During the 2009 NHL Entry Draft, GM Glen Sather completely went off the board by selecting, high-schooler, Chris Kreider with the 19

overall pick,

which left many prospect watchers scratching their heads

. Three years on and Sather is looking like a complete genius. Kreider picked up a goal along with an assist in game one as the New York Rangers edged Washington 3-1. The 20-year old has two game-winning goals despite averaging just 11:08 per contest for the Rangers, which makes him someone to strongly consider for keeper leagues.

Another player that's really impressing me is Brad Richards. If you've been playing fantasy hockey for a while, then you're probably well aware of his inconsistent regular season stats. But when it comes to playoff time, the guy is absolutely clutch (68 points and 256 SOG in 71 career post-season contests)! There aren't very many players in the modern era that have posted numbers similar to Richards. Daniel Briere, Henrik Zetterberg, Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin are the only ones that really come to mind. Perhaps Joe Thornton and Patrick Marleau should take a page from his book.

Henrik Lundqvist didn't have to work too hard to pick up the W tonight, as he faced only 18 SOG from the Caps. If the Rangers can keep that going, this series will be done and dusted fairly quickly.

On the flip side Braden Holtby wasn't very impressive, as he allowed three goals on just 14 shots, which was a far cry from the numbers he posted in the opening series (2.00 GAA and .940 SP). I would strongly argue that he's the key to the series for the Caps.

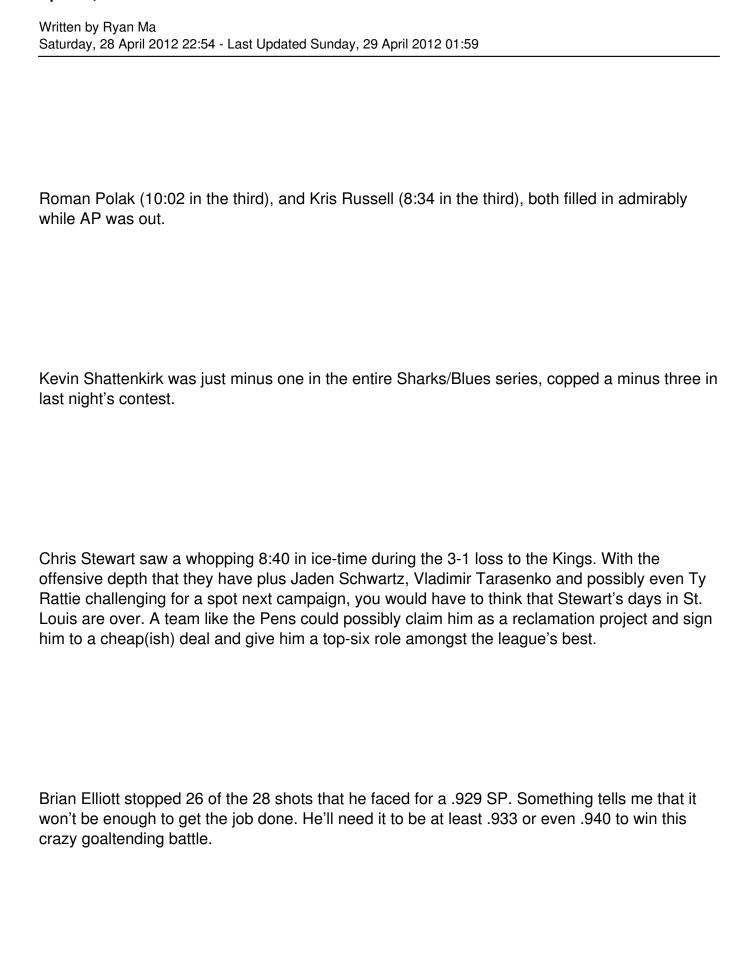
Alex Ovechkin has played "alright" this post-season (tied for 21<sup>st</sup> in points these playoffs, and fifth in SOG with 29), and he got the Caps through the first round against a very tough Bruins team, but somehow I still feel a bit empty. Is it because I expect too much from him? Anyone else feel the same?

