
Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 25-06-2008 16:49

So the NHL is "negotiating"* with Alexander Medvedev's Continental Hockey League in wake of the (genuine?) rumours that Evgeni Malkin will be "poached" by the new Russian setup.

Is this upstart going to provide the European rival to the NHL that many would like? Or is it merely a cunning ploy by Malkin's agent? Or a money-laundering scheme for Russian billionaires? Or something else entirely.

* scare quotes denote terms used by G&M.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 25-06-2008 16:57

The answer to each of the questions in your second paragraph is yes.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 26-06-2008 15:47

It seems to me the potential for Bettman and his buddies to turn this pear shaped quickly is gargantuan. At a guess they're going to treat the CHL as if it were the WHA, which it absolutely isn't. If new league does come to pass, and they get it wrong, then they can kiss their last players' contract goodbye, and that's just for openers. Interesting times.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 26-06-2008 15:55

Completely agree.

I think this has a real chance to be one of the most fascinating "sports business" stories of the next several years, with potential ramifications well outside the often insular world of ice hockey.

In fact, Lymond just mentioned it on the Spain/Russia thread.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 26-06-2008 16:15

What kinds of ramifications do you think there will be outside hockey, Urs?

I've always been under the impression that inter-sport interactions are always lower than one would expect.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 27-06-2008 17:40

"Or is it merely a cunning ploy by Malkin's agent? Or a money-laundering scheme for Russian billionaires?"

Insofar as it's either of those, I can't see how this could be something that anyone would wish for.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 27-06-2008 19:22

You're right of course. The title was a play on the yearnings, expressed several times in the past, of European Hockey fans here for a larger professional league. One that would both be competitive with the NHL and keep local players at home.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 04-07-2008 17:46

Jagr signs with Avangard Omsk

My Russian is shite, but it seems to be confirmed on the team website.

That is one shit crest.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by evilC - 04-07-2008 20:35

So - does this mean the NHL 'salary cap' for players may end up getting ...errr... 'looked at' or something?

The implication is that a cap-less Russian league could poach all the best players, similar to what happened during the (NHL) strike season.

I seem to recall hearing that one of the Russian teams (one from central/eastern Russia, IIRC) that year actually had the highest single-year wage bill in hockey history and something like the 4th-highest in all of sports history - in the region of \$100million dollars, I think.

This is all just from my (slightly tipsy) memory though, so those figures could be somewhat off.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 04-07-2008 21:48

Eventually maybe.

Right now most teams have no problem with the cap as it's gone up substantially each year. In fact some clubs — and I'm talking about my own Katastrophik Canucks here — due primarily to train-wreck management — are something like \$16 million under the cap because no one wants to be associated with them.

If a trickle of players of Malkin and Jagr's quality turns into any sort of flood, and it might, then the cap will vanish faster than frost in July.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 05-07-2008 15:33

You think? The cap is there because most teams were on the verge of bankruptcy 5 years ago. The league's desire to keep Malkin et. al is presumably not stronger than clubs' sense of self-preservation, is it?

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 06-07-2008 04:24

Not all the clubs were on the verge of bankruptcy. Bettman had real trouble selling the cap to the affluent among them (Toronto, Philadelphia, Detroit, NYR etc) in the first place. The strength of our mighty petro-dollar means other Canadian clubs are not as gung-ho about it now either. If too many of them start losing marquee players it'll be every man for himself.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 08-07-2008 16:55

I'm with Amor on this one.

Gramsci, my reference to ramifications outside the world of hockey was to my belief that Russia will become (and, in fact, is already becoming) a significant economic power that will be able to compete for athletic talent on a competitive footing with the biggest leagues in Western Europe and (eventually) North America (at least in hockey). As evidence for that, one can look at CSKA Moscow's success in European men's basketball and the kind of wages that Zenit St. Petersburg are paying the likes of Arshavin.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 09-07-2008 15:26

Ray Emery becomes the first black goalie in Russia. He may need all his brawling skills just to survive.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 09-07-2008 15:39

I really think this is going to be an interesting experiment. Sky Italia has recently added four Russian language channels to our package, and I am hoping that one of them has the rights.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 09-07-2008 16:10

Yes, I suppose a significant test will be if it can draw teams from countries beyond the old Russian League. A couple of Swedish and a Finnish club are mulling it over apparently. It's hard to see how they could compete financially though without profit sharing on a massive scale.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 10-07-2008 10:59

That's going to be an issue for them even without expanding to the Nordic countries, because far from all of the teams in the KHL as it stands are controlled by "oligarchs". It will be interesting to see whether they are going to try some kind of profit sharing beyond things like a central television contract, or whether they are looking at a more "capitalist" model. My bet is on the latter.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 10-07-2008 18:31

A (probably very temporary) truce...

...in fact the ink wasn't even dry.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 10-07-2008 18:49

My guess is that the AHL has more to fear from the KHL than the NHL, but that's ok because it will take away some of the has-beens and open up more slots for up-and-comers. Ray Emery is not exactly a big loss for the NHL.

I don't think that many Russians really want to play in Russia unless there's a really obscene offer on the table and from what I can tell, only a few oligarch's are going to be able to offer those, meaning the overall quality of the 24-club league won't be that great. And unless things have changed from the lockout years, Russia doesn't offer much ancillary income from merchandising and what not.

Other than money, Russia isn't going to be that appealing to non-Russians. As I recall from the lockout period, most of the non-Russians who went there, especially the Canadians and Americans, struggled to convince their wives and girlfriends to join them for winter in Siberia.

After all, didn't Malkin have to resort to all sorts of cloak and dagger escapades to get to Pittsburgh in the first place?

