Nashville prospect Austin Watson had two goals and seven shots on net last night for Milwaukee. Watson is having a solid season for the Admirals, and he should find himself playing in Nashville within the next two years. The 6-3 forward was Nashville's 1st round pick back in 2010.

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Patrick Wiercioch is having a very strong season for Binghamton – he had an assist last night and has a solid shot at earning a roster spot in Ottawa in a few weeks (provided the lockout is over).

*

Robin Lehner stopped 35 of 37 shots for the win – the only two goals he allowed were to former Senator Bobby Butler , who is playing for a roster spot in New Jersey.

*

Matt Frattin had a goal last night and led the Marlies in shots on goal with five. He's come on as of late with his play.

*

Cody Hodgson had two goals for Rochester, and he now has four goals in his past two games. He missed some time with a broken hand, but looks to be peaking at the right time. The Sabres have high hopes for him, and he is expected to center one of the top two lines in Buffalo right off the hop.

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Hamilton forward Gabriel Dumont had an impressive five point game yesterday, including a hat trick. Dumont led the QMJHL in goal scoring back in 2009-10 (51 goals). He was drafted by Montreal back in 2009, and this is his third pro season. Not sure of any NHL futures (the plight of the skilled but undersized forward), but a five point game is enough to gain some attention.

*

Lightning center prospect Tyler Johnson had three points for Syracuse. The undersized forward is very crafty with the puck, and he is one of many Lightning prospects chomping at the bit for some NHL action.

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Jacob Markstrom was sensational last night against OKC, stopping 42 of 44 shots in a shootout loss.

*

Jordan Eberle and Taylor Hall combined for four points and a whopping 19 shots on goal on Friday.

Justin Schultz had a tough game – he was at fault on both Rampage goals. That is bound to happen from time to time with the style of game he plays, though.

*

A note to AHL teams – don't take penalties against Oklahoma City. Taylor Hall had a hat trick against Texas on Thursday, and OKC finished with three PP goals.

Center Mark Arcobello had four helpers for the Barons. The 24-year-old spent four years at

Yale University before turning pro in 2010. He is close to the point-per-game mark this season in OKC.

Justin Schultz and Jordan Eberle had two points apiece.

Texas forward Colton Sceviour may be in line for a roster spot in Dallas thanks to his impressive play this season. The gritty forward had two goals last night and led Texas with six shots on goal.

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Pierre LeBrun wrote about 10 ways that the NHL can get back on track post lockout. I'll add my thoughts to each one:

Free NHL GameCenter. This one is a no-brainer. The league's revenue stream from GameCenter isn't significant, and this would be a great way to get some fans back – they may

not purchase tickets, but it gives them access to the product across the league.

Ensure realignment happens. 100% agree – get more teams playing each other (home and home with every team in the league), and align the Western Conference from more of a geographical perspective.

Add a "play-in" playoff round. I agree as well – but my idea is different than LeBrun's. Give the top seed in each conference a first round bye, and have the seven and eight seeds play a quick best-of-three series to determine who is the final team in the postseason.

Make the World Cup permanent. I don't really have a strong opinion on this one either way.

Three-on-three overtime. Yes, yes, yes. Imagine the hockey we would see? It would also cut down on the number of shootouts, which would increase the excitement around them (a shootout every night takes away from the fun). Have the three-on-three played if the two teams remain tied after five minutes of four-on-four.

Shorten the pre-season, have the season end before June. Agree on both accounts. I'd drop it to a 60-65 game season, but that would never happen as the league generates most of its revenues from ticket sales.

Have trade deadline day similar to the draft with all teams under one roof. I like this idea – could be fun and something unique to hockey.

NHL in Europe. Not sure about this one – it is quite a radical idea. Again, hockey has tapped out what it can do in North America (outside of moving a few teams around, maybe), and a European division could be the key to the next stage of revenue generation. Travel, of course, is a major obstacle.

Agree to a 20-year CBA. Why not make it 30?

*

Speaking of the NHL and NHLPA, the league made a new offer to the PA yesterday. Who knows if this leads to anything, but here are some of the interesting parts of the proposal:

Clubs can operate with an effective Upper Limit of $70.2 million in 2012/13; must come into compliance with $60 million Upper Limit for the start of the 2013/14 season.

Each Club will be entitled to execute up to one "Compliance Buy-Out" prior to the 2013/14 season pursuant to which payments made to the Player will not be charged against the team's Cap, but will be charged against the Players' Share.

Maximum contract length of 6 years subject to a Club's ability to re-sign its own Player for a term of up to 7 years (provided the Player played his last full season with the re-signing Club). In addition, year-to-year Salary variability will be limited (up or down) to no more than 10% of the value of the first year of a multi-year SPC.

Implementation of a weighted Draft Lottery in which all non-Playoff teams compete for opportunity to choose first overall in the annual Draft.

I'd read that TSN post if you have the time – there is a lot more information in there. I like the idea of the draft lottery change. It will be interesting to see if the PA will agree to a $60 million cap next season – the amnesty clause helps, but many teams will struggle to get under that upper limit.

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The London Knights have won 22 consecutive games. They are now three behind the 1983-84 Kitchener Rangers for the all time consecutive wins mark (25).

*

My lockout hurts/helps columns from a few months ago – it will be interesting to see which teams benefit and lose if a season does start up in a few weeks.

*

Canada had to overcome penalty trouble against Slovakia early on Friday morning, but they pulled out the win thanks to impressive performances from a few key players.

Malcolm Subban allowed three goals (he had no chance on one of them). He hasn't played bad by any means, but he hasn't done much to put a stranglehold on the starting gig, either.

Ryan Strome was the best forward and he finished with two goals. Defenseman Morgan Rielly had three points and showed why the Leafs were so high on him back in June.

Canada forward JC Lipon is sure to face a suspension after throwing a high hit early on in the game.

Bruins prospect Anthony Camara was tossed from the game as well, but his hit was completely clean. It was a devastating shot on a player with his head down.

The Camara hit:

{youtube}-TIWWQ24wVg{/youtube}

*

One player off to a slow start (I guess it is past the “start” at this point) is Chris Kreider. Through Thursday, the forward had only 11 points in 29 games with the Connecticut Whale of the AHL. Kreider was the rookie who impressed everyone with his strong play in the 2012 postseason, and his struggles offensively this season just go to show how tough it is for young players to continually improve in a linear fashion. There are setbacks along the way.

*

The title says it all:

{youtube}uo7w-vL_tqk{/youtube}

*

Check out the ridiculous OT winner near the end of this clip:

{youtube}wZAnN5JdABA{/youtube}

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