

**October 18, 2012**

Written by Jeff Angus

Wednesday, 17 October 2012 19:08 - Last Updated Thursday, 18 October 2012 15:18

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### **Lockout thoughts:**

The meetings today were a step backwards, but I'd caution to get too pessimistic. The November 2nd deadline was never really that realistic - I think the league continues to play hardball, because let's face it - they can. Will the players continue to tow the PA company line when they see another month of games cancelled?

I think the fact that they met is a good sign. We will wait to see what Fehr says later on today after the PA conference call. I could see the negotiations cooling for a few days, and the NHL coming back with another offer with the threat of cancelling more games.

Again, not good news, but I'd recommend not getting too high or too low with each bit of news from each meeting (Twitter really makes this an easy thing to do). Nothing that is said or done today or in the coming days is going to impact the return of hockey - the November 2nd start

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date was nice and the thought of 82 games was great, but I think a December or early January start is still much more likely.

As for the players - do they want to settle for some of a season of something they don't love (CBA), or absolutely zero hockey of something they do (their proposals)?

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Well today is a big day between the NHL and NHLPA. I am hopeful some traction can be created and negotiations move forward. At this point I'm not too worried about a full 82 game season - I would honestly prefer a 70 game season - the hockey would be better quality, and the chances of injuries significantly less.

We will see what happens. PR move or not, the NHL has shown a willingness to bend a bit, and now it is time for the PA to do so.

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My piece for the Hockey Writers looking at [the potential return to Quebec City for the NHL.](#)

*“The conditions for growth are right — the Canadian dollar will likely remain strong and the taxation gap with the U.S. is expected to continue to narrow. This will allow existing franchises to prosper and offer a better chance for new franchises to succeed.”*

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I am going to be interviewing Andy O’Brien, the trainer who works with Sidney Crosby (and other players). Any questions you want me to ask him?

[Here is a good read on O'Brien and how he had to learn so much with Sid's concussion issues.](#)  
O'Brien has been training Crosby since Sid the Kid was only 13 years old.

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O'Brien trained Matt Duchene this summer, as well.

Speaking of Crosby - [here is a pretty in-depth interview with him yesterday](#) . Some noteworthy stuff:

*During the offseason, Giroux claimed you broke his wrists while taking faceoffs. Do you recall any plays where that might have happened?*

*"No. I really like to win the faceoff. I don't try to go after his wrists but if I caught it, I'm not sorry for it. I think it's hilarious I hear that stuff from Philly. It's comedy to me to be honest with you. They're probably involved in that stuff more than any team in the league and they're the ones always talking about it. I guess I'm not apologetic.*

Love the response. A natural rivalry between two of the best players in the game. If you have 10 minutes to spare, read the interview. Probably Crosby's best and most wide-ranging interview I have come across.

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CBA meetings are happening today at 10am PST/1pm EST in Toronto.

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Nail Yakupov is tearing up the KHL. I have said for a long time - I think he is the best prospect since Crosby. That doesn't mean he will be a better NHLer than Stamkos or Tavares - a lot depends on how he develops in the Edmonton system. But to me, he was the most impressive player as an 18-year-old. He dominates the game in so many ways. Even as a Canucks fan I can't wait to see this kid play in the NHL. I'd value him very highly in all league formats of course.

I'd also throw my proven > unproven fantasy hockey rule out the window - Yakupov is about as bust-proof as it gets.

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[Here is a good interview with Yakupov.](#)

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A very thorough PDF document on everything related to Boston Bruins prospects. [Well worth the read if you have the time.](#)

Anthony Camara, who plays in the OHL with Barrie:

*Talent analysis: Despite not having a large frame at a shade under 6-foot-1, Camara nevertheless plays a rugged, physical style and is known as one of the league's top hitters. He's picked up the offense while playing alongside Barrie scoring leader and Winnipeg Jets first-rounder Mark Scheifele. Camara is using his speed and quick hands to crash the net score goals in close. Additionally, he's shown off an impressive release, beating netminders with shots from the outside while backing up defenders with his wheels. When you toss in Camara's physical edge and toughness, he's on pace to be one of the OHL's most complete players this season.*

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[I got some great insights from Justin Goldman](#) for my latest Defending Big D piece on Kari Lehtonen. Goldman is very high on Lehtonen, ranking him as a top 10 goaltender with the upside for much, much more. Once Dallas improves on the back end, Lehtonen could find his way into the NHL's top five.

On Lehtonen's secret weapon:

*Just make sure people give plenty of credit to Stars goalie coach Mike Valley. It's 2012, and the casual fan or reporter still has no clue just how important a goalie coach is to a team's success. They are vital, just like a quarterback coach is to a quarterback's success. Valley is known by many in the goalie community to be one of the brightest young goaltending minds in the world. He gets it. He is progressive, and not just with the way he teaches technique, but how he motivates and inspires goalies to be their best.*

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In AHL action, Binghamton defeated Rochester 3-1 on Tuesday evening.

David Dziurzynski had two goals for the Baby Sens.

Silfverberg and Zibanejad were pointless, but the duo did combine for eight shots on goal.

Jared Cowen had two helpers – I'd look for a strong season in the NHL from him very soon.

Kevin Porter scored the lone Rochester goal, with an assist going to 2012 1<sup>st</sup> round pick Zemgus Girgensons.

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Andrei Loktionov missed out [getting his name on the Cup](#) – he's in the Kings organization for now, but I don't see that continuing much longer. He isn't an effective winger, and he isn't going to play 4<sup>th</sup> line minutes behind Kopitar, Richards, and Stoll. Look for a trade involving the talented young Russian in the near-ish future.

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Can someone [please explain](#) what the hell Daryl Katz was/is trying to do in Edmonton?

*After a lengthy session this afternoon Council voted unanimously to cease negotiation with Daryl Katz on a new downtown arena. For those who have supported the deal this is a major blow but the message from Council today was clear, they do not see any reason for the additional subsidies that Daryl Katz is requesting. \$6M annually is a significant gap to try and close so for now it appears that the deal is very much dead and the Oilers future in Edmonton will not be a great topic of debate.*

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[A review of Jonathan Gatehouse's "The Instigator."](#) Gatehouse takes a never-before-seen look behind the scenes at Gary Bettman.

On the topic of hockey books – I am compiling a comprehensive list of the “must-haves” in any collection. What are your favorite hockey books?

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A very interesting interview with Texas Stars GM Scott White, [from Hundred Degree Hockey.](#)

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Corey Pronman takes a look at the best college prospects in hockey [here](#).

*Mike Reilly, D, Columbus Blue Jackets, University of Minnesota*

A fourth-round pick in 2011, Reilly has the chance this season to raise his NHL stock. He was great in the BCHL last season, with scouts describing him as a fantastic all-around offensive player who was always making plays. Plus, he had a significant growth spurt in the last year. Reilly was very impressive at the recent USA World Juniors camp, and seems like a lock to be one of their top defensemen this holiday season. In their predictions for the conference's rookie of the year, WCHA coaches picked Reilly ahead of first-round picks such as Brady Skjei and Jordan Schmaltz (Rocco Grimaldi was selected the favorite).

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[Really enjoying the KHL recaps](#) that Steve Dangle and Andrey Osadchenko have been producing - English translations.

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