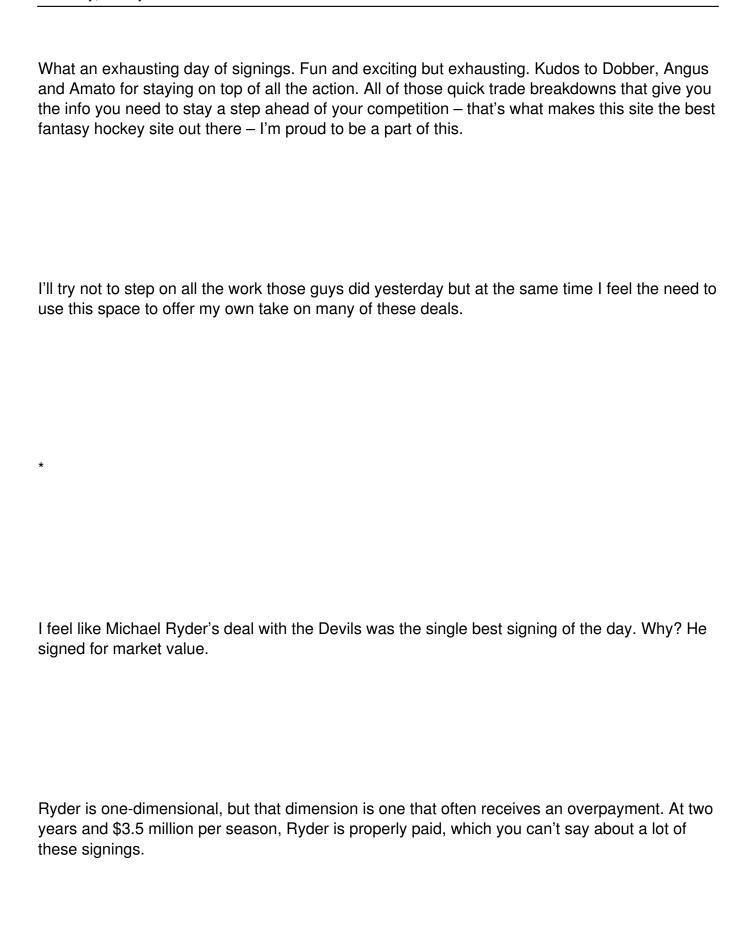
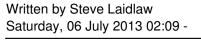
Written by Steve Laidlaw Saturday, 06 July 2013 02:09 -





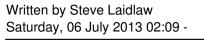
Ryder fills a huge need for the Devils as well because they had some real holes in their top six. All he does is score and he'll do so in New Jersey.

Props to the Devils for locking up Patrick Elias earlier this week as well. Obviously they still have use for him in their top six but more than anything it's just nice to see him sticking around with his one and only NHL team after a season where we've seen marquee names like Vinny Lecavalier, Jarome Iginla and Daniel Alfredsson all with new clubs.

It helps that Elias already has his rings and was never the team's face of the franchise but he's still been a great player for the Devils for a long time – this contract will take him to his 20th NHL season, all with the Devils. He certainly gets his jersey retired. A Hall-of-Famer as well?

*

By the way, I hate this whole Alfredsson to Detroit business. Just hate it. The Senators are ready to make a push. They just acquired Bobby Ryan for goodness sake! Granted that happened after Alffie had decided to leave but still. He easily could have chased the ring in Ottawa. I firmly believe they are contenders now that Pittsburgh and Boston are taking steps backward.



Because don't kid yourselves, Ottawa was on the rise regardless of this Ryan deal but acquiring him gives them a tremendous boost. They haven't had a player of his ilk since... since... maybe ever, I don't know. I can't recall a player with his size, athleticism, skill and tenacity ever playing for the Senators.

You can certainly argue that there was an opportunity cost dealing those prospects and pick when the team could have just hit free agency for their power forward but no one on the market was as good as Ryan, except maybe Horton who is older and more injury prone.

It's important to note that Ryan is not injury prone because that's a huge contrast with pretty well the entirety of this Senators roster.

The shackles are coming off for Ryan in Ottawa too. No more second line duties. No more second unit power play. No more being forced into center duty. The Senators have all of that covered. He will be a first liner, skating beside a top 5-10 playmaking center, on a team with the league's best coach and the league's top (offensive) defenseman. If he doesn't score 80 points this season he is a bust and has always been a bust. I hate to put the pressure on like this but that has to be the expectation. He's too good and this situation is too good for anything else to happen.

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I will add that you should absolutely NOT try to trade for Ryan now. His value just spiked. Maybe he plays up to these expectations but you won't get any value dealing for him now. Best to sit back and hope some other guys get hyped and maybe you get good value on Ryan later.

