Buy the updated Playoff Draft List **here** . See a video on how the customization of this list **here** .

Another college player to watch for today – Jeremy Welsh will suit up for the Hurricanes after being signed out of Union a few days ago (they lost in the NCAA semi-finals to Ferris State).

Welsh scored 27 goals in 40 games and is 6'3" and over 200 pounds. Keep in mind he turns 24 at the end of the month.

Not really a surprise, but doesn't sound like Nathan Horton will return at all this postseason.

Tuukka Rask won't be ready to dress as the backup to Tim Thomas for game one – expect that responsibility to fall on
Anton Khudobin
's shoulders.

Tom Gilbert has played 30-or-more minutes in four straight. He was good earlier in the season with Edmonton – he has his weaknesses (physicality, consistency), but he moves the puck quickly and effectively up the ice – something many of Minnesota's other defensemen struggle to do on a regular basis.

Injuries and a lack of ice time are the culprits, but only 13 goals and less than 30 points for Matt Duchene
? Has to be one of the biggest fantasy busts of the season.

All 30 NHL clubs are in action today/tonight. Have fun with the ramblings tomorrow, Chris!

Jonathan Toews won't play tonight, and is still experiencing post-concussion symptoms. He is hoping to play in game one, but it doesn't sound too optimistic.

Mike Smith 's shout streak ended at 234 minutes. Wow indeed.

Smith also set an NHL record with 161 consecutive saves. If the Coyotes win out, they will come 3rd and claim the Pacific Division title.

Jack Connolly won the Hobey Baker award for 2012 (awarded to the best player in college hockey).

The undrafted 5'8" forward recorded 60 points in 41 games for the Bulldogs of Minnesota-Duluth.

The latest Evgeny Kuznetsov news – **he waved farewell to the Traktor fans** … prompting speculation that he will leave for the NHL this coming season.

"He now has two options: sign Traktor's qualifying offer worth around $1.5 million per year with the possibility of receiving an unknown KHL stipend or bolt to the NHL and sign an NHL entry level contact worth a maximum of $925,000 a season plus possible signing and performance bonuses. There are also outside factors likely to be at play — Kuznetsov was married last year

and moving to America would be a big step for the 20-year-old non-English speaker. Kuznetsov is a part of the Russian national team so we likely won't know anything until after the World Championships, taking place in Helsinki and Stockholm throughout May.

We can only guess what Kuznetsov's choice will be — his agent, Jay Grossman, didn't respond to requests for comment regarding his client's earlier remarks — but Kuznetsov took an emotional lap around the ice after today's season-ending loss. Is it just me or is it a little dusty in here?"

Caught some of the Barrie/Ottawa OHL game on TV last night. Mark Scheifele looked good for Barrie – he had a quiet first round. Fellow Winnipeg prospect Ivan Telegin can absolutely fly – he just needs to round out the rest of the game. Tantalizing physical package there, though.

Chris Neil was injured at practice yesterday and didn't travel with the Sens for their final game of the season in New Jersey.

No word on the severity of Neil's injury – he is obviously an integral part of Ottawa's squad, especially if the Sens get matched up against the Big, Bad Bruins in round one.

Scott Glennie is going to make his NHL debut for the Stars tonight. The former 1st round pick has improved in his play as the AHL season has progressed.

The Stars will also play Brendan Dillon on defense – keep an eye on him, he could be a wildcard fantasy pick up in a few years. Former WHL star – smart player, moves the puck well.

The Penguins called up Steve MacIntyre for the game against Philadelphia today. Hmmm….

Paul Holmgren sure goes after what he wants. The Flyers announced yesterday that they have locked up UFA-to-be Nicklas Grossman to a long-term contract. The rugged defenseman has played really well for the injury-ravaged Flyers (Grossman is currently out with an injury).

The cap hit on Grossman's deal - $3.5 million per for four seasons. Seems to be the going rate for a 4/5 defenseman (which is what Grossman is).

Not sure how many of you read Grantland – Bill Simmons has been attending some Kings games this year, and from time to time he **weighs in with his thoughts.** Interesting to get a non-hockey fan perspective (Simmons is a basketball/baseball/football guy).

"According to hockeyfights.com, the Kings have been involved in just 33 fights this season. If you've never been to that site before, it's like Rotten Tomatoes crossed with YouTube for hockey fights — not only do they post clips for EVERY fight, their users even vote for the winners. (By the way, if you had told 1980 Billy Simmons that, some day, he would be able to watch any hockey fight that happened and vote for the winner, his head would have exploded.) Just for fun, I tallied up the Kings' voting results. They started the season with two wins, six draws and no losses. From there, things went downhill with a 3-20-2 cold streak that included the Kings losing their last eight fights. They haven't won a fight at home since Mike Richards beat Phoenix's Martin Hanzal on February 16. Trust me, I went to that game — it wasn't exactly an ass-whupping."

Tom Gilbert has **fit in quite nicely** for the Wild.

"I've been really impressed with his ability to skate pucks out of our zone in traffic," Yeo said of Gilbert. "And, when the pressure is on, he can take two strides and make the tape-to-tape play. As we continue to grow and continue to develop here, he's going to be such a huge part of it."

After writing up some reports on Florida's unbelievable prospect cupboard for the 2012 DobberHockey Prospect Report, this read from the Litter Box Cats couldn't be more bang on – **Bright Present, Blinding Future.**

*"**Drew Shore** recently signed an ELC with the Panthers and reported to the San Antonio Rampage of the AHL to help them in their playoff pursuits. Shore had a fantastic junior year at Denver and seems eager and ready to make the leap to the pro game as well. He'll likely start next season with the Rampage, but if he has a solid camp it wouldn't be shocking to see him in a Panther sweater on opening night."*

This year will be the fifth edition of my annual Prime Cuts roster. I'll be releasing my roster for the 2011-12 season this Sunday evening/Monday morning.

The team will be better than any NHL club, but it won't be stacked. I'll try and place players in appropriate roles (Claude Giroux won't be a checking center, for example). The bottom pairing defensemen may not feature actual five and six defensemen, but it won't contain All-Stars.

Since this is a fantasy hockey site, the selection process favors players that have had strong seasons on the score sheet, obviously. However, not just goals and assists are weighted – perhaps a player has started to shoot the puck more, or play better defensively. Intangibles like heart, grit, and determination factor in to the selection process as well. It is far and away my favorite article to write each year, and I hope you will all enjoy reading it as much as I have

enjoyed writing it.

My past lists – **2011,** **2010** , **2009** , and **2008.**

What are your guesses as to how the roster shakes out?

Joe Thornton pummels Drew Doughty :

{youtube}cVO7TfkGw_g{/youtube}