

Derek Roy has been [rehabbing hard](#) from his off-season shoulder surgery. He remains on target to return in November and hopes to begin skating later this month. He mentions how research shows when you start rehab right away, instead of just letting the area heal, it apparently helps you get back more quickly.

There were some eyebrows raised when he ended up having surgery shortly after the trade this summer, but it's all good in Roy's eyes.

“They figured a 100 percent [Derek Roy](#) would help the team more than playing at 75 percent, getting hurt, coming back and doing that all season. We made the decision on surgery and right now for us, and we are going to move forward,” Roy said. “I could have played with it, but I wouldn't have been 100 percent. If it fails on me again, I could miss some games. Every time you do that, you take a step back. Getting the surgery done just shows how much they care and how they want their players to be 100 percent. It shows exactly how much they care about their players.”

Clearly he's pretty far along in his rehab if he's already referencing himself in the third person.

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Chris likes that. Chris likes that a lot.

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Linus Omark had a three-point debut in Switzerland, which included the game-winner with a pair of assists. He was also the third star of the game. Hopefully he can dominate there, make some positive tweaks to his game and be ready to come back to North America for next season.

As much as I can't see a top-nine spot for him the way the Oilers are currently rounding out, sometimes the need for organizational depth is glossed over in some circles. It's also way too early, IMO, to write off his chances of success in the NHL and if he can bring his game up a notch then at the very least he'll be an even better trade chip down the line. If not, at least he'll still be fun to watch during shootouts.

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You may remember hearing during the winter about how Phil Esposito's 43-year-old daughter tragically passed away from an abdominal aneurism. [The Tampa Bay Times notes](#) that Esposito and his wife are now raising her 19-year-old son. Really touching story. He says not only has he gotten to know his grandkids even better, but he's finding out what his daughter was all about too.

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A few Sunday Ramblings back there was a note on how the charter air service the Nashville Predators used filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in late June. They're still operating despite that fact, which isn't uncommon. They had been flying the team and its equipment since last year under a five-year contract, but the service sought to drop the Preds altogether. Well, [a court finally ruled](#) they could do exactly that as part of its corporate reorganization plan. So they did. The gist of it seems to be that they only wanted to serve Eastern teams, so they also punted the Colorado Avalanche, Denver Nuggets and Phoenix Suns.

That all sounds fine, right? Geographically speaking, if a company wants to tighten up financially then maybe it makes sense to hone its craft (no pun intended) to one specific region. They kept their contract with the Boston Bruins. But wait a minute... they also maintained service with the St. Louis Blues. And Chicago Blackhawks. Check the map. Both cities are definitely west of Nashville.

Not that I really care who flies the Preds. I'd also imagine they'll have no issue whatsoever finding alternative arrangements either. But when you sign a contract to do something and then give what – at least on the surface – appears to be a factually incorrect argument of why you can no longer live up to that contract... what the heck?

\*

There are 60-plus dailies perused for each edition of Hockey Hearsay and although weekdays have still been plentiful through the summer, the past two weekends have been virtually dry looking for Ramblings content. It's virtually all CBA crap.

So what better time to check CapGeek for a list of next summer's potential UFAs? Here's a quick glance at some of the names.

Jarome Iginla celebrates every Canada Day with his birthday, so he'll turn 36 next summer. Calgary's captain has five straight seasons of playing a full 82-game slate and chances are reasonable he'll not only match last year's 67 points (a 19-point drop from the prior campaign), but a Bob Hartley horse-driven system increases the odds he'll improve on that mark. Will he finish his career with the Flames though?

This should be a defining season for Alexander Semin, one way or the other. I tend to believe he'll bounce back markedly from his 54-point result, which should make him a virtual steal in most drafts. He can set himself up nicely for a longer-term contract, instead of his recent string of one-year deals, while also working on restoring some lustre to his tarnished image. Either way, the ball is firmly in his court. Put up or shut up.

Brenden Morrow will attract a lot of suitors, without question. If a slightly-older Shane Doan is causing this much commotion, then Morrow will surely be a big draw despite a few injury issues. Morrow will be 34 then, while Doan will turn 36 a day before the season is technically slated to begin. As much as the Dallas winger should finish with more than 26 points this time around, his seemingly likely third line slot isn't helping his fantasy potential at the moment. Michael Ryder could also become a free agent and Dallas has been a nice fit for him.

Who wouldn't want who will then be a 30-year-old Ryane Clowe if he makes it to the not-so-free market? #beast

Alexander Edler won't make it to open waters, while it's doubtful Alexandre Burrows would either.

Ryan Getzlaf and Corey Perry would command a King's ransom if they decided to bolt Southern California, but the Ducks will do everything possible to make sure that doesn't happen. Imagine the ruckus if they went the Zach Parise-Ryan Suter route though as a package deal, eh? It'll be interesting to see if the league can get that five-year cap on contracts or something close.

