

Eye on Sports

Philadelphia Flyers Update: Countdown to Puck-Drop

By David Hoffer - *Lion's Eye Sports Editor* - deh5081@psu.edu

It seems like it was only yesterday that the Flyers, defying the odds and the "experts", rallied back after a 3-0 deficit to the Boston Bruins and fulfilled the expectations heading into the season by reaching the Stanley Cup Finals. And while the memories of Simon Gagne's final heroics in orange and black, the dominance of Danny Briere, the emergence of Ville Leino and the image of Mike Richards hoisting the Prince of Wales trophy begin to fade, we look to new season on the horizon.

With the season just one month away, let's take a look at what has transpired this summer.

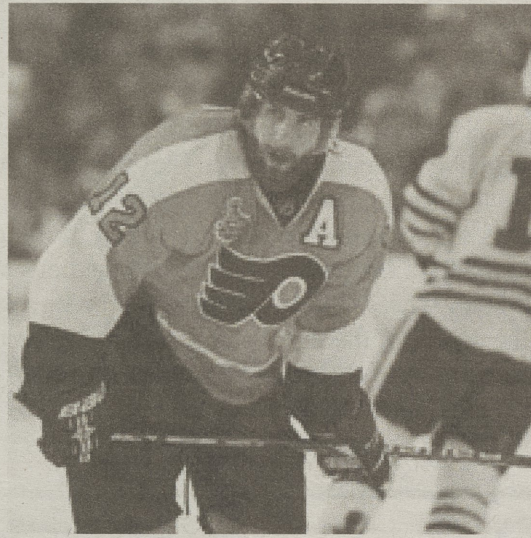
Loss of Simon Gagne:

The salary cap has once again reared its ugly head and forced the Flyers to cut ties with the long time fan favorite. Traded away to Tampa Bay on July 19th for defenseman Matt Walker and a 2011 4th round draft pick, Gagne leaves his mark. On the Flyers all time list he is ranked 10th in games played, 9th in goals, 10th in points and 6th in game winning goals. He was also a two time winner of the Bobby Clarke Trophy giving by the team to their most valuable player during a season.

New acquisitions: Nikolai Zherdev and Andrej Meszaros

The Flyers will enter the season armed with two new and young players looking for a fresh start. Right winger Nikolai Zherdev, 25, is returning to the NHL after spending last season playing in Russia. Zherdev has previously played for the Columbus Blue Jackets and the New York Rangers, leading the Rangers in points in his only year with the Rangers in 2008-2009. Zherdev, who signed with the Flyers as a free agent, has had a track record with clashing with players and coaches throughout his time in both the NHL and Russia. This combined with the Flyers hesitancy in signing Russian players makes for an interesting relationship. However, for a one year

deal at 2 million dollars, it's a low risk and high reward situation. "I look forward to him getting here and work-



Due to salary cap issues, Simon Gagne was traded in the offseason
(Photo Courtesy of nhl.fanhouse.com)

ing with him," spoke Flyers Coach Peter Laviolette. "It's a great opportunity for the Flyers to pick up a guy like him."

Andrej Meszaros, 24, was acquired from Tampa Bay on July 1 in exchange for a 2012 2nd round draft pick. Meszaros, who is due 4 million dollars over the next four seasons, is a top four defenseman but has struggled his past 2 seasons. In those seasons, both spent with Tampa Bay, Meszaros netted only 33 points. In his first 3 years in the NHL, spent with the Ottawa Senators,

he finished the season with no fewer than 35 points and recorded a career high 39 points (10g 29a) in 2005-2006. The Flyers are hoping he will return to his early form shown with the Senators. "Andrej is a young, durable defenseman who can play in all situations and will be a good fit on our Club," said Flyers GM Paul Holmgren.

Goaltending:

Despite rumors of negotiations with Marty Turco and names such as Martin Biron, Antero Niittymaki as well as Blackhawks ex-goalie Antti Niemi being kicked around, the Flyers opted to stick with the duo that brought them two wins away from the Stanley Cup: Michael Leighton and Brian Boucher. While many can point out that Flyers are entering a season of very high expectations with two journeymen goaltenders not known as solid #1 starters, their run in the first three rounds of the playoffs was remarkable. Boucher easily outplayed Martin Brodeur and the Devils. Both Boucher and Leighton were instrumental for the Flyers great comeback against Boston. And while Leighton did struggle in the Finals, his work against the Montreal Canadiens in the Eastern Conference Finals was masterful. With both goalies play-off tested, both goalies making a combined 2.5 million dollars and with the Flyers now possessing the best all around defense in the league. Goaltending might not be as big a concern compared to recent years.

To round off the news from the summer, the Flyers will now play their home games in the newly renamed Wells Fargo Center. If you are keeping score this is the fourth name the Center has taken in its 14 year existence. RIP - Wachovia Center ('03-'10) as you join the CoreStates Center ('96-'98) and First Union Center ('98-'03) in Philadelphia sports trivia lore.

Phillies: Back in First

By Nicole Fedora and David Hoffer - *Lion's Eye Staff Writer and Sports Editor* - nkf5026@psu.edu and deh5081@psu.edu

Here we go again.

