Last-minute addition before Sunday runs out. Hockey fans in Edmonton got a huge treat Sunday afternoon. Sweet, sweet pics as told through Twitter. That's my Monday Hearsay offering - how one team (just happens to be my favourite) took a step toward winning the fans back.

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With camps officially opening Sunday, an avalanche of information is streaming in from across the league.

The Twitter feed will be a busy place, so stay tuned.

In the meantime, here are a handful of the early stories worth passing on to you as an addition to last night's posting.

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Canes agree to terms w/ Dan Ellis on a one-year contract. Prorated $650K.

GM Jim Rutherford: "Dan is an experienced netminder who has had good years in the NHL, and played well for Charlotte this season. We feel it is important to have a veteran goalie to partner with Cam during the compressed season."

Well done by Ellis. He is another one who used the lockout to boost his stock up and raise NHL interest again. Did really well with the Checkers.

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The Montreal Canadiens have sent Scott Gomez home for the rest of the season. In a nutshell, he'll be an amnesty buyout in the summer. Had he been hurt while playing, he wouldn't be able to be bought out.

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Brian Boucher is a member of the Philadelphia Flyers. Again. Acquired from Carolina for forward Luke Pither. The team, as you'll recall, also has Michael Leighton behind Ilya Bryzgalov.

*

Flyers opened camp with Brayden Schenn on the explosive Claude Giroux – Scott Hartnell line, who are minus Jaromir Jagr (Dallas) this season. Jakub Voracek was with Sean Couturier and Max Talbot, while Scott Laughton was between Wayne Simmonds and Matt Read. Danny Briere is sidelined with his injury for the time being.

Voracek owners shouldn't begin hyperventilating just yet. The team likely knows what he can do with the top line since they've spent some time together in the past, so this is a chance to let Schenn develop some chemistry with them. Schenn would, though, be a good fit with Giroux-Hartnell and in the fall was my top choice to fill in there should Voracek falter or get injured.

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Sabres began with Vanek-Hodgson-Pominville/ Foligno-Ennis-Stafford/ Ott-Grigorenko-Leino. It's worth noting Jochen Hecht wasn't on the ice right at the start, although he was later and his deal with the team is official now.

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Much more via Twitter. A deluge, likely.

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We are officially a week away from the re-launch of the latest, shrunken net worth edition of the National Hockey League.

With a packed slate of games beginning Saturday, January 19th, next Sunday's Ramblings will have the honour of being the first statistical smorgasbord offering of the new season. Can't wait, actually. It's been awhile.

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NHL teams will officially be able to make transactions a short time after this Ramblings is posted.

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If you haven't yet purchased the updated DH fantasy guide – help support the site you frequent, while also enjoying a fun read. A lot of people worked hard on that and it's worth the money, especially since it helps to make this site run year-round.

*

Newsday reports that Josh Bailey, who hurt his knee playing in Germany during the lockout, will miss up to a month after having arthroscopic surgery on his knee Wednesday. The article surmises Bailey's injury increases the likelihood that 2011 first-rounder Ryan Strome, 19, will stick with the team this season.

"I've had a good half a season so far, and there's a lot of guys who haven't been playing anywhere," Strome said. "I like where my game's at and I feel like I know I have to prove it every day next week to make this team."

*

40-year old winger Mike Knuble will be given a shot – however long it may be - to earn a job with the Detroit Red Wings on a tryout basis at camp. He certainly could still fill a power play role in a meaningful way, but he'd see limited minutes overall at best. Best of luck to a quality NHLer though.

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Looks like Eric Fehr will be taking another run with the Washington Capitals. One year at $600K, which gives the Caps every incentive to keep him around in this cap world if he's anywhere close to decent.

Good on Fehr though. He has been a hard-luck injury case, but he smartly utilized his time during the lockout to play overseas and made an impression while skating with HPK in SM-liiga. He rung up 13-12-25 in 21 starts after a disappointing '11-12 campaign with the Jets where he was limited to 35 games and only chipped in three points.

Remember the deal with Fehr is that if he can ever catch a break that doesn't involve a trip to the IR, he can potentially add some PIM to your bottom line in addition to points. For now, he belongs on the waiver pile in most situations. I'm pulling for him though.

