We saw Friday's news that oft-injured Habs defenceman Andrei Markov left midway through his KHL game, which didn't come as too big of a surprise to most hockey fans. Before long, it was reported he was merely winded after a check. Mildly bruised ribs, or something along those lines. He told his agent he was okay.

But, sadly, this is Markov.

Genadi Boguslavski, a Montreal-based Sov Sport reporter, tweeted Sunday morning that the rearguard will miss at least the next three games.

At least it's not a knee injury again, right?

*

There have been a wealth of stories generated since the hiring of John Davidson by the Columbus Blue Jackets, but this one from Sunday's Columbus Dispatch does a particularly effective job of showing why JD is so well-respected in hockey circles.

An NHL executive observes this about Davidson: "You think he's just there shooting the bull with you, but he's reading the situation as he's shooting the bull. He has a tremendous capacity to put people at ease, but he also gets a clear read on people. He finds out what their motivations are."

Lengthy, insightful quote at the end of that article from former Rangers great Brian Leetch too, who had many a long talk with Davidson when he was a broadcaster there.

*

Roberto Luongo, when asked to verify if he operates @Strombone1 on Twitter: "I have no idea what you are talking about," he said. "I have heard about it. Pretty funny guy."

Indeed.

In terms of trade talk, these are the facts as laid out Saturday by the man himself via The Vancouver Sun
.

Luongo has the no-trade clause. He maintains he has not given GM Mike Gillis a list of specific teams to which he'll go. The two did speak over the summer 'about certain teams', but that was 'nothing concrete.'

Naturally, if he could go anywhere it would still be the Florida Panthers. But he says there are 'many teams out there that I'll consider for sure.'

The recent rumour involved a deal basically being done with the Toronto Maple Leafs pending a new CBA, but if the goaltender knows anything he certainly didn't shed any light in that area.

Regardless, the enticing potential still exists that Cory Schneider's draft value could fall a bit if Luongo isn't dealt between the time a new CBA is signed and the season begins. Even with the invariable rust factor, that should present a good opportunity for poolies to get a guy who stands to be in the top statistical rung of netminders when all is said and done on whatever shortened campaign with which we end up.

It's still a wait and see mode in terms of what Luongo's traded fantasy value might hold. On the face of it, you'd think his peripherals would at least take some sort of hit since the defence and system in front of him won't likely be nearly as effective as Vancouver's.

Realistically though, let's keep in mind he 'only' had 2.41/ .919 splits last year. Good, but not fantastic. Nowhere near Schneider's 1.96/ .937 standout numbers. Luongo's '11-12 benchmarks are achievable plateaus for virtually any new team for which he might play.

Given that Luongo would also stand to start a bigger percentage of games than he did while duking it out with Schneider, the veteran should certainly still be able to challenge a 31-win pace – with his actual totals dependent on the number of games played in what looks to be a shortened season at best.

From a pure entertainment standpoint, Toronto would be a fantastic destination. He'd immediately make that team better and, more importantly, he has the mental strength to deal with the media insanity that is the self-proclaimed centre of the hockey universe. Fun times would be ahead, to be sure.

*

The Tampa Bay Times reports Anders Lindback will play for Ilves Tampere during the lockout. His agent also said the goalie is 'chomping at the bit' to play for the Lightning. No doubt.

It was about six weeks ago when Guy Boucher came out and relieved some of the expected pressure from Lindback by saying the 24-year-old and Mathieu Garon are Nos. 1 and 1a for the time being. The coach indicated both guys were 'going to get a lot of ice time' and he wasn't expecting Lindback to 'come in here and play 65 games.'

The aspect of that mentality I liked the most was Boucher specifically telling Garon this: "Don't come in with a backup attitude."

Where possible, you'll likely best be served by nabbing both netminders early on and seeing how the workflow develops. Lindback certainly has legit No. 1 skills and his size is a strong bonus, but don't discount Garon. The guy can play.

*

We've seen a number of articles on Taylor Hall's rehab process for the Edmonton Oilers, but it's also worth noting that both Nikolai Khabibulin and Andy Sutton are still under the care of the team's medical staff. The Edmonton Journal notes Khabibulin has lingering hip/groin issues from the 2011-12 season, which could certainly impact his ability to fight Devan Dubnyk for starts should this year actually get underway anytime in the foreseeable future. Neither keeper will be anywhere but near the bottom of most top starter rankings, but the Oilers are set to move up in the standings and one of them –seemingly Dubnyk - will be securing some extra wins in the process.

Sutton is certainly much less relevant in fantasy parlance, but it's entirely possible he has already played his last NHL game. The Journal indicates he underwent arthroscopic surgery 3-1/2 weeks ago after enduring yet another knee injury over the summer. He now faces the prospect of more invasive work after it was discovered he fractured the medial condyle of the femur.

