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PROFESSOR OF THE WEEK



DR. VLADISLAVA
BLINOVA
HECOL 454

"Vlada, as her students call her, is a great professor. She is **patient**, kind, and always willing to go **above and beyond** the expectations of a professor. She spends extra time **helping students** draft patterns, demonstrating proper apparel production techniques, and **gives advice** that helps with student projects. Vlada is **well-respected** by all her students, and we feel lucky to have her as a professor. She definitely makes a difficult course enjoyable."

MAKE TEACHING MATTER!

Excellent teaching is the foundation of an outstanding undergraduate education, and the university community needs to begin to value everyday achievements in undergraduate teaching.

The Students' Union is looking to recognize professors who demonstrate sincere enthusiasm for teaching undergraduates, innovative methods of engaging students in the learning process and a willingness to go beyond what is normally expected of a professor.

Thank you everyone who submitted nominations this year! The program was a great success, with winners from eight different faculties. With your help, the importance of great teaching at this university was celebrated and recognized as a cornerstone of our education. If you have any questions or comments about the Professor of the Week Program, please send an email to the Associate VP Academic Tasneem Karbani at avpa@su.ualberta.ca

Kevin Lowe broke my heart



NICK
FROST

Sports
Commentary

Basements are cold and lonesome, even with a used shot-glass and a half-empty bottle of Jack Daniels. But Tuesday I couldn't leave mine, opting instead to scour the Internet, searching for hope. Looking for a report that the Ryan Smyth deal wasn't filed with the NHL on time, or that it was actually Jason Smith who was traded—all the while trying not to spill whiskey on the keyboard. Despite it all, I can't help but replay the question that all Oiler fans must've asked themselves at 1:35pm on Tuesday afternoon: why, Kevin, why?

On the one hand, I can kind of understand Kevin Lowe's motivation for making this deal: Smyth was an impending free agent this summer who wasn't doing the whole "home-town discount" shtick since Fernando Pisani and Steve Staios got overpaid, and Edmonton hadn't yet signed him. He could've got his requested \$6-million overpayment from some other team, and left the Oilers with jack all.

It seems, though, that in the midst of deciphering that logic, Lowe has forgotten an important fact that everyone else seems to know: Ryan Smyth was the heart and soul of the Edmonton Oilers. Several reports have suggested that Smyth had expected that a deal would get done with Edmonton at some point—so why the itchy trigger finger? Sure, Lowe is going to have a huge wad of cash to play around with this summer, but where is he going to find a free agent with as much heart and passion for the Copper and Blue as Ryan Smyth? Don't tell me that Andrei Markov or Chris Phillips can fill the heart-and-soul role. Sure, they could maybe step in and be the difference-

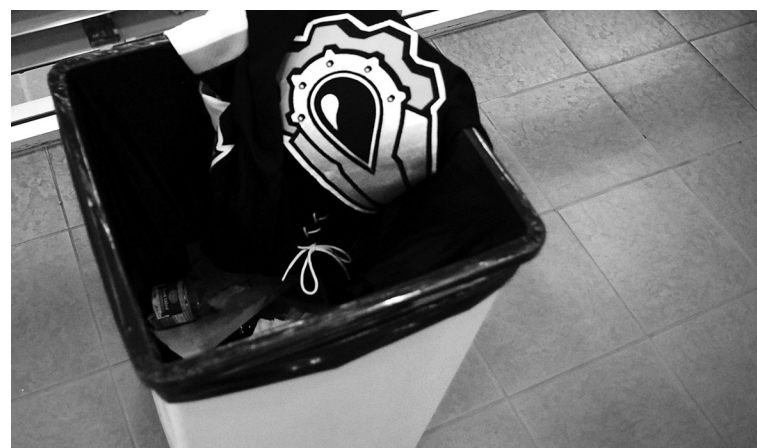


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: LIZ DURDEN

WHERE THE TRADE BELONGS Oiler fans feel the Smyth trade is garbage.

making defenceman that the Oilers so sorely need—although, I even have my doubts about that—but there's absolutely no way they can replicate what Smytty was to the Oilers.

As much as I hate to sound like one of those preachy, fanboy-ish, armchair general managers, it seems to me that when market value for all players is high, you have the cap space, and when you have someone who means as much to a franchise as Ryan Smyth did to the Oilers, you fucking pay the man. No hockey player really deserves the type of money that they covet, but guys are going for ridiculous prices these days, and if you don't overpay to have one, some other schmuck will.

This should mean that the Oilers are in rebuilding mode—even though, they were never really in a position where we needed to hit the "rebuild" button. They were sniffing around ninth-place despite having a shitload of injuries—Moreau, Stoll, Pisani, Staios and even Smyth—and still have 18 games left, many of which are against divisional opponents that they could have narrowed the gap against. Instead we get to sit back and watch as the top prospects—including Russian exile Denis Grebeshkov, AHL healthy-scratch Rob Schremp, and Alexei Mikhnov on his third chance—take the reigns.

