



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • Jan. 12, 2018

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

State, local leaders hope Canes' growth under new owner will keep pace with Raleigh's

By Henry Gargan

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RALEIGH

Raleigh would relish seeing its only professional sports team grow as quickly as it has in recent years.

The Carolina Hurricanes' sale Thursday to Dallas businessman Thomas Dundon is the first time the team has changed hands since it came to Raleigh in 1997, when the city was about 200,000 people smaller than it is today. Local leaders hope Dundon's promises to shake things up will bring more of the city behind the Hurricanes, whose attendance ranks 30th out of 31 NHL teams.

Peter Karmanos Jr., the Hurricanes' majority owner, indicated in recent years that he was seeking to sell his majority stake in the team.

Empty seats at PNC Arena, where the Hurricanes play their home games, led some to speculate that a new owner might move the franchise – perhaps to Quebec.

But John Burns, a member of the Wake County Board of Commissioners and an avid hockey fan, echoed the NHL brass's insistence that a move was never seriously considered.

"I've been assured repeatedly by people in the organization that there was never a question of the team moving," Burns said. "This market was too good for the future of the NHL. The attendance issues are related to them not winning consistently – it's no indication that the market itself is the problem."

Burns compared Dundon's style to that of Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban, a friend of Dundon's. Cuban's reputation for treating players well allowed him to woo high-caliber players to Dallas. Burns also said Wake County itself has the potential to be a recruiting asset for the Hurricanes.

"From what I understand, players come here and stay here," Burns said. "There are a lot of retired NHL players here, in Cary and in Raleigh."

Raleigh Councilman Corey Branch, a native of the city, acknowledged that the team has always faced an uphill battle for attention against the area's bevy of successful college sports programs.

"But I think with the new owners, there's definitely a chance and opportunity to broaden the scope and exposure of the team to all parts of the city," Branch said.

Mayor Nancy McFarlane said she'd like the city to work more closely with the Hurricanes' management than it has in the past. She recalled the team's 2006 Stanley Cup run and how that season brought the city together behind the Hurricanes and said there was more the city and team could do to help each other out.

"We're obviously very excited they're planning to stay because they are a huge part of this city," she said. "The team is an economic asset, yes, but they're also a big part of our identity."

North Carolina FC owner Stephen Malik said he has already met with Dundon and came away impressed.

"I've had some conversations with him because I'm thrilled we've got a guy who's going to ramp up the professionalism and commitment to pro sports here," Malik said. "I found the guy to be energetic and definitely somebody who wants to win."

As for potential synergies or partnerships between the two franchises, Malik said he foresees opportunities there as NCFC pursues an MLS expansion bid.

"I think there's lots of things we can do together," he said. "Some of that is obvious to everyone, isn't it?"

Governor Roy Cooper, a hockey fan himself, also praised Dundon's decision to invest in the Hurricanes.

"The Carolina Hurricanes are a valuable economic asset to our state, and Mr. Dundon has made a wise choice in buying this team and keeping it here," Cooper said in a statement to the N&O Thursday. "I'm ready for Stanley Cup playoff action."

An unlikely duo brought the Hurricanes from Hartford to Raleigh

By Chip Alexander

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Peter Karmanos Jr., unhappy in Connecticut, was looking for a new city for his NHL franchise.



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Steve Stroud, then chairman of the Centennial Authority, was looking for another tenant to share a new arena in Raleigh due to open in 1999.

It was an unlikely duo: the pony-tailed Karmanos, a software company owner from Detroit, and Stroud, a native North Carolinian whose drawl was thick and his business acumen keen.

But together, the two helped orchestrate and bring major-league hockey to the Triangle and the state in 1997. The Carolina Hurricanes, whose home is PNC Arena, have given North Carolina its only major-league championship – the 2006 Stanley Cup – while becoming an indelible part of the state’s sports landscape.

“The Carolina Hurricanes are a part of our area fabric,” Stroud said. “They’ve become a part of the sports passion here. Mr. Karmanos has done right by this community.”

As Karmanos steps aside as the Hurricanes’ majority owner, turning over the franchise leadership to Dallas billionaire Tom Dundon, much good has been done, and not just the winning of the 2006 Cup.

PNC Arena initially was to be the home of N.C. State men’s basketball. But Stroud and others on the Centennial Authority, an appointed body and the arena landlord, realized sharing the building with an NHL team would be advantageous.

And especially if the team owner would help pay for it.

“We first were supposed to spend \$12 million to \$15 million to upgrade it to NHL standards,” Karmanos said. “It turned out to be \$40 million that I put in.”

The total cost of the arena was \$158 million.

“Without Peter we couldn’t have done it,” Stroud said.

Before the coming of the Canes, Raleigh was bidding for an NHL expansion franchise. The ownership group, headed by Charlotte business executive Felix Sabates, made an impressive presentation to the NHL executive committee in New York in January 1997, and Raleigh appeared among the favorites – along with Atlanta and Nashville – to land a franchise.

But the constant haggling over the building of the arena – its size, its cost, who would pay what, a lease – finally caused the Sabates group to pull its bid. The push to get an NHL team seemed over.

But NHL commissioner Gary Bettman liked the potential of the Triangle and Raleigh market. Karmanos, while not on the executive committee at the time, sat in on the expansion presentations and liked what he heard about Raleigh and the Triangle.

Karmanos, the co-founder and CEO of Compuware, had joined business partner Thomas Thewes in buying the

Hartford Whalers in 1994. By '97, he was looking to move the team.

“They were going to build a beautiful building in Raleigh, in a dynamic area with really good jobs where within a 25-mile radius was one of the highest per-capita incomes in the league,” Karmanos said. “It was a wonderful market.”

Stroud and the authority quickly found common ground with Karmanos and the franchise’s management group headed by Jim Rutherford. A lease deemed fair by both sides was approved. On May 6, 1997, Karmanos made it official: the Whalers were being rebranded the Carolina Hurricanes and coming to Raleigh.

For two years, while the arena was being completed, the Hurricanes played in Greensboro, usually before sparse crowds. Karmanos lost millions of dollars those two years which he said helped offset his “huge” personal tax bills at the time.

“But I wouldn’t characterize it as losing anything,” Karmanos said. “It’s an investment in the team and the market.”

I think we’ve been good business for Raleigh, Wake County, the Triangle and the state. On the ice we had so much success early that we may have spoiled some people. Few in the league had the success we did.

Peter Karmanos

The arena, then called the Entertainment and Sports Arena, was opened Oct. 29, 1999. It has hosted Stanley Cup finals in 2002 and 2006, the 2011 NHL All-Star Game and the 2004 NHL Draft. The 2006 Stanley Cup banner hangs in the rafters along with N.C. State’s 1974 and 1983 NCAA championship banners.

Gale Force Sports & Entertainment, the Hurricanes’ umbrella company, has managed the operations of the arena.

“I think we’ve been good business for Raleigh, Wake County, the Triangle and the state,” Karmanos said. “On the ice we had so much success early that we may have spoiled some people. Few in the league had the success we did.”

The Canes have not reached the playoffs since 2009, when they were eliminated by the Pittsburgh Penguins in the Eastern Conference final, and that has been reflected, in part, in lagging home attendance in recent years.

“That’s not a knock on the market,” Karmanos said. “We haven’t made the playoffs and you need to win to earn those tickets back.”

Stroud remains a Centennial Authority member although no longer is the chairman. The authority now will be dealing with a new owner, perhaps new arena management.

“But Peter left us in very good shape,” Stroud said. “The organization is in great shape.”



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Four questions with new Hurricanes owner Thomas Dundon

By Luke DeCock And and Chip Alexander

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Four questions with the new Carolina Hurricanes owner, Thomas Dundon.

Q: Why do you want to own a hockey team?

A: Because they keep score, mostly. I've watched hockey for a long time and I enjoy it, but I think the part that is most enjoyable is there's a lot of moving pieces and you get to figure out, hopefully, how to help find a way to win or help people be successful. There's everything from how you treat the players and giving them an advantage and the resources you do with the coaches and how you market the team and how you generate entertainment in the building that brings energy that hopefully helps you win. So primarily it's because I like things where they keep score. This is a way you can do that even though you can't play yourself.

Q: Why the Hurricanes?

A: It felt like there was value that could be created here. And the fact that the team is in a position where if you do a few things, make a couple more things go right, you have a

chance to be really, really good. They're good now. The definition of really good is doing it for a long time. I think they can be competitive for a long time. Everybody says they want to be patient, but I'm not patient. We can do a few more things to continue the momentum is better than a situation where you could go backwards. I don't want to go backwards.

Q: You're obviously inheriting an entire operation here. On the hockey side, are you confident in (general manager) Ron (Francis) and (head coach) Bill (Peters) at this point?

A: Yes, 100 percent. I talked to a lot of people before I decided to do this in the hockey business. I think we're lucky here. I think you have to give the previous owner a lot of credit for what he put together. I hope we can help them. I hope we can add some resources where appropriate but I think it's incremental gains, it's not fundamental. It's not foundational.

Q: What are your Day 1 priorities?

A: I think the top priority is the fan experience. I think we've got to give the fan more value. Part of that is the team winning. They're winning. They're competitive. Part of it is getting more people in the arena and having them feel like they're getting value. We've got to give them a better experience. It's got to be somewhere they'd rather be than be at home. I think we've got some opportunities there.

Here are the highs and the lows of the 20-year history of the Carolina Hurricanes

By J. Mike Blake

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The Carolina Hurricanes are about to change owners.

In the 20 years since the move to Raleigh from Hartford, Conn., memorable players such as Ron Francis, Rod Brind'Amour and Eric Staal have come and gone. Five playoff teams in the team's first 11 seasons resulted in two Stanley Cup Finals appearances and one title.

Here is a timeline of the Canes years under Peter Karmanos in Raleigh:

The Hurricanes franchise through the years

Oct. 12, 1972: The Hartford Whalers, members of the World Hockey Association, begin their first season.

June 22, 1979: Whalers join an expanding NHL as the WHA dies out.

Sept. 7, 1988: Franchise is sold to Donald Conrad and Richard Gordon.

June 28, 1994: Peter Karmanos, Thomas Thewes and Jim Rutherford purchase the Whalers for \$47.5 million.

Nov. 6, 1995: Whalers hire Paul Maurice as head coach.

March 26, 1997: Franchise announces plans to leave Hartford at the end of the season.

May 6, 1997: Raleigh officially named as new franchise location. The Hurricanes name and logo are rolled out over the the next two months.

Oct. 1, 1997: The Hurricanes open up the regular season on the road in Tampa. It's the first of two seasons the team's home games are played in Greensboro while the Entertainment and Sports Arena (now PNC Arena) is built next to N.C. State's Carter-Finley Stadium.

July 13, 1998: Hurricanes sign former Whalers great Ron Francis, who had been traded to Pittsburgh in 1991.

Oct. 29, 1999: Raleigh's long wait to host a Hurricanes game is over. In the first home game played at what's now PNC Arena, the Hurricanes defeat the Washington Capitals 3-2.

Jan. 23, 2000: Rod Brind'Amour is picked up in a trade with Philadelphia.

May 28, 2002: The Hurricanes clinch a trip to their first Stanley Cup Finals. Martin Gelnas scores in overtime to win Game 6 in Toronto by a 2-1 score, winning the Eastern Conference Finals 4-2.



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June 13, 2002: The Hurricanes fall 3-2 in Game 5 of the Stanley Cup Finals to Detroit. The Hurricanes had won Game 1 on the road but lost the next four, including Game 3 in triple overtime.

June 21, 2003: The Hurricanes select Eric Staal second overall in the NHL Draft. He plays for the team one season later.

Dec. 15, 2003: Peter Laviolette is hired as head coach, replacing Paul Maurice, who had been the coach before the franchise changed cities.

March 9, 2004: Francis, the franchise's all-time leading scorer, is traded to Toronto. He retires in 2005 and returns to the franchise as director of player development in 2006 and is now the team's general manager.

June 26-27, 2004: The Hurricanes host the NHL Draft at PNC Arena, the last NHL event before the lockout that wipes out the entire 2004-05 season.

Oct. 5, 2005: Goalie Cam Ward makes his NHL debut. He would become a Conn Smythe Trophy winner for MVP of the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

June 1, 2006: The Hurricanes head back to the Stanley Cup Finals after defeating Buffalo 4-2 in Game 7 of the Eastern Conference Finals.

June 19, 2006: Hurricanes become Stanley Cup champions, winning 3-1 in Game 7 against the Edmonton Oilers.

Sept. 28, 2008: Thomas Thewes dies. He had been Karmanos' business partner for decades and helped found Compuware with him.

April 28, 2009: One of the Hurricanes' most memorable games comes in Game 7 of a first round series against New Jersey. Down 3-2 with 1:20 left, Jussi Jokinen scores to tie it. With 32 seconds left, Eric Staal scores the game-winner for a 4-3 victory.

May 26, 2009: For the third time since coming to Raleigh, the Hurricanes are in the Eastern Conference Finals. But on this day, they're swept by Pittsburgh, falling 4-1 to lose the series 4-0.

June 30, 2010: Brind'Amour retires.

Jan. 28-30, 2011: NHL All-Star Weekend comes to Raleigh. Staal is a captain of one of the two teams.

April 27, 2013: A lockout-shortened 48-game season ends with a new record in average attendance: 17,560 (17th in league, 23rd by stadium capacity). It's the only time, other than 2007, that the team has topped the 17,000 mark on a season.

June 6, 2014: Jim Rutherford resigns as president.

Sept. 22, 2014: Karmonos announces he's entertaining offers to sell his majority interest in the Hurricanes.

Feb. 28, 2016: Team trades Staal to the New York Rangers.

April 9, 2017: The eighth straight season of missing the playoffs concludes, and with the league's lowest attendance – 11,776 fans per game (63 percent capacity).

Jan. 11, 2018. NHL approves sale of the team to Thomas Dundon.

In first hours, Dundon wasting no time putting his stamp on the Hurricanes

By Luke DeCock

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Updated 8 hours 2 minutes ago

RALEIGH

Thomas Dundon was shooting baskets on the floor at PNC Arena Thursday afternoon when the last wire transfer went through. At that moment, the 46-year-old was one pro forma NHL signature away from owning the Carolina Hurricanes.

For Dundon, the Dallas billionaire who bought the team out of a competitive spirit and belief he can find a better way to do things, his first hours as the owner of a major-league team didn't feel any different. Since reaching a purchase agreement with Peter Karmanos in December, Dundon has been meeting with Hurricanes employees and players, making plans and getting ready for this day.

We're questioning everything.

New Canes owner Thomas Dundon

Even before the sale went through Thursday afternoon, giving him 61 percent of the team in a deal that valued the

franchise at \$550 million, Dundon already had arena employees working on the first behind-the-scenes changes, taking measurements and drawing up plans. By the time Dundon makes his first public appearance Friday morning, alongside Karmanos and NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, things will already have changed for the Hurricanes.

And they will continue to change.

"We're questioning everything," Dundon said Thursday, and they might as well stencil that above the door.

Not the locker room door, though. Dundon said he's happy with the work done by general manager Ron Francis and coach Bill Peters and loves the team's upward ascendance. A lot of what Dundon will do is drawn from the playbook his friend Mark Cuban put together when he bought the Dallas Mavericks, but people forget Cuban inherited Steve Nash and Dirk Nowitzki. The same might be said of Dundon someday. His only real complaint right now is that the players aren't big enough stars in this market – and he wants to do everything he can to change that.

As for everything else, from concessions to parking to ticketing, Dundon's first priority is to upgrade the fan experience, to take away excuses not to go to games. There may even be noticeable changes by the time the Hurricanes



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take the ice against the Washington Capitals on Friday in the second half of a back-to-back set that's nothing short of critical to the Hurricanes' playoff hopes.

In the longer term, expect to see movement on a new practice rink and the long-delayed renovations to the south entrance plaza of PNC Arena – revised to include a desperately needed sports bar for pregame entertainment.

In short, Dundon is saying all the right things that fans have wanted to hear for a long time, with the exception of his geography. With five kids, all 16 or younger, he plans to keep his home base in Dallas – but plans to be here as often as he feels he needs to be. He's been "retired" for almost three years. He's been home a lot. He's ready to dig into his next project.

"The people understand the way we've been doing it in the past isn't getting us results," Dundon said Thursday. "We're going to work with them and help them figure it out."

Karmanos will still be around as a sort of senior adviser, but he is believed to support the incoming wave of change and understands it's necessary for the franchise to move forward – and that it was not something he could do at his age and with his resources.

His final act as majority owner was quite a gift to the franchise. He found a new owner who was willing to keep the team here, to invest, to innovate, to drive the franchise and arena forward into the future. That may or may not work out, but it's all anyone could ask of Karmanos as he exits the stage.

So these are going to be different, disruptive days under Dundon, for better or for worse. He's young, energetic, technologically savvy and analytically minded. Things are going to change, and fast. How fast? Fans might even be able to detect subtle differences by Friday night.

Dundon has been preparing for weeks for this day. He's not going to wait around to start doing things his way.

Hurricanes beat Capitals on day sale to Dundon is finalized

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Hockey Writer

January 11, 2018 10:38 PM

Updated 8 hours 56 minutes ago

WASHINGTON

On a historically significant day for the franchise, the Carolina Hurricanes picked up an important regulation victory that helped them move up the standings.

Victor Rask scored the go-ahead goal in the third period and Scott Darling made 26 saves as the Hurricanes beat the Metropolitan Division-leading Washington Capitals 3-1 on Thursday night, hours after the team's sale to Dallas billionaire Tom Dundon was finalized. The two points helped Carolina leapfrog the idle Philadelphia Flyers and Pittsburgh Penguins to move into a playoff position after 43 games.

"Two points in regulation is the only way you can really make up any ground," coach Bill Peters said. "You better make hay when the sun shines, and it was a nice day here in Washington today."

It'll be an even nicer day Friday in Raleigh when Dundon, Commissioner Gary Bettman and previous majority owner Peter Karmanos discuss the sale that should at least temporarily quiet relocation speculation. The NHL on Thursday announced Dundon had completed his purchase of the Hurricanes, who are expected to stay put for the foreseeable future.

"It's exciting," said Darling, who won for the first time since Dec. 16 in a rare start. "We all had a chance to meet him. He seems like a great guy. He has a lot of big plans, and we're excited to see it all unfold."

Co-captain Jordan Staal scored a short-handed goal and Sebastian Aho added an empty-netter for Carolina, which improved to 9-7-8 in one-goal games. Winger Justin Williams, who left Washington after two seasons, said the difference between the first-place Capitals and the

Hurricanes was the disparity in their performances in tight games.

The Capitals fell to 12-3-3 in one-goal games and had their five-game winning streak and league-best 10-game home winning streak snapped. Players were unhappy that Rask's goal came after they thought defenseman Brooks Orpik touched the puck to stop play on a delayed penalty call.

"That one we all thought was a clear play on the puck," Orpik said. "We all were confused by it and frustrated by it, especially when that winds up being the winning goal."

Lars Eller scored for the third consecutive game and Braden Holtby made 30 saves for Washington, which lost at home for the first time since Nov. 30.

"They had been on a pretty good run here at home, and they're a tough team to play against," Aho said. "But so are we."

Outshooting and beating the Capitals was an important statement for the Hurricanes, who are seeking to make the playoffs for the first time since 2009 and end what is the longest active in the NHL. Finding some consistency against a division opponent is a good way to continue on that path.

"It's good for our confidence, good for our confidence in our system," said Darling, who felt comfortable all night and stopped Alex Ovechkin late to preserve the victory. "When we play the right way, we're not going to win 6-1. It's going to be close games, and that's the kind of team we are. If we do the right things, we're going to get the advantage on the one-goal games."

NOTES: Peters said Hurricanes C Derek Ryan was fine after taking a high hit from Tom Wilson that led to the delayed penalty in the third period. Peters figured Ryan was going through concussion protocol and didn't have enough time to return. ... Hurricanes D Brett Pesce was a surprise scratch with an upper-body injury. Pesce took a spill while trying to take a slap shot during the morning skate, and Peters said



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he'll be re-evaluated back home Friday. ... Staal's 34 short-handed points are one shy of Matt Cullen for the most among active players. Only four teams have allowed more short-handed goals this season than Washington's six. ... Capitals F Andre Burakovsky was a late scratch with an illness. Coach Barry Trotz said Burakovsky wasn't traveling with the team to Carolina.

UP NEXT

The Hurricanes host the Capitals on Friday night in the second half of the home-and-home series. It's their third meeting in 10 days.



Reports: Hurricanes majority ownership will transfer to Dundon on Thursday

Texas billionaire could buy the remainder of the team in three years for a total of more than \$500 million

[January 11, 2018 Cory Lavalette Article, NHL, Sports](#)

RALEIGH — The Carolina Hurricanes will officially have a new majority owner Thursday, according to reports.

Both the Raleigh News & Observer and WRAL reported early Thursday that sources said the deal to transfer more than half of the team's ownership from Peter Karmanos Jr. to Texas businessman Tom Dundon would be completed by the end of the day and that a press conference with NHL commissioner Gary Bettman announcing the sale is expected tomorrow.

Dundon has quietly pursued the team leading up to December's revelation that he had an agreement in place to buy a majority stake from Karmanos with the option to purchase the remainder of the team in three years for a total of more than \$500 million. The team will remain in Raleigh.

"I think he's been in this area a lot, likes the market, likes the Triangle, the region," Don Waddell, president of the team's parent company Gale Force Sports & Entertainment, said of Dundon back in later November when word of the Texas billionaire's advanced interest in the team went public. "He has spent time here and certainly has liked his visits here and believes in what we have going on here."

Karmanos, two months shy of his 75th birthday, bought the Hartford Whalers in 1994 and relocated the team to North Carolina in 1997, rebranding them as the Carolina Hurricanes.

A member of the Hockey Hall of Fame, Karmanos joined the team on the ice when they won the Stanley Cup nine years later in 2006. The team, however, has reached the playoffs just once since its championship season and has been near

the bottom of the league in player payroll and close to the CBA-mandated salary cap floor. Karmanos will remain a minority owner of the team.

Dundon's acquisition of the team should put to rest rumors — often fueled by speculation from the French Canadian media — that the Hurricanes were a prime candidate to be relocated, specifically to Quebec.

The team's eight-year playoff drought has taken it from Sunbelt success story to the bottom of NHL attendance. Carolina currently ranks 30th out of 31 teams at the gate with 12,494 fans per game. It ranked last the previous two seasons after climbing as high as 15th (17,386) in 2006-07 coming off of its championship season.

The Hurricanes are tied with the Flyers in the Eastern Conference standings, one point behind the two-time defending champion Penguins for the final playoff spot. Both Carolina and Philadelphia have two games in hand on Pittsburgh.

If speculation is to be believed, Dundon plans to revamp the entire Hurricanes experience, evaluating the organization from top to bottom.

Dundon, however, has not spoken publicly about the Hurricanes, refusing to answer questions when interviewed by media outlets about his other ventures. Even his age — reported as 44 by WRAL, 47 by the News & Observer, and 46 based on a September 2015 Dallas Morning News story that said he had turned 44 that month — is up for debate.

Answers from the former Santander Consumer USA founder and current Topgolf investor should start flowing in tomorrow. That's when the dream of new, stable ownership for the Hurricanes should become a reality.



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Dallas businessman now owns Hurricanes after sale closes

Posted 10:00 a.m. yesterday
Updated 10:52 p.m. yesterday

Raleigh, N.C. — The sale of the Carolina Hurricanes to Thomas Dundon is complete, and the Texas billionaire said Thursday night that he's ready to bring a winning culture to the franchise.

Team officials said the sale closed Thursday, about two months after Dundon signed a purchase agreement to buy a majority stake in the franchise from longtime owner Peter Karmanos Jr. The NHL says its Board of Governors has given its approval.

Karmanos will retain a minority ownership interest in the club he moved from Hartford, Connecticut, to North Carolina in 1997.

Dundon, a businessman from Dallas, now owns 61 percent of the team. Dundon said Thursday night that he's been a sports fan his whole life and sees the Hurricanes as a franchise on the rise. He spoke to WRAL News while taking in the North Carolina State vs Clemson game at PNC Arena.

"As I looked at the opportunity there was a young team capable of winning now and also set up for the future. It made it really intriguing," he said. "You live and die with the team as you watch it. I sort of knew this was going to happen since the beginning of the season. They think they're going to win. They're good enough, and they know it. Do they realize how good they are? I think they do."

Dundon will be formally introduced Friday in a noon press conference at PNC Arena that will include NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman and other team management officials. Watch the press conference live on WRAL.com or listen live on 99.9 FM The Fan.

Dundon, 46, will assume control of all team operations.

As for what he brings to the franchise, Dundon said Thursday that he expects the team to compete and will make a push to "take care" of Hurricanes fans.

"We expect to win. We expect to compete. In this business, it means taking care of your customers and having a great team. Those are both things we're going to be able to do," he said.

"Everyone has a TV, right? We have to give them reason to come. If there is energy and excitement and people have a reason to come here, then that helps the team. You have to do it, it's not a choice. And if you're going to do it, you should do it really well."

Dundon is the former CEO and president of Santander Consumers USA Inc., a giant subprime auto lender that he founded and ran until July 2015. He is also the chairman of

Topgolf International Inc. and chairman and managing partner of Dundon Capital Partners, a Dallas-based private investment firm.

Karmanos had been publicly seeking a local buyer for at least three years. He acknowledged over the summer that he and a group led by former Texas Rangers CEO Chuck Greenberg had agreed to a term sheet but did not come to terms on a purchase agreement. He also said he was looking for a sale price of about \$500 million.

Karmanos bought the Hartford Whalers in 1994 and moved the team south three years later.

Reports about another possible relocation have plagued the Hurricanes even as team officials and even Bettman have persistently and repeatedly denied them. Bettman said at the All-Star game in January that "the club is not moving" and NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly echoed that sentiment by saying the league is committed to Raleigh in the same manner it has stuck with the Phoenix area during years of struggles for the Coyotes.

Karmanos in 2015 said "we'd have to be idiots to move from here," largely because of the team's PNC Arena lease, which extends through 2024 and is considered one of the most team-friendly in the league.

In its most recent franchise valuations, Forbes magazine ranked the Hurricanes last in the NHL at \$230 million. Bill Foley paid a \$500 million expansion fee to the league to bring the Golden Knights to Las Vegas.

The Hurricanes have not made the playoffs since 2009 — the longest active drought in the NHL — and entered Thursday night's game at Washington one point out of a playoff spot and tied for sixth in the Metropolitan Division.

Dundon said Thursday he's been a sports fan his whole life and said he is interested in the emotional connection people have to their favorite team or sport. He said he plans to bring his passion to the Hurricanes.

"When they lose, I can't sleep and I'm upset and I'm frustrated and trying to figure out what can we do better," he said of watching the team. "When they win, I'm thinking about what can we do better. Passion won't be our problem, we just have to not talk about it, just execute and do it."

When the two sides [announced the deal in December](#), Dundon said in a statement that he is "thrilled to continue to build upon what Peter Karmanos started in Raleigh."

"The Hurricanes are a team on the rise, and I believe we have an opportunity to take the franchise to the next level. I'm ready to get to work," he said.



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Under Karmanos' leadership, the Hurricanes came to North Carolina from Hartford in 1997 and have won a Stanley Cup, two conference titles and three division championships in the City of Oaks.

Co-captain Justin Faulk, one of several team leaders who has regular communication with the front office, expects more interaction with Dundon now that the deal is complete.

A new era for the Hurricanes

Posted 12:35 a.m. today

Updated 6:58 a.m. today

By Adam Gold

Friday ushers in a new chapter of Carolina Hurricanes history.

Well, technically, it began Thursday when the National Hockey League's Board of Governors and Commissioner Gary Bettman officially approved the purchase of 61 percent of the team by Dallas-based businessman Thomas Dundon from Peter Karmanos. On the ice, the transfer of power was well-received as the Canes [skated past the Metropolitan Division-leading Washington Capitals, 3-1](#).

In that regard, the Dundon era is off to a great start.

Fans see a billionaire and visions of high-priced free agents dance in their heads. That's a natural and human reaction. The infusion of new blood, deeper pockets and a highly-charged competitive environment lead easily to thoughts of player acquisitions. But, ownership is more important than how much money the big boss has.