If the top Russian players really want to play in the NHL and the Russian clubs continue to demand big transfer fees, we might see more and more Russian teenagers try to break into Major Junior in Canada or even high school and college hockey in the USA so that they can be drafted into the NHL without any Russian club getting its hooks in them.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Bombanersson - 10-07-2008 19:13

There's no way any Finnish team will join this without massive profit sharing. Harry Harkimo is keen, but it's much more likely he will start Jokerit football club again than commit to a 300% increase in the wage bill, regular trips halfway to Japan and a mid-table finish if he's lucky.

If in a couple of years this league is draining SM Liiga of talent, then he might think again. But finns learn English not Russian, and their wives and girlfriends are also reluctant to move to Siberia.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 10-07-2008 19:17

If it remains a Russian league that's probably true — at least in the short term. But if it becomes a European League, as the name suggests, things change considerably. To begin with it's very likely that top Scandinavian, Czech and other European players will see the league as a viable option, thereby reducing the NHL's talent pool — which will please Don Cherry — but few others. After that, while Emery and Chris Simon are hardly Iginla quality, if their experience turns out to be OK then better North Americans will slowly follow. Modern Football's experience suggests that most professional athletes will ultimately follow the biggest paycheck wherever it's being written.

If the top Russian players really want to play in the NHL and the Russian clubs continue to demand big transfer fees, we might see more and more Russian teenagers try to break into Major Junior in Canada or even high school and college hockey in the USA so that they can be drafted into the NHL without any Russian club getting its hooks in them.

I think that's a stretch. The KHL obviously has strong influence within the Russian government (cf: the story above.) It probably wouldn't be hard to quash that type of emigration.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 10-07-2008 19:23

finns learn English not Russian, and their wives and girlfriends are also reluctant to move to Siberia.

But would they feel the same about Moscow, St Petersburg or even Riga? After all no one is making them go where they don't want to. And, once again, for a really, really fat contract Jagr is quite willing to play in Omsk.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 10-07-2008 19:30

The KHL obviously has strong influence within the Russian government (cf: the story above.) It probably wouldn't be hard to quash that type of emigration.

I think it wouldn't be hard for enterprising North American agents and junior clubs to quash the KHL's quashing of that emigration and find a way to bring over promising youngsters one way or the other.

"Oh well, you see, he's not coming here primarily to play hockey. He's coming because his mother has much-in-demand, er specialized accounting skills and has taken a job at our local gypsum mine counting up the, ummm, gypsum for Mr. McLean. Yes, Mr. McLean also owns the local junior team, the rink, six other pits, and most of the real estate in this town, but that's just a coincidence."

Bombanersson's description rings true. I could be totally wrong about this, but my impression is that the owners of the Swedish and Finnish leagues, especially the owners of the most successful clubs, are fairly content with their station in the hockey world and aren't very interested in taking a huge financial risk to change it.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 10-07-2008 19:37

But would they feel the same about Moscow, St Petersburg or even Riga? After all no one is making them go where they don't want to. And, once again, for a really, really fat contract Jagr is quite willing to play in Omsk.

Right, but there are only a few of those and, if that article is correct, the teams will be limited on how many non-Russians they bring in, further limiting the opportunities. Even the oligarch's cash pile is not completely unlimited. And, if only a few teams are able to attract the big talent, the overall quality of the league isn't going to be very good and that will deter players and/or mean the KHL will have to pay more of a premium to attract NHL players.

So I imagine what we'll see is a trickle of slightly past-peak players like Jagr going over there, but nothing like a stream let alone a flood. It will, I think, be a bit like MLS with Beckham and Blanco.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 10-07-2008 19:42

my impression is that the owners of the Swedish and Finnish leagues, especially the owners of the most successful clubs, are fairly content with their station in the hockey world and aren't very interested in taking a huge financial risk to change it.

Could be, I dunno. But it might also be totally irrelevant. An "entrepreneur" from Russia, or somewhere else, might be quite willing to pour money into a small Finnish team on the off-chance that they'll turn into KHL titans. This is all about the \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ (or the €€€€€€€€€€ or whatever it is they're being paid in.)

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Bombanersson - 10-07-2008 19:54

Jagr grew up in 1970s Czechoslovakia. After however many years of luxury in 5 star hotels and gated communities he is probably intrigued to observe people reliving his childhood eating their gruel in unheated apartments, while he doesn't even have to take a pay cut.

If someone wants to create a new team in Finland, and they market it right, then a European League could work. But of 24 teams, 21 are Russian and beating them will be tough. I think the bigger thing is going to be the Champions league, which is also funded by the nice Mr Medvedev (the hockey one, not the Deep purple fan). If that is successful, it might be that the shit-muncher owned CHL clubs are dumped and the a half Russian/half European league is created.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 10-07-2008 20:05

Right, but there are only a few of those and, if that article is correct, the teams will be limited on how many non-Russians they bring in, further limiting the opportunities.

I think almost half the league is in the Moscow or St Petersburg areas but I'm not really sure. Ursus? They're planning on expanding by six clubs next year most, if not all, outside Russia. I imagine the "non-Russian" rule could be changed very easily.

It will, I think, be a bit like MLS with Beckham and Blanco.

No way. First the overall quality/quantity of Russian hockey players is a lot higher than that of US soccer players. Second the KHL and the NHL are each others only competition. MLS has to compete for players with dozens of leagues of a higher, or equivalent, standard around the globe. The KHL has to be better than MLS, maybe not NHL quality yet, but potentially it could be.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 10-07-2008 20:38

I'm much closer to Amor on virtually every question here, especially the attraction of a Russian/European league that plays under international rules (and with an international approach to goons) while paying NHL-type salaries to Russian and Central European players (and potentially higher salaries to what would be NHL journeymen, while arguably affording a higher quality of life to everyone, given relative costs of living).

The "mystique of the Cup" and general lure of the NHL may still exist in the current generation of players, but that can fade pretty quickly if a closer to home, more culturally similar and equally lucrative alternative presents itself. And if Reed thinks that North American agents are resourceful, he hasn't dealt with Gazprom.

