Hoping to finalize a fantasy guide update today this will be done tomorrow (I was plowing away at it for an hour before the wife handed me a "honey-do" list), including Bobby Butler and Jonathan Quick notes, as well as getting the CBA Tracker started.
You can pick up the fantasy guide here
- the draft list is included. I'll update the ramblings and let you know when the guide update is complete.

In the offseason, more teams improve on paper than get worse. If you look at 20 teams right now, you believe that they are better - even a little bit. Only four or five teams you look at and say "whoa, they got worse". So there are bound to be teams who fall short of expectations. But the trap that you can't fall into is the easy trap - the one that suckers you into picking the obvious teams to do terrible. Phoenix? Nashville? Florida? Easy pickings. On paper, the teams aren't flush with stars. But they didn't have stars last year either. Phoenix is there because of coaching. Losing Ray Whitney hurts, but they won't be 15th because of it. Nashville lost Ryan Suter, but for all we know Roman Josi and Ryan Ellis will make up for much of that loss. More importantly, Nashville has been all about the coaching for years. Turn your attention elsewhere if you want to shift teams out of a playoff spot in your projections. Take a chance. Otherwise, you'll be wrong.

As for Florida, take a look at this:

Gone – Wojtek Wolski, Krys Barch, Bill Thomas, Mikael Samuelsson, Jason Garrison, John Madden, Marco Sturm

Incoming – Casey Wellman, Peter Mueller, Filip Kuba, George Parros, Jonathan Huberdeau

Does this look as though they got worse? Because I'm seeing much, much better.

If Bobby Butler gets a fair shake in New Jersey, it will happen because he is on the first line with Ilya Kovalchuk and Travis Zajac…or with Adam Henrique and Patrik Elias. Otherwise, it's not a fair shake. He's useless on a checking line. A boom or bust dark horse, as he'll probably post either 42-plus points or eight or nine points tops - and waste away in the minors..

Brendan Ross gives a rundown of the notable performers of the Canada-Russia challenge over at The Hockey Writers . Of note, he comments on the likes of Mikhail Grigorenko, Ty Rattie, Mark Scheifele...as well as Jonathan Huberdeau, Ryan Strome, etc.

Not to put down this Jamie Benn column on NHL Numbers, but... Benn already broke out. Last year. That was the year where some poolies were caught off guard (not the ones who bought my Guide last summer, but the ones who didn't). If Benn didn't get hurt, he would have flirted with 75 points (18th in scoring). Anyway, if the crux of the article is the statement that he can still be better, then I accept that (Sons of Anarchy quote - been wanting to work that in ha). But if it's a piece on how he could break out in 2012-13, then that's like writing a piece on how Evgeni Malkin could win scoring titles.

Those who think that the owners "didn't really hurt themselves that much" by wiping out an entire season are deluding themselves. The owners lost close to a billion dollars from that season, whereas players still got their guaranteed contracts without being docked a year. Granted, the players lost a year of earning power - those who didn't play in Europe or other leagues. The point is, the owners do care about missing a season, or even half a season. Now with the money that a season is making them these days. They understand that cancelling 20 games will hurt their bottom line more than 25% - fans will be pissed and that will have a residual effect. Missing 25% of the season would probably cost them 35% or the revenue or more. It will cost them prominence in mainstream media and if this thing goes past Christmas it will piss off NBC and HBO. The owners feel pressure to get hockey going again more so than the players.

I'm behind on this news, but how nutty is the punishment on the OHL's Windsor Spitfires? They "violated the League's Player Benefit and Recruitment Rules and Policies". And for that they forfeit a second round pick in the OHL Draft for 2015 and for 2017. Oh, and also they forfeit first round picks for 2013, 2014 and 2016. And…$400,000 fine. This team is gonna hurt for the next little while. What did they do, kidnap a player and force him to play? If I'm the OHL, Windsor would have been No.2 on my list of teams to stick under the microscope. Be careful London!

If Mika Zibanejad does not make the Sens this year, he will play in the AHL, not Sweden.

Copper'n Blue named Taylor Hall the best Edmonton player under the age of 25 recently. I have to agree. In terms of all-around play, what he brings to the table - and not factor injury-proneness due to his style - absolutely. But in terms of pure offensive creativity, if he's healthy, Jordan Eberle's healthy, Nail Yakupov's healthy and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins is healthy - then I give the nod to Hopkins. And possibly Yakupov, but I'd need to see him play in the NHL before stating it for sure. So real NHL - Hall. Fantasy hockey - Hopkins.

The Flyers have lost Andreas Lilja for four months after undergoing hip surgery. So that's Lilja, Pronger, Meszaros all hurt, and Matt Carle signed with another team.

Bobby Butler highlights:

{youtube}7VknAPiOUTY{/youtube}