

3-5-09

I suppose we can breathe a collective sigh of relief, now that the NHL trade deadline has come and gone. It looks like Capitals General Manager George McPhee stayed true to his word, sticking with Jose Theodore, Brent Johnson, and/or Michal Neuvirth and Simeon Varlamov as the goaltenders they'll take into the postseason. In fact, the Caps made zero deadline moves, which can only be a good thing for the Rays.

Next up: March 11, the AHL's clear day deadline.

With Staffan Kronwall getting sent down yesterday, Hershey now has 10 defensemen on its roster, not including Grant McNeill, who can play up front or back, and Brian Pothier, who was assigned to the Bears for a conditioning stint following a concussion suffered over a year ago.

It's bound to happen to any NHL goaltender, but Michal Neuvirth had a forgettable night on Tuesday, allowing goals from every possible way – penalty shot, short-handed (two, actually), power play, and even strength – in Washington's 5-2 loss at home to the Carolina Hurricanes.

The article is six years old, but this New York Times story discusses Lyon Messier and his Dad, NHL Hall of Famer Mark Messier:

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9903E5DB103CF936A25751C1A9659C8B63>

It's not often that we see a player appear for different visiting teams in consecutive home games, but that may be the case for Myles Stoesz when the Trenton Devils make their first appearance in the Lowcountry since Feb. 2006 on Friday. Stoesz, found among the league leaders in penalty minutes the last two seasons, was packaged this week in a deal that sent Niclas Havelid to New Jersey from Atlanta.

Paul McIlveen, who started the season with the Stingrays, made his AHL debut Tuesday night, collecting two shots and two penalty minutes as the Norfolk Admirals defeated the Bridgeport Sound Tigers, 3-1. He was returned to Elmira, however, after the game.

Meet the world's richest Zamboni driver:

http://www.usahockeymagazine.com/story.php?left_nav=0903&article=zamboni-lotteryhockey0903&right_nav=normal

So if you weren't able to make it on the Stingrays' 1997 Kelly Cup championship roster, you can own a piece of history and tell your friends that you did: <http://cgi.ebay.com/Mens-10KT-ECHL-Stingrays->

[Championship-Hockey-](#)

[Ring_W0QQitemZ170307804943QQcmdZViewItemQQptZLH_DefaultDomain_0?hash=item170307804943&trksid=p3286.c0.m14&trkparms=72%3A1205%7C66%3A2%7C65%3A12%7C39%3A1%7C240%3A1318%7C301%3A0%7C293%3A1%7C294%3A50](#)

Defenseman Scott Romfo needs one point to set a new career high in scoring. In 49 games, the RPI alum has 6 goals and 19 assists for 25 points.

Daren Machesney article, written by Hershey Bears beat writer Dan Sernoffsky:
http://www.ldnews.com/sports/ci_11818309

Congratulations go out to former Rays tough guy Chris Wheaton and his wife, Alana, who welcomed a baby boy, Brody, on Tuesday.

"A good hockey player plays where the puck is. A great hockey player plays where the puck is going to be." – Wayne Gretzky

-Joe
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3-12-09

Another pair of important games on tap this weekend, with Gwinnett and Charlotte on the itinerary. The Gladiators, fighting with Mississippi for the fourth and final playoff spot in the South Division, have lost Chad Denny, Jim Jackson, Tomas Pospisil, reassigned last weekend, to AHL recalls while enforcer Myles Stoesz was dealt to the New Jersey Devils. They did, however, receive G Joe Fallon, who has given the Rays fits this year, and F Matt Siddall today from the Chicago Wolves.

The Checkers, meanwhile, who host the Stingrays on Sunday, saw all-star Matthew Ford assigned to the team from Hartford on Tuesday, only to see the rookie turn around and sign with Lake Erie. If that wasn't bad enough, former Rays goaltender Maxime Daigneault was summoned (again) to the Wolf Pack.

It'll be interesting to see if Stingrays Head Coach/General Manager Jared Bednar follows the same path as Washington Capitals General Manager George McPhee and Hershey Bears GM Doug Yingst, electing not to make any deadline deals before tomorrow's 3pm cut-off. Bedsy has already made several moves since the beginning of last month, bringing in Jonathan Boutin, Patrick Wellar, Nikita Kashirsky, and Lyon Messier, so it'll be interesting if he makes any changes at all.

