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644922 Buffalo Sabres

Sabres' Ott co-hosting charity game in Windsor, enlists Vanek, Stafford, Leopold, Ellis

---John Vogl

About the only hockey outlet available for NHLers who haven't signed overseas is a charity game. Sabres forward Steve Ott is helping put one together, and he's enlisted some Buffalo teammates.

Thomas Vanek, Drew Stafford, Jordan Leopold and Matt Ellis are scheduled to join Ott for the fundraiser Dec. 8 in Windsor, Ont. Detroit's Danny Cleary and Edmonton's Shawn Horcoff are also organizing the game.

According to a picture posted by Ott on Twitter, other players planning to take part in the game include Johan Franzen, James Neal, Brendan Morrow, James Wisniewski and Jimmy Howard.

Buffalo News LOADED: 11.27.2012

644923 Buffalo Sabres

Rochester Amerks game moved to Buffalo

Kevin Oklobzija

With no end in sight to the NHL lockout, another Rochester Americans home game is being moved to Buffalo's First Niagara Center, and this time it's a weekend game.

The Friday, Dec. 28 game against the Lake Erie Monsters will be played in downtown Buffalo at 7:05 p.m., the second time the parent Sabres have shifted a game to their rink.

The Oct. 23 game at the First Niagara Center against the Hamilton Bulldogs drew 10,936.

Even if the NHL lockout ends, the game still will be played in Buffalo. The NHL has canceled games only through Dec. 14 but Dec. 28 is an open date on the First Niagara calendar.

The game was chosen based on the Amerks home calendar: Four games in a six-game stretch. The Amerks and Monsters play in Blue Cross Arena at the Rochester Community War Memorial on Dec. 26 — a traditional big-

draw date for the Amerks — and are also at home to play the Binghamton Senators on Dec. 29 and Hamilton on Dec. 31.

"There's a little compression in the market with four games in six days so we wanted to relieve a little of that market fatigue," Sabres president Ted Black said.

The Amerks have averaged 6,740 for seven games at the War Memorial. Six of those games have been on Fridays, for which the average is 7,356. Two of the past three home games drew more than 8,300.

But if the lockout has not ended, a Friday night game in Buffalo during the holiday school break will surely draw in excess of 14,000, and probably more.

While that means extra ticket revenue for the Sabres organization, that's not the only motivation, Black said.

"There are Buffalo fans in Rochester and I want to make sure there are Amerk fans in Buffalo," Black said. "By choosing that Friday game, we do want to expose more Buffalo fans to the Amerks."

Fans who already have a ticket for the Dec. 28 game have three options: 1) Exchange it for a ticket to that game in Buffalo; 2) exchange it for a ticket to another Amerk game in Rochester; 3) request a refund.

The Amerks also switched the television broadcast schedule. The Dec. 28 game will now be shown on Time Warner Cables SportsChannel; the Dec. 7 game has been dropped.

Democrat and Chronicle LOADED: 11.27.2012

644924 Calgary Flames

Prospect check: Gaudreau mania hits Boston College

By Scott Cruickshank

Calgary Flames prospect Johnny Gaudreau is having another whale of a season for Boston College.

Of course, Johnny Gaudreau has seen the snazzy T-shirts.

They're bright yellow. His name is on them. So he doesn't even pretend to be unaware.

"Pretty funny," says Gaudreau, with a chuckle. "It's extremely cool, watching people wear T-shirts of you. I mean, it doesn't happen every single day. I'm taking it all in. It's something special. I'm excited that they're so involved with the hockey team."

Emblazoned on the front of the aforementioned shirts is GAUDREAUBEY BAKER. Which, as a catchphrase, may be a bit of a stretch, but this wee kid's place in the Hobey Baker Award conversation is certainly not.

The trophy goes annually to the finest player in U.S. collegiate hockey.

And here is Gaudreau — the top scorer on the top program in the country, the defending national champion Boston College Eagles.

Bagging the Baker, though, won't be easy.

Gaudreau, 19, is in only his second campaign and, typically, nods go to junior and senior players. Since Paul Kariya prevailed as a freshman in 1992, only two sophomores have claimed the award.

"Yeah, I hear people talking about it," says Gaudreau, a 2011 fourth-round pick of the Calgary Flames. "It's an honour that my name is even in that mix of guys. It's exciting to have that experience and, hopefully, I'll have a chance to prove to myself that I can win it some time."

These days the shifty left-winger is doing a splendid job of ignoring the sophomore slump. After his brilliant freshman year — 44 points in 44 games — Gaudreau has actually jacked his rate of production.

In 11 dates, he has recorded a team-high 19 points, including the five-spot he hung Saturday on Dartmouth.

"Not too big of a deal," the five-foot-eight, 153-pounder says of the offensive outburst. "The big deal is us winning another game, 10 straight so far."

The opponent had been less modest.

"Obviously, Gaudreau is just a phenomenal player," Dartmouth coach Bob Gaudet told the Boston Globe. "He reminds you of Paul Kariya a little bit when he was in college. Obviously, there are other (BC) guys, but he's a difference-maker."

Gaudreau cannot remember the last time he churned out five points.

During his single winter in the USHL — as the circuit's top rookie with the Dubuque Fighting Saints — he never generated anything like that. Prodded for a point-spree memory from his minor-hockey days, he hems and haws.

His modesty, it seems, is genuine.

"I nudged him after the game and said, 'Was that a five-point game out of you?' And he looked at me and said, 'I don't know,' " Pat Mullane, BC captain and first-line centre, told the Globe. "I don't think that was the thing on his mind. I think he obviously was happy about the (6-3) win. It's nice to see that comes first, but still an extremely impressive performance out of him."

This weekend, the 10-1-0 Eagles will feud with the rival Boston University Terriers. Then they visit Providence — home of fellow Flames commodities, centre Mark Jankowski and goalie Jon Gillies — before the Christmas break.

Not that the Carneys Point, N.J., native will trundle home for eggnog and tinsel

Gaudreau is key part of the American entry bound the world junior championship in Russia.

"Hopefully, I get a chance to represent my country, to show the coaching staff that I have what it takes to play on the team," he says. "I'm not too fond about (missing the holiday), I'm pretty close to my family . . . but I'm sure I can talk to them the whole time I'm up there."

Gaudreau is unquestionably busy these days.

On this particular morning, he takes a few minutes — between a tutoring session and a child-development class — for a quick chat. Then there's the ever-present pressure of defending the NCAA title. And the world junior lead-up. And the Hobey Baker buzz.

But, on the ice, life is always peaceful for Gaudreau.

"Whether it's a practice or a game or a little pre-game skate, I just love going out there," says the communications major. "A lot of guys, when they're growing up, they get tired of it. They don't want to go to practice and stuff like that. But I enjoy going to the rink every day.

"I love coming to the rink and I'm glad that (feeling) has stuck with me."

CALGARY FLAMES PROSPECTS REPORT

The Flames have amateur prospects sprinkled around the hockey world. Here are draft picks currently skating in the NCAA:

Player Team GP G A P Draft selection

LW Johnny Gaudreau Boston College 11 9 10 19 104th, 2011

C Bill Arnold Boston College 11 4 7 11 10 108th, 2010

LW Matthew DeBlouw Michigan State 12 4 7 11 186th, 2012

C Mark Jankowski Providence 12 4 4 8 21st, 2012

C Nick Larson Notre Dame 13 1 1 2 108th, 2008 D John Ramage Wisconsin 10 0 0 0 103rd, 2010

Calgary Herald: LOADED: 11.27.2012

644925 Calgary Flames

Kent Wilson

The Calgary Flames are known for being a lousy drafting organization. For good reason - they haven't internally picked and developed a star quality forward since Cory Stillman in 1992 and even he isn't exactly a hall-of-famer. Their best draft pick in the last decade is Dion Phanuef by a considerable margin. Behind him, the second best pick in terms of games played over that period is...third liner Brandon Prust.

It's been a long, sad march through mediocrity at the draft table for Calgary. The Jesper Mattsson's and Rico Fata's of the world have outnumbered the Phaneuf's and Stillman's 10-1. The reason Darryl Sutter was so manic and determined in his attempts to trade the future for the present during his time in office was because the franchise failed so utterly to surround marquee players like Jarome Iginla and Miikka Kiprusoff with high-end, homegrown talent.

It wasn't always this way. If you peel back the veil of time and peer into the now distant past, you'll discover the Flames were once a juggernaut built almost exclusively through savvy drafting. Nowhere are those rapidly fading successes more pronounced than in the 1984 NHL entry draft.

Roberts and Hull and Suter! Oh My!

Although they had added guys like Dan Quinn, Mike Vernon, Hakan Loob and Al MacInnis through a number of earlier drafts, the Flames were still well back of the Smythe Division leading Edmonton Oilers when the summer of 1984 rolled around. That past season, the Oil had lead the league with a ridiculous 57-18-5 record before cruising to a Stanley Cup victory over the New York Islanders. The Flames were second in the Division that year, but only because the Smythe was fairly awful - their 34-32-14 record was miles away from their provincial rivals.

The '84 entry draft would help turn the tables down the road. In the first round, Calgary took OHLer Gary Roberts 12th overall. A tough left winger who scored 27 goals and 57 points in 48 games, Robert's output was pretty pedestrian for a first round pick that year. Of course, he broke out the following season collecting 106 points in just 59 games and was a full time NHLer by the 1987-88 season*.

*(fun fact - Roberts managed 200+ PIM in each of his first 5 seasons in the league. He as more or less considered a grinder before popping 39 goals in 88-89)

In the third round, Calgary picked St. Louis native Paul Ranhiem out of the Minnesota high school system. Ranheim spent four years in the US college hockey playing for the University of Wisconsin before making the Flames in 1989-90.

By current Flames standards, that would be a bumper crop for any one draft. The Flames still had a hall-of-famer, a pivotal first pairing defender and capable third line checker on the radar though.

In the sixth round, Calgary took a chance on cocky son of the Golden Jet, one Brett Hull. Hull scored a ridiculous 105 goals and 188 points in just 57 games (read that again) for the BCHL Penticton Knights during his draft year. He would go on to compete for Minnesota Duluth the next year where he would manage 38 goals and 60 points as a freshman.

Of course, Hull wouldn't get much of chance to make an impact on the Flames organization after being shipped out of town as a rookie in 1987-88 for Rob Ramage and Rick Wamsley. Nevertheless, Hull in the 6th round probably stands as one of the best value choices in league history given his incredible career.

Next up, the Flames went overseas to pick Jiri Hrdina out of Prague in the Czech Republic. Hrdina was 26 years old at the time, so more or less a fully formed pro player already. He made the Flames full time in 1988-89 and provided the club with about three seasons of yeoman's work before being moved to the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Finally, in the ninth round, Calgary chose defender Gary Suter out of the Univesity of Wisconsin. After a completely average season offensively speaking in 1983-84, Suter would break out as a sophomore in college, garnering 12 goals and 51 points in just 39 games. He made the Flames out of camp the very next season, landed on a pairing with Al MacInnis and scored 18 goals and 68 points en route to a Calder Trophy. He would wind

up spending 8 seasons with the Flames in total, scoring 60+ points in six of them, including a 91 point career best in 1987-88.

The Tally

All told, five of the Flames 12 picks that summer were future NHLers and four of them would become high impact players for many, many years. Altogether, Suter, Hull, Ranheim, Roberts and Hrdina totaled an eyepopping 4,901 career games and 3,636 career points. Four of those players played significant roles on the Flames 1989 cup championship team (Ranheim, Hrdina, Roberts, Suter), while Hull was traded for Rob Ramage, who was also a key piece of the puzzle that year.

The Flames had a number of notable entry drafts in the early-to-mid '80's, but 1984 stands out as the best of the bunch. Calgary hasn't picked a single player of the same quality as Roberts, Suter or Hull in at least a decade, but in '84 they got all of them - and more - in one fell swoop.

Calgary Herald: LOADED: 11.27.2012

644926 Calgary Flames

Flames Future — AHL Heat success breeds NHL success

By WES GILBERTSON

CALGARY - The Abbotsford Heat don't have a single guy on the first page of the AHL's point-production charts.

Nobody from the Calgary Flames' top affiliate is being mentioned among the best blueliners on the minor-league loop.

And although feel-good goaltending story Barry Brust is leading several puck-stopping categories, he's not even under contract with the parent club.

The Flames prospects are, however, setting the pace in one important category — victories as a team — and that's gotta be a good omen for the future at the Saddledome, right?

"I think winning really helps develop young guys," said Heat captain Quintin Laing, who has 79 NHL outings on his stat-sheet, mostly from a stint with the Washington Capitals, and is currently signed to an AHL-level deal.

"You want young guys knowing what it takes to win close games, having that pressure on you in a one-goal game and pulling that out. So I think, for the development of a player, it helps to be in a winning environment, just so they know that feeling and they get that sour taste in their mouth when they lose.

"And you can tell that with us right now. These young guys, they don't want to lose. They want to be on a winning team."

They are.

With Friday's home tilt against the Hamilton Bulldogs, the Heat will officially hit the quarter-poll of the AHL season, and it's been a heck of a run so far. In fact, the squad has suffered only two defeats in regulation and sits atop the league standings with a 12-2-2-2 mark.

Swiss winger Sven Baertschi is still considered the only can't-miss kid in the Heat lineup, but history suggests Flames fans have legitimate reason to be excited about the success of their top affiliate.

During the 2004-05 campaign, when NHL arenas remained dark for the full winter, eight AHL squads collected 100-plus points. The following season, seven of those same NHL organizations hit triple digits in the big-league standings. That total included both the Flames and the Carolina Hurricanes, who split a farm club in Lowell, Mass., where the roster featured Mark Giordano and future Hurricanes stars Eric Staal and Cam Ward.

"Winning in an organization helps from top to bottom," said Heat head coach Troy Ward. "I think winning in the NHL helps your minor-league team, and I think winning with your minor-league team just helps the foundation of your organization ...

"I think that the foundation moving forward is that we're winning, and winning breeds winning."

There isn't a lot of immediate help in Abbotsford — Baertschi, T.J. Brodie and Roman Horak are the only certain candidates to be recalled by the parent Flames once the lockout ends — but that also means Ward's roster won't be picked over if the NHL and the NHLPA suddenly strike labour peace.

For the rest of the AHL, the scary part is Ward expects more from his group. Only four skaters have hit double-digits in points through 18 games, but the Heat have been beneficiaries of solid goaltending, a stingy penalty-kill and solid team efforts.

"I really feel like we have some individuals that aren't playing good night now. Based on pedigree and what they're supposed to be doing, we have some players that aren't really cutting it," Ward added. "But we're winning as a team. That's why we're winning."

THREE STARS

1. LW Johnny Gaudreau

The Boston College Eagles sophomore sniper has emerged as an early favourite for the Hobey Baker Award. After racking up two goals and three helpers in Saturday's 6-3 win over Dartmouth, the 5-foot-8 sparkplug ranks fourth in the NCAA's scoring race with 19 points in 11 outings.

2. G Jon Gillies

Not much gets past this guy. A freshman netminder for the Providence Friars, Gillies recorded a 35-save shutout over the crosstown-rival Brown Bears in the Mayor's Cup. A third-rounder in the 2012 NHL Entry Draft, it was his second goose-egg of the season.

3. D Chris Breen

Not known for his offensive pizzazz, the 23-year-old Abbotsford Heat blueliner buried the overtime winner in Friday's 3-2 triumph over the Texas Stars — his second goal in a four-game stretch. Breen scored just once in 2011-12.

FAST FACT

He's not under contract with the Flames organization, but Heat backstop Barry Brust deserves the pub. The former Hitmen goalie, who is signed to an AHL-only deal with Abbotsford, logged 268 minutes and 17 seconds without surrendering a goal, erasing a 54-year-old AHL record belonging to some guy named Johnny Bower.

SAY WHAT?

"It was kind of like Heinz ketchup — it was anticipation. It took a while to get there, but usually when it comes out of the bottle, it's pretty good stuff."

— Heat head coach Troy Ward on G Barry Brust, who had a nine-day layoff between starts before breaking Bower's record

Calgary Sun: LOADED: 11.27.2012 644927 Chicago Blackhawks

Kane looks tame in Swiss team Tribune report

Staff

Even in Switzerland, Patrick Kane can't escape the watchful eye of Deadspin.com, the website that doggedly has chronicled the Chicago Blackhawks star's every off-the-ice escapade.

This time, the Deadspin folks are having some fun with Kane's photo posted on the website of his Swiss team, EHC Biel.

As Deadspin observes, Kane and fellow NHL lockout refugee Tyler Seguin apparently arrived overseas too late for team photo day. So their standardissue, run-of-the-mill mug shots look ridiculously out of place next to the rest of the player photos, which adhere to what Deadspin describes as a "no shirts, battle axe optional" theme.

Chicago Tribune LOADED: 11.28.2012

644928 Chicago Blackhawks

CSN to air Blackhawks, Red Wings Winter Classic game tonight

NINA FALCONE

Comcast SportsNet will be re-airing Blackhawks Classics until the NHL lockout comes to an end. Tune in tonight at 7:00 p.m. to catch the 2009 Winter Classic game between the Blackhawks and Red Wings at Wrigley Field

It was an early afternoon at Wrigley and over 40,000 fans packed the Friendly Confines, but this time, the seats were filled in the dead of winter and the outfield was covered with a thick sheet of ice. For the first time in its history, Wrigley Field was home to an outdoor skating rink as the Blackhawks faced off against the defending Stanley Cup champion Red Wings in the 2009 NHL Winter Classic.

What to watch for

Cubs and Blackhawks legends came together for the historical event as Billy Williams, Fergie Jenkins and Ryne Sandberg joined Bobby Hull, Stan Mikita and Denis Savard at the game to perform their own version of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game", changing a few words to make the song more hockey-friendly.

The tune of course came after the first memorable performances of the night, which included Jim Cornelison and Scott Newlands performing the Star-Spangled Banner and O Canada.

Kris Versteeg, Martin Havlat, Ben Eager and Duncan Keith all found the back of the net during the outdoor game, but a strong run from the Red Wingers in the second and third periods resulted in 6-4 victory for Detroit.

Remembering the 2008-09 season

Martin Havlat led the Blackhawks with 77 points.

Jonathan Toews had 34 goals, still a career-high.

Patrick Sharp had scored more than 30 goals in a season three times in his NHL career.

Kris Versteeg was named to the 2008-09 NHL All-Rookie Team.

Dave Bolland recorded 47 points, still a career-high.

The Blackhawks had a franchise-record 9-game winning streak in December, 2008.

The Blackhawks' 2009 playoff appearance was their first since 2002.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.28.2012

644929 Dallas Stars

Stardate: Nov. 27, 2010 - Lehtonen helps Stars take two from Blues

-Mike Heika / DMN

ST. LOUIS - Statistically speaking, the Stars' weekend sweep of the St. Louis Blues was quite an anomaly.

First of all, the Blues entered the weekend 9-1-3 when scoring first. They lost both games despite scoring first. Second, the Blues were 7-0-1 when leading after two periods. They lost both games despite leading after two periods in each. And finally, the Blues were 8-0-1 at home, and lost in regulation Saturday for the first time.

If that weren't enough, the Stars got the game-winning goal in a 2-1 victory at Scottrade Center on a road power play - just their second road power-play goal of the season.

Loui Eriksson broke a nine-game goal-scoring drought when he lifted a shot over Jaroslav Halak at the 5:30 mark of the third period, and Kari Lehtonen was a wall, stopping 35 shots while playing on the second of back-to-back nights. The victory gave the Stars three wins over the Blues this season.

"It was a great game by Kari, and we just filled in at the right moments," said Benn, who had two key goals in the two games.

The Stars move to 13-8-1 (27 points) and now are top five in the West in both points and winning percentage. The Blues fall to 12-7-3 (27 points). It's a testament to just how wild the West is this year.

"We know they are a good team, and we know how important these four points are," said Lehtonen, who was outstanding at not only calming the Stars but surviving an intense third period with a one-goal lead.

Lehtonen was the clear difference in the game, but the Stars also handled the challenge. After getting outshot 13-4 in the first period, they bounced back.

In fact, they almost seemed to be in control before St. Louis scored on Patrik Berglund's hard-working goal late in the second period.

It gave the Blues a lead after two, and they typically are a dead-solid lock when that happens.

But Benn roofed an off-wing shot just 1:05 into the third period, and the Stars had their legs back. Then the Stars got on the power play, and while they were just 1-for-33 on the road with the man advantage, they found a way to get the job done this time.

Brad Richards found Loui Eriksson, and Eriksson put a pretty shot up over Halak at 5:30 of the period for what proved to be the game-winner. It was Eriksson's 10th goal of the season, but his first in the last 10 games.

"It's just two big plays, and that's how you win games," Richards said. "You can play great for 55 minutes, but if the other team makes the big plays, then that's the difference."

On this night, the Stars clearly made the biggest plays.