If it was just about money, then the New York Knicks or Cleveland Browns or Washington Redskins would win all the time. Here's the truth, with few exceptions, those fortunate enough to own major league sports franchises are ALL wealthier than we could ever imagine. What sets the great owners apart from the rest is the ability to surround themselves with high-character people and provide the resources that will allow them to do the jobs they were trained to do.

This will be [Dundon's first foray into this realm](#). Obviously, you don't go from failed hamburger joint to NHL franchise ownership without being driven, smart, intuitive and highly competitive. It's obvious that the Hurricanes new majority owner possesses all of the qualities necessary to succeed in the business world. Whether or not that translates to professional sports remains to be seen.

There is one common thread in all successful major league sports franchises. With very few exceptions, you can't achieve sustained success without great ownership. And, it matters not how your wealth was built nor how you acquired your stake in the team.

Robert Kraft is the best owner in sports. Not because he's a multi-billionaire, but because he's smart enough to allow his employees to do the job he pays them to do. Has there been a franchise in sports that's enjoyed a longer run of

"Tom's been around a few times and he's talked to some players and we've gotten to know him a little bit," Faulk said Thursday in Washington. "Obviously, all the right things have been said, and I think usually they are for the most part unless it's maybe the Marlins.

"I don't know if it's a sense of relief. Maybe a relief that we don't have to field questions on it for years to come without actually knowing any answers."

dominance than the New England Patriots over the last two decades?

James Dolan has essentially the same net worth as does Kraft. But, Dolan is a meddling, pompous, impatient fool who's turned the New York Knicks into a punchline. The difference between the two is about how they treat people, both their customers as well as their employees. For decades, George Steinbrenner was a terrible owner of the New York Yankees. Yes, they won back-to-back World Series in 1977-78, but they essentially jumped into free agency with both feet long before anyone else. Once that started to even out around baseball, Steinbrenner's bombast and interfering only served to get in his team's way.

Only after he was suspended for a time and forced to cede control of the Yankees did The Boss eventually learn those valuable lessons. The second stage of Steinbrenner's tenure was filled with compassion for players and confidence in those he hired to run his team. It's not in any way accidental that his greatest run of sustained success coincided with his decision to start listening to those better-suited to build his teams on the field.

That's not to say that all great owners just shut up and sign the checks. Everyone has a different style of leadership. Dundon is, by all accounts, more hands-on. Those that know him talk of his energy, his passion, his instincts and his drive to be the best. He's talked extensively about taking this franchise to the next level.

I would point out that the Hurricanes have been to that level before. The only problem was that those ended up being mere visits, no matter how euphoric the runs in 2002 and 2006 might have been. Getting there, it turns out, isn't nearly as difficult as staying there. Owners named Kraft and Rooney and DeBartolo and Buss were all very different people, but they all built championship organizations that stood the test of time and defined their era.

It's an exciting time to be a Carolina Hurricanes fan. I can't wait to see — and to feel — [the impact Dundon has](#) on his new venture. If it's anything like what he's done in the past, we just might again stake our claim to the loudest house in the NHL.

Hey, and it would be nice if that began Friday night when the Caps are in town. Not only to say thank you and welcome the new boss, but also to remind everyone that a home ice advantage is a collaborative effort.



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Dundon Becomes Majority Owner of Hurricanes

Dundon owns 61 percent of team, Karmanos retains minority interest

by Michael Smith [@MSmithCanes](#) / CarolinaHurricanes.com

January 11th, 2018

WASHINGTON - It's official: Tom Dundon is now the majority owner of the Carolina Hurricanes.

Dundon's purchase transaction with Peter Karmanos is now closed, as announced by the National Hockey League on Thursday. Dundon owns 61 percent of the Hurricanes, while Karmanos retains a minority ownership interest in the club.

"I am thrilled to continue to build upon what Peter Karmanos started in Raleigh," Dundon [said in December](#) when the

purchase agreement was reached. "The Hurricanes are a team on the rise, and I believe we have an opportunity to take the franchise to the next level. I'm ready to get to work."

Dundon will be introduced at a news conference at PNC Arena on Friday at noon. NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman, Karmanos, Executive Vice President and General Manager Ron Francis and President Don Waddell will also be in attendance.

For more on Dundon, his bio is available [here](#). The News & Observer's [Luke DeCock](#) also did some tremendous reporting and [penned this profile](#) of the Hurricanes' new owner.

Recap: Darling, Canes Top Caps

Rask nets game-winner in third, Darling makes 27 saves

by Michael Smith [@MSmithCanes](#) / CarolinaHurricanes.com

January 11th, 2018

WASHINGTON - [Victor Rask](#) netted the game-winning goal with just over nine minutes left in regulation and [Scott Darling](#) made 27 saves, as the Carolina Hurricanes took the first game of a home-and-home, back-to-back set against the Washington Capitals, 3-1.

[Jordan Staal](#) opened the scoring for the Hurricanes in the second period, [Sebastian Aho](#) sealed the victory with an empty net goal in the final 90 seconds and Darling earned his first win since Dec. 16, which helped the Hurricanes halt the Capitals' 10-game home winning streak.

Here are five takeaways from tonight's game in the District.

One

A fortuitous bounce for the Hurricanes put the puck on Rask's stick on a delayed penalty sequence just past the midway point of the third period, and with the game deadlocked at one, Rask wasted no time settling the puck and firing it past Braden Holtby to give his team a lead they wouldn't relent.

[Justin Faulk](#) had the initial shot with the extra skater on - Tom Wilson was going to get penalized for a board of [Derek Ryan](#), and there's more on that in takeaway No. 5 - and

Holtby made the save. Brooks Orpik whacked at the puck in midair, which the officials deemed to be a hockey play but not possession, so they did not blow the play dead. The puck ended up on Rask's stick, and he scored his 11th goal of the season.

"It's a huge win," Rask said. "These are the games we want to win in our division, for sure. I thought we did a good job tonight."

Two

At the other end of the ice, Darling stood tall and made 27 saves on 28 shots to record his first win in nearly a month.

"I felt comfortable tonight. I haven't been playing much, so I was really excited to get the start tonight," he said. "Things haven't been going great for me the last couple of games, so I figured I should just relax and try to have some fun. That's what I did tonight."

"He played huge today. He played really well," Rask said. "That's fun to see."

"He was solid," head coach Bill Peters said. "I thought he was real good. He was calm and composed and made every save he needed to make."

The only blemish on his stats line was a goal from Lars Eller that found its way through moving bodies off a Capitals' faceoff win in the second period.



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"I don't think he saw the goal, probably," Peters said. "I don't think he picked it up."

Darling's play perhaps muddies the goaltending decision for Friday; the tentative plan was to start [Cam Ward](#) in the back-to-back situation, but maybe you roll with the hot hand.

"We've got to make an educated and smart decision," Peters said. "We'll see."

For Darling, the goal remains the same, whether it's him or No. 30 between the pipes.

"Cam's awesome. First of all, he's a great guy. We hit it off right away," he said. "Early on when I was playing every night, he was my biggest fan. Then things didn't go so well and he's been playing great, so I'm cheering for him. We're here for the team. We want to win. Obviously we both want to play, but at the end of the day, we want to make the playoffs and go deep this year. Whoever is playing better is going to play. We're a good duo."

Three

Staal made a great read on the penalty kill to open the scoring, as he intercepted a pass from John Carlson that was intended for Alex Ovechkin at the point. Instead, Staal poked it ahead and was off to the races. Ovechkin gave chase and slashed Staal hard on the shin pads - and he was going to get a penalty for this - but Staal remain poised, opened Holtby up and beat him five-hole.

"We play close games lots," Peter said. "We should be very comfortable playing in a one-goal game either way, down one or up one, whatever the scenario may be."

Four

The Capitals came into tonight's game winners of 10 straight at home. The Hurricanes came in on a bit of a slide, having one just once in their last five games, a stretch that included the first meeting with the Caps in Raleigh.

Gameday: Capitals vs. Hurricanes

by Michael Smith [@MSmithCanes](#) / [CarolinaHurricanes.com](#)

2:00 AM

Déjà vu.

This is the gameday hub, where you can find all the latest news and information you need to know for tonight's rematch between the Washington Capitals and Carolina Hurricanes. Make Hurricanes.com a regular stop throughout the day, as we update this hub with notes, videos, photos and more as puck drop draws near.

The Hurricanes will not hold a morning skate on the second half of a back-to-back with travel, but we'll be passing along any and all gameday content as we have it.

Last updated: 2:00 a.m.

"Two points in regulation is the only way you can really make up any ground," Peters said. "You better make hay when the sun shines, and it was a nice day in Washington today."

The Hurricanes were looking to clean up their defensive game, having surrendered 12 goals in their last two games, and did just that.

"It's good for our confidence," Darling said. "It's going to be close games. That's the kind of team we are. If we do the right things, we're going to get the advantage in one-goal games."

Five

[Brett Pesce](#) took an awkward spill towards the end of today's morning skate and suffered an upper-body injury as a result. He was held out of tonight's game and will be reevaluated when the team gets back to Raleigh.

"He's going to get looked at by our people and have an MRI or something done tomorrow," Peters said. "We'll know more once we get the results of that."

Ryan was boarded by Wilson in the third period, just prior to Rask tallying the game-winning goal, and Ryan did not return to the game.

"I said, 'How are you?' And he said, 'I'm fine.' I think he should be good. I think he was going through protocol," Peters said. "We'll wait and see in the morning. You know how those things are."

Up Next

These two will rematch on Friday night in Raleigh to bookend a home-and-home, back-to-back set.

"We've got to come out to a good start," Rask said. "Get home, get some rest and get back at it."

"We've got to come in ready to go," Darling said. "Whoever wants it more is going to get it tomorrow."

CANES, CAPS MEET AGAIN

2:00 a.m.

A home-and-home, back-to-back set between the Carolina Hurricanes and Washington Capitals wraps up on Friday night in Raleigh.

The game also marks the third meeting between the two teams in a span of just 11 days. The Hurricanes dropped a 5-4 overtime decision in Raleigh last week, and on Thursday night in Washington, the Canes broke a 1-1 deadlock in the third period to skate away with the 3-1 victory.

"I liked our effort. I thought we got contributions throughout the lineup. Specialty teams were good," head coach Bill Peters said. "Darls was real good for us in net. I thought he played real well."

[Scott Darling](#) made 27 saves on 28 shots in his first victory since Dec. 16. [Victor Rask](#) had the game-winning goal, scored on a delayed penalty sequence, and [Jordan Staal](#)



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and [Sebastian Aho](#) (empty net) also found the back of the net for the Canes, who snapped the Capitals' 10-game home winning streak.

"It's a huge win," Rask said. "These are the games we want to win in our division, for sure. I thought we did a good job tonight."

"It's good for our confidence," Darling said. "It's going to be close games. That's the kind of team we are. If we do the right things, we're going to get the advantage in one-goal games."

The win vaulted the Hurricanes back in to a wild card spot in the Eastern Conference with two games remaining until the team's bye week.

"Two points in regulation is the only way you can really make up any ground," Peters said. "You better make hay when the sun shines, and it was a nice day in Washington today."

The playing statuses of two Hurricanes could be in question for Friday night's rematch. [Derek Ryan](#) was boarded by Tom Wilson in the third period on Thursday, and he did not return to the game.

"I said, 'How are you?' And he said, 'I'm fine.' I think he should be good. I think he was going through protocol," Peters said after the game. "We'll wait and see in the morning. You know how those things are."

[Brett Pesce](#) was pulled out of the lineup after suffering an upper-body injury on an awkward fall late in the Canes' morning skate on Thursday.

"He's going to get looked at by our people and have an MRI or something done tomorrow," Peters said. "We'll know more once we get the results of that."

CANESPR NOTES: Staal has tallied a point in each of his last four games (2g, 2a), and he's posted eight points (4g, 4a) in his last eight games against the Capitals. ... The Canes are 10-4-1 in back-to-back games this season.

CLICKS AND CLIPPINGS

Articles

- [Recap: Darling, Canes Top Caps](#)
- [Dundon Becomes Majority Owner of Hurricanes](#)
- [Hurricanes Homegrown Guide](#)

Videos

- [Highlights: CAR 3, WSH 1](#)
- [NHL Now: Hurricanes Have New Owner](#)
- [In the Room: Noah Hanifin](#), Jan. 11

Gameday Links

- [Buy Tickets](#)
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- [Book Drive](#)
- [First Goal Contest presented by Kayem](#)



SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY

Recap and Rank 'em: Hurricanes Start Home and Home with 3-1 Win over Capitals

The Canes return home tomorrow night to try to sweep the top team in the division.

By [Zeke Lukow](#) Updated Jan 11, 2018, 10:31pm EST

A day that started with the [Carolina Hurricanes](#) opening a new chapter in their history wrapped up with the team putting on a show for their new owner.

The Hurricanes, coming off of two straight losses to the [Bruins](#) and [Lightning](#), downed the [Washington Capitals](#) 3-1 at Capital One Arena on Thursday, snapping the Caps' six-game winning streak and eleven-game streak of home wins. Starting a huge home-and-home, the Canes were able to secure a very valuable two points, worth their weight in gold in a very competitive Metropolitan Division.

The first period was an evenly matched period with both teams registering 10 shots, with multiple scoring chances each way. The major difference in the period was that [Marcus Kruger](#) took a holding penalty seven minutes into the period, but the Canes successfully killed it off

The second period featured a power play for each team, neither of which were successful. However, the Canes did tally the icebreaker on special teams. [Jordan Staal](#) was able to break up a pass on a Caps power play and spring a breakaway to eventually beat [Braden Holtby](#) to make the game 1-0.

The Caps responded to tie the game when [Lars Eller](#) buried a shot from the slot just five minutes later. [Eller](#) won an offensive zone faceoff back to [Christian Djoos](#) who fed [T.J. Oshie](#), who slipped it back to Eller in the slot. With a couple



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of bodies sliding across the crease, [Scott Darling](#) was unable to pick up the puck.

[Brett Pesce](#) was out of the lineup after suffering an injury at the morning skate, breaking up the familiar pairing of Pesce and Jaccob Slavin. Slavin instead played with [Justin Faulk](#), who read each others' play well and were able to form a successful pairing.

The final stanza featured a goal by [Victor Rask](#) on a delayed penalty to give the Canes the lead. It was not an easy ride for the Canes to close out the game as they had to kill off a slashing penalty by [Klas Dahlbeck](#), but they did so and [Sebastian Aho](#) sealed it with an empty-netter with 1:29 to go.

Scott Darling, making his first appearance since a relief role in the loss to Boston last weekend, looked better than he had in his recent starts. He plays better when he is able to stop the first couple of shots and get into a rhythm. Early in the first, he was a little jumpy, but once he stopped the first few shots you could see his composure change. He tracked the puck much better and seemed to feel the movement of the play naturally, taking a blistering slap shot from [Alex Ovechkin](#) late in the game but coming out relatively unscathed.

The teams will fly to Raleigh tonight for the rematch at PNC Arena tomorrow evening, preceded by the press conference introducing Tom Dundon as the club's new owner.

Around the Room

Victor Rask

It's huge to win these types of games, these are games we want to win in our division for sure. We needed to skate and not stand still to try to make plays where plays can be made. We needed to get to the net.

On his goal:

I'm not sure how it got to me but Faulk shot it and somehow it bounced straight out to me and I put it on net.

On the home and home:

It's tough, we need to get home and get some rest so we can come out strong.

Sebastian Aho:

They've had a pretty good run here at home, they are a tough team to play against. We wanted to play fast. Darling was really good for us tonight and he made a couple of tough saves for us.

Scott Darling:

I felt comfortable tonight, I haven't been playing much, but I was real excited to get the start. You know things haven't been going great for me lately, so I tried to relax and have fun tonight and that's what I did.

A win like this is good, it's good for our confidence and confidence in our system. When we play the right way were not going to win 6-1, it's going to be a close game, that's the kind of team we are. If we do the right things we're going to get the advantage on one goal games.

It feels great tonight but it doesn't affect tomorrow. We have to come out ready to win. We're both in back to backs and traveling tonight so it the same thing. Whoever comes out and wants it more tomorrow night will get it.

On the Caps streak:

They've been playing great, they're a great team, but every streak has to come to an end and we're happy to be the ones to do it.

On the Sale of the Canes:

It's exciting. We've all had a chance to meet him, he seems like a great guy and he has a lot of great plans. We're excited to see it unfold.

On making early saves:

Its huge, getting some early saves, feeling the puck and getting some clean saves gets you into the game right away.

On sharing goaltending duties:

First off Cam Ward is a great guy. We hit it off immediately. Early on when I was playing a lot he was my biggest fan. As of late hes been playing a lot and we're just cheering for him, we want to win. Obviously we both want to play, but we want to make the playoffs and we want to go deep this year and whoever's playing better is going to play.

Bill Peters

They're still rolling at home, I liked the contributions throughout the lineup. Our power play only had one kick at the can but we had four solid chances, and Darling played well for us tonight.

On one goal games:

I think we have won a lot of those myself. 8-7-8 on one goal games, I guess we have to get better thats .500ish and that's not going to get it done. We should feel comfortable playing in one goal games down one, up one, whatever the situation may be. We are going to have to win a couple more of those.

When asked about Scott Darling:

I thought that was a real good save on Ovechkin at the end on that 6-on-5 he came across and got his upper body up. I thought he was real good. He was calm, he was composed. He made ever save he needed to make. I don't think he saw the goal, I haven't talked to him but it looked like he picked it up late.

He gives me something to think about tomorrow we have to make an educated decision tomorrow.

On the Metro Division

Two points in regulation is the only way that you can make up any ground. The overtime point or the three point game doesn't do much for you. We were talking today about how we were up one late in the Washington game at home. They had a cross corner dump we didn't handle well, we hit a crossbar in overtime and they came down and won it, that's how close these games are.



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We're going to play two more games here and then we're going to go on a bye and we're going to lose some ground, that's the reality.

Injuries:

I spoke to Derek Ryan and he said he was fine. I think he should be good, and there wasn't enough time for him to come back, but we will see in the morning. Pesce left the morning skate banged up with an upper body injury. He's going to get looked at by our people, get an MRI and we will see the results.

Tom Dundon Closes Purchase of Majority Ownership of Carolina Hurricanes, Press Conference Noon Friday

It's done. It's finally done.

By [Brian LeBlanc@bdleblanc](mailto:Brian_LeBlanc@bdleblanc) Updated Jan 11, 2018, 5:10pm EST

Update 4:50 p.m.: The purchase is complete and Tom Dundon is the new majority owner of the Carolina Hurricanes. Dundon will be introduced to the media at a press conference tomorrow at noon at PNC Arena.

Also in attendance at the press conference will be former majority owner and now minority partner Peter Karmanos, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, Hurricanes president Don Waddell and general manager Ron Francis.

In an update to previously reported information, the News and Observer now reports that Dundon will acquire a 61% stake in the club, up from the earlier reports of him purchasing a 51% share of the team.

Canes Country will have full coverage and reaction from tomorrow's announcement. Below is our story from this morning, and following that is the release from the team.

A new day has arrived for the [Carolina Hurricanes](#).

Citing multiple sources involved in the transaction, [the News and Observer is reporting today](#) that the sale of the Hurricanes from Peter Karmanos to Dallas businessman Thomas Dundon will close today. A press conference with Dundon and NHL commissioner Gary Bettman has been scheduled for tomorrow in Raleigh.

On the Sale:

It's exciting, he's a good guy and he's been around the guys a lot. He was on the trip to Nashville and he was on this trip for a while. He's got lots of energy and a lot of ideas, excited about the team and the opportunity to implement some of the things he has done on the business side in his life. Obviously I think Ron has done a great job of making our team more competitive in the three years I've been here and making us more competitive in the minors.

The NHL Board of Governors has approved the transfer of the franchise, the last remaining hurdle to Dundon becoming majority owner. He will own just over half of the franchise, which the N&O reports is valued at \$505 million.

The paper also reports that Dundon plans to keep the Canes' hockey operations staff, including general manager Ron Francis and head coach Bill Peters, in place after he assumes majority ownership.

This is a developing story and will be updated throughout the day.

NEW OWNER TOM DUNDON TO BE INTRODUCED FRIDAY

News conference to take place at PNC Arena at noon

National Hockey League Commissioner Gary Bettman will introduce new Carolina Hurricanes majority owner Tom Dundon at a news conference at PNC Arena on Friday. The league announced that Dundon today became majority owner of the Hurricanes through the formal closing of his purchase transaction with Peter Karmanos, with Karmanos retaining a minority ownership interest in the Club.

Hurricanes television partner FOX Sports Carolinas will carry the news conference live, as well as streaming it via FOX Sports Go.

TriangleSportsNetwork

Done deal! Tom Dundon becomes Carolina Hurricanes majority owner

Dundon to be formally introduced at press conference Friday

[January 12, 2018 Peter Koutroumpis Carolina Hockey Network, Carolina Hurricanes, Triangle Sports Network, Triangle Sports Roundup](#)



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editor@trianglesportsnet.com

RALEIGH, N.C. – Tom Dundon is the new majority owner of the [Carolina Hurricanes](#), the team announced on Thursday.

To officially introduce and recognize Dundon accordingly, [National Hockey League](#) (NHL) Commissioner Gary Bettman will be on hand to do so at a press conference that will be held at PNC Arena at Noon on Friday.

Dundon, who formally closed his purchase transaction with Peter Karmanos, Jr. on Thursday, via league approval, will take over operation of the organization with Karmanos retaining a minority ownership interest in the Club.

The process comes to closure a little over a month since Dundon had signed an agreement to purchase a majority stake in team as was announced on Dec. 7, 2017.

“I am thrilled to continue to build upon what Peter Karmanos started in Raleigh,” Dundon said in a statement at that time.

“The Hurricanes are a team on the rise, and I believe we have an opportunity to take the franchise to the next level. I’m ready to get to work.”

Dundon who resides in Dallas, Texas with his wife Veruschka and their five children, is the chairman and managing partner of Dundon Capital Partners, a Dallas-based private investment firm.

He has been involved in investment activities that have spanned the entertainment, healthcare, real estate and hospitality, technology, automotive and financial services sectors.

Karmanos originally purchased the Hartford Whalers franchise in 1994 before he moved it to Raleigh and renamed it as the Carolina Hurricanes in 1997.

Since relocation, under Karmanos’ ownership, the team has captured three division titles, two conference titles and the 2006 Stanley Cup Championship.

In 2015, [Karmanos was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame](#) in the category of Builder, in recognition of his more than four-decades of achievements and contributions to the sport.

In seeking a buyer over the past few years, Karmanos was adamant in finding an individual who would work to keep the team in Raleigh while he could transition out of any ownership of the club in coming years after a sale was completed.

“Tom has had tremendous success in business, and I fully expect that to continue as he takes control of the Hurricanes,” Karmanos said.

“I look forward to working with him, and bringing another Stanley Cup to North Carolina.”

THE ATHLETIC

LeBrun: Tom Dundon learning quickly after taking over ownership of the Hurricanes

By [Pierre LeBrun](#), 14 hours ago

Dallas businessman Tom Dundon is now officially in control of the Carolina Hurricanes and one senses he won’t take long to put his stamp on the hockey club.

When you consider that the new Hurricanes owner has been picking the brain of Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban, that should give you an idea of where things are headed.

“He’s one of my best buddies,” Dundon 46, told *The Athletic* over the phone Thursday after the Hurricanes sale to him was officially announced. “I think as far as you take care of the players and the fans, I’d say he’s best in class the way they do it, those two things; and those are probably the two most important things to me.”

Dundon said already the Hurricanes training staff is working with the Mavs’ training staff in terms of sharing ideas as to best practices when it comes to nutrition and rest, etc.

“You always make sure you have the best practices,” Dundon said. “So yeah, Mark has been extremely useful and I think we’re making him a fan of the ‘Canes for sure.”

Dundon’s initial purchase agreement was announced last month at the NHL Board of Governors, a deal that at the time would see him gain control of 52 percent of the team. But his

share in the final agreement approved by the NHL has since grown to 61 percent, sources confirmed Thursday, as he bought out additional existing limited partners (the overall franchise value is believed to have been placed at between \$505-\$550 million US which includes incurred debt). Dundon can buy the remaining shares of the team from longtime owner Peter Karmanos in three years as per terms of the agreement.

While Thursday marked his first day as official majority owner, the reality is that Dundon jumped feet first last month into the Hurricanes operation.

“Pete was kind enough to let us get going right after signing (last month),” said Dundon. “I’ve been acting like I’ve been in charge for a while.”

Dundon accompanied the Hurricanes on road games to Toronto and Nashville last month and talked to people in both organizations, not to mention getting the pulse of players and people in his own organization.

“It’s interesting. Obviously I’m fortunate that they’ve done a good job on the hockey side here,” Dundon said. “They’re some good players. We’re competitive. We’re probably early in whatever that window is, I guess everybody wants to say their window should be permanent, but I’m fortunate to come



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in on the hockey side with something that's able to compete now and hopefully incremental improvements from here."

Commissioner Gary Bettman did his best to put to rest at the Board of Governors meeting any notion that Dundon was buying the team to move it, citing the fact that any franchise purchase agreement stipulates having to keep the team in that market for at least seven years.

Still, I asked Dundon about the idea he might move the Hurricanes.

"I like the market. It's not even something I've ever thought about," Dundon responded. "As a matter of fact, what we're focused on is improving the fan experience which means adding amenities to the building and also extending the lease. So, I'd say that's the priority. I literally have not spent one moment thinking about any sort of move. It would be almost impossible to conceive of that happening. I want to get this building improved and the fan experience improved

immediately. So that comes with a lease extension which I intend to sign."

The arena lease expires after the 2023-24 season.

Dundon has a varied business background, which you can [read about here in his official Hurricanes bio](#), which underlines his willingness to try new things even if he doesn't know much about them.

What's clear from talking to him is that he's ready to try and revamp a whole lot with the Hurricanes.

"Look, I messed up lots of times but I don't accept it though," said Dundon. "We're not all going to get it right the first time, but we're going to keep trying to fix it and expect everything to end up in a good spot. It's never as easy as you had hoped. During this whole process (while buying the Hurricanes), I've tried to talk to many people. I'm trying to learn and hope to improve on what everyone else is doing."



Under new ownership, Hurricanes host Capitals

RALEIGH, N.C. --- It's bound to be quite a day around the Carolina Hurricanes on Friday.

by [STATS](#)

7h ago • 2 min read Update 7h ago

RALEIGH, N.C. --- It's bound to be quite a day around the [Carolina Hurricanes](#) on Friday.

A new owner officially takes over and the Hurricanes take on the [Washington Capitals](#) at PNC Arena in a rematch of Thursday night's game in Washington.

The Hurricanes are already riding a high with the 3-1 victory against the Metropolitan Division-leading Capitals before heading home after the game in anticipation of the back-end of the games on consecutive nights.

On Friday afternoon, the formal introduction of new owner Tom Dundon takes place with [NHL](#) commissioner Gary Bettman attending.

The Hurricanes (20-15-8) will look to deliver a welcoming victory for the new owner.

"Not a lot changes between games," Carolina coach Bill Peters said of facing the same team on consecutive nights. "It's fresh in your memory."

The back-to-back setup against the same opponent isn't all that common.

"I think you've got to take it one period at a time," Capitals coach Barry Trotz said. "Win the period and try to collect as many periods as you can."

Carolina goalie Scott Darling made 27 saves Thursday night, so that could make for a tough decision for Peters because goalie Cam Ward has been on a good roll for the past month.

"We've got a back-to-back, we anticipate using both of them," Peters said. "We'll see. We'll fly home and make an assessment of the game."

Dundon has spent time around the team in recent weeks, so his ownership role doesn't mark his first up close look of the Hurricanes.

Thursday night's game was tough for the Capitals (27-14-3), who completed a three-game homestand.

Trotz said he has some flexibility with this lineup and he's trying to use that while it's available.

"I look at our schedule, we try to keep some guys in the lineup," Trotz said. "So, I'm rotating (off) a player each time. It is a reality of our schedule and where we are. We're trying to get everybody involved and keep them involved."

With the end of the five-game winning streak, the Capitals want to start another.

