



free stuff!

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FANTASTIC MR. FOX

on Tuesday, November 24, at 7 p.m. at Empire City Centre. Just come to the Gateway office (3-04 SUB) between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Monday, November 23. First come, first served.

OPENS in theatres on WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25TH

Fisticuffs and radical changes highlight the Gateway's ideas for NHL rule remodelling



SPORTS STAFF

Group Commentary

With the recent chatter amongst NHL GMs to eliminate headshots in the game, a number of ideas have been bounced around about how to improve the game across the board. From radical to rough stuff, here's a look at some rule changes we'd like to see.

Nathan Liewicki

Regular season overtime games are so intense — why? There's way more open ice for players to skate and dangle their way into the offensive zone, and create chances to win the game.

Maybe it's just me, but generally it seems that overtime is defined by the best hockey players in the world — namely Alex "The Great" Ovechkin — creating excitement across arenas, in bars, and homes everywhere in a brief five-minute frame.

Who wouldn't want to see unimaginable passes, unbelievable dekes, or mind-boggling saves from end to end during a full 60 minute affair?

Therefore, I propose that the NHL adopt the rules of four-on-four hockey throughout the entirety of a game, and not restrict it to the OT session. Fan excitement would blossom, especially in smaller markets in the southern United States, and teams would likely find themselves competing on a more level playing field.

True, traditional hockey minds probably would despise the idea, but why not give it a try and see how rapidly the fan base of the league expands? After all, Gary Bettman's dream is to elevate the NHL to the financial level of success enjoyed by the NFL, which enjoys a huge annual surplus.

Four-on-four hockey would undoubtedly enhance the excitement of the game tenfold. Making the switch from five players per side to four would also result in more goals, and what fan isn't in favour of more high-scoring hockey games? Only goalies would object — and, well, too bad for them.

Matt Pretty

The one change I'd make to the NHL

rules is to award three points in the standings for a regulation win. Nothing frustrates me more than when my team is fighting for a playoff spot, loses, and the out-of-town scoreboard for the key game between two teams higher in the standings shows "F/OT" or "F/SO". Then my guys lose ground on not one, but two teams because neither of them have the chutzpah to actually finish the game in regulation time.

As slow as soccer can be, I think they have the point system right (rugby's is even better, but that's another article) in that they award three points for a win, but only one each for a draw. They put so much more emphasis on a win, which is how it should work — none of this sissy playing for a tie, or overtime. You should be playing for the win every game.

Not only would it open the game up late because teams will be pushing for that extra point, but it would also even out the points distributed throughout the year — every game will be worth three points. Thus, the current dreaded three-point game in the playoff race would be irrelevant. You could win in regulation and even gain some ground on a team that wins in extra time.

Finally, it decreases the influence of the shootout on the standings. While I like the excitement of the shootout as much as anyone, it really is a glorified skills competition and shouldn't have as much influence on the standings as it does. Should one team get an extra point because the other team missed the net on two shots? That's not earning the point — that's having it gift-wrapped and handed to you on a silver platter. There's a reason they don't go to the shootout in the playoffs.

Three points for a win, two and one for an overtime win and loss, and nothing for a loss in regulation. Sequential and sensible. And it will decrease the frustration of fans of middle-of-the-pack hockey teams everywhere.

Bren Cargill

It seems like a nightly occurrence that there's a star player being injured by a vicious, borderline hit. All of this began when the NHL entered into its rule book something that needs to be taken out: the instigator rule. Call me old fashioned, but for the stars of the NHL to be protected fully on the ice this rule needs to be abolished. Think back to the days of the Edmonton Oilers running wild in

the 1980s re-writing the NHL record book. Outside of Mark Messier, the skill players on the Oilers were small guys who needed protection.

Enter Dave Semenko, Dave Brown, and Marty McSorley, who imposed fear in opposing teams which gave guys like Wayne Gretzky and Paul Coffey room on the ice. Look at all of the great teams that the NHL has seen post-expansion and they've all had intimidating, physical players on them. The Islanders had Clark Gillies and Bob Nystrom, the Canadiens of the '70s had "Butch" Bouchard and Larry Robinson, while the Philadelphia Flyers roster contained guys like Dave "The Hammer" Schultz and Bob "Mad Dog" Kelly. Players like these keep the opposition in check and allow for the star players to put on a show.

