Pick up my SEVENTH annual Interactive Playoff Draft List . I stuck a video clip below of how it works. Everything is up to date. Plus - join my FREE playoff pool.
Click here
, pick your players – 'submit'. Done. Win a custom jersey from
Cool Hockey
or a framed and signed Alex Burrows picture from The
Fan Zoo
.

TSN is reporting that Daniel Sedin missed practice today. He didn't practice yesterday either. That doesn't sound like a player who is ready for Game 1.

But who is ready? Daniel Briere. He'll be there for Game 1.

If you want some added strategy for a basic office pool draft, I wrote down my thought process during today's draft over at The Hockey News. You can read it here

The Oilers did it again. They'll get the first overall pick after winning the draft lottery. I'm positive that this team will be a juggernaut. Before you go on about "you always say that", or "we should have seen something by now" keep this in mind:

The Penguins drafted

Ryan Whitney fifth in 2002

Marc-Andre Fleury first in 2003

Evgeni Malkin second in 2004

Sidney Crosby first in 2005

After that… yes, after that… the Penguins had 58 points, good for 29th in the league. What? All those great players were drafted and they still finished 29th? Oh yes. And not only that, but the media and fans alike where blasting them. The 2006-07 Hockey News yearbook predicted that they would finish second last in the Conference. Wrong. The Penguins finished with 105 points, eighth in the entire league.

Just that quickly, they were 29th… and experts predicted them to again be 29th… and they finished eighth. The drafted Jordan Staal second overall the prior summer.

So is 2012-13 the Sidney Crosby year for the Oilers? Or is it the Jordan Staal year? That is to say – are they second last one more time? Or do they shoot into the Top 10? This is their fourth Top 10 pick in a row, indicating that it's the Crosby year (assuming the two timelines will be identical). But, this is their fifth Top 10 pick in the last six years, indicating that it's a Staal year (i.e. Top 10).

All the usual arguments aside (blah blah goaltending, blah blah defensemen), the team is well on the way. Since they pretty much have to take Nail Yakupov, they are obviously overstocked up front. So you build around Ryan Nugent-Hopkins , Jordan Eberle , Taylor Hall , Ales Hemsky
and Yakupov. You trade
Magnus Paajarvi
,
Linus Omark
and
Sam Gagner
for – wait for it – goaltending and blue line help. Solved. And with great character guys developing (
Ryan Jones
,
Anton Lander
,
Teemu Hartikainen
) the forwards are set.
Jeff Petry
, Oscar Klefbom and a (finally) healthy Whitney plus whoever is landed via trade makes a recipe for success. Now, trading is easier said than done, but nobody – and I mean nobody – can offer "excess" assets like the Oilers can.

Oh wow, what a nice, neat little bow that was placed on this package that was delivered to Ken Hitchcock. Goalie controversy? What goalie controversy? Brian Elliott left practice with an upper-body injury yesterday, so by default –

Jaroslav Halak is the man. Halak was the man regardless. That's the rule of Golden Boy. And since I love conspiracy theories – if I'm head coach and I am in this jam, I tell the guy who won't be starting to fake a vague injury. Then the papers lay off, no pressure on the No.1. Problem solved. I even rig it to be believable, leaving in the middle of practice… maybe even have him limp a bit. Brilliant. Dobber for coach!

Check out our finalized "Expert Panel" picks for Round 1. As a group, we are 46-14 over the last four years, so if you want help making your picks – give this a look-see .

Thomas Vokoun skated for 20 minutes yesterday. Still probably won't start Game 1. Neuvirth did some light practice as well, but was very limited. Holtby, it is… (and to me, that may be a good thing).

Alexander Semin was also back in practice.

Brad Richardson is out for a couple of weeks after having an appendectomy . Thankfully for the Kings, the Jeff Carter situation looks very promising. That's a pretty good trade. The Kings also recalled Andrei Loktionov from Manchester.

Alexander Radulov – "I feel good" when asked about his maintenance day (he missed practice Monday). Also in that story is word that Hal Gill could be sidelined with a lower body injury.

Tampa prospect Mark Barberio was named the AHL's Outstanding Defenseman (Eddie Shore Award) Tuesday. He had 59 points in 71 AHL games and should finally get some cups of coffee with the big club next year. He's 22, but the team is letting their prospects develop, using the old Red Wings philosophy.

Not fantasy worthy, even for the deepest playoff pool, but the Capitals called Mattias Sjogren back over from Sweden.

Breaking: The New York Rangers have signed Chris Kreider and he will join them in practice. Just attending practice burns the first year of his contract, so they may as well play him. Kreider has the size (6-3, 225) and talent to play in the NHL right now. He's ranked 20th on my Fantasy Prospects List, but moves up with this news (I know I'm a day late with this list, but it's that time of year – I'll try to get it up by Thursday).

I have added Kreider to the Interactive Playoff Draft List and I can pretty much guarantee that no other draft list on the 'net has a projection for him.

If you like your politics, give this Chesnokov piece a read . It's about Kevin Dallman being kicked out Kazakhstan because his wife described some of the corruption there in a recent blog. One thing I can say about greedy, dirty officials who waste their life garnering perceived "power" – they're a bunch of whiny sucks. (ga-ga goo-goo, somewun called you corrupt…do you want your ba-ba?)

Can you imagine being Scott Howson? Does it get any worse than the last 300-odd days?

{youtube}O9cSkQWyE14{/youtube}

How the Interactive Playoff Draft List works, and what it has to offer…

{youtube}fjOeMnEAmHw{/youtube}