"It's going to be playoff mode from this time on," said Trotz, who expects his team to play at a spirited level. "The group has found its own new identity. I think we can be better in a



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number of areas. We can be better in some of our decision-making and puck management areas. Those two areas come to mind. Some of the details in our game need to be tightened."

Defeating the Capitals is a bonus for the Hurricanes, who lost to Washington by 5-4 in overtime earlier this month at home.

"We have to tighten up," Peters said of the plan against Washington. "What they get they have to earn. We know how to play when we play the right way."

This will be the first Carolina home game since defenseman Noah Hanifin was selected to participate in the NHL All-Star weekend.

"I'm excited," Hanifin said. "It should be a great experience."

The Hurricanes might be in line for a roster move after defenseman Brett Pesce missed Thursday night's game with an upper-body injury suffered earlier in the day during the morning skate.



Hurricanes end Capitals' home winning streak at 10

Washington loses for first time in six games

by Brian McNally / NHL.com Correspondent

January 11th, 2018

WASHINGTON -- [Victor Rask](#) scored the go-ahead goal midway through the third period, and the Carolina Hurricanes ended the Washington Capitals' NHL-best 10-game home winning streak with a 3-1 victory at Capital One Arena on Thursday.

The Capitals (27-14-3), who also had their season-high five-game winning streak end, had not lost at home since the Los Angeles Kings defeated them 5-2 on Nov. 30.

"They've been playing great. They're a great team," Carolina goalie [Scott Darling](#) said. "Every streak has to come to an end, so I'm happy that we were the ones to do it."

[Jordan Staal](#) and [Sebastian Aho](#) scored, and Darling made 27 saves for the Hurricanes (20-15-8), who won for the first time in three games.

[Braden Holtby](#) made 30 saves for Washington, which plays at Carolina on Friday.

Rask's goal came during a delayed penalty call on Capitals forward [Tom Wilson](#) for a hit from behind on forward [Derek Ryan](#). With an extra attacker on for the Hurricanes, Rask scored from the left face-off circle off the rebound of [Justin Faulk](#)'s shot from the point at 10:54.

"I'm not sure how it got to me," Rask said. "But Faulk shot it and somehow it bounced straight out to me, and I just tried to put it on net."

Darling helped keep the game 0-0 well into the second period. At 8:47 of the period, he pivoted to make a pad save on [Jay Beagle](#), who tried to jam a shot past him from in front.

Staal scored shorthanded on a breakaway at 11:33 of the second period. He poked away a cross-ice pass from Carlson inside the Carolina blue line and scored on a backhand to make it 1-0.

Washington tied it 1-1 at 16:05 of the second when [Lars Eller](#) beat Darling with a shot from the high slot after the Capitals won a face-off. Eller has scored in three straight games.

"It's always disappointing to lose at home," Eller said. "But today we probably didn't deserve much better. It was not really our best game, our best effort, and when that happens other teams might beat you. Even here."

Aho scored into an empty net with 1:29 remaining in the third to make it 3-1.

Carolina moved into fifth place in the Metropolitan Division.

"Two points in regulation is the only way you can really make up any ground," Hurricanes coach Bill Peters said. "The overtime point or the three-point game doesn't do much for you. We were up one late in the Washington game at home (on Jan. 2) with probably seven, eight, nine minutes to go and [lost 5-4 in overtime]. That's how close it is. That's the reality of it."

Goal of the game

Rask's goal at 10:54 of the third period.

Save of the game



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Darling's save on Beagle at 8:47 of the second period.

Highlight of the game

Staal's shorthanded goal at 11:33 of the second period.

They said it

"[The Capitals] had been on a pretty good run here at home, and they're a tough team to play against. But so are we." -- *Hurricanes forward Sebastian Aho*

"We're going to have to tighten up a few areas. They were just a little more desperate in the battle. And then special teams got the shorthanded goal for them. We weren't good enough." -- *Capitals coach Barry Trotz*

Dundon becomes majority owner of Hurricanes

Sale from Karmanos official, will own 61 percent of team

NHL.com [@NHL](#)

January 11th, 2018

Tom Dundon became majority owner of the Carolina Hurricanes on Thursday.

The NHL announced the completion of the sale, which was agreed to in December. The NHL Board of Governors previously approved the transaction.

Dundon will own 61 percent of the Hurricanes, with Peter Karmanos retaining a minority stake.

"I've watched hockey for a long time and I enjoy it," Dundon told The News & Observer in a video posted Thursday. "But I think the part that is most enjoyable is there's a lot of moving pieces, and you get to figure out, hopefully, how to help find a way to win, or help people be successful.

"There's everything from how you treat the players and giving them an advantage, and the resources you do with the coaches, and how you market the team, and how you generate entertainment in the building that brings energy that hopefully helps you win.

Need to know

Ryan left the game in the third period after the hit by Wilson. There was no update. ... Carolina defenseman [Brett Pesce](#) was a late scratch. He sustained an upper-body injury during the morning skate and will have an MRI on Friday. ... Capitals forward [Andre Burakovsky](#) (illness) was a late scratch. He was not expected to travel for the game Friday.

What's next

Hurricanes: Host the Washington Capitals on Friday (7:30 p.m. ET; FS-CR, NBCSWA+, NHL.TV)

Capitals: At the Carolina Hurricanes on Friday (7:30 p.m. ET; FS-CR, NBCSWA+, NHL.TV)

"Primarily, it's because I like things where you keep score, and this is a way where you can do that even though you can't play yourself."

Dundon said he was 100 percent confident in general manager Ron Francis and coach Bill Peters. The Hurricanes have made the Stanley Cup Playoffs once (2008-09) since winning the Cup in 2005-06.

"I talked to a lot of people before I decided to do this, in the hockey business," Dundon said. "And I think we're pretty lucky there. You have to give the previous owner a lot of credit for what he put together.

"I hope we can help them, I hope we can add some resources where appropriate, but I think it's incremental gains, I don't think it's fundamental. It's not foundational."

Dundon will be introduced at PNC Arena on Friday. The 46-year-old is chairman and managing partner of Dundon Capital Partners, a Dallas-based private investment firm.

The team had been owned by Karmanos since 1994, when he purchased the Hartford Whalers. He moved them to North Carolina in 1997, when they were renamed. They played in Greensboro for two seasons before moving to Raleigh.

Karmanos was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in the category of builder in 2015.

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Articles from outlets covering the Hurricanes' upcoming opponents and league-wide news

1092660 Carolina Hurricanes

News Observer LOADED: 01.12.2018

Four questions with new Hurricanes owner Thomas Dundon

1092661 Carolina Hurricanes

BY LUKE DECOCK AND AND CHIP ALEXANDER

In first hours, Dundon wasting no time putting his stamp on the Hurricanes

Four questions with the new Carolina Hurricanes owner, Thomas Dundon.

BY LUKE DECOCK

Q: Why do you want to own a hockey team?

A: Because they keep score, mostly. I've watched hockey for a long time and I enjoy it, but I think the part that is most enjoyable is there's a lot of moving pieces and you get to figure out, hopefully, how to help find a way to win or help people be successful. There's everything from how you treat the players and giving them an advantage and the resources you do with the coaches and how you market the team and how you generate entertainment in the building that brings energy that hopefully helps you win. So primarily it's because I like things where they keep score. This is a way you can do that even though you can't play yourself.

Q: Why the Hurricanes?

A: It felt like there was value that could be created here. And the fact that the team is in a position where if you do a few things, make a couple more things go right, you have a chance to be really, really good. They're good now. The definition of really good is doing it for a long time. I think they can be competitive for a long time. Everybody says they want to be patient, but I'm not patient. We can do a few more things to continue the momentum is better than a situation where you could go backwards. I don't want to go backwards.

Q: You're obviously inheriting an entire operation here. On the hockey side, are you confident in (general manager) Ron (Francis) and (head coach) Bill (Peters) at this point?

A: Yes, 100 percent. I talked to a lot of people before I decided to do this in the hockey business. I think we're lucky here. I think you have to give the previous owner a lot of credit for what he put together. I hope we can help them. I hope we can add some resources where appropriate but I think it's incremental gains, it's not fundamental. It's not foundational.

Q: What are your Day 1 priorities?

A: I think the top priority is the fan experience. I think we've got to give the fan more value. Part of that is the team winning. They're winning. They're competitive. Part of it is getting more people in the arena and having them feel like they're getting value. We've got to give them a better experience. It's got to be somewhere they'd rather be than be at home. I think we've got some opportunities there.

RALEIGH-Thomas Dundon was shooting baskets on the floor at PNC Arena Thursday afternoon when the last wire transfer went through. At that moment, the 46-year-old was one pro forma NHL signature away from owning the Carolina Hurricanes.

For Dundon, the Dallas billionaire who bought the team out of a competitive spirit and belief he can find a better way to do things, his first hours as the owner of a major-league team didn't feel any different. Since reaching a purchase agreement with Peter Karmanos in December, Dundon has been meeting with Hurricanes employees and players, making plans and getting ready for this day.

WE'RE QUESTIONING EVERYTHING.

New Canes owner Thomas Dundon

Even before the sale went through Thursday afternoon, giving him 61 percent of the team in a deal that valued the franchise at \$550 million, Dundon already had arena employees working on the first behind-the-scenes changes, taking measurements and drawing up plans. By the time Dundon makes his first public appearance Friday morning, alongside Karmanos and NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, things will already have changed for the Hurricanes.

And they will continue to change.

"We're questioning everything," Dundon said Thursday, and they might as well stencil that above the door.

Not the locker room door, though. Dundon said he's happy with the work done by general manager Ron Francis and coach Bill Peters and loves the team's upward ascendance. A lot of what Dundon will do is drawn from the playbook his friend Mark Cuban put together when he bought the Dallas Mavericks, but people forget Cuban inherited Steve Nash and Dirk Nowitzki. The same might be said of Dundon someday. His only real complaint right now is that the players aren't big enough stars in this market – and he wants to do everything he can to change that.

As for everything else, from concessions to parking to ticketing, Dundon's first priority is to upgrade the fan experience, to take away excuses not to



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go to games. There may even be noticeable changes by the time the Hurricanes take the ice against the Washington Capitals on Friday in the second half of a back-to-back set that's nothing short of critical to the Hurricanes' playoff hopes.

In the longer term, expect to see movement on a new practice rink and the long-delayed renovations to the south entrance plaza of PNC Arena – revised to include a desperately needed sports bar for pregame entertainment.

THE PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THE WAY WE'VE BEEN DOING IT IN THE PAST ISN'T GETTING US RESULTS. WE'RE GOING TO WORK WITH THEM AND HELP THEM FIGURE IT OUT.

Thomas Dundon

In short, Dundon is saying all the right things that fans have wanted to hear for a long time, with the exception of his geography. With five kids, all 16 or younger, he plans to keep his home base in Dallas – but plans to be here as often as he feels he needs to be. He's been "retired" for almost three years. He's been home a lot. He's ready to dig into his next project.

"The people understand the way we've been doing it in the past isn't getting us results," Dundon said Thursday. "We're going to work with them and help them figure it out."

Karmanos will still be around as a sort of senior adviser, but he is believed to support the incoming wave of change and understands it's necessary for the franchise to move forward – and that it was not something he could do at his age and with his resources.

His final act as majority owner was quite a gift to the franchise. He found a new owner who was willing to keep the team here, to invest, to innovate, to drive the franchise and arena forward into the future. That may or may not work out, but it's all anyone could ask of Karmanos as he exits the stage.

So these are going to be different, disruptive days under Dundon, for better or for worse. He's young, energetic, technologically savvy and analytically minded. Things are going to change, and fast. How fast? Fans might even be able to detect subtle differences by Friday night.

Dundon has been preparing for weeks for this day. He's not going to wait around to start doing things his way.

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1092663 Carolina Hurricanes

State, local leaders hope Canes' growth under new owner will keep pace with Raleigh's

BY HENRY GARGAN

RALEIGH-Raleigh would relish seeing its only professional sports team grow as quickly as it has in recent years.

The Carolina Hurricanes' sale Thursday to Dallas businessman Thomas Dundon is the first time the team has changed hands since it came to Raleigh in 1997, when the city was about 200,000 people smaller than it is today. Local leaders hope Dundon's promises to shake things up will bring more of the city behind the Hurricanes, whose attendance ranks 30th out of 31 NHL teams.

Peter Karmanos Jr., the Hurricanes' majority owner, indicated in recent years that he was seeking to sell his majority stake in the team.

Empty seats at PNC Arena, where the Hurricanes play their home games, led some to speculate that a new owner might move the franchise – perhaps to Quebec.

But John Burns, a member of the Wake County Board of Commissioners and an avid hockey fan, echoed the NHL brass's insistence that a move was never seriously considered.

"I've been assured repeatedly by people in the organization that there was never a question of the team moving," Burns said. "This market was too good for the future of the NHL. The attendance issues are related to them not winning consistently – it's no indication that the market itself is the problem."

Burns compared Dundon's style to that of Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban, a friend of Dundon's. Cuban's reputation for treating players well allowed him to woo high-caliber players to Dallas. Burns also said Wake County itself has the potential to be a recruiting asset for the Hurricanes.

"From what I understand, players come here and stay here," Burns said. "There are a lot of retired NHL players here, in Cary and in Raleigh."

Raleigh Councilman Corey Branch, a native of the city, acknowledged that the team has always faced an uphill battle for attention against the area's bevy of successful college sports programs.

"But I think with the new owners, there's definitely a chance and opportunity to broaden the scope and exposure of the team to all parts of the city," Branch said.

Mayor Nancy McFarlane said she'd like the city to work more closely with the Hurricanes' management than it has in the past. She recalled the team's 2006 Stanley Cup run and how that season brought the city together behind the Hurricanes and said there was more the city and team could do to help each other out.

"We're obviously very excited they're planning to stay because they are a huge part of this city," she said. "The team is an economic asset, yes, but they're also a big part of our identity."

North Carolina FC owner Stephen Malik said he has already met with Dundon and came away impressed.

"I've had some conversations with him because I'm thrilled we've got a guy who's going to ramp up the professionalism and commitment to pro sports here," Malik said. "I found the guy to be energetic and definitely somebody who wants to win."

As for potential synergies or partnerships between the two franchises, Malik said he foresees opportunities there as NCFC pursues an MLS expansion bid.

"I think there's lots of things we can do together," he said. "Some of that is obvious to everyone, isn't it?"

Governor Roy Cooper, a hockey fan himself, also praised Dundon's decision to invest in the Hurricanes.

"The Carolina Hurricanes are a valuable economic asset to our state, and Mr. Dundon has made a wise choice in buying this team and keeping it here," Cooper said in a statement to the N&O Thursday. "I'm ready for Stanley Cup playoff action."

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1092664 Carolina Hurricanes

Here are the highs and the lows of the 20-year history of the Carolina Hurricanes

BY J. MIKE BLAKE



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The Carolina Hurricanes are about to change owners.

In the 20 years since the move to Raleigh from Hartford, Conn., memorable players such as Ron Francis, Rod Brind'Amour and Eric Staal have come and gone. Five playoff teams in the team's first 11 seasons resulted in two Stanley Cup Finals appearances and one title.

Here is a timeline of the Canes years under Peter Karmanos in Raleigh:

The Hurricanes franchise through the years

Oct. 12, 1972: The Hartford Whalers, members of the World Hockey Association, begin their first season.

June 22, 1979: Whalers join an expanding NHL as the WHA dies out.

Sept. 7, 1988: Franchise is sold to Donald Conrad and Richard Gordon.

June 28, 1994: Peter Karmanos, Thomas Thewes and Jim Rutherford purchase the Whalers for \$47.5 million.

Nov. 6, 1995: Whalers hire Paul Maurice as head coach.

March 26, 1997: Franchise announces plans to leave Hartford at the end of the season.

May 6, 1997: Raleigh officially named as new franchise location. The Hurricanes name and logo are rolled out over the the next two months.

Oct. 1, 1997: The Hurricanes open up the regular season on the road in Tampa. It's the first of two seasons the team's home games are played in Greensboro while the Entertainment and Sports Arena (now PNC Arena) is built next to N.C. State's Carter-Finley Stadium.

July 13, 1998: Hurricanes sign former Whalers great Ron Francis, who had been traded to Pittsburgh in 1991.

Oct. 29, 1999: Raleigh's long wait to host a Hurricanes game is over. In the first home game played at what's now PNC Arena, the Hurricanes defeat the Washington Capitals 3-2.

Jan. 23, 2000: Rod Brind'Amour is picked up in a trade with Philadelphia.

May 28, 2002: The Hurricanes clinch a trip to their first Stanley Cup Finals. Martin Gelinis scores in overtime to win Game 6 in Toronto by a 2-1 score, winning the Eastern Conference Finals 4-2.

June 13, 2002: The Hurricanes fall 3-2 in Game 5 of the Stanley Cup Finals to Detroit. The Hurricanes had won Game 1 on the road but lost the next four, including Game 3 in triple overtime.

June 21, 2003: The Hurricanes select Eric Staal second overall in the NHL Draft. He plays for the team one season later.

Dec. 15, 2003: Peter Laviolette is hired as head coach, replacing Paul Maurice, who had been the coach before the franchise changed cities.

March 9, 2004: Francis, the franchise's all-time leading scorer, is traded to Toronto. He retires in 2005 and returns to the franchise as director of player development in 2006 and is now the team's general manager.

June 26-27, 2004: The Hurricanes host the NHL Draft at PNC Arena, the last NHL event before the lockout that wipes out the entire 2004-05 season.

Oct. 5, 2005: Goalie Cam Ward makes his NHL debut. He would become a Conn Smythe Trophy winner for MVP of the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

June 1, 2006: The Hurricanes head back to the Stanley Cup Finals after defeating Buffalo 4-2 in Game 7 of the Eastern Conference Finals.

June 19, 2006: Hurricanes become Stanley Cup champions, winning 3-1 in Game 7 against the Edmonton Oilers.

Sept. 28, 2008: Thomas Thewes dies. He had been Karmanos' business partner for decades and helped found Compuware with him.

April 28, 2009: One of the Hurricanes' most memorable games comes in Game 7 of a first round series against New Jersey. Down 3-2 with 1:20 left, Jussi Jokinen scores to tie it. With 32 seconds left, Eric Staal scores the game-winner for a 4-3 victory.

May 26, 2009: For the third time since coming to Raleigh, the Hurricanes are in the Eastern Conference Finals. But on this day, they're swept by Pittsburgh, falling 4-1 to lose the series 4-0.

June 30, 2010: Brind'Amour retires.

Jan. 28-30, 2011: NHL All-Star Weekend comes to Raleigh. Staal is a captain of one of the two teams.

April 27, 2013: A lockout-shortened 48-game season ends with a new record in average attendance: 17,560 (17th in league, 23rd by stadium capacity). It's the only time, other than 2007, that the team has topped the 17,000 mark on a season.

June 6, 2014: Jim Rutherford resigns as president.

Sept. 22, 2014: Karmonos announces he's entertaining offers to sell his majority interest in the Hurricanes.

Feb. 28, 2016: Team trades Staal to the New York Rangers.

April 9, 2017: The eighth straight season of missing the playoffs concludes, and with the league's lowest attendance – 11,776 fans per game (63 percent capacity).

Jan. 11, 2018. NHL approves sale of the team to Thomas Dundon.

News Observer LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092665 Carolina Hurricanes

Thomas Dundon, a man of many ideas, takes over the Carolina Hurricanes

BY LUKE DECOCK AND AND CHIP ALEXANDER

RALEIGH—Thomas Dundon, the new owner of the Carolina Hurricanes, comes across as a man of many ideas, constantly in motion, looking to make changes and move forward.

Dundon, a self-made billionaire from Dallas, finalized the deal Thursday in which he took over majority ownership of the Hurricanes from Peter Karmanos Jr., the National Hockey League announced. Dundon will own 61 percent of the NHL team, which was valued at \$550 million, with an option to buy the remainder in three years.

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman will join Dundon, Karmanos and Ron Francis, the Hurricanes' executive vice president and general manager, at a press conference Friday at PNC Arena to discuss the ownership changeover.

Dundon, 46, has no background in professional sports but knows how to operate a successful business and already has analyzed much of the Hurricanes' organization and operation. He also likes to win.

Asked Thursday why he wanted to own a hockey team, Dundon said, "Because they keep score, mostly."

"I've watched hockey for a long time and I enjoy it, but I think the part that's most enjoyable is there are a lot of moving pieces and you get to figure out, hopefully, how to find a way to win or help people be successful. There's everything from how you treat the players and giving them an advantage, and the resources you do with the coaches, and how you market the team and how you generate entertainment in the building that brings energy, that hopefully helps you win."



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Likes direction of the team

Karmanos has been the team's majority owner since 1994, moving the franchise to North Carolina in 1997 from Hartford, Conn., and celebrating a Stanley Cup championship in 2006. Karmanos, 74, will retain an equity share in the team.

"I am tickled pink," Karmanos said in an interview. "I've been looking for a partner since my partner (Thomas Thewes) died in 2009 and I've got one, a good one."

Dundon said he likes the direction of the team under Francis and Canes coach Bill Peters – "Yes, 100 percent," he said. He sees a young team on an upward trajectory, which was a selling point.

"Everyone says they want to be patient but I'm not patient," Dundon said. "The fact we can do a few more things to continue the momentum is better than going into a situation where you sort of have to go backwards. I didn't want to go backwards."

Dundon said he would not hesitate to pursue some of the NHL's higher-priced free agents. While not naming names, that could include such players as center John Tavares of the New York Islanders, who will be an unrestricted free agent after the season if not re-signed by the Isles.

[Dallas businessman signs purchase agreement to buy controlling interest in Hurricanes]

Dundon said his first priority would be in improving the fan experience at PNC Arena. He is scrutinizing every aspect of the game-day experience, from traffic flow and parking to food and beer prices.

"We have to give the fan more value," Dundon said. "Part of that is the team winning. But it's getting more people in the arena and making them feel they're somewhere they'd rather be rather than being at home."

The interview with Dundon on Thursday was at courtside at PNC Arena. He soon grabbed a basketball and got off a few jumpers – he's a left-hander – and said he would attend the N.C. State basketball game Thursday night against Clemson.

Staying in Raleigh

Dundon made his fortune in the subprime auto lending industry. He and his five children live in Dallas.

Karmanos joined Thewes, his former business partner, in buying the Hartford Whalers in 1994 – former general manager Jim Rutherford also had a share of the team – and relocated the franchise to Raleigh. Renamed the Carolina Hurricanes, the team moved into PNC Arena in 1999, reached the Stanley Cup final in 2002 and won the Stanley Cup in 2006.

In recent years, Karmanos first looked to add investors in the Canes, then to sell a controlling interest in the team. A group headed by sports attorney Chuck Greenberg put together a term sheet that had Karmanos' approval, but Greenberg had trouble lining up enough investors to meet Karmanos' selling price.

Dundon stepped in and agreed to a sale agreement in December. The franchise will remain in Raleigh.

"What set Tom apart was one, he's a solid business guy," Karmanos said. "He's willing to learn and listen and he's energetic. He can put some additional capital around the team it really needs."

Passionate about winning

Dundon, a friend of trend-setting Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban, is expected to make sweeping changes to the team's business operations, in-game presentation and player comforts while leaving general manager Ron Francis and coach Bill Peters in place.

Dundon accompanied the team on a two-game road trip before Christmas to Toronto and Nashville, and has been able to talk with some of the coaches and players.

"I think he's pretty passionate about trying to make a winner out of this place," assistant coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "That's pretty clear when you talk to him."

"I don't think he necessarily has seen a lot of hockey. He certainly didn't grow up with it. But when he talks about the things he wants to do, the passion is there for sure."

"He wants to win now, which I like. We're not here to just be OK but here to win and win it all. I think that's why he's getting involved."

News Observer LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092666 Carolina Hurricanes

An unlikely duo brought the Hurricanes from Hartford to Raleigh

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

Peter Karmanos Jr., unhappy in Connecticut, was looking for a new city for his NHL franchise.

Steve Stroud, then chairman of the Centennial Authority, was looking for another tenant to share a new arena in Raleigh due to open in 1999.

It was an unlikely duo: the pony-tailed Karmanos, a software company owner from Detroit, and Stroud, a native North Carolinian whose drawl was thick and his business acumen keen.

But together, the two helped orchestrate and bring major-league hockey to the Triangle and the state in 1997. The Carolina Hurricanes, whose home is PNC Arena, have given North Carolina its only major-league championship – the 2006 Stanley Cup – while becoming an indelible part of the state's sports landscape.

"The Carolina Hurricanes are a part of our area fabric," Stroud said. "They've become a part of the sports passion here. Mr. Karmanos has done right by this community."

As Karmanos steps aside as the Hurricanes' majority owner, turning over the franchise leadership to Dallas billionaire Tom Dundon, much good has been done, and not just the winning of the 2006 Cup.

PNC Arena initially was to be the home of N.C. State men's basketball. But Stroud and others on the Centennial Authority, an appointed body and the arena landlord, realized sharing the building with an NHL team would be advantageous.

And especially if the team owner would help pay for it.

"We first were supposed to spend \$12 million to \$15 million to upgrade it to NHL standards," Karmanos said. "It turned out to be \$40 million that I put in."

The total cost of the arena was \$158 million.

"Without Peter we couldn't have done it," Stroud said.

Before the coming of the Canes, Raleigh was bidding for an NHL expansion franchise. The ownership group, headed by Charlotte business executive Felix Sabates, made an impressive presentation to the NHL executive committee in New York in January 1997, and Raleigh appeared among the favorites – along with Atlanta and Nashville – to land a franchise.

But the constant haggling over the building of the arena – its size, its cost, who would pay what, a lease – finally caused the Sabates group to pull its bid. The push to get an NHL team seemed over.



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But NHL commissioner Gary Bettman liked the potential of the Triangle and Raleigh market. Karmanos, while not on the executive committee at the time, sat in on the expansion presentations and liked what he heard about Raleigh and the Triangle.

Karmanos, the co-founder and CEO of Compuware, had joined business partner Thomas Thewes in buying the Hartford Whalers in 1994. By '97, he was looking to move the team.

"They were going to build a beautiful building in Raleigh, in a dynamic area with really good jobs where within a 25-mile radius was one of the highest per-capita incomes in the league," Karmanos said. "It was a wonderful market."

Stroud and the authority quickly found common ground with Karmanos and the franchise's management group headed by Jim Rutherford. A lease deemed fair by both sides was approved. On May 6, 1997, Karmanos made it official: the Whalers were being rebranded the Carolina Hurricanes and coming to Raleigh.

For two years, while the arena was being completed, the Hurricanes played in Greensboro, usually before sparse crowds. Karmanos lost millions of dollars those two years which he said helped offset his "huge" personal tax bills at the time.

"But I wouldn't characterize it as losing anything," Karmanos said. "It's an investment in the team and the market."

The arena, then called the Entertainment and Sports Arena, was opened Oct. 29, 1999. It has hosted Stanley Cup finals in 2002 and 2006, the 2011 NHL All-Star Game and the 2004 NHL Draft. The 2006 Stanley Cup banner hangs in the rafters along with N.C. State's 1974 and 1983 NCAA championship banners.

Gale Force Sports & Entertainment, the Hurricanes' umbrella company, has managed the operations of the arena.

"I think we've been good business for Raleigh, Wake County, the Triangle and the state," Karmanos said. "On the ice we had so much success early that we may have spoiled some people. Few in the league had the success we did."

The Canes have not reached the playoffs since 2009, when they were eliminated by the Pittsburgh Penguins in the Eastern Conference final, and that has been reflected, in part, in lagging home attendance in recent years.

"That's not a knock on the market," Karmanos said. "We haven't made the playoffs and you need to win to earn those tickets back."

Stroud remains a Centennial Authority member although no longer is the chairman. The authority now will be dealing with a new owner, perhaps new arena management.

"But Peter left us in very good shape," Stroud said. "The organization is in great shape."

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1092670 Carolina Hurricanes

Noah Hanifin a curious All-Star, but Canes could benefit in long run

BY LUKE DECOCK

The NHL All-Star Game will be a terrific experience for Noah Hanifin, and the Carolina Hurricanes will benefit from that in the long run to be sure. It should be nothing but healthy for the 20-year-old to interact with some of the game's elite players and maybe learn a thing or two.

