

NHL's pre-K designs enrage this fan



MIKE
KENDRICK

Sports
Commentary

As the designer at this little operation that we call a newspaper, I'm confronted with poor design every day. Critiquing the layout of posters and billboards in my head is just a quirk that I've developed with the job. By now, I've learned to let some things slide, since not everyone realizes that clutter doesn't equal sexy design, or that Comic Sans should not be used in any situation, ever. But when it comes to an overhaul as massive as the NHL's new line of jerseys, certain design missteps are simply unforgivable.

When the so-called "reimagining" of team uniforms was announced during this year's All Star break, I was a bit leery, but willing to give a chance to the creative gurus in the league's art department. After all, while Nashville's mustard-yellow alternate sweaters weren't the prettiest fashions in professional sports history, at least the powers that be got a few things right with the latest styles for my beloved Calgary Flames.

One thing us creative types have to accept, though, is that no matter how good a design idea might seem, nothing can hold a candle to the power of the misinformed CEOs who are at the helm of athletic corporate sponsorship. At least, that's who I'm pinning

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the blame for this one on. When I picture the creative sessions for some of those jerseys, I imagine a bunch of cigar-smoking, suit-wearing monkeys sitting around an elaborate boardroom table carved of human bones as head imp Gary Bettman—clad in his virgin-skin cloak, breathing fire and shitting brimstone—graciously approves the ill-conceived redesigns. Meanwhile, dump trucks of dollar bills, fueled by the undistilled tears of broken eight-year-old hockey fans everywhere, unloaded their tainted funds directly into the coffers of these ungodly magnates.

As a hockey fan and a designer, I take my jerseys very seriously.

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But perhaps the most heinous fashion crime—a terrible blow that I see as a personal strike against everything I hold dear as a Flames fan—came earlier this week. Calgary unveiled their entry into Reebok's Hall of Shame,

and the cries of the damned were unleashed upon the urban sprawl that covers south-central Alberta. I mean, vertical stripes? *Armpit curves*? A huge blue Alberta flag on the shoulder of a crimson sleeve? What the hell were they thinking?

I can't help but think that new head coach Mike Keenan was somehow involved in this monstrosity, perhaps in an effort to fuel his players with rage and seething hatred after a lackluster playoff run. I suppose you could equate it to feeding razor blades and sawdust to a rabid pit bull that you've been poking with a sharp stick, before unleashing him upon a playground of school children wearing Oilers jerseys.

The Oilers, meanwhile, have yet to display their own attempt at preschool arts and crafts hour. If it's anything like their horrendous season last year, and I look forward to seeing what tripe they come up with. At the very least it will provide me with some solace—though at this point, the only thing the NHL could do to renew my hopes would be to appoint Lanny MacDonald Prime Minister and launch a rocket containing Kevin Lowe, Craig MacTavish, and Sean Avery on a one-way trip directly into the flaming sun.

Federer's athletic feats already amaze

Whether he wins this year's US Open or not, the Swiss Mister is already the greatest mens player of all time—maybe even the top individual athlete period



ROBIN
COLLUM

Sports
Commentary

If you don't know Roger Federer, you've been living under a rock. Even people who aren't sports fans or those unfamiliar with tennis should know this athlete. Federer has revolutionized the game, shattering anyone's expectations of what can be achieved by a single athlete. He has dominated his sport more than any other tennis star ever—it will be a long time before we see anyone else who can live up to the legacy he's building himself—and arguably more than any other athlete either, regardless of sport.

The Swiss Mister began his rise to the top of the tennis world in 2001, when he reached the quarterfinals at Wimbledon for the first time, beating seven-time Wimbledon champion Pete Sampras along the way. Two years later, in 2003, he took home the big prize there, winning his first Grand Slam tournament.

His career really took off in 2004, however, when he reached the world number-one ranking, a position that he has held ever since. That year, he won three of the four men's singles Grand Slam events—Wimbledon, the US Open, and the Australian Open—and defeated the likes of Lleyton Hewitt and Andy Roddick. And he did

all of this *without a coach*.

Wimbledon has been the site of some of his greatest successes—he has won it every year since 2003, and is only the second man to have five consecutive wins there in tennis' Open era, the other being legendary Bjorn Borg. The list of records that he holds is extensive to the point of being comical.

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He was the first player in the Open era to win his first four Grand Slam singles finals; in 2006 he became the first man since 1969 to reach the final in all Grand Slam single events in one year; he has won more consecutive Grand Slam sets than any other man; he's only two Wimbledon wins away from Pete Sampras' career total titles there; he is the only man to have held five consecutive Wimbledon titles, two consecutive Australian Open titles, and three consecutive US Open

titles at the same time. And the list goes on—he's only 26 years old.

He is already in the record books alongside the likes of Sampras, Borg, Rod Laver, and John McEnroe, and he's on pace to outstrip them all. Barring significant injuries—and he's been remarkably healthy so far—he will enter the record books as the greatest tennis player of all time, and in fact the most dominant single athlete in any sport, ever.

Federer has been compared to Tiger Woods in golf and Lance Armstrong in cycling, but the analogies just don't work. Though Tiger is certainly the best golfer of his generation, he hasn't had the same kind of singular and consistent domination.

As for Mr Livestrong, the similarities are stronger, but not close enough. Armstrong has accomplished feats—his record-setting seven Tour de France victories in particular—that are unlikely to be duplicated, but the difference between cycling and tennis is that, essentially, Armstrong just did the same thing seven times. Federer has trounced the competition in so many different conditions—clay, grass, and hard courts—not to mention that he doesn't have a team backing him up.

As this paper goes to print, Federer is facing Roddick in the quarterfinal of the US Open. Another Grand Slam win by Roddick would be an incredible feather in his cap, but it would do nothing to diminish Federer's position—he's in the record books already, and there's still plenty of time.

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