For the fourth year in a row, the Philadelphia Phillies have themselves embedded in a fierce playoff race. With meaningful baseball in September becoming the norm, we seem to forget it was just three years ago that the Phillies entered the season mired in a 14 year playoff drought. One of the key contributors in that drought was the dominance of the Atlanta Braves. The Braves, who won the NL East 11 times during that span, are currently neck and neck with the Phillies who sit atop the NL East. Despite success in recent years, long time fans are chomping at the bit over the opportunity to step on and over Braves on their way to a 3rd straight World Series.

After suffering an embarrassing four game sweep at the hands of the visiting Astros in late August, the Phillies have been doing what it takes to play October baseball. They have been getting timely hits, getting strong pitching and winning series. They bounced back immediately after that sweep with a sweep of their own on the road in San Diego against the Padres. The Phillies then proceeded to take 2 of 3 from the Dodgers, a makeup game in Colorado, 2 of 3 from the Brewers and 3 of 4 against the Marlins. They followed that up by taking 2 of 3 against the hated Mets over the weekend in New York.

Despite the recent success, the Phillies have still struggled with a continuing problem: Injuries. It was last Wednesday against the Marlins the Jimmy Rollins limped into second base on double and hobbled home later in the inning. He left the game immediately after scoring with tightness in his hamstring. Coach Charlie Manuel said the tightness was a product of dehydration. "He was sick a little bit today and he was dehydrated," Phillies manager Charlie Manuel said after the game. "He was kind of under the weather." Rollins, who has had two stints on the 15 Day DL, is currently day to day.

Most recently the Phillies took game one of their road series against the Marlins Monday night winning 11-4. Joe Blanton was sharp going six innings and surrendering only one run. Chase Utley, Jayson Werth, Greg Dobbs and Carlos "Señor Octubre" Ruiz all homered in the rout.

After finishing up with the Marlins, the Phillies will conclude their 2010 home schedule against the Nationals, Braves and Mets. They will finish their season with road matchups against the Nationals and Braves. With six games still to be played against the Braves, three at home and three in Atlanta, the Phillies will undoubtedly have their faithful fans on the edge of their seats with excitement again.

Philadelphia Union: First Season Success

By Andrew Shaner - *Lion's Eye Staff Writer* - ads5249@psu.edu

The Philadelphia Union (6-11-6) kept the Chicago Fire at bay on Saturday at PPL Park in Chester. Securing a 1-0 lead early on, the Union held on with a strong defensive showing.

The Fire (6-8-8) has had only two goals in its past four matches, and came off of a scoreless draw against Toronto FC. This game was the fifth in the Fire's winless streak. The game also marked Philadelphia's first shutout in MLS action. They are the last time in the league to record a shutout.

Union midfielder and forward Sébastien Le Toux scored his 11th goal of the season via an assist from former Fire midfielder Justin Mapp in the 36th minute. Le Toux, who received a green card from the U.S. this year, could potentially play for the US national team. The 26-year-old Frenchman is third in MLS in goals, trailing Los Angeles' Edson Buddle (13) and New York's Juan Pablo Angel (12).

For Union goalkeeper Brad Knighton, who made only his second MLS start, it was his first career shutout. Knighton who made four

saves, two in each half, was the difference in the Union taking the victory. He stonewalled the Fire's Freddie Ljungberg in the 8th minute, making a save on a point blank shot from inside the penalty area. In Knighton's only other start, he was red-carded in the 22nd minute of a 3-1 loss to FC Dallas on Aug. 8. "They were just happy for me," spoke Knighton in a post game interview. "It's an all around team effort though. We been working our socks off since pre-season to try and prove to everybody that we can get a shutout."

The news was not completely good coming out of Saturday's win. In 55th minute, the team's second leading scorer, Danny Mwanga, suffered an injury to his shoulder. Team Manager Peter Nowak called Mwanga's injury a "slightly separated shoulder." His status for the Union's next games is unknown.

The Union are now tied with the New England Revolution in league standings with 24 points. The two teams are currently 6th in the Eastern Conference.

PSU Brandywine Men's Tennis

By Jennifer Knowlton - *Lion's Eye Campus News Editor* - jak5450@psu.edu

The PSU Brandywine men's tennis is back and starting off strong. Coming off a 6-6 season last year, the team kicked off their season on September 8th when the men's team hit the road and defeated PSU Lehigh Valley 6-3 in an afternoon matchup.

Tennis coach Lloyd Vernon enthusiastically states, "We are looking to be very competitive with the other teams and look to improve on the 6-6 record from last year." Coach Vernon, who is in his first year as tennis coach here at Brandywine, actually played on the tennis team here from 1977-1978 when Penn State Brandywine was known as Penn State Delco. The Philadelphia and Upper Darby native sees much potential in this year. "I've definitely noticed an improvement in their play in just the couple of weeks that we have had to practice. I can see strong potential in at least a couple of our players going through the season undefeated!" With a determined coach and four returning players from last season's 6-6 team, there is much hope for the team to succeed this season.

The team's next match will take place on September 20th at 3:00 p.m. here at Brandywine. It will be against PSU York and be the first of two meetings this season between the teams. Students and faculty are more than welcome to attend any or all of their matches. Let's go Penn State!

The women's team, which is currently lacking players, is asking if anyone is interested in joining the team to please contact Coach Vernon at psutenniscoach@verizon.net.