That's good. In a best-case scenario, being around the other All-Stars will be a wake-up call for Hanifin, who even as his offensive game matures in the middle of his third season in the NHL still has an extraordinarily long way to go in his own end. (In a worst-case scenario, he would get the message that he's made it as an NHLer and can relax.)

Still, the fact that Hanifin would be picked as an All-Star remains baffling to anyone who actually pays attention to this team, especially after Tyler Johnson stole his soul on the game-winner in Tuesday night's loss in Tampa Bay, but that's all part of an All-Star selection process that's flawed to say the least and, in the end, pretty inconsequential anyway. The NHL picks the All-Stars with little or no regard to what teams want, and most of it is focused on delivering star power for television, leaving teams like Carolina as an afterthought.

So there's no point in getting worked up that Hanifin was picked over more deserving defensemen like Jaccob Slavin and Brett Pesce, or that the current 3-on-3 format built around divisions means the NHL annually takes four seconds to check whichever Hurricanes defenseman leads the team in scoring. Usually, that's Justin Faulk. This year, it's Hanifin.

Of course you'd prefer to see your best players honored and of course Slavin and Pesce and Sebastian Aho (and others) are more deserving, but it's probably better for the Hurricanes if they get that weekend off, even if the team likely now owes Hanifin a \$212,500 bonus it never, ever thought it would have to pay.

Herald-Sun LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092671 Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes' Noah Hanifin headed to NHL All-Star Game

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

Noah Hanifin's commitment to being a more productive offensive player this season may have landed him in his first NHL All-Star Game.

The defenseman, in his third season with the Carolina Hurricanes, was selected Wednesday to be the team's representative at the 2018 All-Star Weekend, set Jan. 27-28 in Tampa, Fla. Hanifin will compete for the Metropolitan Division in the three-on-three All-Star tournament on Jan. 28.

Some were guessing forwards Sebastian Aho or Teuvo Teravainen, the Canes' top point producers, or shutdown defenseman Jaccob Slavin might be chosen from the Canes. Hanifin, 20, will give the Metro team a player who is eighth among NHL defensemen with seven goals and also leads the Canes' D-men in assists (14) and points (21).

"Coming into this league you have to be reliable defensively first or you're not going to be too successful, so my first two years I was developing my defensive game," Hanifin said in a recent interview. "This being my third year, I felt defensively I had developed a lot and started working on my offense, my shot and jumping into the play. It's an area of my game over the summer I really wanted to improve on, to make sure I'm creating more offense for this team."

Hanifin had the overtime winner against the Florida Panthers on Dec. 2, scoring in the final seconds of OT for a 3-2 win at PNC Arena. He also had the winning goal Dec. 16 in a 2-2 victory over the Columbus Blue Jackets.

"I think my confidence is coming and I'm more comfortable making plays I may not have tried my first two years," Hanifin said.

Hanifin's defense still is developing and he has had some rough moments. One came in the third period of Tuesday's road game against



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Tampa Bay, when Lightning forward Tyler Johnson beat him to the puck in the Carolina zone, shouldered him to the ice and then beat goalie Cam Ward for the winning goal in a 5-4 Tampa Bay win.

But Hanifin, often paired with Trevor van Riemsdyk this season, has been solid enough in the D-zone. The former first-round draft pick, taken fifth by Carolina in 2015, has added weight and strength and has had a more physical edge to his game.

Hanifin, who played a year at Boston College, is in the third and final year of his entry-level contract with Carolina and said he would like to lock down a long-term deal similar to those given to Slavin (seven years) and defenseman Brett Pesce (six) last summer.

Hanifin changed agents in the summer, signing with CAA Sports headed by Pat Brisson.

"I'm just focusing on contributing to the team and getting better," Hanifin said. "But I want to be here for a long time. I love this organization and all the guys on this team and I want to be here.

"It will all take care of itself. I'm not too worried about that. It's about getting this team in the playoffs this year."

Herald-Sun LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092752 Washington Capitals

Capitals' 10-game home win streak halted with 3-1 loss to Hurricanes

By Isabelle Khurshudyan January 11 at 9:55 PM

After their 3-1 loss to the Carolina Hurricanes, the Washington Capitals were left with one question: What constitutes possession of the puck?

A tied game in the third period boiled down to a goal on a delayed penalty, but the Capitals were confused as to why the play wasn't blown dead. Capitals forward Tom Wilson crunched Carolina's Derek Ryan into the glass. A penalty was called as Ryan fell to the ice and clutched at his helmet. The Hurricanes had possession, so goaltender Scott Darling skated to the bench for an extra attacker.

Carolina's Justin Faulk had a snap shot go off goaltender Braden Holtby's blocker, and then Capitals defenseman Brooks Orpik made contact with the puck, batting it into the air with his stick. Once possession changes to the offending team, play is supposed to cease, and the penalized player is then sent off.

But in the moment, the referee didn't judge Orpik's contact with the puck as a change in possession, so play continued. Victor Rask then scored the game-winning goal from the left faceoff circle, lifting Carolina to a 2-1 lead with 9:06 left in regulation.

An empty-net goal from Sebastian Aho in the final two minutes sealed the result, snapping a 10-game home winning streak and a five-game winning streak overall. Washington will get a rematch with the Hurricanes on Friday in Raleigh, N.C., but on Thursday night, the Capitals were left unsatisfied with the explanation — or lack thereof — on Rask's goal.

"A few of us kind of froze because we all thought the play was going to be over," Orpik said.

The Capitals argued that if the puck had gone over the glass after making contact with Orpik's stick, it would have been a delay-of-game penalty on Orpik. The goal also was unassisted, so if Orpik never had possession of the puck, then why didn't Faulk at least get an assist because Rask's goal technically came off his rebound?

"They didn't really want to give us an explanation, and they moved on pretty quickly," Orpik said. "A lot of us were pretty frustrated with it."

Said Coach Barry Trotz: "That's a tough one. I'm going to ask the referees because I didn't get an explanation. I didn't think we had control, but the puck's up in the air, and if Brooks plays it — you know, he hit it — and if it goes out into the stands, it means he had control and we would have another penalty. That one's tough because it's in the air. And under the rule, it can't sort of go both ways, so technically that would be control. It just doesn't look like control."

Even with the questionable ruling, several Capitals felt they ultimately didn't deserve to win, outworked by a hungrier team trying to climb the standings. Less than two minutes after Rask's goal, Klas Dahlbeck was called for slashing T.J. Oshie, giving Washington a power-play opportunity. With a chance to draw even, the Capitals didn't register a shot on goal. Holtby went to the bench for the extra attacker with 1:46 left, and Carolina's empty-netter followed shortly thereafter.

Neither team scored in the first period, and a power-play opportunity in the second frame ultimately worked against the Capitals. One wrinkle in Washington's man-advantage is to switch defenseman John Carlson and left wing Alex Ovechkin, moving Ovechkin to the point and Carlson to the left faceoff circle, where he shoots one-timers. But after the two swapped spots, Carlson's errant pass to Ovechkin at the point was intercepted by Carolina's Jordan Staal. On the breakaway, he beat Holtby five-hole to lift the Hurricanes to an early lead.

"A little bit we did to ourselves," Trotz said.

Center Lars Eller answered before second intermission, scoring with a one-timer from the high slot with 3:55 remaining. That marked his third goal in as many games, giving him eight through 43 games when he had just 12 all of last season. He now has 20 points, five shy of his 81-game total last year.

While the Capitals have a four-point lead atop the Metropolitan Division, the Hurricanes entered the game as one of three teams clustered at the bottom of it, yet just one point out of a playoff spot. Beating Washington moved Carolina ahead of Pittsburgh for the second wild-card position with 48 points now.

"It's always disappointing when we lose at home," Eller said. "But today we didn't deserve much better. . . . They just worked a little harder than us."

Washington Post LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092753 Washington Capitals

Capitals' Lars Eller finds his groove midway through the season

By Jesse Dougherty January 11 at 12:59 PM

Lars Eller weaved through the center of the ice, drifted toward the right slot and, after dragging the puck behind him for a split second, fired a shot through the legs of Vancouver Canucks defenseman Ben Hutton and into the net.

The goal came in the first period of the Capitals' 3-1 win over the Canucks on Tuesday night, and it was Eller's flashiest play in a season that can otherwise be defined by the center's consistency and adaptability. Eller has 12 assists in 42 games — his career-high for assists is 22 — and has netted seven goals while playing with a variety of wingers that have included T.J. Oshie, Devante Smith-Pelly, Andre Burakovsky, Jakub Vrana, Brett Connolly, Alex Chiasson and Chandler Stephenson. Eller centered a line of Connolly and Oshie in Tuesday night's win. He is expected to center a line of Burakovsky and Oshie against the Carolina Hurricanes at Capital One Arena on Thursday night.



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On Thursday morning, Capitals Coach Barry Trotz swapped Chiasson, who was scratched Tuesday, back into the lineup on the fourth line. Connolly is expected to be scratched Thursday night as Trotz continues to rotate forwards ahead of an odd part of the schedule that includes the team's bye week and the all-star break.

"I think so," Eller said when asked whether there is something about his game that makes him able to thrive with a bunch of different forwards. "But I also think we have a really deep team with a lot of good players. So no matter who, I end up with really good players. But I like to think I can be equally effective no matter who I play with."

And why is that?

"I'm probably not the guy to evaluate that," he answered, which fits with Eller's general aversion to talking about himself.

The 28-year-old is in his second year with the Capitals, and he said he has felt increasingly more comfortable since two Christmases ago. Since then, after what he called a bumpy start to his tenure with the Capitals, Eller was the center for a reliable third line (Burakovsky, him and Connolly) at the end of last season, and now is providing consistent offense in a pivotal year of his career.

Eller is nearing the end of a four-year, \$14 million deal he signed while he was with the Montreal Canadiens. It is his second contract year of his career, and he feels more settled this time.

"I've already been through that once, and I think I learned a lot from that last time," Eller said, and he added that he probably thought about it too much earlier in his career. "This year, I don't really have any worries. Just having fun. Things are going pretty good, too, and the team is going good, too. There's no reason to think about it. I'm aware of it, but it's not a worry."

After Eller netted that goal through Hutton's legs, Capital One Arena blared Survivor's "Eye Of The Tiger." Capitals players started calling Eller "Tiger" after a team-building activity last season, the center said, but he doesn't want to reveal any more than that about the nickname.

"That's all I have to say about Tiger," he said through an unassuming smile. "Just Tiger."

Capitals unhappy with Carlson's All-Star snub

The NHL announced Wednesday that Capitals goaltender Braden Holtby will join Alex Ovechkin and Trotz at the All-Star Game in Tampa at the end of January. Defenseman John Carlson, who has the second-most points (34, with five goals and 29 assists) among all NHL defensemen, was noticeably left off the Metropolitan Division's roster.

"I was supremely disappointed about Carlson," Trotz said Thursday morning. "I think it's a crime that he didn't make it. I'm not in the selection process, but I know he's been one of the best defensemen. I know how much he has meant to us as a group, especially with [Matt Niskanen] out earlier in the year and how many minutes he had to play. Playing with pure rookies on the back end and helping them along, I just think he should have been there. I'm biased, obviously. I see him night in and night out, but I truly believe he should be in that group."

Capitals defenseman Brooks Orpik shared his thoughts on the selection process when asked about Carlson, who has never been named an All-Star in his nine-year career and is averaging 26:20 of ice time. The Metro Division defensemen selected were the Hurricanes' Noah Hanifin, the Columbus Blue Jackets' Seth Jones and the Pittsburgh Penguins' Kris Letang.

"I wouldn't put much value in the All-Star Game selections," Orpik said. "[Nicklas] Backstrom has played in one, I think, so that tells you enough about the selection process for that. So I'm not going to get too much into whether certain guys should be there. Selfishly speaking, I'm glad [Carlson] is not going, so he gets some extra rest with the amount of minutes he's been playing this year."

Here is how the Capitals are expected to look against the Hurricanes on Thursday night in Capital One Arena:

Forwards

Alex Ovechkin-Nicklas Backstrom-Devante Smith-Pelly

Jakub Vrana-Evgeny Kuznetsov-Tom Wilson

Andre Burakovsky-Lars Eller-T.J. Oshie

Chandler Stephenson-Jay Beagle-Alex Chiasson

Scratched: Brett Connolly

Defensemen

Dmitry Orlov-Matt Niskanen

Christian Djoos-John Carlson

Brooks Orpik-Madison Bowey

Scratched: Taylor Chorney

Goaltenders

Braden Holtby (starter)

Philipp Grubauer

Washington Post LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092754 Washington Capitals

Capitals' 11-game home winning streak snapped in loss to Hurricanes

By Stephen Whyno - Associated Press - Thursday, January 11, 2018

On a historically significant day for the franchise, the Carolina Hurricanes picked up an important regulation victory that helped them move up the standings.

Victor Rask scored the go-ahead goal in the third period and Scott Darling made 26 saves as the Hurricanes beat the Metropolitan Division-leading Washington Capitals 3-1 on Thursday night, hours after the team's sale to Dallas billionaire Tom Dundon was finalized. The two points helped Carolina leapfrog the idle Philadelphia Flyers and Pittsburgh Penguins to move into a playoff position after 43 games.

"Two points in regulation is the only way you can really make up any ground," coach Bill Peters said. "You better make hay when the sun shines, and it was a nice day here in Washington today."

It'll be an even nicer day Friday in Raleigh when Dundon, Commissioner Gary Bettman and previous majority owner Peter Karmanos discuss the sale that should at least temporarily quiet relocation speculation. The NHL on Thursday announced Dundon had completed his purchase of the Hurricanes, who are expected to stay put for the foreseeable future.

"It's exciting," said Darling, who won for the first time since Dec. 16 in a rare start. "We all had a chance to meet him. He seems like a great guy. He has a lot of big plans, and we're excited to see it all unfold."

Co-captain Jordan Staal scored a short-handed goal and Sebastian Aho added an empty-netter for Carolina, which improved to 9-7-8 in one-goal games. Winger Justin Williams, who left Washington after two seasons, said the difference between the first-place Capitals and the Hurricanes was the disparity in their performances in tight games.

The Capitals fell to 12-3-3 in one-goal games and had their five-game winning streak and league-best 10-game home winning streak snapped.



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Players were unhappy that Rask's goal came after they thought defenseman Brooks Orpik touched the puck to stop play on a delayed penalty call.

"That one we all thought was a clear play on the puck," Orpik said. "We all were confused by it and frustrated by it, especially when that winds up being the winning goal."

Lars Eller scored for the third consecutive game and Braden Holtby made 30 saves for Washington, which lost at home for the first time since Nov. 30.

"They had been on a pretty good run here at home, and they're a tough team to play against," Aho said. "But so are we."

Outshooting and beating the Capitals was an important statement for the Hurricanes, who are seeking to make the playoffs for the first time since 2009 and end what is the longest active in the NHL. Finding some consistency against a division opponent is a good way to continue on that path.

"It's good for our confidence, good for our confidence in our system," said Darling, who felt comfortable all night and stopped Alex Ovechkin late to preserve the victory. "When we play the right way, we're not going to win 6-1. It's going to be close games, and that's the kind of team we are. If we do the right things, we're going to get the advantage on the one-goal games."

The Hurricanes host the Capitals on Friday night in the second half of the home-and-home series. It's their third meeting in 10 days.

NOTES:Peters said Hurricanes C Derek Ryan was fine after taking a high hit from Tom Wilson that led to the delayed penalty in the third period. Peters figured Ryan was going through concussion protocol and didn't have enough time to return. ... Hurricanes D Brett Pesce was a surprise scratch with an upper-body injury. Pesce took a spill while trying to take a slap shot during the morning skate, and Peters said he'll be re-evaluated back home Friday. ... Staal's 34 short-handed points are one shy of Matt Cullen for the most among active players. Only four teams have allowed more short-handed goals this season than Washington's six. ... Capitals F Andre Burakovsky was a late scratch with an illness. Coach Barry Trotz said Burakovsky wasn't traveling with the team to Carolina.

Washington Times LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092755 Washington Capitals

Tarik's three stars: Hurricanes clip Caps, 3-1

By Tarik El-Bashir January 11, 2018 9:35 PM

Jordan Staal scored a shorthanded goal to break a scoreless tie in the second period, and the Hurricanes skated off with a 3-1 victory over the Caps on Thursday night.

The loss snapped Washington's five-game winning streak. It also halted the Caps' 10-game streak at Capital One Arena.

The teams meet for a third time in 11 days on Friday night in Raleigh.

Tarik's three stars of the game:

1-Jordan Staal, Hurricanes

The Canes' captain opened the scoring in the second period, putting away a shorthanded tally after picking off a John Carlson pass that was intended for Alex Ovechkin.

The shorthanded goal was the sixth that Washington has surrendered this season. Only the Islanders, Sabres, Avalanche and Canucks have allowed more.

2-Lars Eller, Capitals

'Eye of the Tiger' is getting played a lot these days. Eller's nickname, of course, is tiger, and the song is played at home after No. 20 scores. On Thursday, he evened things, 1-1, in the second period with his fourth goal in the last six contests.

3-Victor Rask, Hurricanes

Rask provided the Canes' second goal late in the third period thanks to a weird bounce on a delayed penalty against Washington. The Caps thought play would be whistled dead after Braden Holtby blockered a puck down and Brooks Orpik whacked at it. Play continued, though, and Rask had his third goal in two games vs. the Caps this season.

Agree? Disagree? Let us know what you think in the comments.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092756 Washington Capitals

4 reasons the Caps lost to the Hurricanes

By J.J. Regan January 11, 2018 10:09 PM

The Capitals saw a 10-game home win streak and a five-game win streak overall snapped as they fell 3-1 to the Carolina Hurricanes on Thursday. Here's how they lost.

A poor pass from John Carlson

The Hurricanes opened up the scoring in the second period on a power play...but it was Washington who was the man up. In a play that will not make John Carlson's personal highlight reel, the Caps' defenseman tried to pass to Alex Ovechkin on the point, but the pass was too far ahead of him. Jordan Staal anticipated the pass, poked it past Ovechkin and was off on the breakaway. Staal would finish the play by tucking the puck through the five-hole of Braden Holtby with the backhand for the shorthanded goal.

A controversial no-possession call

Midway through the third period, Tom Wilson was awaiting a delayed penalty call for boarding. Carolina took advantage with a go-ahead goal for Victor Rask, but it was not without controversy. Braden Holtby saved an initial shot from Justin Faulk and the rebound bounced up into the slot where Brooks Orpik took a swing at it with his stick. He clearly got a piece of the puck, but was it enough to qualify for possession?

A delayed penalty was being called on the #Caps. The play should stop when Caps get possession. What do you think: Possession or no? □

On a delayed penalty, the play is blown dead once the offending team gets possession of the puck, but what qualifies as possession is at the discretion of the referee. Orpik definitely touches the puck, but touching does not necessarily mean possession. The refs allowed play to continue and Rask fired the puck past Holtby for the go-ahead goal, despite the Caps' protests.

A powerless power play

The Capitals had three opportunities with the extra man, but failed to score on any of them in the loss. In fact, Carolina got more goals on Washington's power play than the Caps did with Staal's shorthanded goal. Washington had a late chance to score as Klas Dahlbeck was



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whistled for slashing just 1:40 after Rask scored the go-ahead goal. The Caps, however, could not take advantage.

Not enough pressure

Scott Darling has had his struggles in his first season with the Hurricanes with a 2.97 GAA and .893 save percentage. Carolina's latest push in the standings has been largely because of the resurgence of Cam Ward who has an 11-4-2 record as compared to Darling's 8-11-6. Darling played fairly well in this game, but the fact is that Washington did not get nearly enough pressure on him with only 27 shots on goal. The Caps have been held to fewer than that only once in their last seven games. That came on Jan. 2 against the same Carolina Hurricanes.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092757 Washington Capitals

Capitals sound off on John Carlson's All-Star snub

By J.J. Regan January 11, 2018 12:29 PM

The Capitals will be well represented at the All-Star Game with two players, the head coach and members of the team's equipment staff all taking part. Heck, even Slapshot will be there.

But all the talk around the team Tuesday was about who was not selected to participate: John Carlson

"I was supremely disappointed that Carlson, I think it's a crime that he didn't make it," Barry Trotz said.

Carlson, who did not speak to the media after Tuesday's morning skate, has scored 34 points in 43 games this season and plays an average of 26:17 per game for a team that currently sits in first place of the Metropolitan Division. His role has increased substantially this season with two rookie defensemen playing regularly and injuries limiting Matt Niskanen to only 29 of the team's first 43 games.

To many, an invite to what would have been his first All-Star appearance seemed like a formality. Yet, when the teams were announced Wednesday, Carlson was passed over for Kris Letang, Seth Jones and Noah Hanifin.

That is not sitting well with the Caps.

"I know he's been one of the best defensemen," Trotz said. "I know how much he's meant to us as a group and especially with Nisky out early in the year and how many minutes he's had to play, playing with pure rookies on the back end and helping them along. I just think he should have been there."

"I wouldn't put much value into the All-Star Game selections," Brooks Orpik said. "I mean, Nicky Backstrom has played one, I think, so that tells you enough about the selection process for that."

Of all the defensemen selected for the All-Star Game across the NHL, only one player, Dallas' John Klingberg, has more points than Carlson. Only two players selected, Drew Doughty and Erik Karlsson, average more ice time per game.

But there is some silver lining to the snub.

"Selfishly speaking, I'm glad Carly's not going so he gets some extra rest," Orpik said. "With the amount of minutes he's been playing this year, he's obviously had to step up a lot with the guys that we lost from last year. Especially when Nisky was out this year, he was probably pressed to play probably in more minutes than he probably should have been, but he didn't complain. He did a really good job with it."

The All-Star break does give time off to those players who are not fortunate enough to go so it could be beneficial for Carlson to have a few extra days off considering how much Trotz continues to lean on him.

But even if it would be better for the Caps if Carlson did not go, Trotz is still holding out hope his star defenseman gets a shot.

"I really truly believe he should be on that group," Trotz said. "Who knows? There's a few days here and something might happen. I hope he has that experience because he deserves it."

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092758 Washington Capitals

2018 NHL All-Star Game Roster: Pacific Division

By Ryan Wormeli January 10, 2018 3:15 PM

The 2018 NHL All-Star Game is almost here and the annual event originates from Tampa Bay. For the third straight season, the All-Star Game format is a 3-on-3 Tournament between the different divisions.

While they don't have as many first-timers in this year's All-Star Game as the Central Division, the Pacific does look relatively inexperienced. Brent Burns is the only player making his 5th appearance, and the biggest star (team captain Connor McDavid) is only in his 2nd game.

What also enhances this feeling is the fact that the NHL's newest franchise, the Golden Knights, is so well-represented, as they've got two players in the event, along with their head coach.

The Kings wind up with the most representatives on this year's roster, with Kopitar, Doughty, and Quick each making the team.

2018 NHL All-Star Game Roster: Pacific Division

Coach: Gerard Gallant (VGK)

Goalie: Marc-Andre Fleury (VGK), Jonathan Quick (LAK)

Forwards: Connor McDavid (EDM) (Captain), Brock Boeser (VAN), Johnny Gaudreau (CGY), Anze Kopitar (LAK), James Neal (VGK), Rickard Rakell (ANA)

Defensemen: Brent Burns (SJS), Drew Doughty (LAK), Oliver Ekman-Larsson (ARI)

The 2018 NHL All-Star Game will take place on Sunday, January 28 at 3:30 p.m. ET on NBC. Coverage begins at 12:00 p.m. ET.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092759 Washington Capitals

2018 NHL All-Star Game Roster: Central Division

By Ryan Wormeli January 10, 2018 3:15 PM

The 2018 NHL All-Star Game is almost here and the annual event originates from Tampa Bay. For the third straight season, the All-Star Game format is a 3-on-3 Tournament between the different divisions.

The Central Division has a few stalwarts representing their respective teams, including Patrick Kane making his 7th career NHL All-Star Game



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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appearance. Tyler Seguin and Eric Staal are also no strangers to the event, as 2018 marks the 5th appearance for both of them.

The Nashville Predators aren't currently leading the division, but they are well-represented, with their goaltender making it, in addition to both the captain and head coach of this year's roster.

Coach: Peter Laviolette (NSH)

Goalie: Connor Hellebuyck (WPG), Pekka Rinne (NSH)

Forwards: Patrick Kane (CHI), Nathan MacKinnon (COL), Brayden Schenn (STL), Tyler Seguin (DAL), Eric Staal (MIN), Blake Wheeler (WPG)

Defensemen: P.K. Subban (NSH) (Captain), John Klingberg (DAL), Alex Pietrangelo (STL)

The 2018 NHL All-Star Game will take place on Sunday, January 28 at 3:30 p.m. ET on NBC. Coverage begins at 12:00 p.m. ET.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092760 Washington Capitals

2018 NHL All-Star Game Roster: Atlantic Division

By Ryan Wormeli January 10, 2018 3:15 PM

The 2018 NHL All-Star Game is almost here and the annual event originates from Tampa Bay. For the third straight season, the All-Star Game format is a 3-on-3 Tournament between the different divisions.

Surprise, surprise: NHL-leading Tampa Bay Lightning has four players on the Atlantic Division roster, the most of any team.

Considering not only Tampa Bay's lightning-hot start to the season (thank you, I'll be here all week) and the fact that they hosting this year's big event, it should come as no shock to see them dominate this roster.

There are a few other stars in the Atlantic, including Carey Price, who is making his 6th All-Star Game appearance, the most of anyone in the division.

Coach: Jon Cooper (TB)

Goalie: Carey Price (MTL), Andrei Vasilevskiy (TB)

Forwards: Steven Stamkos (TB) (Captain), Aleksander Barkov (FLA), Jack Eichel (BUF), Nikita Kucherov (TB), Brad Marchand (BOS), Auston Matthews (TOR),

Defensemen: Mike Green (DET), Victor Hedman (TB), Erik Karlsson (OTT)

The 2018 NHL All-Star Game will take place on Sunday, January 28 at 3:30 p.m. ET on NBC. Coverage begins at 12:00 p.m. ET.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092761 Washington Capitals

2018 NHL All-Star Game Roster: Metropolitan Division

By Ryan Wormeli January 10, 2018 3:15 PM

The 2018 NHL All-Star Game is almost here and the annual event originates from Tampa Bay. For the third straight season, the All-Star Game format is a 3-on-3 Tournament between the different divisions.

The Metropolitan Division has some serious star power, and it shows up on this year's All-Star Game roster. Caps fans have witnessed many battles between Alex Ovechkin and Sidney Crosby, which has been the defining player rivalry of the last decade in the NHL.

Joining them will be Braden Holtby who, along with veteran Henrik Lundqvist, helps make up perhaps the most star-studded goaltender duo in this year's event. Coaching Ovechkin in his 7th All-Star appearance will be his own coach, Barry Trotz.

Coach: Barry Trotz (WSH)

Goalie: Braden Holtby (WSH), Henrik Lundqvist (NYR)

Forwards: Alex Ovechkin (WSH) (Captain), Josh Bailey (NYI), Sidney Crosby (PIT), Claude Giroux (PHI), Taylor Hall (NJ), John Tavares (NYI)

Defensemen: Noah Hanifin (CAR), Seth Jones (CBJ), Kris Letang (PIT)

The 2018 NHL All-Star Game will take place on Sunday, January 28 at 3:30 p.m. ET on NBC. Coverage begins at 12:00 p.m. ET.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092762 Washington Capitals

Game 44: Capitals vs. Hurricanes Date, Time, How to Watch, Game Thread

By J.J. Regan January 11, 2018 6:00 AM

What: Washington Capitals vs. Carolina Hurricanes

Where: Capital One Arena, Washington, D.C.

When: 7:00 p.m. ET

How to WATCH: Capitals-Hurricanes will be broadcast on NBC Sports Washington (Channel Finder)

Live Stream: You can watch the Capitals-Hurricanes game on NBC Sports Washington's live stream page.

You can also stream the game online with no cable TV subscription on fuboTV (try for free!).

WHEN IS THE CAPITALS-HURRICANES GAME?

The Capitals (27-13-3) take on the Hurricanes (19-15-8) Thursday, January 11 at 7:00 p.m. ET at Capital One Arena.

WHAT CHANNEL IS THE CAPITALS-HURRICANES GAME ON?

