

LA KINGS PART WAYS WITH BRIAN O'NEILL, J.F. BERUBE

by Ryan Cowley October 7, 2015



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To call it a dark day for the **Los Angeles Kings** would not be anything less than extreme — and ridiculous. Still, on a day when two promising prospects leave the organization, there isn't much worth celebrating. On Tuesday, that was the case for forward **Brian O'Neill** and goaltender **Jean-Francois Berube**, who were acquired by the **Devils** and **Islanders**, respectively.

Coming off a year where he won the **AHL's Most Valuable Player** award, it could be argued that Brian O'Neill increased his trade value. The Kings, however, received just a conditional 7th-round draft pick from the New Jersey Devils in exchange for the diminutive 27-year-old.

Coming off his MVP season where he scored 22 goals and 80 points in 71 regular-season games for the Manchester Monarchs, O'Neill proved just how much of an asset he is to any team — especially for a club who would eventually capture their first **Calder Cup** championship. Unfortunately, his small 5-foot-9, 173-pound stature — especially coupled with his age — did not make O'Neill an ideal fit with the Los Angeles Kings.

Also, in terms of AHL MVPs transitioning into solid NHLers, the odds were not in O'Neill's favour. For all we know, O'Neill could have been another version of Tampa Bay's Tyler Johnson but that just doesn't seem to be the Kings' style — and few would see that changing this year.

As for Jean-Francois Berube, yours truly, along with numerous fans, were dreading the worst when the big netminder was placed on waivers earlier this week. Then on Tuesday, the New York Islanders claimed him, officially ending his tenure with the Kings organization.

Berube, who turned 24 in July, is coming off a spectacular 2014-15 campaign in Manchester where he went 37-9-4 with a 2.18 goals-against average and a save percentage of .913 with a pair of shutouts. However, Berube suffered an injury in June's **Calder Cup Final**, making way for **Patrik Bartosek** who — a 7th-round draft choice, by the way — shone in the Manchester goal, turning quite a few heads in the process.



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This writer is certainly disappointed to see both O'Neill and Berube go but to be realistic, the chances of either receiving much playing time if they were called up to the big club would have been slim.

As someone who stands at 5-foot-9, this writer would have certainly liked to see Brian O'Neill could do in Los Angeles, but the experiment wasn't meant to be. Besides, yours truly is excited enough for **Jordan Weal**, so that poses as a more-than-decent consolation prize.

This writer wishes nothing but the best for both Brian O'Neill and Jean-Francois Berube as he is excited to see both succeed at the NHL level — just preferably not against the silver-and-black.