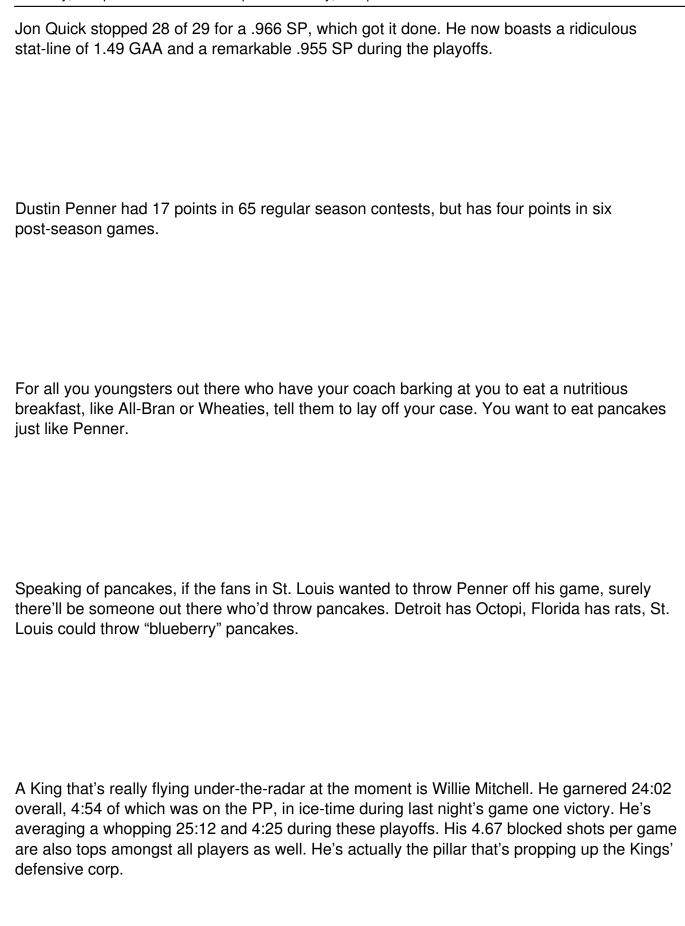
Dennis Wideman is another player that I've been unimpressed with. 46 points in 82 regular season games, but has just a lone point in eight contests during the playoffs. I understand that he didn't have Mike Green to compete with for much of the season, but that's a massive drop off from 0.56 points-per-game pace down to just 0.13.

Some <u>info</u> and some <u>more</u> regarding where the Caps have given up most of their goals during these playoffs, interestingly enough it's actually posted on the Washington Post

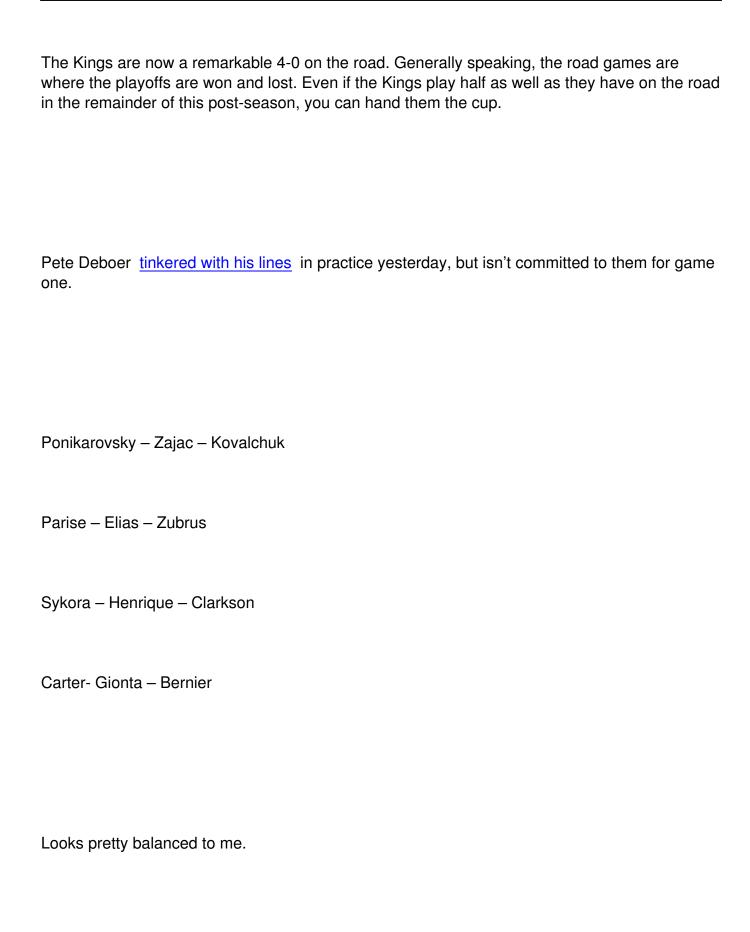
website. That's like posting top-secret military plans on the CIA website for all to see. Surely John Tortorella would have access to this vital information and start sending Ryan Callahan, Brian Boyle, Artem Anisimov and Ruslan Fedotenko towards the opposition net.

