

May 16, 2012

Written by Chris Nichols

Tuesday, 15 May 2012 22:47 - Last Updated Tuesday, 15 May 2012 22:53

Ok class, you have a substitute teacher today. Attendance will still be taken and there will be zero hallway passes granted. No exceptions.

Puck Daddy [went behind the scenes](#) of the Los Angeles Kings' Twitter feed, which has drawn a lot of media attention in the playoffs. Good read, whether you're for or against the way the team's social media squad run things. As someone who trudges through a lot of hockey info on Twitter each and every day, it's pretty refreshing to get a laugh once in awhile. Doesn't mean it's always funny and from time to time it seems like they're trying too hard. At least they're making an effort to be different though.

From the guy in charge: "It's an extension of the brand. It's supposed to be partisan. It's supposed to be fun. It's no knock on any team, but the other 29 NHL teams can be pretty dry. That's why celebrities have big followings on social media and brands don't: Because there's no personality to a brand."

In the second intermission, which was shortly after Mike Smith's chop on Dustin Brown (seriously... how did Brown get an embellishing penalty on that??), the Kings' feed tweeted this: "Intermission Activity: Mike Smith is _____". Again... agree or disagree, you can bet they got

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some colourful responses. They're getting fans involved. If you don't like it, don't follow them.

Buddies Mike Richards and Jeff Carter are due for a pretty decent upward statistical spike next season. Even if the Kings have a short summer following a Cup Finals appearance, which can hamper the following season's stats in some cases, both guys were so off this year that it's almost unthinkable they could repeat that poor level of results. Richards has a box score appearance in five of six and had six points in that span before Tuesday's game. Carter has points in three of five now after this hat trick effort in Game Two, although that stretch was preceded by nothing in five starts.

The jury is still out on Dustin Penner for '12-13 though. Playoff performance aside, the pending UFA may fall fairly late in most fantasy drafts next season. We'll see where he signs and what the situation is then, but the 6-4 winger has generally been a fantasy tease in the long haul of a regular season. Could he thrive if he stayed in L.A. and managed to earn time nightly with Richards and Carter? Absolutely. Consistency has not tended to be his mainstay, though he'll have an increasing number of people pulling for him if he contributes all the way to a Cup run. I love his dry sense of humour. I hate not knowing what you'll get from him night in and night out on the fantasy roster.

Shane Doan on Trevor Lewis: no suspension will or should be handed down, IMO. Lewis turning into it will be the mitigating factor.

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Martin Hanzal on Dustin Brown: Shanny may give one game, despite no history for Hanzal. We'll see. I don't envy Shanahan's job.

Jonathan Quick and the Kings have now won seven in a row, 10 of 11 in the postseason and Quick nabbed his second shutout.

39-year-old Mike Knuble is ready and willing to continue his NHL career next season, but is he able? He says he doesn't have any nagging injuries and he still enjoys being at the rink with the guys every day. He'll be a UFA July 1 and the fact that his role varied so widely all season may make it tough for NHL GMs to gauge exactly how much is left in the tank. His production has dropped from 53 to 40 to 18 points over the past three years, although he really had little chance to put up points this season. His generally limited action was, IMO, pretty clearly the reason he dropped below the 24-goal mark (he only had six) for the first time in the post-lockout era. Still, he's no spring chicken and although he can certainly be a useful FA pickup in the right line combo situation, most poolies will just take a wait and see attitude with Knuble while first looking for fresher, younger talent.

Speaking of older players, Milan Hejduk's agent and the Colorado Avalanche apparently have an ongoing dialogue regarding the 36-year-old UFA-to-be. His preference is to stay with the Avs, which is the only NHL team for which he's played. Family considerations (and legacy, you'd imagine) might push his decision toward retirement if the team doesn't want him back on the ice, but The Denver Post noted there's [still a chance he could sign elsewhere](#) July 1. Either way, in larger formats Hejduk is a serviceable depth winger who can still produce despite not having the greatest statistical season (14-23-37 in 81 GP) this time around.

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Alexander Semin's likely voyage to unrestricted free agent waters this summer should be viewed as a good thing for his potential fantasy value, IMO; which is not something we would have necessarily thought a few years ago when the Caps' stars were the high-flying fantasy darlings of the poolie world. Semin's case, particularly this season, kind of reminds me of Martin Havlat in Minnesota prior to the deal with the Sharks. Either misused or underused by the team, but certainly deserving of said treatment a fair amount of the time. Chicken and egg kind of thing. Play better, get a better role. Or get a better role and production chances increase. Either way, I still believe Semin can be a legit higher-end fantasy producer in this league.

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FWIW and IMO (and an especially appropriate topic after discussing lightning rods of criticism like Penner, Semin and Havlat), it's really important for fantasy owners to keep an open mind when it comes to players' performances.

Some people approach pools (and life) with a 'glass is half-empty' philosophy, which can lead to missing out on some of the great redemption stories like Mike Smith or Brian Elliott.

Others are on the opposite end of the spectrum. They lean toward overinflating every possible shift in value; from signing with a new team, to a trade, to a bump up in line assignments. The

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glass isn't just half-full for them... they think there's a pot of gold at the end of every rainbow.

The ideal approach, as best we can manage, is that of a realist. Base your opinions on what you see on the ice, not outdated opinions that get recycled by the hackier members of the media. Use your own eyes and (hopefully) good judgment to disseminate the info as it unfolds and apply that going forward. It sounds simple enough, but experience says not enough people operate under that philosophy.

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I'll be back with another substitute Ramblings May 25.

*Check in each weekday, 12 months of the year, with [Hockey Hearsay](#) on Sportsnet.ca. If you're so inclined, [follo](#)
[w me on Twitter](#)
as a safe "mobile notifications on" guy. I don't tweet just to tweet.*