Dallas Morning News LOADED: 11.28.2012

644930 Dallas Stars

Stardate: Nov. 27, 2010 - Lehtonen helps Stars take two from Blues

Mike Heika / DMN

A series of Stars games and moments that happened on a specific date. The following appeared in the Nov. 28, 2010 editions of The Dallas Morning News.

ST. LOUIS - Statistically speaking, the Stars' weekend sweep of the St. Louis Blues was guite an anomaly.

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"We know they are a good team, and we know how important these four points are," said Lehtonen, who was outstanding at not only calming the Stars but surviving an intense third period with a one-goal lead.

Lehtonen was the clear difference in the game, but the Stars also handled the challenge. After getting outshot 13-4 in the first period, they bounced back.

In fact, they almost seemed to be in control before St. Louis scored on Patrik Berglund's hard-working goal late in the second period.

It gave the Blues a lead after two, and they typically are a dead-solid lock when that happens.

But Benn roofed an off-wing shot just 1:05 into the third period, and the Stars had their legs back. Then the Stars got on the power play, and while they were just 1-for-33 on the road with the man advantage, they found a way to get the job done this time.

Brad Richards found Loui Eriksson, and Eriksson put a pretty shot up over Halak at 5:30 of the period for what proved to be the game-winner. It was Eriksson's 10th goal of the season, but his first in the last 10 games.

"It's just two big plays, and that's how you win games," Richards said. "You can play great for 55 minutes, but if the other team makes the big plays, then that's the difference."

On this night, the Stars clearly made the biggest plays.

Dallas Morning News LOADED: 11.28.2012

644931 Detroit Red Wings

Finger injury hurts chance for Red Wings' Cory Emmerton to develop his game

By Helene St. James

Writing is difficult, his pointing is crooked, and airport metal detectors are a gamble.

Cory Emmerton, his Red Wings' career on derailed by a labor dispute, can skate but has to be wary.

His overseas adventure to Finland, where he'd signed on to play for SaiPa Lappeenranta, ended after a puck to his right hand left him with a broken index finger.

He'd played all of one shift into the second period of his first game.

"It was short, not so sweet," Emmerton said of his Finnish experience after taking part in a player-run practice in Troy. "It was a bad break, but right now it doesn't really matter too much, I guess."

It doesn't matter in the sense that the lockout that's shuttered the NHL since Sept. 16 means he won't be missing any games with the Wings, anyway. But it would be far better for a young player like Emmerton to be honing his skills in a league that emphasizes skating and skill.

Jan Mursak, for example -- who like Emmerton still needs to establish himself at the NHL level -- is tearing up the Austrian hockey league with 32 points in 19 games for Ljubljana Olimpija.

Emmerton is left to skate with a group of locked-out NHL players so small at times it's hard to even run any drills. It's hardly the way he'd hoped the 2012-13 season would pan out after he contributed 10 points in 71 games in his rookie season.

"I was hoping there was going to be training camp and preseason, where you get to play lots, just kind of showcase yourself, and it all just kind of went sideways from Sept. 15 on," Emmerton said. "Then I was just excited to go play a lot of minutes and be ready for whenever, and that didn't work out. It's been a weird year so far, in every sense of it."

The Oct. 12 injury required surgery and the insertion of a plate.

Emmerton estimated he's got 60-65% mobility, and said "the plate makes it harder on the tendons to move. It doesn't feel bad or hurt, but it's so stiff it doesn't have the range of motion to protect itself. I've been learning to do things left-handed."

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.28.2012

644932 Detroit Red Wings

Report: Red Wings' Riley Sheahan was wearing 'Teletubbies' costume, carrying Brendan Smith's ID during DUI arrest

Detroit Free Press Staff

Detroit Red Wings prospect Riley Sheahan reportedly had a blood-alcohol content of .30 when he was arrested Oct. 29 by Grand Rapids Police on charges of "super drunk" driving and giving false information.

The 20-year old, playing for the Grand Rapids Griffins, also was carrying teammate Brendan Smith's Michigan driver's license and wearing a purple Teletubby costume when he was pulled over shortly before midnight in downtown Grand Rapids, according to MLive.com, which obtained the details of the arrest through a Freedom of Information Act request.

The police report says Sheahan, the No. 21 overall pick in the 2010 NHL Draft, was driving the wrong way on Ottawa Avenue NW, near Pearl Street, in a 2012 Jeep Wrangler and was carrying Smith's ID in the license window of his wallet.

Police asked Sheahan if he was carrying the 23-year-old Smith's ID to get into bars and said he said "yea," according to the report. There was no word on how Sheahan obtained Smith's ID. The Wings drafted Smith with their top pick in the 2007 draft.

Sheahan was treated at Saint Mary's Health Care for his high blood-alcohol content before he was taken back to Kent County Jail. He is charged under the state's new "super drunk" distinction for having a blood-alcohol content higher than .17, a charge that can "carry up to 180 days in jail with a conviction and possible deportation because he is not a U.S. citizen," according to MLive.

Sheahan was the Red Wings' top pick in the 2010 draft. He joined the Griffins, the Wings' minor-league affiliate, earlier this year, and has three goals and two assists in 15 games this season.

The Red Wings were made aware of the arrest and are monitoring the situation.

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.28.2012

644933 Detroit Red Wings

Report: Wings' Riley Sheahan was in Teletubbies costume when pulled over

By Ted Kulfan

Detroit — Riley Sheahan, the Red Wings' No. 1 draft pick in 2010, reportedly was wearing a Teletubbies costume at the time he was pulled over shortly before midnight on Oct. 29, driving the wrong way in downtown Grand Rapids.

"Teletubbies" was a PBS children's program that was produced from 1997 to 2002.

Sheahan, 20, had a blood-alcohol content of .30, nearly four times the legal limit and twice the threshold for the "super-drunk" charge he faces for his arrest, MLive reported. Sheahan also had identification of Brendan Smith, another Red Wings draft pick who will join the Wings once the NHL lockout is over, at the time of the arrest. Sheahan was also charged with providing officers with false information.

Details of the arrest were obtained by MLive website through a Freedom of Information ${\sf Act}$ request.

Sheahan, who pleaded not guilty at his arraignment Nov. 6 in Grand Rapids District Court, faces up to 180 days in jail.

General manager Ken Holland said the Wings have dealt with Sheahan's issues internally.

In his first pro season, Sheahan has three goals and two assists for the Griffins in 15 games.

Detroit News LOADED: 11.28.2012

644934 Detroit Red Wings

Arrest report: Red Wings prospect Riley Sheahan was 'super drunk' in Teletubby costume

Peter J. Wallner

Sheahan, 20, who plays for the Grand Rapids Griffins, was wearing the costume of a purple Teletubby, also known as Tinky Winky, when he was pulled over by police on Oct. 29.

He also was charged with providing false information. He was carrying the Michigan driver's license of Brendan Smith when he was pulled over by police on Ottawa Avenue NW in downtown Grand Rapids.

Sheahan, who is from St. Catharines, Ontario, is teammates on the Griffins with Smith, also a touted Red Wings prospect.

Details of the arrest were obtained by MLive through a Freedom of Information Act request.

Related: Sheahan arrested for 'super-drunk' driving in Grand Rapids

Sheahan's 'super-drunk' arrest draw support, anger from hockey community

Sheahan, the Red Wings top pick in the 2010 NHL draft, was pulled over shortly before midnight on Oct. 29 for driving a 2012 Jeep Wrangler the wrong way on Ottawa Avenue NW, near Pearl Street.

Police initially believed they had arrested Smith before learning later in the night that it was Sheahan.

The report reads:

"Riley had a Michigan driver's license in the license window in his wallet, which is what Officer Dyer used as his ID. Deputies found Riley's Canadian license in the wallet after it was turned in with his property and he kept telling them his name was Riley.

"Riley is only 20 and I asked him if he had Branden's (sic) ID so he could get in the bars. He shook his head yes and stated 'yea."

The report did not indicate how Sheahan got Smith's ID.

Smith, 23, was the Red Wings top pick in the 2007 draft.

The Griffins today reiterated Sheahan will not be made available for comment, and they are handling the situation internally along with the parent organization in Detroit.

Jim Nill, the Red Wings assistant general manager, said of Sheahan, "He's getting help right now and will continue to get help."

At the traffic stop, Sheahan failed a pair of sobriety tasks and refused a breath test.

After he was transported to Kent Country Jail, he agreed to a breathalyzer test and blew .30 twice, according to the report.

He was taken to Saint Mary's Health Care afterward where he had to be cleared because of the high blood-alcohol content, the report said, before he was taken back to the jail.

Sheahan, who pleaded not guilty at an arraignment hearing in Grand Rapids District Court on Nov. 6, has his next hearing scheduled for Dec. 13. He was charged under the state's new "super drunk" distinction of driving with a blood-alcohol content of .17 or higher. The charge could carry up to 180 days in jail with a conviction and possible deportation because he is not a U.S. citizen.

His arrest came a day after the Griffins played a game at Chicago. He did not play in the team's following game, a 3-2 loss Nov. 2 at San Antonio.

Sheahan is in his first full season with the Griffins after a successful collegiate career at Notre Dame. The 6-foot-2, 212-pound center has three goals and two assists in 15 games this season.

In 2010, Sheahan was arrested and charged with public intoxication and minor alcohol consumption in South Bend, Ind., when he was a freshman at Notre Dame.

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.28.2012

644935 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings scouting report: Inconsistent Jakub Kindl still trying to establish himself in NHL

Staff

Red Wings Scouting Report

Red Wings scouting report: Inconsistent Jakub Kindl still trying to establish himself in NHL

Red Wings scouting report: Mikael Samuelsson will be needed to make up for lost production

Red Wings scouting report: Ian White must find way to flourish without Nicklas Lidstrom

Red Wings scouting report: Drew Miller found his niche in Detroit as reliable role player

Red Wings scouting report: Kyle Quincey will be counted on to show significant improvement

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(MLive.com periodically will profile a Detroit Red Wings player while the NHL lockout lingers):

Jakub Kindl

Position: Defense

Age: 25

Height/weight: 6-3/216

How acquired: Selected in first round (19th overall) in 2005 entry draft.

Contract: One year remaining at a salary-cap hit of \$833,333.

2011-12 stats: 55 games, one goal, 12 assists, 13 points, plus-7 rating, 25 penalty minutes.

Career stats: 106 games, three goals, 14 assists, 17 points, minus-1 rating, 61 penalty minutes.

What he's doing during the lockout: He is playing for Pardubice in the Czech Republic and has no goals, six assists, 18 penalty minutes and a minus-8 rating in 19 games.

Strengths: Has good size, mobility and the ability to move the puck. He is not physical but is capable of playing with an edge.

Weaknesses: Lacks consistency. Doesn't always play with confidence. Reluctance to take a hit in order to make a play was one of the knocks against him. Has limited offensive potential.

2011-12 in review: Appeared in career-high 55 games and posted career-best totals in assists, points and plus-minus rating. ... Won the job as the sixth defenseman in the preseason, in part due to Mike Commodore's injury. ... Scored his lone goal in a 4-1 win at Buffalo on Dec. 2. ... Played in 31 of the first 33 games before coaches soured on his play. He was a healthy scratch the next seven games and 13 of the next 21. ... Missed eight games (March 6-21) due to a strained oblique muscle. ... He was a plus-13 in 29 home games and a minus-6 in 26 road games. ... Was a healthy scratch in all five playoff games.

2012-13 outlook (season pending): He would start the season firmly as the seventh defenseman. His only hope of cracking the top-six would be if rookie Brendan Smith faltered or if there was an injury, the latter being the more likely scenario. His future with the organization is murky, but he has good size and raw potential, and, being a former first-round pick, that probably gives him a longer leash than most.

Will Kindl eventually develop into a regular in Detroit, or will he be traded? What does he need to show to earn a regular spot in the lineup?

Follow Ansar Khan on Twitter at twitter.com/AnsarKhanMLive and like MLive.com's Red Wings page on Facebook. Download MLive.com's smartphone app to get all the latest Red Wings news on your mobile device.

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.28.2012

644936 Edmonton Oilers

Oilers prospect Klefbom entertains surgery location options

Swedish defenceman can have it performed in home country or in Edmonton

By Jim Matheson, Edmonton Journal November 27, 2012

EDMONTON - As the roadies for Steve Perry's group, Journey, were moving equipment around Rexall Place on Tuesday, injured defenceman Oscar Klefbom was talking about his long road ahead.

Klefbom will have surgery on his left shoulder in about two weeks, hardly sweet music to the teenager's ears.

The highly-rated Edmonton Oilers prospect, who was sometimes playing 25 minutes a night for Farjestads in the Swedish Elite League, was keeping a stiff upper lip as he discussed a six-month recuperation. He wouldn't say what was wrong with his shoulder after he was pushed from behind in a game against Vaxjo on Oct. 9, but it could be a labrum tear similiar to that of Taylor Hall.

In any event, his season is over after just 11 games.

"I'm trying to stay positive. This is my first real major surgery. Of course, it's going to be a long time to be away from hockey, but I hope I come back stronger and I'm ready for the summer development camp (in late June or early July)," said Klefbom, whose surgery is tentatively scheduled for Dec. 13 if it's done here.

For now, there's no determination if he'll come back to Edmonton for repairs or have doctors in Sweden do it. Chances are the Oilers would rather have their own people fix him up because he's a very valuable commodity, but it's up in the air.

Klefbom was hurt on one of those harmless plays.

"I dumped the puck into the offensive zone, got hit from behind, lost my balance and flew right into the boards," he said. "I put my arm up to stop myself. I couldn't feel my arm right away. It felt like a dead arm. I didn't know what was wrong, but now I know. At first, I thought I would maybe be out six to eight weeks."

Instead, it's six months.

Klefbom, who also would have been a leader on the Swedish team at the world junior championship in Russia around Christmas, isn't worried about the surgery.

"I don't know the medical term for it. I shouldn't express myself too much," he said.

He had two injuries last season — a skate cut to his thigh that got infected and a concussion, but shrugged them off.

"Fluke things. The concussion was a cheap hit (by a Russian player)," he said

In Farjestads, he was shoved on the ice every second shift, rare for a teenager in a man's league.

"The start was very good. I was getting 25 minutes (a night). The injury happened, but what can I do? I'm already looking forward to next season."

He wants to play in North America next season, hopefully on the Oilers' roster. Maybe, in a perfect world, he'd be paired with hotshot Justin Schultz, although that's coach Ralph Krueger's call.

"I've tried to watch every game (computer). That Schultz? He's unbelieveable. Would I like to play with him? For sure," Klefbom said. "I hope I can be a two-way defenceman. Maybe I can take the glory with Justin."

Edmonton Journal: LOADED: 11.27.2012

644937 Edmonton Oilers

Oilers prospect Oscar Klefbom latest to fall to the shoulder injury bug

EDMONTON - Oscar Klefbom has caught the Edmonton Oilers shoulder injury bug.

In an organization where season-ending shoulder injuries seem to be a rite of passage, the blue-chip prospect is the latest scheduled to undergo surgery.

Klefbom got the bad news this week after visiting with the Oilers doctors, having hurt his shoulder in October playing with Farjestads of the Swedish Elite League.

"It happened on Oct. 9 playing against Vaxjo," Klefbom said. "I dumped the puck in the offensive zone and I got a small hit from behind and I lost my balance and I flew into the boards. I had to catch myself with my left arm.

"Afterwards, I couldn't feel my arm, it was like a dead arm. I didn't know what happened."

Klefbom figured he had done some damage to his left shoulder, but not to the extent where it would cost him the remainder of the season.

He joins the likes of Shawn Horcoff, Ales Hemsky, and Taylor Hall who all had to undergo shoulder surgery.

Ryan Nugent-Hopkins also suffered a shoulder injury last season.

"I'm trying to stay positive and keep my head high," Klefbom said. "It's a long time to be away from hockey, but I'm going to be positive and try to come back even stronger for summer camp. We'll see what happens with the surgery, I don't know yet. If I have the surgery here, it'll be on Dec. 13. But Farjestads and Edmonton are going to have discussions possibly (Wednesday) and they'll see what's best for me."

The 19-year-old defenceman was selected by the Oilers in the first round — 19th overall — of the 2011 NHL Entry Draft.

He arrived in Edmonton a couple of days ago to be evaluated by Oilers doctors, not anticipating he would be out for the rest of the year.

"No, absolutely not," Klefbom said. "Back home in Farjestads, we thought it would be six to eight weeks, probably. It's obviously a bit longer."

It hasn't been decided where the native of Karlstad, Sweden will have the surgery. The Oilers and Farjestads need to work out details of the procedure.

If it takes place in Canada, Klefbom would have the surgery in mid-December. He would then likely return home to begin the long rehabilitation process.

Klefbom had suited up in 18 games for Farjestads this season, collecting three assists in that time.

He was playing heavy minutes on the blue line with the club and had a plusseven rating in league play.

"I was having a very good year," he said. "I was playing a lot of minutes, about 25 a night. It was a bad injury, it happened but there's not much I can do."

Along with the disappointment of being out for the rest of the season, Klefbom will also miss the World Junior Hockey championships, which get underway Boxing Day in Ufa, Russia.

The Swedes go into the tournament as defending gold medal champions and Klefbom was expected to be their captain.

"Yeah, that's hard," he said. "Of course, I was looking forward to the World Juniors, but it is what it is, so I just have to look forward to next season.

"Now, my next goal is to have good rehab after the surgery and then have a good summer camp. I want to keep my head up, stay positive and come back even stronger. This is my first serious injury."

Klefbom had stayed in Sweden this year due to an agreement with Farjestads. He was in the final season of his deal with the club.

Next year, the six-foot-four, 204-pound defenceman is expected to play in North America, most likely starting out with the Oilers' AHL affiliate in Oklahoma City.

Klefbom is looking forward to joining the rest of the Oilers rising stars and has kept tabs on their progress during the NHL lockout.

"I've been able to watch them," he said. "It's hard because of the time difference, but I try to watch every game. They look pretty good.

"(Justin) Schultz is an unbelievable player. He's a good guy, I met him at the summer camp this year. He's really good. I hope I get to play with him one day."

Edmonton Sun: LOADED: 11.27.2012

644938 Florida Panthers

Mueller eager to play again

By GEORGE RICHARDS

MIAMI -- It would have been easy for Peter Mueller to skip last Wednesday's informal workout in Pompano Beach. After all, the new Panthers forward said he had a noon flight to catch to spend Thanksgiving in Minnesota

Mueller piled into his Chevy Avalanche at 11:15 a.m. and headed toward the airport.

But not before participating in the workout - he didn't even sneak out early. Mueller, 24, signed a one-year deal with the Panthers on July 1 and can't wait to get this season started. Mueller hasn't missed a workout since arriving in South Florida .

He made his holiday flight last week. Barely. He would much rather have been suiting up for the Panthers that night. The NHL lockout, now in its third month, has prevented Mueller and the rest of the Panthers from being able to do what they love.

"It's tough. I came in here ready to go," said Mueller, who has spent parts of the past three seasons with the Colorado Avalanche.

"This is the best I've felt since my rookie year. It's kind of tough to stand here right now. We're putting in all the work and not seeing the return of it. That's tough. But I'm optimistic. I'm hoping something gets done real soon."

A first-round draft pick (eighth overall) of the Coyotes in 2006, Mueller's talent level has never been questioned.

Mueller is viewed as a potential front-line scorer for the right team, and it looked like Colorado was going to be his home for a long time. Mueller was traded to the Avs in 2010 after scoring 39 goals with 68 assists in 207 games with Phoenix.

In Colorado, concussion issues sidelined his career progression. Mueller missed all but 15 games of the 2009-10 season and all of 2010-11 because of concussions, coming back to play in 32 games last year.

Mueller scored two goals in a game against the Panthers on Jan. 18 - just four games back from his most recent concussion problem.

"That shows you someone was paying attention that night," Stephen Weiss joked.

Mueller, who was medically cleared to play last year, said he hasn't been slowed by the concussions since then and added he's healthy and ready to play

"I'm just so happy to be here," he said. "The past couple years have been tough. It's not anyone's dream situation. If you talk to any athlete and tell them they will miss that kind of time, it's going to hurt in some way. But everything is good now. I may sound like a broken record, but everything is behind me. I'm just excited to play."

When the offseason came, Mueller found the Panthers ready to offer a contract. It's most definitely a fresh start. The Panthers, who watched

Mueller work out prior to the lockout, believe they pulled off a coup by getting him at such a discount.

"I've watched him for a while. He's a super-skilled guy who is going to fit in here nicely," Weiss said. " He's a perfect fit, a guy who will fill in for (Mikael Samuelsson) very well. They are the same kind of player, very smart, a (right-handed shot) . Hopefully he can fill those shoes there.

"For me, a guy with that kind of talent, play him with some guys who can score and make plays. That's where he's at his best. We're happy to have him. He's a talented player who can score goals. That's always needed."

Said Mueller: "This team we have here in Florida is so talented. You see what was accomplished here last year. I was thrilled to be able to come here and sign on for that. And it's nice to be able to walk outside every day in shorts."

Mueller isn't the only one ready to put this labor strife behind him and start playing hockey.