Biggest news coming out of the Blues/Kings series is Dwight King's hit from behind to Alex Pietrangelo. AP got up and skated off the ice on his own accord, which didn't look too serious at the time, but he didn't see much ice-time after that, which could mean that something more serious could be lingering in the background. If Pietrangelo's out for a significant amount of time, the series could swing LA's way given the importance of AP to the Blues' lineup.





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Of the eight remaining teams in the post-season, all of them were at or near the top 20 teams in terms of defense (goals against average). If you knock out Washington and Philadelphia, six of the eight teams were in the top 10.

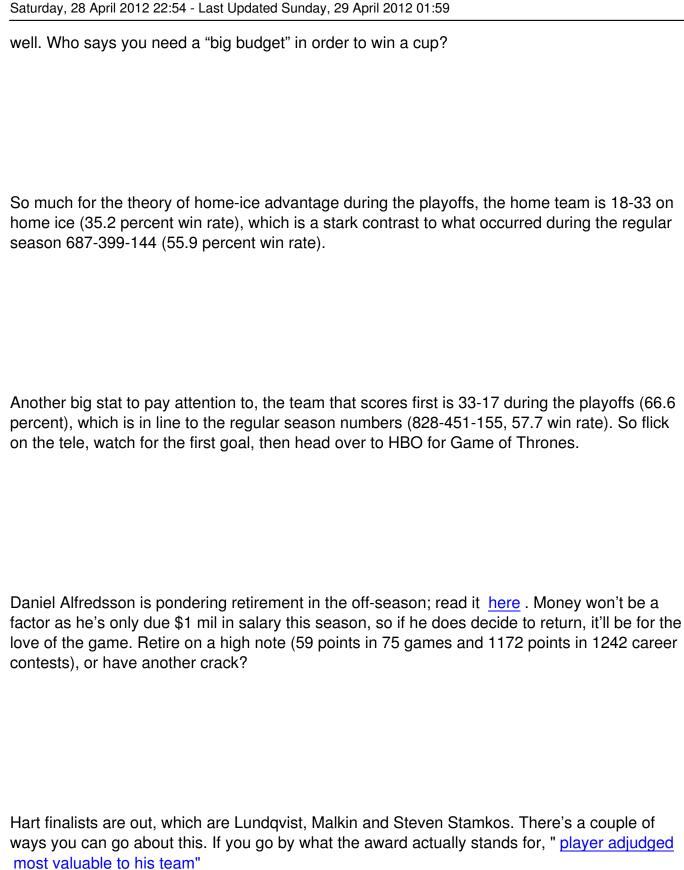
The fantasy implications of this can be disastrous as more teams will try to "replicate" the path of champions as opposed to doing the opposite. We could very well be heading back towards the "dead puck" era if you follow the trends as highlighted over at <a href="Hockey Reference">Hockey Reference</a>. My guess, 2.65 goals per game per team next season, which means fewer "high end" point-per-gamers and fantasy studs. So you can essentially throw those borderline player x "can be a point-per-game player" projections out the window.

<u>Illustrated guide</u> to the first round of the playoffs.

After averaging just 7:08 per contest in the opening series against the Pens, it appears that James van Riemsdyk will garner more responsibility against the Devils according to camphilly.

If you're big in trying to be "ahead of the curve", consider the Avs (\$42.8 mil), Preds (\$32.3 mil), Coyotes (\$29.4 mil), Blues (\$28.5 mil) and Sens (\$27.8 mil) who are in the top-five, in terms of available cap space heading into 2012-13, according to <a href="Capgeek">Capgeek</a>. Interesting enough, four of the five teams made the post-season this year, and Colorado was pretty close at the cusp as





, then you almost have to give it to Stamkos don't you? I mean where would the Lightning be without Stammy's 60 goals, which accounted for 25.9 percent of the Lightning goals this campaign? You take that out and they'd be where Minny, Islanders or Columbus are.



