

11-26-08

Greetings from Northern Virginia! I'm away for the week, spending Thanksgiving with the future in-laws before heading up to my folks' place just outside Hershey, PA. The Stingrays are on the road, too, but I'll still get to check out some games, with the Capitals and Canadiens Friday night in DC as well as Philadelphia and Norfolk in Chocolatetown this weekend. I'm also hoping to hit Harpers Ferry and Gettysburg today, since I'm a Civil War junkie who never misses an opportunity to check out the historic sites.

I'll be doing several short interviews with ex-Rays this weekend in Hershey, so keep an eye out for those next week on the Stingrays' website.

South Carolina's 10-0 win over Mississippi on Sunday was their widest margin of victory in team history. Previously, the record was nine goals, set during a 10-1 win over the Raleigh Icecaps on Dec. 31, 1996.

Congrats to Tom Nemeth and Rod Taylor, two former Stingrays selected to the ECHL Hall of Fame:
http://www.echl.com/cgi-bin/mpublic.cgi?action=show_news2&cat=1&id=16960

You've got to feel sorry for the Canadiens' Ryan O'Byrne, who committed this "oopsie" in Monday's 4-3 shootout loss to the New York Islanders:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9JtNIwyWOW&eurl=http://sports.yahoo.com/nhl/blog/puck_daddy?author=Greg+Wyshynski

Former Stingray Jeremy Stevenson, who played for the team during the NHL lockout season of 2004-05, has 8 points in five games this season with the IHL's Kalamazoo Wings.

"Anytime you hold Dallas to a one touchdown, it's not all bad." – Former Phoenix Coyotes General Manager Bobby Smith after a Coyote 7-2 loss to the Dallas Stars

I hope everyone has a safe and Happy Thanksgiving. Take care, and we'll see you next week.

-Joe

joe@stingrayshockey.com

11-21-08

In case you missed it, here's an article on former Stingrays defenseman Grant McNeill that was written by

Tim Leone, who covers the Hershey Bears for the Patriot News:

<http://www.pennlive.com/columns/patriotnews/leone/index.ssf?/base/columnists/1227084018203980.xml&coll=1>

If you were at this past Monday's Coach's Show at Bobby Hartin's, you heard Stingrays defenseman Johann Kroll play a few chords on his acoustic guitar. His debut cd, Chasing Dreams, is now available through his website: <http://www.johannkroll.com/> 12 songs are included on the album. Not a bad deal for \$7.

Eight players have already earned fighting majors this season for the Stingrays. During the 2007-08 campaign 11 players dropped the gloves during the regular season.

Could you imagine Stingrays Head Coach Jared Bednar throwing the kind of temper tantrum this LNAH coach did last week? You be the judge: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GT49wKeWB54>

The Washington Capitals held their annual rookie dinner earlier this week in Los Angeles. What it means is that the rookies on the club get to foot the bill – dinner, drinks and dessert – for the entire team. Eric Fehr and Tyler Sloan were the lucky ones saddled with the multi-thousand dollar tab, and Caps Senior Writer Mike Vogel talked to the pair about the event. Also, several other Caps players discuss their rookie dinner experiences: <http://capitals.nhl.tv/team/console.jsp?catid=810&id=25847>

You've heard of hockey players sporting mohawks and faux-hawks, but could you imagine a skater hitting the ice with this hairdo: <http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/ireports/2008/11/17/irpt.mohawk.makes.hair.history.cnn?iref=videosearch>

Goaltender Josh Johnson, traded to Gwinnett last week, could be in store for a busy weekend. The Gladiators, who host Dayton tonight and Mississippi tomorrow before closing out the weekend Sunday in Charlotte, lost netminder Kevin Nastiuk to the AHL's Providence Bruins on Thursday. To compound matters, Gwinnett's schedule includes home games next Tuesday (Florida) and Thursday (Augusta), rounding out a slate of five games in seven nights.

Former Rays forward Stephen Werner (2006-2008), tallied a pair of 3rd period goals to help lead the Milwaukee Admirals past the Grand Rapids Griffins 3-2 on Tuesday night.

"You find that you have peace of mind and can enjoy yourself, get more sleep and rest when you know that it was a 100 percent effort that you gave – win or lose." – Gordie Howe

-Joe

joe@stingrayshockey.com

11-18-08

Congrats go out to rookie defenseman Josh Godfrey, who made his Giant Center debut Sunday evening after getting recalled from SC on Saturday. The former second-round draft pick of the Washington Capitals notched two assists and posted a game-high +5 plus/minus rating in Hershey's 9-0 shellacking of the Binghamton Senators. Another former Stingray, goaltender Daren Machesney, turned aside 26 shots for the shutout victory. Here's a link to the boxscore: http://stats.theahl.com/stats/gamesummary.php?game_id=1004986

So let's see, the Capitals are sitting in first place in the NHL's Southeast Division, Hershey is one point behind the Bridgeport Sound Tigers for first in the AHL's East Division, and the Rays sit one point behind (with a game in-hand) the front-running Florida Everblades in the South. Not. Too. Shabby.

