on Oct. 18, Bettman rejected three NHLPA proposals in 10 minutes and walked out after only an hour.

The NHL had made a proposal two days prior, on Oct. 16, offering a 50-50 revenue split between owners and players, but the proposal contained many details considered unacceptable by the union, including new contract restrictions and a provision that claimed to honor current player contracts but actually circumvented that end.

The league was willing to discuss further how to honor current player contracts but only if the union accepted the entire remainder of the proposal as is. The NHLPA declined, responding with its own proposals that ignored the NHL's framework. The NHL backed off negotiations completely, canceled games through Nov. 30 and then pulled its recent proposal from the bargaining table altogether.

#### RANGERS' HAGELIN DAY-TO-DAY

Winger Carl Hagelin, who starred as a rookie winger for the Blueshirts last season, injured a shoulder in his Swedish 'B' League game with Södertälje SK on Tuesday and is listed as day-to-day. The injury is not serious, and Hagelin is being sidelined solely for precautionary reasons.

New York Daily News LOADED: 11.01.2012

643499 NHL

Parent was no Stooze in goal

By Dave Stubbs, The Gazette October 31, 2012

MONTREAL — I knew my chat with Hall of Fame goaltender Bernie Parent would be golden when not only did we agree that Shemp was the best of the Three Stooges, but that of the 190 shorts the Stooges filmed for Columbia Pictures between 1934 and 1959, we both ranked 1947's classic *Brideless Groom* as our all-time favourite.

Moe was great, naturally. Larry? Sensational.

"And Curly was awesome," Parent said last weekend, in Montreal for a signing at a sports collectibles show. "But I preferred Shemp. To me, he was the funniest of all."

If you thought Parent's 1970s Broad St. Bullies teammate Dave Schultz could throw bombs, The Hammer was just a pretender to the throne of *Brideless Groom* co-star Christine McIntyre, the actress cast as Miss Hopkins who broke Shemp's nose with a vicious right cross she didn't quite pull when slugging the Stooze through a door.

That is Parent's favourite scene in the short — one of a great many Stooze films the goalie saw during his playing days, a fact we'll revisit shortly.

The 66-year-old native Montrealer with the quick wit and easy laugh was one of the goaltending greats of his or any generation, backstopping the Philadelphia Flyers to consecutive Stanley Cups in 1974 and '75, in both seasons winning the Conn Smythe Trophy as most valuable player of the postseason and the Vezina Trophy as the NHL's outstanding netminder.

Parent's career sadly was cut short at age 34 in 1979, a high stick clipping his right eye through his mask to permanently damage his depth perception.

Five years later, he was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame, and in the decades since he has fashioned himself into a highly sought motivational speaker, sharing a message of risk vs. reward to high schoolers and captains of industry alike.

"When there's risk involved, fear comes in. And when fear comes in, most people back away," Parent said. "That's when people miss out on great opportunities in life. My philosophy is, if I assume it's not going to work out, I take the first step anyway. If it doesn't work out, learn from it and move on."

Parent grew up in Montreal next door to the sister of Canadiens goaltending icon Jacques Plante, the man he worshipped. He would become a teammate of Plante in the early 1970s in Toronto, where he absorbed the steady flow of advice offered by his idol.

He has said he learned more from Plante in a season and a half than from anyone else over any period of time, schooled in Toronto on the finer points of challenging a shooter, playing and preventing rebounds, balance, working the angles and the mental aspect of playing nets.

Parent played 671 big-league games over 14 seasons from 1965-79 — 608 with Boston, Toronto and most famously the Flyers in the National Hockey League, 63 more with the World Hockey Association's Philadelphia Blazers in 1972-73.

If he doesn't have richly detailed memories of his first game at the Montreal Forum — a 27-save, 3-1 victory for Boston over the Canadiens on Nov. 6, 1965 — he does remember his nerves and a win, his first in the NHL.

It was Parent's third career league game, having earned a 2-2 tie at Chicago on Nov. 3 and been pasted 8-1 in Detroit the next night.

(Reminded that the Canadiens beat him 5-2 back in Boston on Nov. 7, Parent laughed and said, "No, if we lost, it must have been someone else in goal!")

The Forum, he said, was a unique experience, if not always a pleasant one.

"I'm having such a great trip to Montreal and you have to destroy it by mentioning the Canadiens," Parent said, laughing again. "In those years, the team Montreal had was incredible. It was a great game every time we played there. It wasn't a scary situation, but let me put it this way: I never slept well the night before I played at the Forum."

Parent recalls having gone to the shrine at Ste. Catherine St. and Atwater Ave. as a boy, his gaze seldom straying from Plante. Then on Nov. 6, 1965, he skated onto Forum ice at age 20 to face the Canadiens, a club stocked with nine future Hall of Famers.

"I was amazed by the crowd," said Parent, who outshone Montreal goaler Charlie Hodge that night. "I'd gone to the Forum as a young fan and I'd watch the Canadiens on TV every Saturday night. And now I was a goaltender for Boston, performing on Forum ice. It was an incredible feeling."

Parent shuffled to the expansion Flyers from the Bruins, claimed by Philly in the 1967 draft, then had his heart broken by being traded from his adopted home to Toronto in February 1971.

With a priceless education under Plante, Parent bolted to the WHA's Blazers for the 1972-73 season.

He then wound up back with the Flyers in May 1973, Toronto trading Philadelphia his NHL rights.

Parent laughs at the claims of some that his routine the night before a game was to quaff a half-dozen beers then get eight hours' sleep.

In reality, he would spend a couple hours studying his opponent, reviewing how he'd play 2-on-1s, 2-on-2s, left- or right-handed shooters, honing his entire system of play.

So with little worry the next day about the contest, he would awaken from his afternoon nap and watch the Three Stooges on videotape.

"I wanted a clear, happy mind that I needed to perform better in the game," Parent said. "Watching the Three Stooges was part of it. It was better to be laughing."

He was back in goal last New Year's Eve for the Winter Classic alumni game against the New York Rangers, strapping on his old leather pads at age 66 for a six-save, 5:32 outdoor stint at Citizens Bank Park after being badgered to play by friends, fans and old teammates.

"The last time I left the ice (in 1979) was when I was hit by a stick," Parent said. "I never had the chance to wave to the crowd. So there was a lesson in coming back: being a player instead of a spectator, in hockey as well as in life, is very important.

"Was it scary? Of course. But when you face fear, the results can be beautiful. We stepped on the ice in front of 45,000 people. The excitement was incredible. I only played five minutes, but that was my goal.

"I had people see me play and face a couple shots. I was able to come out on the ice and wave to the crowd one last time and what a feeling that was."

A great goaltender was back, in every way.

It was only perfect that a dear old friend, Jimmy Petronglo, put the Three Stooges on the DVD a few hours before the game.

*Brideless Groom*, of course. And again that day, Parent laughed when Miss Hopkins connected with a stiff right to the generous beak of Shemp, the greatest Stooze of all.

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.01.2012

643500 NHL

Locked-out hockey fans turn to NFL

By Stu Cowan, Gazette Sports Editor October 31, 2012

MONTREAL — It's starting to look more and more like there won't be any NHL hockey this season as the lockout drags on with no new negotiating sessions planned.

The Canadian Press reported this week that the Winter Classic is next on the chopping block and that a formal cancellation is expected to be made on Friday.

This year's Winter Classic between the Toronto Maple Leafs and Detroit Red Wings has been billed as the biggest in the event's six-year history with organizers expecting to break the attendance record of 104,173 for a hockey game that was set at the "Big Chill" NCAA game at the University of Michigan in 2010.

Our Hockey Inside/Out poll question this week asked fans: With no NHL hockey and the World Series over, which pro sport are you most interested in?

Here's how more than 1,200 people who voted:

National Football League: 35 per cent

None: 22 per cent

American Hockey League: 20 per cent

Canadian Football League: 18 per cent

National Basketball Association: 5 per cent

Here's what fans were saying about the possible cancellation of the Winter Classic at hockeyinsideout.com:

kalevine says: "Why not just set the expectations. Every 7th season the league will take a year off. It's like a sabbatical — the players can choose to spend more time with their families, play elsewhere, work toward a degree, take another job, or some combination thereof. The owners can ... I don't really care. After that year, everyone will so want to get back to the big bucks that they will settle on something. And the fans will know what to expect too."

HabFab says: "No deal by next September, my money would be on replacement players."

habs11s says: "The fans are definitely in an abusive relationship with the NHL. They keep f---ing us over and abusing us over and over and we keep running back for more. Screw the NHL, screw the players, this "stalemate" and ego contest is just juvenile and I'm definitely sick of waiting for these babies crying about giving something up ... I can only hope no one makes it out to the first game back in October 2013."

Thomas Le Fan says: "I've decided that regardless of the results of further "negotiations" I am done with the NHL this year. Will I be back for next season? You betting men Mssrs. Fehr and Bettman? I may just find I can do nicely without it. I think, at this point, this is the only logical response a fan can make."

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.01.2012

Future NHLers coming to Quebec

Tourney gathers best of the best

By Kevin Mio, The Gazette October 31, 2012

MONTREAL — Quebec will welcome some of the best young players from across Canada and Europe in December, when Victoriaville and Drummondville co-host the 2013 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge.

It's a chance for fans to see future NHLers, if past history is any indication.

Since the event began in 1986, Hockey Canada says approximately 1,200 National Hockey League draft picks have suited up in the tournament.

That includes nine of the last 12 No. 1 overall picks, including Ilya Kovalchuk, Marc-André Fleury, Alexander Ovechkin, Patrick Kane, John Tavares, Taylor Hall and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins.

Currently locked-out NHLer Antoine Vermette represented Team Quebec during the 1999 Canada Games and says playing against such talented players was a great opportunity.

"It attracts a lot of scouts and hockey people," the Phoenix Coyotes forward said.

"So this is a really good tournament and, actually, I am pretty excited for those guys because at the moment it will be their first international experience."

The tournament begins Dec. 29 and features 10 teams, including Russia — the defending champions — Finland, Sweden, Slovakia and the United States.

