



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • February 5, 2019

## THE ATHLETIC

### That guy on the Rangers wore it and 37 was taken: Stories behind the Hurricanes' numbers

By Sara Civian

Jersey numbers are a polarizing topic in the National Hockey League. Where a superstitious player might wax poetic about the time he got a hat trick in bantam and the rest was history, another might look at you like you're a nut job for even asking.

The Hurricanes were in a unique situation when they relocated — they could decide for themselves if they'd keep the Whalers numbers retired or have a fresh start. The Stars and the Coyotes are teams that kept numbers retired, while the Avalanche and Hurricanes opted for the fresh start.

Three Hurricanes since have their numbers in the rafters: Rod Brind'Amour (17), Ron Francis (10) and Glen Wesley (2). The numbers of Steve Chiasson (3) and Gordie Howe (9) are unofficially retired and have been removed from circulation.

Here are the stories behind most of the Hurricanes' players and the numbers they wear:

No. 4 Haydn Fleury

"I've always worn No. 4. My dad said it was a cool number, so. My first year here at camp I actually wore No. 5 because Andrej Sekera was No. 4, then the next year I got it. I've always worn it, ever since I can remember. I had it in Junior, I had it at World Juniors, everything I can remember. It's just always been my number."

No. 13 Warren Foegele

"I've always had a three. You can't wear it here (unofficially retired), and 37's not ...

Points next door to Andrei Svechnikov

... I wore that in Junior. So I just chose 13. No big reason but I just like the number three so I thought that's the closest thing."

No. 14 Justin Williams

"(Former Flyers GM) Bobby Clarke came down one day and he gave me three numbers and asked which one I want. I forget what they were, but I was like 14 sounds good."

No. 17 Rod Brind'Amour (No, he's not on the roster. But he definitely still could be.)

"Well, when I got to Philly I had no choice. I was No. 19 in St. Louis and somebody was wearing that, then they said here you go. I think I was 20 (years old) so you just take what you get. Unfortunately no story there."

No. 19 Dougie Hamilton

"I wore it when I was 13 or 14 years old. I started liking Shane Doan a lot, and at that time I wanted to be Shane Doan, so I wore it. I always liked the number. I like Steve Yzerman too, but mainly because of Shane Doan."

No. 20 Sebastian Aho

"I was No. 6 growing up but when I went to play National U20 (in Finland's Liiga) it was retired. So I was between No. 13 and No. 20. I wore No. 20 in a tournament and we won, so ever since it's been my number."

No. 22 Brett Pesce

"My dad wore it ... and uh ... Brad Parks? Is that a hockey guy?"

Me: "Oh, I don't know. If you don't know I wouldn't know."

Pesce: "Hey, Tripper, who's the guy that used to be on the Rangers?"

Tripp Tracy: "There are a lot of guys that used to be on the Rangers."

Pesce: "Something Park? Brad Park?"

Tracy: "Brad Park. He's one of the greatest of all-time!"

Pesce: "Brad Park."

Me: "So your dad liked him?"

Pesce: "I guess."

Millennials...

No. 27 Justin Faulk

"Just because."

No. 37 Andrei Svechnikov

"My brother's No. 37 too. It was the first number I chose."

No. 42 (noted journeyman) Greg McKegg

"It's what was given to me. I don't even know if I've worn it before, I don't think I have. I don't mind it though, actually. I wore No. 14 in Charlotte, I wore No. 9 growing up. No. 9 was probably my favorite. I started wearing No. 14 in Junior because when I got to Erie (OHL), Ryan O'Reilly had No. 9."

No. 44 Calvin de Haan

"I believe it was my first season in Bridgeport, didn't make the team out of camp and since the day I was drafted I was assigned No. 3. Travis Hamonic made the team that year and ended up taking No. 3 and then I was assigned No. 24. The Isles signed someone who took 24, ever since then I've been No. 44."



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No. 57 Trevor van Riemsdyk

"It was given to me my rookie year and then we started winning so I didn't want to change it."

No. 71 Lucas Wallmark

"I got it at camp and haven't changed. Pretty easy, right?"

No. 74 Jaccob Slavin

"It's what they gave me. I was No. 7 growing up, then I got No. 74. Kept it and that's it."

## LeBrun Notebook: Ferland market cools down, Boyle on the block, Howard's future

By Pierre LeBrun

A week ago, there seemed to be a sense of urgency for the Carolina Hurricanes to move Micheal Ferland as soon as possible, hoping to make a deal before other forwards flooded the market.