Speaking of prospects, Lowe did

manage to pick up a couple of good ones—apparently for the 2018 Stanley Cup run—in Robert Nilsson and Ryan O'Marra—assuming they haven't been run out of town by then. But Ryan Smyth is a beloved player, and to be the guys that he was traded for isn't a great position to be in. Just talk to Jimmy Carson about what it was like to replace Gretzky, or Bernie Nicholls about filling Mark Messier's skates. Better yet, talk to Joffrey Lupul about being the fan whipping-boy because he can't dominate opposing forwards and notch a point per game like Chris Pronger did. If Nilsson and O'Marra don't perform right away, they'll be scrutinized heavily and, quite possibly, will want to flee Edmonton.

As much as I try to figure it out, I just don't see why it was so necessary to make this move. What happened to you, Kevin Lowe? You used to be cool and bring us guys like Roloson at the deadline. We had the money, we didn't need the extra prospects or the extra first-rounder—which, like the other two in this year's weak-ass draft pool, will likely score us another Jesse Niinimäki—and there was still a chance to make eighth in the West. As much as it hurts to say it, Oiler fans had better get used to spending the next few years in the cold, lonesome basement of the Western Conference.

Smyth trade proves Lowe's gutless



TREVOR
PHILLIPS

Sports
Commentary

Will somebody please turn off the reruns because I'm getting sick of seeing the same thing happen to the Oilers over and over. Losing franchise guys, whether it be in the off-season or at the deadline, seems to be a calling card for this team. Coffey in '87, Gretzky in '88, Messier in '91, Cujo in '98, Buchberger in '99—there's a laundry list of lovable players that have come and gone from Oil Country over the years, each with different, but admirable, accomplishments: trophies, goals, Cups and upsets. All of these players contributed something important to Edmonton, and they all have something else in common: they left.

Now, I know that the early '90s fire sale was an economic one, and the moves since can all be linked to the financial state of the team during the NHL's big-spending days of the late '90s. But, that doesn't explain the recent influx of players leaving this little river town for bigger and better things. Well I'll tell you why: Kevin Lowe is a wuss.

There I said it. Kevin Lowe—the boy on the bus, Mr Conservative—is the NHL's whipping boy. Even his nickname—"K-Low"—is sans *cojones*; I want my GM to be nicknamed "the giant-testicled bull," or something. This pushover mentality is the only explanation for why he keeps selling off the best Oilers for dick all.

His track record includes constant contract holdouts at the beginning of the year: Doug Weight, Mike Comrie and Ryan Smyth are the highest profile. That suggests Lowe is unable to sign players until the latest possible moment. There are the big deadline deals to unload players whose salaries are going to rise: Bill Guerin, Jason Arnott, even Anson Carter. Rival GM's pickpocket the Oilers' veteran talent while Lowe leaves his wallet open on the table. And let's not forget the great migration of '06, where names like Jaroslav Spacek, Radek Dvorak, Mike Peca and Sergei Samsonov all skipped town after a magical Stanley Cup run. Some players left because there wasn't the money to sign them; others left because when they wanted out. Kevin "I can't say No" Lowe let them. Guerin, Weight and Pronger all asked to get away, and Lowe punched their tickets to Boston, St Louis and Anaheim.

Every time there's been an ounce of discomfort from an Oiler, Lowe practically drives them to the airport. He

bargains from a position of desperation—because it would be a sin to let these guys stay here too long—and unloads the guy for a bag of pucks (or Joffrey Lupul) and a couple of picks.

That Ryan Smyth is taking off to Long Island is Lowe's fault, and not just because he pulled the trigger on the deal. Instead of signing his best player and the only local hero left this summer, Lowe elected to leave negotiations for the season, but reward lesser players with large contract extensions. When Steve Staios, Ethan Moreau and even Fernando Pisani got their paycheques last fall, Lowe neglected to throw any of that money at Smyth, who went out and scored goals at a torrid pace and priced himself out of the Oilers' budget. It's not like Lowe gave Smyth any reason to want to stay: he low-balled him with his first contract offer and did nothing to improve a floundering team, even as Smyth put up a career year when Edmonton needed it the most. Hell, Lowe didn't even come out Tuesday night for the Messier ceremony in fear of the fans' reaction.

Kevin Lowe clearly doesn't have enough fortitude to run an NHL hockey club. Maybe it's time the Edmonton Investors Group thought about letting the boys off the bus and started over again, preferably without ex-Oilers. Next stop, retirement.