With Wednesday's shootout loss to Mississippi, the Rays fell to 25-3-0-1 this season when leading after two periods.

Ten American Hockey League clubs have used 2008-09 Stingrays:

Binghamton: Paul McIlveen

Hershey: Viktor Dovgan, Michael Dubuc, Josh Godfrey, Bobby Goepfert, Johann Kroll, Maxime Lacroix, Steve Pinizzotto, Sasha Pokulok

Iowa: Pierre-Luc O'Brien

Lake Erie: Josh Johnson (recalled, but did not dress)

Manitoba: Tom Maxwell

Norfolk: McIlveen

Portland: Trent Campbell, Goepfert, Keith Johnson, Zach Tarkir

Quad City: Brad Farynuk

Syracuse: Johann Kroll

Worcester: Campbell

O'Brien, who led the Rays with three shootout goals last season, has gone 0-5 in the skills competition this year.

The Washington Capitals may have beaten the Nashville Predators on the scoreboard, but they lost in the alley Tuesday night.

Example #1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzQj31fVycU>

Example #2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6irzelC243g>

Former NHL'er and current Florida Panthers play-by-play man Randy Moller returns with another batch of hilarious goal calls: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JS8z0QZzazw>

[Brett Leffler](#), Washington's 5th round pick in the 2007 NHL Entry Draft (125th overall), is finishing up his junior career with the WHL's Regina Pats this weekend. The Pats did not punch a ticket for this year's playoffs, so it remains to be seen where the soon-to-be 20-year-old ends up. This year, Leffler produced 33 goals and 23 assists for 56 points and 109 penalty minutes in 62 games.

The NHL is looking to crack down on "staged" fights:
<http://www.nhl.com/ice/news.htm?id=413255&navid=DL|NHL|Home>

Why doesn't the NHL do something more productive, like doing away with shootouts? They make about as much sense as the designated hitter rule in baseball. People aren't heading for the concessions when a fight breaks out, and with the NHL acknowledging an economic crisis you don't want to lose a hardcore base of fans that enjoy pugilism, regardless if it's following a big check or right after a faceoff.

I've been told the next edition of *Scherer's Shots* is in the works, but no official release date has been set.

Did I really need to see hockey headlines like these this morning?

[Celebrity Girlfriends Watch Sens Win 4th Straight](#)

[Happy Birthday, Carrie!](#)

You have to admire Washington Capitals fans, who rolled out the red carpet treatment for Sidney Crosby this past weekend: http://sports.yahoo.com/nhl/blog/puck_daddy/post/Today-in-Sidney-Crosby-bashing-Caps-fans-offer-;_ylt=A2KIPHA5ArVJd.gAmQB7vLYF?urn=nhl,146533

The AHL's Houston Aeros, looking to shore up on scoring and veteran leadership for the postseason, [have signed veteran Tony Hrkac to a standard player contract](#). That would be *42-year-old* Tony Hrkac, who hasn't played since the 2004-05 season.

Former Stingrays forward Jarrett Konkle (2006-07), now with the Binghamton Senators, scored his first career AHL goal in last night's 5-2 win over Trent Campbell and the Worcester Sharks.

"My girlfriend was saying, 'I don't know how you do it. You fight each other and then you have to be friends.' I can definitely see how people think it's strange. It's funny how it works." -- San Jose's Ryane Clowe on welcoming former rivals Kent Huskins and Travis Moen to the fold.

-Joe

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3-19-09

Can you believe it, the Rays actually should have a complete lineup this weekend. When was the last time you saw Jared Bednar dress 10 forwards and 6 d-men?

Here are some vids and a read on Kip Brennan, who's expected to see action in all three games this weekend for SC:

On Fox Sports' Sport Science:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1p4tUwTWs0&feature=PlayList&p=FBAE9F5B7CC06B6A&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=7

Versus a Manchester Monarchs fan in the 2007 Calder Cup playoffs:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXwavC3gfoc&feature=related>

[Appearing on an episode of VH1's Sober House](#) that aired last month:

<http://www.vh1.com/video/play.jhtml?id=1604398&vid=339116>

This last video is the one that put him out of commission for a while recently:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pW4P348xuBc>

And finally, a Q&A I did with Brennan two years ago:

http://www.hersheypa.com/events/hershey_bears/news/detail.php?bp=capitals.php&id=1991

What has been the biggest surprise for the 2008-09 Stingrays?