But he wasn't moved. The offers never firmed up quite the way Carolina wanted. And then the likes of Artemi Panarin hit the market, perhaps soon to be followed by Matt Duchene and/or Mark Stone depending on how contract talks go with the Ottawa Senators.

So what I'm hearing now is that the Ferland market has slowed down a bit, contending teams wanting to see how all these other potential names could play out. If you're Nashville or Boston, for example, don't you want to see how things play out on Panarin, Duchene or Stone before you spend assets to acquire Ferland?

Plus, well, the Canes continue to play terrific hockey and have a shot at making the playoffs. So there's that to consider.

Now, deep down, I don't think Canes GM Don Waddell feels he can allow Ferland to walk out the door July 1 and get nothing in return. But if his team keeps winning games between now and Feb. 25, it's going to be a tough call on Ferland. At the end of the day, it's going to really depend on the quality of the offers.

If that first-round pick is there for the taking how can they say no?

Silfverberg talks

There's been some progress in contract talks between the Anaheim Ducks and Jakob Silfverberg, a pending UFA July 1, according to sources.

One of the game's top two-way wingers, he's seen as part of the solution for the re-tooling Ducks, not a guy they want to move out. But they'll have no choice if he isn't signed by Feb. 25.

So we'll see if the Ducks can bring this across the finish line soon in terms of an extension for the 28-year-old, who otherwise would be an intriguing name to have on the trade market.

By the way, the Ducks, meanwhile, seemed to be listening on a lot of their other players. Watch out for GM Bob Murray, he won't be afraid to let loose if the offers are fair. He wants to re-tool his roster big time.

Boyle on the block?

Any contender looking for a bottom six upgrade would do well to reach out to the Devils on Brian Boyle. And I'm told a few already have.

The 34-year-old pending UFA forward has 13 goals in 46 games, kills penalties and provides a beauty screen on the power play (check out the Devils' power-play goal Saturday afternoon at Montreal). His pace might worry some clubs but his leadership and work ethic are through the roof.

I'm not sure Boyle loved his last trade deadline experience, going from Tampa to Toronto two years ago. He didn't quite fit in with the Maple Leafs in terms of their scheme but then again, that's often the case with trade deadline pickups late in the season.

Still, given his special teams acumen and versatility as both a winger (where he's played most of season in New Jersey) and centre, depending on the price he'd be a solid rental.

Boyle has an eight-team no-trade list, so there's that to navigate for Devils GM Ray Shero but my sense is Boyle will likely find a new home for a few months. And I mean, there's nothing stopping the Devils from perhaps offering him a deal again come July 1.

Martinez staying put

Now that Jake Muzzin has been moved, my sense is that the Los Angeles Kings will likely hold onto to Alec Martinez.

He's signed for two more years after this season at a reasonable \$4-million cap hit. Yes, the Kings are rebuilding/re-tooling but I think GM Rob Blake feels Martinez is important to keep on board through that.

So really now it's about a pair of pending UFAs for the Kings in terms of moving out Carl Hagelin and Nate Thompson before the deadline.

Panthers plans for Brassard

Folks were quick to point out that Derick Brassard's stay in South Florida might not be a long one and certainly I do agree he's got a reasonable chance to get flipped before the deadline.

However, not right now.

Panthers GM Dale Tallon hopes his team goes on a run here like last year and Brassard, for now, is part of that roster he hopes can pull it off.

Florida opened the week nine points behind Columbus for the last wild-card spot with four other teams ahead of them so I don't like their chances.

More likely than not Brassard packs his suitcase again closer to Feb. 25.

Wings have decision to make on Howard

Feels to me like the Jimmy Howard situation will go right to the wire.



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It all depends, I think, on the quality of offers the Red Wings get for the pending UFA netminder.

There's mutual interest in having Howard re-sign in Detroit but I think the organization has no choice to examine the asset(s) it could net if demand surges on him.

He's been terrific on a non-playoff team this season with a .916 save percentage.

One team I wonder about is Columbus. If the Blue Jackets decide to move pending UFA netminder Sergei Bobrovsky (who has a full no-move so he'd have to okay any trade), no question GM Jarmo Kekalainen would want some insurance in net. Howard would fit that bill perfectly, depending on the cost, of course



## Gold: Down the stretch Canes hoping to balance present and future

By Adam Gold

That's 30.

