

2-5-09

Jonathan Boutin is the team-record seventh goaltender to see action for the Stingrays this season, surpassing the previous mark of six set during the 1999-00 campaign.

Speaking of goalies, Hershey signed Kris Mayotte to a PTO yesterday. By my count, that makes five netminders the Bears have utilized this season, joining Simeon Varlamov, Daren Machesney, Michal Neuvirth, and Bobby Goepfert. Things aren't much better in the nation's capital, where six goaltenders – Jose Theodore, Brent Johnson, Brett Leonhardt, Varlamov, Machesney, and Neuvirth – have suited up for the Caps in 2008-09.

This makes about as much sense as New Coke:

<http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117999461.html?categoryid=13&cs=1>

Josh Godfrey's short-handed goal on Tuesday, his first in a Stingrays jersey, was SC's first since Dec. 26.

South Carolina has had 12 different players record game-winning goals, and 14 skaters register fighting majors, this season.

Below is an example of some of the detailed (and sometimes pointless) statistics I keep track of during the season. This list shows each referee the Stingrays have seen in 2008-09, the number of games officiated, and the team's record.

Steve Patafie: 15 games (8-6-0-1)

David Jones: 8 games (4-3-1)

Jason Rollins: 7 games (4-3)

Joe Sullivan: 4 games (2-1-0-1)

Keith Kaval: 3 games (1-1-1)

Ryan Sweeney: 3 games (1-2)

Francis Charron: 2 games (1-1)

Jean Hebert: 2 games (1-1)

Geno Binda: 1 game (0-0-0-1)

The Hockey News' website put together a list of the top 10 NHL "Little Guys," consisting of players under 5-foot-10: <http://www.thehockeynews.com/articles/23100-THNcom-Top-10-Little-guys.html>

If you had to come up with an all-time top 10 list of Stingrays players fitting that criteria, who would make the cut? Mike Ross? Joey Tenute? Pierre-Luc O'Brien? Andy Bezeau? ;)

I remember watching this on the big screen at Verizon Center back in late December, but the NHL website posted a video on its front page yesterday featuring the Capitals' Donald Brashear, Eric Fehr and Mike Green participating in a burger challenge at Spike Mendelsohn's (of Bravo's Top Chef fame) Good Stuff Eatery: <http://www.nhl.tv/team/console.jsp?id=30727>

FYI, the game worn jerseys donned by [Johann Kroll](#), [Travis Morin](#) and [Michal Neuvirth](#) at this year's ECHL All-Star Game end later this evening. This past Saturday, at the post-game jersey auction – with proceeds benefitting the Children's Miracle Network – Kroll, Morin and Neuvirth's jerseys fetched \$350, \$400, and \$275, respectively.

I'm glad my blog isn't enabled to accept comments, if you know what I mean.

Former Stingrays defenseman Paul Traynor (1998-99, 2001-02) leads all Iserlohn Roosters blueliners in scoring, totaling 24 points in 44 games.

"Give me a grape or an orange, and none of that stinkin' root beer." 'Remaking this movie would be root beer.' – A fan, on the planned re-make of the 1977 cult classic Slapshot.

-Joe
joe@stingrayshockey.com

2-11-09

Michael Dubuc's unassisted goal last Friday reminded me of some of the signature shootout goals Jussi Jokinen has potted in his career. Here's a perfect example: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJbI-nITjIM>

Granted, Dubuc's lamp lighter wasn't a shootout score, but the finish was certainly reminiscent of Jokinen's style.

I'm not sure if any of you remember James DeLory, who opened the season with the Florida Everblades. His one and only ECHL game was at the North Charleston Coliseum, which was limited to just a few shifts. Not long after his pro debut, he opted to go back to the OHL as an overage player for the Oshawa Generals, where he serves as alternate captain. Well, DeLory, who apparently has a history of suspensions in the "O," is facing a lengthy suspension for this incident: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVpJW9uNCnM>

So in case you didn't see it on [ESPN](#), [Fox Sports](#), [NHL.com](#), [The Hockey News](#), [TSN](#), [Yahoo!](#), or any other hockey media outlet, Sean Avery is back, heading to the AHL's Hartford Wolf Pack.

