Some random hockey trivia - on this day in 1965, two babies were born in Quebec who would go on to change the game of hockey. Happy 47th birthday to Patrick Roy and Mario Lemieux.

*

Taylor Hall has been ruled eligible to play in the AHL. He will join the other young Oilers down in Oklahoma City.

Hall was originally ineligible to play, as he wasn't healthy when AHL teams announced their rosters a few weeks ago. However, AHL teams let NHL teams know that players who are waiver-exempt (like Hall) would be able to sign AHL-only contracts during the lockout.

This isn't really a loophole, it is just ensuring that players who should be eligible for the AHL can play there this year. And it helps the league as the talent infusion across the board will be even better now.

*

Steve Laidlaw shared his thoughts on the Experts Draft over on his blog – you can read that here.

There were a lot of good picks in this group and I feel as though we hit something of a breaking point in the draft where we've switched from the group of proven talents to the longshots. Now I certainly could have thrown my regression comment out there after this group as well when looking specifically at Elias, Purcell and Vrbata but frankly I'm just happy to see a few names I don't like fly off the board. I really wanted Dubinsky and Lecavalier but neither one makes it to me.

*

A hot start to his season in the AHL could fast-track Kevin Connauton to an NHL spot with the Canucks. A self-assessment of his defensive game:

"It's kind of been a knock, but I've taken that part of my game to to the next level every year trying to shake that label," added Connauton. "I think I've done a pretty good job and heard good things from the people who I'm trying to impress. It's just reading the coverage and making sure you have an active stick. My game in my zone has improved drastically since the day I was drafted. I'm comfortable and confident back there."

*

I am heading to the Medicine Hat vs. Vancouver Giants game on Friday night – will be nice to get an up-close look at Medicine Hat captain Hunter Shinkaruk – he plays a lot like Patrick Kane, and should be a top five selection at the 2013 Draft.

The Giants are struggling to start the season – not the best time to slump with the NHL currently in a lockout. The Giants really captured a lot of Canucks fans during the last lockout, as they had a really exciting and successful team.

*

Andrei Markov has signed with a KHL club. How much does it cost to ship him over in bubble wrap? Joking aside – I nabbed him very late in the experts draft, and am cautiously optimistic that his knee issues are a thing of the past. He won't be as mobile as he once was, but he should still be a very effective power play defenseman.

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In case you forgot how good Anze Kopitar is:

{youtube}4R2rdGuwJv4{/youtube}

*

Rangers prospect JT Miller scored the lone goal in Connecticut's first game of the exhibition season (AHL). Chris Kreider didn't play. Miller has 30-goal upside at the NHL level – I'm a big fan of his and will be tracking his progress in the AHL closely.

*

Another beauty goal – this one off of the stick of Vladimir Tarasenko:

{youtube}ry9QwQzRaAg{/youtube}

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Jack Campbell is the top prospect once again in the Dallas system.

Jack Campbell will always be a very controversial draft pick, but there is no doubt in my mind that he remains the top prospect in the Stars system with the absolute most value and potential. The netminder is still two years away from being seriously considered for NHL action, but if his performance in the AHL at the end of last season is any indication -- it could be a very fun two years. Campbell's mechanics and athleticism are off the charts but it is his competitive drive and mentality that truly define who he is as a player.

He is one of the more approachable and personable hockey players you'll ever meet, he absolutely despises losing and his competitive nature is infectious. What Campbell needs to do is to become more consistent against top competition and he'll have a fresh start this year in Austin to help accomplish that.

The Stars will treat Campbell like Cory Schneider – let him marinate in the AHL for a while. Kari Lehtonen is signed for the foreseeable future, just as Roberto Luongo is/was in Vancouver. Campbell doesn't have the pressure of an organization on his shoulders now, and he can go about adjusting to pro hockey (it is a huge step up for any player, particularly goaltenders though).

*

The AHL will be broadcasted in Sportsnet a few times this month – check this link out for details.

It's no Hockey Night in Canada, but sure beats nothing:

Then on Oct. 20, it's an AHL doubleheader as the Marlies host the Hamilton Bulldogs (Montreal Canadiens) at 7 p.m. ET and the Chicago Wolves (Vancouver Canucks) visit the Abbotsford Heat (Calgary Flames) at 10 p.m. ET.

*

Some more European signings – Claude Giroux and Danny Briere are off to Germany, as is TJ Galiardi. Joe Pavelski and Anton Volchenkov signed in the KHL.

Andrew Ladd signed in the KHL (or was close to signing), but he changed his mind and will remain in Winnipeg, citing family reasons.

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