In journalistic jargon, it means, "the end." Normally posted at the bottom of a news story, or a press release, "30" tells us that the story is over.

In the case of the Carolina Hurricanes the number has significance in that there are 30 games left in the 2018-19 regular season. The hope, of course, is that there will be additional games worth playing beyond those already scheduled. However, in order to unlock that reward — and avoid "30" the first weekend in April — the Canes need to pile up points in a hurry.

Carolina hits the road for five games in an 8-day span starting tonight in Pittsburgh. They'll make stops in Buffalo, New York, New Jersey and Ottawa before returning home next Friday night against the Oilers. As it stands, the Canes are three points out of the final wild card spot, but as Facebook might say, Carolina's relationship with the playoff race is complicated.

Thanks both to Carolina's recent 10-4-1 stretch and the Sabres and Blue Jackets indifferent play of late, the Canes have slowly clawed their way back into the periphery of contention. But, with the trade deadline 20 days away, the roster is likely to undergo a few nips and tucks as General Manager Don Waddell and company explore their options for the likes of forward Michael Ferland and/or a right shot defenseman.

What happens if the Hurricanes continue to gain ground over the next couple of weeks? What happens if they go 6-2-0 and are hovering right at — or even inside — the playoff line two weeks from now? How does that impact what Carolina's decision-makers look for in return?

The answer is fairly easy, though there are multiple ways at which to arrive. The brain trust is set on positioning Carolina for the future and, while not necessarily at the expense of the present, nothing is going to alter that decision. What remains to be solved is just how they get to their destination.

It's no secret that the Hurricanes are open for business when it comes to the availability of Ferland, who aside from scoring goals has become somewhat of a fan favorite. The physical, power forward, set to become an unrestricted free agent at season's end, is regularly listed among the most attractive deadline targets. But, the forward market is loaded with the likes of Philadelphia's Wayne Simmonds and possibly the Senators' duo of Matt Duchene and Mark Stone.

How that effects what Carolina would receive back in a Ferland deal is a story yet to be written. It's unlikely they'll keep him and risk losing him for nothing after the season, so barring a contract surprise, Ferland is probably going to be moved. Whether or not the Canes seek a prospect, a high draft pick or a player that can be plugged into the line up might depend on what else they have in the works.

The Hurricanes have been rumored to be shopping one of their right shot defenders since the end of LAST season. Carolina has a glut of righties on the blue line and they plan on signing Adam Fox, the highly regarded college defense prospect at Harvard that was the third piece in the blockbuster deal with Calgary in the off season. In order to clear room on the NHL roster — which is probably what it will take to get Fox to put pen to paper — the Canes are going to need to free up a spot in the line up.

Does that mean Brett Pesce, Justin Faulk or Dougie Hamilton are on the block? Well, depending on the return, all are probably available. Of that trio, the team values Pesce the most. He's under contract for five more seasons, is ultra-smart, just turned 24, and still has room to grow offensively. It would take a haul to pry him from the room.

After that, Hamilton is probably more attractive than Faulk, with his play-making reputation and two more years of organizational control. Faulk is by no means a rental, as he still has another year left on his contract as well and each will earn \$6 million annually. But, the more the Hurricanes win, the less likely they are to settle for "best available offer" at the deadline. And, a couple of games ago, a subtle line up shift might have given a glimpse of a slight shift in mindset.



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Pesce moved over to the left side, partnering with Faulk, kicking Trevor van Riemsdyk back to his natural right side. It's very possible that the team might opt for a minor deal with van Riemsdyk thus opening the door for Fox to jump into the mix when his season ends next month. That's purely speculative on my part, and it doesn't mean that the team won't eventually move one of their higher-end defensemen. It's just that the better deal might be at the draft as opposed to the trade deadline.

There is a lot that is going to happen over the next three weeks. Carolina will play 10 times before the deadline, half of them in the next eight days. Keep winning, and the decisions become a little more challenging. But, that's okay. Winning and planning for the future are not mutually exclusive. Both, can still be achieved.

Here's to hoping "30" isn't the end, but the beginning.



## Preview: Hurricanes at Penguins

Canes begin season-long, five-game road trip in Pittsburgh  
by Michael Smith

PITTSBURGH - The Carolina Hurricanes begin their longest road trip of the season - five games in an eight-day span - in Pittsburgh against a Metropolitan Division opponent.

The road trip will take the Hurricanes through five different cities in the Eastern Conference, featuring two opponents the team is presently chasing in the standings and three opponents slotting below the Canes in the standings.

