Angus here - my latest on the lockout and the Carolina Hurricanes.

I am also running a contest over at my Facebook page - "like" my page and post your guesses for the top 50 NHL trade values (in order) to win an autographed Alex Edler 8x10. The details.

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Lockout Update: Day 2 - There is still a lockout.

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Fantasy Guide update - The guide was last updated September 14. My annual 3-Tiered Invitational will go on, and invites are being accepted until tonight at midnight. If you bought the guide and you want to join this pool, enter the draw by emailing me with the subject line Enter me in the Pool! and include your name in the body.

*

The league has to cave on this one. Will they? I think so. Obviously we hope it happens sooner, rather than later. But the problem is, they have already received $200 million from NBC for this season. That's a nice war chest. The players, meanwhile, will get 8% of last year's salary on October 15, thanks to their escrow being refunded. So a lockout does nothing to them. And furthermore, with memories of the last lockout still fresh, many players have already signed overseas. I remember last lockout it took many players weeks, even months, to make the decision to play elsewhere.

The NHL also will realize that they will get an improvement on the deal that they already have. And the deal they already have gives them cost certainty.

*

Without the last lockout, there would be no DobberHockey. Should we be thankful? (Uh…no comment)

When the season was announced as cancelled that fateful January, The Hockey News was forced to lay off several of their staff, including their webmaster. So Adam Proteau, a writer there, was given the added duties of posting the work of the web writers (i.e. myself). Well, he couldn't figure out how to get my rankings up in neat chart form, so I created a little webpage and put them up myself - and he linked to it through my columns. That 'little webpage' grew into what you see here.

*

Players who have signed contracts to play in Europe, so far (that I know of): Evgeni Malkin , Sergei Gonchar
,
Jiri Hudler
,
Ondrej Pavelec
,
Pavel Datsyuk
,
Jussi Jokinen
,
Jaromir Jagr
,
Pavel Kubina
(that one may be for the full year, not sure),
Tomas Plekanec
,
Ruslan Fedotenko
,
Alexei Ponikarovsky
,
Andrei Kostitsyn

(that one is for the full year).

Rumored players probably on the way: Hemsky, Krejci, Fleischmann, Berglund, Backlund, Stastny, Kopitar, Yakupov

Is there a KHL package I can buy, Mr. Canadian TV Exec?

*

I know there is an AHL package I can buy, check out some of these names in the AHL now:

Braden Holtby , Dmitry Orlov , Vladimir Tarasenko (may go to KHL), Jaden Schwartz , Nino Niederreiter
,
Kevin Poulin
,
Kirill Kabanov
,
Travis Hamonic
,
Gabriel Bourque
,
Ryan Ellis
, Jack Maclellan, Mikael Granlund, Johan Larsson, Charlie Coyle,
Marco Scandella
, Jonas Brodin,
Andrei Loktionov
,
Slava Voynov
,
Gustav Nyquist
, Damien Brunner,
Cody Eakin
,
John Moore
,

Ryan Johansen
,
Cam Atkinson
, Sven Bärtschi,
Brayden McNabb
,
Cody Hodgson
, Zemgus Girgensons,
Marcus Foligno
,
Luke Adam
, Sami Vatanen, Devante Smith-Pelly,
Emerson Etem
,
Alexander Burmistrov
,
Jake Gardiner
,
Simon Despres
,
Michael Stone
,
David Rundblad
,
Brandon Gormley
,
Oliver Ekman-Larsson
(Yeah, Portland is going to be sick on the blue line. Ridiculous talent),
Sean Couturier
,
Adam Henrique
,
Jacob Josefson
,
Adam Larsson
,
Mattias Tedenby
,
Jordan Eberle
,
Teemu Hartikainen
,
Ryan Nugent-Hopkins
, Justin Schultz,
Magnus Paajarvi
,

Brandon Saad
,
Andrew Shaw
, Jeremy Welsh and
Jeff Skinner
.

As noted - Phoenix's farm team (Portland) is going to have better D than some NHL teams. Other thoughts:

Edmonton's farm team (Oklahoma City) is almost as good as Edmonton will be. It's pretty much the Oilers minus goaltending, Whitney, Hemsky, Horcoff, Smyth and Yakupov.

Minnesota's farm team (Houston) may be the best of them all - with studs on the ice in front of a stud goaltender (Matt Hackett), I'll be watching as many of their games as I can.

I made Jack Maclellan notable because he was a top college player last season. He sighed with Nashville and stayed with the big club, but never got into a game. So we have no idea how he does as a pro, because he's never played pro hockey.

Those players who have had a tough go of it while being a little rushed to the NHL can now reboot in the AHL. If this lasts longer than two months, this will be very good for these players. I'm talking about Niederreiter, Paajarvi, Burmistrov, Johansen, Tedenby and Larsson. If the lockout lasts two months, I predict that at least two of these players will make an immediate splash in the NHL when they return.

*

And then there is the junior circuit - no longer losing studs to the NHL, much as it was in 2004 when Corey Perry led the London Knights to the Memorial Cup. Teammates included Dave Bolland
,

Brandon Prust
,
Dan Girardi
,
Marc Methot
and several potential prospects who fell short of expectation -
Rob Schremp
,
Dan Fritsche
,
Danny Syvret
and
Bryan Rodney
. The quality of all three leagues improve for sure.

*

Pittsburgh prospect Nick Petersen was given his unconditional release late last week. He was a dominant QMJHL player and again in the ECHL, but his impact at the AHL level was average at best.

*

Dumb deal - Evander Kane for over $5 million per season for six seasons. Here's a guy whose career high is 57 points, but more importantly - his career high is 74 games. They consider him the face of the franchise - I'm afraid that by 2014, Blake Wheeler
and
Mark Scheifele
will beg to differ.

*

Gates here - my rotisserie mailbag is now open. Have a burning roto based question? Ask away .

*

Here is the party line of the NHL - boils down to three messages.

• The players are willing to play and negotiate at the same time

• The players have conceded salary growth

• The players want their concessions to help small-market teams survive, not help the rich teams get richer

The players have this message for you regarding the lockout:

{youtube}RCW0VsfR9FM{/youtube}