Consider Brendan Shanahan's actions as the new NHL Dean of Discipline as shots across the bow. This week's shot may have actually hit the bow of the SS Blue Jacket. With James Wisniewski's eight regular season game suspension for a late hit on Minnesota's Cal Clutterbuck, the Blue Jackets will now have to patchwork together their defense following training camp.

I will openly admit that I have not watched the video of the hit. To me, it doesn't matter. I have read the description of the play from various media outlets and well-respected journalists on Twitter. The facts are simple in this case. It was a late hit with an accompanying headshot on an unsuspecting player. The Blue Jackets and Wisniewski can spin this story any way that they want to and it's perfectly within their right to do so. Wisniewski is a two-time previous offender, including another eight-game suspension. The stigma attached to these players will not be ignored.

However, the fact remains, the NHL has been entirely too lenient on length of suspension and entirely too unpredictable with suspensions. Former disciplinarian Colin Campbell took everything in context and made his decision based on if an injury occurred or if a star player was targeted. Shanahan has completely changed the dynamic and player safety is going to be on the rise as a result.

"Shanny", as he was referred to during his playing days, has re-established a policy that holds players accountable for their irresponsible actions. Will it stop hits from behind into the boards and blindside head shots in the neutral zone? Highly unlikely, but it will slow down the number of them and that is what Shanahan wants to achieve.

Wisniewski isn't the first player to be suspended during the preseason and likely won't be the last. A handful of players have been suspended and two others have hearings with Shanahan

this week. Questionable hits and a lack of respect for your fellow player have forced the NHL to this type of justice. Pardon the expression, but Brendan Shanahan has shown the set of stones that he needs to show in order to hold his position and be taken seriously. Frankly, there was a league-wide epidemic and Shanahan is the antidote.

Part of the beauty of what has transpired so far is that Brendan Shanahan posts on his Twitter with video links to his explanation. There will be very few grey areas in regards to suspensions and the hits that lead to them. Players will know what they can and cannot do, something Colin Campbell never achieved. Thus far, Shanahan's explanations have been poignantly worded and detailed. He has set an incredible standard and one that he now has to uphold as the games become more serious when the regular season begins.

In any event, the Blue Jackets are now left to compensate for the hand that has been dealt to them. The suspension opens the door for players like Nick Holden or Grant Clitsome to open the season with the team. Just a couple depth forward spots remain unfilled and the backup goaltender spot is still of some conjecture with Mark Dekanich's injury.

With the final roster decisions being made, the behind the scenes work to save the franchise from its Mt. Everest of debt is fast and furious. The new plan to use casino-related resources to help the Blue Jackets out was presented to the Columbus City Council late last week. Funds will come from the casino as well as from a revamped arena and ownership agreement with Nationwide Insurance, the company who owns the naming rights to the downtown arena. Without going in deep detail with the new financial plans, they are far superior to what the team was working with.

One thing that people have a hard time understanding is how expensive running a hockey team is. While the payrolls are smaller than most of the other major sports, due in large part to a salary cap, upkeep of the playing surface is extremely expensive. In a market like Columbus's, ticket deals and packages slim the profits that bigger market teams get to enjoy. Factor in the extra travel costs incurred by the Jackets because they are the easternmost team in the Western Conference and the lengthy road trips that occasionally require extra hotel stays; you have a lot of money changing hands without the same amount being recouped by the team.

The Wisniewski suspension has cast a dark shadow over the good things going on with the team right now. Their prospects have played well in camp and in their limited preseason action and the new financial plan provide stability and may help the Jackets in their free agent

dealings. And, although it won't seem like it right now, Shanahan's strong statement about suspensions and the hits that cause them will benefit the league as a whole.

The Blue Jackets open regular season play on October 7 at home against Nashville.