There are five Canadian teams representing the different areas of the country, with the Pacific, West and Atlantic regions icing teams, as well as ones from Ontario and Quebec.

The gold-medal game is slated for Jan. 4 at 7:30 p.m. in Victoriaville and will be televised on TSN and RDS.

"It's always a big thrill to play against other countries and see how they play," Vermette said. "It's not only other countries, but you are playing against the best of the best, and it's a good experience."

The 30-year-old forward, who played his junior hockey with the Victoriaville Tigres, says that in the 1999 tournament he played with guys like Pascal Leclaire and Matthew Lombardi, and faced Jay Bouwmeester and Scott Hartnell, among others, on the Alberta team that won the tournament.

"It's an elite team, so most likely you are playing with guys who are going to make it (to the NHL)," Vermette said.

"It's always interesting as a player to face the elite player. You are always raising your game by playing with better players and playing against better players."

Vermette is excited for Victoriaville, which will get a chance to see the stars of tomorrow up close.

"I think they will embrace it greatly," he said of the fans.

"There are a bunch of highly skilled guys coming in."

For more information on the 2013 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge visit the Hockey Canada website at [www.hockeycanada.ca](http://www.hockeycanada.ca)

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.01.2012

NHL Players' Association shows no signs of fracture in this lockout

By Sean Fitz-Gerald

By the last week of October 2004, echoes of dissent were already being heard from inside the National Hockey League Players' Association. More than one member wondered why the union would not consider accepting a salary cap from the NHL, while another said he would gladly cross a picket line, if one existed, adding: "I'd cross the line in a second."

Eight years later, with another lockout settling into the final hours of October, the players have made plenty of noise, but none of significant dissent. Even with the advent of social media platforms such as Twitter, the message — aside from the odd admission of anxiety over not being able to play — has been remarkably consistent with NHLPA party lines.

"I think the initial players who began to speak out [in 2004] were players who were primarily motivated from being in the dark, and frustrated with being in the dark," NHL player agent Allan Walsh said Tuesday. "And there are no players today who are in the dark."

It has been reported the NHL could cancel the Winter Classic this week, having already announced it was cancelling the entire slate of November games. More than a quarter of the regular-season schedule has been wiped from existence.

New York Rangers goaltender Henrik Lundqvist has voiced his displeasure on Twitter, imploring NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr and NHL commissioner Gary Bettman to "figure this one out!" New Jersey Devils enforcer Krys Barch had a beer or two before launching an awkward, but heartfelt, rant against the owners.

But that is about it. And it is nothing compared to some of the public remarks made in 2004.

Then, the NHLPA had dug a bunker behind the notion of avoiding any form of salary cap offered by the league. The message fractured quickly, though. Pierre Dagenais, a forward with the Montreal Canadiens, said some "would be surprised to see how many players in my situation would vote in favour of a cap."

Others repeated the sentiment. Rob Ray, the tough guy who pledged to cross a picket line wherever it emerged, declared: "Really, it's the role players on the team who are going to get screwed in all of this."

The NHL ultimately won its salary cap, and the union splintered.

There are plenty of differences between then and now. The economic system is not set to undergo a complete overhaul with the introduction of a salary cap, for one. But some point to Fehr, who became executive director two years ago, and the method in which he communicates with players. Information is updated constantly, dispersed from the head office, by player representatives and on an application that can be downloaded to the players' mobile phones.

"He's a populist, in the true sense," NHL player agent Anton Thun said. "His belief is that his mandate comes from the players, and that he does what the players want him to do."

In 2004, the message might not have been dispersed quite as readily under then-leader Bob Goodenow. The executive committee, comprised of just seven players, was also much smaller than it is now. (The NHLPA now has a 30-man executive board, with one representative from each team.)

"When you centralize power in a few people, you also encourage apathy amongst the wider membership," Walsh said. "There were very few players vested in the process. So, this time around, you have over 100 players who have already participated up until now in a direct CBA negotiating meeting with the league."

Those players have been in the room to hear, first-hand, whatever Bettman and the other league executives have had to say in bargaining.

"That vests you in the process," Walsh said.

National Post LOADED: 11.01.2012

643503 Ottawa Senators

Senators prospects Matt Puempel and Cody Ceci face tough battle to make Canada's world junior hockey team

By Aedan Helmer, Ottawa Sun

While an NHL deep freeze that extends into December could be good news for Canada's hopes at the world junior championship, it could also spell disappointment for some elite Senators prospects.

Hockey Canada head scout Kevin Prendergast said Cody Ceci and Matt Puempel — who were left off the 2012 entry as 18-year-olds — will have "something to prove" in their final audition for a camp invite when they suit up for Team OHL for the Subway Super Series against Team Russia later this month.

Competition is expected to be fierce at camp, and Hockey Canada scouts are already salivating at the prospect of drawing from a talent pool that includes the likes of Ryan Nugent-Hopkins — who was one of the final cuts at camp as a 17-year-old and was unavailable last year as a full-fledged Edmonton Oiler — along with forwards Ryan Strome, Jonathan Huberdeau and Mark Scheifele, and defencemen Dougie Hamilton, Ryan Murphy and Scott Harrington.

While the roster may not rank with the locked-out 2005 entry considered perhaps the best ever — with a defence corps that included Dion Phaneuf, Shea Weber and Brent Seabrook and a forward group featuring Sidney Crosby, Corey Perry, Ryan Getzlaf, Jeff Carter, Mike Richards and Patrice Bergeron (who already had a full NHL season under his belt) — Prendergast is already finding the silver lining in the dark cloud that hangs over the NHL.

"That was a phenomenal hockey team they had that year, but we feel if we have the opportunity to get all our best players we'll certainly have an A-plus team," he said. "We've been hurt the last couple of years with some of our high-end players in the NHL."

Prendergast already has a good feel for what the roster will look like when the tournament opens on Boxing Day in Ufa, Russia after watching the Canada-Russia Challenge in August.

"The kids who went to Russia in the summer are going to have a real clear picture of what the scene is like there. It's not Canada or the U.S., it's a different world altogether, the ice is obviously a lot different than what they're accustomed to," he said. "I think they have an idea of how the big the bullseye is on Canada's back."

Prendergast has spent the last few months scouting prospects, and got a first-hand look at both Ceci and Puempel last week.

"I was there (at the Oshawa) game and (Ceci) probably played 40 minutes," said Prendergast. "Cody had the opportunity to play this summer on the big ice over there in front of (Russian) fans and then come over here to Canada, and I think that was a good learning experience for him. He struggled a bit with the speed of the games, but I know he's a very intelligent kid and I know his makeup. He's got something to prove in these games, so we're expecting a lot out of him."

Puempel may have an inside track considering he now plays for Kitchener and coach Steve Spott, who has the same role for Team Canada.

"(Spott) is happy with the way he's played, he got off to a slow start, but he's starting to become the player they thought he would be. He'll probably have the final say on a player like that because he sees him every day," said Prendergast. "Puempel is a goal scorer and that's certainly something you always need in a tournament like that. The (Super Series) will be a good measuring stick for us and for him too."

Much depends on whether the NHL lockout still is on.

"If NHL is still out, we'll have a small camp, because we have a pretty good idea of the guys we want," he said. "If the NHL is back on, then the door opens for everybody because we have no idea what we're going to get back."

ICE CHIPS: G Francois Brassard, a Senators draft pick from Gatineau, will suit up for Team QMJHL at the Super Series, but Prendergast said he's a "long shot" to make the squad against the 19-year-old frontrunners —

Malcolm Subban, Laurent Brossoit and Maxime Lagace, all of whom played in the August showcase against the Russians.

"He's been very good with Quebec and obviously he's playing for a guy (Patrick Roy) who knows how to play the position," said Prendergast. "I think this is a good learning curve for him going into next year where I think he'll be in the mix for us."

The same could be said for 18-year-old Senators netminding prospect Chris Dreidger of the Calgary Hitmen, who was left off Team WHL in the Super Series as an 18-year-old.

Other Senators hopefuls who should be in the mix for their respective nations at the world juniors include Binghamton C Mika Zibanejad (Sweden) and Plymouth Whalers RW Stefan Noesen (U.S.), who was among the 46 invites to the team's August evaluation camp.

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.01.2012

643504 Ottawa Senators

Boston Bruins forward Chris Kelly off to Switzerland to play in B league

By Don Brennan, Ottawa Sun

Boston Bruins forward Chris Kelly is headed to the Swiss National League B.

The former Senator is going to play for the HC Red Ice, replacing Nashville's Patric Hornqvist on the roster.

Kelly, who makes his home in Ottawa, had been skating with his union brothers at the Sensplex until this week.

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.01.2012

13 straight days of no talks in NHL dispute

BY: Sam Carchidi, Inquirer Staff Writer

All was quiet on the NHL labor front Wednesday, marking the 13th consecutive day representatives of the league and the players' association did not meet.

Donald Fehr, executive director of the NHL Players' Association, complained about the league's lack of negotiating in the latest letter he sent to the players.

"At every opportunity we have continued to state that we are ready to meet and willing to discuss all open issues, including the owners' last offer," Fehr wrote. "Nonetheless, to date, their group has declined to commit to a meeting unless it can dictate what the agenda is."

Bill Daly, the NHL's deputy commissioner, did not respond to an e-mail Wednesday asking him to respond to Fehr.

In recent days, Daly and Steve Fehr, Donald's brother and the NHLPA's special counsel, have spoken over the phone about numerous issues, but the conversation has not led to any face-to-face meetings.

ESPN has reported that the league will cancel the Jan. 1 Winter Classic on Thursday, though NHL commissioner Gary Bettman has said a decision could be delayed until mid-November.

The league estimates it has lost \$720 million because games have been canceled through Nov. 30. Twenty-two of the Flyers' 82 games have been canceled.

The lockout, imposed by the owners, reached its 46th day on Wednesday.

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.01.2012

MacLeish family (and surprise visitor) survives hurricane

The wife of former Flyers star Rick MacLeish reported that she, her husband and their dog, Gus, survived Hurricane Sandy on Monday - and even had a visit from a fish.