Bears President/General Manager Doug Yingst was released from the hospital last Friday, after he broke both wrists and three ribs, and suffered two skull fractures and a collapsed lung, along with facial and body bruising, in a fall at his Derry Township (PA) home on Sunday, Nov. 9 (<http://www.pennlive.com/columns/patriotnews/leone/index.ssf?/base/columnists/1226451312179890.xml&coll=1>).

Yingst has a long road to recovery, but it was nice to hear he made it out to Giant Center to see the Bears romp Sunday night.

For those familiar with Hockey's Future/hfboards.com, contributor Justin Creech has put together an assessment of the Capitals' prospect outlook:

http://www.hockeysfuture.com/articles/10696/capitals2008_system_audit/

Several former and current Stingrays are mentioned in the write-up, including Kyle Wilson, Andrew Gordon, Sasha Pokulok and Michal Neuvirth.

The Stingrays have allowed a league-low 21 goals this season. Surprisingly, the Cincinnati Cyclones, reigning Kelly Cup Champions, have surrendered an ECHL-high 60 markers.

It's a couple of years old, but here's a story on the newest Stingray, Jeff Corey, from CBS3 in Philadelphia, Corey's home area: <http://www.viddler.com/explore/jeffcorey/videos/4/>
Speaking of Corey, Stingrays Head Coach Jared Bednar mentioned yesterday afternoon that he didn't think the PA native would be in the lineup tomorrow night in Charlotte. The third-year pro is en route to

the Lowcountry, but isn't due to arrive in the area until sometime tomorrow. Look for him to make his Stingrays debut Friday night at home against Mississippi.

For those of you who might have missed it, check out Alexander Ovechkin's last-second, game-tying goal against the New Jersey Devils from Saturday night, courtesy of Nicklas Backstrom's needle-thread pass: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCFiloUIsXY>

My latest Behind the Bench with Bednar will be posted to the Rays website later this evening, so keep an eye out for that.

Former South Carolina blueliner Deryk Engelland (2005-06) currently leads the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins with 43 penalty minutes.

"Great lines in hockey could turn the lights off and know where each other is." – Mike Barnett, former Phoenix Coyotes General Manager

-Joe
joe@stingrayshockey.com

11-14-08

When was the last time a Stingray has started a season as hot as Michael Dubuc has in 2008-09? Points in all nine games played, 15 points total. Through nine contests a year ago, Travis Morin, last season's leading scorer, had 13 points (Morin was scoreless in two of those games, however). You know the Hershey Bears, who signed Dubuc to a two-year deal this fall, are keeping a watchful eye on the rookie pro.

Count me among those who were concerned when Capitals goalie Brent Johnson left after the first period of Wednesday's game with a leg injury. I had finished typing the press release on Josh Johnson's trade to Gwinnett earlier in the evening and I remember thinking "you've got to be kidding me." I could just see a sequence of events that included a goaltender recall from Hershey and a subsequent plucking from the Stingrays roster. Good thing Johnson's injury wasn't too serious, though, as he'll be able to remain in the lineup as a back-up to Jose Theodore.

The Washington Capitals announced yesterday the signing of John Carlson, one of their first round choices (27th overall) in this year's NHL Entry Draft:

<http://capitals.nhl.com/team/app/?service=page&page=NewsPage&articleid=392237>

He's only 18, though, so it could be a couple years before we see him in a Stingrays jersey...if we even see him at all.

For you Facebook users out there, the Stingrays now have their own page on the popular social network website: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/profile.php?id=1661501938&ref=nf>

Be sure to add the Stingrays to your friends list!

If the Toronto Maple Leafs are smart they'll scoop up Brian Burke as their next General Manager. Burke stepped down as Ducks GM earlier this week, and one can only imagine he's looking for a new challenge. The Leafs, who haven't drank from Lord Stanley's Cup in 41 years, are in dire need of someone like Burke, who put together a Stanley Cup winner in Anaheim two seasons ago. If Burke lands in TO, his first order of business should be bringing in some toughness to protect all the young talent on the roster, followed by the addition of a superstar. Longtime captain Mats Sundin is gone, leaving the Leafs without a household name in their lineup.