The Capitals-Hurricanes game will be broadcast on NBC Sports Washington. Coverage kicks off with Capitals FaceOff at 6:00 p.m. followed by Caps GameTime at 6:30 p.m. Stay with NBC Sports Washington for Caps Extra following the game, Caps Overtime at 10:00 p.m. and Caps in 30 at 11:00 p.m. for all your postgame coverage. (NBC Sports Washington channel Finder)

6:00 p.m. — Caps FaceOff

6:30 p.m. — Caps GameTime

7:00 p.m. — Capitals vs. Hurricanes

9:30 p.m. — Caps Extra

10:00 p.m. — Caps Overtime



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11:00 p.m. — Caps in 30

WHERE CAN I STREAM THE CAPITALS-HURRICANES GAME?

The Capitals-Hurricanes game, as well as Caps GameTime and Caps Extra, is available to stream live here through NBC Sports Washington's live stream page and is available to authenticated NBC Sports Washington subscribers on desktops, tablets, mobile devices and connected TVs anywhere in the United States.

The game is also available to stream, along with all the pregame and postgame shows, on fuboTV (try for free).

WHAT ARE THE PROJECTED LINES FOR CAPITALS-HURRICANES?

Here are the Caps' projected lines:

Forwards

Alex Ovechkin - Nicklas Backstrom - Devante Smith-Pelly

Jakub Vrana - Evgeny Kuznetsov - Tom Wilson

Andre Burakovsky - Lars Eller - T.J. Oshie

Chandler Stephenson - Jay Beagle - Alex Chiasson

Defensemen

Dmitry Orlov - Matt Niskanen

Christian Djoos - John Carlson

Brooks Orpik - Madison Bowey

Goalies

Braden Holtby starts with Philipp Grubauer as backup

Scratches: Brett Connolly, Taylor Chorney

CAPITALS-HURRICANES OPEN THREAD

Use the comment section below to discuss the game action with other Capitals fans.

For all the latest Caps coverage, follow Capitals Insider Tarik El-Bashir, Capitals correspondent JJ Regan and the NBC Sports Capitals account on Twitter. Be sure check out our Capitals page and NBC Sports Washington's Facebook page.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092654 Calgary Flames

Flames continue hot streak with impressive win over Lightning

KRISTEN ODLAND, POSTMEDIA

Published on: January 11, 2018 | Last Updated: January 11, 2018 9:30 PM MST

TAMPA BAY, FL. — Call it a warm-up for the National Hockey League All-Star game.

Or, at the very least, the snapping of nearly a month-long goal-less drought.

Johnny Gaudreau did both on Thursday night as the Calgary Flames extended their win streak to five games with a 5-1 win over the Tampa Bay Lightning at Amalie Arena.

The 24-year-old left winger wasn't the only one helping defeat the NHL-leading squad which, until yesterday's game, had only lost four times in regulation at home.

Mike Smith stopped 33 of 34 shots, Calgary's powerplay notched a goal for the first time in 13 tries, the penalty kill went a perfect three-for-three and the Flames were able to hang onto a second period lead.

"Our meeting this morning wasn't all love-y for winning four in a row," said Flames head coach Glen Gulutzan, whose club improved to third in the Pacific Division with a 23-16-4 record. "We weren't happy with our third period in Minnesota. We talked about how when you're up on a team, you need to keep the intensity and put them out.

"We can't afford to give up points, especially in our division. We addressed that today that we have to keep our level high. I thought our guys did a good job with that."

Gaudreau scored for the first time since Dec. 14 against the San Jose Sharks but, of course, his production goes beyond putting the puck in the net. He did so in fine fashion with 3:12 left in the second period, making a slick move to fake out Eastern Division All-Star goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy and score the game-winning goal.

He also helped set up Micheal Ferland's 19th goal of the year — which set the tone 29 seconds into the game — keeping the puck in play at Tampa Bay's blueline.

Also scoring for the Flames was Sam Bennett, who deposited a pass from TJ Brodie after Brodie made a smart move to pull the puck behind Vasilevskiy's net on the powerplay. That made it 3-1 with 1:17 remaining in the second period.

From there, it seemed like the Lightning — who were headed out on their mandated National Hockey League bye week after Thursday's game — checked out, especially when they lost top defenceman Victor Hedman to an apparent knee injury. Calgary-raised Brayden Point scored their lone goal of the game, making it close with 31 seconds elapsed in the middle frame.

Another turning point was Lightning centre Cedric Paquette being stopped by Mike Smith on a second-period penalty shot.

Having collapsed in the third period as of late, the Flames did the opposite on this night.

Mark Jankowski dangled around Yann Goude to score on Vasilevskiy while Matthew Tkachuk went five-hole.

Tkachuk's marker — Calgary's fifth of the game — sent fans to the exits early and the Lightning players might have joined them, if it was an option.

"Over the course of five games, we've found different ways to win," Smith said. "(Thursday) was another one of those. They're a good team. They came at us hard early. They had some power plays. I thought our penalty kill did an unbelievable job.

"We got two big goals at the end of the second to give us some breathing room. And I thought that was one of our better third periods to give us some breathing room."

Yes, you read that right: the Flames scored on their powerplay which, if you can believe it, improved their statistics to nine-of-71 opportunities since losing Kris Versteeg at the end of November to a hip injury.

The Flames improved to 11-5-4 on the road, winning by more than one goal for the first time since a 6-1 pounding of the Vancouver Canucks on Dec. 17. The previous eight games were all one-goal contests, including Tuesday's 3-2 overtime win at Minnesota.

"It was definitely a big confidence boost for our group to keep the win-streak alive and to feel good about what we're doing and keep the road trip going the right way," Smith said. "We want to go into the break, feeling good about where we are in the standings. Every game is so important now. It's like a playoff mentality for us, it's been talked about a lot in our room that now is the time to make a push to get points in all the games we can. It's another big two points (Thursday)."



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Next up? Friday's clash with the Florida Panthers as Calgary's four-game road trip continues.

Calgary Herald: LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092655 Calgary Flames

Stockton Heat defenceman Goloubeff playing for Canada at Olympics

Kristen Odland, Published on: January 11, 2018 | Last Updated: January 11, 2018 7:40 PM MST

Sitting with a group of Canadian teammates, Cody Goloubeff was at the University of Wisconsin's viewing party when Chris Cuthbert called Sidney Crosby's "Golden Goal" at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver.

He also won gold with the Canadian world junior team in 2009. As a kid with the Toronto Marlboros, a 16-year-old with the Milton Icehawks, then the Oakville Blades, Springfield Falcons, Columbus Blue Jackets, Colorado Avalanche, San Antonio Rampage, Cleveland Monsters, Stockton Heat and with Canada at the Spengler Cup, Goloubeff has been cheering on his country since he before he can remember.

So the answer — what it means to be named to Canada's 2018 Olympic men's hockey team — is clear.

"Like every Canadian kid, I was glued to the T.V. during the winter and summer," said Goloubeff — a native of Oakville, Ont. — who was calling from Stockton, shortly after the announcements were made official on Thursday at Hockey Canada headquarters in Calgary. "It's such a cool event and something that's so rare."

For him, 14 forwards, seven defencemen and three goalies from seven different leagues across North America and Europe, it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to seek a third straight gold medal.

Goloubeff, who was part of Canada's gold medal winning Spengler Cup team over Christmas, has already played under Olympic head coach Willie Desjardins at the 2009 world juniors. Back then, Desjardins was manning the blueliners, but the familiarity is there.

Signing an American Hockey League deal with the Calgary Flames in the off-season, Goloubeff has been on a defence pairing with Flames prospect Oliver Kylington. With Stockton, he's played 27 games, scored six goals and eight assists and — without NHL-ers at this year's Olympics — he'll be a direct Flames connection next month in Pyeongyang.

"We're really proud of Cody," said Flames assistant general manager Brad Pascall. "Having worked at Hockey Canada, I know how special the Olympics are for the athletes and around Olympic village and just experiencing the whole moment.

"In Cody's case, he's a guy that's been in the NHL for the last couple of years and was a player we liked. He's played very well for us. He's provided good stability for our young players down there."

At 28-years-old, Goloubeff is old enough to know the magnitude of this opportunity. With 129 NHL games under his belt between the Blue Jackets and a baby on the way (his wife Allie is due with the couple's first child while finishing her real estate licence in Oakville, Ont.), the former 2008 second-round pick of Columbus is seizing the chance.

He is confident that it will be well worth it for fans, too, despite the absence of the NHL.

"I think it's going to be good competition through and through," Goloubeff said. "No game is going to be a cakewalk. Every game is going to be a good game. Canadians want to win, no matter who it is. When you watch

the world juniors, it's not NHL players playing and people still rally around it and get super excited. Everyone is going to want to win gold, no matter who is on the ice. Just because it's not NHL guys, a lot of guys has played in the NHL. It's not that big of a difference.

"There might not be Sidney Crosby or the superstars. But you look at that roster — there's a ton of guys that played in the NHL. To a certain extent, there are NHL guys playing. I think it's going to be really good competition and I think hockey fans are going to get what they want."

Former Senators forward Chris Kelly leads the way for Canada with 833 regular season NHL games. Former Flames winger Rene Bourque, currently playing in the Swedish League, is also on the roster. Ditto for speed demon Mason Raymond and Linden Vey (both former Flames) while Calgary's Brandon Kozun and Mat Robinson (both playing in the KHL) are off to the Olympics.

According to Goloubeff, these guys can still wheel.

"The one thing I learned going over to the Spengler Cup and playing, guys that play in Europe are just as talented as the guys that play here," he said.

"A lot of those guys could still be playing in the NHL but some of them made their own decisions to go over. It's not necessarily right to say, 'Oh, they're not good enough to play anymore.' Some guys were just done with putting up with the day-to-day nonsense and wanted to play abroad. I was impressed with the skill level. Guys assume, 'Oh, he went to Europe and couldn't cut it anymore.' Actually, a lot of those guys wanted to make a lot of money and didn't want to do the day-to-day, up-and-down, in-and-out of the lineup anymore. It's something people are going to see at the Olympics ... people will be wondering why certain guys aren't playing in the NHL."

Calgary Herald: LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092656 Calgary Flames

Game Day: Flames gunning for five in a row in Tampa

Kristen Odland, Postmedia

Published on: January 10, 2018 | Last Updated: January 11, 2018 1:31 PM MST

The Calgary Flames are searching for their fifth straight victory at the same time as the Tampa Bay Lightning is getting ready for their mandated National Hockey League break.

So, what will that mean tonight when the teams square off at Amalie Arena (5:30 p.m. MT, Sportsnet West, Sportsnet 960 The Fan)?

Considering that the Lightning (31-9-3) are the best team in the NHL, have two of the top-three leading scorers in the 31-team loop (Nikita Kucherov and Steven Stamkos), the third-highest scoring defenceman (Victor Hedman), there's a good chance it could mean a whole heckuva lot.

"For us, we're not going to try to do anything special," said Flames head coach Glen Gulutzan. "We're trying to get our team geared up and I think our guys will be geared up — we're playing a top team in the National Hockey League. I still think our game is about us. They recognize who is on the ice and the success that some of their players are having. But, at the same time, I'm sure Tampa is used to that. Teams are coming in and playing their 'A' game because they know they have to. It'll be a challenge for us but we know that."

Gulutzan gave the Flames (22-16-4) the day off on Wednesday as the team travelled from the Twin Cities to Tampa Bay. Hitting the ice on



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Thursday morning, Calgary had a few things to work on even after a 3-2 overtime win against the Minnesota Wild which kicked off this four-game road trip.

For one, the Flames allowed two goals late in the game which sent the game into overtime. Calgary is 14-0-1 when leading after two periods, so they're able to close out games when they're ahead late.

But that's not the point, according to Gulutzan. The point is not to give up points.

"Especially within the division," he said. "The late goals are something we've talked about too. We've tied and watched these things in overtime but we'd like to get a little more of that killer instinct."

The powerplay also needs more of a killer instinct, currently operating at eight-for-69 in the last 20 games which was when Kris Versteeg went down with a hip injury.

Starting for the Flames will be Mike Smith (18-13-3, 2.55 goals against average and .921 save percentage) in net and, after winning four straight, it's no surprise their lineup will remain the same. Smith is among four goalies that have played 36 games or more in the first 42 games of the season.

Calgary is 10-5-4 on the road with points in 14 of its 19 games.

The Lightning have an NHL All-Star quartet of players which include Stamkos, Kucherov, Hedman and goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy while Jon Cooper will coach the Atlantic Division team. Vasilevskiy starts for Tampa while D Dan Girardi (neck) will miss his second game.

"This will be a measuring stick," Gulutzan said. "The more of these type of games you play, the better your team becomes. Just getting up to that level is going to be a good thing for us."

Calgary Flames at Tampa Bay Lightning

5:30 p.m. MT, Amalie Arena, TV: Sportsnet West, Radio: Sportsnet 960 The Fan

THE BIG MATCHUP

Flames D Mark Giordano vs. Lightning D Nikita Kucherov

It'll be a big test for the Flames captain to try and shut down the NHL's top marksman, Nikita Kucherov, who has netted 27 goals and 33 assists in 43 games. The 24-year-old is a front-runner for the NHL's Hart Trophy and could, potentially, help lead the Bolts to a Stanley Cup this season. Giordano, meanwhile, is trying to will his team to play consistently and try to make a second-half push. It'll be a busy night for him, no doubt.

FIVE STORYLINES FOR THE GAME

1. MARVELLOUS MONAHAN

With his second-period marker in Tuesday's 3-2 overtime win against the Minnesota Wild, Sean Monahan became the second player in franchise history to score at least 20 goals in each of his first five NHL seasons with the Flames. The 23-year-old has 20 goals and 19 assists in 42 games this season as Monahan joined Kent Nilsson who did so in each of his first six seasons with the franchise from 1979-80 to 1984-85. He was also tied with Brayden Point for first in the NHL with seven game-winning goals (heading into Wednesday's action).

2. POWER-PLAY OUTAGE

Since RW Kris Versteeg was sidelined with hip surgery, the Flames are 8-for-69 on their powerplay in 20 games. And in the last four wins, they're 2-for-14. The man-advantage has been a sore subject for the last few weeks, but as the Flames try to make a second-half push, special teams are critical. "We are just not winning battles after we shoot a puck," said Flames head coach Glen Gulutzan. "We can never sustain a second try ... we're a one-and-done. That's something we have to address."

Calgary Flames Dougie Hamilton is mobbed after scoring the winning goal against Anaheim on Jan. 6. AL CHAREST / POSTMEDIA

3. CLUTCH DOUGIE

Defenceman Dougie Hamilton came up in overtime, potting the winner with 2:21 remaining in the extra frame to lift the Flames to a 3-2 win over the Wild. It was the 24-year-old blueliner's first overtime winner of the season, but it wasn't the first time he's answered the bell. Hamilton is currently tied with Mark Giordano with three game-winners. But given his penchant for making a difference when it matters, perhaps he should be tapped on the shoulder in OT more often. The Flames have played 12 overtime games this season, and Hamilton has only played 1:10 of ice time.

4. THIS N' THAT

The Flames are 12-4-0-0 when Sean Monahan scores a goal in a game ... D TJ Brodie is one point away from 200 in his NHL career ... The Calgary club is riding its first four-game win streak this season and is undefeated in 2018 (so far) ... RW Micheal Ferland is having a career season with 18 goals and eight assists in 41 games ... The Flames continue a four-game road trip which also sees stops in Florida on Friday and Carolina on Sunday.

5. HEY NOW, YOU'RE AN ALL-STAR

It's no surprise that when the NHL's all-star roster was released Wednesday that the Lightning had four players on the Atlantic Division team. Joining captain Steven Stamos is top-scorer Nikita Kucherov, goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy and defenceman Victor Hedman. Lightning head coach Jon Cooper will skipper the Atlantic Division bench as the Bolts play host to the 2018 NHL All-Star weekend Jan. 26-Jan. 28.

FLAMES GAMEDAY LINES

Johnny Gaudreau-Sean Monahan-Micheal Ferland

Matthew Tkachuk-Mikael Backlund-Troy Brouwer

Sam Bennett-Mark Jankowski-Garnet Hathaway

Andrew Mangiapane-Matt Stajan-Curtis Lazar

DEFENCE PAIRINGS

Mark Giordano-Dougie Hamilton

TJ Brodie-Travis Hamonic

Brett Kulak-Michael Stone

GOALIES

Mike Smith

David Rittich

LIGHTNING GAMEDAY LINES

Chris Kunitz-Steven Stamkos-Nikita Kucherov

Ondrej Palat-Brayden Point-Tyler Johnson

Yanni Gourde-Vladislav Namestnikov-Alex Killorn

J.T. Brown-Cedric Paquette-Ryan Callahan

DEFENCE PAIRINGS

Victor Hedman-Jake Dotchin

Anton Stralman-Mikhail Sergachev

Andrei Sustr-Braydon Coburn

GOALIES

Andrei Vasilevskiy

Luis Domingue

SPECIAL TEAMS (prior to Wednesday's action)



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POWER PLAY

FLAMES: 17.1% (22nd)

LIGHTNING: 24.7% (3rd)

PENALTY KILL

FLAMES: 79.6% (22nd)

LIGHTNING: 79.9% (20th)

SICK BAY

FLAMES

LW Kris Versteeg (hip), RW Michael Frolik (broken jaw), RW Jaromir Jagr (lower body)

LIGHTNING

G Peter Budaj (lower body)

Calgary Herald: LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092657 Calgary Flames

Stockton Heat defenceman Goloubeff representing Canada at Olympics

Kristen Odland, Postmedia

Published: January 11, 2018

Updated: January 11, 2018 7:40 PM UTC

Sitting with a group of Canadian teammates, Cody Goloubeff was at the University of Wisconsin's viewing party when Chris Cuthbert called Sidney Crosby's "Golden Goal" at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver.

He also won gold with the Canadian world junior team in 2009. As a kid with the Toronto Marliners, a 16-year-old with the Milton Icehawks, then the Oakville Blades, Springfield Falcons, Columbus Blue Jackets, Colorado Avalanche, San Antonio Rampage, Cleveland Monsters, Stockton Heat and with Canada at the Spengler Cup, Goloubeff has been cheering on his country since he before he can remember.

So the answer — what it means to be named to Canada's 2018 Olympic men's hockey team — is clear.

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He is confident that it will be well worth it for fans, too, despite the absence of the NHL.

"I think it's going to be good competition through and through," Goloubeff said. "No game is going to be a cakewalk. Every game is going to be a good game. Canadians want to win, no matter who it is. When you watch the world juniors, it's not NHL players playing and people still rally around it and get super excited. Everyone is going to want to win gold, no matter who is on the ice. Just because it's not NHL guys, a lot of guys has played in the NHL. It's not that big of a difference."

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Calgary Sun: LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092658 Calgary Flames

Flames win fifth straight against NHL-best Lightning

Kristen Odland, Postmedia

Published: January 11, 2018

Updated: January 11, 2018 9:30 PM UTC

TAMPA BAY, FL. — Call it a warm-up for the National Hockey League All-Star game.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Or, at the very least, the snapping of nearly a month-long goal-less drought.

Johnny Gaudreau did both on Thursday night as the Calgary Flames extended their win streak to five games with a 5-1 win over the Tampa Bay Lightning at Amalie Arena.

The 24-year-old left winger wasn't the only one helping defeat the NHL-leading squad which, until yesterday's game, had only lost four times in regulation at home.

Mike Smith stopped 33 of 34 shots, Calgary's powerplay notched a goal for the first time in 13 tries, the penalty kill went a perfect three-for-three and the Flames were able to hang onto a second period lead.

"Our meeting this morning wasn't all love-y for winning four in a row," said Flames head coach Glen Gulutzan, whose club improved to third in the Pacific Division with a 23-16-4 record. "We weren't happy with our third period in Minnesota. We talked about how when you're up on a team, you need to keep the intensity and put them out.

"We can't afford to give up points, especially in our division. We addressed that today that we have to keep our level high. I thought our guys did a good job with that."

Gaudreau scored for the first time since Dec. 14 against the San Jose Sharks but, of course, his production goes beyond putting the puck in the net. He did so in fine fashion with 3:12 left in the second period, making a slick move to fake out Eastern Division All-Star goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy and score the game-winning goal.

He also helped set up Micheal Ferland's 19th goal of the year — which set the tone 29 seconds into the game — keeping the puck in play at Tampa Bay's blueline.

Also scoring for the Flames was Sam Bennett, who deposited a pass from TJ Brodie after Brodie made a smart move to pull the puck behind Vasilevskiy's net on the powerplay. That made it 3-1 with 1:17 remaining in the second period.

From there, it seemed like the Lightning — who were headed out on their mandated National Hockey League bye week after Thursday's game — checked out, especially when they lost top defenceman Victor Hedman to an apparent knee injury. Calgary-raised Brayden Point scored their lone goal of the game, making it close with 31 seconds elapsed in the middle frame.

Another turning point was Lightning centre Cedric Paquette being stopped by Mike Smith on a second-period penalty shot.

Having collapsed in the third period as of late, the Flames did the opposite on this night.

Mark Jankowski dangled around Yann Gourde to score on Vasilevskiy while Matthew Tkachuk went five-hole.

Tkachuk's marker — Calgary's fifth of the game — sent fans to the exits early and the Lightning players might have joined them, if it was an option.

"Over the course of five games, we've found different ways to win," Smith said. "(Thursday) was another one of those. They're a good team. They came at us hard early. They had some power plays. I thought our penalty kill did an unbelievable job.

"We got two big goals at the end of the second to give us some breathing room. And I thought that was one of our better third periods to give us some breathing room."

Yes, you read that right: the Flames scored on their powerplay which, if you can believe it, improved their statistics to nine-of-71 opportunities since losing Kris Versteeg at the end of November to a hip injury.

The Flames improved to 11-5-4 on the road, winning by more than one goal for the first time since a 6-1 pounding of the Vancouver Canucks on

Dec. 17. The previous eight games were all one-goal contests, including Tuesday's 3-2 overtime win at Minnesota.

"It was definitely a big confidence boost for our group to keep the win-streak alive and to feel good about what we're doing and keep the road trip going the right way," Smith said. "We want to go into the break, feeling good about where we are in the standings. Every game is so important now. It's like a playoff mentality for us, it's been talked about a lot in our room that now is the time to make a push to get points in all the games we can. It's another big two points (Thursday)."

Next up? Friday's clash with the Florida Panthers as Calgary's four-game road trip continues.

Calgary Sun: LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092659 Calgary Flames

Seven Game Segments: Inconsistency remains but Flames hit their stride as calendar flips to 2018

By Kent Wilson 16 hours ago

Another seven games in the books, another oddly mixed bag of results for the Calgary Flames.

On the bad side of the ledger, this segment featured a three-game losing streak, including two of their worst performances of the last month or so. On the positive side, the Flames also put together their first four-game winning streak of the season and are currently undefeated in 2018.

Calgary has been a frustratingly dichotomous club all year. Each segment to date has featured a ying/yang blend of good and bad, which has both prevented them from climbing up the Western Conference standings and also kept them out of the basement and in the playoff picture. This segment was a tale of last minute, OT heroics juxtaposed against numerous blown leads.

The Flames sit just outside of the last wild-card spot in the West, currently occupied by the Chicago Blackhawks, with 48 points. They are also only marginally ahead of clubs like Minnesota, Anaheim, and Colorado, all of whom are within a point of the Flames at the time of writing. Calgary will have to break their ongoing cycle of mediocre results and put together a truly dominant run in the second half if they want to extract themselves from the five-team horse race that is the playoff bubble.

The Basics

Record: 4-2-1 (22-16-4)

CF%: 52.2% (52.9%)

GF%: 52.0% (51.7%)

XGF%: 52.0% (53.2%)

PDO: 101.0 (100.0)

PP: 17.4% (17.1%)

PK: 90.9% (79.6%)

Two terrible performances around the holiday break against the Montreal Canadiens and Anaheim Ducks pulled the club's underlying numbers down somewhat. Since the calendar flipped, the Flames Corsi and expected goals ratios have been north of 60% at even strength.

The penalty kill enjoyed perhaps its best run of the season through this segment. Not only did the Flames limit shot attempts against to less than



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90/hour, but their goaltending put up a save rate of 93.9% while a man down. As a result, Calgary surrendered just two goals on 22 attempts.

The PP improved from their previous hideous four percent run to just over 17 percent effectiveness, although that number is somewhat misleading. Two of the Flames four powerplay goals came in a single game against the Chicago Blackhawks. Since that outburst, Calgary has gone four straight games without scoring on the man advantage, a 0 for 15 run. The new look PP units have begun to look as stagnant as the previous outfits as well, with overly predictable tactics and a general inability to penetrate the opponent's defensive schemes.

Frequent Lines

Gaudreau – Monahan – Ferland

Tkachuk – Backlund – Brouwer

Bennett – Jankowski – Hathaway

Mangiapane – Stajan – Lazar

Giordano – Hamilton

Brodie – Hamonic

Kulak – Stone

The Flames lost three bodies recently: Micheal Frolik to long-term injury (broken jaw), Freddie Hamilton to waivers (claimed by Arizona), and Jaromir Jagr to an undeclared dispute (likely ending in a contract termination). Jagr briefly filled in for Frolik on Mikael Backlund's line before another injury forced him to the sidelines (and apparently convinced all parties involved to move on), which bumped Troy Brouwer back up the rotation.

With Hamilton being snagged by Arizona, the Flames called up AHL stand-out Andrew Mangiapane to fill in on the fourth line, where he has performed admirably so far. The Flames also recalled Marek Hrivik to eat popcorn as the 13th forward. The 27-year old is a better than point-per-game in the minors this year and might get a look sooner rather than later.

The Good

Calgary continues to be above average at controlling play at even strength. Even with two stinkers skewing results somewhat, the Flames managed over 52% of shot attempts, goals, and expected goals during this recent segment. This is a vast, vast improvement over the previous coaching regime and has held since roughly the mid-way point of last season.

It's tempting to wonder why the club continues to be mediocre overall given their above play at five-on-five, but the way to look at it is – without controlling even strength play to this degree, the Flame's various other struggles likely would have sunk them by now otherwise. Their notable shot share has floated them through low shooting percentages and erratic/inept performances on the PP and PK to date and is one of the primary reasons (aside from guys like Johnny Gaudreau and Mike Smith) that the team is still a going concern.

The best news for the Flames through this seven-game stretch was the return of the Monahan line, which was unfortunately absent through much of December. The trio got back to outshooting and out-chancing the bad guys and finally saw some pucks go in the net as well. The Monahan unit outscored the opposition 6-1 at even strength over the last seven games, while Gaudreau was also critical in the last minute win over Anaheim and the recent overtime win over Minnesota.

Noteworthy in the first line's recent run is the play of Micheal Ferland, who struggled mightily at times in December and probably would have been demoted at some point if the club had any other options on the right side. However, the 26-year old really turned things around at the end of the month and was a key contributor on many of the unit's tallies. Ferland now has career highs in goals (18) and points (26) only halfway through the season.

And then there's the dynamic duo of Mark Giordano and Dougie Hamilton. Calgary's top pairing did it all during this segment: at even strength, they boasted a CF% of over 60 percent while playing against the other team's best players. The Flames were also +20 in terms of chances for and against at five-on-five with the top pair on the ice (SCF% 59%). On top of all that, Giordano and Hamilton scored three of the club's game-winning goals: OT vs Chicago (Giordano), 16 seconds left vs Anaheim (Hamilton), and OT versus Minnesota (Hamilton). Offense has been hard to come by for this pairing this year, at least relative to last season, but they were truly dominant from all angles during the recent stretch.

The addition of Mangiapane to the fourth line seems to have made a positive difference. Although we're talking about 20 minutes of ice time, the unit of Mangiapane, Stajan, and Lazar boasts positive rates across the board, including shot attempts (54%) and scoring chances (69%). The trio has yet to score, but at least they are more than holding their own in sheltered minutes. After the formation of the effective kid unit of Mark Jankowski, Sam Bennett, and Garnet Hathaway, the club's fourth line remained the lone, clear chink in the armour at even strength. If the team can finally find a way for the bottom line to simply not be terrible on most nights, they will have no significant weaknesses up front.