### One Game at a Time

The Hurricanes are approaching the schedule with a one-game-at-a-time mentality, each game being the biggest of the season.

It may be cliché, but that's the reality for the Canes, who find themselves three points back of a playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

"We know where we are in the standings. We want to win every game, get as many points as we can and try to get in the playoffs. It sucks when we lose," Dougie Hamilton said after a 4-3 loss to Calgary on Sunday. "We'll just go to the next game and try to win that."

"They're all big. From day one, we've been saying the same thing," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said after practice in Raleigh on Monday. "I know and we all know how important every game is. Now, they just get ramped up more based on where we're at. This is obviously a huge week."

### Sebastian Stays Hot

All-Star Sebastian Aho leads the Hurricanes in scoring with 60 points (24g, 36a) in 52 games. Aho hit the 60-point mark with a two-point performance (1g, 1a) against Calgary on Sunday, and he's the fastest Carolina player to reach that mark since Eric Staal did so in 45 games in the 2005-06 season.

Aho brings a five-game point streak (3g, 6a), his third point streak of at least five games this season, into tonight's game in Pittsburgh.

### The Last Meeting

Led by Matt Murray's 39-save performance, the Penguins shut out the Hurricanes, 3-0, in Raleigh on Dec. 22. Jake Guentzel scored twice and Sidney Crosby recorded a trio of assists, as the Hurricanes continued to stumble in what was a rough month of December.

That game was also Jordan Staal's last of record this season. He's missed the Canes' 18 games since with an upper-body injury.

### The Opposition

Since returning from the All-Star break, the Penguins are 2-2, and the team is 5-5-0 in its last 10 games. Pittsburgh ranks second in the Metropolitan Division with 62 points in 52 games (28-18-6). Sidney Crosby leads the Pens in scoring with 61 points (23g, 38a) in 49 games, and he's recorded points in three straight games (2g, 2a).

### WORTH A CLICK

#### News

Recap: Canes Edged by Flames

Hurricanes Jersey Breakdown for 2018-19 Season

Canes Recall Fleury from Charlotte

#### Podcast

CanesCast, Ep. 75: One Game at a Time

#### Videos

In the Room: Rod Brind'Amour, Feb. 4

In the Room: Greg McKeeg, Feb. 4

Highlights: CGY 4, CAR 3



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## Flames Takeaways: Rittich keeps red-hot Calgary rolling

Derek Ryan scored a goal and added an assist against his former team for the Flames to edge the Hurricanes 4-3.

By: Eric Francis

The evidence was long ago conclusive on who won the swap Calgary made with Carolina last summer.

But if there was ever any doubt, it was erased Sunday afternoon in Carolina where all three Canes-turned-Flames marked their initial return to Raleigh with goals in a 4-3 win.

These Flames sure have a flair for the dramatic.

No, Derek Ryan wasn't part of the five-player swap that saw Noah Hanifin and Elias Lindholm head north for Dougie Hamilton, Micheal Ferland and Adam Fox.

But the former 'Cane who signed as a free agent in Calgary did well to ensure he wasn't omitted from the narrative by scoring on a beauty wraparound and then setting up a nifty short-handed goal by Garnet Hathaway.

It was Hathaway's second goal in as many games, giving the Flames their 16th shorthy, which is four more than anyone else in the league (and seven off the franchise record).

Ryan's productive second period was overshadowed only by a first period goal by Lindholm, and Hanifin's eventual game-winner with seven minutes left in the third.

Making the storyline even sexier was the fact Hamilton scored for his second straight outing in 12 days against the Flames.

After getting a taste of their own medicine in Washington two days earlier with a last-minute loss, the Flames ended their first roadie following the mid-season break with a split.

It ensured the Flames avoided losing consecutive games in regulation – something they haven't done since mid-November.

The Flames are on a 12-2-2 run that has them sitting six points up on the Sharks for the division lead and three on the Winnipeg Jets for the conference lead.

More takeaways on a game that put the Flames a whopping 20 games above .500:

### BIG SAVE DAVE LEGEND GROWS

Bill Peters surprised no one by turning to David Rittich following Mike Smith's (solid) start Friday.

Rittich was once again spectacular, especially early in a fast-paced game he had under control despite the Flames being outplayed in the first stanza.

A huge first-period save on Justin Williams typified his ability to make saves few others in the league are capable of as part of a 34-save effort that has become the norm for the sophomore netminder.