When and if this season does start, the Panthers plan on finally hanging their 2012 Southeast Division championship banner from the rafters at BB&T Center in Sunrise.

It would be the first hockey-performance banner to be unveiled at the Sunrise arena and first for the team since its 1996 Eastern Conference championship banner was won at Miami Arena.

The Panthers want to carry over some momentum from last year. Adding an offensive talent such as Mueller should help once things get going.

"It's a shame what has happened," defenseman Mike Weaver said. "The Panthers organization must be very disappointed that there is a lockout."

"The fans here, I feel for them. We feel the same way they do. It's a shame across the board. We had such a great feeling from the playoffs. That Game 7 was amazing. Our fans were amazing. I hope we get this thing taken care of and start playing. We don't want to lose our momentum from last year."

Miami Herald LOADED: 11.28.2012

644939 Minnesota Wild

Lockout prompts Wild to cut employees' pay by 20 percent

Article by: MICHAEL RUSSO, Star Tribune

Most of the team's 200-person staff will have their work week reduced to 32 hours, but no layoffs were announced.

With the NHL lockout in its 12th week and no end in sight, the Wild announced cost- cutting measures during a staff meeting Tuesday.

The vast majority of the 200-person staff was informed that it will begin fourday, 32-hour work weeks that will reduce salaries by 20 percent. In order to alleviate the stress heading into the holiday shopping season, employees won't feel losses for the first time until after Christmas.

"Our whole philosophy is we're all in this together," chief operating officer Matt Majka said. "We want to keep the staff intact because we still think we can play hockey this year. That's why we're announcing no layoffs. It's an all-for-one thing, and that's why we're going to do it this way with everyone feeling it a little bit."

If the lockout results in the cancellation of the 2012-13 season, Majka wouldn't speculate whether layoffs would be on the horizon.

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"Honestly, we have not had any developed discussions about what we do next," Majka said. "We're taking this step for today, and we'll have to see what will happen over the next couple months."

The objective is to avoid layoffs, which is why Majka said the club decided the fairest thing to do was "difficult" across-the-board pay cuts. Employees for teams in Vancouver, Montreal, Ottawa, Columbus and St. Louis have

been working four-day weeks for some time, as well as full-time employees at NHL headquarters in New York and Toronto. Ottawa, Florida, Edmonton, Phoenix and St. Louis have laid off employees.

Previously, the only Wild employees to receive cuts in base pay were those making more than \$70,000 a year, and that was a 30 or 35 percent reduction to the compensation over that \$70,000 threshold. Those employees include executives on the business side and management, coaches, trainers and broadcasters on the hockey operations side.

Some of these employees now will receive pay reductions significantly greater than 20 percent after Christmas.

Wild employees who make parts of their salary off commission have been severely hurt throughout the lockout. In addition, there are 500-plus part-timers who work in the arena during games that have lost significant pay.

That includes security, ushers, concierges and concession workers. The lockout has hampered local businesses, police officers who work overtime, parking venders, bus companies and area hotels. The list goes on and on.

Originally, there were 44 Wild home games scheduled this season. Every home game brings in a gate of roughly \$1.1 million.

Majka said there has been an uptick lately in Wild season-ticket holders requesting refund options, but the majority is taking advantage of the 10 percent interest offered by the team to keep money in their accounts. Sponsorships have been largely unaffected, Majka said.

But as the lockout continues, so will damage to the business. Talks broke off again between the NHL and NHL Players' Association last week. The two sides have agreed to meet with federal mediators beginning Wednesday. The NHL's Board of Governors meets Dec. 5, and games have been canceled at least through Dec. 14.

Wild owner Craig Leipold is one of four NHL owners on the NHL's negotiating committee, joining counterparts from Boston, Calgary and Washington. The Wild spent to the salary cap ceiling in three of the past four years and had the second-highest cap hit heading into the 2012-13 season after signing Zach Parise and Ryan Suter to identical 13-year, \$98 million deals July 4. Each received \$10 million signing bonuses.

Star Tribune LOADED: 11.28.2012

644940 Minnesota Wild

Wild employees taking paycuts, going to 4-day work weeks

Michael Russo

All Wild employees will now feel the effects of an NHL lockout that is 73 days old.

During an all-staff meeting at 2 p.m. CT, the Wild announced that the roughly 200-person staff will be put on four-day, 32-hour work weeks, Chief Operating Officer Matt Majka told the Star Tribune.

That will mean a 20% payout for almost all employees. In an attempt to lessen the hurt with the holidays coming up, employees won't see an initial reduction in pay until their first paycheck after Christmas.

"Our whole philosophy is we're all in this together," Majka said. "We want to keep the staff intact because we still think we can play hockey this year. That's why we're announcing no layoffs. It's an all-for-one thing, and that's why we're going to do it this way with everyone feeling it a little bit."

If the lockout continues or eventually results in the cancelation of the 2012-13 season, Majka wouldn't speculate if layoffs could be the next step.

"Our philosophy at the moment is we want to keep the staff intact as long as possible," Majka said. "Some teams have had layoffs. Honestly, we have not had any developed discussions about what we do next. We're taking this step for today and we'll have to see what will happen over the next couple months."

Previously, the only Wild employees receiving paycuts were employees making over \$70,000 a year. That included mostly executives and higher-compensated employees on the business side and mostly coaches and management on the hockey ops side.

Those employees either received a 30% or 35% reduction of their compensation over that \$70,000 threshold, sources say.

That appears to be changing. All employees will receive at least 20% paycuts across the board, but Majka indicated higher-paid employees are losing a bigger chunk.

Just poking around a little bit with other beat writers, Ottawa and Montreal are also on four-day work weeks. All full-time employees of the NHL have been on four-day work weeks since Oct. 1.

The Ottawa Sun reported that the Senators laid off 40 employees in September. Florida and Phoenix have laid off employees, and Calgary Flames employees over a certain threshold are taking paycuts. There are others, but in response to a query I sent out, beat writers from Anaheim, Los Angeles, Detroit, Buffalo, Tampa Bay, Chicago, New Jersey responded that they've been told the teams they cover have laid nobody off and not reduced any salaries as of yet.

The 2012-13 season was supposed to consist of 44 Wild home games, which includes three preseason games. With games canceled until at least Dec. 15, at the very least, several of those won't be played. At the very worse, all won't.

Every game not played at Xcel Energy Center means a 500-plus-person staff of ushers, security personnel, concierges, concession workers and others don't get paid.

Every lost home game costs the Wild roughly a \$1.1 million gate.

Since things went south with negotiations between the NHL and NHLPA, Majka admits there has been an uptick in season-ticket holders calling and asking for immediate refunds. The majority are taking advantage of the 10% interest the Wild is offering season-ticket holders to keep their money in their accounts.

Clarification and update: Majka's report was that approximately 10% of season-ticket holders have requested refund options. He said sponsorships have not been greatly affected. Games are being refunded to ticket holders as they are missed.

The NHL and NHLPA have agreed to meet with federal mediators beginning Wednesday. The NHL has a Board of Governors meeting scheduled for Dec. 5, and the players have begun the process of at least kicking around the decertification of the NHLPA.

Wild owner Craig Leipold is one of four NHL owners (Boston, Calgary and Washington) on the league negotiating committee. On July 4, the Wild signed Zach Parise and Ryan Suter to identical 13-year, \$98 million deals.

The Wild spent to just below the salary cap ceiling in 2009-10 and 2010-11 and before the lockout ranked second from the salary-cap ceiling heading into the 2012-13 season.

Star Tribune LOADED: 11.28.2012

644941 Minnesota Wild

If NHL lockout continues, Minnesota Wild will cut employees' hours, not jobs

By Bruce Brothers

The Southwest entrance to the Xcel Energy Center on Friday, Nov. 16, 2012. ((Pioneer Press: Kelsey Shirriff))

Zach Parise, Minnesota Wild teammates willing to wait for right deal with NHL

If the NHL lockout continues past Dec. 9, about 200 full-time employees of the Wild will have their work hours reduced from 40 to 32 and will have their pay reduced accordingly, chief operating officer Matt Majka said Tuesday, Nov. 27.

There will be no layoffs, Majka added, noting that Wild employees will receive their first paycheck with a reduction of 20 percent on Dec. 28. Executives can expect a larger reduction.

Majka said Wild owner Craig Leipold wanted to delay the bulk of salary cuts until the first paycheck after Christmas.

Employees will return from a four-day workweek to full time if and when the lockout ends.

"We were forced to make some difficult decisions," Majka said. "Keeping the staff intact and having no layoffs was important."

He noted that other NHL teams already have made cuts because of the lockout and credited Leipold for showing patience. The Wild are receiving some income from concerts at the Xcel Energy Center, but NHL games through Dec. 15 have been canceled. Minnesota will have lost 15 home games including exhibitions as of Dec. 15, and it's unclear if some of those would be rescheduled if the lockout ends soon.

The Wild take in approximately \$1.1 million per game in gate receipts.

The staff was informed of the organization's decision at a meeting Tuesday afternoon, and Majka said employees reacted "as well as they could have."

" 'We're all in this together' is the message," he said. "It's a disappointing outcome for

all of us, but people were understanding of it. I would say people are grateful that it hasn't been more serious, that there haven't been layoffs."

Pioneer Press LOADED: 11.28.2012

644942 Montreal Canadiens

Fantasy: Cole shines in win over Lightning

By Pat Hickey, The Gazette November 27, 2012

MONTREAL — Erik Cole ignited a third-period explosion as the Canadiens defeated the Tampa Bay Lightning 5-2 Tuesday night at the Bell Centre.

Coach Michel Therrien engaged in some serious line-juggling as he doubleshifted Cole and cut back on David Desharnais's ice time.

"Davey was a game-time decision because he wasn't feeling well and I decided to take some of the pressure off him," Therrien said. "He's been playing a lot and we don't him to get worn down."

While Desharnais, who came into the game as the team's leading scorer, picked up an assist on a third-period goal by Brandon Prust, this was Cole's night. The veteran scored two goals and added two assists as the Canadiens improved to 14-6-1.

Teddy Purcell gave the Lightning a 2-2 tie at 4:34 of the third period, but Cole put the Canadiens ahead five seconds later after Tomas Plekanec won the faceoff.

Cole and Desharnais each had an assist as Prust scored at 7:34 and Cole added his 10thof the season at 18:27.

Former Canadien Mathieu Garon and Carey Price matched big saves in the first period when Montreal outshot Tampa Bay 12-11, but Garon cracked first when P.K. Subban unloaded with a one-timer on a power play at 4:31 of the second period.

"Max (Pacioretty) wound up like he was going to shoot, but then he saw me and I was able to get the shot off before anyone could react," Subban said.

Benoit Pouliot tied the game at 6:04, but Colby Armstrong gave the Canadiens the lead going into the third period when he scored at 19:22.

"You don't want to give up a goal in the final minute and that was what I was thinking," Armstrong said. "But Colesy forced a turnover in the neutral zone and I had a 2-on-1 with (Alexei) Emelin. It was one of those situations where neither one of us seemed anxious to shoot, but the defenceman went to his side and I just had to make sure I controlled the pass and waited for the goalie to move first."

Price finished with 27 saves, while Garon had 26.

The Canadiens don't play again until Saturday when the Toronto Maple Leafs are at the Bell Centre. Therrien gave the Canadiens Wednesday off and scheduled a rare afternoon practice Thursday.

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.27.2012

644943 Montreal Canadiens

Habs' Eller one of more than 200 NHLers playing in Europe

Posted by Stu Cowan

More than 200 locked-out NHLers are playing in Europe during the lockout, including the Canadiens' Lars Eller, who has four goals (five including shootouts) and two assists in four games with Finland's SM-Liiga's JYP Jyväskylä Oy, the defending champion in the 14-team league. Eller is seeing plenty of ice as JYP's first-line centre, coach Jyrki Aho using him at even strength, on the power play and the penalty kill.

"It's a lot of fun, getting that kind of playing time," Eller, who averaged 15:19 in 79 Canadiens games last season, scoring 16 goals and adding a dozen assists, told The Gazette's Dave Stubbs. "So it's up to me to produce and hopefully that's going to turn into more wins for our team."

Meanwhile, the Boston Bruins' Tyler Seguin is lighting up the Swiss league with EHC Biel. The 20-year-old has 20 goals in 20 games.

"I had no idea what to expect when I came to Switzerland," he told the Tages-Anzeiger newspaper. "The league is very competitive — the speed and the talent level of the players has surprised me. It took me some time and effort to get used to it. "Scoring goals is never easy; I didn't do very well at the beginning. Now I just hope to continue playing well like I have been lately."

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.27.2012

644944 Nashville Predators

Former Predator Tom Fitzgerald enjoys 'best job' with Pittsburgh

Written by Josh Cooper

The passion is still there with Tom Fitzgerald. When the first Nashville Predators captain talks about his job as assistant to the general manager with the Pittsburgh Penguins, the speed of his words increases and the inflections in his voice build as he describes his role.

"I have the best job in the organization because I get to touch different areas of the game," Fitzgerald said.

Fitzgerald's rise through the management ranks has been swift and somewhat expected. A heady NHL player, he notched 1,097 games and helped lead the Florida Panthers to a surprise 1996 Stanley Cup finals appearance. He captained the Predators from 1998-99 through 2001-02 and retired after the 2005-06 season.

"He is really good with people, he knows the game, he sees the coaching aspect of it, he's a good sounding board for our NHL coaches and AHL coaches and for me," Pittsburgh general manager Ray Shero said. "I don't think I'd make one (personnel decision) without asking him. Since he has come on, every personnel decision I've had his opinion on it; I've wanted his opinion on it."

When Shero hired Fitzgerald as the Penguins director of player development in 2007, Fitzgerald found himself in a transitional role. He was sometimes asked to coach — like when he became an interim assistant mid-season in 2009 on Pittsburgh's Stanley Cup championship team. But he also relished his previous job in the Penguins organization of scouting prospects and keeping tabs on players in Pittsburgh's organizational structure.

After the Penguins defeated the Detroit Red Wings in a memorable sevengame Cup final series, Fitzgerald looked at options within Pittsburgh and decided to move back into management. He was promoted to his current position, and overall believes it was the right step for him.

"In development, it's a role that will splinter, you're going to fork. You can either coach or go down the management side, and as I was coaching, I realized I enjoyed coaching, I enjoyed being in the trenches, but it's so much like playing because of moving," said Fitzgerald who resides with his family in the Boston area. "I really, really felt with my people skills the way I enjoyed working with the personnel side, the way Ray ran his team, I knew I wanted to be a general manager."

According to Shero, Fitzgerald presides over all aspects of the organization. Be it scouting, signing college players, helping prospects or working with the team's American Hockey League affiliate in Wilkes-Barre/Scranton.

"He has a hand in everything, with our NHL coaches, minor league coaches, prospects, drafted players, obviously working with me quite closely," Shero said. "He has been fantastic."

Fitzgerald said that when he becomes an NHL general manager he will be a "Ray Shero disciple." But by virtue of this, he'll likely have some management tricks that Shero adopted from Predators general manager David Poile. Shero was Poile's assistant in Nashville for eight years. At times, Poile also would bring Fitzgerald into the managerial process, which the former Predators captain appreciated.

Said Fitzgerald, "He was a very approachable person, and Ray is the same way. He's very approachable, and I'd like to think that's something I am."

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Tennessean LOADED: 11.28.2012 644945 New Jersey Devils

Mediators to Join N.H.L. Talks on Wednesday

By JEFF Z. KLEIN

1:00 p.m. | Updated Federal mediators are scheduled to join the N.H.L. and players' association Wednesday in New York, the first negotiating session between the two sides in a week.

It will be the mediators' first attempt to help break the stalemate in the N.H.L. lockout, now in its 73rd day.

The session was scheduled before the death Tuesday morning of Marvin Miller, the founder and longtime head of the Major League Baseball Players Association and Donald Fehr's professional mentor. Fehr, who followed Miller at the helm of the baseball players' union, is now the executive director of the N.H.L. players' union.

On Monday, George H. Cohen, director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, announced the assignment of three mediators to the talks. One, Guy Serota, was removed from the assignment within a few hours because of off-color comments posted on his Twitter account.

The other two mediators still assigned to the negotiations are Deputy Director Scot L. Beckenbaugh and Director of Mediation Services John Sweeney.

Beckenbaugh was acting director of the federal service in 2005 when he mediated three bargaining sessions between the league and the union in February of that year. But the mediation was unsuccessful, and Commissioner Gary Bettman the season was canceled three days after the last session Beckenbaugh mediated.

The mediators will try to bring the N.H.L. and the players' union together in two key areas of contention.

One is on how to reach a 50-50 split of revenue, which both sides have agreed to in principle after the players took 57 percent of revenues under the expired agreement.

The players want to gradually reduce their split over the first three years of a five-year deal, starting with 56.5 percent of revenues this season. The owners want to start at 53 percent and get to 50 percent after two seasons.

Union officials characterize the dollar difference between the two positions at only \$182 million over five years, or \$1.2 million per year, per team.

The other area of contention is contract rights, where the owners are proposing to make players wait an extra year to become eligible for free agency, and to make it more difficult to go to salary arbitration.

Chris Campoli, a player who has been present for most of the negotiating sessions, said Tuesday that the union first requested mediation.

"All along as an association we've been trying to engage them in a negotiation and it just hasn't worked," Campoli said on Fan 590 radio in Toronto. "Hopefully this can help lead to a solution."

New York Times LOADED: 11.28.2012

644946 New Jersey Devils

Devil players not too spoiled by good life to ride the bus while playing with Albany in AHL

Rich Chere/The Star-Ledger

ALBANY, N.Y. — The text message from former teammate Zach Parise brought a smile to Adam Henrique's face even if there was a painful grimace hiding behind it.

After a debut season in the NHL in which he went to the Stanley Cup Finals with the Devils and was a finalist for the Calder Trophy as top rookie, Henrique is now dealing with life back in the minors.

During the NHL lockout, Henrique is playing for the AHL Albany Devils and Parise couldn't help rubbing it in.

In his text, Parise pointed out that Albany had three games in three cities over three days last weekend. It started with a game in Rochester Friday night, followed by a home match at the Times Union Center and then a meeting with Wilkes-Barre Scranton in Atlantic City on Sunday.

That's 17 hours covering nearly 1,000 miles on buses with a home game in between. Hardly the lush life of jet travel to which Henrique and former NHLers Adam Larsson and Jacob Josefson have become accustomed.

"I'm 22 years old. I'm okay," Henrique said with a laugh. "Being one year removed (from the AHL), I'm still used to it. We haven't had any of the 10-hour bus rides yet. It's a little different than the plane (in the NHL), but that's what comes with this."

The NHL, still without a collective bargaining agreement, has canceled games through Dec. 14. That means Henrique, Larsson and Josefson could very well be looking at a Dec. 19-22 trip in which Albany plays in Bridgeport, Conn., then back-to-back games in Norfolk, Va. That's about 11 hours and 805 miles on the bus.

"I'm kind of used to this from my time in Sweden," Larsson, 20, said. "Some of those bus trips were four hours. You just have to get used to it. You have no other options. There is no way out. You have to sit on the bus for four hours and still play. Of course I'd rather sit on a plane, but this is how it is right now."

Hey, they got to fly from Albany to St. John's, Newfoundland. That prompted Henrique to joke about the luxury of having hot towels on the flight.

It could be worse. They could be flying to Siberia, like those NHLers playing for or against Avangard Omsk in Russia's KHL.

Still, it's the American League, and playing in front of 3,500 people in Albany, as the Devils did against the Syracuse Crunch on Saturday, can be a shock to the system for those who were in the Stanley Cup Finals only five months ago.

"Coming back here was different, but I try to stay positive," said Henrique, who is a center. "When I come to the rink I try to make sure I'm doing the right things so my game is at the NHL level it was last year. Obviously there is nothing I can do about changing the lockout.

"The fortunate thing is coming into it I knew I was going to have somewhere to play. I didn't have to worry about going overseas. I'm staying fresh. I'm

playing. It's a great league. There are a lot of great players in the league. Guys are playing for their jobs every night because of the ability the coaching staffs have to switch half the lineup night in and night out. It's the same for me. If I'm not playing well, there is somebody there who can jump in."

Albany general manager Chris Lamoriello said Larsson, Henrique and Josefson have all maintained a positive frame of mind.

"We certainly haven't seen any of that lack of focus or distraction," Lamoriello said. "All of these players have handled this, in my opinion, as well as you can handle it.

"Not only are they young players at this stage in their careers, but they are able to play right now when unfortunately some people aren't able to play. This greatly benefits them. I think this is a great experience for them for a number of reasons."

Larsson said he is benefitting from playing in the AHL for the first time.

"Oh, yeah. It's better than not playing," the defenseman said. "To play a lot of minutes down here is good for me. I think Jacob and Henrique and I are enjoying it so far."

In 16 games, Josefson, a center, leads Albany in scoring with 11 points (seven goals, four assists). Henrique has 5-3-8 while Larsson is tied for second in scoring with nine points (two goals, seven assists).

