



CAN ANYONE FIND NHL HOCKEY?

By Kerry Schmidt

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Does anyone really WANT to find NHL hockey?

I had heard somewhere that the NHL playoffs had started.

Now since I had found nothing about them, I decided to check it out.

I figured that since the NBA playoffs would not start for another week, MLB was just getting started on their steroid stuff, the NFL draft was not 'til next week end, so something had to be going on in HAAAAAAKEY.

I bought the USA TODAY, since they are a national paper and a good one.

I started with Wednesday's sports section, figuring they would have had time to over due the Masters Tournament, and by mid week papers are usually looking for anything to fill space.

I might as well have been looking for the Holy Grail.

Page one of sports.

Top story was that Tiger had had his left knee scoped. Big story on how he kept it quiet and stuff. Then the major front page story was on Darren McFadden, the Arkansas all world running back. Besides his greatness, of course, he had to have the couple of run-ins with the law. I mean, isn't that obligatory with top athletes today? You ain't nobody if you haven't been to the hoosegow. Rest of the front page was that the Eagles will play on Thanksgiving. Man, I'm sure looking forward to that!

Page 2, more McFadden and stuff on some soccer player named Guillermo Barros Schelotto being named player of the week for somebody in some league, and something about a Jimmy Vasser, car racer in Indy type cars.

I thought, wait, who in hell are these guys. Where's hockey?

Page 3: Hot stuff. Column on some lady sportswriter on You Tube. Exciting. Then a look at a book about Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus and how they did not get along with each other. Add a blurb on some golf writer who played the Augusta course, a very neat story about some ordinary lady who walks a lot and how the Cleveland Browns will be on TV a bunch of times this season. Good stuff.

Pages 4 & 5 were all about MLB and HGH.

Getting scared, page 6 was about Horace Stoneham, the owner of the Giants when they moved to the West Coast 50 years ago on April 16 and some really worthless MLB stuff.

Page 7 covered how tight the NBA's Western Conference was, something about Carmelo Anthony, Denver Nuggets' forward being fouled for a DUI and a hot bit on the new Speedo swimsuits for the Olympics. NOTE: Label says, "Made in China." He he.

Desperate now! Page 8 gave the entire NFL schedules along with the nationally TV'd games.

Page 9: All about the best college LB's for draft day, how high school players are graduating early so they can show up for their (soon-to-be) colleges spring training regimens, and a bit on some hot freshman college B Ball player going to the NBA after taking 3 classes (one was Phys Ed, another was Lunch).

Page 10 had Tiger's swing coach teaching kids and LPGA's Lorena Ochoa jumping into a lake. Panic'd, since I knew the Boston somethings were playing someone, I called ATT info, waited to press "1" for English, then asked the operator, who I could not understand, to look up ANY sports bar in Boston.

"Oh, no, senior, you mus have name or I can no do." I asked for her supervisor, and something named Dalishamika came on and she said, "well yea, honey, I cans finds you all kinds of bars." I bet she could!



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

So she hooked me up with a place called “Pugs Sports Mugs.” Cool.

Got the proprietor, Paddy McGwyer. I think he was an illegal Hispanic immigrant, as at first he was hesitant to speak to me.

After convincing him I was just a sportswriter, he did tell me that, yes, the BRUINS (the name of Boston’s hockey team) were indeed in the playoffs, but were losing to the Montreal somethings. I asked him if it was crowded at his bar for the games, and he said, “Naw, the regulars just come in and down a few pints and don’t really care ‘bout the “Bruns.”

He added something about a cancelled season and said that killed the game.

Said not since Bobby Orr and Phil Esposito has anyone really watched.

So I kept looking, and I struck gold. On page 11, there were two stories on two games, each about 60 words long. WHEW. God, I don’t know what I’d do if I couldn’t read up on my hockey playoffs.

I actually followed up with Thursday’s sports section, and way back on the last, back last page, they had a couple of tiny stories about the Penguins sweeping someone (Is that a Disney movie?) and a player named Ovechkin. Good stuff.

I didn’t even bother to look Friday.

I googled the NHL playoffs and found that the TV ratings were, they said, actually up; from 0.5% to 0.6%! NOTE: On some very obscure station, the Canadian curling championships had a 0.8% rating.

And, the big news was that the NHL was just putting the final touches on their very own “NHL NETWORK!”

I think you can get a 30s second ad for about \$6.25.