His record is now 20-4-4, which has him top ten in the NHL for wins, goals-against average and save percentage.

At home he has yet to lose a single game in regulation this season, but on the road he has been particularly productive, posting an 11-4 mark, a .942 save percentage and a 1.86 goals-against average.

If he keeps this up, people will be forced to start including him in discussions about the league's most dominant goalies.

### BLUELINE BUMP-UPS

Travis Hamonic suffered a lower-body injury Friday and flew home Saturday for an MRI, the results of which won't be unveiled until Tuesday when the lads resume practice.

Rinat Valiev was summoned from the farm, only to watch from the press box as Dalton Prout drew in as the team's sixth blue liner alongside Oliver Kylington.

It all meant Rasmus Andersson would play on the second pairing with Hanifin, acquitting himself brilliantly in over 22 minutes of action that saw a little bit of everything, including power play and penalty kill time.

He also assisted on Ryan's goal and had a team-high six blocked shots.

A fan favourite since training camp, Andersson gives the Flames a hint of the type of depth needed in the playoffs when the war of attrition will require more efforts like these.

### PETERS TOAST OF THE TOWN

Not lost is the fact Flames boss Peters was able to make a successful return to the city in which he coached the Canes for four years before resigning last summer to sign with Calgary.

He was all smiles after the game.



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"What a great day yesterday – I got to go to my house and got to see my daughter," chuckled Peters, whose daughter stayed in Carolina to attend college.

"I got some work done in my house and found a bottle of Caymus in the wine fridge there and brought that home to give to my wife.

"I went and got all the good stuff out of there. The cheap stuff, the vinegar, I left in the fridge."

The native of Three Hills, Alta. has indeed been masterful at separating the wheat from the chaff all season long.

## MORE STORM SURGES IN THE WORKS

The Flames win ruined the creative post-game celebration the Hurricanes have made a thing following their home wins. Lindholm, in particular, was booed by the crowd several times, prompting him to punctuate the game by mocking the crowd's reaction to their team's post-game storm surge.

Remaining Time -0:32

Fans boo as Elias Lindholm mocks Hurricanes' celebration

Veteran Justin Williams insists their new tradition, known as Storm Surge, will continue despite the fact it's getting harder and harder to come up with fresh material.

"We had a lot of ideas, but the vault is getting a little bit thin," smiled Williams during his club's visit to Calgary 12 days earlier.

"But we've created something with it, we're enjoying it and we're not going to let it die now because people are really enjoying it. We'll come up with more."

Has the group, which punctuated their win Friday with a spirited game of Duck, Duck, Goose, studied some of the post-game celebrations being performed in Europe?

"We've seen some of their stuff," said Williams, pausing to be diplomatic.

"You want to toe the line between being just dumb as opposed to being fun.

"We're not out there to embarrass ourselves. We're there to have fun and interact with the fans and celebrate for a minute after the game with the people who stick around and most of the time nobody leaves, which means they're enjoying it."

Micheal Ferland credited Williams' 10-year-old son with being the creative director behind it all, which Williams shot down.

"He only did one," said Dad.

"He did the dominoes one."

UP NEXT: Flames host San Jose Thursday before embarking on a four-game road trip starting in Florida.



## PHT Power Rankings: Sharks are one player away

By Adam Gretz

We need to talk about the San Jose Sharks this week because they are looking awesome this season.

They do not have a single player in the top-20 in the league in scoring, and only one (Brent Burns) that is in the top-40. Despite that, they have seven different players that have already topped the 40-point mark this season (putting each of them on at least a 65-point pace for the season), an eighth that is already over 30 points, and then Joe Thornton casually hanging back with 26 points in only 44 games and still being a dominant one-man wrecking crew when it comes to driving possession (nearly a 60 percent Corsi rating this season).

So they are loaded at forward.

Their two Norris Trophy winning defenders in Burns and Erik Karlsson are playing at an elite level and they have at least

one of them on the ice for nearly 45 minutes per night. So for more than two-thirds of the game their opponents are going up against probably one of the five-best blue-liners in the league. If Marc-Edouard Vlasic ever gets back on track and plays to his expected level the defense would look even scarier.

Overall, the Sharks enter the week with the sixth-best points percentage in the NHL (third best in the Western Conference) and look every bit like they contender we expected them to be at the start of the season.

They have almost everything they could possibly need.

The one thing they are missing? Goaltending. That has been the Achilles' heel of this team this season as neither Martin Jones or Aaron Dell have played well at all.