Rick MacLeish and his wife, Charlene, are year-round residents of Ocean City, N.J., and they disregarded Gov. Christie's orders to evacuate the island. Instead, they stayed in their Bay Avenue home and waited out the hurricane.

Charlene MacLeish said there was minor damage to the home, noting that a small part of a stucco wall at the bottom of the house came off.

"But there were no other issues," she said on Tuesday.

At one point, Charlene MacLeish said she opened a door at the bottom of the house \_ it leads to the stairway entrance \_ and some water surged in, along with a fish. "It looked like a big minnow," she said, laughing.

She said about four feet of water entered their garage, but that it was gone after high tide went down.

"I'm glad we stayed because our electricity never went out," she said. "We probably shouldn't have stayed, but we're comfortable being in our own house. It was empty around here. No one else was around."

Except for their cockapoo. And a fish.

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.01.2012

Around the NHL: Del Zotto headed overseas

TIM RIDAY

Rangers defenseman Michael Del Zotto is headed overseas without an NHL contract.

The 22-year-old, who has been unable to negotiate a contract extension with the New York Rangers, has signed with the Rapperswil-Jona Lakers in Switzerland, according to the Rapperswil website (via ProHockeyTalk).

Negotiations between the Rangers and Del Zotto went throughout the summer, but the two sides weren't able to work out a deal prior to the Sept. 15 CBS expiration.

The blueliner registered 10 goals and 31 assists for New York last season. He has 21 goals and 68 assists in 204 career games with the Rangers.

Del Zotto will join Senators forward Jason Spezza with the Lakers. The club also features former NHLers David Aebischer, Robbie Earl and Peter Sejna.

Ennis rejoins Swiss team

Sabres forward Tyler Ennis missed seven games for his Swiss league team because of an unknown ailment, but is healthy and back on the ice.

"He's healthy and he's playing," Sabres general manager Darcy Regier told the Buffalo News on Wednesday. "That's the main thing."

Ennis returned to action on Tuesday, registering an assist in the SCL Tigers' 5-1 over Rapperswil.

Regier said that he and his staff are doing what they can to keep tabs on Ennis and the six other Sabres playing overseas.

"We are keeping track from a distance," Regier said. "The biggest focus is making sure that we stay in touch, at least in the stats, who's playing, how they're playing, how they're doing and maybe even more importantly are they staying healthy?"

Kelly signs in Switzerland

National League B team HC Red Ice in Switzerland announced the signing of Bruins forward Chris Kelly on Wednesday (via PHT).

The 31-year-old is coming off a career year with Boston. He scored 20 goals and added 19 assists in 82 games last season. The Bruins rewarded Kelly with a four-year, \$12 million extension earlier this offseason.

Kelly will replace Predators forward Patric Hornqvist, who signed with Red Ice in early October, but recently decided he wouldn't renew his contract.

Two other Bruins are playing in Switzerland. Tyler Seguin (HC Biel) and Patrice Bergeron (HC Lugano) are playing in the National A League.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.01.2012

643508 Philadelphia Flyers

NHL Notes: Oilers' Hall off injured reserve

The NHL continued to be mired in a lockout, which means players continue to flee for opportunities to find competitive hockey.

Here are some news and notes from around the league:

Hall off IR

While other NHL players have been locked out for some time, Edmonton's Taylor Hall just joined them on Tuesday.

The Oilers winger tweeted (via ProHockeyTalk) that he was officially off injured reserve and served his "divorce papers" by the club. Hall is now free to join the AHL's Oklahoma City Barons.

Hall suffered a shoulder injury on March 17 that required surgery.

The 2010 No. 1 overall pick racked up 53 points (27 goals, 26 assists) in 61 games last season.

Kane makes Swiss debut

Hall is just getting back to competitive games and so is Patrick Kane.

According to ProHockeyTalk, Kane notched a goal and an assist in his debut for Swiss League team Biel. The output didn't matter too much on the scoreboard as Kane and his team lost 7-4 to Zug, who was powered by Henrik Zetterberg's two goals and two assists.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.01.2012

Slight movement in NHL labor talks

By Shelly Anderson / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Although there is no sign that the NHL and the NHL Players' Association are close to reaching a resolution that would end the ongoing lockout, there has been a little movement this week.

NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly confirmed by email Wednesday that he and Steve Fehr, special counsel for the NHLPA, "had a substantive call" Tuesday. It is believed the union is seeking a way to resume formal negotiations.

Daly and Fehr -- brother of NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr -- have been the front men in terms of behind-the-scenes communication between the two sides.

The details of the conversation Tuesday aren't known, but it was different from ones the two men have had before, and might be described as a form of negotiating.

But Daly cautioned that the sides "don't yet know what, if anything, will come of" the conversation.

NHL owners locked out the players when the previous collective bargaining agreement ended Sept. 15. The season was to have opened Oct. 11, and the league has canceled the 2012-13 schedule through the end of November. The Penguins have lost nine games.

It is believed that the NHL will cancel its signature event, the Winter Classic in Ann Arbor, Mich., as soon as today or Friday. Toronto and Detroit are scheduled to play Jan. 1 at Michigan Stadium.

The biggest stumbling block to reaching an agreement has been league economics.

Two weeks ago, the NHL presented an offer that included a 50-50 split of hockey-related revenue. At a negotiating session in Toronto, the NHLPA countered with three alternative plans for a new CBA. The league quickly rejected all three, and the sides have not sat down together since

Post Gazette LOADED: 11.01.2012

Q&A with Penguins forward Craig Adams

November 1, 2012 12:37 am

By Shelly Anderseon / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The NHL lockout has wiped out training camp and early games in the 2012-13 season, but the Post-Gazette will help you catch up with the Penguins with an occasional Q&A. Today, we probe the mind of forward and Harvard graduate Craig Adams, who spent the 2004-05 season playing in Italy during an NHL lockout and said he is now exploring the possibility of playing in Europe again. Adams, 35, was claimed off of waivers by the Penguins in March 2009 just in time for the team's Stanley Cup run. He is the team representative for the NHL Players' Association.

• • • •

Question: What's it like being a first-year player rep in this, of all, seasons?

Answer: I don't want to say it's exciting, but it's definitely interesting. We would prefer not to go through it, but I'm the type of guy that likes to be informed, and it's interesting to be in the room.

Q: How is this lockout different for you from the previous one?

A: The other one, for me, I made the decision in the summertime to sign overseas. I was gone the day the lockout started. Over there, it was just whatever we read on TSN or what updates we got. Being that far away, you were more removed. And there was more of a sense that it was going to go a really long time. We kind of settled in. Not that we didn't hope something would get worked out, but the mentality was different.

Q: What have you been doing with your spare time?

A: I haven't really had a lot of spare time. I come [to Southpointe] in the morning. I get back in the early afternoon. The kids are getting to that age where they're starting to do lots of activities. Our weeks are flying by. It's been a lot of fun to be at almost everything [with the kids]. I'm definitely not bored.

Q: What's the best thing about having a Harvard degree?

A: The best thing about going to Harvard is the people you meet, my wife being No. 1. I've made some great friends there, plus great contacts. Some really cool people. As far as the degree, I guess it hasn't really helped me so far, but maybe one day in the future I'll get the benefit of the doubt or it will open a door. Then you've got to go in and prove yourself after that.

Q: What's one of the funniest moments on the ice that you remember?

A: One game when I was playing in Carolina, Ray Whitney was in the starting lineup. He was out there for the anthem. I was on the bench. As soon as the ref dropped the puck, he took one spin, then headed for the door and headed straight off the ice. All I could think was, 'Oh, boy, he pulled his groin or something.' He was a really big player for us. A few minutes later, he came back to the bench, a big smile on his face. We had all thought maybe he was out for the year or something. He said, 'No, I just realized during the anthem that I really had to go to the bathroom.' He gave us a good scare.

Q: What's your favorite meal?

A: I cook a rack of lamb with roasted potatoes that my mom taught me to cook. It's pretty solid. I don't do the mint. Just garlic, lemon, rosemary. You've got to under-cook lamb -- medium rare. It's not an every-night meal, for sure.

Post Gazette LOADED: 11.01.2012

643511 Tampa Bay Lightning

exhibition games with fellow NHL players in Canada's Quebec province. "It was good to be on the ice in a game," the Quebec City resident said, "but there was no defense."

Tampa Bay Lightning's Steven Stamkos trying to stay sharp during lockout

Tampa Bay Times LOADED: 11.01.2012

By Damian Cristodero, Times Staff Writer

In Print: Thursday, November 1, 2012

To say Steven Stamkos is at loose ends is probably overstating things a bit.

But the Lightning's All-Star center has a lot of free time on his hands, thanks to the NHL lockout, that extra work in the gym and playing pickup games at the local rink just can't fill.

"I guess it's the old saying, you don't realize what you have until you lose it," Stamkos said. "For me, my whole life has been hockey, and now you don't have that. It's tough."

From the sound of things, it is not going to get better soon.

The league, perhaps today, will cancel the Jan. 1 Winter Classic. The NHL and players association haven't formally negotiated since Oct. 18 and have no plans to resume.

So, Stamkos, 22, who last season became the first NHL player in four years to score 60 goals, contemplates playing in Europe — "I'm going to see what happens in the next two or three weeks before I go any further" — takes advantage of extra opportunities to see family and friends, and tries to stay in some kind of hockey shape.

That means working three days a week with fitness guru and former Lightning player Gary Roberts, who has trained Stamkos the past several summers and whose gym is near Stamkos' Toronto-area home.

Stamkos also works two or three days a week with Jari Bryski, who runs a hockey school in Toronto and has coached Stamkos on skating and stick skills since he was 8.

"For now," Stamkos said, "I'm planning that there will be some sort of a season."

Until then, he must deal with a new reality.

Stamkos has played organized hockey since age 3 and said it's weird for the first time since then not to be playing when his body and mind are saying he should.

