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Offensive Sparkplug Craig Leaves Game With Knee Injury

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TAMPA - Lightning F **Ryan Craig** had just joined the line of **Brad Richards** and **Marty St. Louis** midway through the second period Thursday against the Flyers.

His fifth goal of the season, 7:38 into the period, had just made it 1-0 Lightning. And then came a check into the boards that buckled his right knee, and 31 percent of Tampa Bay's goals this year (five of the team's 16) limped off the ice, not to return.

The knee will be evaluated today. The evaluation of Craig's importance to a team struggling to find its offensive identity was immediate.

"He does everything for us," Lightning coach **John Tortorella** said. "I'm not exactly sure what the injury is, what the time frame is. But he's that important to us. He's a very important guy for us."

Craig scored his goal, the 20th in his 55th career NHL game, by knocking a Richards pass out of the air and past Flyers G **Antero Niittymaki**. It was what has become a typical Craig goal - find the spot in front of the net, punch the puck past the defense.

"I think a lot of people can take a lot from just how he has a sense, a nose for the net, as far as banging in

5-foot goals," Tortorella said. "Not 20-foot goals; 5-foot goals. He's so good at that."

"That's where I'm successful," Craig said. "It's part of my game. It's part of where I fit in on this team."

DiMAIO'S STATUS: Lightning F **Rob DiMaio** was administered a computer cognitive test Wednesday by University of Pittsburgh Medical Center concussion specialist **Michael Collins** to gauge DiMaio's time response and memory.

DiMaio remains sidelined after sustaining a head injury Sept. 26 at Montreal. Lightning trainer **Tom Mulligan** said DiMaio is being treated for vertigo-like symptoms.

"He has a lot of the same symptoms and there has not been much improvement," Mulligan said. "He will get better. It will just take time."

DiMaio, who is at home in Toronto, will undergo the same test in three weeks, and a firm diagnosis then will be made.

NUTS AND BOLTS: Flyers LW **Ben Eager** was called for instigating a third-period fight and issued a game misconduct after taking down Lightning D **Doug Janik** with an upper-cut right to the jaw. Janik also was penalized for fighting and received six stitches and returned late in the third. ... Tampa Bay RW **Nikita Alexeev's** late goal in the third extended his career-high scoring streak to four games. ... Shots on goal were recorded by 15 different Lightning players. ... Flyers C **Peter Forsberg** left in the first period with a sprained left wrist, which also will keep him out of today's game against the Panthers. ... The Flyers sent C **Petr Nedved** and LW **Niko Dimitrakos** to the AHL's Philadelphia Phantoms. ... Westshore Pizza will serve a 14-inch cheese pizza or cheesesteak sandwich to anyone who brings a ticket stub from Thursday's game to the one of the restaurants locations today.

Carter Gaddis

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