Is Lundy the most valuable Ranger? More important than Dan Girardi? Would Biron have completely collapsed the Rangers?

Can't really fault what Malkin did this season for the Pens, but would Pittsburgh completely collapse if Malkin weren't there? His 50 goals accounted for 18.3 percent of the Pens' goals this campaign, is that enough to justify him over Stamkos?

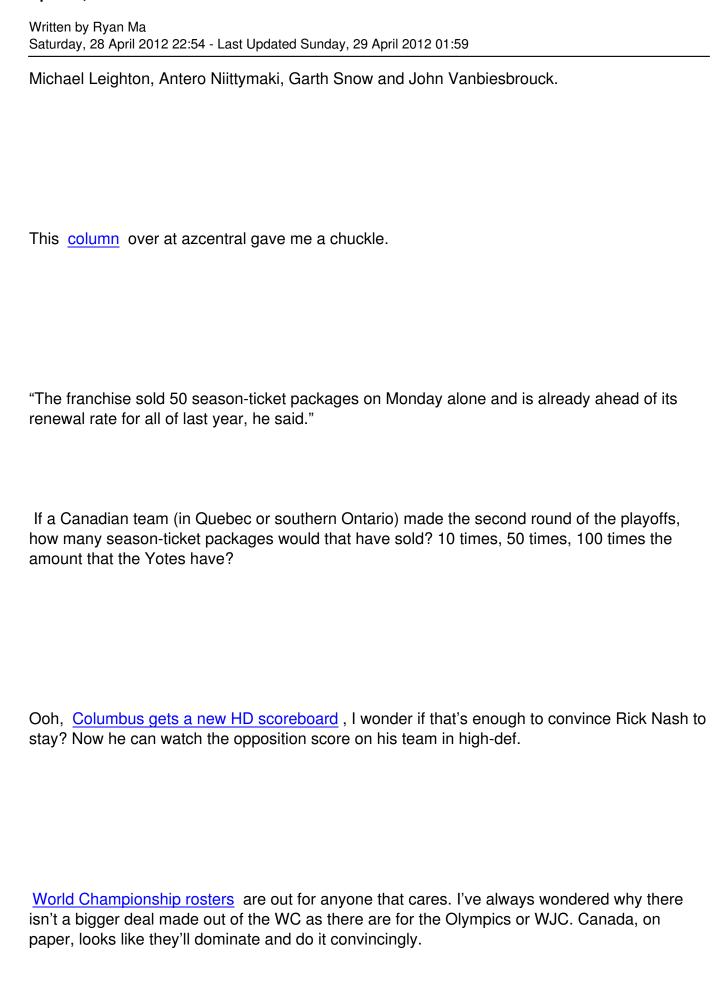
An interesting <u>take</u> on goalies from Adam Proteau of THN, but I'll take it a bit further and look back to the lockout. 2005-06: Cam Ward (still remains) and Dwayne Roloson (gone), 2006-07: J.S. Giguere (gone) and Ray Emery (gone), 2007-08: Chris Osgood (gone) and M.A. Fleury (still remains), 2008-09: same as 07-08, 2009-10: Antti Niemi (gone) and Michael Leighton (gone), 2010-11: Tim Thomas and Roberto Luongo (both possibly gone). I guess this just highlights how fickle the goaltending position is in the NHL. You can win a cup and three years down the road and you're in a different uniform.

One of the reasons why I think the Devils will take out the Flyers, **Martin Brodeur**. According to the blog over

at Fire and Ice. Brodeur will start in his 178

consecutive playoff game on Sunday, a streak which was started way back in 1994. Since then, the Flyers have utilized 12 different goalies during the playoffs, Martin Biron, Sergei Bobrovsky, Brian Boucher, Sean Burke, Ilya Bryzgalov, Roman Cechmanek, Robert Esche, Ron Hextall,

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Make sure you head over to <a href="Dobber Prospects">Dobber Prospects</a> and give that a good gander. Brendan Ross and Matt Bugg are two of the most knowledgeable people in terms of hockey prospects.	
Should you be so inclined, follow me on <u>Twitter</u> if you think that my article/tweets are useful.	
King hit on Pietrangelo plus game-winning goal from Matt Greene. Suspendable?	
Kreider's bullet on Holtby	

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