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BY WILLIAM KLINE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Bars offer better insight on sports than ESPN ever could. Hours before the New York Rangers' kidney-stone inspiring Game 7 loss to the Washington Capitals, I found myself at an Applebees.

"Big game tonight," said a server behind me. "Think they'll pull it off?"

The bartender's disgust answered the question. "Does it matter?"

The conversation gradually, without details, reaffirmed my confidence that the two servers were talking about the Rangers-Caps playoff clincher later that night. The discussion ebbed and flowed.

"You know, it's sad when Sean Avery is your best player," said a server as he placed a few sodas on a tray and scurried away. *How depressingly true*, I thought.

That's not intended to discredit Avery's skill as a hockey player. Despite criticism against him, he has much to

A Eulogy for Ranger Fans

offer offensively, like an enraged Matthew Barnaby. Ranger fans have a guilty affection for Avery because he will play Game 7 every night, including games during the regular season. Most of the highly skilled players couldn't match that intensity even against the Caps in a winner-take-all contest Monday. As for a post-Ranger playoff, I have no intentions of predicting. The practice is loathsome and arrogant. Instead, I'll issue some of my arrogant wishes.

Washington-Pittsburgh: Okay, it is kind of cool that Ovechkin and Crosby will square off. I have no real anger towards either Washington or Pittsburgh. This might be a series that will later determine B-roll footage for both of these characters. It's like pretty boy vs. ugly boy.

Boston-Carolina: Would you even care about the 2009 Stanley Cup if Carolina won this round? I'm hoping the big city, original six team takes it in this one, possibly for a big city match up in the Eastern Conference finals (Washington-Boston) or at least a well matched set of uniforms (Boston-Pittsburgh).

Vancouver-St. Louis: Blues GM John Davidson, a Ranger heartthrob helped dig this team from the worst in

the league. A Blues won cup, however unlikely, would make a great Disney movie. On the other hand, no Canadian franchise has won a cup since 92-93 (Montreal Canadiens). Not to sound unpatriotic, but we can throw them a bone, since we stole their sport and all. This is the coin-toss match.

Anaheim-Detroit: Anaheim is merely the Carolina of the West Coast (you know how I feel about that sort of thing). And, I'm pretty pissed that they beat San Jose. Detroit could use the Cup to actually generate money, as opposed to sucking it up. Can we really endure another year of watching Detroit win Cups? I can't. I hope the winner of this series loses to the winner of the other Western Conference match-up.

Now, back to the Rangers. We lost. Sad face. Well I want to invoke the power of Rhonda Byrne and think positive. After all, this really didn't seem like "the year" anyway. Players—and fans—seemed to lack that confidence needed to propel them to the finals. Simply put, it didn't have that 1994 aura. I've issued some fan training tips for the off-season: 1) Repeatedly watch old tapes of the '94 playoffs: Messier in Game 6, Matteau, and of course Game 7 vs. the Canucks. 2) Reflect on the Islanders placing dead last in the league. 3) Think about how

Lundqvist punked-out Ovechkin after his wise-(expletive) comment. Ovechkin said that Lundqvist isn't Tretiak. Well Ovechkin isn't Gretzky.

Great ones come through in the big one. An older, more superior Russian-born player, Sergei Federov, stepped up.

So cheer up! If those suggestions don't stroke your harp, look at the bright side. The Devils lost.



Henrik!

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with the batter at hand.

CSI hopes to stay on top and bring home that trophy. Make sure to check the results of the game at csidolphins.com to see if your Dolphins brought home the championship.

