*

Center Tyler Johnson made his NHL debut for the Lightning last night – no points in 11 minutes of ice time. He was a prolific WHL scorer and has started to do the same at the AHL level, too.

Alex Killorn didn't have any points, but he played over 18 minutes. A lot of ice time for a rookie.

*

Dustin Byfuglien had two helpers and was a dominant force all night for Winnipeg on Thursday. His ability to jump into the rush and still play sound defense for 20+ minutes is really impressive. There aren't many blueliners better at reading the play than Byfuglien is.

No points, but another five shots on goal for Evander Kane .

*

Jake Allen , who at this point last season was #4 on the Blues goaltending depth chart, stopped 28 shots for the shutout victory last night. The team may give him a chance to run with it a bit here, especially considering how well he has played for them in limited action this season.

Chris Stewart 's name has started to come up in trade rumours, and his strong performance last night (two goals and a helper) will help the Blues fetch a nice return (if they do end up moving him).

But the fact that Stewart has already been traded has to be a bit of a red flag, no?

*

Did anyone expect PA Parenteau to be as good as he has been for Colorado? He is keeping up with the NHL's very best in terms of production, and he potted two more goals last night against the Wild.

Rookie Jonas Brodin has been rock solid all year, but he hasn't got a ton of attention for it because he isn't an offensive contributor at this point. He did score his first NHL goal last night, though.

Ryan Suter had three helpers for the Wild and has really rebounded after a tough start to 2013 – he's been living up to the preseason hype.

Speaking of that, Zach Parise also had a great game, and he is starting to really find some chemistry with Mikko Koivu . The duo combined for four points and 12 shots on goal.

Matt Cullen has points in four of his last five games and is quietly having a solid offensive campaign.

*

Andrew Cogliano scored again. As mentioned before, he looks like a brand new player this year for the Ducks.

*

Jonathan Quick was yanked after allowing three goals in 12 shots – at this point, Bernier seems to be giving the Kings a better shot to win games.

Logan Couture was great lastnight, scoring a pair of goals, adding an assist, and firing five shots on net.

Brent Burns , San Jose's new power winger, also had a great game. It will be interesting to see how long Burns sticks at right wing – he had a goal and a helper last night.

*

Vancouver and Nashville… expected to be a low scoring affair. So much for that – the two teams combined for 11 goals and some shoddy defensive play.

A plus/minus rating isn't always reflective of a player's performance, but in Ryan Ellis ' case, his minus-4 sums up how his night went defensively.

Andrew Ebbett had three points for the Canucks – don't expect him to hit the stat sheet each night, but he's a solid depth/waiver option for the next little while until Kesler is back and/or the Canucks bring in a center.

David Booth finally scored his first of the season (into the empty net). He has been playing well as of late, driving possession and creating offense, but his luck has been terrible. I'd buy low on him right now, and I am sure he is available for cheap in many leagues.

Steve Pinizzotto had five PIM and four hits in his Canuck debut. He'll play a lot of games on the fourth line for this team, provided he can stay healthy. He brings a lot to the plate.

Mason Raymond had a goal and an assist and he continues his bounceback season in 2013. He's been Vancouver's most consistent forward this season at both ends of the ice.

Zack Kassian had a rough game, turning the puck over a few times. He's fighting it right now.

*

Florida hung with the Bruins for 40 minutes last night, but Boston emerged victorious.

I was impressed with a few Panther players:

Shawn Matthias had a great game – he scored a beauty short-handed goal, had six shots on goal, and was around the puck all night.

Peter Mueller looks great right now – after the concussion issues he has battled through, that is great to see. He led all skaters with eight shots on net. Too bad they were directed at Tuukka Rask
, as none of them went in.

Patrice Bergeron , who was an honourable mention on my top 10 centers list, had two goals and was once again rock solid defensively for Boston.

Jordan Caron had two hits and two shots on goal – he will get a chance to play a bit more now

with Kelly out.

A sleeper of mine for next season, Colby Robak , had 16 minutes of ice time including some power play minutes for the Panthers. He's a young offensive defenseman who will get a chance to show what he can offer down the stretch for Florida.

*

Dupuis and Kunitz show no signs of slowing down, thanks in large part to Mr. Crosby.

Crosby made one of the most ridiculous passes you will ever see:

{youtube}BGeVsOanEqM{/youtube}

Cody Franson had a great game as he continues his strong season. He has so much to offer offensively, especially with how he passes the puck and sees the ice. And the Leafs were at one point essentially willing to let him walk for nothing!

John-Michael Liles was pointless in 17 minutes of ice time, but he did end up with four shots on goal.

*

Dobber's latest Puck Daddy piece from yesterday.

Patrik Berglund , St. Louis Blues (5-4-2-6, plus-3, 2 PIM, 9 SOG) – While Jeff Carter will walk away with the Cy Young Award this year, Berglund's 13 goals and four assists have him in the running. Berglund is subject to prolonged stretches of terrible numbers, having had a five-game as well as a four-game pointless run already this season. But when he's on a role he deserves far more than 25% ownership that he has right now. He's also pretty good for hits (33 this year).

*

My look at a few centers the Canucks could target at the deadline, including Marcel Goc and Shawn Matthias
.

