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Jacob Markstrom stopped 29 of 31 shots in San Antonio's win last night. He has been inconsistent this season, but i'd still consider him one of the better 'tender prospects.

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Zack Kassian had a goal, five shots, and nine PIM in Chicago's 4-2 loss against Rockford last night. He dropped the mitts with Kyle Beach.

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Minnesota Wild goaltender Josh Harding has been diagnosed with MS . Harding found out in early October but waited a little while to inform his teammates and management/coaches. He is planning on continuing on with his career. All the best to him.

He said when he was first diagnosed, he didn't know if he should tell anybody. Then when he'd be in conversations with friends, whether he should tell them would be running through his head, and essentially, he didn't act like himself for weeks.

He had been skating with fellow locked-out players here in town. Suddenly, he disappeared for no reason for six weeks. I had gotten an inkling that he had a neck injury, but he had been seen out in public, like Timberwolves games, so I didn't bother him. That's what his teammates were told, too.

"But to miss six weeks with a neck injury, I don't know if any of the boys bought it," Harding said.

Former NCAA goalie Jordan Sigalet, now the goalie coach with the Abbotsford Heat, also suffers from MS. Sigalet went on to play a few years of hockey after finding out.

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DobberHockey reader Ryan passed long the following note - he's been watching the NHL players who are down in Phoenix, and there are quite a few of them down there right now. Phoenix is the logical choice to go practice for these guys right now - great weather for golfing!

Forwards: Sidney Crosby, Shane Doan, David Moss, Raffi Torres, Boyd Gordon, Steve Sullivan, Kyle Chipchura, Nick Johnson, Brendan Morrow, Steve Ott, Chuck Kobasew, Shawn Horcoff, Ray Whitney, Matthew Lombardi, David Steckel, John-Michael Liles, and Dan Cleary.

Defensemen: Keith Yandle, Zbynek Michalek, Ryan Whitney, Trevor Daley, Adrian Aucoin, Mike Komisarek, Steve Montador and Aaron Johnson.

Goalies: Mike Smith, Jason LaBarbera and Ryan Miller.

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I am going to have some World Junior content coming over the next few weeks. I'm getting very excited for the tournament this year, for obvious reasons. Canada's team is going to have a great mix of skill (Strome, Nugent-Hopkins, Scheifele, and Huberdeau) and toughness/size.

*

Cory Schneider is off to Switzerland to play – lucky for Schneider he has a dual citizenship with Canada and Switzerland. Schneider was involved with the CBA negotiations – he's one of the smarter and more level-headed players in the league. His heading to Europe could be bad or good, depending on your perspective.

1) Schneider sees the season as slipping away, and he wants to start playing now to remove himself from the frustration.

2) Schneider is hopeful that hockey will return in late December or January, and he wants to get some game-action in and shake off the rust that has accumulated over the past few months.

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Thanks to DobberHockey reader TheHockeyHitman for brigning Chad Billins to my attention.

The 22-year-old undersized defenseman was signed to an AHL contract in Grand Rapids after finishing up a four-year NCAA career at Ferris State. He has 16 points in 17 games in the AHL as a rookie after scoring seven goals and adding 22 assists in his final year at Ferris State.

The 5-10, 175 pound defenseman is in the right system – Detroit knows how to develop its young players.

Billins was far from the stereotypical college athlete some people might envision. He takes great pride in being a true student-athlete or, in his case, a scholar-athlete. It's not an NCAA line for him – student-athlete has been a way of life at college for Billins. In addition to being a first-team All-CCHA honoree for his play on the ice, the league bestowed another great honor on him to recognize the work Billins does in the classroom. He was named winner of the CCHA's Scholar-Athlete of the Year Award.

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Ryan Murray is out for the season with a torn shoulder labrum (same injury as Taylor Hall and Ryan Kesler).

Team Canada will have the luxury of two returning defencemen with Hamilton and and London Knights captain Scott Harrington . The likes of Detroit Red Wings prospect Xavier Ouellet of the QMJHL's B-B Armada could round out a solid top-four.

Murray's shoulder has been bugging him for some time (again, just like Hall and Kesler).

The Blue Jackets were first alerted that his shoulder was sore at development camp after the draft in July, but it was considered a minor annoyance. But Murray said the shoulder had been getting increasingly sore so far this season with Everett (WHL), to the point where he had an MRI scheduled for Nov. 20 ... four days after the injury occurred.

*

My latest fitness post – how to make your training in the gym more "hockey specific."

One suggestion:

For core training, focus on rotational power and stability. Ditch the sit-ups and crunches. Work on explosive power with med ball work (if your gym allows it), or use the cables. Learn how to plank and side plank properly – they are very beneficial exercises but most people don't do them correctly. And don't forget that your "core" is always working when you are exercising,

especially with free weights, body weight, and cables. Ditch the pressing/pulling machines if you can – zero translation over into hockey.

*

Apparently Shane Doan was close to becoming a Flyer.

It appears Bross, using the screen name "tpbross", posted that photo on Sept. 15, a day before the NHL locked out its players and a day after Doan re-signed with the Coyotes. A source with the Flyers said the team did in fact create the Doan sweaters “months ago,” but that it’s not uncommon for them to make jerseys for potential players.

