

**With NHL's Superstar Missing the All-Star Game, Who Will Shine?**  
***The Sports Bank (Blog)***

Only 23 years old and he's already got a Stanley Cup, two Messier Leadership Awards, a Rocket Richard trophy, an Art Ross, a Lester Pearson, a Hart Memorial, basically any trophy named after a man with slamming flow (before you argue, look up Art Ross' fabulous updo). Not to mention, he was the youngest player in NHL history to record 100 points in a season and has earned two Lou Marsh trophies because one's just the loneliest number.

Unsurprisingly, he has been an All-Star since the first one in 2007, and daddy's favorite since 1984.

Don't get me wrong; I am anything but a die-hard Crosby fan. But the madness has got to stop now. Face it hockey fans, Sidney Crosby is Superman on ice, and his kryptonite—concussions, and according to him, anything clad in black and white stripes. I hear he's wildly allergic to zebras.

But looks like this year, Superman's out of the game with a nasty concussion. You smiled when you read that, didn't you, you sicko? Concussions are terrifying and rightly so. So, regardless of you pre-conceived notions about the Great One 2.0, wipe that smirk off your face and go blog about how this affects your fantasy league. I propose tiny rear view mirrors to either side of the bucket, like the ones in the dentist's office. You know what I'm talking about. Copyright pending.

On the bright side, with Crosby out, Eric Staal finally gets his chance to sit in the big boy chair at the head of the table. The 2011 NHL All-Star Game will proceed with captains Eric Staal (East) and Nicklas Lidstrom (West). Forgive me but this is bull sh\*t. If you are anything like me, picking a side will have you cowering in the corner the room, rocking back and forth, contemplating what you're life has become. Maybe a little dramatic, but that's what they pay me for. Just kidding, they don't pay me. Ah, internships— more commonly known as legalized versions of indentured servitude. So why do I do it you ask? Partly, it's because the world is cruel. But more so, because I get to watch hockey and put my opinions out into the blogosphere for "class credit," and never look back.

So this year, my loyal followers (all seven of you), the NHL has decided to cut me a break and make things interesting. The league has apparently decided to let the players draft their own teams. Two days before gameday, Staal and Lidstrom will select their teams in a live 18 round draft, based on a coin flip. Each team will have three goalies, six defenseman and twelve forwards.

"If I'm not picked last, then I think it's a great format." Flyers' Claude Giroux aptly put.

It's like kickball during recess all over again. The question on everyone's mind now is: who's going to be the loser who "didn't want to play with you jerks anyway"?

***Pierre McGuire Moment: Meet The Parents***

Eric Staal, in his seventh season, who also happens to be the captain of the host team—the Hurricanes, is a three-time All-Star pick and a member of the 2006 Stanley Cup team. And in addition to earning MVP honors at the '08 All-Star game, he holds the Hurricanes' franchise record for most hat tricks in a season ('08-'09), and most career post-season points. He was born in Thunder Bay, Ontario on a sod farm with 3 younger brothers, one of whom he might have the pleasure of not drafting this year.

Behind door 2, is of course the man that makes the blue line look like a drum line, because this guy doesn't miss a beat. *The* Nicklas Lidstrom. One of, if not the best defensemen

in the league, a man many of his younger teammates grew up worshipping to an unhealthy level. The six-time Norris trophy winner hails from Krylbo, Sweden, which may or may not sound like whale food. In 13 seasons, the six-time Norris trophy winner has never finished lower than 6<sup>th</sup> in voting. Six-time. On top of that, he has four Stanley Cups under his belt and is one of the highest paid players in the league, hitting a cap of a little over 6 million dollars. What the heck do they put in Swedish water? Or as my man, Cherry, would say "But he's not Canadian."

"This guy is the man," Kris Letang, of the Pittsburgh Penguins, said of Lidstrom. "Totally another class." Smart move kissing up to the guy that decides whether your fate will be sealed as Mr. Irrelevant—a moniker all too familiar for any Penguin who's name doesn't begin with a "Sid" and ends with a "ney Crosby."

"Lidstrom was a no-brainer," NHLPA divisional player representative Steve Webb said. "The first couple guys I was calling right out of the gate were saying Staal. I think they recognized with Sidney — his name was always in there — but they always added Staal with Sid maybe not being able to appear."

### **QUESTIONS STILL REMAINING**

With a stud-packed 42-man roster, who will shine?

Who will cry?

Will big brother Staal choose his kid brother? Or will this become a battle of the long-awaited battle of the Staals?

How is Patrick Sharp's hair so shiny?

Does Jonathan Toews ever smile?

Is Pierre McGuire turtley enough to be in the Turtle Club?

Are we sure Zdeno Chara isn't actually a man standing on another man's shoulders under that uni?

And more importantly, how many people are just now going to discover that Carolina (I'm assuming both Carolinas have come to an understanding and realized how silly this whole north/south business is) has a hockey team?

As always, my lovely puckheads, comments, questions, concerns, shoot me a line in the discussion below.