Yakupov, Galchenyuk, Huberdeau and Tarasenko move onto the semi-finals

The quarterfinals of the Cage Match Rookie Tournament were supposed to up the ante and bring some really tight matchups. It didn't necessarily work out that way but it was nevertheless a huge success as reader voting has never been higher. You guys have opinions on this stuff and you want to make them heard so who am I to argue. Here are the blowout results:

#1 Nail Yakupov over #4 Mikhail Grigorenko – 105 votes to 9 votes

Well that certainly wasn't all that close now was it? Not that the result is very surprising. With both Yakupov and Grigorenko producing middling results on their middling teams this season you just have to fall back on pre-season hype and that's where the reigning first overall pick reigns supreme.

#3 Alex Galchenyuk over #2 Mikael Granlund – 88 votes to 32 votes

I guess that counts as an upset. I won't lie – my preseason ranking of these two was completely flipped. I was bullish on Granlund coming into this season and expected him to be much more NHL ready. I figured he would step into the top line power play quarterback role similarly to the way that The Nuge did in Edmonton last season. His game seems perfectly suited for it but for whatever reason he just hasn't had that sort of impact. Meanwhile, Galchenyuk is proving himself more than ready for NHL duty and his emergence is one of several reasons the Canadiens have ascended back to prominence so quickly. What a difference a month and a half can make! There remains a lot of hockey to be played but it's clear that Galchenyuk is simply better than Granlund right now and when dealing with two prospects with such high upside that's probably all that matters.

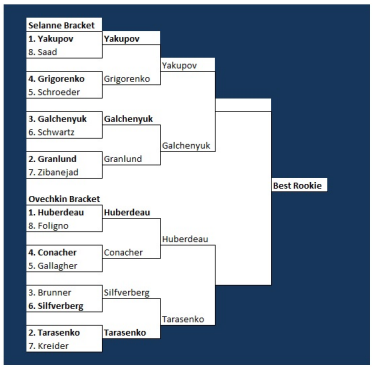
#1 Jonathan Huberdeau over #4 Cory Conacher – 94 votes to 24 votes

The Conacher supporters provided a spirited debate but ultimately the force of long term upside was too much here. When you've got a 19-year-old former lottery pick putting up comparable numbers to a 23-year-old undrafted player well you are probably going to see people flock towards the young guy. And unlike the situation with Brunner vs. Silverberg, the difference in production this season is not so substantial that you'd want to take the older guy.

#2 Vladimir Tarasenko over #6 Jakob Silfverberg – 96 votes to 18 votes

You know, the funny thing about this result is the fact that considering Tarasenko's current concussion woes I wonder if this shouldn't have been much closer. I mean, long term Silfverberg really does have some nice upside. Is it as nice as Tarasenko's? Perhaps not but it's not far off and there's no guarantee either one makes it to that lofty upside. The point being there's no short term advantage to taking Tarasenko despite the fact that in his limited time playing in this league he looked like the much better player out of these two. So since this probably just comes down to long term upside, the gap probably isn't as wide as the votes show.

But then again Silfverberg probably didn't deserve to make it so far, so screw it. Be gone Silfverberg!



This week only four remain with the two winners meeting in the final. **First up it's the Selanne Bracket Final:**

#1 Nail Yakupov vs. #3 Alex Galchenyuk – VOTE HERE

Could there be a better semi-final matchup? I think not. This pits two former teammates and the biggest prizes of the 2012 NHL Entry Draft up against one another. Without trying to influence the results too much I'd like to suggest this will be a very close matchup, which will only serve to further demonstrate the bad luck and utter futility of the Columbus Blue Jackets.

Sure, they get screwed out of Yakupov in the draft lottery but then passed on Galchenyuk at #2. Some teams just can't catch a break. Anyhow, who you got?

Then in the Ovechkin Bracket Final:

#1 Jonathan Huberdeau vs. #2 Vladimir Tarasenko – VOTE HERE

I sincerely hope that Tarasenko's current concussion woes don't influence the vote here but at the same time they probably should since you don't want to be discovered to be a perpetually rebuilding knucklehead! In any case, this matchup is juicier than a pair of Lululemons.

For those of you who haven't been following along or those of you that need a reminder. Please vote based on a points only keeper league format with the caveat that winning now absolutely matters. Follow the links provided to cast your votes and make your voices heard!

The rest of the tourney voting:

Week 3

Week 2

Week 1