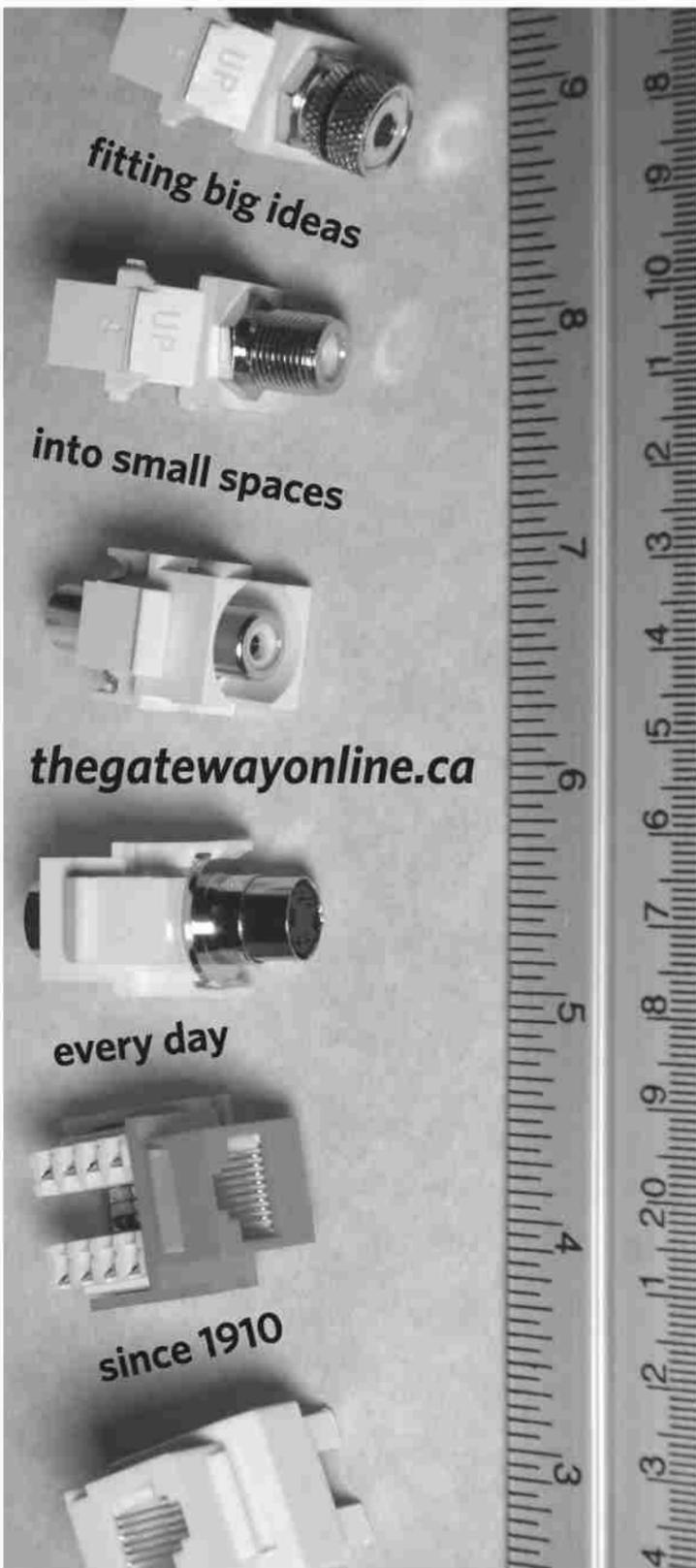
If you want to improve the product of the NHL, and give Don Cherry one less thing to complain about on Saturdays — get rid of the instigator rule.

Evan Daum

Rule changes are a part of any sport that wants to remain relevant, popular, and healthy. Times change, and so do sports, making rule changes part of a game's evolution. Hockey, which has seen the interpretation of its rules, more than the actual written rules themselves change in recent years (i.e. hooking has always been a penalty, but its interpretation has been more stringent post-lockout) doesn't need a massive overhaul or sweeping changes.

One thing that the NHL needs to change is the trapezoid behind the goal line. The trapezoid, which outlines a specific area behind the net in which the goaltender can play the puck, was a ridiculously contrived rule to eliminate goalies from playing the puck, thus giving forecheckers a better chance of generating scoring chances. While the rule has generated those scoring chances when goalies are caught between going to play the puck and staying in their net, it's hard to make the argument that the number of chances that result from the trapezoid have outweighed those that could've been created by a goalie helping his team break out quickly to generate an odd-man rush the other way.

Playing the puck is a skill goalies should be able to use. Besides, aren't there already enough lines out on the ice to confuse fans in hockey hot-beds like Phoenix?



sportsshots

Compiled by Matt Pretty

Pandas Volleyball

After two comeback wins at Simon Fraser, the number-four ranked Pandas volleyball squad (7-1) will stay on the road this weekend, as they head to Regina for a pair of matches against the number-five ranked Cougars (5-1).

While the sides are evenly matched in many areas, the Pandas have a distinct edge in team aces, digs, and blocks, leading the conference in all three. Alberta's Krista Zubick is leading the way on the net with just under a block-and-a-half per game, including an incredible 15 solo blocks already this year — nine higher than her nearest competitor. Regina will counter with Beth Clark, who is one of the best all-around players in Canada West.

First serve for the ladies will be at 5 p.m. on Friday and 7 p.m. on Saturday.



PETE YEE

Bears Volleyball

The Volley-Bears (4-2) will shake the rust off from their bye weekend and also travel to Regina. For the first time in many students' university careers, the Bears will not go into the weekend leading the conference and will not be ranked number-one in CIS (they're currently ranked number-three).

However, the 0-6 male Cougars ought to provide a welcome tonic for

Alberta's 3-2 record over their last five. Regina is in the Canada West bottom two in every possible statistical category except service aces. The Bears field three of the top ten blockers in the conference in Simon Lidster, Spencer Leiske, and Mike DeRocco, and their net presence will be a key in taking the series.

The action starts at 7 p.m. on Friday and 5 p.m. on Saturday.