"Of course it's disappointing with the way negotiations and everything is going in the NHL," Larsson said. "Right now I'm focusing on playing here and helping this team win. I can't really focus on the NHL. At the same time, it's very sad the NHL isn't playing. I hope it starts Dec. 15."

The AHL may be the best hockey being played in North America during the lockout, but the travel is strictly minor league.

"Of course the travel is hard," Josefson said with a shrug. "Just get on the bus and try to get some rest, some sleep. It's the same for everybody. It's no big deal."

They are, after all, collecting paychecks. Most locked-out NHL players are not, although the \$10 million signing bonus Parise got from the Minnesota Wild makes it a lot easier to sit home and rib buddies with text messages.

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.28.2012

644947 New Jersey Devils

NHL lockout hot topic: Will you boycott the NHL if there's a 2012-13 season?

Charles Curtis, NJ.com

A couple of weeks ago, we asked you, the fans, what you'd want from the NHL post-lockout to help bring you back to the game after the prolonged work stoppage.

One commenter said "not [to] expect dime one from my pocket. I will not be attending any games this season, even if someone is offering up free tickets."

Then there's this report from The Philadelphia Inquirer's Sam Carchidi: he interviewed Bill O'Toole, a Flyers season-ticket holder who wants to boycott Philadelphia's first home game.

"It would be a national story and a fitting 'final word' put on the debacle by the fans, the ones who write the checks for the billions of dollars these two sides can't seem to divide," O'Toole said.

It's not the first time an idea like this has been floated. John MacKinnon of the Edmonton Journal suggested NHL fans shouldn't even protest -- they should just walk away, even though he said they won't, as history has shown

Luke DeCock of the News & Observer wrote about Carolina Hurricanes fans who are asking for refunds on their ticket plans, an action that others could be taking with NHL teams.

The real long term damage may be done by casual fans sick of multiple work stoppages that have already left for good.

We'd like to hear if you have any plans to boycott when the NHL starts up again. Did you already get a refund on season tickets or plan on asking for one? Do you know of anyone planning on leaving the NHL behind? Tell us in the comments section below.

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.28.2012

644948 New Jersey Devils

NHL lockout links: Experts say no guarantee lockout will be solved with mediators; Brad Richards 'not too optimistic' about mediation

Charles Curtis

Yesterday's news was somewhat encouraging: with the NHL and NHLPA at an impasse, they would now turn to mediation, beginning tomorrow.

But as we mentioned, mediation doesn't mean the lockout will disappear all of a sudden, with a 2012-13 season appearing out of thin air.

That's exactly what The Sporting News' Jesse Spector wrote. He interviewed Warren Zola, an adjunct associate professor of business law, who wondered how mediation would help.

"A mediator can't address saving face. Either the players will give in or the owners will give in, and because this is such a public fight, I don't see how a mediator necessarily resolves this," Zola told Spector, who also pointed out decertification is still an option, something he thought would kill any 2012-13 season.

ESPN's Pierre LeBrun looked back at the mediation that took place during the 2004-05 lockout. A source told him "it went nowhere."

But LeBrun said there's "more potential" for success this time around -- in the last lockout, a heated debate over a salary cap was at the center of negotiations.

"In the end, no matter what mediators say or try, only the true willingness of both sides to finally compromise for the final stretch will allow a true breakthrough," LeBrun wrote. "It's non-binding mediation, nobody is going to force the NHL to back off on its player contracting rights demands, nor the NHLPA in coming down on its Make Whole number."

The stat that's being thrown around by writers like Scott Burnside of ESPN is positive: "Between 2008 and 2011, [the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service] settled between 85 percent and 87 percent of cases through mediation."

The negative? The FMCS didn't help lead to settlements in the NBA and NFL work stoppages. Nonetheless, it's a change in what's been a troubling few weeks. And that could be helpful.

"The atmosphere surrounding this process has been poisoned for some time now," Burnside wrote. "Maybe, just maybe, having a third party in the room will help release those toxins and the two sides can get down to the business of saving at least part of the 2012-13 season."

In other lockout news:

- The Daily News' Pat Leonard tweeted from a Brad Richards event, where the Rangers forward had plenty to say about mediation. "I'm not too optimistic about it. If last NHL quote is that this is their best [and] final offer, I don't know what a mediator's going to do," he said, via Leonard.
- Spector was also at the event and said Richards mentioned "there's hope for another NY-area charity game after success of Atlantic City. Need a venue."
- Kevin McGran of The Toronto Star spoke with San Antonio Spurs forward Matt Bonner, who dealt with an NBA lockout last year. Bonner said decertification was a risk and "shouldn't bee a path chosen lightly."

"It's hard because it throws everything into chaos. It just adds a huge degree of uncertainty to the situation. It's a tough decision for the players to make and it's tough for the owners to deal with. That's a possible strategy to get the owners to move, to budge," Bonner said.

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644949 New Jersey Devils

Don Fehr praises his former boss and mentor Marvin Miller for his unmatched 'integrity' and 'grace'

By Pat Leonard / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Don Fehr, who headed up the MLB Players Association until 2009, lost a friend and mentor with Tuesday's death of Marvin Miller.

Don Fehr is embroiled in National Hockey League lockout negotiations, but on Tuesday morning, the executive director of the NHL players' union lost a mentor and friend with the passing of Marvin Miller, 95, the first director of the MLB players' association.

Fehr began working for Miller as the baseball union's general counsel from 1977-1982 and in 1985 officially was named to Miller's former post, holding the position as head of the MLB players' union until 2009.

RELATED: MLB PLAYERS ASSOCIATION STATEMENT ON MILLER

Fehr worked on the landmark baseball Messersmith-McNally free agency case as an outside lawyer prior to joining the MLBPA. During his career, he learned from an unparalleled union leader whose influence is still felt throughout the sports landscape.

"Marvin possessed a combination of integrity, intelligence, eloquence, courage and grace that is simply unmatched in my experience," Fehr said in the MLBPA's statement announcing Miller's death. "Without question, Marvin had more positive influence on Major League Baseball than any other person in the last half of the 20th century. It was a rare privilege for me to be able to work for him and with him. All of us who knew him will miss him enormously."

Miller spoke just as highly of Fehr in a Daily News interview in June: "He's probably the best they've ever had."

Miller also hailed Fehr's \$280 million settlement of free agency collusion cases against baseball's ownership in 1990. "That was an important moment for him and the players to recognize that what was going on was a return to the old ways of the industry doing illegal things, getting away with it, being brazen about it," Miller said. "And that was the moment to stand your ground and say, 'We're not going back to that.' And he did it. That was important for him. I've always thought it was an important achievement."

Miller also provided unique insight into the challenge Fehr faces when bargaining with the NHL's brass. When Miller became director of a newly-formed baseball players' union, he had to explain to the players the nature of necessary conflict. "You've got to be ready to take whatever struggles come in order to do this," he recalled telling players.

Getting an entire union to understand that concept, however, required consistent reinforcement. Fehr, Miller said in a frank assessment, has a lot of experience but faces a new challenge due to the recent broken history of the NHL players' union and a cancelled 2004-05 season. "One set of speeches like that is not enough," Miller said. "Things like that and struggles had to be dealt with year-after-year before you could build a union, and I don't know how capable Don is at that, because you have to remember, he first came to the ballplayers in 1977 after I had been here 11 years ... Don was not part of the struggle for free agency. He had a minor role when the owners appealed the jury's decision. But in the buildup towards removing a reserve clause, Don was not here yet.

"I just don't know what the mindset of the (NHL) players is," Miller continued. "I think that they have always faced a hostile management, and they have not done too well in terms of protecting the rights of the players (in previous negotiations). It's a very complicated situation. As you know, they have a group of players that come from all over the world. I just don't know if they understand that they're dealing with a very hostile management."

While Capitals veteran defenseman Roman Hamrlik challenged Fehr openly through the Czech media last week, for the most part the players have remained united behind Fehr during the long lockout, which reached Day 73 on Tuesday.

Miller admitted he was pleasantly surprised when he saw Fehr commit to the NHL players' union in 2010 so quickly after retiring from the MLBPA in 2009. "It's hard to do that for so many years and still be effective, and I expected he was going to do something else or perhaps take a

considerable rest period," said Miller, who guided the MLBPA from 1966-84. "So when he went to start helping the players in hockey, I thought it was going to be a temporary thing. I was excited that he would accept a long-term assignment. I was quite amazed."

That was Miller, forthright about what Fehr faces but amazed by his longevity and effectiveness, qualities Fehr learned from his mentor, whose death leaves a defined and lasting legacy.

New York Daily News LOADED: 11.28.2012

644950 New York Islanders

NY Rangers' Brad Richards on lack of progress toward ending NHL lockout: 'We're scared for the game'

By Pat Leonard / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Brad Richards is "not that optimistic" federal mediation will help the NHL and its players' union resolve their differences.

"If the last league quote that is on the table is their best and final offer, I don't know what a mediator's going to do," the Rangers center said Tuesday at his unveiling as the face of the men's apparel line UNTUCKit at New York Vintners near City Hall. "Maybe a mediator can spark something, but I'm not that optimistic about it."

The NHL and players' union will begin mediation on Wednesday, Day 74 of the lockout, at an undisclosed location. Games through Dec. 14, the Winter Classic and All-Star Game are already canceled. Foreseeable potential stopgaps toward saving the 2012-13 season include mediation and then a Dec. 5 Board of Governors meeting in New York.

Richards has used his free time to the advantage of others. He volunteered to help victims of Hurricane Sandy in Queens, helped organize a skating clinic in ravaged Staten Island, captained a team in Saturday's charity hockey game in Atlantic City to benefit storm victims and now is looking to organize another game of NHL stars in the New York City area.

But he also attended bargaining sessions the second week of November and said the process is "a lot different than people think on the outside." He struggles to see a resolution since the owners first wanted to reduce the players' share from 57% of revenue to 43% and now have backed off to a 50-50 split, only to call that move a "concession."

"That's the biggest crock I've ever heard," Richards said, adding: "We're scared for the game."

The union has discussed filing for disclaimer of interest, in which the union would disband to allow players to file individual anti-trust lawsuits against the NHL to create bargaining leverage. But that drastic move would drag the process into months of litigation and cancel the season, without any quarantee it would be effective.

In other words, filing disclaimer of interest would be a last resort. "We are trying to find any way to try to get a deal done," Rangers player rep Marty Biron said via text message of mediation. "It's another tool to try to get the league to finally negotiate. We will see how it goes."

New York Daily News LOADED: 11.28.2012

644951 Ottawa Senators

Ottawa Senators' Daniel Alfredsson: 'Every player is pissed off' about NHL lockout

Veteran says NHLPA firmly behind Donald Fehr

By Don Brennan

OTTAWA - Daniel Alfredsson left the casino last weekend with exactly what he had when he arrived

That is, a firm grip on the frustrations of fellow, high-profile NHLers in the money-driven labour dispute with the league's owners.

Alfredsson was in Atlantic City to play in a charity game that resembled an all-star classic, featuring the likes of Steven Stamkos, Brad Richards, Martin Brodeur, Scott Hartnell and James Neal.

Prior to the fundraiser generating "hundreds of thousands of dollars" for victims of Hurricane Sandy, about 25 players met with NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr at Caesars Hotel & Casino.

While the session was more of an update on the details of recent discussions with the NHL, the players also had plenty of opportunity to chat among themselves. And Tuesday, after skating with other locked-out pros at a Carleton Ravens practice, Alfredsson's voice had a similar tone to that of marquee players Sidney Crosby and Alex Ovechkin during interviews the day before.

"Every player is pissed off, there's no question," the Ottawa Senators captain said of a lockout that has hit the 73-day mark. "I think we all feel that this could be avoidable. We love to play. We'd almost do anything to play. But if we're mad or frustrated, we're not going to let it dictate negotiations. We just want a fair deal.

"We don't want to run over anybody, or take anything ... and I think that's the feeling we get from (the owners), that they're not budging much at all, (that it's) 'take this or don't play'.

"I think it frustrates a lot of players and at the same time it galvanizes us as well."

Alfredsson and company made it clear to Fehr that the union is standing firmly behind him — which shoots down any suggestions of discontentment made by Capitals defenceman Roman Hamrlik last week.

"(Fehr) just updated us to where the negotiations were ... (and) we kind of talked to him about how we felt, where we were in the whole process," said Alfredsson. "That's what's good when you meet with players from other places, because we all go through the same things. They skate at their rinks and feel the same way. We told him we're really confident in what he's doing and feel really good about his leadership. We kind of gave him a feeling that we're totally behind him."

A non-binding, third party — the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service — is scheduled to meet with both sides Wednesday. Alfredsson is hopeful its input will help move things along.

"I don't know really that a mediator can tell anybody what to do, or what they should do," said Alfredsson. "They can kind of speak to both sides, independently. It all depends on what each side says to the mediator. But I think at this point, it's not a bad thing."

Even if both sides don't completely divulge everything?

"From what I hear, the guys (with the FMCS) who are doing it are really experienced," said Alfredsson. "They know the ins and outs of negotiations. So I'm sure they can piece together things, from what's out in the media, which is not far off from the truth. The whole negotiation has been pretty public. I'm sure they can piece together a good picture of where things are.

"At the same time, I don't think the NHL is ready to do a deal until the NHL is ready to do a deal. That's where I think we're at."

Alfredsson and his peers did discuss the possibility of decertifying the union, a long and complicated process which would diminish the league's powers but potentially wipe out the season.

"We're also aware of all the opportunities that are available to us, and that's one of them," said Alfredsson. "I'm not saying if we're doing that or not ... that's up to the whole membership. (But) that's one avenue for us to force their hand a bit at something ... it's pretty much the only avenue to go if we want to do that."

While veteran winger Todd Bertuzzi stated publicly his belief that the season will be cancelled, Alfredsson isn't as sure.

"I have no idea. Once we get there, we'll get there," he said. "I'd be surprised.

"I don't think that's (the league's) agenda. That's my personal opinion. Only they know and it's probably only a few guys that know, too. The owners probably don't even know."

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.27.2012

644952 Ottawa Senators

Ottawa Senators coach Paul MacLean returns to coaching — with kids

By Don Brennan

Paul MacLean can only watch helplessly as the second season of his threeyear deal with the Senators slips away.

After impressively coaching Ottawa into the playoffs and earning recognition as a Jack Adams Award finalist, MacLean has mostly spent the lockout travelling with his wife on vacation, then travelling with his coaching staff on business to see the team's prospects in Binghamton.

A lot of the time, he sits in his office trying to keep busy.

On Tuesday, MacLean and members of his staff took a break from the routine by serving as guest coaches for the Gloucester Rangers major atom 'A' team. Clearly, they enjoyed the opportunity to work with the nine-year olds.

"This was a lot of fun," MacLean said after the practice at Earl Armstrong Arena. "I think it's a good opportunity for us to spend some time in the community, and maybe help some kids out. And it's good for us to get out, something to do."

Something besides feeling the frustrations most everyone else has with the lockout.

"For the most part, we're like everybody else," he said. "We're trying to read the eloquent stuff in the newspapers to find out what's going on. We don't know anything more than you guys know, either. We're just basically trying to be patient. It doesn't concern us but it concerns us. But there's nothing we can do about it. We just have to wait until it's over. We understand it's a process. Like everybody else, we'd like it to go faster than it's going, but it's a process and we're going to have to go through it."

Working with the kids was a reminder that hockey is more than a big business.

"I think this is the part of the game we really understand, that it is fun," said MacLean. "We need to have fun in our game, even at the NHL level. I believe our team had a lot of fun last year. But also, in the NHL, winning is fun. You can have way more fun when you're winning than when you're not.

"These kids had fun ... we had fun (Tuesday night), too. It is still a game and we should have fun doing it."

MacLean said much of the past week or so was spent preparing for this practice and others like it, with various minor teams, over the next 10 days. He knows there will be other requests in the coming days, and hopes that people will understand that they all can't be accommodated.

"We'll do what we can until (the NHL) gets started up," he said. "We're just taking it week by week."

When the season does start, he'll try to pick up where he and the Senators left off.

"Whoever can come out of the gate, seize the momentum and maintain it, is going to have success," said MacLean. "We want to make sure we're one of those teams."

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.27.2012

644953 Ottawa Senators

Ottawa Senators captain Daniel Alfredsson wants to play in Europe if lockout wipes out NHL season

Don Brennan

OTTAWA - Daniel Alfredsson is going to play a game that matters again — in one place or another.

The Senators captain told the Sun on Tuesday that if the NHL lockout wipes out this season, he'll look to sign with a team in Europe. Not in his native Sweden, where Alfredsson expects there will be "public pressure" on Elite League teams to open their doors to locked-out players. And not in the uptempo KHL, either.

Alfredsson said he'd go to "Italy or France or somewhere" so he can stay sharp and keep open the possibility of playing for the Senators in 2013-14.

"If I feel I'm going to play next season, maybe I should play somewhere," Alfredsson said at the Carleton University after a practice with the OUA's Ravens. "Not that I have to, but it's probably a good idea.

"I'd play some games, and just have a great experience. I'm not looking to go to a Swedish league or the Russian league, I don't think. The way I feel now, I don't think I would be motivated enough, if they cancelled the season, to really do a full push there.

"But I would like to play some hockey and go from there ... then decide what I want to do."

Until recently, Alfredsson has mostly watched the NHL's CBA negotiations go nowhere from Ottawa, where he has been able to spend quality time with his wife and four sons. His skating has primarily been done at Bell Sensplex with a handful of other locked-out pros, although two or three times the small group has accepted an invite to practice with Carleton.

But last week, Alfredsson became more familiar with the laces on his skates.

On vacation with his family in Phoenix, he took part in three on-ice sessions organized by Coyotes captain Shane Doan, which also included former teammates Wade Redden and Sean Hill.

And then Saturday, he was in Atlantic City to play in "Operation Hattrick"—a charity game held for victims of Hurricane Sandy, played before a house packed with 11,000 fans.

It was there — with a number of the NHL's biggest names — that Alfredsson's competitive juices really started to flow.

"It was a great experience," said Alfredsson. "There were a lot of Rangers, Jersey (players), Philly (players) ... and a lot of Philly fans."

Alfredsson said it was a "fun introduction" to the rivalries that exist between along the eastern seaboard. Along with the cheering, there were a lot of boos — and he chuckled when it was mentioned that for once, they weren't directed at him by Montreal and Toronto fans.

Most of the wrath was steered at Pittsburgh's James Neal, although the crowd also broke into chants calling for Gary Bettman's head, even though the NHL commish wasn't in attendance.

"They really appreciated us being there," said Alfredsson. "It was a pretty high-paced game, even though there was no hitting.

"Both teams worked hard. It was fun to play. The crowd was great. They were chanting, "We Want Hockey".

Quite clearly, so does Alfredsson as he approaches his 40th birthday Dec. 11

A couple of months ago he wondered if he could rediscover the motivation to play again if the lockout dragged on and the NHL didn't start up until January. As he left the ice after one October skate at Sensplex, he blurted to no one in particular: "I'm too old for this."

But, re-energized after his trip south and his stop in Atlantic City, he blended right in with the students Tuesday. Finishing off a 2-on-1 rush with Chris Neil, he blasted his trademark, one-timer in off the crossbar before the goalie could really move.

Didn't think of letting up on the kids a little, Dan?

"Should I?" he said with a laugh. "I've got to practise, too.

"The coach did tell me, 'I'm happy (the goalie) didn't get to that one. I guess they have a few injuries."

Now, Alfredsson says he will play for sure if the NHL season doesn't get going until January.

"Playing the game in (Atlantic City) .. once you get out on the ice, it's a great feeling," he said.

But he's not yet ready to commit to playing in the 2013-14 season.

"I don't know," said Alfredsson. "I'll take it as it goes, and go from there."

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.27.2012

644954 Philadelphia Flyers

First look at the Flyers in the film 'This is 40'

Staff

Current and former Flyers Scott Hartnell, Matt Carle, James van Riemsdyk and Ian Laperriere appear alongside Megan Fox and Leslie Mann in the film "This is 40" Photo: Susie Hanover/Universal Pictures

Here's the first look at a group of Flyers players in the film "This is 40," the latest from director Judd Apatow ("The 40-Year-Old Virgin," "Knocked Up")

In the back row is James van Riemsdyk, Matt Carle and Ian Laperriere, and that's Scott Hartnell on the right.

The guys play hockey players in the movie who party with Megan Fox and Leslie Mann.

They also play around with Laperriere's false teeth. Lappy told us after filming the movie that he had put off dental surgery in order to shoot the movie.

Hartnell and Laperriere will attend an invite-only screening Tuesday night at the Ritz Five where Apatow will have a Q&A session hosted by 93.3 WMMR's Casey Foster of the Preston and Steve show.

The film opens in theaters Dec. 21.

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.28.2012

644955 Philadelphia Flyers

Fan: Boycott opener if NHL returns

A Flyers season-ticket holder wants fans to boycott the home opener if the NHL ever returns from its labor war.

"Whether it's this year or next year, the first game back should be in an empty Wells Fargo Center," said Bill O'Toole.