David Littman has to have one of the coolest jobs out there. The former professional goaltender works for EA Sports these days, producing games like NHL 09. He occasionally blogs for The Hockey News, and he posted an entry on their website two days ago: <http://www.thehockeynews.com/articles/19857-David-Littmans-Blog-Going-from-hockey-player-to-video-game-producer.html>

Major props go out to the Anaheim Ducks, who recently invited 200-plus members of military families to a practice and afternoon barbecue outside the Honda Center. Here's some of the video of the get together, courtesy of the Ducks' website: <http://ducks.nhl.tv/team/console.jsp?catid=651&id=24840>

Former Rays d-man Jamie Fraser (2005-2007) is currently second in scoring among defensemen on the Bridgeport Sound Tigers (7 points in 15 games), and leads the team with a +11 plus/minus rating.

"Half the game is mental; the other half is being mental." – Jim McKenny

-Joe

joe@stingrayshockey.com

11-11-08

I wanted to wish those readers who currently serve, as well as those who have served, a Happy Veterans Day. I commend each and every one of you for your service to this great country. If you know a veteran

or see one today, be sure to give them a handshake and/or thank you. It'll mean the world to many of them.

All the best for a speedy recovery goes out to Hershey Bears President/General Manager Doug Yingst, who was seriously hurt after falling off the roof of his home Sunday morning:
<http://www.pennlive.com/hersheybears/patriotnews/index.ssf?/base/sports/122628661341040.xml&coll=1> His injuries aren't life-threatening, and all indications point to a full recovery. Here's hoping for a quick return to his familiar digs at Giant Center.

As many of you may have heard, Stingrays defenseman Sasha Pokulok's apartment sustained significant damage in a fire last Friday morning. "Pok" was able to get his cat and dog out in time, but he lost a good deal of his clothes and other possessions. If you're interested in helping out, please contact Stingrays ticket executive Mike Bellis at: mbellis@stingrayshockey.com

Sunday evening I was reading October's newsstand edition of USA Hockey, and I was hoping I could find this particular story and its pictures I saw in their online format. As luck would have it, I spotted it in their archives. Check out the ingenuity from this high school goalie from Rhode Island:
http://www.usahockeymagazine.com/story.php?left_nav=0810&article=Hockey-Stick-Guitar-0810&right_nav=normal

Scouring the auction websites, I came across this game worn jersey that might interest Stingrays fans:
http://cgi.ebay.com/03-04-South-Carolina-Stingrays-GAME-USED-goaliejersey_W0QQitemZ150308561285QQcmdZViewItemQQptZUS_SM_Fan_Shop?hash=item150308561285&trksid=p3286.c0.m14&trkparms=72%3A1205%7C66%3A2%7C65%3A12%7C39%3A1%7C240%3A1318 Sweet collectible of one of the best goaltenders in team history!

I'm always amazed at the promotions teams come up with. Usually, the most creative ideas seem to originate in the minor leagues, but kudos go out to the NHL's St. Louis Blues for this unique contest:
<http://blues.nhl.com/tickets/promotions/bailout.htm>

If you've ever wanted to know about what goes on in the life of NHL scouts, The Hockey News' has a weekly feature titled "A Scout's Life": <http://www.thehockeynews.com/listings/164-AScouts-Life.html>

Former Stingrays C Rich Peverley has four points (1g, 3a) through nine games with the NHL's Nashville Predators this season. Here's an action shot of the Rays' second-leading goal scorer from 2004-05, from Saturday's game against Colorado:
http://sports.yahoo.com/nhl/players/4089/photos;_ylt=AvxQdNNG4cxrSy0uFgBukqdivLYF?slug=673d27ed715b40608eb44485e98ddf8e.predators_avalanche_hockey_codz10

"The only difference between this and Custer's last stand was Custer didn't have to look at the tape afterwards." - Terry Crisp, former head coach of the Tampa Bay Lightning, following a 10-0 loss to the Calgary Flames.

-Joe
joe@stingrayshockey.com

11-7-08

A solid all-around effort in last night's game. Special teams were clicking, the defense really stepped up, the forward lines looked good, and the goaltending was spot-on. Without Maxime Daigneault in net for Charlotte, the score could've easily been double the 3-0 final.

What a week it has been for Bobby Goepfert. First, he gets a shootout win for the Hershey Bears in his American Hockey League debut last Friday. Then, after being sent back down on Wednesday, the Kings Park, NY, native pitches a 26-save shutout in his first Stingrays appearance last night.