*

Florida defenseman Erik Gudbranson is back on the ice after suffering a serious shoulder injury during the summer.

Had Gudbranson not gotten injured, he likely would have joined the Rampage for training camp in September. Gudbranson is now eligible to play minor league hockey even during the lockout. Only Gudbranson got hurt. And, because the injury didn't happen on the ice, he's locked out — and not being paid — like everyone else.

Gudbranson's injury had been shrouded in secrecy as teammates declined to talk about it, saying "you need to speak with Erik." On Monday, Gudbranson finally came public about how he got hurt, telling The Miami Herald it happened while wakeboarding on a lake in Ontario with his buddies.

*

Some great finds by Kevin Allen here – he discusses 10 news stories from the hockey world (the world where actual hockey is being played).

Pittsburgh native Riley Barber, a Washington Capitals sixth-round pick, is leading the Central Collegiate Hockey Association in scoring as a freshman at Miami. Former NHL player Danton Cole, who coached Barber in the U.S. National Team Development program, has been quoted as saying he believes Barber has a good chance to be a pro because he has a high compete level and a willingness to play physical.

*

Dmitry Korobov is having an impressive rookie season in the AHL with Syracuse. If you hadn't heard of him before, don't feel bad – neither had I. The 22-year-old defenseman doesn't have much offensive upside, but his quick transition to North America bears watching.

He was signed by the Lightning as an undrafted free agent earlier this summer.

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Some nice dangles:

{youtube}VFa0EOFIj8E{/youtube}

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Tyler Seguin is tearing up the Swiss hockey league to the tune of 20 goals in 20 games. Expect a huge breakthrough performance when the NHL returns to action. Seguin had a mini breakout last season, and will take another huge step forward in 2012-13 (2013-14).

*

Is Morgan Rielly NHL ready? An interesting look at his season to date , and the massive expectations that surround him.

"I'd say Rielly might have been (the overall No. 1) for an organization based on what he had done before. I liked him more than Ryan Murray (the Everett defenceman who went No. 2 overall to Columbus). He has more upside, more play-making offensive ability. Murray will be a good player but the creative part of the game, that's Rielly's strength. Murray would be the sound defensive player who would allow a player like Rielly or Ryan Murphy to go do his thing. And I see Rielly as a better risk-reward bet than Murphy -- the upside with Rielly might be higher and there's less risk of him not being able to help you. I'd say No. 1 overall (for Rielly) is defensible."

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Hockey Canada head scout Kevin Prendergast shares some of his thoughts on the selection process for the 2013 squad.

Still, on the radar are blueliners and 2012 returnees London's Scott Harrington and Niagara's

Dougie Hamilton
, plus Blainville-Boisbriand's Xavier Ouellet, Red Deer's Mathew Dumba, Moose Jaw's Morgan Rielly and Portland's Derrick P
ouliot.

*

Is Brett Ritchie a lock for the Canadian junior team?

Ritchie, who is fourth in OHL scoring with 42 points in 27 games, would welcome the chance to suit up for his country.

"Obviously, that's the biggest tournament of the year. It's a big deal in Canada and growing up you always watched that tournament," Ritchie said. "They (Ryan Strome , Dougie Hamilton) experienced it last year and it was an awesome time for them and to get a chance to play in it would be unbelievable."

Ritchie has not-so-quietly emerged as one of the most intriguing prospects in hockey with his amazing play this season. It would be great to see how he performs against the very best in his age class from around the world.

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My latest for DefendingBigD – what will Jamie Benn 's next contract look like? Depends a lot on what the new CBA includes, but we have a general idea of a few of the contract provisions.

If Benn were to sign a six-year contract next month (please take a big leap of faith and assume the lockout is over by then), his contract would carry him to the age of 29, eating up one year of his UFA eligibility (where under the old CBA it would have eaten up two). What many teams have done in the past is given RFAs more money on a contract that brings them one year short of their UFA eligibility, allowing these teams to have one more negotiation process with the player as an RFA.

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Jeremy Roenick discusses his new book, JR, with former player Jason Strudwick .

On former teammate Patrick Marleau :

Hey, that's nothing against him as a person. He's a good guy. He's a good family man. He's a good husband. You know, he got his captaincy taken away for a reason, and it wasn't because I didn't think he was going at his full potential. That was a team decision. There are reasons for that. And hey, he could not like me, and that's fine. I don't care if I'm calling him out. I sat right next to him for two years, and that was my opinion of him. I said I wish I had his talent and he had my heart. Oh, my gosh, what we could have done together.

*

The Nashville Predators are working hard to maintain their sponsorship relationships during the lockout. They have done a great job of building a stable franchise in a non-traditional hockey market, and this is just another reason why – the organization gets it.

With 17,113-seat Bridgestone Arena minus hockey — 14 home games have been canceled so far — the Predators have needed to get creative to publicize their business supporters.

Every Friday, for instance, the team holds a social-media-driven “pride day” to push Predators fans to sponsor venues.

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