He said it would serve as "a protest to what the league and the players have put us through. It would be a national story and a fitting 'final word' put on the debacle by the fans, the ones who write the checks for the billions of dollars these two sides can't seem to divide."

O'Toole claimed he has received lots of support from other season-ticket holders on his idea, and he is hopeful it spreads around the league.

Your thoughts?

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.28.2012

644956 Philadelphia Flyers

NHL Notes: Gudbranson hurt shoulder wakeboarding

Staff

Panthers defenseman Erik Gudbranson opened up about the shoulder injury that he suffered in September and he wasn't completely honest to the Panthers about how the incident occurred.

According to the Miami Herald (via ProHockeyTalk), Gudbranson injured his shoulder while wakeboarding on a lake in Ontario. He originally said he hurt himself training.

As a result of admitting that he injured himself in non-hockey activities, Gudbranson lost his right to a paycheck during the lockout.

"I wasn't hurt playing hockey. I have learned from my mistakes," Gudbranson said. "I needed to be honest with them. The players have been transparent during the lockout and I felt it was my duty to the Panthers to be transparent and honest with them. I hurt myself and it was unfortunate. I learned something the hard way. But I'm everything I can to get back on the ice."

Gudbranson was the Panthers' 2010 first-round pick (third overall) and entered last season as the team's top defensive prospect, according to Hockey Prospectus.

The 6-foot-5, 210-pound blue liner registered two goals and eight points in 72 games last season with the Panthers, his first professional season.

Smith signs in Danish league

As the NHL and NHLPA agreed to bring in a mediator to try to smooth things out (see story), some players continue to sign overseas.

Senators center Zach Smith signed with the Frederikshavn White Hawks in the Danish league, according to the team's official website (via ProHockeyTalk).

The 24-year-old signed on a recommendation from his Senators teammate Peter Regin, who used to play with Herning of the AL-Bank Ligaen. He's the second Senator to join the Danish league during the lockout. Colin Greening is playing with Aalborg.

Smith had a career season last year with Ottawa in which he set careerhighs in games played (81), goals (14), assists (12) and points (26).

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.28.2012

644957 Philadelphia Flyers

Actually, Doan was very close to becoming a Flyer

Staff

How close was Shane Doan to becoming a Flyer? Close enough for the organization to mock up a couple jerseys for the 36-year-old forward: one with No. 18, another with No. 91.

And, apparently, close enough for his agent, Terry Bross, to post a photo of the sweaters hanging in the Flyers' locker room at Skate Zone on Instagram with the caption, "So glad this didn't happen. It came close though." (No. 19, which Doan wears in Phoenix, is currently owned by Scott Hartnell here in Philadelphia.)

It appears Bross, using the screen name "tpbross", posted that photo on Sept. 15, a day before the NHL locked out its players and a day after Doan re-signed with the Coyotes. A source with the Flyers said the team did in fact create the Doan sweaters "months ago," but that it's not uncommon for them to make jerseys for potential players.

Bross did not return calls for comment.

Remember, if you will, that Doan visited the Flyers (as well as a handful of other East Coast teams) back in July, shortly after the Flyers tendered that now-notorious offer sheet to Nashville Predators defenseman Shea Weber.

Reports in August, however, suggested it was the Buffalo Sabres who offered Doan the lucrative four-year, \$30 million deal that Bross had discussed in the media earlier during the summer. But photos don't lie: Apparently, the Flyers did come close to luring Doan away from the organization that's been his home for his entire NHL career.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.28.2012

644958 Phoenix Coyotes

Ice Den hosting week-long camp for locked-out NHL players

By SARAH MCLELLAN

The Ice Den in Scottsdale has been the lockout destination for many Coyotes players, but now they've recruited some of their peers from around the league to participate in training sessions this week.

About 30 players are practicing and scrimmaging against each other. Only a handful of players will skate on Wednesday, but the entire group -- which has been split up into two teams -- will be back on the ice Thursday and Friday. Penguins star Sidney Crosby is expected to join the skates at the end of the week

"Word's getting out it's a pretty good spot to be during this time," Coyotes captain Shane Doan said.

Other participants include Sabres goalie Ryan Miller, Sharks forward Patrick Marleau, Leafs defenseman Mike Komisarek, Oilers defenseman Ryan Whitney, Red Wings forward Daniel Cleary, Sabres forward Steve Ott and Stars forward Brendan Morrow. Former Coyotes Ray Whitney (Stars) and Adrian Aucoin (Blue Jackets) are also here.

A large number of Coyotes players, including defensemen Keith Yandle and Zbynek Michalek, forward Steve Sullivan and goalie Mike Smith, are also on hand.

Expect to see defenseman David Schlemko join these sessions in the near future.

The Arizona Sundogs, a Central Hockey League affiliate of the Coyotes, announced on Tuesday that Schlemko has taken a leave of absence from the team to return to Phoenix.

Schlemko played 14 games with the Sundogs during the lockout, chipping in three goals and seven assists.

"We have enjoyed having Dave play with us thus far and he has been a role model for some of our younger guys on the team," coach David Lohrei said.

Glendale City Council is expected to vote tonight on whether or not it approves a revised lease agreement with potential buyer Greg Jamison.

The meeting starts at 7 p.m.., but there are a couple agenda items scheduled before this one.

Here is what happened at a recent workshop when city council debated the reworked lease agreement, which is now a 20-year, \$320 million agreement -- down from the \$324 million deal discussed earlier this year.

Interim City Manager Horatio Skeete helped renegotiate this deal but he wouldn't recommend that council approve it. In the past, a majority of council has supported the agreement.

While the City of Glendale continues to work on an ownership resolution for the Coyotes, the NHL and its players are still mired in a labor dispute.

The most recent development in the almost three-month saga is the inclusion of federal mediation. All three parties are expected to meet Wednesday.

Here is USA Today's story on the news.

It's important to note that a mediator can't force a deal to be negotiated. The presence can merely help steer the NHL and NHLPA toward an agreement.

Doan's reaction to mediation: "I want to do everything we can to get the game back. Players, we're as big as fans as there is of the game. We've given our lives to play it, to do it. So we care about the game, and we want to get it back going."

Sarah Baicker, a Comcast SportsNet Philadelphia Flyers reporter, had this story today about how close Doan was to becoming a Flyer.

Apparently, the team had two jerseys made -- one with the No.91 and the other with No.18.

Arizona Republic LOADED: 11.28.2012

644959 Pittsburgh Penguins

Presence of mediator not inspiring optimism for NHL lockout

By Josh Yohe

News that the NHL and its Players' Association have agreed to consult with mediators did not generate much optimism among the Penguins who skated at Southpointe on Tuesday.

In fact, it barely produced a reaction.

"I don't know if it's going to make much of a difference," Penguins player representative Craig Adams said. "Hopefully, it can't hurt."

The Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service is set to oversee negotiations between the league and union beginning Wednesday. Primary issues dividing the league and union include annual revenue split, money to honor current contracts and other contractual issues.

NHL owners locked players out Sept. 15. Since then, little progress has been made in negotiations while the threat of a second lost season in eight years has become real.

"I don't want to get too excited about any of this," Penguins captain Sidney Crosby said. "But if this is something that will at least get both sides talking every day, I guess it's a good thing."

The NHL and union are slated to meet Wednesday at an undisclosed location, both sides have confirmed. The Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service will not comment on negotiations going forward.

There has been an undercurrent among NHL players that league owners aren't interested in speeding the negotiating process along.

Adams suggested that, unless the league is legitimately hungry to make a deal in time to save the season, the presence of a mediator is irrelevant.

He also seemed only slightly more than dismissive about any notion that a mediator will move things along.

"From what I understand," Adams said, "it's just someone who can try to facilitate dialogue and maybe find some areas of compromise.

"It's not like an arbitrator where they can make a decision. I don't even think they'll make recommendations. But I don't know the ins and outs."

He does know one thing for certain.

"The way it was expressed to me," said Adams, "is that a skilled mediator can be very helpful in negotiations. But only if both sides are motivated to make a deal."

Josh Yohe is a staff writer for Trib Total Media.

Tribune Review LOADED: 11.28.2012

644960 Pittsburgh Penguins

NHL labor: Mediators presence spurs some optimism

By Dave Molinari / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Craig Adams knows that introducing federal mediators to the talks for a new collective bargaining agreement in the NHL could be critical to ending the lockout that has shuttered the league for 2 1/2 months.

That bringing fresh eyes and ears and thoughts to the negotiations could help both sides find common ground that had been overlooked previously, could help to generate traction where there has been only spinning wheels and frustration.

But he also realizes that mediation comes with no guarantees, that the NHL won't necessarily be lifted out of suspended animation simply because some new faces turn up at the bargaining table.

Which is why Adams, like most of the Penguins he serves as player representative, is cautiously optimistic, at best, that adding mediators to the mix will have a positive impact.

"I don't know that it's going to make much of a difference," Adams said after a player-organized workout Tuesday at Southpointe. "But, hopefully, it can't burt"

Optimists like to cite the numerous examples of mediators helping to bring about agreements in labor disputes that had seemed to be hopelessly stalemated.

Pessimists counter by noting that back in the winter of 2004-05, mediators got involved in the negotiations for a new CBA -- just days before a season was canceled.

And realists point out that it is management and labor, not any outside party, that will determine whether mediation was an inspired addition or simply another sideshow in a dispute that has had no shortage of them.

"The way it was expressed to me, a skilled mediator can be very helpful in negotiations, but only if both sides are motivated to make a deal," Adams said

"There have been instances where [mediation] helped, but both sides have to be motivated to do a deal.

"And, if they're not, it doesn't matter what the mediator says."

Mediation, he noted, is non-binding, which means that neither the owners nor the players can have any terms imposed upon them.

Consequently, salvaging at least a portion of the 2012-13 season still will hinge on either one side collapsing or both compromising.

Adding a third party to the talks is intended to make the latter more likely.

"To get a different opinion, I think, is great," center Sidney Crosby said. "The more that they're in the room talking, the better it is.

"I'm a big believer that if you want to get something done, that you stay in a room, figure it out and keep talking.

"When you have those lulls in talks, nothing's going to get accomplished that way. This is good, I think."

The most daunting challenge for the mediators will be to get the parties to agree on how to divide hockey-related related revenues, but other issues ranging from the length and structure of contracts to the finer points of free agency figure to be difficult to work out, as well.

"What [the negotiators] are hoping -- what I'm hoping -- is that [mediation] will spark conversation in a new direction," defenseman Matt Niskanen said.

"Maybe just a different train of thought from one side or the other. Or, hopefully, both. And we can move toward a deal from there."

Imposing as some of the current issues appear to be, some players feel the hurdles to a deal were greater eight years ago.

"Hopefully it's a little easier than it was then," he said. "You were talking about redoing a whole [salary] structure.

"There was a lot of complicated things there. I think right now, it's just dollars."

And, ultimately, it is the owners and players, not the mediators, who must determine whether there is an equitable way to share them and to resolve the numerous other differences.

"At the end of the day, we still have to make a decision, or they have to make a decision," left winger Matt Cooke said.

"The mediators can only suggest what they think is best."

NOTES -- Agent Pat Brisson confirmed that Crosby is "at a point of making a decision" about whether to go to Europe because of the lockout and said that "we got calls from pretty much every league and/or [country]" expressing interest in signing him. Brisson added that while teams are not balking at paying for Crosby's insurance, it is not possible to cover all 13 seasons remaining on his contracts with the Penguins. ... Niskanen said he doesn't plan to explore playing possibilities in Europe in the near future and likely not until after the NHL season would be canceled.

Post Gazette LOADED: 11.28.2012

644961 Pittsburgh Penguins

Penguins coach Dan Bylsma gets in practice

By Shelly Anderson / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

WHEELING, W.Va. -- After a restless day in the Penguins offices Monday, coach Dan Bylsma decided to jump aboard Tuesday when assistant Todd Reirden and development coach Bill Guerin made an hour's drive to attend practice with the club's ECHL affiliate, the Wheeling Nailers.

No word on whether Bylsma called shotgun, but he certainly was enthused about getting on the ice with a hockey team during the NHL lockout.

"I've been stagnant a little bit, so to come down and be around hockey, be around the coaches here, the players here is something I wanted to do," Bylsma said after what stretched to a 21/2-hour practice in which he, Reirden and Guerin helped with drills and offered a lot of one-on-one instruction.

"I'm not very good at not working," Bylsma, a high-energy sort, said. "The summertime is too long. You want to get back then. Without work, you get antsv."

With no practices or games -- or even contact -- with the Penguins on the NHL roster, Bylsma and others in management have done what they can to be prepared for a shortened season should there be a deal struck between the league and the NHL Players' Association.

They have gone over some things more than once. They have looked every which way at how a training camp might play out.

"The past told us that it might be maybe 11 days from the time a deal was done until the first game," Bylsma said.

"In the past, there were four days of getting people back to a city, then six days of practice. We've done [plans for] a seven-day camp, we've done a six-day camp, we've done a five-day camp. We did that awhile ago. We've done one that comes back Friday through Friday, one that comes back Monday through Friday -- different days depending on the ice [availability], the American Hockey League [schedule], lots of different things."

Post Gazette LOADED: 11.28.2012

644962 San Jose Sharks

San Jose Sharks ticket refunds come slowly

By David Pollak

SAN JOSE -- That first refund from the Sharks after the lockout-forced cancellation of 16 regular season and three preseason games through Dec. 14 isn't likely to soothe many fans.

That's because the first check comes to 1.8 percent of the 70 percent of the season most season-ticket holders have paid for to this point.

For example, a fan with two \$80 seats in the lower bowl using the installment plan paid 70 percent, or \$4,928 of the \$7,040 total cost of season tickets, before the team stopped collecting final payments with the lockout pending. That fan will be getting back \$88.70.

In an email sent to season-ticket holders Tuesday, the Sharks also noted that it would take two weeks to process and mail out November refunds to those who paid by check, pushing their actual arrival inside the mailbox to mid-December.

Though four more games already have been canceled for next month, the team only is giving refunds on a month-by-month basis in case a labor agreement is reached and more games are added to the December schedule.

Using the team's formula, 31.8 percent of the season has been canceled through the end of November, or 1.8 percent more than the Sharks declined to collect.

Season-ticket holders who paid the full 100 percent have been receiving monthly refunds since the lockout began Sept. 15.

San Jose Mercury News: LOADED: 11.28.2012

644963 San Jose Sharks

San Francisco Bulls fill a need for hockey-starved fans

By David Pollak

DALY CITY -- David Claudio provides a short answer when asked why he made the 44-mile drive from San Jose to the Cow Palace for a minor league hockey game.

"Withdrawal," said Claudio, wearing his Sharks jersey as he celebrated his 28th birthday at a San Francisco Bulls game with his wife and another couple last weekend. Later he elaborates: "It's pretty rough. Hockey was a routine for me and when that went away it left a hole."

The NHL lockout, of course, is what disrupted Claudio's routine, and with one-third of the Sharks season canceled, he and other fans can find themselves in need of a hockey fix. For them, the Bulls are part East Coast Hockey League expansion team and part methadone clinic.

During

Stockton forward Kristians Pelss carries the puck around the back of the net with Bulls left wing Marek Viedensky iin pursuit during San Francisco's 6-3 victory over the Thunger on Saturday night.

the 2004-05 NHL lockout, the closest pro hockey to San Jose was the nowdefunct Fresno Falcons. Since then, the ECHL added a team in Stockton and now another in the building where the Sharks skated their first two seasons.

Minor league sports in a major league area can be risky, but so far the Bulls seem to be making a go of it.

Attendance for the first nine home games has averaged 4,597 -- about 50 percent above the minimum owner-coach Pat Curcio says he needs for financial viability in a building whose down-sized capacity is 8,277.

"It seems like a minimal number, but 4,000 in this building is loud and they're energetic," said Curcio, whose team is 8-10-0-2 overall, but 7-3 at home. "I think you'll see more fans if we

continue to win, but there's a loyal base there now, win or lose."

Individual game tickets range from \$14.25 to \$41, far less than what the Sharks charge. And a night at the Cow Palace differs from one at HP Pavilion in other ways as well.

Fans can spend \$1 to throw a foam rubber puck on the ice between periods with the hopes of winning \$150 and a team jersey if it lands on the bullseye. Unlike the Sharks, the Bulls have hired "ice girls" -- though the "Cow Belles" attire is more modest than the bare-midriff look favored in many arenas.

A video that uses San Francisco scenes to introduce the team is first class, but the pubic address announcer needs to learn that the Massachusetts city of Worcester is pronounced Woo-stah and not WOR-chester, and ex-Shark Setoguchi's first name is DEV-in, not de-VON.

The Bulls have had a few growing pains on the ice as well. They lost six straight on a nine-game trip before rebounding with five wins in their last six, all at home.

Two separate Shark connections get much credit for the turnaround.

The Bulls are a San Jose affiliate and five prospects who weren't getting ice time in Worcester are now on the San Francisco roster. In addition, NHL forward Ryane Clowe is both practicing with the team and serving as an assistant coach during games.

"Ryane's been awesome," said Curcio, who also serves as the Bulls general manager. "His work ethic in practice makes everyone else better."

Behind the bench Clowe, strangely, is responsible for the defense -- "It's weird because I'm always screaming at the D during the year and now I'm defending 'em" -- and earning high marks from players.

"He almost simplified how we were taught to play," said Bulls captain Justin Bowers, a 27-year-old forward with his fourth ECHL team. "That helped a lot. Guys are in the right spots now."

Those guys include goalies Thomas Heemskerk and Taylor Nelson, forwards Marek Viedensky and Mikael Tam, and

Three Sharks prospects, from left, Mikael Tam, goalie Thomas Heemskerk and Marek Viedensky helped the Bulls win their fourth consecutive game Saturday night, a 6-3 win over the Stockton Thunder.

defenseman Daniil Tarasov -- the five prospects squeezed out of jobs in Worcester, the Sharks' top development team.

Playing close to San Jose means young players get a closer to look from the Sharks front office. Assistant general manager Wayne Thomas watched Friday night's 5-1 victory over the Ontario Reign.

"It's been very convenient," said Thomas, who doubles as one of two Sharks goalie coaches. "The proximity of being able to work with them (goalies) also is of great benefit."

Heemskerk was named ECHL netminder of the week Tuesday, but Viedensky has had the biggest impact on the scoresheet with four goals and 10 points in six games. In Worcester he was odd-man-out as the NHL lockout meant 17 forwards were competing for 12 jobs.

"I had a feeling I might play here," said Viedensky, 22, a second-year pro from Slovakia who was San Jose's seventh-round pick in 2009. "When I came here it was kind of tough going from nothing to playing three games in a row, but I survived."

Back-to-back games are common in the minors. And because ECHL teams are limited to three forward lines -- not four like the NHL -- it can be extra taxing.

Fewer forwards was one difference fans would notice between the NHL and ECHL, said Clowe, who has stopped short of playing with the Bulls at least in part because he would be risking injury in his contract year.

What else is noticeably different?

"The biggest thing is speed and how quick players make decisions," Clowe said. "You get six defensemen in the NHL and they're all bang-bang, they know what's going on right away. Things probably happen a little slower here."

Still, Sharks fan Claudio and his friend, Brad Helfenberger, weren't complaining.

"Minor league prices, minor league game," Helfenberger, 29, said. "It's cool."

San Jose Mercury News: LOADED: 11.28.2012

644964 St Louis Blues

Gordon: NHL shutdown raises hard questions

By Jeff Gordon

Blues Talk: Fans sound off about the lockout

Federal mediators ask a lot of questions while trying to resolve a labor dispute. They try to cut through all the posturing, assess the bottom line differences between the two sides and propose ways to bridge those gaps.

Now that the NHL and the NHLPA have agreed to allow such third-party assistance, your cyber-correspondent offers up some potential questions for the two sides:

QUESTIONS FOR OWNERS

- Do you really believe that shutting down the league every few years is a sound business model? Did you steal this strategy from the good folks at McDonald's, who tease us by giving us the McRib and then taking it away over and over again?
- Do you realize that only a small percentage of Americans have even noticed NHL games are not occurring?
- Rather than demand all wholesale rollbacks on player contracting rights, why not weigh player contracts on a case-by-case basis and only pay players what they are really worth?

- Rather than demand a collective bargaining agreement designed to protect yourselves against yourselves, why don't you learn to say "no" to excessive salary demands?
- When the players hired Donald Fehr to drive these negotiations, what is it about "they won't cave easily" that you didn't understand? Did you not Google his name to see what he has done in his career?
- Do you realize that modern professional athletes are your partners, not your employees?
- If the league is in grave financial shape, why were you guys signing players to eight-digit contracts right up to the moment you locked them out?
- Why would one of you trumpet the signing of Ryan Suter and Zach Parise to 13-year, \$98 million contracts if there was no intention to actually honor those deals in full?
- Did agent Rich Winter hold somebody at gunpoint to get that nine-year, \$51 million contract for client Ilya Bryzgalov?
- What sort of imbecile would give Jeff Carter an 11-year, \$58 million contract? And how could two other teams later take on that contract via trades?
- Have you people ever heard of Jimmy Carson?
- · How is that 15-year contract for Rick DiPietro working out?