Somewhat overshadowed by the on-going struggles of the powerplay is the club's steadily improving penalty kill. A ghastly eyesore for much of the season, the Flame's PK has finally started to defend the zone and blueline with some measure of aplomb. Although it still sits 22nd in the league in terms of effectiveness (79.6%), it's a big improvement over the 30th ranking they suffered through earlier.

A part of that success is, of course, Mike Smith, who put together another above average stretch of games recently. His even strength save rate of 93.01 percent is tied with Henrik Lundqvist for fifth best so far this year amongst NHL starters, which is better than the Flames could have hoped for when they acquired him in the summer. Adding David Rittich, who has a 93.68 ES SV% in his five appearances so far, means the team may have finally found stable netminding for the first time in Treiving's tenure.

The Bad

I mentioned recently that the Flames seem to be allergic to leads this year. That bad habit persisted in the recent segment. In four of the last seven games, the Flames had, and lost, a lead. In fact, in three of those games, they garnered a two-goal or better advantage heading into the second half of the contest and blew it every time.

Versus San Jose, Calgary went ahead by one on a Hathaway goal early in the first and then didn't score again, leading to the 2-1 loss. Versus Chicago, Calgary was up 3-0 by the five-minute mark of the second period, only to see the Blackhawks storm back with three unanswered goals, pushing things to overtime. Against the Ducks, the Flames entered the third period with a two-goal lead, only to see it evaporate inside the first seven minutes of the period. The recent OT win over the Wild was a similar script, with Calgary up by two to start the third, only to collapse and need extra time to finish the job.

Perhaps the good news in this tale is the Flames still managed to pull off wins in the three of the four instances. That said, being reliant on three-on-three overtime to garner victories while constantly handing out loser points to your rivals isn't a great long-term strategy for success.

A big part of the Flames current inability to close out games is their powerplay. Although the extra man was instrumental in the win over Chicago, it has continually failed to deliver a death blow otherwise. Versus Anaheim, for example, the Flames were gifted a four-minute PP near the start of the third. Instead of ending the Duck's night, the PP not only failed to score, but it surrendered a short-handed goal against. Versus the Wild, the Flames PP had a chance to put the club ahead 3-1 halfway through the third. It failed, and the Wild would tie the game up just a few minutes later.

Since December 2nd, the Flames have won a game by more than a single goal twice (both times against Vancouver). The last team Calgary



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beat by more than a single goal (aside from the Canucks) was the Arizona Coyotes, all the way back on November 30th. Calgary has been good at staying in contests and pushing things to extra time for much of this season, but they've also been lousy at closing things off when the game should be well in hand.

The lackluster PP and the team's general lack of poise while leading seem to be the last two major obstacles facing the Flames this year. If they can finally figure out how to become a persistent threat on the man advantage, and/or how to step on the necks of their enemies while they are down, they might finally put together something more than a 4-3-0 run.

If we drill down to individual performances, the TJ Brodie and Travis Hamonic pairing once again pops up as a problem. Although the duo has mostly eliminated the overly obvious defensive gaffes that marked their performances earlier on, they are still unable to drive shot or chance totals. In this segment, as in many others to date, Brodie and Hamonic had the worst possession and chance ratios on the Flame's blueline.

In 90 minutes together, the club's second pairing had a CF% of 47%, a shot ratio of 36%, a chance ratio of 48%, and goals ratio of 43%. In fact, only an on-ice save percentage of 92.7 and PDO of 102.4 prevented the last seven games from being an outright disaster for this duo.

We're halfway through the season and it's fair to say that Brad Treliving has not received the performance bump he expected out of the Hamonic acquisition. Brodie and Hamonic are now fifth and sixth out of the club's seven regular defenders by almost any relative underlying number you care to name: Corsi, goals, expected goals, shots, scoring chances, etc. Even the Michael Stone, Brett Kulak pairing is outpacing the Brodie combination, albeit in easier circumstances. Only Matt Bartkowski's presence on roster prevents either Brodie or Hamonic from being "team worst" in many of these measures.

It will be interesting to see what the Flames do in the face of this failed experiment – assuming, of course, there isn't a sudden turn around in the pair's performance during the second half. Calgary has three right-handed defenders signed for the next few years in Hamilton, Hamonic, and Stone, and a couple high potential prospects in Rasmus Andersson and Adam Fox knocking on the door. It will likely behoove the organization to move at least one of these guys in the next twelve months in order to make room. Do the Flames try to flip Hamonic if he continues to flounder?

Finally, this recent segment was easily Mikael Backlund's worst. Losing line mate Frolik to injury, plus having to take on the top opposing line's every night (while starting many shifts in the defensive zone) caught up to the Flames second line center. He was underwater by all chance and shot metrics through the last seven games, though given his history we can likely count on a return to form relatively soon (even with Troy Brouwer on his wing).

Scouting report

In the previous seven-game segment article, I noted Calgary's poor "conversion rate", which referred to their ability to turn shot attempts into actual shots on goal, particularly on the power play. Their last seven games featured this peculiar weakness as well. Although they fired 57 shot attempts on the man advantage, just 38 of them went unblocked (19 or 33% of their shots were blocked) and 28 of them made it on net (another 10 were shot wide, meaning 49.1% of total shot attempts turned into actual shots on goal).

When I looked at league-wide averages for conversion rates on the PP previously, 54.5% was the average for turning shot attempts into actual shots, while the average block rates for teams was about 24.8%. Previous to this segment, the Flames were second last in the league by both of these measures (49.7% conversion rate, and 29.9% block rate). Only the Detroit Red Wing converted less of their shot attempts into shots on goal (49.6%) and only the Chicago Blackhawks had a higher percentage of their shots blocked (31.5%). As you can see, the Flames recent efforts on the PP featured even worse conversion and block rates,

meaning they again struggled to turn potential shots into something more fruitful.

This points to one of two issues: either Calgary's shooters are getting good looks and simply failing to execute, or there are systemic problems hindering their ability to get a clean shot through to the net. Without more in-depth scouting we can't definitely say one way or the other, but the impression is one of systemic failures. Calgary's power play remains staid and predictable. It spends a lot of time passing pucks around the perimeter and doesn't do enough to pull defenders or the opposing goaltender out of position. This can result in either the shooter facing a wall of shinpads when he looks at the net or a goalie in a set position and not a lot of net to shoot at.

The reconfiguration of the top unit, featuring the addition of Giordano, Matthew Tkachuk, and Backlund with Gaudreau and Monahan hasn't really overcome these challenges. Although Tkachuk is a natural net-front presence due to his ability tip pucks, gobble up rebounds, and absorb abuse, the unit still doesn't do enough to get pucks to the net cleanly. At some point, one wonders when the coaching staff will completely re-evaluate their efforts with the man advantage, which seems to be grossly underperforming given the quality of the players available. Like the PK, Calgary's PP currently ranks 22nd in the league. One place ahead of them at 21st? The Arizona Coyotes.

The next seven

Thurs, Jan 11 – at Tampa Bay Lightning

Fri, Jan 12 – at Florida Panthers

Sun, Jan 14 – at Carolina Hurricanes

Sat, Jan 20 – vs Winnipeg Jets

Mon, Jan 22 – vs Buffalo Sabres

Web, Jan 24 – vs LA Kings

Thurs, Jan 25 – at Edmonton Oilers

Calgary heads out on the road for a compressed tour of the southern states before the all-star break. After that, they head home for three games before getting a chance to redeem themselves in Edmonton.

We're still awaiting the club's first really impressive seven-game segment of the year. While continuing to put together four wins and three losses in perpetuity might not take them out of the race, it will definitely mean a mad scramble and coin flip for a playoff position at the end of the year. To avoid that fate, Calgary absolutely must figure out a way to win five or more in the remaining segments moving forward.

The Athletic LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092686 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings mailbag: Ken Holland, re-signing young stars and more

Helene St. James, Jan. 11, 2018

Taking advantage of the Detroit Red Wings being on bye-week to do another mailbag. As always, thank you for the questions.

Will Ken Holland be the GM of the Red Wings come next season? #HeleneonHockey

— CMCNa (@McNamaraC5) January 10, 2018

HSJ: I anticipate Holland will have a role with the team, either as general manager or advisor. President and CEO of Ilitch Holdings, Chris Ilitch, gave Holland a vote of confidence at the end of last season. Within the organization, there is very much the understanding that the team is



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overdue to struggle — when the Wings drafted Michael Rasmussen at ninth overall last year, it was the highest the Wings had drafted since 1991. Teams that have won the Stanley Cup since 2009 all have had at least a second-overall pick on the roster.

Tanking, however, doesn't guarantee access to picking that high any more. From 1995 through 2012, the only clubs that could vie to select first overall were the bottom five teams in the standings (excepting 2005, when the season was wiped out by a labor dispute. All 30 teams were in the lottery, with anywhere from one to four balls. The Penguins, who had three balls in the lottery, won the right to draft Sidney Crosby). Now the top three draft selections are awarded via a draw that includes all the teams that miss the playoffs. In other words, the team that finishes at the bottom of the standings could end up being pushed back to fourth (as happened in 2017 with Colorado).

What it will come down to is whether Chris Iltch sees the Wings as being in good shape to regain competitiveness as quickly as possible. They have good building blocks already in Dylan Larkin, Anthony Mantha and Andreas Athanasiou. Defenseman Dennis Cholowski, their 2016 first-round pick, is having a very good season and could be ready to push for a spot in Detroit as soon as next season. Center Michael Rasmussen, their 2017 first-rounder, was having a very good season and is expected to return either this month or next from surgery.

Imagine, if the Wings end up with the right to draft first overall in June, adding defenseman Rasmus Dahlin to that mix!

Something to note regarding gaining competitiveness, though: it's hard even with high-end picks. The Florida Panthers have missed the playoffs 14 times since 1998, leading to drafting third overall in 2011, second overall in 2013, first overall in 2014 — and they are one point ahead of Detroit in the standings. Since the 2004-05 lockout, the Coyotes franchise has drafted inside the top 10 six times, and has missed the playoffs nine times, including the last five years. Arizona is at the bottom of the standings.

Colorado was Detroit's contemporary in the late 90s and early aughts. The Avalanche has a lineup that includes the first overall picks from 2006 and 2013, second overall from 2011, 10th overall from 2015 — and the Avs are at the bottom of the Central Division. The Edmonton Oilers drafted first overall in 2010, 2011, and 2012, seventh overall in 2013, third overall in 2014, first overall again in 2015 (netting generational forward Connor McDavid), fourth overall in 2016 — and the Oilers have made the playoffs once the past 11 seasons, and are headed for another miss this spring.

Is having a GM on his final year of his deal a bad thing because the Red Wings should be unloading UFA at the end of the year plus shedding some other contacts. Detroit has been playing good lately but the long term plan needs to be draft picks and prospects #HeleneonHockey

— Jarek Fornwald (@JRoc022) January 10, 2018

HSJ: Drafting and developing is the plan, as it was last season. Holland has not been a buyer since 2015. The Wings have drafted in the first round every year since 2013, and have swung deals to acquire bonus second-round draft picks in 2013 (Tyler Bertuzzi) and 2016 (Filip Hronek). In 2017, the Wings had 11 draft picks. So far they hold nine picks in 2018.

#Heleneonhockey Do Redwings sign any "The Big 3" Larkin-Mantha-AA during season or after? <https://t.co/qnME4EZfH8>

— Chad looyenga (@CLooyenga) January 10, 2018

HSJ: I could see Dylan Larkin getting done early, because he's a fairly known quantity — he's a 200-foot player who works hard and has shown good consistency dating to the last month of last season. He's future captain material. Anthony Mantha probably would be next — he almost hit 20 goals last season, and this season should get there, if not to around 30. Andreas Athanasiou's value will be harder to determine — he's demonstrated of late how incredibly skilled he is, but before that he

went 15 games without a goal. So he's more likely to be a summer signing than in-season signing.

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092687 Detroit Red Wings

Kulfan: Red Wings' path to playoffs just too daunting

Ted Kulfan, Jan. 11, 2018

Detroit — The Red Wings are enjoying their "bye" week, so news surrounding the team has come to a standstill.

But that doesn't mean other teams are still playing, and news continues in the NHL.

Here are some of the popular questions — stated in various ways (salty language excluded) — in the mailbox these past few days.

Tampa, Boston and Toronto are pulling away, are projected to go over 100 points, and simply look a cut above everyone else in the Atlantic.

The Red Wings aren't going to catch those teams.

So, their best bet is to concentrate on securing one of the two wild-card spots, on which the Metropolitan Division seems to have dibs.

It's not going to be easy for the Red Wings.

They'll have to climb over Carolina, Philadelphia, the New York Islanders and Florida, just to have to pass two-time Stanley Cup champion Pittsburgh (let's forget about the first wild-card team, New York Rangers).

We saw this first-hand last season. The Red Wings fell behind, and then you saw how difficult it is to climb over teams because many of those teams are playing against each other, so someone is gaining two points, and you also have the variable of three-point games, with losing gaining a point for the regulation tie.

The Red Wings will have to go on a huge, huge run, something like Ottawa's 20-1-2 stretch three years ago, and that is so unlikely.

Someone else from the Red Wings very well might still wind up going.

Let's face it: Most players would rather have the weekend off than play in the All-Star Game, although having the game in warm Tampa this season does help matters considerably.

Larkin is deserving, obviously, but the players picked ahead of him certainly are fine players and deserve it, too.

You're not going to make everyone happy, and the rosters are small.

But if you ask players, some of them would prefer to have those days worked into the schedule and maybe do away with the longer time off, and rather have the two or three days off more often.

It is odd scheduling for teams like the Red Wings, and the others on the bye cycle right now. They just had a three-day holiday break over Christmas, now have the five-day bye, and later this month have three days for the All-Star break.

All in the matter of about a 40-day span.

And, looking ahead, the Red Wings have a rugged schedule in February and, especially March, with few days off and traveling all over the place.

Maybe having the bye week later in the schedule, which has been discussed, would be a preferable placement.

Good for them.



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As for the NHL, it's certainly disappointing the league and the NHL Players Association couldn't work something out.

The majority of fans would love to see the best hockey players in the world competing for their countries — never mind the crazy time difference, being the games are in South Korea.

Many of these tournaments have been a joy to watch. Outstanding, breathtaking hockey.

But, again, let's not take away what these players who've been selected for next month's tournament have accomplished. It's their rightful time to shine.

And don't be surprised if the attention and interest they get, as the tournament draws near and takes place, is greater than some would anticipate today.

There will be good stories on those teams.

Detroit News LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092688 Detroit Red Wings

Wojo: Ken Holland stays course amid his, Red Wings' uncertainty

Bob Wojnowski, Jan. 11, 2018

There's no pretense anymore, that much is clear. After years of stretching timeframes beyond reasonable limits, the Red Wings are trying to buy time — time to develop young players, time to stockpile draft picks, time to (rebuild, retool, regroup, pick a word).

Ken Holland knows it, and although he hates the r-words, he acknowledges the reality. The Wings have played better of late, but at the midseason break they're 17-17-7, six points out of a wildcard spot, still an arduous climb to the playoffs.

Change came when they missed the playoffs for the first time in 25 years, and more change is coming. And the uncertainty is, Holland either will lead it, or be part of it. His contract expires after this season, and while Chris Ilitch, president and CEO of Ilitch Holdings, expressed "100 percent confidence" in Holland last spring, there's been no talk of a new deal.

Holland wants to make this clear — he's fine with that. He's not campaigning for anything. If his time is almost up, he understands it. He's been the GM here for 21 years, and in some ways, the Wings' slide was inevitable. But he still has supreme confidence, and if you spend any time talking with him, his passion churns as strongly as ever.

"I'm enjoying the challenge, I have a ton of energy," Holland said. "I also know it's gonna take time, lots of time, maybe more time than some people are prepared for. I understand the fans' frustration, I got it. When you've lived the things we've lived, the playoff runs, how exhilarating it is, it's frustrating to not win as much. But at the same time, the system is designed for competitive balance."

Reality essentially hit three years ago, when the Wings lost in Game 7 of the first round to Tampa Bay. Shortly thereafter, Mike Babcock left. The Wings snuck into the playoffs once more and fell again to Tampa Bay, then missed the playoffs for the first time in a quarter-century.

It's hard for many to see a clear path back, but Holland spies the signs in a talented young forward core — Dylan Larkin, Andreas Athanasiou, Anthony Mantha — that's producing more. That doesn't mean Holland will get the chance to correct the issues partly of his own making — cumbersome contracts, questionable drafting — and partly the function of a salary-cap system.

The surest formula for success is this: Have a plan and have the right people to carry it out. Holland, 62, still thinks he's the right person, and his long, impressive record presents a strong case. The flip side is, he never has gone through anything like this, and a rebuild often requires fresh eyes and a new approach. He deserves time to fix it, but not limitless time, and the next few weeks leading up to the Feb. 26 trade deadline could be vital.

Holland said he wants to keep working in some capacity, somewhere, but has no problem letting it play out.

"It doesn't bother me I'm in the last year of my contract," he said. "I'm gonna run this team like I'm gonna be here for a long time. I'm gonna make decisions I think are in the best interest of the Red Wings for the 2020, '21, '22 seasons. At the end of the day, whether it's Ken Holland or whoever, you gotta hunker in with somebody, believe in the plan, and hope it bears fruit. I think we're bearing fruit. Some young people are having a bigger impact and they've earned it. I think the process has started."

5 draft picks in early rounds

Holland sees more youngsters — Martin Frk, Tyler Bertuzzi — contributing, and other players bouncing back with solid seasons, such as Jimmy Howard, Gustav Nyquist and Tomas Tatar. He has five draft picks in the first three rounds and will have a lottery pick if the Wings miss the playoffs. In another couple summers, as veterans are traded or roles further reduced, the Wings could climb back in the business of acquiring potential stars.

But there's no quick fix now. Holland stands behind Jeff Blashill (who has another year left on his contract), and won't pull a showy shake-it-up move and fire his coach. He's also adamantly opposed to one nasty strategy in pro sports, the notion of "tanking" to position yourself for a better pick. The NHL draft lottery is now weighted heavier against the top losers, and by most accounts, there's only one franchise prize this year — Swedish defenseman Rasmus Dahlin.

It's tedious and time-consuming, and when you win as much as the Wings won, and just entered a new arena that's the centerpiece of the Ilitch empire, you can't fully retreat.

"My philosophy is to try to be as competitive as we can, because I don't think there any guarantees if you go into these rebuilds," Holland said. "Sometimes you never latch onto those players that turn a rebuild into a powerhouse. So I'm trying to hang onto the culture we have, and in passing that culture to the next generation, the environment is ultimately going to lead this franchise back to one of the better ones in the NHL."

It takes time and patience. It also takes higher-end players, and the Wings don't have nearly enough, especially on defense, partly because they've drafted higher than 15th only once since 1991. They have respected veterans in Henrik Zetterberg, Niklas Kronwall and Howard, an intriguing younger class and a checkered middle group.

After a soul-crushing 10-1 loss to Montreal Dec. 2, Holland suggested the next 10-to-15-game stretch would chart the Wings' course. They're 7-5-2 since, and have won four of their past five.

Holland isn't spinning anything. The playoffs are still a goal, sure, but no longer the only measure of success. The Wings need young players to keep getting better, pushed by Blashill, and they need Holland to make prudent, decisive moves by the trade deadline.

Mike Green is the biggest trade chip, an affordable 32-year-old defenseman who's fourth on the team in points. Defenseman Trevor Daley is an option, too. Howard has been excellent but might have to be shopped, considering most of the team's veterans own hard-to-move contracts.

"The reality is, we're either a seller or a stand-pat," Holland said. "I don't see us spending any real assets to prop us up and make the playoffs. Either this team will be good enough on its own, or we'll continue behind the scenes to add to our asset base. I don't like using the word 'rebuild'."



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because if I say that, now you're saying, 'Who's he trading?' It sends this message that we're not trying to be competitive."

That's the conundrum, but you can't adopt the plan without accepting the pain. And that might partly explain why Holland is operating somewhat in limbo.

Ownership might wonder if he can execute the long-term objective, after years of short-term windows. Fans wonder too. Some of the criticism is narrow, and fails to acknowledge Holland had a win-now mandate under Mike Ilitch. Some of the criticism absolutely is fair, for expensive ill-advised commitments to players such as Justin Abdelkader, Danny DeKeyser, Jonathan Ericsson, Darren Helm and Stephen Weiss.

Grinding through process

You can find examples around the league to fit any narrative you wish — rebuilding takes too long, rebuilding can be accelerated with luck and a few shrewd moves. Is Holland positive he has the stomach, and acumen, to pull it off?

"I consider myself a grinder, a competitor," he said. "I've been very fortunate to watch some great players on great teams, and I want to do that again. Sometimes your time runs out, but there is a plan, and we're on our way back. Up until two years ago, we were making moves for the today, we weren't bad enough to make moves for the future. At some point, you're gonna pay the piper."

It's what the Ilitches' other team, the Tigers, are going through now, a full-on rebuild. It's actually easier to do in baseball, which doesn't have a salary cap, which means there's no cap floor either. In the NHL, you have to spend a minimum amount. And let's be honest — the Wings don't have near the glossy trade pieces as Justin Verlander, Justin Upton and J.D. Martinez.

Steve Yzerman

So logically, the Wings can't completely bottom out. And at times, a halting rise seems possible. They have only one more point after 41 games as a year ago (41-40), but have played better. Blashill talks constantly about the "process," and said after a loss to first-place Tampa Bay the other night, "We can beat anybody in the league, I know that 100 percent."

Holland sees the same things, while admitting improvement is incremental and fleeting.

"You can say our team isn't great, but it's not hopeless," Holland said. "Most nights we compete hard, we're structured. We haven't won enough."

Not good enough since 2013, the last time the Wings won a playoff series. Holland recognizes some view him as a symbol of a different era, not an agent of change. That's not totally fair, as he began the overhaul a year ago, dealing away Brendan Smith, Thomas Vanek, Tomas Jurco and Steve Ott for picks.

The fruits of his drafting remain decidedly inconclusive. Last year's No. 1 pick, 6-6 Michael Rasmussen, is tracking to be a decent NHL forward. The year before, Holland took defenseman Dennis Cholowski, and his progress has been steady, but slow.

One fanciful notion is for the Wings to do whatever it takes to bring Steve Yzerman home, after eight years in Tampa Bay. But Yzerman is under contract through 2019, and has perhaps the best team in the league, while the Wings' challenge is daunting.

Holland said he appreciates his relationship with owner Marian Ilitch and CEO Chris Ilitch and isn't actively seeking resolution to his situation.

"I've had no conversations with Mrs. Ilitch or Chris about my future," Holland said. "I'm not concerned about it at all. At the end of season, I'm sure we're gonna sit down and have a conversation. I've slowly worked my way up in this organization (since 1983) and I've lived the dream to be a Stanley Cup champion. I've been very, very lucky, and at the same

time, I've been very good at what I do. Whatever happens, I'm OK with it. I really am at peace."

At peace and at work, a tougher task these days but with the same basic philosophy. Pick a plan and stick with it, and trust that even in changing times, it still can work.

Detroit News LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092689 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings need better results with tougher schedule second half

By Ansar Khan

DETROIT - The Detroit Red Wings gained 41 points in 41 games the first half of the season. That's a good pace if you're a scorer, not if you're a team seeking a playoff berth.

How much better must they be in the second half to reach the postseason? Based on recent history, the Red Wings need to gain at least 52 points in the final 41 games to qualify. That would get them to 93 points, the total accumulated by the final playoff team in the Eastern Conference in 2014 and 2016, which coincidentally, was the Red Wings.

But that might not be good enough, since it took 95 points to make it last season and 98 to qualify in 2015.

The gist of it is, the Red Wings need to not only play much better, but get results, too. They were six points behind Pittsburgh for the final wild card spot heading into Wednesday's games. Four other teams are in between, compounding the difficulty. On the plus side, the Red Wings have games in hand against all those clubs, including three on the Penguins, whom they visit Saturday (1 p.m., Fox Sports Detroit), in the first game for both clubs following a five-day bye week.

The Red Wings (17-17-7) were playing better prior to the break, winning four in a row before a 5-2 loss to Tampa Bay Sunday. The schedule is tougher the second half, with 23 road games.

Gustav Nyquist believes there are reasons to be optimistic.

"We talked about it here the last couple weeks," he said following Sunday's game. "I think we all think that we're a better team at this point than we were last year, although the (record) looks very similar. I think we've made strides as a team. We're a few points out right now, but if we keep playing the way we've been doing lately, I think we'll have a good chance."

Coach Jeff Blashill said his team is doing a lot of things it takes to be successful, which they not only feel internally but something he said others around the league have told him.

"We just got to stay on it and understand we're going to be in lots of games and we got to find a way to win them," Blashill said. "We need points for sure, we need lots of wins, but we got to keep doing it right. We're not going to be perfect ... but we got to play as complete as we can and find a way to win when we come out of this break."

It will help if goaltender Jimmy Howard is ready. He suffered a lower-body injury during the second period of Friday's 4-2 win over Florida. He finished the game but didn't dress against the Lightning. Blashill doesn't believe it is long-term.

"Sometimes on some mild injuries there's some stiffness that we think will be fine (after the break)," Blashill said. "I anticipate him being available, but we'll see."



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The Red Wings practice in Pittsburgh late Friday afternoon. Their game Sunday at Chicago was switched last week from night to 12:30 p.m. ET for NBC.

They have a tough task right out of the break.

"Going into this break, we're right there," Dylan Larkin said. "We'll have a couple of games to make up when we get back. It will be good to get away for a lot of us and come back and dial it in and make a push and hopefully play (Tampa Bay) again in the playoffs."

Said Justin Abdelkader: "You look at the overall picture here, we've had a really good stretch. This (loss to the Lightning) will leave a bitter taste in your mouth for sure. When we come back, we've really got to go at it until the All-Star break. We're getting ourselves back into the thick of things. We still got some work to do, but we got to continue to play the way we have for most of this homestand."

Michigan Live LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092690 Detroit Red Wings

Pat Caputo - Good, bad and mostly ugly current state of Red Wings

By Pat Caputo,

The Red Wings, on a five-day bye this week, have played exactly half their games, 41.

And they have just 41 points. It's a pace, if continued, will assuredly mean the Red Wings missing the Stanley Cup playoffs for the second straight season.

The Red Wings will not be the NHL's worst team. The Phoenix Coyotes and Buffalo Sabres will "compete" for that "honor," which doesn't guarantee the first overall pick in the NHL Draft anymore because of the lottery.

So cynical Red Wings' fans would say they still have a shot, all right - at the first overall pick - considering generational defenseman Rasmus Dahlin from Sweden presents a franchise-changing prize.

For the less exasperated and more hopeful of the Red Wings' faithful, the playoff chance is faintly alive.

The cold, hard facts hurt: The Red Wings are just a point better than last season at this stage.

In 2016-17, Toronto was the Eastern Conference's second wild card team with 95 points. Boston, which picked up the third playoff spot from the Atlantic Division, also had 95 points.

It looks like the Red Wings are running in place more than progressing, and the screws could be tightening on general manager Ken Holland and coach Jeff Blashill.

The Red Wings better? Really? Just look at the standings.

While the standings don't suggest it, there are signs the Red Wings have improved.

Dylan Larkin, now full-time at center, has made considerable progress this season. He's learned how to create more room on the ice. He's stronger on his skates and in the upper body. Larkin had a terrible sophomore season compared to his sizzling start as a rookie, but has been better because of the experience.

Larkin has been more consistent than the Red Wings other two young guns, Andreas Athanasiou and Anthony Mantha.

After holding out, Athanasiou has delivered even more breathtaking moments than last season when he became somewhat of a sensation. Boy, is he fast. Oh, can finish around the net. But statistical evidence suggests there is more style than substance from AA. It comes in the form of metrics, specifically his Corsi number in close games (goal up or down or tied) while even strength. It's 45.6, which is well-below the 50 threshold for average. It strongly hints Athanasiou does not win battles for pucks, nor skates as swiftly to back check as when offensive chances arise. He is minus 10 in 31 games, too.

Larkin's Corsi close is 50.2, which is up from last season.

Mantha is a gifted player, but after a promising start, his performance has waned. He remains solid metrically, but it looked like he was going to take a genuine step toward stardom early in the season. It's been considerably less than that.