Of course it may not happen (and BaN is right to highlight the potential alternative of the Champions League), but if I was the NHL, I would be looking at this quite seriously.

A cool Google Maps application with all of the current KHL clubs.

One would imagine that the ideal league for them would be maybe 12 Russian clubs, with representation from the Baltics, Czech Republic, Finland, Sweden and Germany. That's a pretty attractive television product in some rich and sizeable markets.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 10-07-2008 21:02

I think almost half the league is in the Moscow or St Petersburg areas but I'm not really sure.

I know some of the clubs that NHL players went to during the lockout were in the hinterlands. Perhaps these teams won't be in the KHL.

Either way, I imagine that it will shake out such that there will only be a few really rich clubs per market. There will be the Chelsea and Arsenal of Moscow ice hockey, and then there will be the Leyton Orient of Moscow ice hockey.

No way. First the overall quality/quantity of Russian hockey players is a lot higher than that of US soccer players.

I just meant that there'd be just a handful of these massive contracts thrown westward to lure a big NHL star. Granted, the its-a-shit-league premium won't need to be as high as it is for MLS because the marginal difference in quality of play is not as great.

The champions league model seems more likely in the near term, as a European Super League would no doubt have the same effect on the not-so rich hockey clubs in the domestic leagues as a football Super League would have on most European football clubs, and therefore the powers that be in those other countries would try to stop it.

I think the biggest threat isn't that the KHL will take away players like Ovechkin and Malkin, but that they'll get guys like Federov (although, apparently, not actually Federov) who may be a bit past it or journeymen who still have a lot to offer an NHL contender. That will erode the quality of the NHL.

As I said, the biggest impact may be to the AHL, which employs many of the Ray Emery's of the world. But as I said, perhaps that's for the best. It will force the AHL to be more development-oriented.

I don't know what Gazprom is.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 10-07-2008 21:07

You should.

They will be the richest company in the world pretty soon; they are already second or third in terms of market capitalization.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 10-07-2008 21:11

We'll see. I'm cautiously optimistic that oil won't be \$150 a barrel forever.

Apparently, Khabarovsk, which has an entry in the KHL once had a team in the Asia league, which includes teams in Korea, Japan and now China.

So perhaps its possible that if this KHL takes off and starts to add non-Russian teams, we may see a league game between a team from Japan and a team from Germany.

It's not likely, but it could happen.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Bombanersson - 10-07-2008 21:15

I know lots of Russians that think you are wrong. I got some right stick the other week for talking about commodity producers 'like Iran, Nigeria and Russia'. They're a Great Power, don't you know.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 10-07-2008 21:20

You are a brave man. Gazprom's reserves of oil and (more importantly) gas are greater than those of any country in the world except Saudi Arabia and Iran.

I don't think that hockey is a big enough sport in Japan to make expansion in that direction interesting. And I should have added Kazakhstan to my earlier list. As to the local shakeout, that has largely happened already; the Moscow teams that are in the KHL are all backed by major players; there are no Leyton Orient.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 10-07-2008 21:35

Yes, the map suggests that the league is already spread out across Russia plus a few neighbors. It's not so concentrated in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

BTW, is Moscow really a "desirable" place to move? From all I've heard from people going there, it's still fairly grim, very unfriendly, cold place with lots of idiots whipping around the streets at pantstaining speed running over pedestrians left, right and center.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Bombanersson - 10-07-2008 21:39

The New York Rangers seem to sign some decent players with those disadvantages.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 10-07-2008 21:52

New York has better sandwiches, no doubt.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 10-07-2008 22:38

I think the biggest threat isn't that the KHL will take away players like Ovechkin and Malkin, but that they'll get guys like Federov (although, apparently, not actually Federov)

I think losing the most talented young Russian (and perhaps European) players is precisely the biggest threat to the NHL. The Federov case is interesting because it's an example of an NHL club doing exactly what you say the KHL will do: give a gassed-out star a massively overpriced short-term contract to put bums in seats, in city where it doesn't happen much.

Avery BTW is a fair bit better than AHL standard. Don't forget he backstopped the Senators to the Stanley Cup final two years ago. He certainly has... errr... 'issues,' but there's no questioning his ability.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 11-07-2008 02:10

If Ray Emery could get an NHL job right now, he'd have one, ergo if there were no overseas options, he'd probably start the year in the AHL. Historically, the AHL has had a lot of guys who have NHL-level talent but have lost their way. Some of them get back to the NHL. Some of them retire. Some, like Alexandre Daigle, go on to find happiness in Europe.

I don't think the Caps signed Federov to put butts in seats. The fans in Washington don't care who Sergei Federov is such that his presence will bring them out. Few Washingtonians could pick Sergei Federov out of a line-up of two. I think the Caps believe he can play an important role on the team. It might be a dumb move, but I don't think he's being retained for his star power.

The best young Russian players already do play in Russia as teenagers, but as things are now, they go to the NHL as soon as they can. I think that as long as the NHL is the better league and the pay is at least in the ballpark of what they could get over there, they'll want to come to the NHL for their prime. Certainly, Alex Ovechkin hasn't shown any inclination to leave Washington, let alone go back to Russia, even though he plays for Russia in international competitions.

But the pay has to stay at least comparable or near comparable.

If the NHL has to keep raising the Cap to keep up, that might be the impetus it needs to dump some of the clubs that should be contracted - Atlanta, Miami, Nashville, to name three.