It is unlikely that the Panthers move Matthias, but he would be a very attractive piece to the Canucks. He's young and controllable, and he brings a lot of elements they would be looking for from a bottom six center. And Florida has a lot of young centers ready to play. Drew Shore has had a great rookie season, and Nick Bjugstad is on the way. Stephen Weiss likely won't be back, so Florida may try and keep Matthias around to ensure they don't lose a lot of their depth.

*

A great read from ESPN on Rich Clune and the demons he has overcome.

It was Hextall who called and told Clune that he was going to get a chance to play in the NHL again. The former NHL netminder acknowledged that it was a bittersweet moment for him because he had come to see himself as a kind of mentor to Clune and Clune represents the kind of player the Kings like to have in their organization.

"He plays the game hard, and he plays for keeps all the time," Hextall told ESPN.com this week.

*

Shared this yesterday – a must-read in case you missed it. Concussions: This is Your Brain on Hockey.

*

Ottawa has signed free agent defenseman Troy Rutkowski from Portland (WHL). Rutkowski is a talented defenseman who needs to improve his foot speed if he is going to make it as a pro. A great “low risk” move by the Senators here, though.

His numbers are really impressive for a defenseman (Portland has had some great teams while he has been there). This season, he has 20 goals and 61 points in 69 games. Ottawa has had some success with young defensemen as of late (Karlsson, Cowen, Grbya, Wiercioch), and he could be the next in line.

*

According to a reliable source out of Detroit, 2013-14 will be Pavel Datsyuk ’s last in the NHL.

Pavel Datsyuk turns 36 on July 20th, 2014. That birthday will be celebrated a few months after the last minutes of hockey he'll ever play for the Detroit Red Wings. Next year will be his last in the NHL and that's according to a very reliable source in Detroit, someone close to the organization and entrenched in regional hockey programs.

Why? Datsyuk wants to go home. We all understand that. But according to this source, a guy who skates with at least one recently-retired Red Wing and whose family is a staple in the Michigan hockey world, it's not just the lure of mother Russia.

Datsyuk sees the realignment, knows the kind of nightly abuse he's going to take in the Eastern Conference and wants to "go out like Barry Sanders did." Healthy, in other words. And he wants to give the KHL a few years of brilliance. He wants his home country to see him while he still has magic left.

Interesting, to say the least.

*

Vincent Lecavalier is out indefinitely with a lower body injury. Does this mean Tyler Johnson and/or
Brett Connolly
are on the way up from the AHL?

*

Detroit and Jimmy Howard are close to agreeing to a new deal. He's been great thisyear without Lidstrom, which has been a pleasant surprise to many.

*

The Bruins inked prospect winger Anthony Camara to an entry-level contract.

Camara has appeared in 243 career OHL games with 66 goals and 56 assists. He also has three goals and five assists in 31 career playoff games and recorded two assists for Canada at the 2013 world junior hockey championship in Russia.

Here is Camara's DobberProspects profile .

{youtube}zdShL1TG9BM{/youtube}

*

How does Sidney Crosby 's season stack up against the all time greatest?

*

Kris Versteeg is done for the season with a knee injury. First Stephen Weiss , now Versteeg. Two of Florida's top trading chips are suddenly off the market.

It will be interesting to see which prospect(s) get a promotion in ice time because of this. Florida is going to be icing a very young team post-deadline day.

*

Mike Ribeiro is refocused and mature , according to NHL.com. He is also looking for a new contract.

"I'm not 19 anymore," he said. "There's a difference between 19 and 33, and there's a lot of life experience that I went through and a lot of mistakes that you make and you try not to make them again. … Now that I'm 33, my knowledge and maturity is a little more advanced than it was even five or six years ago. I try to learn every year; I try to learn about myself, I try to learn how to be a better teammate, a better hockey player and just a better person in general. If you can do that every year and get better as a person and be positive, then I think good things will happen."

*

The Oilers may be awful, but Taylor Hall isn't. He is a dominant 20-year-old and the sky is the limit (provided he stays healthy).

I don't hesitate to use that term anymore. Hall is dominant. When he is healthy, he is almost always the best player in every game he plays in. Oiler fans should really do their best to watch closely and truly appreciate this guy's talent. They haven't seen anything like it in a generation.

*

Realignment has finally been approved – here are the details.

*

My fantasy hockey mailbag is open for business until Saturday. Ask all of your questions here.

*

Ryan Ma and I have developed an App for Android and Apple – FantasyHockeyPP. We aren't aiming to compete with ESPN, TSN, or RotoWorld in terms of scope or volume of coverage and updates, but we want to provide top-notch analysis on the breaking news in the hockey world. All other hockey Apps on the market give you an update on an injury or a player's performance, but they don't dig deep at all. We want to do that.

We are also rolling out a Midseason Guide in the next few days… stay tuned for an update. Here is some more info on FantasyHockeyPP.

Feel free to email or message me with feedback, too. Want to make this thing easy to use and very useful.

*

As a huge Blue Jays fan, I am excited for this season (to say the least). Here is a great read on the expectations of the team.

And don't forget to bookmark DobberBaseball - we have brought on some great writing talent there over the past few weeks/months.

*