"You don't realize how routine-oriented you are," he said, "Training in the summer, you're always gearing up for camp. When you're at camp, you're gearing up for an exhibition game. Everything is hockey-related."

"So, it's trying to find a new routine to get into. It took a while, but I'm finally settling in. I've got my workouts. I've been going to skates and trying to keep in the best shape I can, not to do anything crazy, but just maintain all the hard work you've put in over the summer."

The thing with Stamkos is how far he has progressed the past two seasons, not only on the ice but as a team leader.

Because he has learned how to create scoring chances from anywhere in the offensive zone, he no longer is dependent on his power-play one-timer for goals.

After games, Stamkos' thoughtful perspective makes him, win or lose, a go-to guy for reporters.

If Lightning coach Guy Boucher is worried further development will be delayed by what might be a missed season, he is not saying.

"He's picked up all the tools to be able to be a consistent two-way winner," Boucher said. "He wants to take another step this year."

"He's one of the fastest skaters in the league and wants to be faster," Lightning captain Vinny Lecavalier said. "That tells you how hard he works."

That tells you he wants to tie up any loose ends.

NOTES: The good news, wing Marty St. Louis said, is Hurricane Sandy pushed water only to the front door of his new Greenwich, Conn., house. "But the back yard," he said, "is part of the ocean." ... Goaltender Mathieu Garon is back skating at the Ice Sports Forum in Brandon after playing two

Maple Leafs prospect Morgan Rielly rushing to become a complete player

By Terry Koshan

MOOSE JAW, SASK. -

Morgan Rielly made it look easy.

Got the puck at the blue line. Took a couple of strides forward and avoided pressure from his check, in this case Medicine Hat Tigers forward Hunter Shinkaruk, regarded as a top prospect for the 2013 National Hockey League entry draft. Spun toward boards, came back to the blue line and passed to defence partner Travis Brown.

Stayed engaged and watched as the puck eventually was worked to Moose Jaw Warriors teammate Justin Kirsch, who banked it into the net off Tigers goaltender Cam Lanigan.

There was no assist on the play for Rielly, but the goal, the first for the Warriors in an eventual 3-2 loss in overtime on Sunday night at Mosaic Place, wouldn't have happened without his heads-up, take-charge decision.

Watch Rielly, the Maple Leafs' first-round pick last June and a true blue-chip prospect in a Toronto organization that has not had bushels of them in recent years, skate in three games in three nights and what unfolds for the observer often is the same. He gets the puck on his stick and, more or less, it leaves his blade when he decides it will.

"It's like he is playing a game of keepaway sometimes, that's what it looks like," Warriors captain Kendall McFaul said. "He controls the game."

The chances are excellent that Rielly will patrol the Leafs blue line for years, and, in all probability, some time in the near future. His skating ability isn't matched by many of his peers in major junior, no matter the position. Rielly skates the puck out of trouble like he was born doing it, and if he is on the ice, that's him leading the rush.

But the 18-year-old, who thrilled Leafs general manager Brian Burke and the front-office staff with his performance at the club's prospects camp in July, isn't a high-risk player. Everything he does on the ice is calculated, or it appears to be.

Rielly, of course, is not perfect. There are plays when he will be beaten, which happened a couple of times during a 5-1 loss in Prince Albert against the Raiders on Saturday night, but no hockey player knows perfection.

Still, Rielly, his black, red and white No. 4 Warriors sweater tucked in at the back of his pants, did things during a three-game span -- two of them 350 kilometres north in Prince Albert, another on home ice -- that others his age can't do.

The weekend as a whole was not terrific for the Warriors. They opened with a 3-2 victory in Prince Albert on Friday night, with Rielly assisting on the tying and winning goals, for their first road win of 2012-13. Though Rielly conducted the flow of the game each time he hopped over the boards at the Raiders' creaky home, the Art Hauser Centre, those picking the three stars managed to miss that simple fact entirely.

A sharp pass from the blue line by Rielly went directly to the stick of rookie Brayden Point, whose subtle flick of the wrists deposited the puck behind goalie Andy Desautels. It was a power-play goal late in the second period and made the score 2-2. In the third, Rielly, positioned behind the Raiders' net, started the play and recorded the second assist on the winner by Sam Fioretti.

The next night, the back half of rare road-and-road set, nothing went well for Rielly and the Warriors. He was caught flat-footed, the only time it occurred in three games, and the Raiders' Mike Winther went in to score on goalie Daniel Waple. In the third, Winther scored again, escaping Rielly's check at the net to deflect the puck past Waple.

On Sunday night, a couple of tired clubs met. In the third period, Rielly hung on to the puck, skating around the net before passing to Kirsch, whose pass was directed into the net by Fioretti. In overtime, Rielly watched from the bench as a Warriors' defensive breakdown helped result in the winning goal by the Tigers' Dylan Bredo.

In the larger picture, Rielly showed himself to be a positionally sound player, one who doesn't have to use his stick for anything other than

controlling the puck. In 16 games this season, his lone penalty was a fighting major on Sept. 22 against Swift Current. Ask the majority of defencemen how many hooking and holding minors they have been flagged for this season. When Rielly finds himself in trouble, his speed and smarts lead him to safety.

Rielly's passing is at the NHL level. If there's a challenge when the Warriors are on the attack, it's that Rielly's ability to read the game a step or two ahead of most of the others on the ice can result in broken plays.

As with any defenceman whose main thrust is offence, the questions for Rielly surround his defensive approach. He's not a physical player, in that he won't hammer opposing players into the boards. But he knows when to ride people out of the play. Block shots? Not often.

"There is a point in the game when I have to take the puck and go," Rielly said. "But I am a defenceman and I understand I have to take care of our end first. It's the area I'm going to work on the most in terms of trying to improve it. I understand it's a hugely important aspect of hockey."

But Warriors coach Mike Stothers knows well what he has in Rielly. Stothers wants Rielly to become a better player when he doesn't have the puck, but there are not many restraints placed on the 6-foot, 205-pound Vancouver native.

"It's easy to coach a guy like Morgs because he knows he has some things he needs to improve on, and he is not afraid to meet that head on," Stothers said. "He is not resistant, he is willing to try use of his stick or his body position, being aware in own zone. He wants to be used in all situations. He doesn't want to be labelled as a guy who is an offensive force, he wants to be a shutdown guy. Play late in the game, protect the lead, kill penalties."

A head coach in major junior, at times, can have difficulty convincing his star player it's best for all if he buys in. For many, being carried by talent is enough.

But with Rielly, that couldn't be further from the truth. For hard work and commitment, the easiest example involving Rielly was his determination to return to the lineup from a major knee injury, one that he suffered last Nov. 6. No one would have found fault had Rielly shut himself down and concentrated solely on preparing for the NHL draft combine the following spring in Toronto.

After training for a few months back home, he returned to Moose Jaw in February, bound to get back in the lineup. That happened on April 20, when he skated on to the ice for Game 1 of the Eastern Conference final against Edmonton.

"It said something to the entire hockey world," Leafs director of player development Jim Hughes said. "The thing about this guy is the mental mindset. When he came to the prospect camp this summer, he was on a mission. He has things in his mind he wants to see through. He is a serious kid, matter-of-fact. He knows where he wants to go, and he knows how to get there."

When Rielly gets to the Leafs' lineup, at this point, is just a guess. The lockout derailed the team's plans to give Rielly a long, hard look at training camp, and Burke has no interest in having him on the team just to play a few minutes here and there.

"It's pretty cool when people are asking you how long it is before you will play for Toronto," Rielly, who signed an entry-level deal with the Leafs in August, said of the some of the questions he gets from Warriors fans. "But I don't really have a response for that. I just have a goal to play there at some point in my career."

#### THE RIELLY FILE

Born: March 9, 1994 in Vancouver

Skinny: Among defencemen scoring leaders in Western Hockey League with four goals and 15 assists in 16 games ... Leads Moose Jaw with a plus-3 rating ... Style similar to that of smooth-skating Maple Leafs defenceman Jake Gardiner ... Fan of the Washington Redskins and quarterback Robert Griffin III ... Prefers country music and the TV show The League and likes to play Xbox with teammates on off days ... Drives a silver Nissan Xterra ... Was captain of the famed Notre Dame Hounds during the 2009-10 season ... Father Andy played for Surrey of the BCHL in the 1970s.

#### RUSSIA SOUNDS GOOD FOR XMAS

Not unlike hundreds of major-junior hockey players in North America, Morgan Rielly would love to spend Christmas in Russia.

The city of Ufa will play host to the 2013 world junior hockey championship, and Rielly wants to be in Canada's colours and on the blue line on Boxing Day in its tournament opener versus Germany.

"I try not to think about it, but it's hard at times," Rielly said.

"It's certainly going to be hard to achieve with all the players who are still in junior (because of the NHL lockout), but it's something I want to do."

Rielly was strong for Canada in four exhibition games in August against Russia, recording four points to tie Ryan Murphy for the lead among defencemen. In 2011, Rielly helped Canada win gold at the Ivan Hlinka Memorial Tournament.

Toronto Sun LOADED: 11.01.2012

Leafs centre Tyler Bozak latest public figure to test Halloween taboos

By Sean Fitz-Gerald

Toronto Maple Leafs forward Tyler Bozak appears to have joined what is now becoming an annual tradition of prominent public figures making questionable wardrobe choices at Halloween. Raffi Torres was ahead of him in line, doing something similar last year.

Barrington Walker, associate professor in the department of history at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., teaches courses on race, immigration, African Canadian history and legal history. He was asked about Bozak's costume — intended as a tribute to late singer Michael Jackson — on Wednesday.

"Was it knowingly racist? No," he said. "But does it have consequences with regard to racial insensitivity? I would say yes."

Bozak has removed the photograph from his Twitter account. His agent, Wade Arnott, did not immediately respond to email and telephone messages seeking information. (A tweet Bozak sent last year, after the Torres costume drew widespread criticism, had been circulating again on Wednesday.)

I cant believe this Raffi Torres costume is blowing up. It's Halloween! Arent you supposed to dress up? I thought that was a great costume—

Tyler Bozak ( at Bozie42) October 31, 2011

Here is a transcript of an interview with Walker, with excerpts of another interview with Jeannine DeLombard, associate professor of English at the University of Toronto.