- A. 16 different members of this year's team moving on to play in the AHL?
- B. Michal Neuvirth becoming the first Stingray to play in the NHL and ECHL during the same season?
- C. A record-tying 7 shutouts?
- D. 33 games decided by one goal?
- E. Using a team-record 8 goaltenders?

The newest Stingrays defenseman, Dave Grimson, led Sacred Heart this season with 14 power play points (1g, 13a).

Speaking of Grimson, here's what he had to say about Pierre-Luc O'Brien: "...with Obie here it makes the transition a lot easier. It's going to be fun to be back on the ice with Obie too; he's a great player and maybe we can pick up where we left off a couple years ago."

Brennan and Grant McNeill are quoted in an article on fighting by Tim Leone, the Hershey Bears' beat writer for the Patriot News:

<http://www.pennlive.com/columns/patriotnews/leone/index.ssf?/base/columnists/1237347643326880.xml&coll=1>

Former Stingray Andrew Gordon helps teammate Dean Arsene in the kitchen:

<http://www.fox43.com/pages/video/?autoStart=true&topVideoCatNo=default&clipId=3554072>

Dan Sernoffsky of the Lebanon Daily News (PA) talks to former Stingrays goalie Daren Machesney in this article that was posted on Monday: http://www.ldnews.com/sports/ci_11924302

Johann Kroll picks his winner for this year's NCAA tournament, and surprisingly it's not his alma mater, Ohio State: http://blog.syracuse.com/crunch/2009/03/syracuse_crunch_jumps_into_the.html

Mike Kelly, the voice of the Rays during the 2006-07 season, gets a brief mention in this article posted yesterday on SunHerald.com: <http://www.sunherald.com/sports/story/1212158.html>

Flipping through the channels this afternoon, I came across the Best Damn Sports Show's 50 Most Bizarre Plays, featuring this one from former Rays netminder Steve Shields:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQsuR7EH3uo>

For you collectors out there, here's your chance to add a pair of Maxime Lacroix pre-rookie cards to your collection: http://cgi.ebay.com/2000-peewee-MAXIME-LACROIX-south-carolina-stingrays_W0QQitemZ280322740622QQcmdZViewItemQQptZUS_SM_Sports_Cards?hash=item280322740622&trksid=p3286.c0.m14&trkparms=72%3A1205%7C66%3A2%7C65%3A12%7C39%3A1%7C240%3A1318%7C301%3A1%7C293%3A1%7C294%3A50

http://cgi.ebay.com/2001-peewee-MAXIME-LACROIX-south-carolina-stingrays_W0QQitemZ280322741052QQcmdZViewItemQQptZUS_SM_Sports_Cards?hash=item280322741052&trksid=p3286.c0.m14&trkparms=72%3A1205%7C66%3A2%7C65%3A12%7C39%3A1%7C240%3A1318%7C301%3A1%7C293%3A1%7C294%3A50

"My eyes were as huge as basketballs there." – Calgary Flames winger Eric Nystrom on the moment before he scored the game-winner on Dallas' Marty Turco midway through the third period Wednesday night.

-Joe

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3-27-09

Jared Bednar needs two wins to become the first head coach to begin his Stingrays coaching career with two 40-win campaigns.

If the Rays are able to win their final four away games, they'll tie the team record for most road victories in a season (22), set by the 2000-01 club and matched by the 2002-03 and 2007-08 teams. Only four of the previous 15 South Carolina teams have reached the 20-win plateau away from the North Charleston Coliseum.

As far as Stingrays players currently in the AHL, Portland (Zach Tarkir) and Worcester (Trent Campbell) are deadlocked a 4th place in the Atlantic Division, tied at 73 points. Portland, though, has a game in hand, with Lowell 3 points behind Portland and Worcester.

Syracuse (Johann Kroll) is one point behind Toronto for 4th place in the North Division, with each team having played 72 games.

