My update on the NHL/Seattle arena situation from The Hockey Writers.

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I hadn't put a lot of thought into drafting Damien Brunner this summer. His talent was obvious, but the adjustment to the NHL isn't always easy for European stars. Detroit, in particular, is usually very patient with scoring forwards, too.

However, the fact that Brunner is excelling on the same like with Henrik Zetterberg has me tracking him much more closely. How nice would it be for Mike Babcock to be able to transfer that chemistry over to Detroit's first or second line if and when the season gets going?

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Today is the last day to get your submissions in for the **"Why I Love Fantasy Hockey"** contest. More contest details are here.

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In my continuing series of NHL strength & conditioning coach interviews, I spoke with Nelson Ayotte of the St. Louis Blues.

On the fittest players he has seen:

I was very fortunate to work with great players like Al MacInnis, Doug Weight , Chris Pronger , Paul Kariya , Andy MacDonald, Barrett Jackman, and Jay McClement to name a few. To this day in hockey,

I have never seen anybody who is as strong and powerful as Roman Polak. This guy is the ultimate physical machine, he is awesome to work with. I've tried methods on him than few athletes could sustain.

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If you live in the Bay Area, I'd highly recommend checking out the ECHL's San Francisco Bulls. Ryane Clowe is skating with the team, and there are rumors that another NHL player could be suiting up for the Bulls in a playing capacity shortly. For now, Clowe has no intentions of playing, but that could change:

"Just wanted to get in a routine, a place to practice," Clowe said after his first skate with the Bulls, who were forced out of their Cow Palace home by the rodeo. "To be honest, I had no intention of playing, but I'm not ruling it out."

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Corey Pronman's top 50 players under the age of 23 generated a lot of debate. Generally, the top 50 of anything is very subjective very hard to put together (as I found out with my top 50 NHL trade values from a few months ago
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Here are some of my thoughts on Pronman's list:

Too high:

Brett Connolly (36), David Rundblad (33), Adam Henrique (19), Cam Fowler (11)

Too low:

Derek Stepan (34), Jake Gardiner (30), John Carlson (25), Evander Kane (21)

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Johnny Oduya combined a vacation in Thailand with hockey – pretty awesome, if you ask me.

The post reminded me of Tropic of Hockey, a great book by Dave Bidini, who finds the great game being played in some pretty obscure places.

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Does Lauri Korpikoski deserve some PP time in Phoenix? He seems to think so.

"When NHL season starts, I'm going to send DVDs to #Coyotes to show that I can score on power play", says Lauri Korpikoski (4GP, 5G, 4A).

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Willie Desjardins is doing his best to develop a culture of professionalism in Texas.

The Stars moved Ott and Ribeiro this summer largely because the leadership group in Dallas had been complacent in recent years – they knew the ice time was coming because there was no one else to give it to.

Top prospect Scott Glennie has been a healthy scratch all season in the AHL, and apparently his issues are conditioning related (he wasn't in great shape when he reported). For a team looking to rebrand itself, this has to start from the ground up. It may mean some early growing pains, but players need to be accountable from a young age – a situation with players expecting or assuming ice time is coming their way is never good, and the great teams year in and year out have total buy in from the top down and the bottom up.

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Peter Regin 's loan to a Swiss league is over, so he will be returning to Ottawa. The good news – he is still healthy. I'm not sure what to expect from Regin – one burned, twice shy, I suppose. I was quite high on him as a sleeper pick a few years ago, but injuries derailed any thoughts of that happening.

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A very cool video on the college hockey experience:

{youtube}nJ1fU2UqcZk{/youtube}

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Dobber linked this out yesterday – I spoke with Brock Otten (OHL expert) regarding Radek Faksa's slow start this season. As a Faksa owner, it is good to hear an unbiased opinion – development is often nonlinear, and this is just another example.

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Hey look, hockey!

{youtube}9QHVTiEjQPE{/youtube}