

**CHICAGO SUN-TIMES**

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**BLACKHAWKS 5, BRUINS 2**

Keith scores twice to aid rally from early 2-0 deficit | 55

# SPORTS

## CHEW ON THIS

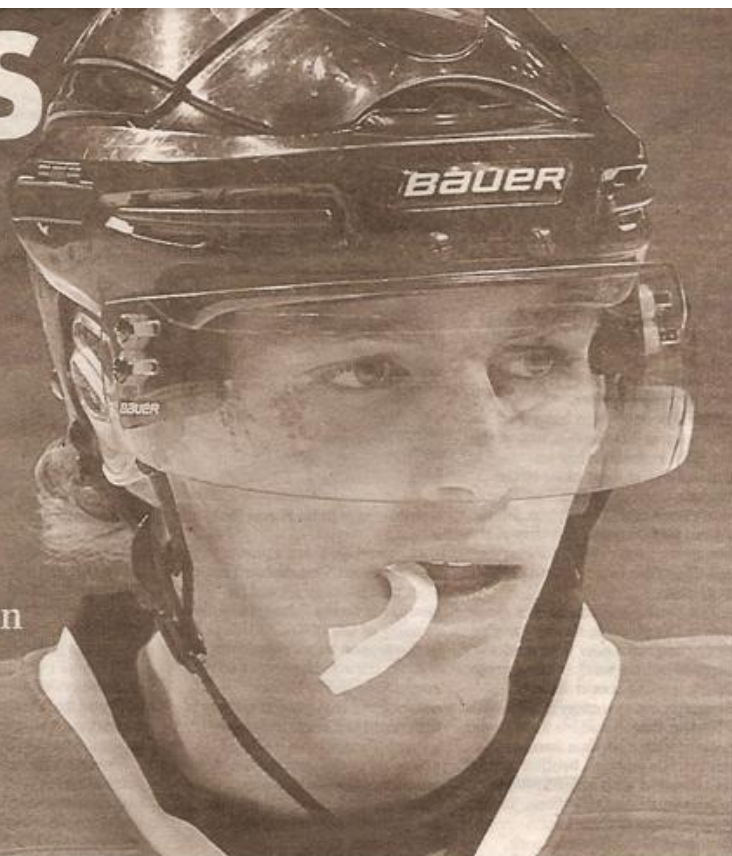
**PATRICK KANE'S  
SIGNATURE  
DANGLING  
MOUTHGUARD IS  
GARNERING A LOT  
OF ATTENTION  
MORRISSEY, PAGE 54**

**CHICAGO'S BEST HAWKS COVERAGE**

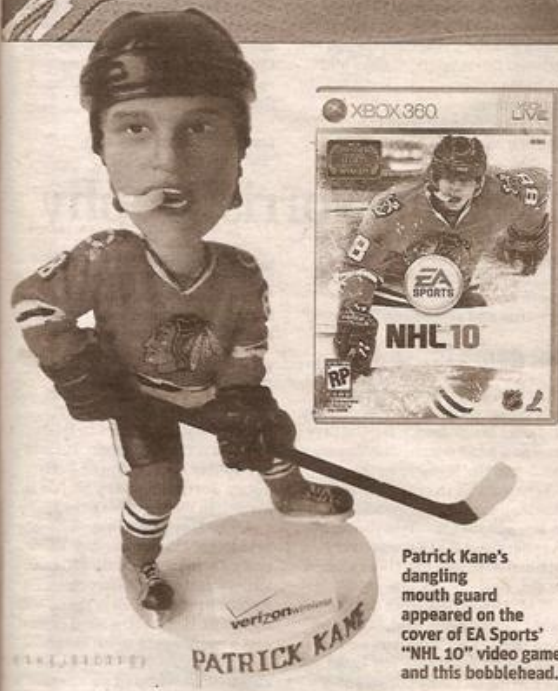
PHOTO: CHRIS WOOD/CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

# KANE'S LOOK CHEW COOL

His admitted 'bad habit' has quickly caught on as quite the phenomenon



TOM CRUIZE-SUN-TIMES



Patrick Kane's dangling mouth guard appeared on the cover of EA Sports' "NHL 10" video game and this bobblehead.

"Everybody talks about it," said Martin Marcus, who, along with fellow Hawks dentist Russell Baer, makes the mouthguards for Kane and other players.

It's quite the phenomenon, even if it gets Kane in trouble once in a while. He suffered three chipped teeth when he hit the helmet of teammate Jonathan Toews during a game against Columbus last season. Kane can't quite recall the particulars, but there are suspicions among the Hawks that he was chewing at the time, and it wasn't his fingernails.

In a league that has always looked at individuality with suspicion, there is something almost audacious about Kane's habit. It's pretty sedate, as these things go, but in some hockey circles, it might as well be Manny Ramirez's dreadlocks and doo-rag.

It's clear that some opposing players think it's the calling card of a diva. During last year's Western Conference finals, the Red Wings' Johan Franzen extracted Kane's exposed mouthguard during a skirmish and dropped it on the ice.

"Sometimes you skate by the [opposing] bench and you'll hear, 'Put your mouthpiece in your mouth,'" Kane said. "And you're thinking, 'Why are they worried about that?'"

The rubber pieces are vacuum-molded to fit the contour of his teeth. When he chews them enough, it distorts the mold. It's time for a new one when his mouthguard starts to look like a patch of rough road.

He goes through about three a month. Some of his Hawks teammates go through three a year, Marcus said.

There is the somewhat sensitive matter of what Kane's cavalier use of his mouthguard says to young hockey players, who might be on the path to picket-fence smiles if they imitate him. On the other hand, there are worse adolescent evils than mouthguard chewing.

"Everybody wants to emulate the stars," Marcus said.

At 21, Kane is closer in age to youth hockey peewees than to grizzled NHL veterans. Not that his teammates remind him of this



MARK HUMPHREY-AP

*"To be honest, I don't even know I'm doing it. It's just kind of a bad habit, but it's suddenly grown to be my signature. ... It's pretty funny to see yourself chewing on a mouthpiece."*

PATRICK KANE

very often. No. Uh-uh.

"Maybe because he's such a young kid he always needs something to be chewing on, like a baby does," Hawks defenseman Brian Campbell surmised.

Kane, who scored a goal in the Hawks' victory against Boston on Thursday, is the team leader in goals, points and game-winning goals. Each of those provided him an opportunity for some serious gnawing. He watches highlights of

Hawks games and tries to view his habit with the detachment of a scientist. But he can't.

"It's pretty funny to see yourself chewing on a mouthpiece," he said.

A mouthguard that doesn't know how to stay put can't match his breathtaking puck-handling skills. But both have something in common: You can't look away.

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