Dobber talked with the Boston Globe this morning - you can read the interview about half-way down on this page.

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Some AHL updates from last night:

Braden Holtby stopped 30 shots for a shutout victory for Hershey. Score one in his battle to start against Neuvirth. And with Neuvirth's comments throughout this lockout, that puts the current score at: Holtby: 1, Neuvirth: -1,000,000.

Zach Hamill scored one of the four Hershey goals. I haven't seen him play at all so can't fully comment, but it may be too soon to write off the former top 10 draft pick. He never really developed in the Boston organizaton (or, to be fair, in the WHL after getting drafted). He is having a very solid season in Hershey though.

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A monster game for Bobby Butler last night - four goals and one helper for Albany (NJ's farm team). Butler has a great shot at earning a second or third line role with the Devils once the NHL is back. And performances like last night will help his cause tremendously.

For the Baby Pens (the team Albany defeated), Beau Bennet had two points, while Eric Tangradi was pointless and finished minus-4.

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Two of my favorite under-the-radar prospects had two points each for Connecticut - Marek Hrivik (two helpers) and JT Miller (1+1).

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Brett Connolly scored twice for Syracuse, while Alex Killorn (another under-the-radar prospect I like) had two points.

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No progress was made with the meetings yesterday between the NHL, PA, and mediators. Not really a surprise – there is still some time before a deal has to be reached. There really isn't a time-sensitive deadline right now.

From everything we are hearing and reading, it seems as if many players are planning for an early January start to the season (returning from Europe, increasing intensity in training and practice, and so on).

The turnaround from a deal getting signed to the puck dropping would probably be two weeks – incredibly quick. Players who haven't been keeping in top shape are going to probably struggle out of the gate, and they will also be more susceptible to the typical "out of shape" injuries like groin strains.

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I have managed to remove the "noise" – I follow LeBrun and Bob McKenzie for lockout-related news. So much speculation and so many leaks from either side seem to distort the true message – a lot of progress has been made over the past few weeks. It is frustrating as a fan of the league and the game that so much of the "negotiating" has been nothing more than smoke screens and spin meant to create positive PR. In addition to the people who are losing their income because of the work stoppage, the fans and media have been the big losers throughout all of this.

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Jamie Benn has left Hamburg in order to return to North America. He is one example of an NHL player returning home from overseas.

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My latest post for DefendingBigD – What are the expectations for Derek Roy in Dallas?

There is no doubt that the Stars bought low on Roy, which is the way to go with regards to asset management in any line of business. But did they sell high on Ott? Roy and Ott are completely different players, and Ott's versatility will be tough to replace. That being said, a player of Ott's skill set is easier to replace than a player of Roy's skill set. It just depends which Roy Dallas ends up getting.

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Top KHL goals from the past week:

{youtube}am_B1VpeZck{/youtube}

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No matter what happens with a lockout agreement, the Jets have given the go-ahead to Mark Scheifele
to remain with Canada during the WJC.

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How has Jakob Silfverberg done as a rookie in his first season of North American hockey?
After a slow start, he has really come on of late:

But since that slow start, things have really picked up for Silfverberg, and thanks to 11P (5G, 6A) in the last 10GP he's now leading the team in points. He's also leading the team in assists (8) and shots (69), and is tied for second in goals (7). Things are looking up. He's not quite on a point-per-game pace yet, but the way his production curve is sloping would suggest it's not remotely out of the realm of possibility.

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Marian Hossa was given the medical clearance by Chicago doctors yesterday.

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Toronto defenseman Jake Gardiner is out with a concussion. The team has been calling it concussion-related symptoms (specifically in the head and neck area). OK then….

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Henrik Lundqvist misses hockey. I am sure most of us miss watching him play hockey.

I miss it so much. I miss the game. I miss the excitement. I miss the challenge of pushing myself every day. I feed off competing. I feed off the energy.

I've tried to be positive. I have to admit that I never thought we would be out this long. I've never gone through anything like this before. The first couple of weeks were weird but then when I realized we might be out for a long time, I started to freak out a little bit. It's hard to explain.

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I'll have a WJC preview piece out later today at CanucksArmy – in the meantime, here is a preview of the defending champs from Sweden.

It's difficult to understate what an enormous achievement consecutive gold medals would be for the Swedish program, especially given their previous drought. But, when one considers that Malmo, Sweden will host the 2014 edition of the tournament, the home team coming in as the two-time defending champions would do wonders for the domestic exposure of this tournament within Sweden as this event is still largely an afterthought outside of Canada.

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Canucks prospect Patrick McNally (who was very impressive as a freshman last season) has left Harvard after being kicked off the hockey team. Many in the industry speculate that McNally (along with other Harvard hockey players and students) was caught cheating in a class. There will be more to come out I am sure, but any academic infraction means McNally has to sit out for at least two semesters. He's probably not ready for pro hockey yet, but the Canucks may not have a choice with regards to his development (at 21, he is too old for the CHL).

McNally was one of the most prolific PP QB's in the nation last year, and has the upside to be a top four defenseman at the NHL level. He is still quite raw though and has a lot of work to do on the ice order to become an NHL player (and off the ice too, apparently).

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Here is a really interesting look behind the scenes at a meeting with John Davidson and the Columbus scouting and management team.

They discuss the 2013 draft class as well as their own prospects (including Boone Jenner , who you will become more familiar with in a few weeks as he is expected to play a significant role for Canada at the WJC).

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Here are my 10 nutrition tips for December - eat to gain muscle, a supplement worth trying, which foods to buy organic, and much more.

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