He's no Matt Scherer (at least in the blogging department), but former pro Sean Pronger can put together some fun and interesting entries. Here's his latest, courtesy of The Hockey News: <http://www.thehockeynews.com/articles/23234-Sean-Prongers-Blog-Making-it-in-the-low-minors.html>

Last Saturday, Nate Kiser passed Jared Bednar for seventh in all-time games played for the Stingrays. He needs 10 more games to tie Brad Dexter, who places sixth with 291. And since we're on the topic, Kiser needs 52 penalty minutes to equal Trevor Johnson (930) for second place in all-time PIMs.

If you're a fan of fighting, here's some good news: http://www.usatoday.com/sports/hockey/nhl/2009-02-09-fighting_N.htm

This past Sunday Michal Neuvirth was sent down to Hershey to get in some playing time, since he had been idle for the last week or so with the Capitals. *His opponent that evening?* That would be the Portland Pirates, who still have defenseman Zach Tarkir on their roster two months after his recall from South Carolina. Tarkir may not have appeared on the scoresheet, but his Pirates earned bragging rights after exiting Giant Center with a 3-2 victory. Wouldn't it be nice wonderful to see these two re-join the Stingrays?

3 straight regulation losses and the Florida Everblades apparently need to re-tool their lineup, acquiring Milan Gajic from Victoria for rookie blueliner Aaron Brocklehurst and receiving forward Yannick Tifu from the AHL's Albany River Rats: http://floridaeverblades.com/news/press/index.html?article_id=406

Caught this one on NHL.com's The Hockey Show, remembering the night when Ray Bourque gave up his #7 to another legendary #7 for the Bruins, Phil Esposito, whose name and number were lifted to the Boston Gardens' rafters: <http://www.nhl.tv/team/console.jsp?catid=2&id=33165>

The Stingrays have utilized just 25 skaters this season, second only to Ontario (23) for the fewest in the ECHL.

"One man's trash is another man's treasure."

Rich Peverley, discarded by the Nashville Predators, has totaled 12 points in 11 games since joining the Atlanta Thrashers.

Dustin Johner, whose time with the Rays amounted to four regular season and seven playoffs contests in the spring of 2004, stands second in scoring on Innsbruck EV (Austria) with 44 points in 52 contests.

"You should see my wall. There's like 62 different lines and 20 different defense pairs. It's like getting a hat and pulling freaking names out of it. (The wall) looks like a Keno board." – Atlanta Thrashers head coach John Anderson, who has been juggling lines all season, on his formula for how he decides on the new lineup.

-Joe

joe@stingrayshockey.com

2-18-09

Some interesting subplots as the Rays kick off their northern road swing tonight in the Buckeye State...

Does Jeremy Duchesne get the nod against his former team, Dayton, this evening?

Can South Carolina overpower the first-place Johnstown Chiefs Friday night?

Will the Stingrays snap a five-game losing streak to Trenton Saturday night?

Will Jeff Corey have a hand in the scoring against his former Reading teammates on Sunday?

The official Stingrays Facebook and MySpace pages launch tonight at 6 pm. Anyone who becomes the Stingrays' friend on Facebook or MySpace will have the opportunity to receive a special ticket deal for February 24 (aka Free). They just have to sign up before February 23. They then will get a message on Facebook/MySpace confirming the friendship and offering an access code with which to call in and redeem their ticket.

[Johann Kroll is one lucky man](#), as longtime Syracuse Crunch beat writer Lindsay Kramer explains in yesterday's blog post on The Post-Standard's website.

So not only is Michal Neuvirth the third former Stingrays player to make his NHL debut the season – joining Sean Collins and Andrew Gordon – but he's the first player in team history to play in both the ECHL and NHL in the same season.

The Washington Capitals reassigned D Karl Alzner and F Jay Beagle to the Hershey Bears yesterday, and Zach Tarkir was a healthy scratch last night for the second straight game for Portland (AHL).

We'll gladly accept reinforcements, especially on the blueline.