It also occurs to me that we may someday see one of these Russian oilgarchs buy an NHL team. They might find the idea of owning a hockey team with a salary cap to be attractive.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Bombanersson - 11-07-2008 08:00

I'm a complete novice at talking to Russian-based wealthy Russians, but after the last month I would guess that the decision to stay in Russia will not be entirely the player's, in the very near future. Arshavin is viewed as 'unpatriotic' for wanting to go abroad, and he has been quite clear that he wants to go abroad. Other clubs want him, but it looks like he will stay at Zenit. As a United Russia politician, it is very unwise for him to look 'unpatriotic'. And I doubt he had much choice about whether or not to become a United Russia politician.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Bombanersson - 11-07-2008 08:03

There are quite a few footballers in Finland who turned down massive money for the chance to play here, some of them for 'family reasons'. Rafael Ederho was in Kazakhstan in 2007, using hundred petrodollar bills to clean the bath, but is now happily installed at Vaasan Palloseura because he wants his kids to go to school without bodyguards.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 11-07-2008 15:40

BaN, they are charming people, aren't they?

Moscow isn't as bad as Reed's friends make out, especially for one making a serious amount of money. I wouldn't move my family there, but then I wouldn't move them to Nashville or Phoenix, either.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 11-07-2008 16:31

Anywhere would be ok if you're rich enough to insulate yourself from ever having to deal with the populace or the weather.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 11-07-2008 16:58

I actually disagree with that quite strongly.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 11-07-2008 17:01

I mispoke. I meant that many rich people do that, not that I advocate that as a lifestyle.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 11-07-2008 17:06

That is undeniably true, and more than a little sad in my book.

In any event, I think that we've already demonstrated that this will be an interesting experiment. I would also want to reserve judgment on its long term impact for at least three years.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 11-07-2008 17:12

Historically, the AHL has had a lot of guys who have NHL-level talent but have lost their way.

OK. If you mean the AHL are likely to lose their function as a the NHL's rehab League then you'd be right.

Whatever their reasons may be for signing him, the Caps are overpaying Federov (he's almost 39 and his production has been tailing off for the past six years.) And, I believe, they're doing solely because he has other playing options. This upward pressure on salaries will be the most significant initial effect of the KHL on the NHL.

The best young Russian players already do play in Russia as teenagers, but as things are now, they go to the NHL as soon as they can.

True enough. But that could change and, based on the Filatov story, it already is. Obviously extorting money, even from NHL teams, isn't something to be applauded. But, should it continue and adding the pressures that bomba has mentioned, it will surely mean there will be fewer young Russian players in the NHL in coming seasons. Last year Russians comprised three of the NHL's top five points scorers. Losing them, or younger players like them will hurt. A lot.

Edit: I also agree with Ursus. It'll take more than a season or so to see how this shakes down.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 11-07-2008 19:00

"And, I believe, they're doing solely because he has other playing options. This upward pressure on salaries will be the most significant initial effect of the KHL on the NHL."

Insofar as any 39-year-old past-it future HOF player has options overseas or here, the Caps probably paid the prevailing wage for a 39-year-old past-it future HOF player. Whether or not somebody like that is really all that valuable to the team is debatable. I think the Caps felt like they had to sign some of the FA's they got last year after letting Huet go. That didn't go down well with the fans here, such as they are.

The Caps have a heretofore unseen opportunity right now to build a fan base in DC. The local media loves them right now and the fans are coming around.

Prior to last year, I was under the impression that the chief rival for Federov's services in 08-09 was not the Russian league, but the golf course. I guess he's not ready to quit yet. He seemed energized by the Caps late season run and really enjoyed playing with Ovechkin and under Boudreau.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 11-07-2008 21:21

I was under the impression that the chief rival for Federov's services in 08-09 was not the Russian league, but the golf course.

Heh! Maybe it still is, but nothing wakes up an old suitor more than a younger one with deep pockets ringing the doorbell.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Muukalainen - 16-07-2008 22:19

Jumping aboard a bit late as usual, my opinion of this remains as before: the chances of any Finnish club joining a league such as the KHL are nil, and no amount of underwriting of losses by the league's sponsors will help. Overwhelmingly, the primary source of income for clubs is from the gate, and the potential erosion of the fan base, from playing against teams who represent almost no interest to almost all Finns, is simply too big a risk. Merchandising is at jocularly low levels for most SM-liiga clubs (off the top of my head, Kärpät lead this particular event by a country mile with about €0.9M of annual sales, HIFK are second at around the €0.5M mark, and the rest are well behind that), TV money is reputedly improving rapidly (though with CanalPlus refusing to release either money or viewing figures, separating facts from the press releases is impossible), but there isn't a club in the country that doesn't look at the bums on seats figures very seriously. Finnish club owners are no different from their North American or wherever counterparts, the sums of money involved may be on a different scale but the principles -- and lack of them -- remain constant. If there's a low risk way of making more money then they'll take it.

It's likely that Swedish clubs are in a similar position when it comes to sources of income, and I'd hazard that it extends well beyond Scandinavia. This makes the KHL being anything other than a domestic Russian league with lots of money close to impossible. The key question in my mind remains "how do you start it, how do you get the non-Russian teams aboard in the first instance?"

By underwriting the finances of the clubs? Possibly, I suppose, but for how long and what's happening back home when, say, Jokerit are away chasing roubles? SM-liiga are hardly going to keep a vacancy in the league for them, they've got their own business to run, and if the pyjama men can't hack the pace in the KHL, crowds dwindle and the league's pay masters see better opportunities elsewhere...

An "entrepreneur" from Russia, or somewhere else, might be quite willing to pour money into a small Finnish team on the off-chance that they'll turn into KHL titans.

To my mind, this represents the only even semi-feasible way of a Finnish team being involved. Which one, though? The only team I'm aware of that has managed this financially engineered quantum leap is our old friend, Jokerit, but here Harri Harkimo had the wit to see the opportunity for a second major team in Helsinki, more or less guaranteeing the fan base. The only large city lacking a top flight ice hockey team is the sports graveyard of Vantaa, and they can't get the punters in in decent numbers when the opponents are from an hour down the road. If not Vantaa then you're looking at towns with a population somewhere in the range 20000 - 50000. Heh, mischievously I've just thought of Viipuri...

