

## **American Hockey Through Ukrainian Eyes: 'Like Interrupted Sex'**

### **Sports**

Posted by:

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***From time to time, we at Global Voices translate texts that appear on the Russian Internet, when writers capture something peculiar about the world, as seen by the denizens of the RuNet. Most of our content has to do with politics and social issues, but that's not a rule, and today's installment concerns the wild world of American hockey, as witnessed by Andrew Ivakhov, a young man from Ukraine now living in Los Angeles. He recently attended a matchup between the L.A. Kings and the Pittsburgh Penguins, where he was treated to a show he didn't expect (or entirely enjoy).***

*This text first appeared in Russian on the website TJournal. It has been translated into English by Kevin Rothrock.*

**'Sports 2.0, Or How I Went to Hockey in the States'** By Andrew Ivakhov This post won't say anything new, if you're anyone who's ever been to hockey in the United States. Unfortunately, the sport's popularity was about zero when I was a kid, and so the first time I was seeing a hockey game live was at age 23. I arrived at the local arena, the Staples Center, where a sluggish crowd of fans was making its way inside. Like lots of these places, it can transform into whatever they need, whether it's boxing, basketball, or hockey. If people buy the tickets, they get what they want. Are you used to going to soccer games? Well, here everything's different. Don't hide that flask with alcohol — they'll gladly sell you some inside. Whiskey, Martinis, vodka — just step into the bar. The '2.0' in my headline isn't for nothing, but it's a little harder to defend the word 'sports.' It's more of a continuous money-making process, sprinkled with some hockey players they barely let play. There are half-naked women — the kind you used to see only in the boxing ring — going around, handing out random lottery tickets. I found out later that this is how they lure you to future games. A mall food court would die of envy from the diversity of meals sold in this stadium, where I bought the worst tasting taco of my life for \$12. 'You don't come here for the hockey.' That's the impression I got. The only similarity with soccer fans that I saw was all the merchandise. It's funny, but the fans don't really get in each other's faces. Only occasionally, just to keep up the mood, someone will yell out something garbled. [https://globalvoices.org/2016/12/26/am...yes-like-interrupted-sex/]