Is it a good idea to go to a Halloween party dressed in blackface if you're a white hockey player?

Walker: [sighs] "This is tough for me, because I'm a big Leafs fan. The Leafs have enough problems, and I'm loath to pile on Tyler Bozak, but I guess I'll have to set that aside and be a professional about this. Is it a good idea? No."

KHL grants exception for Leafs' Joffrey Lupul

Why not?

Walker: "There's a long history of blackface coming out of the United States, in the period during slavery, before the American civil war and after the American civil war. It's an interesting history. I won't bore you with all the details of it, but it emerges as one of America's earliest and most authentic art forms. So the irony of it is, it's right up there with things like jazz and hip-hop and rock and roll, in terms of authentic American art forms."

What were minstrel shows?

Walker: "They were a form of popular entertainment for the masses, from people at the very bottom of the working class to elite Americans. So it'd be akin to whatever popular things people are into today; like going to a movie or going to see wrestling. It was a very popular form of mass entertainment."

What would the performers do, typically?

Walker: "Typically, before going on stage, the performers would take a piece of cork, burn it so it was smoldering, then take the ashes of the cork, rub it on their faces and make the transformation from 'white' to 'black.' Then they would go on the stage — and there were different plays and that sort of thing — and they would engage in exaggerated racist depictions of blacks, in terms of speech, in terms of affectation."

If it was offensive in, say, 1925, why would it still be offensive now?

Walker: "Well, if you're asking an historian, 1925 really wasn't that long ago. And I know to most people, it seems like 1925 was a long time ago, but I think it's still very much true that we're living with the legacies of some of that history. I know that some people think that history is long dead and gone — it's no longer important; people are being overly sensitive; they're hung up on the past ... But there's still a lot of indicators that we have that

would suggest we haven't achieved full equality. And part of the reason is the residue of this history."

Tyler Bozak said it was a tribute ...

That's a tribute to one of my fave artists. For anyone saying its racist is crazy!

—

Tyler Bozak ( at Bozie42) October 31, 2012

Walker: "I'm sure it was. These things are complicated, right? I don't think it really helps to go out and condemn Tyler Bozak unequivocally. What's complicated about these incidents is that we're in the early 21st century, and a lot of our pop icons people are of African descent; whether they be athletes or musicians. And a lot of people want to emulate these figures. And without the historical context, one of the ways in which they do so is to visibly darken their complexions. I don't think it's something that is done out of malice. I really do think, in Tyler Bozak's mind, he was paying tribute to the King of Pop. But the problem is, when you're not aware of the not-so-long ago past of minstrelsy ... you can't escape history that easily."

DeLombard: "I think the first question to ask is, is this blackface? If he's dressing up like Michael Jackson, is that automatically a problem? If you are a white person, can you not dress up like someone who is black, involving a wig or whatever? And on top of that, it's also interesting because Michael Jackson, himself, changed his appearance. So that also adds another layer of interest to this."

So, the big question, then: Is what he did racist? Can you still be racist without intent?

Walker: "Well, you know, unfortunately, my answer to that question would be yes. And not everybody would agree. There are different ways that racism manifests itself. And there are direct and conscious acts of racism that people, unfortunately, will commit on each other. And then there's the kind of racism that has more to do with unintended consequences, unintended effects. There's structural racism. There's institutional racism ... I wouldn't say that [Bozak] consciously, knowingly, acted with racial malice. But I would say that there's a long history that he wasn't aware of, and he kind of walked right into it."

DeLombard: "One thing is, if you really want to dress up to look like Michael Jackson — and you're white — you're not going to have to darken your skin very much, and he's done that. The other thing is that you're certainly not going to draw on a different kind of a tradition that Michael Jackson represents, which is doing something like whitening your lips. If you want to look like Michael Jackson, there are lots of images to copy that look like Michael Jackson. If you do something that looks more like it came out of the middle of the 19th century; that looks very little like Michael Jackson. I guess the question here is, if this is respectful, if this is honourable, he's going to look more like Michael Jackson."

National Post LOADED: 11.01.2012

Leafs' Tyler Bozak thought it was a good idea to wear blackface as part of Halloween costume

By Canadian Press

TORONTO — A photo of Toronto Maple Leafs centre Tyler Bozak wearing blackface as part of a Halloween costume appeared on his Twitter account Tuesday night.

The photo, which showed Bozak dressed as Michael Jackson and grabbing his groin area to replicate a familiar dance move by the pop icon, was removed from his account.

After receiving a flurry of criticism on Twitter, Bozak posted another tweet explaining that the costume was a tribute to the late singer.

"That's a tribute to one of my fave artists. For anyone saying its racist is crazy!" tweeted Bozak.

Bozak isn't the first hockey player to be criticized for wearing blackface as part of a Halloween costume.

Last year a photo of Phoenix Coyotes forward Raffi Torres wearing blackface while dressed as rapper Jay-Z at a Halloween party appeared online.

National Post LOADED: 11.01.2012

Vancouver Sun: LOADED: 11.01.2012

643515 Vancouver Canucks

Toronto D-man Gardiner too valuable to flip  
Marlies at Abbotsford Heat for double-header

By Jason Botchford, The Province October 31, 2012

ABBOTSFORD — When the Roberto Luongo rumour mill went into full churn, promising Toronto defenceman Jake Gardiner knew who to lean on.

Who better than Luke Schenn?

Wait, a minute, Schenn did get traded.

"Sure, but it took four years," Gardiner said. "He had rumours from the first time he got to Toronto. He had four years of it."

"I talked to him and he said, 'Rumours are going to happen. You have to push them off. You can't ever worry about it.'"

From that point, Gardiner hasn't, and with good reason.

Since a mid-season sag that saw him sit seven consecutive games in January, there hasn't been a lot for Gardiner to be concerned about.

Even the rumours have been an ego stroke. The Canucks wanted him in a Luongo trade. His skating and transition game fit Vancouver's attack like a longboard suits a hipster. The Leafs responded with their position that they can't possibly give him up.

"I'm happy Toronto wants me, I don't want to leave," Gardiner said.

Not bad for a player who wasn't considered a blue-chip prospect. He's certainly covered a lot of ground since the Anaheim Ducks gave up on him 20 months ago, trading him and Joffrey Lupul for Francois Beauchemin.

Then, he was the third leading point getter on the Wisconsin Badgers. A decent prospect, but not one anyone raved about. His paperwork hadn't been filed in the "can't miss" folder.

Now, the trade looks ridiculously lopsided. But just think of how it would look if the Leafs flipped Gardiner for Luongo, and the goalie led them on a long playoff run. Or two.

What would that be worth?

But after 21 points in his final 40 games, Gardiner is viewed by most as too valuable to flip. There is too much promise for a rookie who walked off a university campus and accelerated his growth in the NHL at warp speed.

Gardiner leads the Marlies into a double dip this week in Abbotsford, with games Thursday and Friday. He has three goals in his first six games and has the potential to be one of the best players you will see in the AHL.

It's a trip which is sure to generate interest at Rogers Arena. You can expect the Canucks to be represented in Abbotsford, where you can take in a hockey game and play one of your own: Guess the assets coming back if Luongo does don the Maple Leaf.

For Gardiner, playing for the Marlies easily trumps the alternatives during the NHL lockout. On an entry level deal, he didn't have to go to Europe. He didn't even have to leave Toronto.

He remains bent on improving, and showing the second half of last year was no fluke.

"Even midway through the year, I sat out those seven games but I didn't think anything of it," Gardiner said. "I wasn't playing well and I deserved to sit."

"I just kept working by tail off in practice, always figuring I'd get back in the lineup. I was never too worried about it."

He is convinced he can grow in the minors, explaining why he has an advantage over most of his NHL peers.

"When you think about it, there are a lot of guys sitting on their couches right now," Gardiner said. "We're out playing in a very good league and we're still getting better."

"I feel like I'm patient with the puck in my own zone. I feel very comfortable there. But I feel like I can be better in the offensive zone. I can get better at getting shots on the net, taking smart shots instead of having them blocked."

"And overall, I'm fine tuning my defensive game here."

"We have faced some really good players to do that against. Take a look at Oklahoma City. They basically have Edmonton's top line."

Vancouver Province: LOADED: 11.01.2012

643516 Washington Capitals

Marcus Johansson signs with BIK Karlskoga in Sweden

Posted by Katie Carrera on October 30, 2012 at 10:38 am

Marcus Johansson has signed with BIK Karlskoga in the second-tier Swedish league Hockey Allsvenskan, according to the team's website.

Johansson, who returned to Sweden in early October, is the sixth Capital to sign overseas since the lockout began back on Sept. 16. Alex Ovechkin and Nicklas Backstrom are both playing for Dynamo Moscow in the KHL, Brooks Laich is in Switzerland with the Kloten Flyers in Switzerland, Wojtek Wolski is in Poland with KH Sanok and Michal Neuvirth is in the Czech Republic with Sparta Praha.

From BIK Karlskoga, via Google Translate:

Washington Star Marcus Johansson has for some time been training with Färjestad, but now he's ready for the game with BIK Karlskoga. Agreement is a so-called short-term contracts and Marcus practicing with the team for the first time in today's warming. If the insurance issue has time to dissolve, so does Marcus already in tonight's game against Troy / Ljungby.

22-year-old, who played in Malmo, Farjestad, Skåre, Hershey Bears and Washington Capitals are a skate skilled two-way center that is round in most ways. Fine hockey sense, good technique, aggressive in his game, working home and produce objective and above all assists. Has a good shot and epitomizes a team player. Welcome to BIK Karlskoga, Marcus!

Johansson spoke with Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet about the signing and you can check out a translation by Malin Andersson over at Japers' Rink. From that translation, come a few more details of Johansson's contract with BIK Karlskoga as well:

Johansson is playing for free but the club will pay for his insurance. The insurance cost is \$5,000 dollars per month according to BIK Karlskoga's Club president, Torsten Yngvesson. The contract is for two weeks, but in theory it could last all season according to Johansson's agent Gunnar Svensson.