However, pan-European ice hockey could succeed through an expansion of the current CL. This is the best way forward in my opinion: it gets the top clubs involved without interfering with their domestic status, and over a period of time can build up meaningful rivalries with clubs from abroad. This keeps the fans with the club and gives the owners the possibility of increased income at relatively low risk.

If in a couple of years this league is draining SM Liiga of talent, then he might think again.

Can't see the relevance here, BaN. The NHL, Swedish and Swiss leagues all drain SM-liiga of talent (and Kimmo Lotvonen) and have done so for years. The KHL would become just another drain. I'm trying to understand how AdeC's point, that the KHL might attract top European players to the detriment of some NHL clubs, is different. Some clubs rely more on the marketing of star players than on a club being an identifiable part of the community to generate its fan base? There are some sad conclusions to be drawn from that, if true.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 16-07-2008 22:27

According to Wiki, Kärpät are the Finnish club who are interested:

"It has been reported that the league seeks to expand to 30 teams for the 2009–10 season. Two of the teams who have been invited are Swedish sides Frölunda HC and Färjestads BK, neither club has accepted nor rejected the offer as of yet. Ukraine's HC Sokil Kyiv may join in the near future. According to Russia Today News, Finland's Kärpät is also interested, as is the Czech Republic's Energie Karlovy Vary."

Some clubs rely more on the marketing of star players than on a club being an identifiable part of the community to generate its fan base?

In the NHL? Absolutely they do, at least outside Canada and the US Northern states.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 16-07-2008 22:30

Always wonderful to have your invaluable contributions, Muuk.

On your last point, I would say that virtually all NHL teams gave up on being an indentifiable part of the community long ago. And the strike only made things worse in that regard.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Muukalainen - 16-07-2008 23:22

Thankyou ursus, much appreciated. Is it unfair to describe the NHL as a business marketing a sport?

Both Jokerit and Kärpät have been mentioned by the Russian news sources. Finnish news sources say rather a lot less, Kärpät's Wiki entry doesn't mention it whereas the CHL is linked, the entire "Possible expansion ..." section quoted above is omitted from the Finnish language version, and where Russian news sources have said "Kärpät are interested" I interpret as Kärpät have been approached and have said they'll think about it. Arponen and Junno have the reputation of being careful and cautious with the running of the club (having been brought in to resurrect the club after our early '90s bankruptcy, perhaps not surprising) and will not do anything that would put the club at risk. Kärpät are the current champions and the dominant team of recent years (about to end, I suspect) and Jokerit are the strongest financially in one of Europe's strongest ice hockey nations. The KHL can't really avoid us, but almost all the noise about them and us is coming from them.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 16-07-2008 23:39

The Caps are trying to be part of the community, but it's hard. The Wild do a pretty good job at it with their "State of Hockey" marketing push. The Xcel Center is intended to be a monument to Minnesota's hockey heritage.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 16-07-2008 23:59

Is it unfair to describe the NHL as a business marketing a sport?

No, it isn't unfair. In fact I'd say that's exactly what it is. As Reed says, Individual clubs try, to a greater or lesser extent, to build community roots but the league has very little to do with it. The current NHL management views all sports as business opportunities and differentiates very little between them. Bettman came from the NBA and has attempted to impose an identical business plan on the NHL. It hasn't worked because the two sports are culturally different in ways which he fails, or refuses, to acknowledge.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 17-07-2008 06:14

Amor shoots and scores.

Virtually all "major league" teams in North America see themselves as businesses first and foremost, and view their "mission" as not just as marketing a sport, but marketing an "entertainment experience". In the highly corporate/capitalist culture of the post-Reagan US, this is generally seen as a positive good and a "realistic" approach for them to take. It also corresponds to the reality of many clubs, which rely very heavily on corporate ticket holders (even in New York, the number of individuals who can afford something in the range of USD 75 per seat for 41 regular season games (and more for the playoffs)) is quite limited.

I was very fortunate as a child to have a father whose firm had season tickets to all of the New York baseball, hockey and basketball teams. As a result, I got to see 20+ baseball games a year and a lesser number of Rangers and Knicks games (I've always preferred hockey to basketball). Were we living in New York, it would be quite difficult for me to justify the cost of replicating that experience for ursus minor, which is one of the (many) reasons that I appreciate living where we do. Our season tickets for Inter cost about what it would cost me to take he and his mother to two regular season Rangers games in similar seats (were they available).

A strong sense of community is generally something reserved for college teams, minor league teams and junior hockey teams in Canada and the Northern US.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 18-07-2008 15:11

Good points all around.

However, in a recent Sports Illustrated, they came up with an index that compares the average cost of attending a major league sporting event to the overall cost of living in that area. Compared to the cost of everything else there, sports tickets are a relative bargain in New York (while not such a good deal in San Antonio, for example).

Of course it averaged out all the teams in the area and didn't consider that for some teams, it's very hard to get tickets at face value.

By "Inter," do you mean Inter Milan? I'd have thought tickets were much cheaper.

For me, the minor leagues, college and high school are where it's at.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 18-07-2008 15:21

Reed of the Valley People wrote:
By "Inter," do you mean Inter Milan?
Oooo, you'll regret posting that...

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 18-07-2008 18:04

Of course it averaged out all the teams in the area and didn't consider that for some teams, it's very hard to get tickets at face value.

Virtually impossible in Vancouver. Except for exhibitions and a couple of Eastern teams with no-fan interest, then you might be able to pick-up a couple of roofline seats.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Bombanersson - 18-07-2008 23:18

Has Tampere United 'fan'/owner, breast-ogging parliamentary lift-rider and leader of the gungangs Kalervo Kummola said anything much about this new CHL? He really is one of those shape-shifting lizards and I would pay attention if he started getting excited.

I may be getting paranoid, but I just tried to find mention of his comments on sexual harrassment in parliament (he told Helsingin Sanomat that when women walk into a lift wearing tight tops he finds it hard not to stare) and they seem to have vanished.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Muukalainen - 22-07-2008 00:08

I reckon Paavo Lipponen's a better look a like.

