It. Is. Over.

Finally.

You've no doubt heard by now that a tentative CBA has been reached, which means we'll have NHL hockey back very soon.

The highlights of the deal, as noted in this early piece from Michael Grange , include:

*10-year CBA term with each side having an eighth-year opt-out option.

*50/50 HRR split for the entire deal.

*Make-Whole of $300M

*New pension plan with defined benefit structure modeled after MLB

*New contracts will be limited to seven years. Eight if you’re re-signing your own player.

*’13-14 salary cap will be $64.3M

*Revenue sharing upped to $200M. Half of the money will come from top-10 earning clubs. There will also be a $60M ‘industry growth fund’ which can be used at discretion of Commish in ‘struggling markets.’

*Free agency and salary arbitration otherwise unchanged.

*One of the big points: Contract variance is maxed at 35 percent from the value of the prior year and a max of 50 percent from the first year of the deal. So, as Grange points out, a deal worth $10 million in the first year can't have any years worth less than $5-million. It won't be long before teams and agents figure out how to best maximize even that situation, surely.

The most important thing for the fans and everyone dependant on the sport to make a living is that the National Hockey League will be operational.

Now if you'll excuse me, I suddenly have a purpose in life again and a whole lot of content to get ready.

P.S. I just added a sick Pavel Datsyuk goal at the bottom of today's Ramblings. Glad we get to see these guys back in North America now.

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Once a new NHL CBA is officially announced, I'll be able to nail down a date on which fantasy rankings will be released on Sportsnet.ca. That news will come via Twitter and you'll also be able to get the links to the content that way as well.

We'll be looking at Top 60 goalies, Top 60 defencemen, Top 100 forwards and the annual Top 100 overall. Lockout notes on everyone; which will include team, league, stats and any pertinent info from the lockout. Ranks are for standard league formats; meaning goals, assists, plus-minus, power play points, penalty minutes and shots for skaters with wins, goals against average, save percentage and shutouts for netminders.

If nothing else, the lists will serve as a great refresher course on both the summer's free agency results and which player ended up where during the lockout, along with how they fared.

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Anze Kopitar hurt his right knee in Saturday's action while skating for Mora IK of Sweden's Allsvenskan league.

Fortunately, early indications are this injury is not a big deal. Kopitar's agent, Pat Brisson, said 'it's very minor' and more would be gleaned in the next few days after testing was done. Kings GM Dean Lombardi told The Los Angeles Times via email that a recovery time of two or three weeks was a good estimate.

Kopitar: "Got tangled up in the corner and it felt funny. Precautionary reasons to step off. Taking this seriously." Says 2-3 weeks #lakings

— Linus Hugosson (@linushugosson) January 5, 2013

So were the NHL season to begin January 19th, it's still possible Kopitar might be ready. If not, it doesn't sound like he would be sidelined too far beyond that point. Mike Richards and Jarret Stoll could receive a short-term boost in value if the Slovenian can't lace them up on opening night. In a short schedule head-to-head format, a few extra points here or there could go a long way.

The Times also noted that Jonathan Quick, who had what was deemed to be 'minor' back surgery in August, has not yet been medically cleared to play but is close to that point.

I made this point a number of Ramblings back, but that has to go down as one of the most underreported and underemphasized stories of the summer and this non-season. The Kings completely downplayed that surgery and here we are, in what should be the fourth month of the regular season, and Quick is just now going to be medically cleared?

Granted, it's entirely likely Quick would have been playing sooner than this had there not been a lockout. Maybe as early as late November. And certainly the organization is taking care of its franchise goalie, as it should. But still... this delay could have seriously impacted the team's fate this season in an already-challenging post-Cup hangover situation.

Jonathan Bernier, needless to say, may still receive extra starts if the Kings go easy on Quick

with a 48 or 50-game slate in a relatively compressed timeframe.

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#Aeros pull healthy Mikael Granlund from lineup after warmups. #MNWild GM Fletcher cautious with #NHL camp possibly close. Via @russostrib

— Chris Nichols (@Nichols_NHLPool) January 6, 2013

Granlund has 8-13-21 in 21 GP with Houston so far. He suffered an ankle injury earlier in the campaign and only returned in the second week of December. The Finnish forward is as much of a lock as anyone can be to make the big team when the madness ends. He's the Papa Smurf of blue chip prospects.

You may remember, although it's been awhile, that Wild coach Mike Yeo had projected some time before NHL training camps should have opened in the fall that he envisioned his top six looking like this:

Zach Parise – Mikko Koivu – Dany Heatley

Matt Cullen – Mikael Granlund – Devin Setoguchi

Granlund was going to be tried at centre in camp back in the fall. Will a shortened camp change that thinking? We'll see.

A report several weeks ago, incidentally, indicated PMB was 'pretty much symptom free'. In Yeo's initial outline Bouchard was lined up with Kyle Brodziak and Cal Clutterbuck.

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Newsday points out that Biel forward Clarence Kparghai was fined Friday for biting Isles star John Tavares in a game December 22. Tavares did not miss any time and reports didn't indicate where he was bitten.

Also in that article was a note that Travis Hamonic, who has been sidelined since early December with a concussion, is likely to resume skating Monday. That could put him on track to be ready for NHL camps, although we all know by now how completely unpredictable concussions can be.

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Cody Hodgson will be one of the key players for the Buffalo Sabres this year and in the coming seasons, lining up as a top-six centre. The Canadian Press took a look at his time with Rochester so far, including being sidelined by that hand injury.

Off-season training saw the young pivot bulk up with more muscle mass via training with Gary Roberts and Amerks coach Ron Rolston has some pretty high praise for his 22-year-old.

“He’s been exceptional for us, just a catalyst for us in all areas — defensively, offensively, creating, power plays, faceoffs. He just does everything well.”

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The Tribune-Review runs down the slumps of winger Eric Tangradi and defensemen Brian Strait and Robert Bortuzzo down in Wilkes-Barre.

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This is a few days old now , but loved seeing Sven Baertschi’s enthusiasm over the possibility of lining up with Johnny Gaudreau.

The Courier Post also ran a feature on Gaudreau, reflecting back on how motivated he was

after being cut by last year's Team USA. The piece ran before the gold medal contest.

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The Toronto Star gathered some quotes from the final day of the world juniors, including high praise for tournament MVP and top goalie John Gibson from the legendary Vladislav Tretiak.

"He could move very well," said Tretiak. "He could read situations. He will be a top goalie in the future in the NHL."

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Congrats team USA on gold! Well @ gabelandeskog92 u lost the bet, can't wait to see you wear this shirt all next week. twitter.com/6ErikJohnson/s…

— Erik Johnson (@6ErikJohnson) January 5, 2013

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Pavel Datsyuk. Just watch.

{youtube}5h55X3uJU84{/youtube}

Twitter: @Nichols_NHLPool NHL news, analysis & fantasy takes with minimal inane babble.

Weekday Hockey Hearsay blogs on Sportsnet.ca, 12 months a year.

Fresh Ramblings each Sunday.