Washington Post LOADED: 11.01.2012

643517 Washington Capitals

NHL lockout 2012: Unified, players roll with punches

Losing checks is the price they pay

By Stephen Whyno

With a baby on the way and an NHL lockout looming, Troy Brouwer had a plan. He squirreled away money and made sure he and his family could survive a long winter.

But perhaps Mike Tyson said it best: "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the face." Owners punched players in their faces by locking them out Sept. 15 and canceling games through Nov. 30. Another right hook could come Thursday with the cancellation of the Winter Classic.

And while the league holds the power and leverage to eliminate games and the primary source of income, don't expect players to crack. Even for the rank-and-file, this is a battle of principles that's worth losing paychecks and possibly even a season over.

"It's tough on us, for sure. There's no doubt. I don't have enough in my personal bank account that I'm set for life," Boston Bruins enforcer Shawn Thornton said. "I'm going to have to go back to work after all this, and if I miss two years, I'm basically [screwed]."

Thornton has been punched in the face numerous times during his career. But even those who don't drop the gloves recognize the mentality of not wanting to lose a battle such as this.

"We're all losing money. We're not the only ones losing money here," Philadelphia Flyers defenseman Kimmo Timonen said. "It's the teams, the fans. Everybody's losing. This is not a good situation for everybody. But sometimes there's things you have to fight for, and this is one of those things."

For the NHLPA, it could be argued that a bad deal is better than no deal, but this isn't a one-year collective bargaining agreement. Giving up paychecks in the short term is not ideal, but players are adamant about wanting the league to honor existing contracts because of their long-term value.

"What players want is a fair deal, an equitable deal," NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr said. "One that they can believe is even-handed and can set the stage for the future so we don't have to go through this every few years. It's enough already."

Questions about solidarity are impossible for individual players to answer. It's unfair for Capitals superstar Alex Ovechkin and Penguins counterpart Sidney Crosby to speak for Jay Beagle and Thornton and vice-versa.

Brouwer said he's fortunate to have made enough money to hold him over. But he and others know this isn't just about living month to month.

"It's not just affecting you now; but it's something that's going to affect you for a very long time," Brouwer said. "You take the measures to make sure that you're going to be OK financially and your well-being to make sure that you'll be OK for a long period of time."

Players in 2004-05 lost money that they're never getting back. But whereas then cracks began appearing when games started coming off the schedule, that's not happening now.

"From what I understand because I wasn't in the league in 2004, but things fell apart at the seams for the PA," Anaheim Ducks forward Bobby Ryan said. "I can't speak for a guy that's on the fourth line and needs to be playing and is losing a period of that finite window that he has. It's tough. But I think the union is extremely strong right now. From what I understand, it's the strongest it's ever been, and guys are really looking to get in on this."

Veteran Carolina Hurricanes defenseman Joe Corvo, who played for the Capitals in 2010, credited new voices for taking the lead during this lockout. Plus, many who went through the last work stoppage are lending advice.

Unlike 2004-05, when former Capitals goalie Olie Kolzig said the players didn't have a "Plan B," there seems to be little doubt that the NHLPA is better prepared this time.

"Going forward here, we know what the risks are, we know what precautions we need to take," Brouwer said. "And at the same point, we're still staying strong to our principles, and we want to make sure that there's a fair deal for both sides."

In the meantime, it hurts to miss paychecks for those who haven't signed to play overseas or in a minor league in North America. But escrow checks for last season arrived this week, and many players made it clear that money won't be a problem.

"I think every player is smart with that side of things, and it's not really something to worry about," Chicago Blackhawks captain Jonathan Toews said. "Our biggest concern is our future and our future in this game, and supporting ourselves and our families. [This is] our way to earn a living, and we work hard at it. We've earned how far we've come, every single player top to bottom, and it's something that's worth standing up for at this point."

Despite what likely will be diminishing returns — at least in the short term — on the new CBA, players aren't standing for being punched in the face.

"I hope this gets solved and I don't have to worry about it. But if it doesn't right now, I'm on board. I'm on board with the union," Thornton said. "It's out of my hands to a degree, so you just try and make the best of it. If I've got to go back to the steel factory, I've got to go back to the steel factory."

Washington Times LOADED: 11.01.2012

Johansson is latest Caps player to make move to Europe

Brian McNally

Staff writer - sports

The Washington Examiner

The NHL lockout continues and the Capitals have lost another player to Europe. Forward Marcus Johansson signed with BIK Karlskoga on Tuesday, according to multiple Swedish-language media reports. He becomes the sixth Washington player to sign with a team in Europe as the lockout enters its seventh week. As of Tuesday evening, there were still no talks scheduled between NHL owners and the NHL Players' Association. In fact, it is expected that later this week the league will cancel plans to hold its annual Winter Classic event, which this year is set for New Year's Day in Detroit between the Red Wings and Toronto Maple Leafs at Michigan Stadium.

So Johansson signed a short-term contract with Karlskoga, a team in the Swedish second division, the Allsvenskan. Johansson, 22, had 14 goals and 32 assists last season and played 80 games in his second NHL season. He was a first-round pick by the Caps in 2009.

Johansson joins five of his teammates in Europe. Both Alex Ovechkin and Nicklas Backstrom are playing for the same team in Russia's Kontinental Hockey League (KHL), Dynamo Moscow. Forward Wojtek Wolski, acquired by Washington over the summer as a free agent, is playing for KH Sanok in Poland. Wolski was born in the country before emigrating to Canada as a boy. Forward Brooks Laich signed with the Kloten Flyers in the top league in Switzerland, National League A. Goalie Michal Neuvirth returned home to play for HC Sparta Praha in the Czech Extraliga. Two other players expected to make the Caps' final roster -- goalie Braden Holtby and defenseman Dmitry Orlov -- are currently playing for the Hershey Bears, the club's top farm team in the American Hockey League.

- Brian McNally

Washington Examiner LOADED: 11.01.2012

ESPN /Players, owners waste good thing

By Scott Burnside ESPN.com

As I read through another self-righteously indignant news release from NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr, it struck me that the NHL's players and the equally self-righteous and indignant owners truly exist in a kind of bubble.

Now, it might be comfy and warm in there, but it's about time for a little reality to intrude.

On Thursday, or possibly Friday, the NHL will cancel the Winter Classic set for Jan. 1 in Ann Arbor, Mich., and all of the attendant events that would have surrounded the signature event of the NHL's regular season, multiple sources have told ESPN.com.

Unlike the games through Nov. 30 -- some 26.5 percent of the 2012-13 regular season -- that were previously canned by the NHL, this one can't get un-canned.

When the pin goes into the Winter Classic balloon, multiple sources confirmed, the air doesn't get put back in given the myriad of contracts and partners involved in the entire process, including the University of Michigan, the city of Detroit, the American Hockey League, the Ontario Hockey League, major sponsors such as Bridgestone and so on.

Barring a miracle arrival of meaningful discussion this week, the Winter Classic will be gone. Gone. Pfftt.

The players are busy playing all over the world and attacking commissioner Gary Bettman on Twitter, as are the owners with trying to set up secret chats with the players and spending all of 10 minutes going over the players' latest proposals. So maybe it has escaped both sides that outside their tidy little bubble the give-a-hoot factor about not just the labor talks, but the game itself, is rapidly diminishing.

Pfftt. Gone.

Between the multiple events set for Comerica Park and downtown Detroit and the Winter Classic itself set for The Big House in Ann Arbor, some 260,000 tickets were expected to be distributed to events. That doesn't count the thousands, maybe tens of thousands, who might have just descended on the area to be part of the atmosphere.

As the buzz surrounding the first Winter Classic involving a Canadian team and the wildly popular alumni events goes mute, as the expected record television audience reaches for the remote to switch to other programming, as the revenues -- expected to top the previous five Winter Classics and the two Canadian Heritage Classics -- vanish, the implication will be clear to anyone still paying attention: Both sides in this ludicrous dispute are royally screwed.

The obliteration of the NHL's marquee regular-season event is the symbolic crossing of the Rubicon, a stark acknowledgment that all that's been gained since the last ridiculous lockout ended has been in vain, has been frittered away by two sides so entrenched in their dislike and mistrust of each other that they are powerless to stop it.

The Winter Classic represents all the positives that came out of the ashes of the last lockout. It represents the fans' loyalty to the game and the value of pushing the envelope, and it is a shining example of things that work for a league that has so often flirted only with things that go bump in the night.

In the uncertain months after the last lockout, the NHL sold the heck out of the game. They took regular-season games to Europe, and they sunk money into the NHL Network and NHL.com. Teams in places such as Anaheim, Edmonton, Carolina and Buffalo made long playoff runs, and some won Cups. And guess what, sponsors and fans ate it up. Big time.

The salary cap rose from \$39 million in the first post-lockout season (2005-06) to \$70.2 million this past summer based on record revenues of \$3.3 billion.

Sidney Crosby scored the shootout winner against Buffalo in the first Winter Classic.

The Winter Classic embodied this new leash on hockey life. Where many had predicted cataclysm after the NHL became the first pro league to lose an entire season and playoffs to a labor dispute, the game charted a different, more upbeat path.

It was risky and it nearly fell apart early on that first snowy afternoon in Buffalo on the first day of 2008, when the ice, hurriedly set down after the Buffalo Bills' last regular-season game, cracked and chipped and the snow covered the puck. But when Sidney Crosby scored the winner in a shootout against Ryan Miller, the snowflakes made it look otherworldly and the event became an instant hit. Nary a person left Ralph Wilson Stadium that day unaffected, and those at home paused at the spectacle and said, "Hm, hockey. Cool."

Trips to Wrigley Field, Fenway Park, Heinz Field and Citizens Bank Park followed. They weren't perfect, but each event added another layer of scope, more games, more events. More levels of hockey were involved. The past two years, HBO produced a wildly popular reality series that shone a light on the inner workings of NHL teams and players leading up to the Winter Classic. TV audiences soared, sponsors lined up to take part, revenues swelled.