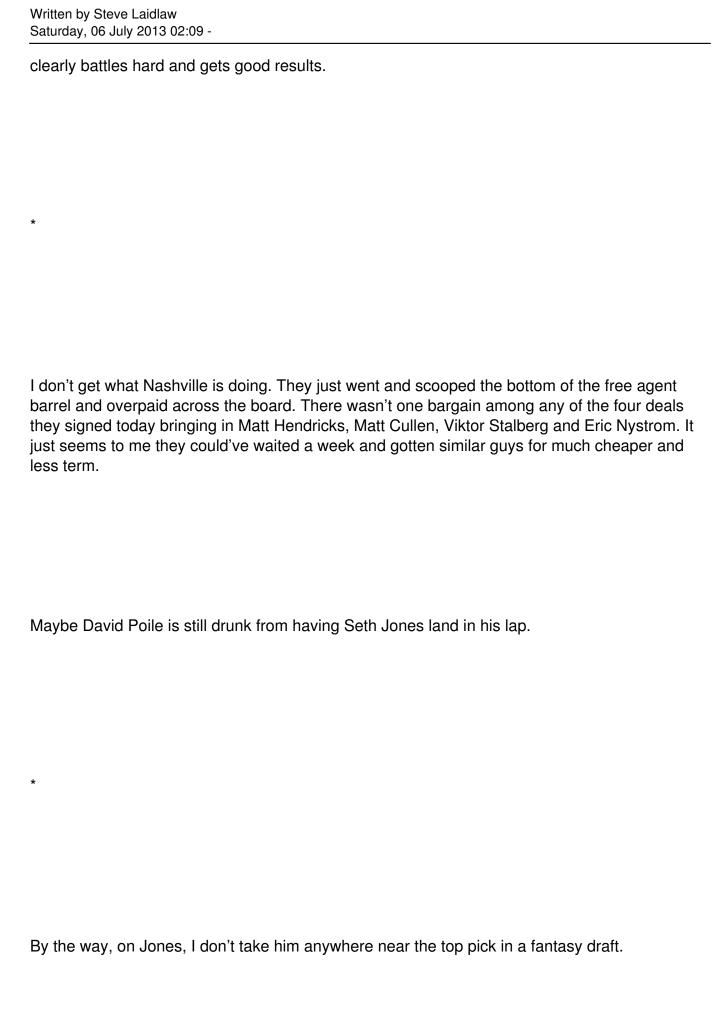
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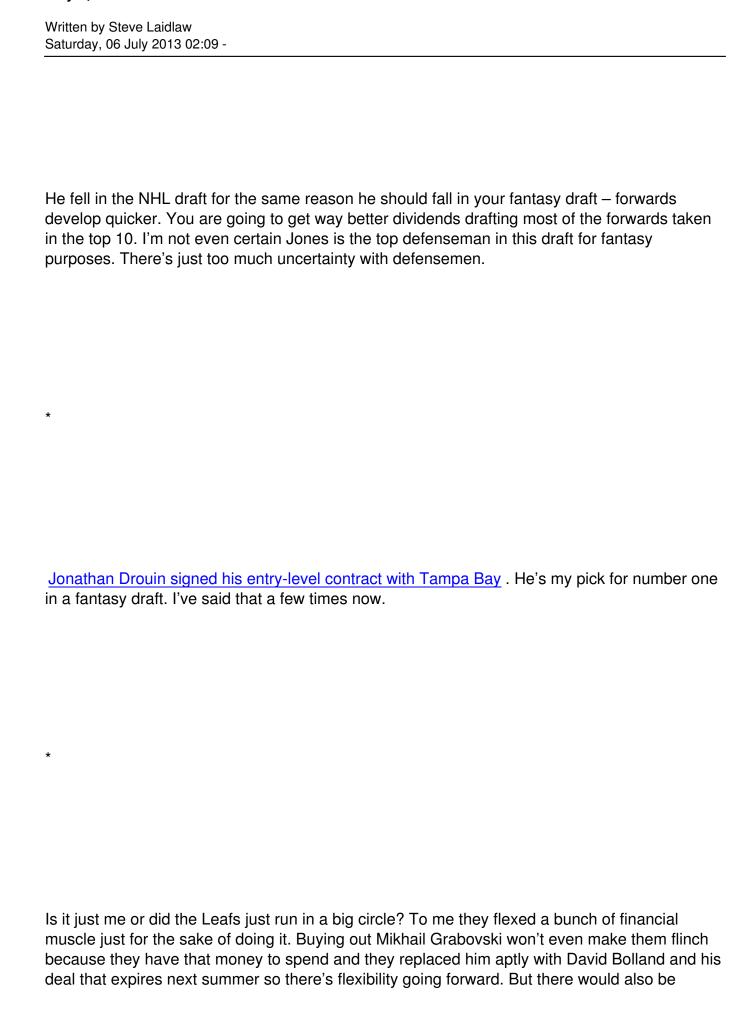
As Angus pointed out Edmonton's signings of Andrew Ference, Boyd Gordon and Jason Labarbera are carry residual value. To me, this points to one man, Devan Dubnyk. Less than a week ago the Oilers were shopping for his replacement, now they bring in his backup to be. That's a vote of confidence. What's more, Gordon and Ference, while probably overpaid, improve the Oilers depth a lot and will make them tougher to play against. You can argue that will open up more ice for their scorers but all I am willing to say is that this helps Dubnyk. The Oilers haven't done enough to become a playoff team yet though.

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The Leafs, among other moves, extended Jonathan Bernier on Friday. The hit and term are both larger and longer than what they've got James Reimer signed for so there's that much more fuel for the impending goaltending battle. For the life of me I can't tell you who will be the starter in Toronto next season. I just know that I'm not a huge fan of Reimer's even though he

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