Mikkel Boedker – is this a fluke, a hot streak, or a sign of things to come? As Bob McKenzie said last night, this could be the “blossoming of a 22-year-old.” I have a piece I am working on regarding the subject of development. Essentially, the majority of players take a nonlinear path to their potential (ups, downs, delays, and so on). Boedker was a stud in the OHL and a high draft pick for a reason.

Jaromir Jagr and Martin Brodeur face off in the playoffs. Two of the best of our generation (and all-time).

Emerson Etem scored twice and led Syracuse with four shots on goal, but his production wasn’t enough as they lost in OT to the Tim Horton’s St John’s IceCaps.

Norfolk forward and former Harvard standout Alex Killom, who I mentioned yesterday, had 1+1 for Norfolk in an OT win yesterday.

Cory Conacher ’s name continues to pop up – an assist and a team-leading five shots on goal

for the Admirals.

Another name I have mentioned countless times – Mark Barberio – had 1+1 for the Admirals. He could be QB-ing the top PP unit for the Lightning in a year or two.

A very cool infographic breaking down Steven Stamkos 's 60 goals.

Johan Franzen had some pointed words regarding the Wings early playoff exit:

""We need to have more fun out there, get some confidence back," Franzen said. "We looked like a drained team, kind of, in most of the games. Get some joy back, believing in ourselves, knowing that we're a good team, and play for each other."

The Red Wings were bounced in the first round of the playoffs by the Nashville Predators. Franzen, speaking Tuesday, when players cleaned out their lockers, believes the handwriting was on the wall following a 7-11-4 finish to the regular season.

“We didn’t have a good ending to the season, eight wins in the last (27), including playoffs,’’ Franzen said. “You got to come into playoffs with confidence, otherwise it’s so tight. You’re playing a team with a really good defense and a great goalie (
Pekka Rinne
), so if you don’t have that extra thing to get through it’s going to be tough.’‘

Why was confidence lacking?”

The Portland Winterhawks have produced a number of really good prospects over the past few years. Their coach, Mike Johnston, deserves a lot of the credit. Johnston is an outside-the-box thinker. An interesting read here.

""It's been written about before, but Johnston has modeled some of Portland's practice routine on the concepts used by Chip Kelly, head coach of the college football powerhouse Oregon Ducks. The Ducks are a darling of armchair quarterbacks far and wide for their high-tempo offence .
Reducing the amount of time they take between plays has allowed them to beat teams with a relatively straightforward run-based offence
."

It turns out Johnston visited some of Kelly's practices in the fall with a notebook in hand.

"The reason I wanted to go down and see Chip and the [Oregon football] Ducks practice is because they play a similar style to the way we play," Johnston said. "They like up-tempo. They

like to play at a high, high pace. So what we took from that practice was a lot of our habits that we do now in practice." The Hawks coach always created an intense atmosphere at practice, but after watching Kelly, he saw changes he could make."I wanted the pace to be high, but I saw a different level down there," Johnston said. "I saw how short they ran their drills. Maybe we were running our drills a little too long. They did a lot of their practice to music. We've tried that sometimes with our guys, just to give a change."

The top 10 saves of the first round.

And… the top 10 hits of the first round.

Darren Dreger on San Jose and Tim Thomas :

"It's possible Wilson once again attacks his core in an effort to push this team over the hump, but it seems unlikely. Thornton, Couture, Pavelski, Clowe, Havlat and Boyle are all important pieces and contractually, in some cases, hard to move. Likewise for Patrick Marleau, whose name I purposely excluded from the list for sake of further discussion. Marleau's future is questioned on an annual basis and always in the days after the Sharks are eliminated from the playoffs…."

“My gut instinct tells me yes - Thomas has likely played his last game with the Bruins. The 38-year-old has one year remaining at $5 million (cap hit) and contractually, can’t be traded before July 1 without consent. My view is the Bruins see Tuukka Rask as being ready to handle the challenge of being a No. 1. He’s paid his dues and will be more affordable than Thomas, which given the Bruins payroll next season ($59 million-plus), GM Peter Chiarelli is going to have to spend his money wisely….”

Chris Kreider could be an X-Factor for the Rangers against Washington, as NHL.com notes . John Tortorella is already giving him ample ice time, and he has the size and speed to stand out against NHL competition already.

Kreider will start the series on a line with Derek Stepan (who was great in the final few games) and Ryan Callahan (who is always really good). On Kreider:

“"He's an easy guy to play with," Callahan said. "For a young guy, he talks a ton out there, and that helps. His size, the way he protects the puck -- I think it fits in great with the way Stepan and I have been playing. The way we play is below the hash marks. It's going to be scary to watch him play in a couple years. The way he was able to step into this situation and play the way he did and play the minutes he did, it says a lot."

Canada's final roster for the World Championships – how would you set the lines up? I assume Ryan Getzlaf will skate on the top line with Corey Perry , and…. Evander Kane
?
Patrick Sharp
?

A Buffalo perspective on Cody Hodgson 's struggles in the defensive zone. Worth the read. I hope more poolies start paying attention to zone starts – it is a huge reason why the Sedins broke out and continue to be elite point producers (this season notwithstanding).

"Advanced statistics via behindthenet.ca indicate Gillis' comment here is not a smoke screen. In January, Hodgson scored 10 points in 11 games while starting in the offensive zone 83.3 percent of the time. If he had maintained that O-zone start percentage, it would have been the highest in the NHL.

In December, Hodgson started in the offensive zone on 33 percent of his shifts. The previous two months, he started in 52 percent and 40 percent. The numbers clearly blew up in January for no apparent reason at the time."

Behind the Net is a phenomenal resource – spend some time there, get to know the stats, what they mean, and how you can use them to help you in your pool. I'll have some pieces this summer on how to use advanced stats to help gain an edge in fantasy hockey.