QUESTIONS FOR PLAYERS

- Doesn't history tell you that owners will quickly circumvent whatever CBA restrictions they beat out of you? Don't you understand that they will resume overspending ASAP?
- While your loathing of commissioner Gary Bettman is completely understandable, are you really willing to sacrifice millions of your own dollars to wipe that smirk off his face?
- Are you aware that a lot of you will never play another NHL game if this season is lost?
- How many of you actually inspire casual fans to buy tickets for a particular game? Does that number fall between zero and five?
- Do you remember that your games ended up on a rodeo channel after ESPN low-balled the league?
- Do you realize that most Americans can afford to eat at Morton's once or twice a year, not after every hockey game?
- Do you realize that a typical supporting cast NHL veteran earns enough in one year to provide lifetime financial security for a working class family?
- While Zurich is far more scenic than Winnipeg, do you realize that most European teams pay a fraction of the going NHL rate?
- Do you really want to roll the dice on Russian airline safety? Do you understand that nobody regulates anything in that country?
- How many of you would be working in a sawmill or on a wind farm if you couldn't play hockey?

While some of these questions may seem harsh, a mediator's job is to cut to the chase. They enter the scene when the two sides are overdue to get real.

Mediation often works. At the very least it forces the sides to re-think their positions and ponder whether self-destruction is the intelligent course.

That is the big question both sides must consider.

St Louis Post Dispatch LOADED: 11.28.2012

644965 Tampa Bay Lightning

Lightning prospect Brown opening more eyes

By ERIK ERLENDSSON | The Tampa Tribune

These days, J.T. Brown takes a peek over his shoulder and likes seeing Syracuse coach Jon Cooper behind him instead of standing behind the opposing bench.

While Brown, a prized college free agent signed by the Lightning out of Minnesota-Duluth last season, was lighting it up for Waterloo in the United States Hockey League, Cooper was coaching the Green Bay Gamblers. During Brown's two years in Waterloo, his team lost 16 of the 18 matchups against Green Bay, which included a pair of three-game playoff sweeps.

"We were a good team, we just never could figure out how to beat him," Brown said. "But it just goes to show that he's a good coach. He was a winner at junior, he's a winner, and obviously what he did last year (winning an AHL championship), you have to be a pretty good coach do that at two different levels."

Brown figured to make the jump from college straight to the NHL this year after fitting in with the Lightning during a five-game showcase at the end of last season.

But with the NHL mired in a lockout, Brown's first professional season started this year in Syracuse. He is coming off his first hat trick as a pro after scoring goals on his first two shifts Sunday against Worcester before capping his three-goal, four-point performance with a goal late in the third in a 6-1 Crunch victory.

The Burnsville, Minn., native said he is starting to adapt to the way the game is played at the professional level.

"I felt a lot of times in college that a lot of it would be a track meet, and it is a lot more systems involved here," Brown said. "The main thing to me was just making sure you stay with the system. If you do the right things on defense it's going to go to offense."

Brown was slowed at the start of the season with a minor injury that cost him four games, but the 22-year-old winger has started to pick up his game.

"He's done a really good job so far after practice and doing little things and stuff like that just kind of guiding me and making me sure that I'm playing the game the way he needs me to play," Brown said of Cooper. "It is a little bit of a learning curve, obviously, coming to a new coach in a different style, but I definitely like our coaching staff. I think that we have one of the best, probably I'd say the best, in the league."

As Brown has started to become accustomed to life in the pro ranks, Cooper is becoming accustomed to seeing a different type of player than he saw back when the two were adversaries in the USHL. Back then, Brown was a top-line player expected to score using primarily his speed and skill, but he now has an element to his game Cooper never had the chance to

"I completely underestimated him, because the parts that I am really noticing now — him being fearless, being first in corners, all of those sorts of things — he did not have those elements when I coached against him," Cooper said. "To me, he was just an open-ice player, and he was a good one, but again I just didn't know he had those other intangibles to his game, and that is what really has impressed me."

During his four-game absence from the lineup, Brown sat and watched games with Syracuse video coach Brian Garlock, which helped him understand the system better and gave him a better perspective on the way Cooper wants the team to play.

"He was very ready to adapt, so that's what I really liked about what he did," Cooper said. "And then you couple in there that he's a really gutty kid, he's fearless when he goes out there, he doesn't go into corners and pull up. I think that was the part that you really say "Wow, there's going to be some light at the end if the tunnel for this kid."

Tampa Tribune LOADED: 11.28.2012

644966 Tampa Bay Lightning

Lightning's St. Louis still in Tampa as NHL lockout drags on

By ERIK ERLENDSSON | The Tampa Tribune

BRANDON --Marty St. Louis and the current state of NHL labor talks have something in common – neither is going anywhere soon.

While St. Louis had a self-imposed deadline of Thanksgiving before heading to Europe to play during the league-imposed lockout, the veteran forward said on Monday he has no intentions of heading overseas at this

"It's tough right now," St. Louis said after a gathering of 10 players held a workout at the Ice Sports Forum. "I'm baffled that we are where we are."

In addition, Lightning all-star center Steven Stamkos has no intentions of heading to Europe at this time, his agent, Mark Guy, confirmed on Monday, and will continue to workout in his hometown near Toronto.

The NHL locked out its players on Sept. 16, when the collective bargaining agreement with the NHL Players' Association expired. The league canceled all games through Dec. 14 – more than one-third of the season – plus the Winter Classic outdoor game and All-Star weekend, both in January.

The sides have not talked since Wednesday, but on Monday federal mediators entered the stalled negotiations.

St. Louis, 37, has said since September he needed to play in games to maintain his conditioning and timing, so he could be ready to go whenever the NHL season begins. Having a consistent group of players — upwards of 10 or more — to workout with on the ice three times a week in town has helped in that process, even if it doesn't come close to replicating game speed or full practices.

"That's why you need a good week of work before we start," St. Louis said. "But whenever we do start, and I don't care what you did all summer, when you get into getting hit, it takes you about two weeks to catch up. But once you get into games, it's like (the snap of a finger). It comes back, so I'm not too worried about that."

"And (working out in Brandon) is better than nothing."

Unless the league cancels the remainder of the season, St. Louis could remain in town.

"It's very possible," he said. "Because if you do the math (on CBA negotiations) it's not that far apart."

Tampa Bay captain Vinny Lecavalier, who will also remain in town instead of looking to pay in Europe, hopes there is a breakthrough soon, but said some movement needs to come from the league. Lecavalier and St. Louis sat in on negotiations in New York last week.

"With how proactive (the players) are, it's the opposite with them," Lecavalier said. "It's like negotiating with yourself. But we'll see what the week brings. I still like to think that there is reason to be optimistic.

"And it's tougher times now, especially after last week, but everything that we have offered and everything that we have done, it would be ridiculous not to start the season."

Tampa Tribune LOADED: 11.28.2012 644967 Toronto Maple Leafs

NHL lockout: Locked-out Leafs, Wings, other NHLers to play in charity game in Windsor

Kevin McGran

It won't be Maple Leafs vs. Red Wings, but there will be NHLers playing hockey in southern Ontario this December. Guaranteed.

The NHL Players' Association is helping organize a charity game in Windsor on Dec. 8, a game featuring mostly Leafs, Red Wings, Windsor Spitfire alumni and players who make their home in and around Windsor.

The game will be played at the WCFU Centre, home of the OHL Windsor Spitfires supporting Sparkles From Above, a foundation that assists children with cancer.

Steve Ott, Dan Cleary and Shawn Horcoff are spearheading the game that will include Leafs defenceman Mike Komisarek and forward Matthew Lombardi. Former Leafs Jamal Mayers, Ian White, Kyle Wellwood and Jonas Gustavsson will also participate.

Red Wings are well represented with Todd Bertuzzi, Justin Abdelkader, Jimmy Howard, Johan Franzen, Niklas Kronwall, Jonathan Ericsson, Darren Helm and Cory Emmerton expected to play.

Other NHLers expected to participate include Ryan Wilson, James Neal, Keith Yandle, Brenden Morrow, Thomas Vanek, Matt Martin, Adam Burish, Matt Ellis, Vern Fiddler, Tom Gilbert, Jordan Leopold, Nick Schultz, Kevin Westgarth, James Wisniewski and Michael Leighton.

The game will be standard hockey play with three 20 minute periods.

Organizers say the game is subject to cancellation if the NHL and NHLPA reach an agreement with players prior to 5 p.m., Dec. 6.

Tickets are \$41.75 for reserved seating and a special family of four package price of \$137.00

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.27.2012

644968 Toronto Maple Leafs

NHL lockout: League, union must be sincere about U.S. mediation

Michael Traikos

NHL lockout forces cancellation of All-Star Game and more

The NHL lockout has claimed 96 more regular-season games and the 2013 All-Star Game in Columbus.

The latest round of cancellations from the league was widely expected after collective bargaining talks earlier in the week failed to produce a new agreement.

All games through Dec. 14 have now been taken off the schedule. Nationwide Arena in Columbus had been scheduled to host the All-Star Game for the first time on Jan. 27.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement Friday. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL all-star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

Read more...

Are Gary Bettman and Donald Fehr finally willing to park their egos and end the lockout?

That will be the key question after the NHL and the players' association decided to welcome the offer of help from a mediator to cut through the nonsense of this ongoing labour battle. On one hand, allowing an independent third-party into the collective bargaining negotiations could mean that both sides recognize their stubbornness and are finally serious about saving some of the season. On the other, it could mean that Bettman and Fehr merely want to give the impression that they are serious.

In other words, this smells like another public-relations game. Who's playing it? We don't know. Maybe both are. After all, an hour after the Federal Mediation and Coalition Service issued a news release announcing its involvement, another statement was issued to announce that one of the mediators assigned to the negotiation process had been removed because of allegations that his Twitter account had been "allegedly" hacked.

"In order to immediately dispel any cloud on the mediation process, and without regard to the merits of the allegations, I have determined to take immediate action, namely to remove Commissioner [Guy] Serota from this assignment," FMCS director George H. Cohen said in the statement.

It was just another footnote in this drama. We've been down this road before, having endured countless artificial deadlines, leaks to the press and accusations. Each time it has led to a dead-end.

In February 2005, a mediator was brought on as a last resort to help solve the stalemate. Shortly after, NHL commissioner Bettman cancelled the season.

"Without knowing what's going to go on behind those closed doors, this could all be a show," said George Smith, a Queen's University professor who has negotiated labour deals for major companies such as Air Canada and CP Rail. "It also could mean that they've acknowledged that they've burned some bridges and they need some help to get past some of the angry words and gestures that have been made in the last little while.

"The cynical side of me says maybe this is to indicate to fans that they trying everything and not giving each other the finger."

The best-case scenario is that when both sides meet this week, mediation cuts through the noise and helps each side recognize the other's arguments. A mediator is not an arbitrator. He or she will not stand in the middle as Bettman and Fehr lob grenades at one another and then make a ruling that either side will have to live with. The FMCS will work privately with each side and try to get both to a place where a resolution can take place, or what Smith calls a "zone of potential agreement."

"The cynical side of me says maybe this is to indicate to fans they trying everything and not giving each other the finger."

The one caveat is that both sides have to buy into the process. For Bettman and Fehr, that is no small feat.

"Depending on how aggressive the mediators are, they will suggest where the dots should go or push each side to recognize the weakness of their particular case and why they should consider what the other side is saying," Smith said. "But let's not kid ourselves. Neither Fehr nor Bettman is going to sign anything to please a mediator. They aren't going to sign anything that they can't live with. But if they really want the mediation to be successful, then yes, they have to at least agree to the process that the mediator will put into place."

At the end of the day, a mediator is like a fan: his No. 1 focus is for a quick resolution. In that aim, both might be disappointed.

"A mediator doesn't care if you give away the farm," Smith said. "But if the parties don't want to agree, a mediator can't help that."

National Post LOADED: 11.27.2012

644969 Toronto Maple Leafs

NHL lockout leaves the old guys behind

Sean McIndoe

As the lockout continues to drag on, some pessimistic fans have already started wondering which players may not return if the 2012-13 season is cancelled. If the NHL and NHLPA can't figure out a way to make a deal and save the season, we may have seen the last of popular veterans such as Teemu Selanne, Martin Brodeur, and Daniel Alfredsson.

Hockey fans have been through this before. When the 2004-05 season was cancelled, it cost fans the chance to see one more year from several hockey legends. Here's a look back at some of star players whose careers were cut short the last time the NHL scrapped an entire season.

Adam Oates: Retired after the lockout but attempted a brief comeback in 2009, we assume, since that's the only logical way to explain a guy with 1,400 career points not making the Hall of Fame until this year.

Al MacInnis: Decided to use some downtime during the last lockout to try out his slapshot with one of those fancy modern superflex sticks, at which point he was immediately kidnapped by government scientists who used him to power the Large Hadron Collider.

Ron Francis: Was so well-respected during his long career with the Whalers, Penguins and Hurricanes that some fans paid tribute to him upon retirement by creating bizarre Photoshops of him wearing a Maple Leafs uniform for some reason.

Peter Forsberg The lockout was almost an entire year long, so let's face it, he probably retired at least a half dozen times when nobody was paying attention.

Mark Messier: Is perhaps best remembered for flashing a huge grin as he was being handed the 1994 Stanley Cup, since it was the last time in history that an NHL player would ever smile near Gary Bettman.

Brett Hull: Actually attempted a brief post-lockout comeback with the Phoenix Coyotes that lasted just five games, during which he recorded zero goals and showed he was clearly no longer capable of playing at a professional level without embarrassing himself – or, as it was known until last year, "The biggest success story in Phoenix Coyotes history."

Cliff Ronning: Retired after a 17-year career that was almost but not quite long enough for you to stop constantly mixing him up with Craig Janney.

Adrian Aucoin: The classy veteran refuses to allow himself to be included with the other legends whose careers ended during the lockout, modestly saying things like "I actually didn't retire in 2004" and "No seriously, I'm still playing today, why do you keep patting me on the head when I say that?"

Felix Potvin: Retired in order to spend more time with his family beating up members of Ron Hextall's family.

Arturs Irbe: At 37 years old and after nearly 1,000 NHL and international games, Irbe's original set of goaltending equipment disintegrated so he figured he might as well retire too.

Scott Stevens: Announced his retirement at a news conference that consisted entirely of him saying, "So it's 2005 and we all still agree that blindside hits to the head that cause concussions are awesome, right? OK, super, I'll just be leaving now, no need to ever mention any of this again."

Roman Hamrlik: Oh wait, that's the guy who's never going to be seen again after this lockout, according to the group of player ominously cracking their knuckles right now in his driveway.

National Post LOADED: 11.27.2012

644970 Vancouver Canucks

Draft depth will become vital for Canucks

Ben Kuzma

The Vancouver Canucks regional scout convinced his peers there was enough potential in the mobile defenceman to invest a fifth-round commitment at the 2011 NHL draft.

Judging by Corrado's rapid development as captain of the Sudbury Wolves — rocketing from virtual unknown to being among top OHL blueliners and gaining world junior tournament roster consideration — the eventual payoff for the Canucks couldn't come at a more opportune time.

With the salary-cap ceiling expected to be lower once a new collective bargaining agreement is struck, it's imperative the Canucks draft well and get those players in the NHL on entry-level deals.

Corrado is just 19 but played in six games for the Chicago Wolves when his junior season ended and didn't look out of place. This season, the 6-foot-2, 191 poundToronto native scored the winning goal as Team OHL beat Russia in a Super Series clash and has 19 points in 27 games on a last-place team.

"We put him in the AHL to show he could play at that level," Canucks general manager Mike Gillis said Tuesday.

"We're continuing to push him knowing full well that he could step in and play at the American League right now. I don't think he's realized his offensive potential yet, but he skates extremely well and is a very smart player who is doing nothing but growing."

The NHL has proposed a \$59.9 million US ceiling for the 2013-14 season after a \$70.2 million limit if this season is saved. The Canucks have 13 players signed for \$54.4 million next season, so outside of lowering their cap hit through a Roberto Luongo trade, the best way is to get younger faster.

The final year of Corrado's entry-level deal would have the defenceman earning \$575,000 at the NHL level in 2014-15. That's vital.

"It's important for every team, not just us," stressed Gillis. "One of the reasons you're seeing younger players in the league when they shouldn't be is because teams need enough players and if your scarce resources are tied up in older players, you have to have younger ones coming along.

"If we had started the season we would have had a minimum of three players, and maybe more, on entry-level contracts. We'll have to see with the CBA negotiations if that is going to change."

Jordan Schroeder, 22, and Kevin Connauton, 22, fall into the category of drafted players. Connauton is probably better served playing major minutes on the blueline with the Wolves rather than replacing Aaron Rome, while Schroeder will get his shot to fill the third-line centre vacancy with the Canucks

That leaves defenceman Chris Tanev, 22, as the other roster player on an entry-level contract, but he was signed as a free agent. First-round pick Nicklas Jensen, 19, could fall into the entry-level playing mode, but the winger is playing against men in Europe.

Gillis has been at the Canucks helm through five drafts and the only pick who proved he could play now at the NHL level was first-round selection Cody Hodgson, who was dealt to the Buffalo Sabres for winger Zack Kassian at the trade deadline last season.

That leaves the Canucks with seven drafted players on their projected 23-man roster, which includes noted late-round picks in winger Jannik Hansen (ninth round, 2004) and defenceman Kevin Bieksa (fifth round, 2001). Hansen played the final year of his entry-level contract in the NHL at \$500,000 and Bieksa played his last two in the bigs at that same price, including a 42-point session. So, will seven drafted players on the local NHL roster be sufficient?

"No, it's probably not enough," said Gillis. "Based on what was here when we arrived and with what we're trying to do with the players we have — it goes in ebbs and flows. There are non-playoff teams who have 12 to 14 drafted players."

The trick is to not miss with your first-round pick like the Canucks did in 2007 with centre Patrick White and in 2000 with centre Nathan Smith. And finding diamonds in the rough has never been more crucial.

"You've got to get them from somewhere and sometimes they evolve like a Frankie Corrado," said Gillis. "Palango really believed in his skill set and he projected well. You've got to get lucky, too."

Gillis is high on a number of his late picks as is hopeful that defenceman Peter Anderson (fifth round, 2009) and goaltender Joe Cannata (sixth round, 2009) can evolve into quality and affordable pros.

"Overall, I think we've done a pretty well," said Gillis.

Still, the Canucks are setting their sights higher. A common refrain from other scouting staffs is that two players they select in any draft who wind up playing anywhere in the NHL constitutes a good year.

"We strive for a much higher rate of efficiency than that," said Canucks assistant general manager and head of amateur scouting Laurence Gilman.

Vancouver Province: LOADED: 11.27.2012

644971 Washington Capitals

NHL lockout: As work stoppage drags on, fans, and the league's business partners, might not return

By Katie Carrera,

After the lockout that led to the cancellation of the entire 2004-05 season, the NHL set about re-branding itself. Apologies were offered to fans, along with assurances that the sport would be even better; marketing campaigns aimed to bring them back with their loyalty to the game as the message.

It was a large project to minimize damage done by the lost season. For the most part, fans and business partners came back and the league went on to record seven consecutive years of record revenues.

Personal Post

On Wednesday, the third NHL work stoppage in 20 years turns 74 days old, having already resulted in the cancellation of 422 regular season games through Dec. 14, the Winter Classic and the 2013 All-Star Game. The dispute centers on how to divide the league's revenue, which reached \$3.3 billion last season, while honoring existing contracts. Negotiations between

the league and players' union have been fruitless, and Monday the two sides agreed to meet with federal mediators.

Whether involving a neutral third party will help create traction remains to be seen, but as the lockout drags on, fans' loyalty to their sport is becoming a frayed trust.

"The league has become known for lying to its fans, to its sponsors," said Ed O'Hara, senior partner of New York-based SME Branding, which helped devise the strategy for the NHL eight years ago and still counts the league among its clients.

"I don't know how you come back from a prolonged stoppage a second time because it is unprecedented," O'Hara said. "Brands are built on promises. In this case, the promised experiences of seeing the greatest athletes in the world. That's all gone now."

Of the four major North American sports leagues, the NHL has lost more games to labor disputes in the past 20 years than any other at 2,120, including games axed from the current season. While hockey is known for having one of the most dedicated fan bases in all of professional sports, the frequency at which the NHL loses games to labor disputes is enough to dishearten even the diehards.

Justin Valentine, 27, grew up a Capitals fan in Prince George's County but his family could only afford to attend one or two games a year. He made purchasing season tickets a priority as soon as he could accommodate the costs as an adult and has plenty of fond memories – including proposing to his wife in the penalty box at Verizon Center — but the repeated lockouts have soured his outlook. He is considering giving up his tickets if the NHL loses another season.