The Red Wings have an expensive defensive corps with relatively decorated veterans, but where Mike Green would be a second-unit power specialist on solid teams, and a third-pair even-strength defenseman, he's the Red Wings' lone All-Star Game representative. Trevor Daly is better at moving the puck than what the Red Wings had, but like Green, he's leaned on too much. It goes on like that throughout the defensive corps.

Gustav Nyquist and Tomas Tatar are on pace to score more than 20 goals (Nyquist might have a shot at 30), but are not quite the stars projected not long ago.

It's been a mixed bag for the Red Wings' prospects. Big forwards Michael Rasmussen (2017) and Evgeny Svechnikov (2015) are recent first-round draft picks who have struggled this season in junior hockey and the AHL, respectively, albeit to a large degree because of injuries.

Defenseman Dennis Cholowski, the first-round choice in 2016, is filling out physically and is thriving in Canadian junior hockey after leaving the American college system. He, surprisingly, nearly worked his way onto the Canadian team for the World Junior Championship before being cut.

But despite his progress, Cholowski, selected 20th overall, continues to pale in comparison to the players selected right in front of him in the '16 draft.

And it's glaring considering the Red Wings' traded down four picks to Arizona for cap relief after Pavel Datsyuk retired, primarily using the money to sign veteran Frans Nielsen to an badly overpriced contract as a free agent.

Arizona, famously at this point, used the selection for defenseman Jakob Chychrun, who has recovered from a knee injury and is back to taking regular NHL shifts.

Defenseman Dante Fabbro was No.17 and has played the last two years for Canada in the WJC. He he has been solid for college power Boston University, and is highly-regarded by the Predators, who have been a defenseman factory.

Kieffer Bellows is a forward, but the 19th overall pick in the '16 draft by the Islanders has stood out for the Americans in the WJC the past two years.

A PLUS: Detroit's second-round pick in '17, defenseman Gustav Lindstrom, played well for a very good Swedish squad in the WJC. It seemed like a stretch when the Red Wings took him that soon, but they may have found a diamond in the rough.

Grand Rapids doesn't have a lot to offer right now. The Griffins, with more than their normal share of minor league veterans, are sixth in a seven-team division. There is not a lot there in regard to advanced prospects, although Tyler Bertuzzi, now with the big club, might be an exception.

Goaltending is a real concern. Petr Mrazek has some the worst stats in the NHL. Of all the goalies who have played in the league in '17-18, his



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save percentage of .885 ranks 64th. His 3.78 goals against average is 69th.

There is no goalie in the pipeline currently solidly NHL-caliber in the Red Wings' organization other than Jimmy Howard, who is still effective - sometimes very effective - but badly and obviously overworked.

The Hockey News recently both praised and slammed Holland in a recent edition. They listed him as the 27th most influential person in the sport because he is, "still a leader on league issues and rules." Yet, when they went over the future salary cap situations for each organization, they rated the Red Wings dead last.

"What a mess," The Hockey News wrote. "Larkin, Mantha, Athanasiou need new deals. Barely enough cash to re-up them all since the Wings are buried in a sea of ugly veteran deals."

Put all together, it doesn't paint a promising picture.

Macomb Daily LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092768 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Men's non-NHL Olympic hockey team built to win the 'Canadian Way'

Shi Davidi

January 11, 2018, 4:50 PM

In describing the Canadian men's hockey team for the 2018 Olympics, Willie Desjardins decided to tell a few stories. The head coach started off by talking about Brandon Kozun, a scorer who wasn't scoring during the evaluation period, but worked so hard to contribute in other areas that he still forced his way on to the team.

"He wouldn't accept not making it," marvelled Desjardins. "Kozie's about 5-5 - he hit everybody."

Then there's Mason Raymond, a slick-skating forward who wound himself "so tight" before games because of his desperation to play in Pyeongchang, and can now play free. Desjardins talked about families, and how Hockey Canada officials let former NHLer Steve Thomas call his son Christian and break the news that he was going to the Olympics.

Finally, he brought up Wojtek Wolski, a skilled winger who after being informed that he'd made the team looked at a picture of himself in a hospital bed with a broken neck from a year ago, and cried.

"That's what our team is about," said Desjardins. "It's about guys who have received a no but found a way to make a yes. Their determination and their heart is incredible."

More, quite obviously, than determination and heart alone will be required for Canada to win a third consecutive men's hockey gold at the Olympics next month, especially without access to the country's unrivalled repository of NHLers.

But Desjardins, along with the management team led by GM Sean Burke, assistant GM Martin Brodeur and vice-president of hockey operations and national teams Scott Salmond, made sure their 25-man roster included players with a surplus of fortitude to complement their skill.

Minus the generational talent of Sidney Crosby and superstars like Jonathan Toews, Connor McDavid, Drew Doughty and Carey Price, team officials thought a lot about what type of identity they wanted this Canadian squad to have.

"A lot of it came down to wanting to be a very hard team to play against," said Burke, himself an Olympian on the 1988 and '92 squads that also didn't include NHL players. "The Olympics are going to have very

talented teams there, there's obviously the pressure of the big stage, but we did want to have what we've always considered the Canadian Way to be a big part of the flavour of our team.

"I feel we've got a very mobile defence, we've got skill up front, some size, but more than anything, I think we've got the character throughout our lineup that gives us the opportunity to play that way and be a very hard team to play against."

Forwards Derek Roy, Rene Bourque, Gilbert Brule, Linden Vey, along with Kozun, Raymond and Wolski, defencemen Marc-Andre Gagnani and Cody Goloubef and goalie Ben Scrivens may be familiar to NHL fans, and headline a veteran-laden squad selected solely from the professional game. Thirteen of the 25 players are in the KHL, followed by four from the Swiss league, three each from the American Hockey League and Swedish loop, and one apiece from Germany and Austria.

A small handful of NCAA players were among the 80 men to suit up for the national team since August, but none from the college or major junior ranks ultimately made it.

"It's a man's game," said Salmond. "That's not to say some of these kids aren't at the development stage where they can play with men, but what it does say is that it takes some time to make that adjustment, whether it's from the NCAA or the Canadian Hockey League, to get up to speed to playing at that level with that size and strength factor. We don't have that time."

Hence the emphasis on experience and character, a formula that served Canada well at the 1994 Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, the last time the Olympics were contested without NHL players. While that group included two top-end talents in a 19-year-old Paul Kariya and naturalized Czech Petr Nedved, they won silver by playing a disciplined, hard game in which each player performed to his role.

"They had the opportunity to sign their work, to do what they could do within a game to help us all have success," Hockey Canada CEO Tom Renney, who coached the '94 squad, said in a recent interview.

In events like the 12-team Olympic tournament - Canada opens in Group A along with host South Korea, the Czech Republic and Switzerland - especially one without NHL players, there is an added degree of small-sample-size randomness that can factor into outcomes, as well.

Being able to lean on a collective toughness or will, what Burke termed the Canadian Way, can sometimes be the difference.

"You're not looking for it when you scout," said Burke. "You know you need it, you know it has to be a part of your team, but it just comes out of players and it becomes obvious who those guys are for you."

This 25-man roster won't have much time to jell. The 13 KHL players are scheduled to arrive for a training camp in Riga, Latvia on Jan. 28, with the others to follow once their leagues allow. Exhibition games simulating the Pyeongchang schedule are set for Feb. 4 against Latvia and Feb. 6 versus Belarus, with a final warmup contest with Sweden on Feb. 12 in South Korea.

Then it starts for real Feb. 15 against Switzerland, when Desjardins' group of players who turned their no into a yes try to fight their way back atop the podium.

"How it manifests itself is when things get tough," said Desjardins. "It's when you're down by a goal in the third period, it's when somebody maybe gives you a cheap shot and you don't retaliate, it's finding a way to keep your focus in mind on where you want to go.

"There always will be adversity. We know going in there's going to be adversity in this tournament. It's not going to go smoothly all along. You go back to Canada's world junior team (earlier this month), they had an early game where their discipline wasn't great, the coaching staff talked about it and they had great discipline in the final, and that was a big part of them winning. It comes out and shows itself when things get tough."

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1092769 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Team Canada's Wojtek Wolski reflects on journey to Olympic selection

Steven Loung

January 11, 2018, 4:09 PM

Hockey Canada announced its men's Olympic team roster Thursday, and while the team may be bereft of household names – having no NHL players will do that – it certainly doesn't come up short in heart.

A strong example being forward Wojtek Wolski.

Wolski was a first-round pick of the Colorado Avalanche in 2004, played parts of 11 seasons with five different teams then, in 2013, left North America to play in the KHL.

Tragically, he most recently made headlines in October 2016 when he broke his neck and suffered a concussion during a game between his Metallurg Magnitogorsk and Barys Astana.

The horrific injury kept Wolski out for the rest of the season, but it didn't keep him off the ice.

Less than a year after his freak accident, Wolski was seen getting ready for the upcoming KHL season.

An inspiring story for sure, but as it turns out, Wolski's initial recovery was just the beginning of his comeback story.

On Thursday, with Wolski being named to Canada's Olympic roster, his Cinderella story of "zero to hero" came to a conclusion and he took to Instagram to share his thoughts on his journey.

Exactly one year ago today I laid in a hospital bed after having surgery to fix a broken neck. Today I am so proud and excited to have been named to Canada's Olympic Hockey Team. I look at the picture of me in the hospital and can't help but cry. Mostly tears of happiness, but I am filled with so many emotions about what I have overcome. I could never have imagined that I would be so lucky one year later. I want to take this moment to thank everyone for all the amazing support along the way. Without my family and friends, I don't think any of it would be possible. @jesselammers has been an absolute superstar through all of it. Thank you and I Love you. When I say family and friends that most definitely includes @matt_nichol @mgivelos @mikeprebeg @sk8onhockey @marylalancette @dmartella12 @carnz74 @biosteelsports , Dr.Forman, Dr.Ford, Dr.Galea . This amazing group helped me literally get back on my feet and then back on the ice. Absolutely thrilled to be representing Canada and defending Gold in Pyeongchang. @hockeycanada @teamcanada @olympics #olympics

A post shared by Wojtek Wolski (@wojtekwolski) on Jan 11, 2018 at 10:28am PST

"Exactly one year ago today I laid in a hospital bed after having surgery to fix a broken neck," Wolski's post reads. "Today I am so proud and excited to have been named to Canada's Olympic Hockey Team.

"I look at the picture of me in the hospital and can't help but cry. Mostly tears of happiness, but I am filled with so many emotions about what I have overcome. I could never have imagined that I would be so lucky one year later."

Wolski's story is proof that you can still have good Olympic hockey stories even without NHL players, and if the epilogue of his tale ends with another Canadian gold medal it won't matter what league the men in red and white play in.

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Sportsnet.ca / 12 notable names you won't see on NHL All-Star weekend

Emily Sadler

January 11, 2018, 11:14 PM

The NHL released the official All-Star rosters on Wednesday, and it inevitably stirred up some healthy hockey debate as we compare the official lineups to our own armchair scouting reports.

Here are the full 2018 #NHL All-Star rosters. Who got snubbed?! (Via – @NHL)

4,794 Likes, 267 Comments – Sportsnet (@sportsnet) on Instagram: "Here are the full 2018 #NHL All-Star rosters. Who got snubbed?! (Via – @NHL)"

So in the spirit of that annual debate, here are a 12 names we won't see in Tampa, Fla., on Jan. 27-28 that are totally playing like All-Stars right now.

ATLANTIC

Forward: Jonathan Huberdeau, FLA

After missing the majority of 2016-17, Huberdeau is on pace for the best season of his career. His 43 points in 42 games so far has him just ahead of All-Star teammate Aleksander Barkov atop the Panthers' stat sheet. It sure would be fun to see these linemates play among the best in 3-on-3.

With 3 points each tonight, Aleksander Barkov and Jonathan Huberdeau now each have 11 multi-point games through 42 contests this season.

— Jameson Olive (@JamesonCoop) January 10, 2018

Defenceman: Charlie McAvoy, BOS

McAvoy earned himself a spot on the Bruins' top blue line pairing alongside veteran Zdeno Chara as a 19-year-old, and while's been a great story in Boston this year, the rookie will surely have plenty more chances to suit up as an All-Star.

Goalie: Frederik Andersen, TOR

Leafs fans are probably relieved Andersen is getting a few days off rather than suiting up for the All-Star Game, as the netminder has started more games (37) and faced more shots (1,261) than all of his crease-dwelling peers. But the Danish netminder, owner of a .921 save percentage and 2.69 goals against average, has been hands-down one of the most valuable Maple Leafs this season and would be a logical All-Star nod.

Most Saves This Season:#Leafs Andersen – 1,161#Flames Smith – 1,034#TBLightning Vasilevskiy – 1,033#NYR Lundqvist – 1,032#CBJ Bobrovsky – 1,024

— Sportsnet Stats (@SNstats) January 11, 2018

METROPOLITAN

Forward: Phil Kessel, PIT

He's leading the Penguins in goals (18) and points (47) and he's always good for an All-Star laugh or two. But when your teammates are Sidney Crosby and Kris Letang (and fellow omission Evgeni Malkin) well, there are only so many Penguins allowed in Tampa Bay.



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Most Points By Players Left Out of All-Star Game:#Flyers Voracek – 51#Pens Kessel – 47#STLBlues Tarasenko – 44#FLAPanthers Huberdeau – 43

— Sportsnet Stats (@SNstats) January 11, 2018

Defenceman: Shayne Gostisbehere, PHI

The 24-year-old ranks fourth in points among defencemen and is on pace for his best season yet.

Goalie: Sergei Bobrovsky, CBJ

The veteran netminder is continuing his tradition of being clutch in the crease, and is tied for the second-most shutouts in the league (four).

I'd bet many within #CBJ are privately delighted that G Sergei Bobrovsky is going to get a break during the All-Star Game. That may or may not include the goaltender himself.

— Aaron Portzline (@Aportzline) January 10, 2018

CENTRAL

Forward: Vladimir Tarasenko, STL

The man is a human highlight reel. Surely we're not the only ones who would like to see him dangle his way through 3-on-3.

tarasenko didn't make the all-star team? pic.twitter.com/JhkWjDGmYC

— Tony X. (@solocity) January 10, 2018

Defenceman: Roman Josi, NSH

With just three defender spots per division and a bunch of talented blueliners in the Central, we understand why there's only room for one Predators defenceman—and that's P.K. Subban, who was voted on as captain.

Goalie: Ben Bishop, DAL

He's pretty hot right now, but won't be making the trip to his old stompin' grounds.

Ben Bishop's numbers during his stretch of starting 10 consecutive games for the @DallasStars.

6-2-2, 1.98 GAA, .936 Save %, 2 shutouts.

— Josh Bogorad (@JoshBogorad) January 6, 2018

PACIFIC

Forward: William Karlsson, VGK

The Golden Knights have been the best story of the season, and William Karlsson's 22 goals and 36 points are two huge reasons why. He and teammate Jonathan Marchessault (16G, 40P) deserve every bit of praise they're getting this season — an All-Star nod would've been pretty cool, too.

Defenceman: Mark Giordano, CGY

We could also plug in partner Dougie Hamilton here—or, if we had more spots on forward, teammate Sean Monahan is playing like All-Star right now, too—but we're going with Gio, who leads his blue line in ice time (24:47 per game), goals (eight), and points (20).

Goalie: Mike Smith, CGY

Smith (2.55 GAA, .922 SV%) has been a real difference-maker this season and is proving to be the No. 1 netminder Calgary was looking for. But, like fellow omissions Andersen and Bobrovsky, he could probably use a weekend off.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 01.12.2018

1092771 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Flames Thoughts: Calgary's 1st line is on fire

Derek Wills

January 12, 2018, 12:32 AM

With four unanswered goals in the second and third periods, the Calgary Flames stretched their season-long winning streak to five games with an impressive 5-1 victory over the league-leading Tampa Bay Lightning at Amalie Arena in Tampa on Thursday.

STRONG START

For the third straight game, the Flames scored first. As a matter of fact, for the third consecutive contest, Micheal Ferland opened the scoring. The rugged and skilled right-winger extended his goal and point streaks to four games when he one-timed a Sean Monahan pass past Andrei Vasilevskiy just 29 seconds into the first period. The Flames seem to feed off of goals more than most teams do, so tallying less than 30 seconds into the game was a great way to get the party started versus the league-leading Lightning.

The Flames are now 15-4-2 when scoring first this season.

FIRST LINE ON FIRE

After a good month of October and a great month of November, the Flames' first line of Monahan, Johnny Gaudreau and Ferland has looked fantastic early in the month of January. Last month, the threesome produced a total of 23 points in 14 games. This month, the trio has already accumulated 22 points in four games. Incredible. On Thursday, Gaudreau and Monahan stretched their assist and point streaks to five games with assists on Ferland's 19th goal of the season. A little later on, Gaudreau snapped a season-long 10-game goalless streak with his 14th tally of 2017-18.

All three players have been doing what they do best since getting off the schneid in the Flames' 4-3 overtime triumph over the Chicago Blackhawks on New Year's Eve. Monahan has been finding soft spots in front of his opponents' net and using his lethal shot. Gaudreau has looked like one of the league's elite playmakers. Ferland has played like a high-end power forward. It's tough to win when your best players aren't your best players, which explains why the Flames struggled to win in December. The Flames have yet to lose in January and the superb play of their top line is one of the main reasons why.

STICKIN' IT TO HIS OLD TEAM

Mike Smith was marvellous versus the Lightning, stopping 33 of 34 shots for his 19th win of the season. When I spoke to Matt Stajan after the game, I asked the veteran Flames forward what the turning point in Thursday's tilt was. He told me that it was Smith's stop on Lightning forward Cedric Paquette on a penalty shot 5:15 into the second period. After tying the game 31 seconds into the middle stanza, the Lightning looked poised to take the game over when Paquette was awarded a penalty shot after being pulled down by defenceman Mark Giordano on a partial breakaway. But, as he has done so many times this season, Smith made a big save when his team needed him to. With all due respect to Vegas Golden Knights goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury, Smith has been the Flames' MVP this season and deserves to be an all-star.

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SPECIAL TEAMS SUCCESS

Teams that win the special-teams battle win games way more often than they lose. The Flames were 1-for-1 on the power play and 3-for-3 on the penalty kill on Thursday. The Flames snapped an 0-for-12 streak on the PP. On the other side of special teams, the Flames' PK has now killed off 16 consecutive opposition power plays. The PK has been good for quite some time. The PP has been the Flames' biggest Achilles heel of late. Maybe, just maybe, Sam Bennett's power-play goal against the Lightning will get it going.

IMPORTANT WIN

While I don't think Thursday's win was the Flames' biggest of 2017-18, I do think it was their most impressive. Because the game was against an out-of-conference opponent, I still think last Saturday's victory over the Anaheim Ducks, a squad that has owned the Flames for years and is one of the teams that they are fighting with for a playoff spot, was the biggest for Glen Gulutzan's group so far this season. With that said, in my humble opinion, Thursday's win was the Flames' most impressive, for a few reasons.

1. The Lightning have been the best team in the NHL this season. First in goals for. Third in goals against. The league's leading goal-scorer in Nikita Kucherov and two top point-producers in him and Steven Stamkos. I could go on and on and on. Assuming stud defenceman Victor Hedman, who left Thursday's game with a lower body injury in the second period, didn't return, and who I saw wearing a walking boot after the game, isn't out long term, the Lightning are my pick to win the Stanley Cup.
2. The Bolts skate as fast and play as fast as any team in the NHL. Going into the game, I wondered if the Flames could keep up. Most teams can't. Coming out of the contest, I have no doubt that when the Flames play their best they can compete with any team in the league.
3. After blowing two-goal third-period leads in their last two games, I couldn't help but wonder if it would be déjà vu all over again versus the high-powered Lightning. Unlike last Saturday's game against the Ducks, a 3-2 win, and Tuesday's contest versus the Wild, a 3-2 overtime victory, the Flames didn't sit on their lead in the final frame on Thursday. Not only did the Flames go into lockdown mode defensively, they continued to create chances offensively, counter-attacking the ultra-aggressive Lightning to add to their lead. After his team played in eight straight one-goal games, hopefully Thursday's four-goal thumping of the Lightning turned a few of Glen Gulutzan's grey hairs blonde again.

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Sportsnet.ca / Canucks' Dan Cloutier able to impart wisdom on fiery Jacob Markstrom

Iain MacIntyre

January 11, 2018, 5:37 PM

COLUMBUS, Ohio – When he played, Dan Cloutier was like a steel cable stretched to its breaking point.

Often he snapped on the ice. But even when he didn't, that tension inside Cloutier rarely abated when the team struggled. He had trouble sleeping after losses, was still angry when he showed up for practice the next day. Cloutier was wound so tightly mentally, you'd swear at times you could hear him crackle and hum like high-tension power lines in a windstorm.

"Now that I look back, I was fighting myself," Cloutier explained Thursday. "All the energy and rest I wasted ... I just wished I would have learned a little sooner.

"I don't care what anybody says, when the game starts, you just want to win. It doesn't matter if it's 7-6, you just want to win. You want it so much, you're almost your worst enemy."

So Cloutier understands these days just how Jacob Markstrom feels because, in terms of intensity and emotions, the Vancouver Canucks starter is a lot like his goaltending coach used to be.

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Markstrom sounded like he might snap after losing 3-1 Tuesday to the Washington Capitals in a game that was decided by a 25-minute Canucks' lull when they were outshot 23-7 and outscored 3-0.

"It's awful; it absolutely sucks," he said of the Canucks' 2-11-2 National Hockey League nosedive the last five weeks. "We're not playing good enough for 60 minutes. That's what kills us. You can always say it's fluky goals we get scored on. But overall, we don't deserve to win. We don't play for 60 minutes."

Markstrom takes losing with the same ferocity as Cloutier did.

After playing as dismally as his team – worse some nights – for much of December, the 27-year-old first-year starter has recaptured his form. Since a 5-4 overtime loss to the San Jose Sharks on Dec. 21, Markstrom has stopped 92.5 per cent of opposition shots in five starts. And yet the Canucks have won only once.

Markstrom still displays that disconcerting tendency to allow a bad goal, like Lars Eller's 35-foot wrist shot he swatted at in vain for the game-winner in Washington. But when a goalie has a .925 save rate, he's not the problem. Still, Markstrom is losing.

In the season in the American League that probably saved his NHL career, the six-foot-six Swede lost only nine games for the Utica Comets in 2014-15. For the Canucks this season, he has lost eight times since top forward Bo Horvat broke his foot on Dec. 5. For the season, Markstrom is 10-14-5. He has lost 19 of his 29 starts.

That's a lot of tension.

"I have one speed; I have to go full out," Markstrom said Thursday after practising for Friday's game against the Columbus Blue Jackets. "Last year's skills competition, I got injured because I can't go out there and mess around. I don't like losing and I don't like letting pucks in."

Asked if it would be easier if he were wired differently, he said: "I wouldn't be here right now, for sure. I feel like I've done a much better job (managing emotions) from the first two weeks of the season until now. I'm getting better every day, both on and off the ice with the mental stuff. It's a learning process for me."

Cloutier said it took him until his second season with the Canucks, after four years in the NHL with the New York Rangers and Tampa Bay Lightning, to learn to temper his intensity and channel all his energy into playing. To not get in his own way.

Cloutier was 25 years old at the start of the 2001-02 season and had played 126 games in the NHL. Markstrom turns 28 on Jan. 31. His start in Washington was his 140th NHL appearance.

"I've been way more emotional after other games," Markstrom insisted. "It's not fun. Especially as a goalie when you lose these tight games, you look back at what you could have done differently. You want to help the guys get out of the slump that we're in. There won't be any people coming from the outside to help. No magic drinks. We have to work hard



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in practice and come together and play more like a team, and play for 60 minutes.”

Cloutier is devoting as much attention to Markstrom’s emotions as his game, telling the goalie there is a process to both his development and the Canucks’ season.

“The way he is wired, when the game starts, he’s there to win the game no matter what,” Cloutier said. “There’s nothing in between winning and losing. So when you don’t win, it affects you mentally and physically.

“Especially now that I’m on the other side (as a coach), I think, ‘Holy smokes.’ I mean, I’d lose sleep over losing because I’d be so mad. Once you figure it out, you realize: ‘Why did I lose so much energy over this?’ But it’s much easier to go through that learning process when you’re on a first-place hockey team.”

The Canucks are 29th in the NHL.

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1092773 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / World Junior experience gives Desjardins Olympic confidence

Eric Francis

January 11, 2018, 4:23 PM

The names on their backs will be unfamiliar to most, but the task at hand for the men on Canada’s Olympic hockey team is easy to identify.

They’ll have to find a way to take 25 players from across Canada, who are playing around the world, and meld them into one cohesive unit. And they’ll have just 19 days to do so. It’s a daunting assignment, but one head coach Willie Desjardins is familiar with.

Having been involved as coach of Canada’s world junior entries in 2009 and 2010, he knows time is short and the pressure is immense.

“I remember in the world juniors one of the first questions I had was, ‘how can you get all these guys together on the same page?’” said the former Vancouver Canucks coach who headed up Canada’s silver medalists in 2010 and was an assistant on Pat Quinn’s gold medal-winning team a year earlier.

“I said, ‘that’s going to be easy, because we all have the same goal.’ And we have it again.”

The goal, even in the absence of NHLers, is gold.

And as unlikely as that might seem given the 25-man roster of European-based players Hockey Canada unveiled Thursday, Desjardins believes his crew will be armed with a work ethic capable of conquering all obstacles.

“That’s the thing about this program – all our guys want it,” said Desjardins, 60.

“They want it and they don’t care what role they’ll be in. They’ll accept any role for this tournament and that’s what gives us a chance.”

Desjardins said what also gives them hope is that by virtue of selecting his team via seven international tournaments the last 14 months, his group has already shared some crucial bonding experiences

“The thing that really brings you together is tough times and we’ve had some of those already for these tournaments where things didn’t go our

way,” said Desjardins, who will have Dave King, Scott Walker and Craig Woodcroft as assistants.

“So our process has already started.”

The Canadian squad will open camp in 17 days in Riga, Latvia, where the team will spend eight days practicing and playing two exhibition games. They’ll then fly to Korea where they’ll face Sweden in a warm-up game before playing their first Olympic test in PyeongChang against Switzerland Feb. 15 at 5 a.m. MT.

“We need to play games to form as a team,” said Desjardins, who had the bulk of his roster play in at least four tourney games during the evaluation process that looked at 100 players.

“That was the hardest thing in the tournaments – building chemistry. Our power play was one key reason we lost in some tournaments. Some teams’ power plays have played together forever, while we had five-man units who had played together one practice. That’s something we’ll have to work on to be successful. That will be our biggest challenge.”

While Canadians continue to try getting over the disappointment of not having NHLers defending the gold medal Canada has won three of the last four Games, the thrill of representing their country on the grandest of stages will be a strong motivator for the NHL castoffs making up the roster.

“There were reasons for them to quit – there were reasons for them to say, ‘I’ve had enough,’” said Desjardins, who has worked closely with team GM Sean Burke to select a squad featuring players like Ben Scrivens, Rene Bourque, Brandon Kozun, Mason Raymond and Derek Roy.

“They have a dream of representing their countries – for some guys that’s the only reason they’re playing this year. I think that’s pretty special. If I was a Canadian I’d appreciate they’ve taken their families to Europe with no family around just so they can be on this team.”

Speaking at a well-attended team unveiling in Calgary about the emotional phone calls informing players of their Olympic fate, Desjardins echoed the clear sentiment this will mean everything to these players.

“All our players somewhere along the line were told ‘no,’ and that they weren’t going to get a chance to continue their NHL career, or in some cases even start it,” said Desjardins, whose team may just have a strong shot at capturing the attention and love of Canadians who otherwise insist they’re not interested in B Level Olympians.

“A lot like other Canadians they’ve managed to battle and fight back. I think that’s the nature of Canadians. It says so much about them as people. I respect that and I think Canadians will as well. I think people can relate to our team and that we’ll be part of the Canadian fabric. You know you’ll get our all.”

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Sportsnet.ca / Dion Phaneuf on uncertain future with Senators: ‘Changes happen’

Chris Johnston

January 11, 2018, 1:15 PM

TORONTO – As the city whizzed by outside the bus window, Dion Phaneuf thought back to a couple places he once called home here.