When you find stories like Olympic judo champion, Yvonne Boensich wanting to boycott the opening ceremonies over China, some Pakistani runner named Basser Haider helping guard the torch in his country and that Virginia Union’s basketball coach retired after 30 seasons, all these before the NHL playoffs, you can just imagine how hot a ticket these games are.

I always buy the NFL package from Direct TV, and someone told me they might pay you to get the NHL package. I didn’t check, because no matter how much they paid me, well, you get the picture.....

HOCKEY SUCKS! AND NOBODY GIVES A F.

OK, what else is worthless. Oh, Titans suspended CB Pacman Jones has decided to delay his filing for reinstatement, saying that his chances of a trade would be better for him. NOTE 2: His agent said Dallas was interested, but there was a snag over the money amount. Say WHAT?

Here is a guy who will be lucky to ever play in the NFL again and he is demanding more money?

He must be the local chapter head of MENSAs.

Celebrating the 51st year of Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in MLB, the league also came out with “minority grading reports” re numbers of minorities in baseball.

The NAACP was quite upset that the number of blacks in MLB continues to diminish. Only 8.2% of MLB players are black, down from 8.4% in ’06 and the lowest in two decades, the NAACP says. “This is unacceptable,” they added.

Hey you freakin idiots, it’s all the Hispanics and some Japanese that are talking over, not the whites. MLB is the biggest importer of Latin Americans and Hispanics in the world.

You can be damn sure that if any player, regardless of race, color, et al, can throw 90 plus and knock the snot out of the ball, they will be in the league!

Now MLB is not politically involved in the illegal immigration thing. The only aspect they will help in is that they want to test the throwing, hitting and pitching skills of each one as they sneak across. If they are good, they will get visas.



They don't need a big fence, they say, just a diamond. But they will use the fence to see who can hit the ball over it.

Forbes.com did a survey to find the most miserable sports city in America.

The winner, ah, I mean loser? Atlanta.

PETA had nothing to do with this study. Tom Van Riper (great name for one who is "ripping" something) and Andrew Ferrell, who wrote this for Forbes, says there are two types of "sports misery."

One is "a team like the Saints, who has lost 60% of their games over 40 years, has qualified for only six postseasons and never been to a SB."

But the worst misery, they say, is the repeated heart breaking, gut wrenching type of losses, were the team is good enough to win, but somehow keeps blowing it.

(Hey, SORRY Chicago fans, you did not even make the top 10. Seattle, Buffalo, Phoenix, San Diego, Houston, Denver, Cleveland, Philly and Minneapolis-St Paul round out the list).

"That's how Atlanta came out on the bottom," they say.

"Since joining the ranks of big-league sports in 1966, Atlanta has produced 56 playoff teams, of which 15 moved on to at least the final four of the NFL, NBA and MLB (Good note³) The study does not even mention the two hockey teams – one left - therein).

"Only one club, the 1995 Braves won a championship," they say.

"That adds up to one title in 142 cumulative seasons of sports."

Hey Atlanta fans, go to your local "Mugs and Pugs" and down a few cold ones to toast your "title town."

Speaking of Atlanta.

Michael "woof woof" Vick is currently residing in a 10 by 12 room in the U.S. Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas.

Well, just about 16 miles from there, the Kansas City T-Bones, an independent league team, play their games at the Community America Ballpark.

Thus, they have scheduled May 28 for a Michael Vick "Welcome to the Neighborhood" night at their ballpark.

While Pitt Bull Vick won't attend, the ball club has joined with about 10 local animal shelters to have a warning track parade of pups.

But it gets much better, sports fans. The T-Bones players will wear black and white striped jerseys, while the visiting SouthShore RailCats will wear bright orange jumpsuit jerseys!

T-Bones spokesman and radio announcer Tommy Thrall says, "Unfortunately, we can't do full jumpsuits, because that limits mobility."

They wanted Vickie boy to get out long enough so he could throw the opening pitch, but the dogs refused to appear if he was there.

Now, guess who is protesting this. The NAACP, of course. Their spokesman, Richard McIntire says, "It sounds like they're willing to uplift one cause (PETA) at the expense of another individual's human dignity."

He is joined by one animal protection advocate, Kristy Winfrey, who writes for "The Animal Advocate" blog. She says "I think once people get there, it's going to look ridiculous to them."

I wonder if they will give away free dog bones or pictures of Vick with his favorite pitt bull to the first 500 fans.

Well, I'm off to watch the hockey playoffs. Right.

It would take a whole lot of single malt to watch those pucksters.