Fantasy Guide - updated through Friday evening - can be bought here . Includes free Draft List (also updated). Only thing the update missed - Todd Bertuzzi has been diagnosed with mono and is out for a few weeks. Mursak, and
not
Nyquist, draws in.

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Saturday. Opening day in the NHL. Finally.

Sucks that it's January 19 before we're getting the season underway, but the "L" word won't be uttered here. We dare not speak its name. Evil.

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Let's look at a few line-related notes from around the league. Naturally all this stuff is subject to change at a moment's notice, but trios are beginning to form and it's helping to give us an idea with whom the guys we drafted may skate and which potential free agents may be worth an early grab.

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Brad Marchand-Patrice Bergeron-Tyler Seguin/ Milan Lucic-David Krejci-Nathan Horton/ Chris Bourque-Chris Kelly-Rich Peverley/ Daniel Paille-Gregory Campbell-Shawn Thornton/ Zdeno Chara-Johnny Boychuk/ Dennis Seidenberg-Dougie Hamilton/ Andrew Ference-Adam McQuaid

The Bruins continue to arguably have two equally effective first lines. Seguin should be taking another step in his development this year. No. 21 on SN forward ranks. Can Horton sustain good health? If so, he'll have been a steal in standard league drafts and he'll also help increase the value of Krejci. Dougie Hamilton and Dennis Seidenberg should see PP2 time, at least initially. Chara and four forwards (Seguin plus the Krejci line) on PP1.

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Vanek-Hodgson-Pominville/ Foligno-Ennis-Stafford/ Ott-Grigorenko-Leino/ Scott-Hecht-Kaleta/ Myers-Regehr; Ehrhoff-Sulzer; Sekera-Leopold; Weber-Brennan (how the pairings were Friday morning at practice)

Mikhail Grigorenko made the roster cut the Sabres, although there wasn't initially any confirmation he'd be in the opening lineup Sunday. Why wouldn't he be though? Low-pressure third line role off the hop. Sabres have used the same top-nine trios all through camp. Watch for Hecht to move up in the lineup if an injury or slump arises and keep in mind he's versatile in terms of being able to play both centre and wing. This is the moment both Hodgson and Ennis have been waiting for in terms of a big role.

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Boychuk-E.Staal-Semin/ Skinner-J.Staal-Dalpe/ Tlusty-Jokinen-LaRose/ with three of Dwyer, Brent, Bowman, Westgarth and Welsh fighting for fourth line duty at the moment. Gleason-Corvo/Pitkanen-Faulk/Sanguinetti-Harrison and McBain was working with Ryan Murphy, who was sent back down to the OHL.

Boychuk has 16-16-32 in 37 GP w/ Charlotte and this is a pretty golden chance. Kirk Muller talked about liking the “young energy” Boychuk and Dalpe (13-15-28 in 38 AHL GP) are bringing and this short-campaign situation is tailor-made for young guys who are all already in mid-season form. It’s just up to them to seize on the chance.

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Marcus Johansson - Nicklas Backstrom - Alex Ovechkin/ Wojtek Wolski - Mike Ribeiro - Troy Brouwer/ Jason Chimera - Jay Beagle - Joel Ward/ Matt Hendricks - Mathieu Perreault - Eric Fehr, Joey Crabb/ Karl Alzner - John Carlson/ Roman Hamrlik - Mike Green/ John Erskine - Jeff Schultz/ Jack Hillen - Tom Poti

The Ovechkin-on-RW experiment continues to unfold, but regardless of where he is on the ice he’ll be lethal while being fed by Backstrom. Adam Oates’ know-how should complement each quite well. The speedy Johansson quietly collected 46 points as a sophomore last year, which was a nice bump from his 27 as a rookie. He has seen plenty of time with that duo already and his style meshes well. How long will the oft-inconsistent Wolski last in a prime L2 spot alongside Ribeiro? Good to see Fehr back and hopefully he’ll push himself higher and higher in the lineup.

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Loui Eriksson-Derek Roy-Jaromir Jagr/ Ray Whitney-Tom Wandell-Michael Ryder/ Brenden Morrow-Vern Fiddler-Eric Nystrom/ Ryan Garbutt-Cody Eakin-Reilly Smith/ Alex Goligoski-Stephane Robidas/ Jordie Benn-Trevor Daley/ Brenden Dillon-Philip Larsen

Jamie Benn. Still waiting. Maybe he'll have signed by the time you read this. Hope so. In the meantime, Roy is in heaven. Most importantly, he's healthy. Short-term boost for Wandell until Benn signs.

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Carl Hagelin-Brad Richards-Rick Nash/ Marian Gaborik-Derek Stepan-Ryan Callahan/ Taylor Pyatt-Brian Boyle-Chris Kreider/ Mike Rupp-Jeff Halpern-Brandon Segal/ Ryan McDonagh-Dan Girardi, Marc Staal-Anton Stralman, Michael Del Zotto-Stu Bickel

Aaron Asham will miss the first game thanks to his suspension from last year's playoffs. We'll certainly see the Gaborik-Richards-Nash super line as needed, but this is a really well-balanced top nine right now. Although it's not tremendous for his fantasy value off the bat, I do like Kreider with Boyle because Boyle will create room out there and be another great role model for the youngster in terms of work ethic. It's huge for this team to have a healthy Staal right from the start.