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Together, they have an .891 save percentage, a mark that is the third-worst in the league ahead of only the Florida Panthers and Philadelphia Flyers.

Do you have any idea how dominant and great the rest of your team has to be to get goaltending that bad and still be one of the best teams in the league? Just look at it this way: Of the 10-worst teams in save percentage this season the Sharks are the only one that occupies a playoff spot. Among the bottom-15 teams they are one of only three that is currently in a playoff spot, joining the Washington Capitals and Vancouver Canucks, and the Canucks are a fringe team that is only really still in the race because the bottom half of the Western Conference playoff field isn't any good.

The Sharks are as good as it gets in the NHL and have everything they could possibly need to win it all except for, at the moment, a goalie. Whether it comes from Jones improving or a trade they are going to need to hope it gets figured out because that is the worst possible position to have a weakness at come playoff time.

The Sharks sit in the No. 4 spot in this week's Power Rankings. Let us see where everyone else sits.

To the rankings!

The Elites

1. Tampa Bay Lightning — They have cooled off the smallest bit, but until someone does something to close the gap on them even a little bit they have earned their spot at the top of the list.

2. Calgary Flames — There is nothing to suggest that they are not for real. A legitimate Stanley Cup contender with an exciting young core that might be around for a while.

3. Winnipeg Jets — They haven't been playing their best hockey lately, but they keep winning. That counts for something. I feel like I've been saying this for a while now but imagine how good they could be when Patrik Laine gets back on track

4. San Jose Sharks — Imagine how great they could be with better goaltending.

The Second Tier Elites

5. New York Islanders — They are 15-3-2 in their past 20 games! It is not always pretty, but they just keep on winning and collecting points. There is no way that Barry Trotz does not win the coach of the year at this point. There are still some red flags that exist here, but you can't take away what they have done and the position they have put themselves in.

6. Nashville Predators — When they are healthy they are as good as it gets. Viktor Arvidsson has only played in 30 games this season and already has 21 goals. Filip Forsberg has only played in 37 games and is playing some of the best hockey of his career. Keep them healthy and this team can go far.

7. Toronto Maple Leafs — If you were one of the people arguing they would need to trade William Nylander for defense what was your reaction to them getting a top-pairing defender in Jake Muzzin without having to trade Nylander?

Or any other key player in the organization? What a perfect fit for what the maple Leafs need both this season and next season.

8. Montreal Canadiens — The surprising success of the Flames and Islanders has overshadowed the job Claude Julien has done in montreal. With Carey Price starting to get back to being Carey Price this team could be a real headache for somebody in the first round of the playoffs. Or maybe the second.

Still Contenders, But Going Through a Slump

9. Pittsburgh Penguins — They are so laughably hot and cold this season, but when they are at their best they beat anybody as they did when they rolled over the Tampa Bay Lightning this past week. They can also lose to anybody, as their 2-6-2 record against last place teams this season reflects. They really need Nick Bjugstad and Jared McCann to solidify their depth, though.

10. Vegas Golden Knights — I am still pretty high on this team and think that in some ways they are a bit better than their first season. They are not as reliant on goaltending, the first line has not been as good but the improved second line makes up for it. Little bit of a slump here recently but when you have rarely struggled in your first season-and-a-half in the league it is going to stand out when you do.

11. Boston Bruins — The top of the lineup is fine and the goalies have been great, but they have got to find some scoring depth to give them a shot in the stacked Atlantic Division playoff field.

12. Washington Capitals — Losing nine out of 10 games is not something we are used to seeing from this franchise in the Alex Ovechkin and Nicklas Backstrom era. I still think it's just a temporary speed bump and not yet a cause for real concern.

The Bubble Teams

13. Dallas Stars — They have only allowed 14 goals in their past nine games but are still only 5-4-0 during that stretch because they can't consistently score and have gotten next to nothing offensively after Tyler Seguin and John Klingberg during that stretch.

14. Minnesota Wild — I still don't fully know what to make of this team. I kind of like their roster, but I also kind of don't. They are kind of good sometimes, they are kind of not good other times. Zach Parise is having a great bounce back season, and that certainly helps given that Eric Staal has regressed a bit. They will probably make the playoffs, but they will probably not go anywhere. Actually, when you look at all of that and put it together this is the perfect Minnesota Wild season.

