

**December 11, 2011**

Written by Chris Nichols

Saturday, 10 December 2011 23:53 - Last Updated Sunday, 11 December 2011 15:19

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Sam Carchidi from the Philadelphia Inquirer reports that Claude Giroux will be reevaluated Monday morning, but that Flyers GM Paul Holmgren said Giroux "felt better this morning. Holmgren also said that Bryzgalov was doing much better and should be able to play Tuesday.

Adam Larsson owners take note: At least for the time being, he's been taking off the power play. Pete DeBoer wants him to concentrate on his 5-on-5 play. Larsson only has 10 points on the season, but seven have come in his past 11 starts. Three of those seven were via the PP.

So Jeff Skinner has gone from having the flu (or flu-like symptoms) to an undisclosed injury. Wonderful. Drayson Bowman has been called up on an emergency basis and Brian Boucher has been moved to the IR.

At today's Devils' practice, David Clarkson has replaced Dainius Zubrus as the RW alongside Petr Sykora and Patrik Elias. The earliest Travis Zajac would play would be late this week.

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When Tim Thomas didn't come out to play the third period of last night's game against Columbus, it wasn't an injury-related issue. The score was tied 3-3 at the time. Claude Julien said he "didn't look as sharp as we're used to him being." The Bruins scored twice in the third on the power play with Tuukka Rask between the pipes and won 5-3.

Nino Niederreiter is inching closer to returning from his concussion, so there could be another conditioning stint in the AHL. He's only been able to play six games with the Isles so far thanks to his earlier groin injury. It never hurts to nose around in deeper keeper leagues to see if the owner of a player who endures a few ailments early in his career is getting antsy already and wants someone who can produce right now. Bargains can often be found that way.

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Richard Bachman was a fourth rounder in 2006 and he finally got the call for his first NHL start tonight against the Kings. He turned away 26 of 27 shots and looked really good doing it in a 2-1 win. Sheldon Souray had nine shots in that game too.

Jay Feaster spent a good chunk of time on After Hours doing exactly what we all knew he'd be asked to do... talk about the never-ending Jarome Iginla trade rumours. Again, he says Iginla is not going anywhere. He also said in direct response to a Twitter question that there has never

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been given a formal trade offer made for Iginla.

After tonight's 3-0 shutout of the Oilers, Iginla (4-5-9, 21 SOG) and Olli Jokinen (3-4-7, 16 SOG) have combined for 16 points and 37 SOG in their past five starts.

Kane. Toews. Hossa. Sharp. [Just try to stop them all](#) . It's a look at the pick-your-poison situation for opponents.

Have you ever wondered what's involved with writing about fantasy puck for a living? Read the end of this Ramblings. It's your chance to find out (virtually) whatever you want to know.

Jordin Tootoo has eight points in his past eight games and he's also the cover boy for the December issue of Goalie Bowling Monthly.

Claude #fantasymealticket Giroux left tonight's game with an injury. If you haven't seen it, he was on the ice and Wayne Simmonds jumped over him and inadvertently knocked the back of Giroux's head with his knee. Hopefully there was no resulting concussion, but we'll just wait and see. Better safe than sorry with the NHL points leader. It was Sean Couturier who jumped onto the first line between Scott Hartnell and Jaromir Jagr sans Giroux. Simmonds, by the way, has five points in his past four games now and he and Danny Briere have been getting it done of

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late. \*\* A Philly reporter tweeted after the game that there are no headaches for Giroux yet.

Ilya Bryzgalov left this one too with some sort of lower-body injury, but he was hanging around the bench with his mask above his head in the third period, so hopefully it's nothing major.

Another potentially big loss for poolies... Zdeno Chara. He's out with an injury from tonight's action. Dennis Seidenberg and Joe Corvo saw the most time at the point of the power play tonight.

Jeff Taffe had points in each of his two starts alongside Mikko Koivu and Dany Heatley. He's been reassigned though, with Cal Clutterbuck expected back against the Jets. That's exactly what you want from a call-up as an organization though... good fill-in performances and then go down and work hard to earn that next opportunity.