Quad City (Brad Farynuk) is still in it, but they're currently in 7th place in the West Division, 6 points behind fourth-place Rockford.

Looking at the NHL, the Maple Leafs aren't likely to make the postseason, so that could only help the Marlies. San Jose (Worcester), Calgary (Quad City), and Columbus (Syracuse) are certain to make the playoffs, but Buffalo's (Portland) on the outside looking in right now. If the Sabres don't make the playoffs, obviously it will only bolster Portland's lineup.

The AHL regular season wraps up Sunday, April 12, but Worcester (Apr. 10), Portland, Quad City, and Syracuse (Apr. 11) conclude their schedules earlier.

Depending on how some of those races go, SC could possibly see guys getting assigned in time for the first playoff game on Thursday, Apr. 8, before the curtain drops on the AHL regular season.

If Portland's blueline wasn't crowded enough, the Pirates received defenseman [Dennis Persson](#) from Timra IK of the Swedish Elite League. Persson was the Buffalo Sabres' 1st round pick in 2006 (24th overall), and the 20-year-old figures to get plenty of ice time down the stretch and possibly into the playoffs.

In the last week Washington has signed center [Trevor Bruess](#) and defenseman [Zach Miskovic](#) to two and one-year entry level contracts, respectively, and assigned the pair to Hershey. Both players come from the collegiate ranks, but I don't see either one getting much playing time, at least until the Bears can clinch the AHL's East Division. Bruess and Miskovic, though, will gain some great experience practicing with the "Black Aces," Hershey's players left off the playoff roster. And who knows, maybe next season one or both may wind up with the Rays.

It seems Steve Pinizzotto, who was recalled but didn't play for the Caps in Toronto on Tuesday, had quite an impact in [Hershey's game against the Toronto Marlies](#) the following evening. From Tim Leone of the Patriot News:

"The second period was a whirlwind that featured two fights, five goals, big saves from Hershey goalie Michal Neuvirth and Toronto goalie Justin Pogge, and Steve Pinizzotto's crushing check on Marlies winger Jiri Tlusty.

Pinizzotto, who leveled Tlusty at 1:20 in the Hershey zone, delivered an exclamation point that echoed off the boards and through the period.

"I don't know if he saw me," Pinizzotto said. "I don't know if his helmet came up and his head hit the glass, but I heard that he was out before he hit the ice. He hit his face on the ice after that. You never want to see that happen, though."

A concerned Neuvirth skated over to check on his fellow Czech. A pool of blood spread on the ice, and Tlusty didn't return after being escorted to the locker room.

"I thought Pinner's hit was clean," Woods said. "It was a good, hard hit. It just kind of got things rolling a little bit."

The hit went unpenalized by referee Chris Cozzan. Toronto's Bates Battaglia jumped Pinizzotto.

"I asked the refs," Pinizzotto said. "They said they all went through it and said it was a clean hit.

"I knew somebody was going to come after me right after that, so I was kind of ready. It was Bates Battaglia, one of the strongest guys I've ever gotten a hold of."

How about this race in the North Division:

1 Cincinnati Cyclones	68	37	26	2	3	79	0.581
2 Trenton Devils	67	36	25	2	4	78	0.582
3 Elmira Jackals	67	35	25	2	5	77	0.575
4 Johnstown Chiefs	66	36	26	4	0	76	0.576
5 Wheeling Nailers	66	34	24	2	6	76	0.576

On the heels of Providence Bruins goaltender Tuukka Rask's meltdown last weekend, ESPN/TSN gives us the Top 10 Goalies Gone Wild: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HoGLxQyXqWo>

Keep your eyes out for former Rays netminders Martin Biron and Steve Shields, who made the cut.

[Andrew Gordon article](#), courtesy of the Enfield Weekly Press.

Can't say I've ever heard of a game being suspended because of this:

<http://www.cleveland.com/monsters/plaindealer/index.ssf?/base/sports/123771075556290.xml&coll=2>

The SPHL is now down to four teams, with [Richmond](#) and [Twin City](#) pulling the plug on their operations.

"He was busy designing women's purses." - Ottawa's Mike Comrie when asked if he worked out with Sean Avery, who he shares mutual friends with, in the summer.

-Joe

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