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RULE: Subban is a Refreshing Character Who Needs to be in the NHL Forefront

By [Heather Rule](#) - June 5, 2017

The Nashville Predators wanted to give their home crowd a victory after losing the first two games of the Stanley Cup Final in Pittsburgh. The Preds delivered with a 5-1 final score to avoid going down three-games-to-none against the defending-champion Penguins.

Perhaps more memorable than the result? The dialogue afterward.

Things got a little chirpy at the end of the game, and Predators defenseman P.K. Subban was yapping with Pens star Sidney Crosby as the teams skated toward their benches to head to the dressing rooms. Subban was asked about the comments [in an interview](#): “[Crosby] told me my breath smelled, but I don’t know, I used some Listerine before the game so I don’t know what he’s talking about.”

Crosby’s response to those comments? [He says Subban made it up](#) and Subban “likes the attention.”

In this post-lockout era where the NHL nationally takes a backseat to football, baseball and basketball on the interest-level scale, Subban’s personality should be embraced and promoted.

Whether Subban stretched the smelly truth or Crosby was just angry about the whole thing, it’s been the topic of discussion and social-media fun the past couple days.

I’ve seen some headlines calling it a distraction. Crosby clearly was not amused with Subban’s comments. Pens fans probably roll their eyes because, after all, Subban is the opponent standing in the way of the first back-to-back Stanley Cup Champion since the Detroit Red Wings in 1997 and 1998.

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Ask any rabid hockey fan about the NHL, and he or she will probably get into how hated commissioner Gary Bettman is among the fan base (though loathing a commissioner is not completely unique to professional hockey). Hockey fans can be a niche group. You’re either passionate about the sport or you’re probably going to spend the time watching hoops or football. Fans love hockey but not necessarily the way the NHL runs things.

No need to list every gripe and complaint. Things like inconsistency with penalties and suspensions, the structure of local times for puck drops during early playoff rounds and, locally, the fact that Minnesota has yet to see a Winter Classic are definitely on the list.

All that said, the NHL could use all the help it can get. That’s why it’s a good thing to create any kind of buzz about the sport. Enter, Subban.

Still, when there’s a guy like Subban around, providing a spark of excitement and good stories, run with it.

Everybody knows about guys like Patrick Kane and Crosby for their raw talent. Subban should be right up there as well with the notoriety factor. Subban, 28, played seven seasons with the Montreal

Canadians before being traded to Nashville at the end of last season. He's helped lead the Predators to their first Stanley Cup Final in team history and was seen jumping up and down on the ice like a kid on Christmas as the team was presented the trophy for winning the Western Conference.

Subban has two goals and nine assists in the playoffs this year. He's also fun to watch and just seems to make the game fun.

In general, it's interesting to see the criticism that goes on in regard to professional athletes or coaches/managers outside of the sport. It's like there should be a one-size-fits-all for the personalities they bring to their games. Maybe it's also going along with societal stereotypes, too. Give us extroverts, people with a lot to say and players who aren't afraid to push the envelope or get angry when necessary. If guys don't fit this mold (Joe Mauer or Paul Molitor from the Minnesota Twins come to mind), then their value off the field/ice gets questioned.

That's not right, because everybody is different and shouldn't be expected to change their personality. Still, when there's a guy like Subban around, providing a spark of excitement and good stories, run with it.

The NHL and Nashville should use this Stanley Cup Final, regardless of the result, as a huge springboard to keep Subban in the minds of sports fans. Get him out there in front of people promoting the sport. Put Nashville on the national NBCSN games, even though it's not considered one of the "major markets."

Maybe even an ad for Listerine wouldn't hurt for a few laughs either. The NHL needs all the help it can get, and Subban should be front and center.

HEATHER RULE



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