... when women walk into a lift wearing tight tops he finds it hard not to stare) ...
Presumably the temptation is seldom mutual.

In any case, Kummola's opinion doesn't count -- it's the Russians who have the money, not him.

I wonder if the CHL and KHL will live side by side for a couple or so years and then we'll see some form of merger. Neither the various national leagues nor the Russian money are going to go away, so it's a question of either co-existing separately or adapting to each other.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 22-07-2008 00:22

Do you mean the NHL and KHL?

If so I think a merger is unlikely in my lifetime (10 years...20?) If the KHL doesn't collapse within a couple of years under the weight of its own greed and hubris then they might some kind of amicable truce eventually. But I bet there's a lot of blood left on the carpet first, only figuratively speaking (I hope!)

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 22-07-2008 03:24

I assume that he meant the Central Hockey League, imagining highly fraught rivalries developing between the likes of the Bossier-Shreveport Mudbugs and Dinamo Riga. Perhaps a highly anticipated finals between the Tulsa Oilers and Metallurg Magnitogorsk.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Bombanersson - 22-07-2008 08:26

I think it's the Champions Hockey league, which I have grown used to calling the Champions League. That's the UEFA CL-style thing run by the IIHF, and funded by Gazprom.

Kummola's tentacles are pretty extensive round here, muuk. I get the feeling that if the KHL was needed to make his Sorsapuisto thing work, he would persuade Ilves to join up. Tappara could probably fund it themselves, one of their co-owners is an arms dealing tax exile apparently worth billions, but he doesn't seem to give much of a fuck at the moment.

Kummola was also the stalking horse sent by the European federations to the current IIHF president to articulate and emphasise their concerns about the NHL. He would be a good weather vane for their intentions, and as I said, his influence in Tampere is extensive.

UA: I'm currently torn between my confidence that they will end up like all commodity exporters, and a Lucas-lite fear that these bastards might actually be very powerful in Europe in the near future. I could be wrong, most Russians I meet are great, but the rich ones are quite disturbingly arrogant and full of hubris.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Muukalainen - 04-08-2008 15:52

BaN reads me right, though Reed's alternative does provide a certain allure.

Kummola's position as the de facto power in Finnish ice hockey isn't in question. However, in this particular case I regard any club joining the KHL as being recklessly close to financial suicide. No-one, Kummola included, is going to be able to persuade any club's owners to make such a step.*

* This presumes that he would wish to, and I can't think of a good reason why he would.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Muukalainen - 18-08-2008 19:15

Time for another swipe at the KHL's plans for expansion westward by means of looking at the crowd figures for the Nordic Trophy so far. This is an annual pre-season tournament featuring 10 of the leading teams from Finland and Sweden, 5 from each. The gate figures so far are (only 7 of the teams have played at home up to now):

| | P.. | Total... | Avg |
|--------------------|------|----------|------|
| 1. Kärpät..... | 3.. | 11317.. | 3772 |
| 2. Färjestads BK.. | 1... | 1795.. | 1795 |
| 3. Jokerit..... | 3... | 4167.. | 1389 |
| 4. HIFK..... | 3... | 3795.. | 1265 |
| 5. Linköpings HC.. | 1... | 1200.. | 1200 |
| 6. TPS..... | 4... | 4662.. | 1166 |
| 7. Tappara..... | 3... | 3284.. | 1095 |

Our figures are dire and the rest are plain ridiculous. As a comparison, our budget would be made based on a main season average gate of about 5500; Jokerit's would be in the region of 9000. Even allowing for the fact that such tournaments are never great crowd pullers, given that half the teams are well known to all ice hockey following Finns and there is some level of identification with the Swedish teams through Finns playing there and access via TV, these figures are staggeringly bad. How many would come to watch some anonymous Russian outfit even if it were a meaningful league game?

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Ball Comrade - 02-09-2008 10:40

You're right, but that's just a pre-season tournament isn't it? I mean who watches hockey in August? If you look at it that way then the crowd figures aren't too bad.

The Champions League jerseys have been unveiled, and they will be Reebok made and sponsor free (apart from the Reebok stuff, obviously). You can see them here:

<http://www.iihf.com/index.php?id=1813>

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 02-09-2008 12:20

It so happens that we were in Bern over the weekend, where they got over 5,000 for their last pre-season friendly against Langnau.

They also announced that the first match in the newly-expanded arena will be a sell out: 17,131 will watch them take on Biel later this week. And they've sold over 13,000 season tickets.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Ball Comrade - 02-09-2008 12:30

Ilves got less than 5,000 for their First Round game three against Kärpät last year, almost certainly Raimo Helminen's last game at hakametsä. The difference between pre-season and proper stuff is probably similar, especially when you factor in the new stadium in Berne. Kärpät are getting more than half their average gate, but that probably reflects the lack of a decent football team in Oulu.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 02-09-2008 20:30

Bern are a definite outlier, but an interesting one nonetheless, surely the only major European city outside of the Nordic countries, the Czech Republic or Russia where the hockey team is clearly more popular than their footballing counterparts.

However, they outdrew every other team in the league by close to 3 to 1 before they expanded the arena.

Latest available statistics here.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Muukalainen - 02-09-2008 20:45

It's just the premier tournament in the whole of Scandinavia featuring 10 well known and well supported teams. Who watches ice hockey in August? Judging by the figures not very many people. Who goes to watch teams from halfway across Russia that they've never heard of? If the KHL are going to pull in top Finnish or Swedish clubs then they're going to have to convince those club owners that crowds are still going to be good even when the fans are offered something which is well away from the usual. Good crowd figures in the Nordic Tournament (and these figures aren't anywhere near good) might be the first step in persuading the owners that the fans might be interested in something other than the September to March bread and butter of SM-liiga. They're not, and until something somewhere instils confidence into the club owners (and the play off figures BC mentions certainly won't help) -- and that's just the first step of many -- then the KHL will remain an essentially Russian league.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 03-09-2008 09:24

Personally, I am tempted to think that the KHL's long-term expansion plans are more likely to target the very same clubs that the NHL would consider for any "European Division". "NHL class" arenas in major cities with good transport links and attractive television markets being the prime criteria in this respect.