15. Vancouver Canucks — Let's be honest, their current position in a playoff spot is entirely due to the mediocrity that is surrounding them in the Western Conference. That is a fact. They are not even on pace for 90 points this season. But, they are there. They are in it. And they are in it despite Elias Pettersson and Brock Boeser, their two best players, combining to miss 24 man-games due to injury. That has no doubt robbed them of at least a couple of points in the standings.



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16. St. Louis Blues — Every year we see a team that gets crushed early in the year and then plays like a contender for the last five months of the season only to fall just short because of that terrible start. This might be that team this season. But they are certainly playing well right now.

17. Columbus Blue Jackets — It wasn't that long ago that I was telling you not to sleep on the Blue Jackets this season and then ... everything fell apart. They lost a bunch of games, Artemi Panarin might be on his way out, and wow did all of that escalate quickly.

18. Carolina Hurricanes — Nino Niederreiter has been exactly what they needed.

19. Philadelphia Flyers — If Carter Hart keeps playing like this he is going to make Flyers fans start to believe they have a goalie. Maybe they have reason to believe that. He has certainly helped them in the short-term.

20. Arizona Coyotes — They deserve a ton of credit for hanging in this thing as long as they have given the injury situation they have had to deal with this season.

21. Florida Panthers — It is going to be intriguing to see what they can do this offseason with the newfound salary cap space they have created for themselves. Will the Artemi Panarin and Sergei Bobrovsky duo be heading to Miami soon?

22. New York Rangers — They are playing hard, but the talent just isn't there.

23. Buffalo Sabres — Being just a few points out of a playoff spot is progress from where they are coming from in recent seasons. Based on where they were just a couple of months ago it is bitterly disappointing. They are fading fast and just got lit up at home by a Blackhawks team that is going nowhere this season.

24. Colorado Avalanche — One line, again, can only take you so far. They are 7-15-3 in their past 25 games and falling fast in the standings. Such a promising start, too.

25. Chicago Blackhawks — The Western Conference playoff field being as weak as it is creates the illusion they might still be in it, but they need to start dumping as many contracts as they can to try and still get something out of the Jonathan Toews, Patrick Kane era.

26. Edmonton Oilers — Five losses in a row, three of them to teams out of the playoffs. A rudderless ship going nowhere.

The Lottery Teams

27. Detroit Red Wings — With three wins in a row and five in their past seven games they clearly have not quit on the season. Just too little, too late. Do not ruin your Jack Hughes chances!

28. Los Angeles Kings — Finally, the rebuild seems to be underway.

29. New Jersey Devils — With Taylor Hall a year away from free agency you have to wonder what his future in New Jersey is. He spent the first part of his career surrounded by nothing in Edmonton, then spent the second part of his career in a similar situation in New Jersey. Have to imagine he wants to take advantage of free agency to get to a team that won't surround him with nothing.

30. Ottawa Senators — They might get a first-round pick or two for trading Matt Duchene and Mark Stone, but it's not going to be the potential Jack Hughes pick they sent to Colorado to get Duchene in the first place. That is unfortunate.

31. Anaheim Ducks — I know the overall record for the season does not reflect this, and technically speaking they are still very much alive in the Western Conference wild card race, but somebody needs to tell me why they do not deserve the No. 31 spot this week. They have the worst goal differential in hockey at minus-39. They just lost 9-3 in a game where they gave up six goals in the first 18 minutes. They are an abysmal possession team and get absolutely caved in when it comes to allowing shots. They are boring offensively. This team stinks. Stinks!

## YAHOO! SPORTS

### Penguins hope whirlwind over as they meet Hurricanes

STATS/TSX

The Pittsburgh Penguins got a breather Sunday after a whirlwind 48 hours to start the weekend. They jump back into things Tuesday when the resurgent Carolina Hurricanes visit PPG Paints Arena.

Pittsburgh, tied for second in the tight Metropolitan Division, split back-to-back games with a 5-3 win Friday at home against Ottawa and a 3-2 loss Saturday at Toronto. That's a busy enough schedule, but there was so much more going on.

Friday morning, the Penguins completed a trade with Florida for forwards Nick Bjugstad and Jared McCann, sending forwards Derick Brassard and Riley Sheahan plus draft picks in exchange. Bjugstad and McCann rushed to get to Pittsburgh, taking a private jet and using a police escort to get to the arena 15 minutes before puck drop and to the bench for the national anthem.

"Sometimes you play your best hockey when you're just on adrenaline and you let your instincts take over," Pittsburgh coach Mike Sullivan said.



