Angus here - I am opening up my hockey mailbag for the duration of the lockout. The details here.

*

Lockout Update: Day 25 - There is still a lockout.

*

Fantasy Guide - Fully updated as of today. Massive updates posted - including KHL injury notes, a full blow-by-blow analysis and breakdown (from my perspective) of the Expert's League draft, a *bonus* article going over the rosters of each team and picking out possible retirement candidates in the event that the lockout wipes out the season. Also added notes in the CBA Tracker.

The Draft List was also updated, including some salary updates and a few injury notes.

FREE - Get this year's *Fantasy Football Guide* and the *2011-12 Fantasy Baseball Prospects Report* . I'm giving these away free, details are here . I want everyone to see what a great product they missed out on so they'll pick it up next time!

*

Phoenix prospect Brett MacLean has retired from hockey. His cardiac arrest was serious enough that he is forced to abstain from contact sports. TSN had that update yesterday. This was an update that was probably easy to get two months ago, I wonder why the news is just out now. Tough break for Brett, but on the other hand he's very lucky and I wish him all the best.

*

The Hockey Writers' Ian McLaren was at Blogs With Balls (should have searched me out Ian!) and he did this little write-up on one of the discussions - Advanced Stats. A solid write-up. That particular part of the conference didn't enthrall me, as it pretty much told me what I already knew - and the focus was on football and baseball, barely touching hockey. But McLaren delves into the QualComp stat if you're interested in learning more about it.

*

So tell me this - why do the big named mainstream media personalities believe that the NHL and the NHLPA are not talking about "core economic issues"? I mean, granted, they're not bouncing proposals off each other, but you can't tell me that they're sitting in the room together for six hours and the topic hasn't come up? Bullshit. Ideas have been floated. Maybe over a coffee break. Perhaps between concluding talks on the frequency of drug testing just before the discussion about standards for media availability. But things have been said.

The two sides are set to meet today.

*

In his first game in the SM-liiga (Finland), Craig Smith tallied four points. A good dark horse to start the season well, but will probably tail off in the second half again.

I write this stuff assuming that there will be a season, of course. And a decent-sized "second half" to a season, too.

*

Another lockout victim - Jason Akeson was cut by the Phantoms and will report to Trenton of the ECHL. Akeson was one of the only promising offensive forwards in the Flyers' system. Still, he was beat out by a few players who I had figured to be not nearly as good. I consider it a big step back.

*

Sean Bergenheim suffered a lower-body injury while playing in Finland and word is that he has returned to North America for treatment.

*

Update on Colorado's Joey Hishon , prospect from my hometown of Stratford - he will not play Friday in the home opener for Lake Erie (AHL) and nobody knows when he will play again. Serious concussion. Buffalo prospect
Brayden McNabb
dished out the cheap shot that took Hishon down.

*

Here are the Top 25 players under the age of 25 according to ESPN's Neil Greenberg, the guy who gave you this same list last year without
John Tavares
on it. Tavares jumps to No. 5, while
Brad Marchand
is apparently better than
Tyler Seguin
.

1. C Jonathan Toews , Chicago Blackhawks, 24

2. C Steven Stamkos , Tampa Bay Lightning, 22

3. C Logan Couture , San Jose Sharks, 23

4. C Jordan Staal , Carolina Hurricanes, 24

5. C John Tavares , New York Islanders, 22

6. RW Patrick Kane , Chicago Blackhawks, 24

7. LW Taylor Hall , Edmonton Oilers, 21

8. D Drew Doughty , Los Angeles Kings,

9. D Erik Karlsson , Ottawa Senators, 22

10. LW Brad Marchand , Boston Bruins, 24

11. D Alex Pietrangelo , St. Louis Blues, 23

12. C Tyler Seguin , Boston Bruins, 21

13. LW Jamie Benn , Dallas Stars, 23

14. LW David Perron , St. Louis Blues, 24

15. RW Jeff Skinner , Carolina Hurricanes, 20

16. D Victor Hedman , Tampa Bay Lightning, 22

17. LW Milan Lucic , Boston Bruins, 24

18. C Sam Gagner , Edmonton Oilers, 23

19. C Evander Kane , Winnipeg Jets, 21

20. D Kevin Shattenkirk , St. Louis Blues, 24

21. C Jordan Eberle , Edmonton Oilers, 22

22. C Patrik Berglund , St. Louis Blues, 24

23. G Semyon Varlamov, Colorado Avalanche, 24

24. D Tyler Myers , Buffalo Sabres, 22

25. LW Wayne Simmonds , Philadelphia Flyers, 24

*

For what it's worth, here are the 25 players under the age of 25 on my Top 300 Fantasy Players list:

1

Steven Stamkos

22

2

Claude Giroux

24

3

John Tavares

21

4

Nicklas Backstrom

24

5

R. Nugent-Hopkins

19

6

Jordan Eberle

22

7

Patrick Kane

23

8

Tyler Seguin

20

9

Erik Karlsson

23

10

Jamie Benn

23

11

Taylor Hall

20

12

Jonathan Toews

24

13

Matt Duchene

21

14

Logan Couture

23

15

Nail Yakupov

18

16

Jeff Skinner

20

17

Evander Kane

21

18

Jordan Staal

24

19

Tyler Ennis

22

20

Derek Stepan

22

21

Jakub Voracek

23

22

James van Riemsdyk

23

23

Max Pacioretty

23

24

Bryan Little

24

25

Kyle Turris

23

Just missing the cut, in order - Landeskog, Lucic, Okposo, O'Reilly and Marchand.

*

Blogs with Balls Hockey Panel, in case you are interested. This is an hour. Entertaining though.

{youtube}qTEkqwCMATM{/youtube}