*

SOURCE: Once this drawn MOU ends ... Kurtis Foster will sign with the Flyers.

— Tim Panaccio (@tpanotchCSN) January 13, 2013

Not someone you'd want to draft this week in most situations, even in the later rounds, but keep an eye on it and see if he'll possibly be worth a free agent addition down the line. Foster has the big shot and can help out the power play, but he's been in better situations than this and hasn't always delivered as well as expected for poolies.

Tread cautiously, but at least be aware there's upside with him. Some PIM too. No Matt Carle for the Flyers this year, you'll remember. Veteran Kimmo Timonen is the main man for points and power play on Philly's back end.

*

Sven Baertschi believes he's 100 percent recovered from his injury, which is good news as heads into Flames camp. He indicated that one important lesson he learned in his time with the Heat was he needs to get used to passing the puck a little earlier. Stars are used to hanging onto the puck for longer in junior, but the higher up you go the less time and space you're going to have out there.

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Alex Semin on Saturday said that he's feeling good and is as close to game-shape as he can be at this point. When asked what he wanted to accomplish personally this season, he said to score as often as possible.

His fantasy reputation has been somewhat tarnished in the past few years, but those who kept the faith with him should be rewarded this winter. He really seems hungry to have that proverbial fresh start with the Canes and with Eric Staal as his centre (and Jordan Staal as the fallback plan), there's no reason he shouldn't be able to accomplish some good things statistically.

Jiri Tlusty, who has some recent playing history with Eric Staal, has been mentioned as one of the L1 LW candidates.

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It was known Friday the Sabres would be bringing Jochen Hecht back into the fold, which is a move I happen to like quite a bit. He's a really versatile player who can play and play well at both centre and wing, which is a coach's dream.

The one thing that kind of stuck in the back of my mind though was the potential impact on what was supposed to be the top two centre slots with Cody Hodgson and Tyler Ennis.

Lindy Ruff said a few days ago that he wanted to keep the Foligno-Ennis-Stafford line together. He also wanted Vanek and Pominville paired together. While that should automatically equate Hodgson with those two star wingers, don't forget that Hecht has some history with them. It'll be worth keeping an eye on the situation.

How Mikhail Grigorenko fares will also alter the equation in the top nine. Bottom line? Exciting time for Sabres fans.

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Tweeted during BB's press conference Saturday. I happen to share Cam's view.

This, right here, is why I like Brian Burke. No bullshit. Loyal. Combative.

— Cam Cole (@rcamcole) January 12, 2013

*

Laughed out loud when this one popped up in the timeline Friday. Have to imagine it gets pretty frustrating when you are asked the same question over and over and over and over...

CAMP IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. CAMP IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. CAMP IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. CAMP IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. CAMP IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

— Aaron Portzline (@Aportzline) January 11, 2013

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This past week included the fantasy rankings release at SN. Top 60 goalies Tuesday, Top 60 defencemen
Wednesday,
Top 100 forwards
Thursday; all leading to Friday's culmination of the
Top 100 players
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Included with each guy was where/if they played during the lockout, along with stats and injury notes if applicable. What happened during the lockout definitely impacted how the rankings looked.

If you'd like an expanded thought or two on a certain player in the rankings, tweet me.

*

Once the season begins, you'll notice a few changes with my SN fantasy content.

The biggest one involves a change in the live blogging. Same basic overall effect; just changing up the delivery method.

Rather than a new blog page each night, like past years, you'll see a single, static page dedicated entirely to fresh, updated line combos from every team and every game. As always, I'll do my best to update each evening shortly after each contest gets underway so that you can get a jump on your competition when someone moves into a favourable line situation.

Also on that same page, you'll find the top individual power play times for each team that will be updated once the tilt is done. Those numbers are always golden, but especially if an injury happens in-game and someone else is thrust into a first unit PP role. Seasonal power play time averages will also be updated regularly (maybe once a week) to give you a feel for how things are trending overall.

One page. Easy to find everything. Bookmark it and use it often.

It should be going live the first night of the season.

*

This shift in live blogging will also mean a few other things.

You'll see more player features written, which is something I've been longing to sink my teeth into and have lacked the time for until now. There'll also likely be a mix of list-based articles as well. As always, the best way to get content when it's initially released is by grabbing the link from the Twitter feed.