With no Saku Koivu for the Ducks, we saw some tweaks to Anaheim's top six tonight. Kyle Palmieri - Ryan Getzlaf - Corey Perry/ Andrew Cogliano - Bobby Ryan - Teemu Selanne. Ryan moved to the middle, as we've seen from time to time in the past. Palmieri, who was a late first round pick in 2009 and who is tearing it up in the AHL so far this season (17-9-26 in 18 GP with 19 PIM and a +15 rating), drew the plum L1 assignment to open this one.

The Sharks were shut out by the Blues with Brian Elliott earning his fourth goose egg of the season. That's four shutouts for St. Louis since Ken Hitchcock took over with the November 8<sup>th</sup> win over the Hawks. Elliott has three of them.

That game also saw Joe Thornton and David Perron meet for the first time since the hit that left Perron out of action for so long. More importantly, Perron now has points in three of four since coming back. Good to see.

Daniel Alfredsson played the point on PP with Erik Karlsson since Sergei Gonchar was apparently a healthy scratch (that's how he was specifically listed where I read it, but an upper-body injury was listed from Thursday's game). Matt Carkner played his first game of the season and if you're looking for PIM help without sacrificing a forward spot, he's been quite good at that role in the past. Alfredsson, as you've hopefully noticed, has been looking much stronger in the last few weeks. I think I made this point in one of my recent live recaps, but he's looking more like the Alfredsson of old... as opposed to an old Alfredsson.

The Nick Foligno hits on Cody Hodgson and Ryan Kesler were the talk of this one. The one on Hodgson seemed to be unfortunate timing for Hodgson with him going down slightly before the hit. Hodgson is apparently ok though and wanted to come back and play, but the training staff erred on the side of caution. As far as the hit on Kesler ? Depends on who you ask. Foligno thinks Kesler embellished it and Kesler... not so much. I only saw the Chris Neil headshot on Alexandre Burrows once as I was writing, so couldn't really tell if there was anything to it at the time.

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Mason Raymond has points in three of his first four games back now. Considering the layoff, that's an impressive start.

Jordan Staal is now day-to-day with a lower-body injury, which shuffled the lines for the Pens a bit tonight. Does it ever matter for this team? So well-coached. It was Chris Kunitz with Evgeni Malkin and James Neal on L1. Matt Cooke and Tyler Kennedy had Pascal Dupuis between them, while Steve Sullivan shifted to a line with Joe Vitale and Arron Asham. Sullivan had only one point in six games coming in and he scored Pittsburgh's first goal in the 6-3 pounding of the Isles. Paul Martin quietly has six points in nine games too.

Speaking of power play minutes, that's the only reason Tomas Kaberle was acquired by the Habs and he delivered today in his matinee debut with a couple of assists. He actually has three straight two-assist games too, so ideally he'll be able to keep this momentum going after an abysmal season otherwise and also help Montreal's PP get back to where it should be.

Jiri Hudler has three straight two-point efforts. He's skating with Henrik Zetterberg and Valtteri Filppula.

Q&A runs every other Sunday and this is one of those weekends. Need a second opinion on something related to your team or on fantasy hockey in general? Please... keep it relatively

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brief, but give me enough info to answer the question. H2H vs. roto, keeper vs. single season, categories counted, etc. [Nichols@dobberhockey.com](mailto:Nichols@dobberhockey.com)

Speaking of which... two weeks from now, it'll be Christmas weekend! My Ramblings will be a Christmas-themed offering, but I thought it might be cool for the Q&A (which will be written in advance of that weekend since that's a rare two-day break for me) to give you a chance to ask whatever you might be wondering about being a fantasy hockey writer. Like what sort of hours are involved, how I got started, what a typical night might entail. So if there's anything you've ever wondered about that side of the fantasy ledger, drop me a line and I'll try to include it in that Christmas edition of Q&A.

Should you be so inclined, you can [follow me on Twitter](#) .