

## At the Rookie Tourney Part III

Written by Steve "Notch" Johnson  
Friday, 11 September 2009 19:31 -

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*Follow Notch's observations all week long at the Leaf's rookie tournament in Kitchener.*

Boston @ Ottawa

Final Score – Boston 4-3

**Best Player on the Ice** – Boston goalie: Michael Hutchinson

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Barrie Colts fans will know him as he played in the OHL for them last season. He was peppered by shots all game and stayed calm and square. He was only caught out of position once all game. He, like most goalie prospects it seems, is tall, listed at 6'3" and a slim 188 lbs. Reminded me of Ryan Miller.

Did anybody show they were NHL ready? Yes, his name is Alain Goulet.

This Boston defenseman split time last year between Nebraska of the CCHA and Gatineau in the Q. He also stands 6'3" and weighs in at 195 lbs. His all around play was fun to watch - never, never out of position - it was like he was playing against Peewee's. He had an active stick and just never made a mistake. Not only was he a beast in the defensive zone, he made some solid breakout passes, jumped into the rush at the right time and pinched when he should. He wasn't even on my radar at all, yet he became my focal point as the game wore on. He looked like Lidstrom against these other rookies – dominating.

Does Milan Lucic have a clone? No, but Matt Marquardt sure plays like him.

Another 6'3" player, but this time a forward. He is listed as 222 lbs and he threw that weight around any chance he got. Whenever he was on the ice, the Ottawa players took notice. His nice hands accounted for the first goal on a pretty little wrap around. He is fast, but patient

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when he has the puck. Another huge power forward in the Bruins system. The Northeast division just wet their pants.

Zach Hamill played, but he was a no show on the ice. Not impressed. Sure he is quick, but seemed soft. Not willing to battle.

Finally a small player for Boston. Listed at 5'9" (they must have measured him with skates on), Chris DeSousa is just too small. It is fine if you are Martin St. Louis and have speed to burn, but DeSousa just can't keep up to the play. He had the effort and tried to make an impression, but he was just getting by. He honestly seemed to be the hardest worker out there, but he was just too small and too slow. Bad combination.

Just past the middle of the first period, Jason Wilson of the Bruins crushed Jason Bailey from Ottawa with a late hit. Wilson was assessed an interference penalty and Bailey left the game and did not return. I saw Bailey dressed in his suit in between the second and third periods and I asked him how he felt. He shrugged his shoulders rolled his eyes and said OK, but not great.

As for Ottawa, they outplayed Boston all game nearly doubling the shots on goal. Ottawa held a decided territorial advantage but were just stymied all game by Hutchinson.

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Ottawa's best player was Erik Condra. He was using his speed all game to get around defenders (except for Goulet) and has a nice wrist shot. His shot is not as fast as once thought, but it is a quick release and very accurate. He gave and took hits to make plays and I was very awed with his overall play today.

Regin can stickhandle with the best of them. He controls the play with his moves and gets out of traffic with ease it seems. When he has the puck on his stick however, he can't slow the play down the way stars like Datsyuk, Thornton and Spezza do. He almost seems like he is getting lucky to get out of the congestion he puts himself in.

Jim O'Brien seems awake this game at least, but I see no offense from him at all. He is hitting, but that is it.

Zack Smith is one of the smartest players on the ice. He reads the play so well and when he does not have the puck he always finds the open areas. If someone with vision played on a line with him I can see a lot of quality scoring chances. Smith was impressive this game.

**Ottawa quick hits:**

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Craig Schira is a brick. I saw him in the first intermission with upper body gear off. Now I can see why he hits everything in sight.

Brandon Svendsen did not do much this game.

Erik Karlsson played great again – fourth best player on the ice. Solid at both ends of the ice. Jumped into the rush on the PK and got a great scoring chance. His package of skills is something Ottawa missed all last season.

Keegan Dansereau has three goals in two games. You can't ignore the ability to light the lamp.

Geoff Kinrade often leads the rush and jumps into the play to create offense.

Went to talk to GM Bryan Murray who was sitting with Coach Clouston, Luc Richardson and who I thought was Eli Wilson. I didn't speak with Murray (I did talk to him at the third game...stay tuned), but I spoke with Clouston. I asked him a bad question about the logjam on

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D and was given a generic answer about camp solving those issues. Got better stuff from Murray.

Back shortly for Game 3 – Ottawa versus Toronto.