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Marleau-Thornton-Pavelski/ Clowe-Couture-Havlat/ Galiardi-Handzus-Wingels/ Sheppard,McLaren-Desjardins-Burish/ Vlasic-Stuart/ Irwin-Boyle/ Murray-Braun

Same top-six we're used to seeing with the Sharks. Look for bigger things from the second line in particular this season. Brent Burns is basically in the day-to-day area now, but still has no real timeline. He is expected to begin skating again soon though.

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Can't wait!!! “@ nhl : #Canucks fans, are you ready to see Cory Schneider as No. 1 in net? #hockeyisback
”

—Strombone (@strombone1) January 18, 2013

*

Jaden Schwartz not only made the opening day roster for the Blues, but he should be skating with Patrik Berglund and Chris Stewart. Stewart needs to deliver some better results this season. Period. Further up in the lineup, we should see Perron-Backes-Oshie and McDonald-Steen-Tarasenko. Fourth line has several candidates, but Sobotka-Nichol-Langenbrunner should see regular action.

This team has a lot going for it, all throughout the lineup. Incredible coaching. They may not end

up with what we'd consider high-end fantasy options in terms of guys racking up a lot of points, but this is a team built to win a lot of games. Watch out.

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Wade Redden signed on with the St. Louis Blues. He deserves another NHL chance after the past few years of hell (well-paid hell, to be sure, but hell for a hockey player nonetheless) and while he won't be a recommended fantasy pick-up at this point, doesn't mean we can't root for the guy to do well. Like I tweeted when news of the signing first broke, it's a good situation for potential success (as a defenceman in general) for him with Ken Hitchcock's team structure.

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The Panthers officially inked both Alex Kovalev and Dmitry Kulikov. Kovalev will be on the right side of the Huberdeau-Mueller line, which has some real potential. Can't wait to see a healthy Mueller and to have Huberdeau in the NHL. Kris Versteeg, incidentally, might miss the first game. He's otherwise slated to resume his role on the first line with Fleischmann-Weiss.

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Mike Knuble was a long-shot to make the Detroit Red Wings out of this shortened camp and everyone knew that going in, but he isn't giving up on the NHL career just yet. He'll tryout with Grand Rapids and look for work back in the bigs based off that.

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The Oilers have been using these man advantage units, so we should continue to see them in the early-goings of the season. PP1: Eberle-RNH-Hall-Hartikainen-Schultz; PP2: Hemsky-Gagner-Smyth-Whitney-Yakupov.

Hartikainen will likely otherwise be on the third line at even strength with the veteran duo of Horcoff-Smyth, but in deeper leagues his value will be raised if he can keep that first unit power play net-front presence role. Edmonton's power play should both receive and bury a lot of chances over the next 48 games.

*

Think the short training camps didn't matter too much? Tell that to Brayden Schenn and Scott Laughton with the Flyers.

Schenn went out and grabbed that highly-sought first line RW slot by the proverbial short hairs and flat-out took it away from Jakub Voracek. Schenn wanted it, he said publically he wanted it and he has it to begin the year. Doesn't necessarily mean he'll keep it for more than one period, one game or one week, but he's done everything he could do to put himself in a position for success. Bravo.

Good piece from The Philadelphia Daily News on Laughton, who has done everything possible this week to earn his five-game tryout. He did make the 23-man roster Friday afternoon. The DN article says the 18-year-old seems to have all of the defensive awareness of Sean Couturier, who made the same jump from junior to pro last year as a first-rounder, but has an added edge to his game. He can play wing and center, score and play defense, fight and fly on the ice.

He may begin with Wayne Simmonds and Matt Read on the third line. The injury to Danny Briere, who has officially been ruled out of games this weekend, certainly didn't hurt Laughton's opportunity.

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I'd like to congratulate Alex Edler on agreeing to terms on a new multi-year deal. Details to follow.

— Mike Gillis (@GMMikeGillis) January 19, 2013

Six years. $30 million. $5 million cap hit. All things considered, that's a reasonable deal for both sides. Edler won't be hurting for cash, he gets to stay with a winning team he likes and the Canucks aren't squeezed very badly in a cap sense. Edler's back apparently is not a worry for the franchise.

Canucks have Kevin Bieksa and Jason Garrison at $4.6M, Dan Hamhuis at $4.5M and Keith Ballard at $4.2M.

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A million more notes I could have included. I know. It's finally time to drop the puck though.

I'll be back late Saturday evening with the first official game stats-based Ramblings of the new campaign. Hallelujah. Notes will be forthcoming from each and every contest, as always.

FYI: I'll tweet the link once it's live Saturday afternoon, but this year I'll have all of the line combos and power play TOI stats I normally provide for SN via live blogging all on one, easy-to-read, tidy single page. A very long page, but a single page nonetheless.

Bookmark it and check back throughout each evening to see fresh info from each and every game, all throughout the regular season.

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This has been making the rounds on the internet. Mark Giordano vs. Green Men.

{youtube}Pwk2LfIUI5k{/youtube}

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

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