

Blackhawks-Canucks Game 7 Preview
The Sports Bank (blog)

There was time (not more than two weeks ago) when it was dicey whether the Hawks would even have a post season, and now they're the giving this year's President's Trophy winners a run for their money. Could this be the third year in a row the Hawks end the playoff run for the Canucks?

Only three other teams have made a comeback from a 3-0 hole to win a series: Toronto in '42, Islanders in '75 and Philly last year. In other words, Captain Serious should probably start looking into Botox for those impending worry lines.

Recap:

"We didn't want to look at the big picture," Coach Quenneville said Monday. "It was ugly at the time, and we just wanted to win one hockey game and try to see where the momentum took us. I still think we have the momentum going into the game, but the excitement that we didn't have going into games 4, 5 and 6." Ah, momentum. Straight out of the hockey PR playbook: 'When in doubt, or you have nothing else productive to add and need to fill the silence, refer to the momentum.'

Sunday night, Smith notched his third of the series (15:30, OT) to takes the much needed 4-3 win for the Hawks. But of course the shining star of the team so far in the playoffs, Crawford, made gloved all the right biscuits—32 overall, and 12 in overtime. If Vancouver can't come up with better play in front of the net and stop trying the same snipe from the point, glove side, they can kiss their dignity good bye because... 'Mericuh.

"Anything can happen in Vancouver," Smith told reporters. "I'm just trying to take a deep breath every once in awhile. They've got some great players." On a side note, kudos to the Hawks PR staff who clearly got to the kid in time. Shortly after, I believe, Patrick Kane smashed a full budweiser into his head and had to undergo concussion testing. Results are inconclusive but I believe the CAT scans actually came back positive for OBS (Obnoxious Bro Syndrome), a common affliction of young men who have never faced the wrath of minor league bag skates. It is believed he will be fit to return to the ice but unfortunately for Vancouver, Goldie Locks will live.

Referring to the Smith's game winner "I got a piece of it with my knob and I'm not sure exactly what happened," Canucks' goalie Luongo said, "I think Smith just chipped it over me on the rebound."

To clarify, Roberto, what happened was that your men in front of the net let you down, buddy. And the entire city of Vancouver let out what can only be described as a collective welp.

Game-day Notes

This morning, in Rogers Arena, when the Canucks took the ice for morning skate, the scoreboard read 5-0 in favor of the Hawks. Now, I'm not superstitious but if I were Luongo, I'd go wabbit hunting, because he's going to need all the luck he can get against a team as hungry as the Blackhawks right now. And I'm not talking about Kaner's hangover cravings. Some Mickey D and a Powerade and there's nothing stopping this guy. Not only is he nearing the 70-point mark on the season, his two-way play, forcing those turnovers like he was stealing candy from Nick Leddy, is like watching tennis on steroids.

Tonight, there are going to be at least three line-up changes for the Canucks: 1) Keith Ballard, one of their pricey new acquisitions will take the ice again after being a healthy scratch for the last two games, 2) Tanner Glass is expected to return after being benched for one game in place of rookie Cody Hodgson and 3) Sami Salo, who left Game 6 injured might not return to the ice tonight.

This would leave Vancouver with only three natural centers: Sedin, Kesler and Lapierre, who are already eating up the ice time like it was Skinny Cow ice cream. Bet they regret not adding depth to the roster now eh? See, overworked players become tired players, and tired players are what we in the biz like to call "crap."

As for Chicago, either rookie Marcus Kruger or veteran Fernando Pisani will take Bickell's place on the lineup with his ongoing wrist surgery. We are told it was definitely a hockey-related incident, and nothing else. But we at The Sports Bank, don't judge regardless. You do you Bry guy. You do you.

He will be missed though. People don't give this guy enough credit. So far, Bickell has been great for the Hawks. He has given the Hawks one of their greatest advantages: secondary scoring. Take notes, Gillis. He has a tepid two goals in the series but well-timed ones nonetheless, one of which opened up Game 4 as a turning point in the series. Bickell's line with Frolik and Smith have outscored the second, third and fourth lines of the Canucks, *combined*.

Woof. That roster is almost more shallow than one can only expect the Sharpest looking man in Chicago to be. See what I did there? If you didn't, please reread it because it was funny.

With Bickell out, who knows what it'll do to the chemistry? Not Pierre McGuire who was apparently too busy, after last night's win, giggling over Toews' retro mutton chops, which I got to say is maybe trying just a little too hard to bring disco back. There's only one man who can bring the 80's back, if just for a game and that man is none other than the epitome of the mullet/muttonchop combo, Jaromir Jagr, or as his teammates like to call him "the cool Uncle".

But at this point, there's not much to shake up this some would say over-confident Chicago team. And let's not forget Chicago's record for when it has a chance to eliminate an opponent in the playoffs: 6-1. Because I'm sure you knew that right off the top of your head. If you did, you're a better man than I. Mainly, because I'm a woman.

"I still feel all the pressure's on them. They're the ones who were up 3-0, they're the first seed in the West, they were kind of predicted to win the Cup this year and go really far," Patrick Kane told the Tribune.

Because of course he did. And fortunately for you Hawks fans, he is right. The Stanley Cup Hangover might end here for the Hawks, but there's not enough Powerade in the world for Chicago's favorite bro.