

RAY EMERY'S PAST ISSUES NONEXISTENT WITH ONTARIO REIGN

by Ryan Cowley • November 14, 2015

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As reported by **Jon Rosen** of **LA Kings Insider**, netminder **Patrik Bartosak** is ready to return to action.

Bartosak, who injured his thumb during Ontario Reign training camp has yet to play this season, but will report to the **ECHL** where he will begin a quick conditioning stint with the **Manchester Monarchs**.

As per Rosen, Bartosak will be then scheduled to be activated by the Reign where he will join his club in Texas by the end of next week. There, the Reign will face the **San Antonio Rampage** on Nov. 20 and the **Texas Stars** the following night. But Bartosak's return will mean that one Ontario goaltender will become expendable, and with **Peter Budaj** enjoying a career revival in Ontario's explosive 8-1-2, do not be surprised to see backup **Ray Emery** become the odd man out.



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Emery attended training camp with the **Tampa Bay Lightning** on a professional tryout but was released by the club on Sep. 28. Then, on Oct. 10, in the wake of Bartosak's injury, the 33-year-old backstop agreed to a tryout with the Reign. While he did make the club, Emery's on-ice tenure in Ontario has been limited to just one game where he allowed two goals on 21 shots.



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Many fans, though, met Emery's arrival with great reticence. His on-ice performance wasn't so much of a concern as was his ways off the ice. In the past, Emery's attitude has been a subject of controversy having been known as, among other things, a detriment to the locker room.

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Emery's troubling attitude, however, has been, according to a couple of reliable sources, anything but with the Reign.

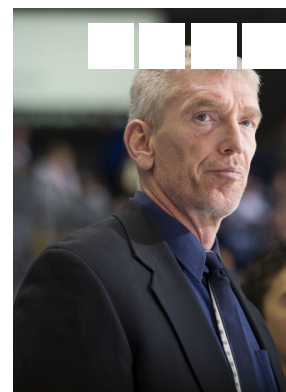
Speaking with **Mike Stothers** last week, the Reign head coach informed me that the veteran netminder has been a good fit with the club despite the circumstances.

"Ray has been terrific for us and has fit in well," Stothers said. "It is a tough situation for him as he knows that Bartosak will returning soon from injury."

Dusty Imoo, the Kings' first-year Goaltending Development coach had no difficulty echoing Stothers' sentiments.

"Razor has been a pleasure to work with up to this point," Imoo told me. "He knows the situation and he still comes to practice and works very hard. He has made this whole interesting goalie situation not only manageable, but an actual good situation."

While it is admittedly difficult to analyze a player's contribution to a team when he has only been there for a brief period, quality does supersede quantity — and that does apply to Emery's situation. After all, when this writer lived in Ottawa, Emery was playing for the hometown Senators. Yet, while he was instrumental in his club's run to the **Stanley Cup Final** in 2007, Emery spent most of his tenure in Canada's capital being the subject of derision.



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From regularly showing up late to practices to not working hard when he did show up on time, Ray Emery was known to be quite the handful in Ottawa, and his ways quickly overshadowed his on-ice skills. In fact, the firing of head coach **John Paddock** in 2008 brought with it a great deal of finger-pointing towards the netminder. But said version of Emery, to the pleasure and even relief of the Reign and their fans, has been absent in Ontario. In fact, his locker room presence alone could be just what the netminder needs to continue his playing career, whether it be with another **AHL** club or even a return to the **NHL**.

"He continues to work on his game in the hopes of landing another opportunity in the NHL," Stothers closed.



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What will come of Ray Emery once the Reign officially activate Patrik Bartosak is unknown at this time. With that said, the dread Reign (and **Kings**) fans had anticipated upon Emery's arrival has been unfounded. Instead, Emery has made the best of an uncertain situation and took control of it to be an example for the younger players and to find alternative ways to contribute to his team's success when he's not tending goal.

If he does become the odd man out in Ontario, it should not be a time for Ray Emery to hang his head in disappointment but to hold it high while carrying over the positive contributions he brought to the Reign to his next club. After all, while it could be argued that the Ontario Reign have made a better goaltender out of Ray Emery, if the enthusiasm of Mike Stothers and Dusty Imoo are any indication, then it is clear that Ray Emery has made a better team out of the Ontario Reign.