

June 03, 2010

Written by Jeff Angus

Thursday, 03 June 2010 01:19 - Last Updated Thursday, 03 June 2010 17:27

Dobber here. The Avs have signed Petr Budaj to a one-year contract. Goldman is trying to pick his jaw up off the floor on this one, because he feels strongly that Weiman is absolutely ready to hold the backup job and long-term will be a better goaltender than Budaj. Perhaps the Avs made a mistake on this one. Then again, perhaps Weiman will steal the job in training camp. Nothing is in stone.

It sounds like Kyle Wellwood is going to test the free agent market. If you are in a points-only league, he bears watching. With Sedin and Kesler ahead of him in Vancouver, there wasn't enough ice time for him to produce on a consistent basis. He was one of Vancouver's best players in the playoffs in both 2008-09 and 2009-10.

I could see a team like Washington (puck possession) having interest in him. He has completely changed his game since coming to Vancouver. Still crafty, but he is very dependable defensively as well now.

Does Jason Spezza [want out](#) of Ottawa?

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Buy the [Fantasy Prospects Report here](#) . Available right now!

Elliott Friedman: "A number of Flyers said that was the fastest game they ever played in." I for one am not surprised. The pace of the game from start to finish was unbelievable. The Villedelphia Flyers and Chicago Blackhawks are such evenly matched teams... I can't wait to see how this series plays out.

I am not a prospect guru like Van Horne, Dobber, or Bugg, but aside from Hall and Seguin, Jeff Skinner really intrigues me from a fantasy perspective. He reminds me a bit of Pat Kane - both were knocked a bit for skating (more speed than overall ability).

I'll have another team audit posted today. Check out the one from yesterday... not sure I've ever seen a team with that much young talent before.

Steve Yzerman wrote a letter to Tampa Bay fans yesterday. Standard stuff, although I found this line interesting: "With young talents like Steven Stamkos, Victor Hedman and perennial All Stars like Vincent Lecavalier and Martin St. Louis forming our nucleus, I feel very good about our future." Check out the rest of the letter [here](#) .

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[Gary Bettman vs. Ron McLean... round three](#) . Good on McLean for not taking the back road against Bettman – he seems to enjoy trying to trap him in corners. Being an experienced lawyer, Bettman could talk his way out of anything. Click on the link to check the video out.

According to Darren Dreger, the Bruins are [getting some nibbles](#) on the 2nd overall draft pick.

Some minor signings – the Ducks locked up depth defenseman Sheldon Brookbank to a two-year, one-way contract. He has some value in deeper leagues that require defensemen and count PIM.

The Cory Schneider signing (two-year deal, one-way) means that he will be Luongo's back up. Schneider is expected to start in at least 20 games according to Canucks GM Mike Gillis, who was on the Team 1040 yesterday.

Dobber touches on this point as well, but Ville Leino was a monster last night – absolutely dominant. He played close to 24 minutes, and it seemed like he was on the ice for the entire third period and overtime. He isn't fast, but his poise with the puck and creativeness is elite. Watching him play at such a high level has been extraordinary. The game as a whole last night was phenomenal – two incredibly deep, fast, skilled teams battled end-to-end for almost four periods.

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More on Leino:

"That Leino's a special player," Blackhawks wing Adam Burish said. "I feel like when he's got the puck, he's just guarding it out there. He doesn't give it up, he keeps it. He always makes a smart play. (That line's) been pretty dangerous. I give that Leino a lot of credit."

Burish is not one to hand out praise to the opposition too often.

"In the locker room after the game, Ian Laperriere shouted over to [Leino] "Detroit should've traded Datsyuk instead of you.""

Would Oiler fans be interested in a Price-for-Paajarvi-Svensson trade? I am putting together an Entry Draft preview article, and am trying to come up with a few creative trade ideas. Price to Edmonton was one of them.

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Don Maloney was named the GM of the Year yesterday. He did a great job with the Coyotes all season long, but an annual GM award seems silly. I'd hand it out every five years at the very least.

Anton Babchuk [met with](#) Hurricanes GM Jim Rutherford and the two sides are expected to reach an agreement after July 1st (Babchuk can't be signed before then).

Montreal prospect Louis Leblanc (one of the best names in hockey) may leave Harvard for the QMJHL.

Daniel Briere is second in the playoffs in goals (two behind Mike Cammalleri), and his 24 points is second only to Toews. He has 85 points in 87 playoff games since the lockout with Buffalo and Philadelphia. I sometimes get Briere and Giroux confused because both of them skate so similarly with the puck. Briere has a better shot, but Giroux is a bit craftier with the puck. It sure is nice for Philadelphia to have the option of going with one or both of them, as the fact they shoot right opens up a lot of lanes in the offensive zone (and on the power play in particular).

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I know the series is only three games old, but I wonder if those people who thought Pronger would have problems with Byfuglien are still thinking that way? Pronger has been completely dominant and Byfuglien has been invisible, aside from a few bad penalties. Pronger has done his best to nullify Kane and Toews as well.

Jordin Tootoo posted some [interesting pictures](#) from his hometown yesterday on Twitter. My favourite – the ‘[Eskimo Limo](#).’

Dobber fired off some of his thoughts from last night to me:

With the OT winner last night, Ville Leino now has 15 points in his last 14 games. It's hard to imagine that he was a healthy scratch for the first four games of the postseason and couldn't get into the lineup in the regular season very often. How do you ignore these numbers? You don't. And the Flyers have a nice problem on their hands for the offseason. Scratching JVR will not be the answer, obviously.

Claude Giroux's three points last night give him 20. Fantastic. The Flyers have an embarrassment of riches. The Hawks are no slouches either, I wasn't implying that.

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And Kane and Toews finally cracked the scoresheet - Kane with his first goal of the Final.

Philadelphia goaltending prospect Jacob De Serres was not signed and he will go back into the draft.

He was a third-round pick in 2008 and is coming off a season in which he went 25-8-2 for Brandon and Seattle of the WHL. My guess is that the Flyers wanted him signed for third-round money, and he felt his win/loss performance warranted better than that. Just a guess.

Pittsburgh prospect Nathan Moon is another guy who is going back into the draft. You can get a full list of players in this situation right here.

Highlights from game 3, including Hartnell's goal. Still looks very close to me:

{youtube}9a7PqDCJRyo{/youtube}

Jonathan Toews, meet Chris Pronger:

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{youtube}-OD54xyCJMo{/youtube}