It's exactly the kind of event that should want to make both sides try to put aside their differences, said Paul Swangard, head of the Warsaw Sports Marketing Center at the University of Oregon, a leading sports business think tank.

Ha. Imagine that.

Every sport looks to find a way to become culturally relevant, to resonate across the landscape and not just with their hardcore fans. The Super Bowl is the obvious standard bearer of such events.

There's the Kentucky Derby, the Indianapolis 500.

The NBA, which returned from its own lockout last season for its annual Christmas Day slate of games, has created a niche with those Yule contests.

Swangard called it a "brilliant stroke" for the NHL to fill a void created by the departure of college football from its traditional stranglehold on Jan. 1 programming and create something unique with the Winter Classic.

"This was an ambitious plan to keep the momentum going," Swangard said.

The loss of this event now serves as a symbol of the problems facing the league.

"I would think that would be a setback for them in the rebuilding of the fan base that will have to occur," Swangard said.

It begs the question, Swangard suggested: "If you all are really in this business together, wouldn't it be something worth saving?"

The answer, perhaps inevitably, appears to be no.

When asked about the possibility that the Winter Classic would be canceled, Fehr told reporters at a charity game in Chicago on Friday "it reinforces the notion that the NHL isn't interested in the money. I hope they don't do it."

Of course, the players, who lifted not one finger to create the entity that is the Winter Classic other than play the game, are completely blameless in this equation.

Just as the owners insist they are ready to close a deal if only the players weren't so intransigent.

Did we mention living in a bubble?

At this point, it's not so much about saving the Winter Classic -- there was some talk at the league level of canceling it last week when the NHL canceled games through the end of November -- but rather how significant the fallout will be when the inevitable happens.

One of the things both sides have agreed on was that the league was well-positioned to continue its revenue growth. The players and owners didn't agree on the degree to which revenues might reasonably have been expected to rise, but they both foresaw continued growth for the league.

The lack of a deal, the cancellation of more than a quarter of the regular season and now the spiking of an event that transcended the hard-core fan base that is so important to the league throws all that into uncertainty.

Bettman can talk about the fans' loyalties, but anyone who has paid any attention to the vibe around this lockout knows the feelings of anger and resentment are much different from past work stoppages.

And then there are the sponsors who, wooed and courted by the NHL, bought into the game and the plan for the game's growth.

If you're a sponsor locked in with the NHL, moving forward you have to wonder about renewing your deal with the league, especially toward the end of whatever deal gets forged. Let's say it's a six-year deal. Given that the league would prefer to lock out players rather than forge some sort of seamless transition from deal to deal, why would you touch this product late in any CBA?

And if you're a sponsor looking for a place to park your advertising or sponsorship monies, why you would turn to a sport whose signature move every time it's presented with a labor negotiation is nuclear winter?

And so we wait for the "pop" that will accompany the puncturing of the Winter Classic balloon this week, and we wonder again what the two sides actually see from inside their bubble.

Does Donald Fehr believe that the players' passive aggressive strategy -- one that ignores the obvious path to draw the league into a more moderate stance, to whitt bargaining off the owners' previous offer -- will ultimately produce a better deal for the players? Or is this more about sticking it to Bettman than getting players back on the ice?

As for the NHL, who does business this way? Who starts a crucial set of negotiations aimed at keeping the gravy train on track with an offer that was guaranteed only to further entrench the players' dislike and distrust of Bettman and the owners? Who treats their own brand with such reckless disregard?

The questions, like most of what passes for negotiations now, are rhetorical.

Instead, the only thing that's real is the disappearance of the one event the players and owners should have done everything in their power to save.

Now, back to your bubble. Hope you enjoy the view.

ESPN LOADED: 11.01.2012

ESPN / O'Donnell puts NHLPA ahead of career

By Pierre LeBrun

Sean O'Donnell began his NHL career in the lockout-shortened season of 1994-95 and knows very well he may see it end by yet another lockout.

The 41-year-old unrestricted free agent understands the facts. Of the players who were on an NHL roster for 40 or more days in 2003-04 (before the yearlong lockout of 2004-05), 121 did not return for the 2005-06 season, according to the NHLPA. Ninety-six players who played 40 or more games in 2003-04 did not return after the lockout, according to Elias Sports Bureau.

O'Donnell knows he might very well be one of the many lockout casualties this time around.

"Even if the lockout ends quickly, there's still no guarantees that I'm going to find work this year," O'Donnell told ESPN.com Wednesday. "And if I don't, I think I had a pretty good career. But you can say 100 percent sure that if this goes long or we miss the whole year, then my career is done. But it's one of those things where you have to think what's best for the union."

The defenseman, as popular a teammate as there has been during his 17 NHL seasons, is willing to sacrifice his own well-being for what he believes is right.

"The players that were in this league before me took care of me and made sure I got paid well and got paid fair, and I've had a good career because of it," said O'Donnell, who played in Chicago last season. "So, that means it's my responsibility -- even if that means it costs me the end of my career -- I have to do what's right for the guys that are coming down the road."

Don't get this guy wrong. O'Donnell isn't a militant, brainwashed player who is ready to jump off a bridge for the union cause. But he also feels he knows what's right and what's wrong in his heart and mind.

"I'm a big believer that owners put up a lot of money to buy these teams, they need to make money, but sometimes I feel they don't negotiate maybe with the best interests at heart," O'Donnell said. "To come in at 43 percent right off the bat (the NHL's first offer last July), some of the moves the owners have done, it seems to me like this partnership they talk about, or dealing in good faith -- their actions are saying more than their words."

And when you listen to a battle-scared warrior like O'Donnell talk, you realize once again that while players may eventually give in under financial pressure from the ongoing lockout, it's certainly not going to come any time soon.

You see, these are hockey players. They're different from other pro athletes.

"One of the things NHL owners love about NHL players is that you're willing to do whatever it takes for the team," O'Donnell said. "You're willing to block a shot, you're willing to fight a guy if it's going to pick your team up. Whatever it takes for the team. Hockey I think has the least individual element in it out of all the team sports. Well I think what owners have to remember is that in this situation, this is a team of 700 or 750 players. Guys will sacrifice individually for the good of the team, not only this year's team but the team down the road."

Like many of us, O'Donnell sees a deal that's there to be made.

"The players want a fair deal. I don't think the players are greedy," he said. "We want the owners to honor the contracts that are already signed. I don't think the players are sticking at 57 or 56 or 55 percent, there's a number that works. But I don't think it's realistic for owners to expect to get down to 50 percent immediately. If we can get a soft landing over the first two or three years, it's my opinion that the players would be open to that. I don't know that for sure, but that's what I think."

What O'Donnell is saying is that the players are willing to give, within reason.

"Players have a lot of pride," he said. "We're willing to give a lot. I hope the owners realize our resolve. If there's a fair deal there to be had, I think we can get this thing done in the next week. But if they're really willing to push

NBCSports.com / Flames prospect has trial date to face assault charges

Mike Halford Oct 31, 2012, 5:00 PM EDT

Michael Ferland, Calgary's fifth-round pick at the 2010 NHL Entry Draft, will be in court on June 24 to face assault charges stemming from a bar fight.

On July 29, Ferland was allegedly engaged in an incident outside of an establishment in a town west of Calgary.

Here's more, from the Calgary Sun:

Cops said a group of people had gathered outside a drinking establishment at around 1:10 a.m. when one male was pushed to the ground.

When another man came over to assist him, he was struck in the face, knocked unconscious and had the orbital bone around his eye fractured.

Police said the attacker then fled from the scene but an investigation led to the charges.

Shortly after the incident, Ferland released a statement through his lawyer, Michael Bates, denying any wrongdoing.

"It upset me to hear that someone might have been hurt," Ferland said. "I am embarrassed by these accusations but I trust the court process and look forward to having this situation behind me as soon as possible."

Ferland, 20, is currently with the Flames' AHL affiliate in Abbotsford, but has yet to appear in a game this season.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.01.2012

643522 Websites

NBCSports.com /Glimmer of hope? Bill Daly, Steve Fehr reportedly "talked extensively" on Tuesday

Jason Brough Oct 31, 2012, 4:44 PM EDT

At the risk of getting everyone's hopes up, TSN's Darren Dreger is reporting that NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr "talked extensively" on the phone Tuesday.

According to Shelly Anderson of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, the talks may have even qualified as "light negotiations."

It's been reported that the NHL will announce the cancelation of the Winter Classic on Thursday or Friday; however, we suppose there's an outside shot that CBA progress could put an announcement on hold.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.01.2012

NBCSports.com / NHL opposes legislation that would expand legalized betting in Canada

Jason Brough

Oct 31, 2012, 12:51 PM EDT

The NHL is voicing its concern with a proposed bill that would legalize betting on individual games in Canada.

Currently the country's Criminal Code only allows wagering on three or more games at a time.

Deputy commissioner Bill Daly will appear before a Senate committee on Nov. 8 to explain the league's position. Presumably, he'll argue that betting on individual games hurts the integrity of the NHL (and other leagues) by raising the likelihood of match fixing. And if not the actual likelihood, the perceived likelihood of it.

Toronto Blue Jays president Paul Beeston put it this way: "Losing bettors and fans... may in turn become suspicious of every strikeout or error, and the game's integrity would be open to question — play by play, day after day."

Supporters of the bill contend that billions of dollars in wagers are already placed online at offshore sports books and through illegal bookies. If anything, regulated betting should alleviate concerns about match-fixing.

The leagues do have one hammer to swing, and that's the threat of re-thinking future expansion. Toronto, for example, is a candidate for a second NHL team and, down the line, maybe even an NFL franchise. There's also been talk of the NHL returning to Quebec City and, to a lesser degree, the NBA trying again in Vancouver.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.01.2012

YAHOO SPORTS / The evolution of Sergei Fedorov: From Soviet defector to NHL superstar to Russian rebuilder

11 hours ago **Nicholas J. Cotsonika**

MOSCOW – He defected. Remember that. Remember that as Sergei Fedorov does a TV interview surrounded by CSKA Moscow memorabilia – red stars on the sofa, a red star on the banner looming behind him. Remember that as he sits in his office at the Soviet arena on Leningradsky Prospect, the new head manager of what once was literally the Central Sport Club of the Army.