*

Worthwhile take on the Isles' upcoming 2015 move to Brooklyn from Newsday , whereby the Isles will truly be coming out of this lockout with some momentum. Aside from the tangible dollar-value assets of the relocation, the biggest positive may well be the changing perception of the team around the NHL. That, in turn, may improve GM Garth Snow's ability to reshape his squad moving forward and that'll certainly help to increase the fantasy value of the team's mainstays like John Tavares. The Isles may also be in a financial and cap space position to take advantage of other teams' contract miscalculations

*

The Montreal Gazette went one-on-one with Brian Gionta. Naturally there were a number of lockout-related questions and frankly, who really cares what anyone has to say from either side at this point? That said, an interesting question was posed for any player who isn't currently on a team somewhere during this work stoppage: How challenging is it to maintain a mental and physical fitness right now?

Gionta: "It's difficult in the sense that normally we have a set date when we want to be peaking. As athletes, you want to build yourself up to a certain point and be ready then. Now, we don't have an end date or time when we want to be peaking. It's trying to maintain the right level of mental and physical sharpness. In the summer, you go for three, four weeks hard and you take

a week where it's lighter, to kind of refresh and regroup for the next stage. The problem now is there's no end date to build up to. Right now, that's the biggest struggle, to find the time to refresh and then be peaking at the right times."

*

No NHL action means hockey writers are having to scramble to come up with story ideas, but that time can certainly be put to good use. CSNWashington.com wonders whether a potentially shortened season would help or hurt the Capitals. Included in the write-up are a number of salient points on which fantasy owners can pontificate.

Alex Ovechkin and Nicklas Backstrom, already a lethal combo with years of chemistry from playing on the same line, should have zero adaption issues when play resumes thanks to the Dynamo Moscow reunion.

Mike Green has been an IR regular in recent years, but extra time to rest and train shouldn't do anything but help his chances when play resumes. It can't be said often enough how much his poolie value should rebound.

The other thing is that while many of us are eagerly anticipating the showdown in net between Braden Holtby and Michael Neuvirth, at least they should each be starting the year on fairly equal footing. Holtby is in line for even more AHL seasoning with Hershey and Neuvirth is getting starts with Sparta Praha, although the results (1-8 with 3.51/ 906 splits) have apparently been anything but good so far.

*

Bruce Boudreau topped the likeability charts for me pretty early on in his ascension to the ranks of head coach of the Washington Capitals. When he hit 24/7? Forget about it. I #^&%# fell in love with the $) #@*&$ guy.

The Orange County Register details how he's been spending some of his lockout time doing what a number of NHL coaches have, which is running coaching clinics. Another good man for the community.

*

Sometimes, with a little extra time on your hands, it's kind of cool to do something outside your comfort zone. Bruins forward Gregory Campbell, according to The Boston Herald , has gone for a few night rides with the Boston Police gang unit.

When his playing career is done, might that line of work be a possibility?

"It's always been something that's interested me. Seeing it up close and personal? It's serious work. The guys are pretty courageous," he said. "I just got married and I don't know if my wife and family would be into that. Hockey's dangerous enough, but you see these guys go out and lay themselves on the line every night.

"But I definitely always respected them and I have greater respect for them now. It's something I would definitely consider, yeah."

*

'Drop-dead date' has been a popular term of late, but how does that apply when it comes to Olympic participation of NHLers for 2014 in Sochi? Olympic hockey has been really enjoyable to

watch, so if there is a full-season lockout what can Canadians expect? Plan A remains NHLers for the nation's entry in Russia and option B wouldn't even be looked at until sometime in the New Year.

Bob Nicholson told The Ottawa Citizen he doesn't want to get into the business of identifying a drop dead date for a CBA deal where Sochi is concerned.

"Rene Fasel (IIHF president) has asked me a number of times, and I've always said, we don't have a date," Nicholson said. "We don't want to have a date sitting there so it's a target."

*

The Toronto Star tells the tale of Warren Rychel's son Kerby, who is a big winger with two-way skills who may project as a first rounder in the 2013 NHL draft.

Warren, incidentally, is the Spitfires' vice president, general manager and part-owner. So Kerby

was afforded the chance to see the team's championship years (2009 and 2010 Memorial Cup winners) up close, including learning from guys like Taylor Hall, Adam Henrique, Ryan Ellis and Cam Fowler.

"He saw the skill but he also saw how hard everyone worked," Warren Rychel says. "Sure, there were future NHLers on those teams but he also saw that no one outworked them.

"He understands the pro game and what it takes to get there."

*

In case you missed it, here's the goalie on goalie penalty shot from Chicago's Champs for Charity event with Niklas Backstrom and Craig Anderson. The event raised over $323,000 for Ronald McDonald House too.

{youtube}kpoJ0-84z1M{/youtube}

Twitter: @Nichols_NHLPool NHL news, analysis & fantasy takes with minimal inane babble.

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