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It's been a topsy-turvy season, with Phaneuf recently becoming a first-time father but also having the bottom fall out of his Ottawa Senators. He was in a reflective mood during a quick stop in Toronto this week – looking back on the past, and acknowledging that he doesn't know what the future holds for him with the winds of change blowing strongly in the nation's capital.

"We put ourselves in this position as players," Phaneuf said Wednesday night. "When you don't win hockey games there are questions from the outside. I think everyone's stood up, they've answered them, and the guys have come to work with a professional attitude that we've got to work our way out of it.

"That's part of when you don't have success – changes happen, there's talk of change, and we're living that."

Phaneuf may not be the most likely of Sens to get moved by the Feb. 26 trade deadline, but there has been chatter. He's still playing on the monster contract former Leafs general manager Dave Nonis gave him on the last day of 2013 and it carries a \$7-million cap hit for three seasons beyond this one.

With owner Eugene Melnyk recently musing about the possibility of cutting payroll in Ottawa, it's the kind of deal a number-cruncher would want off the books – and Phaneuf only has limited control over his situation with a 12-team trade list.

That's just business.

On the personal side of things, the veteran defenceman is a popular figure inside the organization. He wears an "A" on his sweater and plays an important role in the dressing room – speaking up when something needs to be said, and setting a standard through his exemplary work ethic.

"He's one of those guys that never bails out," said coach Guy Boucher. "He could be completely sick [where] a lot of guys would stay in bed, and he's there. He's a real pro, like in all senses of the word. He's never afraid to meet the media, he's never afraid to have to talk about the tough things.

"There's not a lot of those guys left, to be honest with you. In that regard he's a rarity and that's what he's given us on our team for sure."

Phaneuf is also not the same player he was when he signed his contract. He's due to turn 33 in April and averaging the lowest ice time of his career – down two and a half minutes to 20:32 while playing primarily on a second pairing with Cody Ceci that takes on all kinds of water, possession-wise.

Any trade involving him would need to include retained salary and/or bloated contracts coming back in return, not unlike the nine-player deal that saw the Leafs send their captain to Ottawa on Feb. 9, 2016.

It has turned out to be a great move for Phaneuf, all things considered.

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The long playoff run last spring was the first time he played beyond the first round and stands as a career highlight. He and his wife like living in the city so much that Phaneuf declined to waive his no-movement clause to make himself available to Vegas in June's expansion draft.

Now they've started a family there with the birth of daughter Zaphire just before Christmas.

For as much of a disaster as the first half has been – at 15-18-9, the Senators entered their bye week sitting second-last in the Eastern Conference – he's lived through worse. Phaneuf spent parts of seven

seasons with the Leafs and six of them ended outside the playoffs, sometimes spectacularly so.

Those experiences helped with his approach while Ottawa skidded through a 3-13-3 stretch after returning from Sweden in November.

"The thing is, when you're not getting results and you struggle like the month and a half we had, it does wear on you as a player. But as a professional you have got to come and do your job," said Phaneuf. "You've got to put the work in and you've got to work for your teammates because ultimately we're the only ones that are going to get ourselves out of it. We've been open about it. I feel the group has really taken ownership of [the fact] it's on us, we haven't played well enough."

They managed to leave Air Canada Centre with smiles after pulling out a 4-3 victory on Wednesday, bumping Ottawa's head-to-head record with Toronto to 7-1-0 since the Phaneuf deal was completed.

As has been his custom, Phaneuf walked over to the Leafs dressing room after the game for a visit with members of the training staff and former teammates. He also made time for everyone who stopped him along the way.

"I'll always remember Toronto and the way that the city treated me, coming back for the first game and the standing ovation. I mean those are things that I can't even explain to you how they feel when you live it," said Phaneuf. "These are big games. I've got to play on both sides of the Battle of Ontario. What a great thing to say."

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Sportsnet.ca / Three players poised to break out in NHL's second half

Andrew Berkshire

January 11, 2018, 3:44 PM

With half the 2017-18 NHL season in the books, we've looked at the top lines, pairings, and goaltenders so far in terms of on-ice performance, but what about the players who have done all the right things and not seen results?

Hot streaks and cold streaks always happen in hockey, and during the second half of the season, there are players who break out and tear up the second half of the NHL season. Last season one of those players was Nikita Kucherov, and while he wasn't bad in the first half, he was nuclear hot in the second half.

In order to pick our breakout candidates, they need to be doing more than just creating some offence that's gone unrewarded at even strength, they need to get good time on ice, both at even strength and on the power play. Without power-play time, it's tough to produce big numbers.

So with that in mind, here are three players I think could be in for big second halves.

Artturi Lehkonen is stuck playing for a team that can't figure out how to put things together offensively, and he's dealt with an injury that kept him out for a huge chunk of the season so far, but he's top-five in the NHL in high-danger scoring chances and top-10 in scoring chances overall.

He's currently shooting at just 3.3%, despite an expected shooting percentage of around 14%, and every line he's on tends to dominate possession as well. Lehkonen is a strong player all around, playing 1:23 per game shorthanded, 2:28 per game on the power play, and just under 16 minutes per game overall.



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While his playmaking won't blow you away, Lehkonen is primed to be a high level finisher in the NHL at some point, I think he'll be a 30-goal scorer, and he certainly should score a heck of a lot more in the second half than he did in the first half.

Brandon Saad hasn't had the ideal return to Chicago that he probably imagined, scoring just 23 points in 43 games so far, while the guy he was traded for in Artemi Panarin has 36 points in 44 games in Columbus while shooting just 8.7%.

Saad is also among the league leaders in scoring chances, and while he's not scoring at much below his career average rate, shooting 10% so far, he's been very unlucky from a playmaking perspective.

Creating 7.3 scoring chances per 20 minutes played at even strength is first line production, but Saad hasn't been rewarded with assists so far. Part of the reason for that is his passing game has been pretty messy, completing just 28.6% of his passes to the slot, but he's a strong enough playmaker that more of his passes should find their target as the year goes on, creating more points at even strength and on the power play, where he plays almost three minutes per game.

Finally, the tantalizing young Travis Konecny oozes with talent, but he's somewhat sidelined in Philadelphia where most of the team's offence comes from their incredible top line of Sean Couturier between Jakub Voracek and Claude Giroux.

Konecny doesn't get the power play time, just 1:31 per game, or individual scoring chances of the other two breakout candidates, but his passing game is obscure. The problem for Konecny isn't one of talent or drive, but consistent opportunity.

In 496 minutes at even strength this season, Konecny's most consistent line has a whopping 77 minutes together, followed by another three lines of 73 minutes, 70 minutes, and 58 minutes. That's too much fluctuation for most players to produce consistently, especially a young player.

Konecny's most common linemate is Valteri Filppula, who frankly isn't at the top of his game despite scoring on 19.1% of his shots on goal this year. A little stability in line combinations and a linemate that can score goals from the slot, like say Wayne Simmonds, and you're going to see a big improvement in Konecny's numbers.

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Sportsnet.ca / Trying to separate the contenders from pretenders at the NHL's first half

Dimitri Filipovic

January 11, 2018, 10:58 AM

If you ask Gary Bettman or anyone else from the NHL office, they'll be more than happy to tell you all about how great the competitive balance is across the league.

They've been toeing that company line for years now, parroting the same points about a) how the randomness and unpredictably we see in the standings from year to year is a good thing, b) how that shows the NHL has unrivalled parity, and as a result c) how the point structure in place is here to stay.

Whether those first two points are actually even a net positive for the league is ultimately a question of personal preference, but the argument in favour of the point system that rewards teams evenly regardless of when they win is one that's becoming exceedingly untenable.

The aptly named loser point is only really a red herring that muddies the waters and tricks people into thinking their teams are in a better position than they really are.

As a result, aside from the few teams at both ends of the extreme that are either exceptionally dominant or shockingly poor, the standings are essentially one big jumbled mess. There are 17 teams somewhere between 46 and 53 points. In the Metropolitan Division, three measly points separate fourth place (which is ostensibly the first wild card) and eighth place.

The same thing is also true in the Central Division, which means that in the Western Conference it looks like there will be six teams fighting tooth and nail for just two playoff spots.

That type of mayhem has a certain appeal and increases the importance of every matchup between any of those teams, while keeping a larger chunk of the sport's fanbase hooked.

But it doesn't teach us much, so it's up to us to figure out what's really going on now that we're past the halfway point and counting down to the trade deadline. This is the part of the season where taking a step back and being able to critically evaluate where you're at as a team can pay dividends with so few clearly defined buyers and sellers in the market.

With that in mind, let's cut through the fat and dig a little bit deeper in an attempt to figure out who's actually good, and who's hanging on by a thread. We'll do so by taking a closer look at underlying performance indicators that may help us project ahead more accurately than the usual rudimentary analysis of wins and losses.

Thanks to the help of Natural Stat Trick (for the data) and Micah Blake McCurdy (for turning those numbers into a beautiful visual) here's a look at how often teams have been leading versus trailing this season. As a frame of reference, the goal is to be in the top right segment of the chart, although that was probably made obvious as soon as the letters 'B-U-F' flashed on the bottom left of it.

A few quick-hitters:

I don't think anyone is surprised to see the Lightning, Jets, and Predators near the top of the list. The Lightning have separated themselves from the rest of the pack out East and are the undisputed class of the conference. The Jets and Predators are right there atop the West, though the case for either of them as the leader of the pack is far less clear cut. The Blues and Kings most notably might have something to say about that.

You may have noticed the Golden Knights just below them, and I'm slowly but surely warming up to the idea that they're there to stay. Since a slow, percentage-fueled start to the year they've been steadily improving to the point where their past 25 or so games have been legitimately dominant.

At worst, Vegas is going to continue being devastating to play against at home, and frustrating to play against anywhere. They operate at a frantic pace teams struggle to adjust to, and they're deep enough to chip away and eventually take advantage of any liabilities opponents have at the bottom of their lineup. It's fair to be skeptical how it'll translate to the post-season where star power reigns supreme, but that shouldn't preclude you from enjoying this run while it lasts.

The teams I'm most intrigued by on here are the Stars and Bruins. When talking about the best teams in the league they tend to lag behind those other top teams, but there's some awfully encouraging data to suggest they're both terrifyingly dominant in similar ways at five-on-five. They're first and second in expected goals, and sandwich the Lightning atop the shot share leaderboard.

For the Bruins, the decision to keep the top line intact and figure everything else out after that is as cut and dry as it gets. Especially if they're going to continue to get anything resembling consistent secondary scoring from young players like Danton Heinen and Jake DeBrusk, as they have during this torrid stretch; in their past 10 games



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the Bruins have won eight times, lost twice after regulation, and outscored opponents 44-16.

For the Stars, the decision isn't as simple. Ken Hitchcock has experimented with splitting up his Big 3 forwards, opting for a more balanced look. While it makes sense for now, having the option to go power versus power by putting Benn, Seguin, and Radulov together is an endlessly tantalizing one. Especially when you see the manner in which they eviscerated the Oilers this past weekend. They may not be as fun to watch as they once were, but it's impossible to argue with the results. The Stars are as good as they've ever been.

I'd like to see what the Ducks can do now that they're finally icing a competitive lineup. Their underlying numbers are dreadful thus far, but you almost have to toss them out the window because of their unique circumstance. As key contributors have fallen like flies they've needed to piece the lineup together: As far as most even strength minutes played among the forwards on their team this season, Antoine Vermette is third, Chris Wagner is fifth, Derek Grant is eighth, and Logan Shaw is ninth.

If anything, it's impressive Anaheim has stayed afloat, and it's a testament to the life raft that their goaltending has provided. If they bounce back to their form from last year (closer to the middle of the pack, if not top 12-15 at five-on-five), they're remarkably still in a position to make some noise in the second half.

The Islanders season is on life support. They're right there in that stack of Metro teams, but unless they do something to stop the bleeding and tend to their needs they won't be for long. They've been getting pummelled of late, and their inability to keep the puck out of their own net is seriously troublesome. But they do have two great scoring lines, and a unique window where their top two centres and wingers are making just \$13 million combined. Garth Snow and the Islanders have been unflinchingly patient to a fault over the years, but considering the magnitude of John Tavares' decision this summer, it'd be dangerously negligent for them to not do everything in their power to finish strong this season.

We've been putting it off for as long as we could because it's a complicated subject with extenuating circumstances, but let's have the conversation about the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Part of the reason their struggles haven't gotten the attention they deserve is because there's been a number of other playoff teams that came into this season with similar expectations – like the Senators, Oilers, and Canadiens – that have crashed and burned far more spectacularly.

More importantly, by now the Penguins have earned the benefit of the doubt for how they've won the past two Stanley Cups. In 2015-16, they similarly sluggishly sleepwalked their way through the first couple months of the season before making a coaching change and flipping the switch. Last year, in the process of winning it all they overcome a) a relatively pedestrian underlying resume, and b) a ragtag group of defencemen who would make some AHL teams blush.

The fact that we've seen the Pens do it already understandably makes it easier to envision a scenario in which they somehow do it again, but at the same time that'd be like expecting someone who's won the lottery in the past to do it again. This is a different team, and a different year, and we need to evaluate it for what it is.

So what are the Penguins exactly?

There's certainly some alarming red flags there. They've only held a lead for less than a quarter of their games, and only the Sabres, Coyotes, and Oilers have been ahead a smaller percentage of the time. Only those three teams (plus the Islanders and Panthers) have been playing from behind more often than the Penguins.

At five-on-five, they've been outscored by a whopping 37 goals for the year and only the Arizona Coyotes are worse. Meanwhile, no team has given up more 5-on-5 goals against than Pittsburgh's 100 (those same

Coyotes are tied with them there, and I'm sensing a recurring theme here).

Team 5v5 Goal Differential PP Goal Differential PK Goal Differential Overall Goal Differential

Team	5v5 Goal Differential	PP Goal Differential	PK Goal Differential	Overall Goal Differential
TBL	+37	+36	-23	+50
BOS	+27	+22	-17	+32
WPG	+12	+39	-25	+26
VGK	+15	+23	-19	+19
LAK	+15	+19	-16	+18
NSH	+8	+33	-26	+15
COL	+4	+30	-19	+15
CHI	+11	+23	-22	+12
TOR	+9	+24	-21	+12
STL	+15	+19	-23	+11
DAL	+13	+22	-26	+9
NJD	+2	+24	-18	+8
ANA	+9	+19	-21	+7
NYR	+4	+23	-22	+5
SJS	-12	+31	-15	+4
PHI	+10	+23	-30	+3
WSH	+11	+20	-28	+3
CGY	+5	+19	-26	-2
MIN	-4	+21	-21	-4
CBJ	+5	+12	-23	-6
CAR	-6	+18	-21	-9
DET	-14	+19	-16	-11
NYI	-2	+21	-30	-11
FLA	-12	+18	-19	-13
MTL	-11	+22	-24	-13
PIT	-37	+40	-22	-19
VAN	-17	+24	-29	-22
EDM	-9	+16	-33	-26
OTT	-18	+18	-27	-27
BUF	-27	+8	-23	-42
ARI	-43	+18	-19	-44

And yet as concerning as all of that should be on paper, no one wants to be the sucker that bets against Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin (and Phil Kessel, who needs to be mentioned because he's having a prolific offensive campaign).

As many holes as there transparently are in their lineup, that kind of firepower gives you pause before writing them off. Their top gear is special, and it's remarkable how it can bring along the passengers for a ride on the good days.

We've seen that in full effect on the power play, where the Penguins are chugging along at a historically great rate this season. They're currently scoring north of 10 goals per hour when up a man, which only the 2008-



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09 and 2012-13 versions of the Washington Capitals have managed to exceed since 2006.

The other encouraging thing working in their favour is PDO. The stat can be a rollercoaster, and after experiencing the highs of it during the Cup run last year, the Penguins are now feeling the nauseating side effects of its lows. They're 31st in both save percentage and shooting percentage at five-on-five, which is a big reason for that shockingly poor aforementioned goal differential.

Their current PDO (combining shooting and save percentage) of 95.43 would be the lowest recorded total in the analytics era, only rivalled by the 2012-13 Florida Panthers and.. this year's Arizona Coyotes (!). Pittsburgh's 50.7 per cent expected goal rate is middle of the pack and hardly anything to boast about, but would also represent a vast improvement over their current actual rate of 38.2 per cent.

It will be fascinating to monitor the next six weeks leading up to the trade deadline in Pittsburgh.

They've been heavily involved in trade rumours, and figure to be a team that'll look different after the deadline than it does now as they try and squeeze everything out of its current core of players.

None of it may ultimately matter if they don't start getting more favourable bounces, because if the old adage in the NBA is that good offence beats good defence then the NHL's equivalent is that bad PDO beats both.

For now Pittsburgh is still in the thick of the hotly contested playoff race, which is both surprising in the positive sense (based on everything that's gone wrong) and negative sense (based on the expectations we all had for them heading into the year).

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TSN.CA / Sutter eyeing Sunday for return to Canucks lineup

By Jeff Paterson

COLUMBUS, OH – With a slight laugh, Brandon Sutter insisted he had missed the media while out of the Vancouver Canucks lineup the past seven weeks with a groin/abdominal injury. After nearly two months of spending time with nothing but doctors, physiotherapists and his own idle thoughts, dealing with the media must have felt like a relief for the personable centre who has missed the last 20 games since getting hurt against the Devils in New Jersey on Nov. 24.

Driving wide on right wing, Sutter tried to leap to avoid a check by Devils defenceman John Moore. Instead, he got twisted around in a violent collision first with Moore and then with the boards. Immediately, he knew something was wrong.

"Lower body-ish," Sutter said with a chuckle when asked to pinpoint the injury. "There were a couple of different things going on, but definitely something in that region. Trying to skate on it was pretty uncomfortable at first and I knew something wasn't quite right. I got crunched and hit on this side (left hip) and hit the boards on the other and right away I felt something. You hope it's just a sore muscle or a groin strain where it's two weeks, but knew it was something more than that. It was pretty complex and it's a good thing we didn't treat it for what we thought it was in New York because I'd probably still be laying around."

Sutter practiced with his Canucks teammates for the first time since the injury on Thursday here in Columbus. He will not play on Friday when the Canucks face the Blue Jackets, but is a possibility for the team's following game against the Wild in Minnesota on Sunday. The 28-year-

old is expected to skate each of the next two days before a final decision is made on his return to the lineup.

Two seasons ago, after a mid-November game in Columbus, Sutter underwent sports hernia surgery and it was feared this latest injury was in some way related to that one. He says he was relieved to learn early on that was not the case.

"It's completely different – different side of the body and different issue," he explains. "It's a similar time frame in terms of the recovery for it, but there were no tears or anything like that. That was the fear at first, but everything held up pretty good. There was nothing to do for it surgically, so it was just something that needed time. Once I knew it was going to be a bit longer, we just shut it down for three weeks and didn't skate and just tried to get it feeling better. And when I did get back on the ice, it was a night and day difference from before and I knew I was heading in the right direction."

The toughest part for Sutter hasn't been the recovery or the rehab that followed. It's been watching helplessly as the team he left behind has fallen on hard times. First it was Sutter, then Bo Horvat, Sven Baertschi and Chris Tanev all joining him on the injured list and it's simply been too much for the team to overcome. Since mid-December the Canucks have been in a freefall, with just two wins in their last 15 games.

While he nears his return, Sutter knows it won't be easy stepping back in from this type of injury and trying to find the mid-season pace to the NHL game.

"I'm hoping to get in soon and hopefully bring a little bit of fresh blood because it's never fun seeing the guys losing games," he adds. "When you miss that much time, you come back hungry, too. You realize how much you miss playing so I'll be excited to get back at it. I want to get back in as soon as I can and hopefully help a bit."

Head coach Travis Green is also being cautious about his expectations for Sutter's return. While the big centre won't likely bring much in the way of offensive contributions – he has just two goals and six points in the 23 games he played before the injury – Sutter should help stabilize the team with his work as in a shutdown role, on the penalty kill and in the faceoff circle.

"It's great when you get players back, but when you start to miss three, four, five weeks, that's a big chunk of time," Green says of Sutter. "You talk about two months – that's a summer. To think a player is just going to jump back in and take off where he left off, that's not always the case. You can skate on your own for a week or even two weeks, but to get up to game speed and get into game action, you can't mimic that."

Brandon Sutter is no saviour, but he certainly fills many roles for the undermanned Canucks. His return can't come quickly enough. But it's going to have to wait at least one more game.

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TSN.CA / The problems run deep in Ottawa

By Travis Yost

Nine months ago, the Ottawa Senators were one goal away from the Stanley Cup Final. Today, they're a team in dire straits.

The post-mortems on Ottawa's lost season have already started to come in. The team currently sits at 15-18-9 halfway through the season, and they currently have better odds at the first-overall pick (8 per cent) than reaching the postseason (6 per cent).



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The most prominent area of failure for Ottawa has been between the pipes. Last season, Ottawa had a 91.5 save percentage, eighth best in the NHL. This year they hold an 89.3 save percentage, 28th best in the league. That drop-off is substantial. If Ottawa had received last year's goaltending this season, they would be about 29 goals better in the standings and very much alive in the playoff race.

But goaltending isn't the only area where Ottawa has struggled. The team is also 22nd in the NHL in offence, with 2.7 goals per game. Save the brilliance from Mark Stone at the top of the lineup and a surprising offensive outburst from speedster Ryan Dzingel, almost every Ottawa forward has taken a step backward – in some cases, considerably so.

Depth issues aren't new in Ottawa. Even at their peak last season, the Senators were particularly vulnerable when their top units weren't on the ice. It's a question Ottawa's front office has been wrestling with for some time: When their top line and the Karlsson pairing are off of the ice, how do they score goals? And, just as importantly, how do they prevent them?

I think it's important to put some context around Ottawa's production issues across their depth forwards. In an era where ice time is much more smoothed and teams consistently roll four lines, Ottawa gets painstakingly little from their third and fourth lines.

The below graph shows just how little scoring they get – the combination of Zack Smith, Jean-Gabriel Pageau, Tom Pyatt, Nate Thompson, Alex Burrows, and Gabriel Dumont grade out as the least dynamic unit in the entire league.

Embedded Image

Ottawa is getting about 0.46 goals per 60 minutes from their depth forwards, which more or less means they need to play more than two full games before actually getting a goal from one of the six above-referenced players. Note that this is not the norm – the average team gets around 0.7 goals per 60 minutes from their depth forwards, which in Ottawa's case would be worth about 15 additional goals. That's a huge number at just the halfway point of the season.

The one thing to mention here is that it's not just the group at aggregate that's struggling. It's every forward. Again, the average depth forward will score about 0.7 goals per-60 minutes. Here's each Ottawa skater that's seen regular bottom-six minutes:

Embedded Image

This is the part where general manager Pierre Dorion has to be concerned. Players like Thompson, Pyatt, Burrows, and Dumont were either targeted by the front office, desired by the head coach, or a combination of the two. And both Pageau and Smith were given sizable retention contracts – Pageau \$9.3 million over three years, and Smith \$13 million over four years.

The contractual situation is where this gets messy. Teams get bad seasons from depth players all the time, but rarely are so many players inked on multi-year deals. Smith is signed through 2021. Pageau is signed through 2020. Burrows, Pyatt, Dumont, and Thompson are on through 2019. To recap: there isn't a single player in this mess of a bottom-six that has an expiring contract.

Where do the Sens go from here? I suspect they'll look at shipping out a couple of players where they can. Smith will likely covet interest from buyers at the trade deadline, even with his contract, as one example. But you have to imagine they'll start replacing the ice time of some of these players regardless of their contracts. Players like Filip Chlapik and Colin White will see more NHL action in the second half, and it's going to come at the cost of someone here.

If anything, this illustrates how deep the problems are in Ottawa right now. A talented core remains, but without any goaltending or scoring depth, it's hard to see how the Senators really turn this around.

Expect significant activity on both fronts at the trade deadline and the summer of 2018.

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TSN.CA / Evander Kane tops TSN Trade Bait board

By Frank Seravalli

The Buffalo Sabres have been working to move left winger Evander Kane for weeks, long before frustrations boiled over in practice Wednesday.

Kane scuffled with teammate Justin Falk, who told him to "shut the bleep up, you selfish bleep," according to the Olean (N.Y.) Times Herald.

Although Kane shrugged off the incident as something that "happens more often than maybe [the media] sees," Kane's latest negative press would seemingly not enhance his trade value.

Then again, it may just have hastened his way out of Western New York.

With 47 days until the NHL's Feb. 26 trade deadline, the Kane Watch is officially on in Buffalo, as he tops the first TSN Trade Bait Top 20 board leading up to TradeCentre.

TSN Hockey Insider Pierre LeBrun reported Tuesday that Sabres' GM Jason Botterill has set the asking price for Kane at three assets: a first-round pick, a prospect and a conditional draft pick.

Whether Botterill receives that price for his most mercurial asset remains to be seen.

Kane, 26, is on pace to match a career-high 30 goals playing on a Sabres' squad dead last in the Eastern Conference by a whopping 10 points.

Jets fans chanted "Best Trade Ever" at Bell MTS Place last week when the Sabres were in town, referencing Kane's 2015 trade to Buffalo, which came shortly after another public run-in with teammates involving a dress code violation.

Exactly half (10) of the players on TSN's list are from Canadian clubs -- not surprising considering five of Canada's seven teams are on track to miss the Stanley Cup playoffs.

Two pairs of forwards from the Montreal Canadiens (No. 5 Max Pacioretty and No. 7 Alex Galchenyuk) and Ottawa Senators (No. 4 Mike Hoffman and No. 9 Zack Smith) are nestled inside the top 10. Trade winds have swirled around all four, but the biggest question is whether those players -- none of whom are rentals -- will be moved before the deadline or during the summer when more seismic changes may occur.

A new \$30-million contract for Vegas Golden Knights' leading scorer Jonathan Marchessault last week raised eyebrows about the futures of pending UFAs James Neal (No. 10) and David Perron. (No. 11). Both were drafted with an eye toward flipping them for future assets, though GM George McPhee couldn't have imagined last June his team would have the NHL's second best record at their bye week.

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USA TODAY / Meet the men in goal for the U.S. Olympic hockey team



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Kevin Allen, Published 5:22 p.m. ET Jan. 11, 2018 | Updated 5:25 p.m. ET Jan. 11, 2018

One oddity created by the NHL decision not to allow its players go to the 2018 Olympics is that European fans are more familiar with the American goaltending trio than U.S. fans.

With David Leggio (German League) and Brandon Maxwell (Czech League) announced as the final two goalies Thursday, it means none of the American goalies have played in the U.S. since the 2014-15 season. The first goalie named — Ryan Zapski, 31 — is a Kontinental Hockey League standout. The KHL is Europe's best pro league.

"(Playing) at a consistent level the last five years in Europe, (Zapski) has been a top goaltender," U.S. general manager Jim Johansson said. "He's always played on teams that have had success, but at times they've needed to rely on a goaltender to carry them through some games and he's capable of doing that."

The Americans delayed naming their final goalies because they wanted more time to evaluate five goalies, including the U.S. goalies playing at the World Junior Championships. They settled on Leggio and Maxwell because of their experience and skill set. Both players were on the American roster at the Deutschland Cup two months ago.

"Both are very experienced in Europe and understand the game over there," Johansson said.

One lure for Maxwell, 26, is his ability to move the puck to his defensemen. "He's an elite puck-handling goaltender," Johansson said. "That's something that definitely factored into our discussion ... that potentially gives you another weapon on your breakout."

Johansson said Leggio, 33, is known as a consistent performer and an exceptional teammate.

"He's accepted whatever role he's been in, but whenever he's gotten an opportunity to play he has kept his team in games," Johansson said.

None of the U.S. goalies have played in the NHL. Zapski played in the ECHL before jumping to the Finnish league and now the KHL. Leggio played in the American League before joining EHC Munich in Germany. Maxwell has been playing in Europe since 2013-14.

Boasting a 1.63 goals-against average for Jokerit (Finland) in the KHL, Zapski projects to be the No. 1 goalie. But the Americans have back-to-back games against Slovakia and Russia in the preliminary round, and could face other back-to-back situations. Also, in short tournaments, goalie switches are not rare.

"All (of our goalies) have had real solid years," U.S. coach Tony Granato said. "... We are excited about the depth."

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