Bobby Ryan, incidentally, has three years left on his current deal and until the team comes out and make a statement like Steve Yzerman did with Vincent Lecavalier when he took over in Tampa Bay, the rumours will continue to swirl. Ryan could use a clean slate somewhere else.

Patrik Elias will be 37. He seems likely to experience a drop from the 78 points he netted, but he still has a couple more years of decent earning potential.

Stephen Weiss and Valtteri Filppula seem likely to be re-upped by their current clubs, while Guillaume Latendresse represents an intriguing option for both the Sens and poolies. Couldn't have loved that signing anymore, so we'll see what he does with the chance. #lateroundthievery

Teemu Selanne and Daniel Alfredsson won't be going anywhere else.

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Jaromir Jagr. What a beauty. Wherever he ends up, we'll have guaranteed entertainment value during the process. Who saw Dallas coming?

Joffrey Lupul will be an interesting case, especially with Brian Burke in charge. The variables will be there (Phil Kessel and, at least to start with, James van Riemsdyk) for success again if Lupul can deliver it, but can he deliver it at that level again? Can't wait to see what his average draft position will be when all is said and done this year.

Andy McDonald will be an intriguing get if he hits the market. He's another one of those hidden values in pools because of a low GP total (22 points in 25 starts). Mike Ribeiro and Wojtek Wolski (one-year bargain contract), interestingly enough, are both up for new pacts next summer and they could well be linemates. Derek Roy may end up not missing any games if the lockout goes awhile.

Lubomir Visnovsky is slated to have his trade grievance heard Tuesday, but either way his current contract will expire following this season. With only 27 points to his name last year, he's going to fall so deeply on most service's rankings that he should net poolies solid value in any format whether he's with the Isles, Ducks or anyone else.

Vets Kimmo Timonen, Marek Zidlicky, Joe Corvo, and Sergei Gonchar are on the list, as is

Mark Streit. Quite the comeback season for him after missing an entire year, despite the minus-27 rating on Long Island.

Niklas Backstrom may well be gone from Minnesota, but not before enjoying what should be a really effective season. Josh Harding has patiently waited for his turn and he'll likely get it in '13-14. The Stars, Wings and Coyotes will surely lock up Kari Lehtonen, Jimmy Howard and Mike Smith.

Jose Theodore and Evgeni Nabokov will be free agents, as will Nikolai Khabibulin and Ray Emery (see next section), Mathieu Garon, Chris Mason, Jason LaBarbera, Peter Budaj, Viktor Fasth (can't wait to see him in action), Anton Khudobin, Michael Leighton, Henrik Karlsson, Yann Danis, Al Montoya (set to become a quiet fan favourite in Winnipeg), and Thomas Greiss.

If Tim Connolly doesn't end up with a notable reduction in pay from his current \$4.75 million hit, then I honestly won't even know what to say.

Pierre-Marc Bouchard, you'd have to imagine, won't do better than a one-year 'prove you're healthy' deal unless he plays all 82 games this season. And the odds of that are as good as there actually being 82 games this season. I wish him the best though.

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How many outings can Ryan Whitney muster? He and Justin Schultz could do some serious damage for fantasy owners this year, but there won't likely be any long-term deals in Whitney's immediate future.

Health will also be the critical determining factor for Nathan Horton. He was cleared for contact in late July and is supposed to be ready for camp, so there's another potential boom or bust scenario at the draft. In terms of his next contract, we'll see. Ditto in some respects for Simon Gagne.

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This is just pure daydreaming on my part, but I'd love to see the Oilers and Hawks do a straight-up swap with Khabibulin and Emery. One year left on each guy's contract. \$3.75 million for the former and \$1.15 million for the latter.

Clearly Chicago isn't 100 percent satisfied with Corey Crawford, or they wouldn't have tested the waters on Martin Brodeur when he flirted with leaving Jersey early in free agency. Whether there's any truth to the Roberto Luongo rumours floated this summer is another matter, but the team confirmed its interest in Brodeur.

In terms of age, Khabibulin at 39 is even a year younger than the NHL's all-time winningest goalie. The Hawks wanted Brodeur for a single season. Khabibulin has a Cup win on his resume and showed he still has gas left in the tank with last campaign's impressive start. With more defensive support from the Hawks, he could likely push Crawford for starts and improve the team's bottom line. Stop-gap measure at best, to be sure, but not completely out of the question.

On the flip side, I've made no secret of coveting Emery for the Oilers to give Devan Dubnyk a run for his money between the pipes. I'd be pretty content with that tandem going forward. My sense on Emery is that the KHL and subsequent hip injury scare really humbled him. He could have walked away from the game, but he didn't and clearly still has a drive for hockey.

