Jordan Schroeder is the subject of my latest piece - spoke to his summer trainer, and projected his AHL season in Chicago.

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Made some DobberHockey-themed wallpapers. Check 'em out here. I'm open to player suggestions for new ones, too.

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There were a number of exhibition games in the AHL last night. I'll have some updates later on in the AM. I'll get some content up on the DobberHockey Experts draft, as well. The goalie run in the first two rounds was the craziest one I have seen in all of my years of drafting.

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I imagine now is not the time that you will be looking to pick up the 2012-13 DobberHockey Guide, but we will keep it updated through the lockout, and it will be updated right until puck drop (hopefully in December).

The news hasn't been overly optimistic, but I did really enjoy this Q & A with the author of a Gary Bettman biography – he seems to think there is a solution to be made.

I have talked with a few players over the past few weeks, and the general consensus seems to be both sides are "willing" to sacrifice two months for bargaining power, but they didn't expect it to go beyond December (which is why you see many veterans and players with families not going over to Europe right now).

In the meantime, we are going to work hard to ensure you keep coming to DobberHockey each day – fantasy analysis of AHL games, KHL games, SEL games, you name it. Injuries, prospects to watch, interviews, new content each day – I think our team of writers right now is the strongest it has ever been (I really mean that). We have some great talent covering all aspects

of fantasy hockey, and I'm looking forward to seeing what we can do once the NHL drops the puck again.

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The DobberHockey Experts league conducted its draft on last night. I'll be getting feedback from all of the participants and then I will put something together for the main page so you guys can see the thought processes behind our selections. I live-blogged the draft, and you can read my round-by-round thoughts here.

The league will be viewable to public as well – we are using Yahoo! Sports. The biggest change this year – dumping PIM in favor of hits. It change my draft rankings considerably.

Bobby Mac's take on the 2013 WJC squad for Canada. As Borat would say... "Very nice!"

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Here is some of my work from around the ‘net in case you missed it:

Here is my profile of Dallas forward Cody Eakin , including quotes from those who have seen him in the WHL, AHL, and NHL. I’m a big Eakin fan, and the comparisons tossed around in the column are quite accurate – Brooks Laich and Chris Kunitz , to name two.

Eakin could develop into a very good second line center. Or he could top out as a solid energy line center or winger. It depends on who you ask. His work ethic, instincts, and ability to process the game quickly are all unquestioned. However, it is still unknown whether or not he will be able to translate his offensive successes in junior to the NHL. One thing is for certain – he has a much better opportunity of doing just that in Dallas than he did in Washington.

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And my latest on the Seattle arena deal – the problem of traffic. It may seem like a trivial matter, but try telling that to me after you spend some time driving around Seattle.

Instead of trying to strong arm his opponents, Hansen came to the negotiation table looking to make a deal work for all stakeholders involved – something that the NHL and NHLPA need to learn.

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I have also started to blog for the PlayNow Sports Blog. PlayNow is an online betting arm of the BC Lottery Corporation. This week, I am profiling the European hockey leagues, as you will be able to bet on them on the PlayNow site. Here are links to my first two pieces – KHL previews for the Eastern and Western Conferences.

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I had a lengthy chat with Kirk Olson, the strength and conditioning coach for the Minnesota Wild, earlier this week. He gave me a ton of terrific insights (the interview should be published in the next week). He played a significant part in the recruitment of Zach Parise (he's been training Parise in the summers for a number of years now), and he trains a lot of guys during the summer, too – Parise, Drew Stafford, Kyle Okposo, Derek Stepan, and Jordan Schroeder, to name a few.

*

Is "clutch" a myth? A really interesting post on the age-old question by Eric T. from NHLNumbers. Worth reading if you have a few minutes to spare this morning:

There's no question that some players do better in the playoffs than others, of course. For the most part, that's because they are better players -- you don't have to invoke clutch skills to explain why Craig Adams doesn't score as much in the playoffs as Sidney Crosby .

The number of people whose performance improves or declines in the playoffs is almost exactly what we would expect from simple variance over the small playoff sample sizes. It is thus hard to argue that clutch talent is a significant factor in playoff performance, or that people who have had improved outcomes in the playoffs should be expected to continue to do so.

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AHL training camps are in full swing right now. I was able to grab a press pass for the Abbotsford Heat this year, and will be heading out there to cover a few games (the Chicago Wolves come to town at the end of October for two games, for instance).

The AHL is going to be really, really good hockey. Chicago will have a lot of players to get a look at, including Jordan Schroeder , Chris Tanev , Kevin Connauton , and Zack Kassian .

The Oklahoma City Barons come into Abbotsford, too. Hall, Eberle, Nugent-Hopkins, Justin Schultz, and so on. Will be great to see these guys play some hockey, even if it isn't in the NHL.

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Whenever the season does start, the Carolina Hurricanes have high hopes for center Jeremy Welsh.

He kind of came out of nowhere to emerge as a legitimate top nine NHL forward last year. He was third in the NCAA with 27 goals, and let the underdog Union College all the way to the Frozen Four.

He could find himself centering Jeff Skinner this fall for the AHL's Charlotte Checkers (Skinner didn't report to training camp,
but he could find his way down there soon).

*

Lindy Ruff misses Derek Roy . I think he'll get over the loss quickly once he gets to see Steve Ott in action. It was a necessary trade for both sides (a bit of a risk for Buffalo, as Roy was far and away their most experienced center).

Near the end of the season, Roy had trouble getting on the top two lines with Tyler Ennis and Cody Hodgson taking over. Ruff said, "You can say the emergence of Tyler playing center ice probably made the move possible, with Cody looking to be right in there in a 1-2 spot and Tyler the way he played trying to get him that same type of ice time, and Ott playing on the third line or in that situation, or even playing in our top two lines as being a grittier type winger or centerman. We know we're going to need a guy on faceoffs and excellent in faceoffs, he can play the middle so it gives us a little bit different look." Ruff added, "We should be a lot tougher team, a lot more irritating team to play against. I think that message has been heard."

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An amazing video of some unseen (or at least not seen in a while…) Alex Mogilny footage from his career. He sure plays like Pavel Datsyuk.

{youtube}6sAGHHBPCuQ{/youtube}

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Some news and notes from Bridgeport (Isles AHL affiliate) training camp.

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Are any of you in hockey pools that don't include the NHL this fall ? Glen Hoos published a really interesting piece on how to calculate point equivalencies for the various leagues.
I have thought of doing "weekly" leagues for the DobberHockey readers, if that would be of interest. CHL, KHL, SEL, whatever. Something we can track and follow!

I've been watching a few SEL games via streaming, and have really enjoyed it. The hockey is

quite different with the open ice – positioning is crucial, especially for defensemen.

*

We'll be doing lots of contests over the coming weeks and months – Dobber ran the first one on Tuesday, looking for funny fantasy team names. The prizes will include team audits from Dobber and I (these take a lot of time, although I do enjoy doing them), and some of the bigger contests we will get some sports memorabilia. Stay tuned. And feel free to suggest ideas for contests that would be of interest to you.