If Scott Arniel were a ship captain, he would rejoice that he was mercifully thrown off the boat before its mast fully disappeared into the murky water. The 2011-12 Blue Jackets make the Lusitania look like a thriving, seafaring vessel. As what is usually the case, this past Monday, the Blue Jackets fired coach Scott Arniel and named Todd Richards as the interim bench boss.

Being an Arniel defender for the majority of his tenure, the move still was not a surprise by any means. Arniel's nightly lineup was certainly lacking talent and was not good enough to truly compete. Injuries and suspensions did not help his cause. However, the ultimate deciding factor was the overall work ethic of the team with him behind the bench. From night one, the Blue Jackets played sloppy, lazy, disinterested, and clueless.

If any of the readers out there have watched the HBO 24/7 Road to the Winter Classic series, you would have seen the coaching that goes on. Even leading grown men, fundamentals of the game need to be hammered home again and again during film study and practices sometimes include the most basic of drills. All of the behind the scenes approaches to coaching show themselves in a team's performance on the ice. The Blue Jackets' on-ice performance was very telling. It was awful.

Obviously, since the news story is two days old, every media outlet has already covered the story, Arniel's replacement Todd Richards, and the soundbites presented by all sides of the story. As I was out of town with next to no internet, I was unable to write up a timely article. Instead, I'll try to elaborate on an angle that hasn't been discussed a whole lot.

What impact will the coaching change have on the players? Will they wonder why general

manager Scott Howson is still employed and will it have any effect on the locker room? How will Todd Richards's systems translate to the current roster? Will Derick Brassard get a fresh start?

The immediate impact on the team will be that Arniel's firing will be a fresh start. Despite the fact that the team will not be in playoff contention, they want to end the year well. A different voice can be a blessing when the previous voice has fallen on deaf ears.

As for Scott Howson, some in the media are flabbergasted that he has kept his job while Arniel has gone packing. Part of the reason, to me, is that the Blue Jackets ownership group is too focused on the arena deals and finances to worry about finding a new GM. Also, Howson has done some good things. He has just failed to answer certain team needs.

With regards to Todd Richards, he had an admirable two-year tenure in Minnesota keeping a team without much talent in playoff contention. What he lacks in Columbus is a competent goaltending tandem like he had with the Wild. Both Niklas Backstrom and Josh Harding are very solid, starting-caliber goaltenders. His defensive mindset requires such a goaltender. If he gets the players to buy in, that will make Steve Mason better. If they do not fully buy in, the ugly could get uglier.

While in Minnesota, Richards dealt with a player similar to Derick Brassard. Pierre-Marc Bouchard was a highly-touted, very skilled prospect at one time who really hasn't made a huge NHL impact. Brassard is a similar type of player. Both are good skaters who were billed as excellent passers. Richards should be able to get more out of Brassard than previous coaches have, but it remains to be seen if Brassard is willing to put in the effort. Bouchard was hampered by concussion issues for part of Richards's tenure, but still had 38 points in 60 games.

The Jackets passed on offering the coaching position to Ken Hitchcock a couple months back. Hitchcock took over in St. Louis after Davis Payne was fired. Since then, the Blues have gone 18-5-5.

Scott Arniel's termination may turn out to be no more than the proverbial drop in the bucket. The Blue Jackets organization is not a model for others to follow. Too many hands are in the ownership cookie jar. The business model with the poor arena lease and insufficient marketing in a town dominated by Ohio State has led to plenty of hard times financially. Now, the team is

left to circle the wagons and start over with another new coach and a roster that needs a serious wakeup call.

The next four months will be very interesting for the franchise. The team will, again, not be buying at the trade deadline. Todd Richards will be under a microscope since there are not many good coaching candidates on the market. The fans have become extremely disenfranchised and could grow even more apathetic with a poor end to the year.

Good times may lie ahead for the Blue Jackets, but nobody knows how far ahead that really is.