Just say no to Valentine's Day hockey jerseys:

<http://www.7641.com/02.14.2009-080.jpg> <http://www.7641.com/02.14.2009-015.jpg>

I'll be heading north later this evening, stopping in Northern Virginia for a couple of days before hitting my old stomping grounds in Central PA. Two games are on the itinerary: Hershey and Philadelphia Saturday night at Giant Center, and the Rays-Royals game Sunday afternoon at Sovereign Center.

Here's a story that appeared in Saturday's Hamilton Spectator, on AHL referee Jeff Smith's family taking a later flight instead of the doomed plane that crashed in Buffalo:

<http://www.thespec.com/News/Local/article/513682>

Not only was Saturday's 9-goal boon the most the Rays have ever hung on Gwinnett, but the six-goal differential was also the biggest in their six-season rivalry.

Former Stingrays goaltender Davis Parley (2005-2008) was named winner of the Central Hockey League's Performance of the Week:

http://www.centralhockeyleague.com/pressroom/news/index.html?article_id=3151

Since getting released a few weeks back, Ben Boudreau has landed with the Wichita Thunder (CHL), where he's collected a goal and an assist in five games played.

"I'm sure he's telling every goalie that, and when it comes true he's telling you guys (in the media)." -- Washington coach Bruce Boudreau on Alex Ovechkin, who told Florida goalie Tomas Vokoun he would score two goals in Sunday's game.

-Joe

joe@stingrayshockey.com

2-25-09

The answers to last week's questions:

1. No
2. Yes
3. No
4. Yes

Thanks for playing.

With their 3-2 shootout win last night, the Rays reached the 30-win plateau for the 16th consecutive season.

Michael Dubuc, who leads the team with 33 goals, has now gone 0-4 in shootout attempts and is 0-3 in penalty shot tries.

The 16 combined goals in last Saturday's 9-7 loss to Trenton was, if you can believe it, not a team record. In fact, the 16-goal total has been equaled twice before (10-6 loss to Wheeling Thunderbirds on 2-4-94 and a 9-7 win over Knoxville Cherokees on 12-27-96) and surpassed on three occasions (11-6 win over Greensboro Monarchs on 12-26-93; 11-6 victory over Charlotte on 2-9-96; 9-8 win against Raleigh IceCaps on 2-21-97).

Two-time ECHL All-Star and leading scorer Travis Morin needs only 11 assists to tie Mike Ross (1996-97) and Dave Seitz (2002-03) for the single-season team record of 60.

Just a reminder that Michal Neuvirth's game-ready [Pink In The Rink jersey](#) is available for bid on eBay, with the auction closing this Saturday evening.

SC has missed on 10 straight penalty shot attempts, including all seven in 2008-09. The last time the Rays converted on the one-on-one was Oct. 27, 2006, when Matt Reid beat Gwinnett's Dave Caruso in an 8-3 home loss to the Gladiators.

The Rays have nearly identical home (15-10-1-1) and road (15-10-1-2) records.

The parent Washington Capitals have developed the National Hockey League's first female fan club:

<http://capitals.nhl.com/team/app/?service=page&page=NewsPage&articleid=410854>

Happy birthday wishes go out to Stingrays blueliner Viktor Dovgan, who turns 22 on Friday.

Over the last 10 games South Carolina has gone 8-2, tied with Idaho for the best record in that stretch.

By now, I'm sure most of you have seen Alexander Ovechkin's insane goal against the Montreal Canadiens last Wednesday: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6EJ5Iwnv9w>

But for my money, his definitive goal was this gem, scored during his rookie year:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzbmI6-YSnQ>

Former Stingrays defenseman Grant McNeill, who spent the majority of last season in the Lowcountry, returned Saturday to the Hershey Bears' lineup following a three-month layoff due to a broken wrist. One of his first orders of business: dropping the gloves with Philadelphia's Matt Clackson, who he suffered the injury to back on Nov. 15.

"What I can say about him? He is a good player, but he talks too much." -- Washington's Alex Ovechkin on Pittsburgh's Sidney Crosby after the Caps beat the Pens 5-2 Sunday.

-Joe

joe@stingrayshockey.com