Sergei Fedorov has taken on the tall order of turning historic Central Red Army into a winner again. (Y! Sport ...This is a story about evolution. The country has changed. Fedorov has changed. Look at them now: Moscow's streets are choked with the fancy cars Fedorov once left to drive in America, and Fedorov has returned to the club he abandoned to build a modern professional hockey organization upon that Central Red Army foundation – with guidance from none other than Viktor Tikhonov, the legendary Soviet taskmaster.

"It's very exciting, because my former head coach is still here," says Fedorov, who first joined Tikhonov and CSKA when he was only 15. "If he walks in right now, don't be surprised. We always have that connection. He always comes in, or I always come to his office."

Fedorov smiles. He says his mentor's full name in that formal, respectful Russian way. "Viktor Vasilyevich Tikhonov." Now 82, Tikhonov is the "honorable president of the club." After a game the other night, he quietly walked down the hall outside the dressing room, right past a floor-to-ceiling, black-and-white photo of himself.

"He's very involved," Fedorov says.

In the 46 years of the Soviet League, Central Red Army won the regular-season title 32 times, including 13 straight times under Tikhonov from 1977-89. It featured members of the national team, also coached by Tikhonov. It was the club of legends – Vsevelod Bobrov, Valeri Kharlamov, Vladislav Tretiak ... too many to mention.

[Nick Cotsonika: Pavel Datsyuk's magic act astonishes fans, teammates in KHL]

But then players like Fedorov bolted, and the Soviet Union collapsed. Things are different now. CSKA can no longer hand-pick the best players of the Soviet empire, kind of like the Montreal Canadiens can no longer lay special claim to Quebec players. Most of the best Russians play in the NHL, unless there's a lockout. So Fedorov has to uphold all that tradition without any advantages in the Kontinental Hockey League, kind of like the Habs have to in today's NHL.

It is a daunting challenge, and it is even more daunting when you consider Fedorov is responsible for CSKA's junior team and youth hockey school, too. But Fedorov doesn't seem frazzled as people pound on his locked office door, and one cell phone rings, and a second cell phone rings, and the desk phone rings, and he says he wishes he could have "48 hours a day." He seems older and wiser at age 42. He doesn't know if he will succeed. Yet he seems happy, enthusiastic and ambitious.

This is still the same guy who had the guts to leap into the unknown with nothing to his name as a 20-year-old kid. Remember that.

"Trying to make one step at a time," Fedorov says, "with a big thought behind it."

It was spy novel stuff. In 1990, still before the fall of the Iron Curtain, the Soviets came to play in the United States. The Detroit Red Wings, who had drafted Fedorov in the fourth round the year before, hatched a plan to sneak him out of the team hotel, a Holiday Inn on the outskirts of Portland, Ore.

Fedorov said he sometimes gets "chills" when he thinks about his days in Detroit. (Getty)The Wings hired a Russian-speaking journalist to communicate with Fedorov during media availability. The operation was a go. On his way to a game, Fedorov discreetly dropped his room key in the

lobby. The journalist picked it up, went to Fedorov's room and gathered his belongings – what there were of them, anyway.

"He had a little bag with hardly anything in it," says Nick Polano, the Wings' assistant general manager at the time and now an Ottawa Senators scout.

On his way back from the game, Fedorov was the last one off the bus, as he was supposed to be. He saw a man reading a newspaper – Jim Lites, now the president of the Dallas Stars – and recognized the signal. He followed Lites out a back door, where Polano was waiting in a limousine. They drove to the airport and dashed into Wings owner Mike Ilitch's private jet.

"We were back in Detroit before they even knew he was gone," Polano says.

That story is well told. But this one, not so much: In 1991, still before the fall of the Iron Curtain, the Soviets came to play in Canada – and Fedorov rejoined them. He played five games for the USSR in the Canada Cup, with two goals and four points in five games.

Fedorov was proud to play for Tikhonov. He just didn't want to spend 11 months a year barracked in training camp when he could play in the NHL, make big money and live a North American lifestyle. Tikhonov took him back for that tournament.

"I felt as a Russian young player that I still part of the Soviet Union very much, and I'm still part of the school that Viktor Vasilyevich taught me," Fedorov says. "I came back, and I felt there might be some repercussions, but none of them happened. Everything went down to business, and I played. ..."

"At that time for me, we kind of bury the hatchet a little bit. I show him I'm a good guy, good player – just could not live on a hockey base all my life. There was a second sort of part to hockey player life, and that was maybe play somewhere else."

Fedorov played once more for Tikhonov after the fall of the Iron Curtain, when Russian stars toured their home country in the mid-1990s. He played several more times for Russia in international tournaments.

He read something recently he had never heard before: Tikhonov told an interviewer that he forgave Fedorov because he was so young when he defected. Had Fedorov been older, it might have been different.

"I know how deeply involved he was with the players that he trained, and now I understand how much he spend as a coach – energy, emotions, like, anything – to make us to play the best hockey, to bring Russia all those titles," Fedorov says. "And I'm telling you, this is hard level to match. For me, so far, not possible, at all. I understand circumstances were whatever Viktor Vasilyevich wants, but what he did on the ice, it was just very hard, incredible magic."

Fedorov sits in a cafe in the concourse of the CSKA Ice Palace, giving a TV interview to former NHLer Alexei Zhitnik for Ukrainian television. If you don't speak Russian, it's hard to understand. But if you follow the Red Wings, you can pick out some things: "Jim Develano." "Scotty Bowman." "Slava Fetisov." "Igor Larionov." "Russian Five."

Fedorov has a golden helmet and framed photo of the Ilitch family in his Moscow office. (Y! Sports)Later, Fedorov returns to his office. He doesn't have many mementos on display, but he does have a framed picture of him and his family with Wings owners Mike and Marian Ilitch, taken the night he won the Hart Trophy as the NHL's most valuable player and the Selke Trophy as the league's best defensive forward in 1994.

Detroit is like Fedorov's other Russia. He remained loyal and returned, even though he once chose to leave. He appreciates it more with age.

Though he signed as a free agent with the Mighty Ducks of Anaheim in 2003 and went on to play for the Columbus Blue Jackets, the Washington Capitals and the KHL's Metallurg Magnitogorsk, he kept a place in Detroit. He still has a townhouse there. His parents still live there. He spent a month there this summer.

"Certainly Detroit is a huge era for me," says Fedorov, who won three Stanley Cups with the Wings. "I'm talking about even from Day 1, we were a good team. We progress and gain experience and gain good players, good coaches. Eventually we won. Those days are unbelievable. As I grow older, as I gain more experience, I'm ecstatic sometimes. Sometimes I get chills."

The goal is for CSKA to grow in Moscow as the Red Wings did in Detroit, but make no mistake, this is Day 1 for Fedorov as an executive. This was not the plan.

The plan was to take the season off to deal with a troublesome lower back. He still hasn't announced his retirement as a player, and he still skates twice a week, leaving the door open. But a friend who ranks high in the Russian government urged him to think about his next chapter, so he interviewed with Russian Oil, the company that bought CSKA last year. He was thinking he'd be a hockey consultant.

"Then I realize, if I'm consultant, it's big-time pressure, too, so might as well do it yourself so you will be responsible," Fedorov says. "Why be responsible halfway or quarter of the way when you can be just responsible? So that's Russian thinking."

Fedorov has dived in, negotiating contracts, modernizing training, obsessing details – figuring it out and putting it together.

"I'm not a genius at everything, but I understand one thing: If I don't know something, I will go and ask until I get a proper answer, a proper idea," Fedorov says. "To me, most important and biggest challenge is to organize people."

"Sometimes I'm getting through, but sometimes I'm not getting through – and I know that. But I step back, and then make another step next day. So it's constant 24-hour sort of exchange of information of the views on certain ideas."

"It's getting everybody on the same page. I have one experience, the other person have another experience. I need to understand all of those experiences and bring them to the conclusion."

Walk up to CSKA Ice Palace, and you are struck by history. You see the Bobrov plaque, the Bobrov and Kharlamov banners framing the front door. Walk inside, and you are struck even more. From the concourse to the cafe to the dressing room to the Red Machine sports bar in the basement, there are artifacts everywhere.

The CSKA Ice Palace is a testament to Russian hockey history, but it's spartan and small, too. (Y! Sports) You are also struck by reality. The arena is old and spartan and small. The seats aren't filled, even though there are only 5,600 of them, the prices are cheap and stars like Alex Radulov, Pavel Datsyuk and Mikhail Grabovski are in the lineup. The marketing department consists of one merchandise stand not selling much.

Fedorov wants even more memorabilia on display and promises it will be in place next season. He wants better marketing and merchandising. He says there is a new arena being planned – a multifunctional 18,000-to-20,000 seater like the Prudential Center in New Jersey, or Staples Center in Los Angeles, or HP Pavilion in San Jose.

"We're going to build something incredible," Fedorov says. "Right now we're working on it. I don't want to say too much, but we will have an arena, and it's going to be in a nice [public transportation] network where people can come and enjoy like North America. ... As long as I work here, I want to fight for those fans and especially the families that come to the hockey game and enjoy it for the right price."

[Also: Which NHL owners are driving the NHL lockout?]

Can you imagine if the kid who left for North America helps bring North America to the kids? For that big thought to become reality, there need to be a lot of steps. Russia needs to keep changing. Fedorov needs to keep changing. CSKA needs to win.

"I have to do well for ownership, then we'll see," Fedorov says. "After every season, I will be on the docket – yes or no – and I understand that. ... I understand the game and the rules of the game. To me, it's no problem. Actually, I think about those kind of things on a positive way. It makes you work twice as hard – and smart."

He smiles.

"Hopefully smart, too."

Isn't that what he has learned from Viktor Vasilyevich? Isn't that what it takes to make very hard, incredible magic?

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