I always seem to get sucked into watching those "Best Damn 50..." specials on Fox Sports, and last night was no exception. The theme of this one was titled "You Gotta Hear This!", and while a number of classic sports lines were replayed, only two hockey clips made the cut: the Jeremy Roenick-Patrick Roy feud during the 1996 NHL playoffs (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCnNFNbcPvY>), and Wayne Gretzky's goodbye speech after being traded from Edmonton to Los Angeles in 1988. And although it didn't make the top-50, I was pleased to see this gem make honorable mention:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXpcb5aTnPk&feature=related>

Ben Nelson, who kicked off his pro career late last season with SC, was featured this week in an article by Phil Dailey of the Idaho Press-Tribune: <http://www.idahopress.com/sports/?id=15900>

If the Florida Everblades weren't talented enough, the addition of Yannick Tifu and Peter Metcalf this week certainly erased that notion. Tifu, whose rights were acquired from Dayton in exchange for four players back in August, was assigned to the 'Blades from the AHL's Albany River Rats. Metcalf, the reigning ECHL Defenseman of the Year, returned to North America after beginning the season in Denmark. For those keeping count, that makes seven former ECHL All-Stars on the Florida roster.

Adam Calder, who spent four seasons with South Carolina and was a member of the 2001 Kelly Cup team, currently ranks fourth in the EIHL with 31 points for the Coventry Blaze.

Doing some research via Google early this morning, I came across a website for a professional roller hockey team based out of Myrtle Beach, the South Carolina Pirates (<http://www.scpirateshockey.com/>). Out of curiosity, I checked the roster for any recognizable names. Low and behold, former Stingrays forward Marc Genest (<http://www.hockeydb.com/ihdb/stats/pdisplay.php?pid=18167>) plays for the team. Genest saw action in 35 contests for South Carolina during the 1996-97 Kelly Cup-winning season, and then had a one-game cameo for the Rays in 2003-04. Here's his profile on the Professional Inline Hockey Association (PIHA) website: http://www.thepiha.com/profile.php?player_id=72129

Thanks to Derek Meluzio for adding us to the blog roll on his "Stack The Pads" blog (<http://blog.pennlive.com/stackthepads/>) featured on PennLive.com, home of the Patriot News. Derek is a goaltending aficionado, but he frequently mentions the Stingrays in his entries.

"They were checking us so closely I could tell what brand of deodorant they were using." -- Former Philadelphia Flyer Gary Dornhoefer, after playing the Montreal Canadiens

-Joe
joe@stingrayshockey.com

11-4-08

First off, a big thanks goes out to Hershey Bears broadcaster John Walton for adding Barbs & Blurbs to the blogroll on his website, <http://johnwaltonhockey.blogspot.com/>

I wonder how many goalies have participated in shootouts in their first two American Hockey League appearances, just as Bobby Goepfert did Friday and Sunday. Bobby gave up the game-tying goal with seven-tenths of a second left in regulation on Friday, but managed to stop four of five shots in the skills competition against the Albany River Rats to earn his first AHL win. On Sunday, his Bears teammates – specifically rookie Oskar Osala – rallied from a 3-0 deficit to force extra sessions. In the one-on-ones this time, however, Goepfert allowed three shooters to convert, giving the Philadelphia Phantoms a 4-3 victory. Picking up three of four points in the standings over the weekend wasn't too shabby, though, so congrats to the pride of King's Park, NY.

Get out and vote today!

So how well would a veteran Major League Baseball catcher perform if he laced up the skates, strapped

on the pads and took to the nets against a former NHL'er? Here's your answer, as Toronto Blue Jays backstop Gregg Zaun recently tried to shut down former pugilist Nick Kypreos:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ccvwGYUiXU>

The first part of my Rays On The Record interview with Stingrays forward Tom Maxwell should be posted to the website later this evening.

From the "betcha didn't see that coming file," rookie Derek Dorsett was sent from the Columbus Blue Jackets down to their AHL affiliate in Syracuse, NY, yesterday. Interesting, given that he's currently leading the NHL in penalty minutes and scored the game-winning goal in Columbus' win over Vancouver on Oct. 21. By the way, the Blue Jackets have won just four games this season. I guess you see something new every day.

Ever wonder who NHL referees are on the phone with when there's a disputed call? TSN gives you an insider's perspective: <http://www.tsn.ca/nhl/> (on the right-hand side scroll down to the video titled "No Room For Error"). Pretty interesting stuff.

Just a quick reminder...there are 51 shopping days left until Christmas.

Former Rays winger Robin Gomez (2002-2006), now playing for the Oklahoma City Blazers (CHL), leads the team and ranks second in the league with 49 penalty minutes.

"We're losing at home and we're losing on the road. My failure as a coach is I can't think of anywhere else to play." – Harry Neale, former head coach

-Joe
joe@stingrayshockey.com