Think SC Bern, Eisbaren Berlin, Hamburg Freezers and Slavia Praha, rather than Karpat.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Ball Comrade - 03-09-2008 10:07

You may well be right.

I don't take the Nordic thing seriously, I mean how much extra revenue will they get? Gazprom are offering hefty prize money for the Champions League, while the Nordic League would rely on the interest generating extra income.

And the CL will be live on MTV3, with no filler games as the dead rubber with the third team in the group will not take place on the same day for both Blues and Kärpät. If they market it right, and they are planning on doing a much better job than the Nordic trophy has done, then it has a chance of success. Here's a good article about the Nordic league from a Finnish perspective.

I continue to think that an open SM Liiga with automatic promotion and relegation disregarding non-hockey criteria, combined with a rich and serious Champions league, would be the best thing for everyone concerned. I couldn't fucking stand a Tappara-only Tampere, anyway.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Reed of the Valley People - 03-09-2008 13:54

"Nordic League" sounds like an American pro-Fascist organization.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Ball Comrade - 06-09-2008 18:29

Bolshy press release from the IIHF:

A meeting with between the IIHF and nine IIHF member federations and leagues was held in Zurich in today.

The meeting was attended by representatives from associations and leagues from Belarus, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland.

On July 18, 2008, the IIHF suspended six players from all IIHF sanctioned international competition and further

international transfers, pending the legal investigation.

During the meeting the Kontinental Hockey League withdrew its claims pertaining to the following players:

Nikita Filatov (RUS)

Signed by NHL club Columbus Blue Jackets – from KHL club CSKA Moscow.

Tomas Mojzis (CZE)

Signed by NHL club Minnesota Wild – from KHL club Sibir Novosibirsk.

Jason Krog (CAN)

Signed by NHL club Vancouver Canucks – from KHL club Severstal Cherepovets.

Fedor Fedorov (RUS)

Signed by NHL club New Jersey Devils – from KHL club Dynamo Moscow.

Viktor Tikhonov (RUS)

Signed by NHL club Phoenix Coyotes – from KHL club Severstal Cherepovets.

The IIHF suspension regarding these players is lifted with immediate effect.

The meeting agreed that the unsolved case of Alexander Radulov will go to an applicable court or – if all included parties agree – to arbitration, whose verdict can not be overruled.

The KHL furthermore informed that the league is disputing the signings of the following players by the NHL:

Andrei Loktionov – signed by NHL club Los Angeles from KHL club Lokomotiv Yaroslavl

Vyacheslav Voinov – signed by NHL club Los Angeles from KHL club Traktor Chelyabinsk

Andrei Mayorov – signed by NHL club Columbus from KHL club Ak Bars Kazan

The meeting agreed that also these cases will be submitted to an applicable court or – if all included parties agree – to arbitration, whose verdict can not be overruled.

The meeting also concluded the following:

++ As of today, the KHL will continue to respect all legally valid contracts signed with NHL clubs and also all legally valid contracts signed with IIHF clubs, subject to the NHL not signing KHL registered players under legally valid contracts.

++ The participating national member associations and leagues expressed the wish to sign a separate player transfer agreement with the KHL and as soon as possible initiate discussions with the NHL and the NHLPA about formulating a new player transfer agreement between the IIHF, KHL and the NHL & NHLPA.

++ The European IIHF member associations formulated an ambition to create a standard player contract in order to strengthen the validity of contracts in IIHF affiliated leagues.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Ball Comrade - 12-09-2008 09:35

This thread is a large part of the research for the latest post at <http://hockeyinfinland.wordpress.com> .

So, um, sorry and that.

There was a very staged-looking, queensbury rules-like fight in the HIFK-Jokerit game yesterday, btw. I'll try and find the video.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 12-09-2008 09:58

Not everyone wants NHL-class arenas in Europe.

<http://www.spiegel.de/img/0,1020,1297916,00.jpg>

Typische Berliner Agitprop, as far as I'm concerned, but still not the kind of thing that the Bettmans of the world would like to see.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Amor de Cosmos - 12-09-2008 17:22

This is interesting

Nowhere near the ringing endorsement the writer would have us believe. Nevertheless I'm confident the KHL and Champions League will have vanished by Monday morning in the face of such dynamic and relentless leadership.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 15-09-2008 06:53

Much to the relief of the organisers, who've got to love their 17,000+ seat arena, SC Bern have qualified for the Champions Hockey League group stages after beating Nuremberg and Kosice in this weekend's round robin.

The Champions League groups in full:

Group A: Kärpät Oulu (Finland), Eisbären Berlin (Germany), Metallurg Magnitogorsk (Russia).

Group B: HV71 Jönköping (Sweden), Espoo Blues (Finland), SC Bern (Switzerland, qualifier).

Group C: Salavat Yulayev Ufa (Russia), Slovan Bratislava (Slovakia), Mountfield Ceske Budejovice (Czech Republic).

Group D: Slavia Prague (Czech Republic), ZSC Lions Zurich (Switzerland), Linköpings HC (Sweden).

Matches start on 8 October; ursus minor and I are seriously considering going up to Bern for a match, though midweek during school just won't work.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Ball Comrade - 15-09-2008 20:05

Today's Iltalehti had a big (big for Iltalehti, the shittiest Finnish tabloid) article on Blues v Bern which is on the 22nd in Switzerland 'in front of 15,000 crazy fans!'. Blues are in good form at the moment, but if Bern catch them on a bad night it could get interesting.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Ball Comrade - 08-10-2008 11:25

First games tonight, with Muuk's lot in Berlin for the opening game on Finnish TV.

