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Orr: Kelly 'didn't deserve what happened'

 Tuesday, September 8, 2009 | [Feedback](#) | [Print Entry](#)

One week later, the hockey world is still buzzing from Paul Kelly's stunning firing as head of the NHL Players' Association.

And you can count Bobby Orr among those still in disbelief that Kelly, a good friend of his, was dismissed. The greatest defenseman in NHL history, now a powerful player agent, doesn't do many media interviews, but he felt compelled to share a comment in this case.

"This man is one of the nice guys, very trustworthy and very intelligent," Orr told ESPN.com on Tuesday. "I don't understand why they did it. I just hope they move on and don't attack his character because he's one of the most honorable men I know. His integrity cannot and should not be questioned. He didn't deserve what happened to him."

It certainly got ugly last week, especially Thursday when Glenn Healy's stinging resignation letter came on the heels of [reports that Kelly inappropriately read minutes](#) of a union meeting in Las Vegas he was not supposed to have access to. Both Kelly and interim NHLPA leader Ian Penny released competing statements that day. From that point on, the public relations war was on.

Orr, much like this writer, hopes this is a wake-up call for all NHL players. They need to pay better attention to what's going on within their union. They need to attend players' meetings. They need to care.

Until that day, the NHLPA will be susceptible to this kind of turmoil.


[NHL](#)


Pierre LeBrun

Pierre LeBrun covers the NHL for ESPN.com, joining the Web site in September 2008 after spending 13 years with The Canadian Press as its national hockey columnist. LeBrun also was a contributor to Rogers Sportsnet and a regular guest on CBC's "Hockey Night in Canada." In 2005, he won Sports Media Canada's top sports writing award for his coverage of the 2004-05 NHL lockout. LeBrun is based in Toronto and continues to be a weekly guest on "Hockey Night."

Pierre won't mind our mentioning (we think) that he is a fantasy baseball and football nut and has a very unhealthy obsession with Def Leppard.

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