Since this trade won't happen, it'll be interesting to see what unfolds next summer for my Oil in net. I can't imagine Khabibulin will be invited back, regardless of how he fares in '12-13. Will the veteran Danis get a shot if he puts up another AHL season like '11-12 (2.07/ .924 with five shutouts)? Can't imagine the kids in the system will be ready that soon. With Dubnyk eating up a \$3.5 million cap hit, it's hard to think they'd target someone like Backstrom. And to be fair, if Dubnyk gets the job done in what should be the next phase of the rebuild, then Backstrom wouldn't be the right fit anyway.

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Last weekend Michal Neuvirth's agent (former NHLer Patrik Stefan) reached out and we ended up trading a few texts Sunday afternoon while I was still in the hospital. When that whole Czech interview disaster first broke I scrapped Hockey Hearsay for the day and basically wrote an article defending Neuvirth and his right to be taken in context, while also touching on how important it was to read translated hockey interviews cautiously in the first place.

Stefan was not only appreciative of the effort, but he also said if I ever wanted an interview with Michal or any of his clients to let him know and he'd make it happen. Gracious gesture. Kind of made my day. And not in a talking-to-an-empty-chair kind of way.

\*

Speaking of that hospital visit: where to begin? Consider this bonus content for the week.

First of all, a sincere thanks for the well-wishes. Truly. It meant a lot. Initially, I wasn't even going to mention anything about the medical excitement in that Ramblings. In the end, I thought the locale was too interesting to NOT include it. I'm generally pretty much a privacy recluse, but I kinda feel like you came on last week's journey with me - so what the hell.

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The long and the short of last Saturday was after a fairly busy few days, I felt this insane tightness in the left side of my chest around lunchtime. After describing things to my doctor's office over the phone, they INSISTED on calling 911. No ifs, ands or buts. Without saying it, the obvious concern was a heart attack. I have none of the risk factors for one, but better safe than dead I suppose.

Over the course of the next 30 hours, there was:

\*A total of seven paramedics and firefighters in my bedroom, during which my wife – understandably a little freaked out – mistakenly told them my oldest dog's arthritis pill bottle was a medication I took daily. Despite being given my first dose of nitroglycerin, being hooked up to monitoring devices and having a multitude of questions fired at me, I caught the mistake and had the guys laughing. Hey, if you can't tell a few jokes when everyone thinks you're about to die then what fun is that? #tensionbreaker

\*An ER-requested urinalysis, despite me having gone just before the ambulance took me away from the house. The nurse said if I couldn't produce soon they'd have no choice but to use a catheter, at which point I believe my exact words were, "I'll need five glasses of water, please, STAT!" More pain avoided. A lot more went on in the ER in terms of testing and such, but that was the takeaway highlight for me.

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\*A glorious period of 24 hours where I was the only male patient in the entire cardiac wing. Imagine my chagrin when I met my Saturday overnight nurse: a chap named Adam.

Somehow I had different image in my head when I imagined a nurse whisper on the way out of the darkened room, "If there's anything you need, don't hesitate to ask. Anything."

\*A total of six different blood draws consisting of maybe 15 total viles, which apparently qualifies me to get into the next four Twilight movies at a discounted rate. Unfortunately, if there end up being another four Twilight movies I'll probably shoot myself first.

\*A nuclear stress test, during which I was injected with a radiopharmaceutical that caused my heart rate to jump to 110. My resting heart rate is normally about half that. Oh. And I was told to flush twice after I peed. You know... cuz of the whole Chernobyl-in-my-body thing. Plus side? No need for a nightlight in the bathroom. The toilet glows in the dark. I'm still waiting for my superpowers to kick in.

\*A sonogram on my right leg, the point of which was to check for potential blood clots which might have been a root cause of the chest pain. After the incredibly sweet and professional tech was done, she relayed the good news. "Nothing exciting to see down there." To which I replied, "Not exactly what any partially-clothed man wants to hear. But thanks." Couldn't resist. I am definitely a smart-ass, regardless of the situation. This should come as no surprise whatsoever to anyone who knows me.

\*An echocardiogram, which proved the most informational.

Bottom line, there's a small mitral valve prolapse in my heart. Not a big deal, no treatment required and not related to whatever the cause of the 'horse-kicked-me' chest tightness was Saturday. No other cardiac issues whatsoever showed up. I did NOT have a heart attack. Arteries, cholesterol (I actually eat much better than I joke about in my writing), and everything else they could think of to test for all came back clean. I was discharged Sunday night and cleared for anything I'd normally do.

Unfortunately, we still have no idea what caused the severe tightness and the doctor said just because the tests didn't show anything this time, doesn't mean there's still not an issue hiding there. Honestly, that is a little disconcerting. Nothing I can do about it though and I'm not the sort to stress on things over which I have no control. I learned that lesson a long time ago.

Bottom line: it wasn't my time to go just yet. I have to at least hold off the Grim Reaper until this fall's fantasy rankings publish, right? ;)

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Thanks again for the kind thoughts. They're appreciated.

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