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A good profile on Hunter Shinkaruk from THN - I'm a big fan of his, been following him closely over the past few weeks. He didn't impress me much in the one showing I saw of him live, but he has been great for most of the season, even without Emerson Etem on his line in Medicine Hat.

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Another day drags on in this absolutely ridiculous lockout. Fear not – I have compiled an extensive amount of hockey-related news and notes for today's ramblings.

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Brandon Dubinsky is out for up to six weeks with a broken finger. He has been playing in Alaska with the ECHL's Aces, along with a few other NHL players. (Does Scott Gomez still count as an NHL player?)

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I watched some of the Subway Super Series last night between the WHL and Russia (I was mostly drawn to TSN re-airing the Gold Medal Game from 2002 - man it was nice to see Joe Sakic in his prime flying around the ice for Canada - especially on the bigger ice surface. TSN showed the ESN feed - the camera angle was quite interesting - at first I didn't like it but it started to grow on me.

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Back to the Super Series - Morgan Rielly was really good - he's such a great skater, that even if he does make a mistake defensively he can usually get back into the right position quite quickly. I could see him making the leap to the NHL next season, although the Leafs would probably be smart to take their time with him.

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There were six games in the AHL last night - here are some fantasy-relevant news and notes:

Brayden Schenn had a hat trick for the Flyers affiliate against Manchester (LA).

For Manchester, Brandon Kozun scored a goal, assisted by Andrei Loktionov. The fact that Loktionov isn't over in Russia right now bodes very well for his NHL future (probably won't be in LA, though).

Sharks prospect Sena Acolaste has four goals and 10 points through 14 games this season - very impressive numbers for a defenseman. Acolaste is a San Jose area product, and was signed as an undrafted free agent out of the WHL.

TJ Hensick had four points - he's estabilshed himself as one of the better forwards in the AHL, but he hasn't been able to make the leap up to the NHL. A classic "tweener," if you will.

Abbotsford goalie Barry Brust has consecutive shutouts - he's likely not in the mix for a goaltending spot in Calgary, but you never know if he steals the starting gig for the Heat....

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I am very interested with sports and statistics – the MIT Sports Analytics conference takes place each year at MIT and it brings together key figures from the sporting industry. I reviewed the 2012 hockey analytics panel here – lots of interesting nuggets, especially from Bruins GM Peter Chiarelli.

“Chiarelli – they mined the European leagues quite well, and they were able to convince

Europeans to come over and play in the minors, something that is hard to do. Many of these European prospects are already paid well in professional leagues, and they see coming to the AHL as a demotion."

A very interesting point and something I hadn't really thought of before. Look at Kuznetsov in Washington as an example.

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Here is Part I of my interview with Kevin Neeld , a well-regarded trainer in the hockey industry. Some training myths that many hockey players still implement:

In order to shoot harder, players need to develop stronger wrists/forearms or do resisted shooting motions with tubing attached to a stick.

That sit-ups, crunches, leg throw downs, Russian twists, and supermans are still relevant exercises to develop core strength.

Part II will be published later on today.

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Is Jonathan Ericsson ready for a bigger role in Detroit? I have never really been a huge fan of his – too inconsistent for my liking – but this piece is worth a read. His outlook:

He hasn't played up to the level he showed during his surprise 2009 playoff run, but he still has a promising upside. He struggled in 2009-10 but has improved incrementally since then, posting a plus-27 rating in his past 158 games, after posting a minus-22 rating in his first 74 career regular season games.

He has an opportunity to assume a greater role this season (if there is one), following the departures of Nicklas Lidstrom and Brad Stuart . Ericsson could end up playing on the top defense pair, with Niklas Kronwall. In any event, he should log more than 20 minutes a game for the first time in his career. He also will have a bigger role on the penalty kill.

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Sticking with Detroit – Valtteri Filppula is out for a month or two after spraining his knee. He was playing very well to date in the SM-liiga.

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Yakupov gets rocked, and to his credit, gets right back up:

{youtube}ozfOH4Zr2V4{/youtube}

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Cam Fowler is off to Sweden – he is going to be a lot of fun to watch on the big ice. His defensive game is still very much a work in progress, but he is an amazing skater and he sees the ice really, really well.

I'm looking forward to seeing him and Sami Vatanen together on the Anaheim power play very soon.

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More on Vatanen – if he were a stock, I'd tell you to buy all you can right now. He is the real deal (and then some). Mobile, smart, crafty, and he has an absolute bomb of a shot.

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Jared Cowen is out for the season with a hip injury. Likely related to his ACL injury – the two don't connect, but the body functions as one unit, and usually when there has been a serious injury (ACL tear), the body compensates by relying more on another part of the body (in this case, perhaps his hip started bearing more of the responsibility with skating and physical exertion).

More on Cowen:

Last season, playing primarily with Sergei Gonchar on the second pairing and seeing some serious time on the penalty kill. He was everything many of us hoped he would be: big, strong, bruising. He lead the team in hits and became more and more comfortable as the season went on. He even looked perfectly capable of playing big minutes alongside Norris Trophy winner Erik Karlsson for a stretch of games.

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Congrats to Axeman33, mounD, and Bowlercoaster for being the three finalists in the "Why I Love Fantasy Hockey" contest. Bowlercoaster ended up taking home the most votes, and his Dustin Byfuglien signed 8x10 will be shipped shortly! The other two finalists will receive fantasy team audits from Dobber and I - gentlemen, feel free to email me at angus at dobberhockey.com.

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