"Never make someone a priority if they're only willing to make you an option," said Valentine, a tattoo artist in Severn and five-year season-ticket holder. "I feel like [Capitals owner] Ted [Leonsis] has made me an option, like he's taking fans for granted. Those thousands of dollars could easily go toward another expense for my family."

For many fans, feeling undervalued or marginalized by the labor dispute weighs into their decision as much as being able to budget the costs of tickets. Capitals' season ticket prices have increased each of the past five seasons; they were slated between \$30-345 per game for 2012-13.

"I feel I spend a great deal of my hard-earned money to see hockey being played. However, if [Leonsis] raises his price on us after this year, I think many people around me will be leaving this team," Travis Rechenbach, a seven-year season ticket holder, wrote in an e-mail. "No other sport has this much turmoil. It just doesn't make any sense!"

Vince Piperni of Alexandria works for the Department of Homeland Security and has had season tickets since 1998.

Personal Post

"We sat through the last lockout and actually moved to the front row of [Section] 408 as a 'reward' for staying through the fire sale, the last lockout and the painful Caps rebuilding process that followed," Piperni, 36, said. "But enough is enough."

The Capitals have approximately 14,000 season ticket holders and a waiting list of roughly 3,000. So far, there have been "very few" cancellations during the lockout, according to Monumental Sports and Entertainment spokesman Kurt Kehl, and any canceled tickets have been made available to those on the waiting list.

Given the current economic climate, along with eroding attention spans and vanishing goodwill, O'Hara believes that any approach taken to win back fans this time around will require more than simply thanking them for sticking with the NHL.

"There will have to be financial incentive for fans to come back, whether free tickets, events, products," O'Hara said. "However they do it, it's got to be authentic, real, and hit the wallet of the ticket buyer."

Fans aren't alone in feeling betrayed; companies that hold sponsorships and corporate ticket packages look to maximize the return on their investments. Sponsorship deals include relief clauses for the work stoppage, but that hardly addresses the full concerns of business partners.

In early November, Molson Coors CEO Peter Swinburn told the Canadian Press that the lockout was one of the reasons the company's beer sales fell in Canada, and that the NHL's largest sponsor will seek financial compensation from the league once the dispute is resolved.

In 2011, the NHL signed a 10-year, \$2 billion deal with NBC to broadcast games, marking the high-point for a league that was without a cable partner following the 2004-05 lockout. Even if this season is lost to the stoppage, NBC will pay the NHL the \$200 million rights fee.

It seemed to be a positive fit for both the sport and network. NHL viewership increased 52 percent in the first year of that deal according to Nielsen, but that momentum along with the publicity provided by two consecutive years of HBO's '24/7' series documenting the run-up to the Winter Classic has been thwarted.

As companies look to trim costs, ticket and suite purchases for sporting events are under greater scrutiny. Spotlight TMS helps roughly 3,000 companies manage corporate ticket purchases. According to CEO Tony Knopp, a quarter of those businesses are seeking to reduce their budget. The lockout could make it an easy decision for companies to not re-up on a block of seats or luxury suites.

"Business continues, whether it does for the NHL or not. Competition among corporations continues, and so no company is sitting around, waiting to entertain customers until the NHL comes back," said Knopp, whose company also works directly with eight NHL teams to help manage corporate sales.

"The overall amount being spent hasn't changed, according to our data, they're just spending it elsewhere," Knopp said. "The league is playing Russian roulette with this, because who's to say those companies will be there when hockey comes back?"

Washington Post LOADED: 11.28.2012

644972 Washington Capitals

Jason Chimera will return to the United States

Katie Carrera on November 27, 2012 at 8:10 pm

Capitals forward Jason Chimera will return to the United States Wednesday after a five-game stint with HC Chomutov in the Czech Extraliga, his agent Allan Walsh confirmed.

Chimera, 33, waited until November to look for work in Europe during the lockout because he didn't want to leave his wife and two young children. He ultimately missed his family too much to continue playing overseas while they remained in Alexandria and decided to return, as was first reported by TV Nova Sport in the Czech Republic.

"He wasn't able to live here separated from family, especially his children," Chomutov manager Leo Gudas told TV Nova Sport.

According to the team's website, in the event the entire 2012-13 NHL season is canceled it's possible Chimera could return to the Czech Republic with his whole family.

Washington Post LOADED: 11.28.2012

644973 Washington Capitals

Adam Oates ends six-week run coaching Bears

Posted by Barry Svrluga

Adam Oates is shown at a Bears practice in Hershey on Nov. 14. (Jonathan Newton / The Washington Post)

New Capitals Coach Adam Oates ended a six-week run as co-coach of the Hershey Bears, the team's top minor-league affiliate, last week.

Oates had worked with Hershey Coach Mark French in leading the Bears for the first 16 games of the American Hockey League season, a move General Manager George McPhee made to give Oates and his staff – assistants Calle Johansson and Tim Hunter – experience working together as a unit while the NHL endures a lockout.

"I was thinking early on, if we can get to Thanksgiving, that would be enough for the coaches to have worked together," McPhee said Tuesday. "Do we go beyond that? I'm not sure. It just felt right, when we got to Thanksgiving, that this is the time."

The Bears went 6-9-1-0 with Oates working with French, who won the Calder Cup with the Bears in his first season of 2009-10.

"It's hard on the coaches to be working together like that," McPhee said. "It's hard to run practices. It's hard logistically. And it probably wasn't easy on the players, either.

"But whether it's a player or a coach, you do what's best for the organization, and then the individual comes a close second."

The Bears will play Dec. 6 at Verizon Center against Norfolk, the only hockey at the Capitals' home rink since Washington lost in the Eastern Conference semifinals last spring.

Washington Post LOADED: 11.28.2012

644974 Washington Capitals

NHL lockout 2012: Reality is, mediation might not solve anything

Sports labor law expert says it offers no guarantees

By Stephen Whyno

As the league and NHL Players' Association have spent months trying to end the lockout, many ideas have been shared across the bargaining table and from the outside. Bringing in a federal mediator was one.

"Couldn't hurt," NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr said in Toronto a few weeks ago.

The NHL got on board with the idea and, beginning this week, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service will try to bridge the gap between the sides. But will mediators be able to help bring hockey back?

"My guess is just based on past history and the tone of the way things are going right now is that this is probably not going to produce a settlement," said Gary R. Roberts, dean and professor of law at Indiana University. Roberts is a sports labor law specialist who has published articles and book chapters on antitrust and labor issues. He also has served as president of the Sports Lawyers Association.

"This isn't like a hysterical couple doing divorces or a commercial dispute where one side or the other is just being totally unrealistic. These are two very sophisticated and experienced groups. I just don't see how much a mediator can bring to the table other than to remind them of what's at stake periodically."

What's at stake is \$3.3 billion per year in revenues and the NHL's reputation. That's why deputy commissioner Bill Daly said the sides are ready to "try a new approach."

It's an approach that the owners and players tried in 2004-05; three days after a mediator became involved, the season was canceled. But the salary cap was an issue no one was willing to budge on then, and that was much later in the process.

Mediation was part of the NFL and NBA lockouts, too. Roberts said it appeared that the FMCS' involvement in the NFL work stoppage "accomplished almost nothing." The NHL situation might be different.

"Who knows how many seeds the mediator might plant that could eventually bear fruit," Roberts said. "It's hard to predict."

But it's worth a shot, given the current state of talks. The sides haven't met since Nov. 21, when the NHLPA's proposal was rejected by the owners.

"When you make a move toward them, if you're going to have an agreement, somebody has to say, 'Yes and now I can do this.' Instead they said, more or less, 'Yes, and what else can you do for me?" NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr said Saturday night.

Frustration is building up over the stalemate from owners, players and fans. It's all too easy sometimes to get caught up in rhetoric and the idea of winning or losing the battle.

"Mediation tends to me a mechanism whereby tempers can be cooled, and people who are operating from unrealistic perspectives can be brought to see what reality is," Roberts said.

Roberts hasn't followed the specific issues of the NHL lockout as closely as those in the NBA and NFL. But given how the sides have not been able to agree on splitting hockey-related revenue, contract terms and other player rights, his characteristic of the talks was not encouraging.

"It sounds like they're pretty much at an impasse," he said. "Both sides have their perspectives and their objectives and neither side can accept a set of proposals that the other side insists is necessary. We really are at sort of a standstill."

About \$182 million apart on core economic issues, there's further disagreement on matters such as contract length (players want none while owners want to institute a five-year limit) and arbitration rights.

Even if mediators Scot L. Beckenbaugh and John Sweeney cannot bring about a quick settlement, perhaps the value of their presence is in the development of new ideas.

"These are very smart people, they're very well prepared, they've run numbers out the wazoo. They know what's going on," Roberts said. "The only thing a mediator could conceivably do is come up with some complicated set of proposals that neither side has thought of up until this point in time that might pique their interest and get them started talking in a way that might lead to a result."

Already 422 regular-season games have been canceled, along with the Winter Classic and the All-Star Game. The NHLPA is considering decertification to force the owners' hand, and something has to give if the sides are to prevent the Stanley Cup from not being awarded for the second time in less than a decade.

But it's uncertain whether mediation will be the solution.

"If I knew the answer to that, I'd be a soothsayer," Roberts said. "I just don't think anybody really knows."

Washington Times LOADED: 11.28.2012

644975 Winnipeg Jets

Redmond off to another strong start with IceCaps

By Ken Wiebe

Zach Redmond is doing what he can to ensure that the dreaded sophomore slump doesn't apply to him.

The second-year St. John's IceCaps defenceman — and Winnipeg Jets' prospect — is off to another strong start to the American Hockey League season after recording five goals and eight points in 19 games.

But Redmond, who was chosen to play in the AHL All-star Classic last season, is more concerned about finishing strong.

"I remember last year, kind of stalling a little bit in the middle, so I need to keep making sure my body and mind are where they need to be and play as consistent as I can for the full season," said Redmond, who had eight goals and 31 points in 72 games as a first-year pro. "I'm happy with how I'm playing, but there's still work that needs to be done. Offensively, I'll be OK but I'm working on making sure my defence is where it needs to be and hone in on making smart plays, good outlet passes."

That commitment to the D-zone hasn't gone unnoticed.

"He's been very good for us on the back end. He's a really confident defenceman right now," said IceCaps head coach Keith McCambridge. "He skates pucks out of trouble, gets shots through to the net on the power play and 5-on-5. He's been a real strong defender for us and his development has made some leaps and bounds this season. Things have really come together for him.

"I see him as a more mature player, a player that realizes what it takes to be a good, consistent defenceman, night in and night out in professional hockey."

Winnipeg Sun LOADED 11.28.2012

644976 Winnipeg Jets

Inconsistent IceCaps stuck in a rut

Misfortunes in first quarter of AHL season

By Ken Wiebe

Keith McCambridge needed only one word to describe the fortunes of the St. John's IceCaps through the first quarter of the American Hockey League season

"Inconsistency," the head coach of the primary affiliate of the Winnipeg Jets offered over the phone from Newfoundland on Monday afternoon before departing on a three-game road trip.

The IceCaps are 9-9-0-1 to date, but were feeling a little better about things after closing out a six-game homestand with a 6-0 victory over the Providence Bruins on Sunday.

That followed up a 3-2 shootout loss one night earlier and gave the IceCaps three of a possible four points from a home series for the first time this season.

"The last two games we made some strides in the right direction," said McCambridge. "Our inability to score goals has jumped out. But lately, our top players have been our best players, as you need them to be."

The offensive outburst was nice to see, but the early-season struggles were a friendly reminder of how the IceCaps need to play in order to replicate the success that saw them reach the Eastern Conference final last spring.

"We started out a little bit rocky, but I don't think we're a .500 team," said IceCaps defenceman Zach Redmond. "We seem to be picking it up as of late and hopefully, we can continue on with that."

IceCaps winger Spencer Machacek picked up three assists Sunday to snap a 13-game pointless drought.

"The frustration was in his game, but he broke out on Sunday and I was real happy to see him get some points," said McCambridge. "His work ethic was there, but it was just a matter of making sure it was there every single shift and taking care of all the things that have given him success in the past. It wasn't for lacking of caring."

One area that hasn't been a concern is the play of the goaltenders, with both Eddie Pasquale (who made 40 saves on Sunday to record his first shutout of the season) and Mark Dekanich standing tall between the pipes.

"They've been here for us all year, our goalies won't be an issue for us," said Redmond. "They're both really good and I wouldn't trade them for anyone."

ICE CHIPS

Winnipegger Derek Meech leads the team in scoring with 13 points in 17 games, while C Alex Burmistrov is second with nine points in 19 games...The IceCaps released veteran C Derek Whitmore on Monday, so he could join the Augsburger Panthers of the DEL. Whitmore, who had 28 goals and 44 points for the Rochester Americans in 75 games last season, had been a victim of the veteran rule, appearing in only seven games for the IceCaps, producing a goal and four points ... The IceCaps' infirmary remains fairly full as D Travis Ramsey (broken hand), C Patrice Cormier (knee), LW Jason King (undisclosed), LW Hunter Tremblay (concussion-like symptoms) are out and not travelling with the team on this trip. RW Ray Sawada and C Eric O'Dell are day-to-day and might be ready to go on Wednesday.

Winnipeg Sun LOADED 11.28.2012

644977 Websites

ESPN /Coyotes' future in Phoenix in doubt

By Scott Burnside | ESPN.com

Tuesday night looms large for the Phoenix Coyotes, given the long and rutted road they have traveled in search of an owner.

The Glendale City Council is expected to vote Tuesday on a reconfigured lease agreement between potential owner Greg Jamison and the municipality.

The deal would pay Jamison \$320 million during the life of the 20-year deal and would, in theory, secure the Coyotes' future in Glendale. If the new lease agreement is accepted, Jamison and his partners will attempt to complete the purchase of the team from the NHL, likely by the end of the calendar year.

It's expected that Jamison and business partner Anthony LeBlanc, formerly of the Ice Edge group of businessmen that had been in the running to buy the Coyotes several years ago, will be in attendance at the meeting in Glendale.

Sources told ESPN.com the financing for the \$170 million deal is in place and that approval of the lease agreement and subsequent approval by the NHL's board of governors would be the final hurdles in completing the long-awaited deal.

The passing of the new agreement is not a slam dunk, given the financial crisis facing Glendale and the opposition to the deal by current Mayor Elaine Scruggs, a former supporter of the team's relationship with the city.

If the council does not approve the lease agreement, it's expected that would end Jamison's bid to buy the Coyotes and throw the team's future in Arizona back into doubt. Mayor-elect Jerry Weiers and a new set of council members will take office in January, and they have indicated they will not support the re-worked lease agreement.

The widely held expectation is that Jamison's group of investors represents the last chance to keep the team in Arizona and that if Jamison's bid dies, the NHL will have little choice but to begin the process of finding a new home for the beleaguered franchise.

ESPN LOADED: 11.28.2012

644978 Websites

ESPN / Can mediation work this time around?

By Pierre LeBrun

Can mediation work this time around?

It certainly didn't in early February 2005 when the NHL and NHL Players' Association sat down with mediators in an experiment that went absolutely nowhere, as the season was canceled a few days later.

Of course, there's a reason mediation had no chance back then. The NHLPA at that time still had not moved off its no-cap stance, so the mediators had zero wiggle room to play with whatsoever.

"It went nowhere," one source with knowledge of the February 2005 mediation attempt told ESPN.com.

That's what makes this week's mediation session different. It doesn't mean it's going to achieve any more success than seven years ago, but at the very least there's more potential for that to happen. At least on paper.

What separates the two sides is \$182 million in make-whole money, which is actually less because I believe the NHLPA intended with last week's offer that asked for \$393 million in make whole to have the league meet them halfway from the \$211 million the NHL offered.

And certainly there is significant division on player contracting rights, with the league still asking for too many changes, more than the players will ever accept.

Still, that's less of a gap for mediators to work with than seven years ago when the cap/no-cap stances from either side polarized the negotiation and made it futile for mediation

The NHLPA, both privately and publicly, has long seen the merits of mediation in this lockout. My sense is that the union has always believed that once a neutral third party examined the offers on the table, they would see that the players are doing all the backing up in this negotiation.

Perhaps. But the neutral third party might also point to NBA and NFL players also doing all the backing up in last year's respective labor deals and say to the NHLPA, "What's your point?"

Regardless of how it works out, the NHLPA believes it's worth a shot. Why? Because mediation is usually like "shuttle diplomacy," one industry source tells ESPN.com.

"Perhaps it can help focus the parties on the differences, perhaps things can be said to the mediator that cannot be said directly across the table."

And certainly, mediators should give both sides an honest reality check of each other's positions.

But in the end, no matter what mediators say or try, only the true willingness of both sides to finally compromise for the final stretch will allow a true breakthrough.

It's non-binding mediation, nobody is going to force the NHL to back off on its player contracting rights demands, or the NHLPA in coming down on its make-whole number.

That has to come from each side, once and for all.

In other words, mediation has a chance only if both parties are open to the process.

On that, I'm not fully convinced.

ESPN LOADED: 11.28.2012

644979 Websites

NBCSports.com /Hockey Canada announces World Junior selection camp

Joe Yerdon

Few countries would be disappointed in wining a bronze medal, but Team Canada will be gunning to top that at this year's World Junior Championships in Russia. As for who will go for the gold, that's still up in the air

Hockey Canada announced their selection camp will take place December 11-15 in Calgary. Team Canada coach Steve Spott tells Mike Morreale of NHL.com they know there's stiff competition to be had.

"If there's anything I would say to Canadian hockey fans, it's that this has become a global sport," Spott said. "It's no longer Canada's divine right to win gold medals at any level. The bar has been raised, but it hasn't changed our mindset where it is gold or nothing."

One guy who won't be suiting up for Canada is defenseman Ryan Murray. He'll miss up to six months after undergoing surgery on his injured shoulder. Don't feel too bad for Canada as they'll still have a loaded blue line (as well as the rest of the team) with guys like Dougie Hamilton and Scott Harrington (among many others) as well as likely top five picks in the 2013 draft forwards Nathan MacKinnon and Jonathan Drouin.

The World Junior Championships go from December 26 through January 5 in Ufa, Russia.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.28.2012

644980 Websites

NBCSports.com /More lockout realities: Wild staffers take pay cut, shorter work week

Joe Yerdon

The unfortunate part of the NHL lockout is how it affects those not playing hockey or owning teams.

Michael Russo of The Star-Tribune reports employees of the Minnesota Wild, 200 of them, will be taking a cut in pay and going to a four-day work week because of the now 73-day old lockout. On the upside, no one is

losing their job and Wild COO Matt Majka had an interesting way of explaining the cuts.

"Our whole philosophy is we're all in this together," Majka said. "We want to keep the staff intact because we still think we can play hockey this year. That's why we're announcing no layoffs. It's an all-for-one thing, and that's why we're going to do it this way with everyone feeling it a little bit."

Working sure beats not working, especially these days, so that's a good thing. Still, you can't help but think how workers in Minnesota and at the NHL home offices, where they've undergone a similar slash in pay and work time, feel about having all of this happen because of something out of their control.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.28.2012

644981 Websites

NBCSports.com /Stamkos, St. Louis and Lecavalier won't bolt for Europe...yet

Mike Halford

Given the large number of skilled players offered work overseas, you'd think the Tampa Bay trio of Steve Stamkos, Martin St. Louis and Vincent Lecavalier would be in hot demand.

And they very well might be. But for now, all three are sticking in North America.

That was the word out of Tampa on Tuesday as the trio stated its collective desire to stay home and wait for a new CBA to be reached.

"Whenever we do start, and I don't care what you did all summer, when you get into getting hit, it takes you about two weeks to catch up," St. Louis told the Tampa Tribune. "But once you get into games, it's like (the snap of a finger). It comes back, so I'm not too worried about that."

St. Louis, 37, has toyed with the notion of going to Europe, but has stayed back in part because of his family. During the last lockout, he played for HC Lausanne of the Swiss National League "A".

On Monday, Stamkos and Lecavalier — who played for AK Bars of the Russian league in 2004-05 — also re-iterated their desire to stay home rather than play abroad.

Player agent Mark Guy confirmed that Stamkos will continue to workout in his hometown near Toronto, while Lecavalier told the paper he's hopeful the season will start soon, given how close the two sides are.

"If you do the math (on CBA negotiations) it's not that far apart," he explained.

"We'll see what the week brings. I still like to think that there is reason to be optimistic."

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.28.2012

644982 Websites

NBCSports.com /McCarty to host Red Wings-Avalanche "Bloody Wednesday" viewing party

Mike Halford

Give the Detroit Red Wings credit — they're presenting fans the opportunity to watch bookey.

On Wednesday at Detroit's PB's Sports Grille, former Wings tough guy Darren McCarty and current play-by-play man Ken Kal will host a viewing party where folks can watch the infamous "Bloody Wednesday" (or, "Fight Night at the Joe") 1997 regular season game between the Wings and Avs.

The game occurred on Wednesday, Mar. 26, roughly 10 months after Colorado forward Claude Lemieux did this to Detroit's Kris Draper in the '96 Western Conference final:

Draper suffered a broken jaw, shattered cheek and orbital bone which required reconstructive surgery — his jaw also ended up being wired shut.