Speaking of that form of social media, part of the shift in blogging philosophy this season is designed to free up some more time to answer questions on Twitter and also give out a steady flow of pertinent in-game news via that method. So-and-so was hurt; grab this guy because he moved onto the first line; this skater has picked up five points in his past two games and has supplanted so-and-so on PP1, etc.

In terms of answering your questions, I'll say what I've maintained for the entire time I've been on Twitter in the past two years. At 140 characters, the system is NOT set up to be a good place to get well-informed answers. It's a quick-hit situation. This guy or that guy with these categories counting. Anything involving even the least bit of nuance or thought should be emailed to me (address on my Twitter profile).

If you've followed my work for any length of time, you know I prefer to give longer answers with some thought behind it. Maybe give you an outside-the-box option you hadn't considered. Present you with some depth and perspective in the answer. I'll continue to do that via email, whenever possible. Twitter will be an option though. Just be sure to include the pertinent info (single-season vs. keeper, No. of teams in league, categories, etc.).

The last week was a gong show time-wise with rankings preps, but I'm generally pretty accessible.

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Let's jump back to the fantasy rankings, keeping in mind they're based on equal weighting in standard leagues for goals, assists, plus/minus, penalty minutes, shots and power play points for skaters; with wins, goals against average, save percentage & shutouts for goaltenders.

Sidney Crosby placed second on the forward rankings and second overall behind Evgeni Malkin, but ahead of Steven Stamkos. Risky move, given the concussion angle? Maybe. I think a healthy Crosby is going to bulldoze his way through this 48-game slate with ridiculous stats.

Henrik Lundqvist (4), Tuukka Rask (6) and Jonathan Quick (8) all found a home inside of the top 10 overall and were the top three goalies individually. Too soon to jump Rask into a golden spot like that? I don't believe so. He edged Quick because of Quick having spent the lockout recovering and rehabbing, while Rask was thriving overseas. Boston is traditionally one of the best goals against teams in the league in the past handful of years and Rask, IMO, is ready and able to step into the unquestioned No. 1 role as a heavy-start goalie for this team. Those three goalies in particular, I feel, will excel in what stands to be a four-month playoff atmosphere regular season and warrant the early picks.

Jordan Eberle all the way up to No. 17 in the forward ranks, ahead of some pretty big names. He's poised to follow up last year's success with even more this time around and has excellent linemate support. Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, as alluded to in a fall Ramblings, scored well on the list as well. No. 30 among forwards, despite having weak peripherals. Let's not put the cart before the overall playoff horse, but the Oilers are ready to begin to make some noise this season that'll begin with pretty sweet offensive stats from the big boys. There's no reason why those two can't thrive with Taylor Hall, especially when the team's second line will be nothing to sneeze at either.

Kris Letang was the guy I alluded to in this space months ago set to be the No. 1 defenceman over Erik Karlsson. Karlsson played and did well during the lockout though, while Letang only skated and worked out. So Karlsson fairly deserved the top spot. Nonetheless, Letang should be a domineering force on the back end for poolies.

Dustin Byfuglien in third spot on D? Hell to the yes. Look. At. His. Stats.

Justin Schultz. There's an interesting rankings conundrum. Zero NHL games played, but plenty of hype before and after signing his deal with the Oilers. That means haters. Lots of them. He had a great college track record and he lit up the AHL like fireworks on Canada Day. When the rankings were initially set to be released in September, I had him at No. 42 on the D list. Rookie in a position to succeed because he was clearly going to be a PP1 option with plenty of high-end talent at his disposal. Fast-forward nearly four months and he moved himself into the No. 16 slot. Too high? I don't think so. He's placed right in the area where he'll need to deliver in the 40-50 point-pace range (adjusted to the shorter schedule, obviously), which I really don't see him having a problem delivering. A lot of power play points will be included in his numbers too, which should be a major bonus.

They're rankings. No two people will agree on everything and situations change daily. FWIW, they're my thoughts on where I'd place guys headed into this season.

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Ilya Kovalchuk. Breathtaking form. I teared up just a little.

{youtube}6lX2eXrW45I{/youtube}

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Does Pavel Datsyuk have his own YouTube channel yet? Two Datsyukian delights.

{youtube}HdwG_jsBxPQ{/youtube}

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*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.*