=====

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 08-10-2008 12:15

If Bern get only 15,000 for Blues they'll be very disappointed.

They are in Jonkoping tonight to play HV71; I'm very interested to see how this goes. Bern have been quite good in the league (currently 3d, one point off the top but with two games in hand on 1st place Davos and four on 2d place Zurich), but are coming off humbling home losses to the New York Rangers in the Victoria Cup and to Lugano. I think they have been looking ahead to the ECL.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Muukalainen - 08-10-2008 20:54

Ball Comrade wrote:

First games tonight, with Muuk's lot in Berlin for the opening game on Finnish TV.

Advertised as on MTV3 but not actually there. I presume it was on MTV3+ or whatever the pay channel is called. Our third defeat on the trot, and one that is likely to see the knives being sharpened again for Matti Alatalo. Give the poor sod a chance, surely everyone round here understands he's got to re-build the team. We're a centre short, but more importantly we're under strength at the back (and I, and I suspect many others, are going to take a lot of convincing that Järventie was a good signing). Mikkola's shepherding a lot of inexperienced youngsters at the moment, and this season is going to be a big test for the likes of Korpikari and Ylönen, neither of whom are in the same class as Pitkänen, Kukkonen or even Lehtonen. There's nothing wrong with bringing your own juniors through, of course, it can be a bit painful when it's so many at the same time.

EDIT: Almost forgot to mention that Kummola's been elected to the chair of the CHL. This is a significant move, and I'm expecting this league to be driven forward vigorously along the lines of UEFA's CL.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Ball Comrade - 08-10-2008 21:23

Kummola was using the CHL as a reason for his new cock substitute arena at a public meeting last month, held in Tampere one and a half hours before Finland played Germany in football at the Olympic Stadium. There was only one dissenting voice present, he asked whether they might spare 50k for new changing rooms at Tammela Stadium (the estimated bill for the work done so far on plans for sorsapuisto is around €500,000). Kummola said 'we have no plans for that' and talked about the CHL beginning to admit 4 teams soon. I'd laugh my tits off if Tappara and Ilves still can't get in, but I fear this is going to be a spur for arena building everywhere: the IIHF press releases are talking about crowd figures a lot.

I was well fucked off to find it wasn't on telly, it's changed my entire opinion on this. I think I'm going to write a snide piece about Kummola next week, with many references to Tepsin's bollockless hockey and third best support in Turku after Inter and TPS football, despite their cavernous arena.

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 09-10-2008 08:09

Bad night for the bears from Bern as well, they went down 6-2 to HV71 (who are currently ninth in the Swedish Elitserien).

Other CHL results:

HC Slavia Praha (CZE) 4 - 2 Linköping (SWE)

Salavat Yulaev Ufa (RUS) 7 - 1 HC Mountfield (CZE)

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by 1890 - 09-10-2008 13:33

Well, first hockey of the season for me. Home game against Kloten, 4-3 for us, good attendance, pretty good atmosphere

and excellent hockey between two teams playing the game well. The next day it was Fribourg away and that was a rotten game, on and off the ice with some pretty nasty charges and a deserved 2-0 win for the locals. Incidentally, you get fined 500CHF for chucking objects on the ice, onto the away team manager and on the fans in Switzerland...

Otherwise, it must have been a sizeable hangover in Alto Ticino last Sunday, after Ambri's 6-0 win away to Lugano...

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ri_cofQU3s&feature=related
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKa0MbHMkA&feature=related>

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 09-10-2008 15:39

Chi non salta e Luganese, I presume?

What a tremendous result for Ambri Piotta. I wouldn't be surprised if they are still drinking . . .

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by 1890 - 09-10-2008 17:21

"Chi non salta e bianconero" in fact. I won't be surprised either! Very busy days for the cops last Saturday, the Ticino derby, the Bern derby and Fribourg-Servette...all friendly games without much tension...

I'm sorely tempted to hop over in Geneva 21/22 November, Fribourg away on Saturday, Fribourg at home on Sunday...mmmmm

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 14-10-2008 05:28

Tragedy strikes the KHL.

"New York Rangers draft pick Alexei Cherepanov died Monday shortly after collapsing on the bench during a Continental Hockey League game in Russia. He was 19."

Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by Ball Comrade - 22-10-2008 09:43

In the spirit of keeping the political shit in this thread, it seems Kummola is fighting back:

SIX EUROPEAN PROFESSIONAL ICE HOCKEY LEAGUES ESTABLISH "HOCKEY EUROPE"

The leading professional ice hockey leagues from Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland (as an associated member) have established a new organization named "Hockey Europe". The purpose of the Group and its founding members is to promote cooperation, amicable relations and unity of these Leagues and their member Clubs in a middle of the heavy heated competition between the new launched Russian Ice Hockey League KHL and the North-American NHL.

Hockey Europe will furthermore concentrate to help the six founding members and possible new members to promote and improve professional ice hockey competitions in all its aspects and safeguard the general interests of its Members and European ice hockey as a whole. Of utmost importance for Hockey Europe is also an improvement in the exchange of information and promotion of the cooperation and relations of its members with the National Hockey League USA/Canada (NHL), Kontinental Hockey League, Russia (KHL) and other sports institutions or other professional ice hockey leagues and the clubs, as well as with the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) and its National Member

Associations.

The first President and voluntary General Manager of Hockey Europe will be CEO of the Finnish Ice Hockey League Mr. Jukka-Pekka Vuorinen. Hockey Europe has its seat / registered office in Cologne, Germany and is governed by EU law as a European Economic Interest Group.

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Re:Getting What You Wish For (Hockey Edition)

Posted by ursus arctos - 22-10-2008 09:53

Interesting that they've included the Swiss as an associate member, but Germany as a full participant.

The Swiss league is considerably stronger than the German one, but Germany is where the large arenas (and potentially big bucks) are.

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