Lemieux received a two-game suspension for the hit, returning to the lineup for Colorado's eventual Stanley Cup victory.

Following the incident, Colorado and Detroit met three times during the 1996-97 regular season before the infamous March affair, which went a little something like this:

The game was arguably McCarty's defining moment in a Wings uniform (the argument, of course, is this goal.)

In addition to administering the frontier justice Kal later called "the turning point" of Detroit's season, McCarty also scored the OT winner on Patrick Rov.

All told, the Red Wings and Avalanche combined to produce nine fights, 11 goals and record 148 penalty minutes in the game.

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644983 Websites

NBCSports.com /Calgary's Butler signs in Swedish second division

Mike Halford

Flames defenseman Chris Butler has agreed to a lockout deal with Allsvenskan club Karlskrona, according to the team website.

Butler, 26, was Buffalo's fourth-round draft pick at the 2006 NHL Entry Draft and was shipped to Calgary as part of last year's Robyn Regehr trade.

In his first season with the Flames, Butler played in a career-high 68 games while scoring 2G-3A-15PTS. He finished third on the team in average time on ice per game (21:36) and represented Team USA at the 2012 World Hockey Championships.

With Karlskrona, Butler will become just the latest locked-out NHLer to ply his trade in the Swedish second division. The Allsvenskan is currently home to the likes of Bobby Ryan, Cam Fowler, Carl Gunnarson, Patric Hornqvist, Anze Kopitar, Nicklas Grossman, Patrik Berglund, Matt Read and others.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.28.2012

644984 Websites

NBCSports.com /Red Wings prospect arrested for "super-drunk" driving was using teammate's ID, wearing purple Teletubby costume

Mike Halford

Riley Sheahan might have a tough time living this one down.

The Detroit prospect — a first-round pick in 2010 — was caught using a fellow Detroit prospect's ID while wearing a purple Teletubby costume upon being arrested for "super-drunk" driving in Grand Rapids on Oct. 29.

Sheahan, 20, was reportedly using Brendan Smith's drivers license (Detroit's first-round pick in 2007, who is 23).

He was driving the wrong way down a street upon being pulled over, and authorities initially believed they'd arrested Smith until learning of Sheahan's identity later in the evening.

As for the outfit, one can only hope it was for a Halloween party.

Here are the details from the police report, obtained by MLive.com:

"Riley had a Michigan driver's license in the license window in his wallet, which is what Officer Dyer used as his ID. Deputies found Riley's Canadian

license in the wallet after it was turned in with his property and he kept telling them his name was Riley.

"Riley is only 20 and I asked him if he had Branden's (sic) ID so he could get in the bars. He shook his head yes and stated 'yea."

The report also states Sheahan failed two sobriety tasks and refused to take a breath test. The test was later administered at the Kent County Jail, where he blew .30 twice. He was charged under Michigan's new "super drunk" distinction of driving with a BAC of .17 or higher.

Afterward, Sheahan was sent to a local hospital — where he had to be cleared because of his high blood-alcohol content — before being taken back to jail.

Sheahan has pled not guilty to the super-drunk charge. If convicted, he could face up to 180 days in jail and possibly face deportation, given he's not a U.S. citizen.

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644985 Websites

NBCSports.com /Update: Second overall pick Murray will have shoulder surgery, "likely" out for year

Mike Halford

The Blue Jackets can't catch a break.

That was the word out of Columbus on Tuesday as it was learned Ryan Murray, taken No. 2 at the 2012 NHL Entry Draft, will undergo shoulder surgery to repair a torn labrum.

According to Aaron Portzline of the Columbus Dispatch, Murray will have the surgery in 2-3 weeks and likely be out for the remainder of the 2012-13 season. The Blue Jackets have also released a statement confirming the surgery, saying Murray's recovery period will be approximately six months.

Murray hurt his shoulder playing for WHL Everett on Nov. 16. The talented defenseman tried to break his fall after a hit during a game against the Victoria Royals when the injury occurred.

Despite being just 19 years old, Murray was seen as a strong contender to make the Columbus roster this season. He had 17 points through 23 WHL games and captained the WHL squad versus Russia in the Subway Super Series.

He was also a virtual lock to make Team Canada for the upcoming World Junior tournament and, looking forward, probably would've been in line to play in his second consecutive World Hockey Championships.

This past spring, Murray — then just 18 years old — was the youngest player on Team Canada at the 2012 Worlds, averaging nearly eight minutes a game and finishing the tournament plus-1 while playing with the likes of Duncan Keith, Dion Phaneuf and Jay Bouwmeester.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.28.2012

644986 Websites

NBCSports.com /Report: Crosby's agent talking to teams in Russia, Switzerland

Mike Halford

It appears Sidney Crosby is closer to playing overseas than ever.

"You know what? It's a lot more possible right now," Crosby told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette on Monday. "I probably hadn't thought about it quite as much as I have the past few days.

"It's definitely been something — with the way things are looking now [with CBA talks], it's not looking too good."

According to the Gazette, Crosby's agent, Pat Brisson, has been in discussion with teams in the KHL and Switzerland's National League "A".

Both have ties to No. 87 — Crosby's running mate in Pittsburgh, Evgeni Malkin, currently plays for KHL Metallurg while former Penguins Jason Williams and Richard Park are skating with Ambri-Piotta of the Swiss League.

The biggest issue with Crosby playing in Europe is insuring the 12-year, \$104.4 million extension signed with Pittsburgh at the end of June. Insurance issues be why the Pens captain has held off on jumping the pond — playing a portion of the season rather than the whole campaign would greatly reduce costs.

Here's more, from the Gazette:

Brisson could not be reached for comment, but this fall projected that insuring Crosby's contracts with the Penguins — before the lockout, they were scheduled to pay him \$111.9 million over 13 seasons — could cost between \$200,000 and \$400,000, a fee that likely would be borne by the European club that lands him.

Presumably, that insurance would be pro-rated to reflect Crosby playing less than a full season.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.28.2012

644987 Websites

NBCSports.com /Richards doubtful mediation can solve lockout

Jason Brough

The news that federal mediators have been brought in to help solve the NHL lockout hasn't been met with a ton of optimism.

On Monday, NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly gave it a less-than-ringing endorsement, saying only, "We'll see how it goes and perhaps something good will come of it."

While the NHLPA seemed more open to the idea of third-party intervention as the work stoppage dragged on, Rangers forward Brad Richards is doubtful it will lead anywhere good.

On Tuesday, Richards told the Daily News that if the NHL has indeed made its best and final offer to the players, "I don't know what a mediator's going to do."

The NHL had previously questioned the usefulness of mediation, citing the belief that each side fully understood the other side's position.

And that, according to Gary R. Roberts, dean and professor of law at Indiana University, is why mediators may have trouble bridging the gap between the league and union.

"My guess is just based on past history and the tone of the way things are going right now is that this is probably not going to produce a settlement," Roberts told the Washington Times. "This isn't like a hysterical couple doing divorces or a commercial dispute where one side or the other is just being totally unrealistic. These are two very sophisticated and experienced groups. I just don't see how much a mediator can bring to the table other than to remind them of what's at stake periodically."

The NHL's dispute with the players isn't a particularly complicated one. At this point, it appears more a game of chicken than one side trying to convince the other to see its point of view, and vice-versa.

But hey, maybe mediation will help.

Beats sitting around wondering about it.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.28.2012

644988 Websites

NBCSports.com /Stars, Jackets among major-league teams with worst attendance drops

Jason Brough

Of the 10 major-league teams that saw the largest drop in attendance over the last 10 years, two of them were from the NHL, according to analysis by 24/7 Wall St.

The Dallas Stars (-23.2%) and Columbus Blue Jackets (-19.2%) rank fifth and 10th, respectively, in the rankings.

The Seattle Mariners (-51.4%) top the list, followed by three other MLB teams (Cleveland, Houston, and Arizona).

Not surprisingly, the common theme among all teams is losing. The Stars have missed the playoffs the last four seasons, while the Blue Jackets have made the postseason just once since coming into the league in 2000.

Obviously, not every city is willing to support a perennial loser like Toronto supports the Maple Leafs.

That said, a team like Dallas, which has at least been competitive the past couple of seasons and made it all the way to the conference finals in 2008, might not have suffered such a precipitous drop in attendance in a more traditional NHL market.

The Mariners, Astros and Diamondbacks also moved into new stadiums in the last 15 years, and a new stadium is only a novelty for so long.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.28.2012

644989 Websites

NBCSports.com /Spurs' Bonner cautions NHLers, says decertification "throws everything into chaos"

Jason Brough

It only took two weeks after the National Basketball Players Association dissolved itself for the NBA's lockout to end; however, San Antonio Spurs forward Matt Bonner can't say for certain if the union's bold move pushed the owners to reach a season-saving deal with the players.

"I think only [NBA commissioner] David Stern and the owners can answer that. I'm sure they never would tell us," Bonner told the Toronto Star recently. "Obviously it caused the deal to get done pretty soon thereafter. You could argue that helped the process.

"Or you could argue they had a timeline in mind anyway and were going to get a deal no matter what. Or you could argue they were going to push us to that point and squeeze us for every last drop and then cut a deal. I don't know. They'll never tell us."

Despite what happened in basketball, Bonner has a word of warning for NHL players who may be considering decertification as a way to end the hockey lockout:

"It's hard because it throws everything into chaos. It just adds a huge degree of uncertainty to the situation. It's a tough decision for the players to make and it's tough for the owners to deal with. That's a possible strategy to get the owners to move, to budge."

Bonner's take is in line with what Canucks goalie Cory Schneider said on Monday.

"Decertification is not something you do half-heartedly," Schneider said, as per The Province. "You can't start to decertify in hopes that you're going to get a deal done. If it doesn't, you still have to push forward with it. Once the wheels are in motion, there's no stopping. It's a very serious decision and that's why we're a little reluctant to charge ahead without thinking."

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.28.2012

644990 Websites

NBCSports.com /Glendale to vote on Coyotes lease tonight

Jason Brough

In the latest chapter of the never-ending Phoenix Coyotes ownership saga (we believe it's chapter 13,349), the City of Glendale will vote this evening on a 20-year lease with prospective team owner Greg Jamison.

The lease is a controversial one in that it calls for the cash-strapped municipality to pay Jamision in the neighborhood of \$15 million a year to manage the city-owned Jobing.com Arena.

Some say it's nothing but a subsidy and that the arena could be managed for considerably less.

The counterargument is that it's the only way to keep the Coyotes from moving and that, with the potential loss of jobs and indirect business taxes, things would be worse for the city without the NHL franchise.

The vote's outcome could come down to city councilor Yvonne Knaack, who didn't indicate last week which way she was leaning.

It's also worth noting that city manager Horatio Skeete no longer supports the lease, even though he's the one who negotiated it with Jamison.

Of course, even if the lease is approved by city council, Jamison would still need to close on the deal. Last week, he told the Arizona Republic that his group would "move as quickly as we possibly can" should the vote go its way.

There's also the specter of the Goldwater Institute, the taxpayer watchdog group that may challenge the lease, which many have called a subsidy, in court.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.28.2012

644991 Websites

NBCSports.com /Neuvirth apologizes for lockout comments

Jason Brough

Neuvirth made the controversial remark last week after expressing support for his Washington teammate, Roman Hamrlik, who had criticized the leadership of NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr.

Both players were roundly condemned by union members, in particular Caps forward Troy Brouwer, who accused them of "selling us out."

Neuvirth's comment was especially notable as Washington captain Alex Ovechkin, one of the most vocal critics of the NHL, happens to be a superstar with a big contract.

"I know a couple guys [are] pissed off and they say bad things," Ovechkin said recently, "but you know we stick together and we're not gonna listen to those guys. Of course everybody wants to play but we have to stick together."

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.28.2012

644992 Websites

NBCSports.com /Federal mediators brought in to assist NHL labor talks

Jason Brough

Enter the marriage counselors to the NHL's labor dispute.

Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service director George H. Cohen issued the following statement Monday:

"I have had separate, informal discussions with the key representatives of the National Hockey League and the National Hockey League Players' Association during the course of their negotiations for a successor collective bargaining agreement. "At the invitation of the FMCS, and with the agreement of both parties, the ongoing negotiations will now be conducted under our auspices. I have assigned Deputy Director Scot L. Beckenbaugh, Director of Mediation Services John Sweeney, and Commissioner Guy Serota to serve as the mediators

"Due to the extreme sensitivity of these negotiations and consistent with the FMCS's long-standing practice, the Agency will refrain from any public comment concerning the future schedule and/or the status of the negotiations until further notice."

NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly confirmed the development to the Star Tribune's Michael Russo.

"The FMCS reached out to both sides independently, and apparently we both agreed that we are prepared to explore the process," said Daly.

"I have no level of expectation at this point. We'll see how it goes and perhaps something good will come of it."

The mediation will not be binding.

The NHL had previously questioned the usefulness of mediation in its dispute with the players, citing the belief that each side fully understood the other side's position.

Update: NHLPA head Donald Fehr released this statement regarding mediation (via CSNChicago.com's Tracey Myers):

"The NHLPA has agreed to the addition of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) to our ongoing negotiations. We look forward to (mediators') involvement as we continue working to reach an equitable agreement for both players and owners."

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.28.2012

644993 Websites

YAHOO SPORTS / Marvin Miller, a trailblazer in pro sports unions, had a lasting effect on NHLPA head Don Fehr

Staff

"Let me back up," Don Fehr began, sitting in a conference room at the NHL Players' Association headquarters in Toronto. "Marvin Miller ..."

Marvin Miller, Major League Baseball's first players' union boss, died Tuesday at age 95. (AP) This was back in January, long before the lockout. I sat down with Fehr to discuss his preparations for collective bargaining, to see if there were parallels to his approach in baseball.

Fehr had spent a quarter century leading the Major League Baseball Players Association before becoming the executive director of the NHLPA. He had amassed his own experience and credentials. He was his own man with his own mind.

But the fifth and sixth words he used were Miller's first and last names, and he kept coming back to Miller, his predecessor and mentor at the MLBPA. He had worked under Miller as the MLBPA general counsel from 1977-82 and remained close to him afterward. He spoke of him with not only respect, but reverence.

Miller died Tuesday. He was 95. In a statement released by the MLBPA, Fehr said: "Without question, Marvin had more positive influence on Major League Baseball than any other person in the last half of the 20th century."

In short, during his tenure from 1966-82, Miller helped the players stand up to the owners for the first time. He helped them build the strongest union in sports. He helped them win free agency, higher pay and better benefits. He did it all while the MLB painted him as a troublemaker. Though the business has thrived, he is not in the Hall of Fame.

But his influence reached beyond baseball, and it goes directly to hockey right now as Fehr leads the NHLPA through this lockout. Fehr learned much from Miller, like simple skepticism of the owners' claims, the importance of player involvement and who works for whom in a union. Fehr is still fighting for many of the same things, like free agency eligibility, arbitration rights and pensions.

I asked Fehr about a quote attributed to him in John Helyar's book "Lords of the Realm: The Real History of Baseball": "You go through The Sporting News for the last hundred years, and you will find two things are always true. You never have enough pitching, and nobody ever made money."

Fehr said he didn't remember the context, but generally, from the 1890s until about 15-20 years ago, baseball owners constantly cried poor. He mentioned two things said by MLB commissioner Bowie Kuhn, Miller's old counterpart.

"I'll never forget when Marvin told me this," Fehr said. "He had the most mischievous look on his face. He said, 'Bowie just gave a speech that said, 'Unless we find oil wells under second base, we're all going broke.' He wants everybody to dig. That was the first one.

"And the second one was that if free agency existed in baseball, the American League would go out of business and the National League would be reduced to six teams, and it would be like the NHL. And of course, the entire history of baseball is completely the opposite. Free agency is in many respects what made the sport what it is today.

Don Fehr (right) worked under Miller (center) from 1977-82 and spoke of him with reverence. (AP)"So every once in a while in baseball, I would get frustrated when people repeated the same old litany, as if the mere fact that somebody said it meant it mattered."

These are different times, and this is a different sport. The NHLPA has access to NHL financial information. But that doesn't mean the players trust the owners' accounting, and that doesn't mean Fehr accepts the status quo or conventional thinking.

I asked Fehr why he made it a point to have players at the bargaining table in baseball and why he would do the same in hockey. That was actually my starting point.

This was his starting point: "Let me back up," he said. "Marvin Miller began the process in baseball of making sure that the constituents – the members, the players – were involved in the bargaining and were present during the meetings. And he did that because, first of all, they have a right to be there.

"There's nothing like the education you get listening to the actual exchanges rather than somebody summarizing the exchanges sometime later on. Players will very often pick up issues that staff won't, because they're out there on the ice, and in my case now, that's even more likely because I don't have a longtime hockey background.

"You can make compromises, you can make counterproposals, and it's really, really important. So when we came in, one of the things that I started talking to players about was how important it is for them to be informed, for them to talk to one another, and to participate in the process. And that means, among other things, being physically at the table and in the bargaining."

That's especially interesting now.

Fehr has been accused of creating the illusion of inclusion and transparency, while actually diffusing dissent and driving his own agenda. Because lots of players have rotated through bargaining sessions and the negotiating committee includes about 30 players, that means there is no small group with the power to set the course.

The NHL feels its message isn't getting through Fehr's filter, which is why it posted one of its proposals on its website and gave team executives a brief window to discuss it with players. The NHL feels the players have no mechanism to steer in a different direction. Deputy commissioner Bill Daly has suggested publicly that Fehr doesn't share the players' desire to get a deal done.

Fehr's strategy of including players in CBA talks with the league is something he learned from Miller. (Getty)At the same time, veteran players – guys who have been through these things before – will tell you they have never been better informed than they are now. Fehr's door is always open. The PA holds conference calls. It even has a smartphone app.

And the view within the league is that the players pushed Fehr to make the PA's last proposal, which linked the players' share to hockey-related revenue for the first time in these negotiations. If that view is accurate, was he pushed by the players – or was he listening to them?

Another quote from January:

"There is this ... I was about to say mythology, but this perspective out there about the baseball players' union, which basically says that Marvin Miller came in at a point in time in which there was nothing and had to build

from scratch, and so whatever changes there were were revolutionary all the way through," Fehr said. "He was regarded by a lot of people, mostly in the media, as a revolutionary leader.

"Players will tell you he was the most practical person alive. What most people forget is the first strike – [during] which everybody was calling Marvin a communist – was something that the players voted to do over his specific recommendation to the contrary. That was in 1972, on a pension issue."

It is true that Fehr has rebuilt a broken union, and it is true that his job is to make recommendations to the players, and it is true that the players likely will choose from the options he gives them. They will follow his lead. That's why they hired him.

It is also true that Fehr loathes the salary cap system, was unafraid to fight with baseball owners and has no personal investment in hockey.

But Fehr will tell you he did not rebuild the NHLPA from scratch, despite all the problems he inherited and all the Union 101 work he did to educate the players on how the organization should operate. He will tell you hockey is a bigger business now than baseball was back then. He will tell you he works for the players. He will stress it.

Miller at his New York apartment in 2003. (AP)And when I asked Fehr in September 2011 if he wanted this to be a revolutionary agreement or an evolutionary one, Fehr said: "Everybody understands that trying to change something radically, unless both sides start from the premise that they want to, is much more problematic in terms of getting an agreement done than not."

In other words, he understands the situation on a practical level. He inherited the salary cap. Challenging it would come at a high cost to his constituents

There is a fear that Fehr wants to become another Marvin Miller, a revolutionary leader. There is a fear that all this was orchestrated, so he could challenge the salary cap, so he could be the first union boss to get rid of one. Why else would Fehr take this job? What's in it for him?

I have no doubt Fehr is using his aura to his advantage, and I think it's possible he could go all the way. If mediation fails, if the PA disclaims interest or decertifies, this could blow up. He could go to court, challenge the cap and try to establish the free market in which he believes. The owners better calculate whether it's worth the risk, especially when the sides are so close on so many issues.

But what if Fehr wants to be another Marvin Miller, the "most practical person alive"? Is he really misleading the players about the owners' proposals, when other staff members and players are in the room, when memos aren't the only form of internal communication? If the players want to decertify, or if they want their leaders to disclaim interest, it will happen. But if the players really want to make a deal, will Fehr really not make it – even if he disagrees? Really?

What if what's in it for him is the satisfaction of helping players who had been pushed around stand up for themselves? What if it's helping them build a strong union so they can fight for their interests as effectively as possible? It took years of struggle for Miller and the MLBPA to make so much progress. What if Fehr is helping the NHLPA take its first steps?

"When I started in baseball, Marvin was there, and I was 29," Fehr said in September 2011, pointing out he was in the same age range as the players then and needs to work harder to relate to them now. "I'm 40 years older than some of these guys, so it's different.

"They've got to see that I'm not just some Dutch uncle that's telling them how to live their lives, another old fart, and that's what makes it hard to get them to understand that I work for them and not the other way around."

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