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"As they get the opportunity to be with us longer, we'll start to add some more of the details."

After the game, the team, with its revamped group of forwards, hopped a flight to Toronto.

"It was a crazy experience. I think we had a little more to give, obviously," said Bjugstad, whose assist Friday was the only point by either newcomer in the two games. "I'm sure we'll sort it out here."

A different type of Penguins newcomer, forward Teddy Blueger, scored in each of the weekend games while playing in his second and third NHL games after being recalled from the American Hockey League last week.

"He's scored a couple goals, but he's (also) been a smart player," Sullivan said of Blueger.

The Penguins, who did not hold a morning skate Saturday or a practice Sunday, finally got a chance to practice with the new players Monday.

The Penguins, however, still are without defenseman Justin Schultz, who has been out since mid-October because of a broken leg but practiced in a full-contact capacity Tuesday.

Pittsburgh center Evgeni Malkin also appears likely to miss Tuesday's game. He missed both weekend games - another part of the tumultuous 48 hours -- because of a reported hand injury and skated separately from practice Tuesday.

The Hurricanes had a four-game point streak before falling Sunday to Calgary 4-3 but still have won 10 of their past 15 games to move to within three points of a playoff spot. They are six points behind Pittsburgh.

Getting within sniffing distance of a wild-card spot has Carolina getting itchy every time it loses.

"We know where we are in the standings. We want to win every game, get as many points as we can and try to get in the playoffs. It sucks when we lose," defenseman Dougie Hamilton said.

"We'll just go to the next game and try to win that."

The Hurricanes' game Tuesday kicks off a season-long five-stop, nine-day road trip that also goes through Buffalo, New York (Rangers), New Jersey and Ottawa.

"It's a tough road trip, obviously, but we're just looking at the next game," Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "It's going to be a grind for us."

## DEADSPIN

### The Carolina Hurricanes Are Officially Good Enough To Get Mad About

Lauren Theisen

The Carolina Hurricanes, who have not been good in a very long time, are actually pretty cool to watch this year, even if they haven't quite crossed back into the realm of "good" yet. Of the teams currently outside the playoff picture (the Canes are 10th in the East right now), Carolina is undeniably one of the most fun for neutral fans. For one, they're an analytics marvel, best in the league at both shots for and shots against. Also, they have one of the best young forward duos in the game thanks to points leader Sebastian Aho and second-best assist man Teuvo Teravainen, as well as an agelessly consistent and lovable veteran leader in Justin Williams. If only their netminders could make a save, they'd be a real force to be reckoned with.

But the Hurricanes aren't fun only because of their goal-scorers. In their first full season under new owner Thomas Dundon, and their first with rookie head coach and Hurricanes legend Rod Brind'Amour, the Canes have really leaned into the "cute and scrappy small market team" vibes, embracing the ghost of the Hartford Whalers while also pioneering more and more elaborate and rehearsed post-game celebrations whenever they win at home. It always starts with the Iceland Viking Clap and eventually climaxes with some sort of flourish, like a charge towards the loudest side of the rink, or human dominoes, or—on Friday after the

Hurricanes beat the Golden Knights 5-2—a friendly round of Duck Duck Goose at center ice.

In a sport where just using the first-person is often seen as too flamboyant, it's obviously a polarizing gimmick. Personally, I love when non-traditional hockey towns adopt some kind of weird ritual to personalize the game—from rats on the ice in Florida to catfish in Nashville to the Medieval Times pregame show in Vegas—but it'd maybe be kind of embarrassing if, like, the Leafs or the Blackhawks tried to copy it. One thing that's for sure is, there's a specific type of serious hockey-watcher who gets irked by these displays. The normally sane Justin Bourne at The Athletic was one of them, formulating a take that basically amounts to, "Players need to get off the ice immediately after a win and not have fun if they want to be their best."

The easiest way to poke holes in Bourne's thought process is to note that captain Justin Williams, three-time Cup winner and "Mr. Game 7," took the lead on the whole celebration idea. And Brind'Amour, himself a champion, says "We want to have fun when you win. The game should be fun."

But love it or hate it, the slow clap is on everyone's mind, and on Sunday, after the Flames won on the road against the Hurricanes, former Cane Elias Lindholm did his own mocking clap in front of his old fans, much to their annoyance.



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Even if the loss wasn't ideal, this is a fantastic new development for the Hurricanes and their fans. As recently as last year, if you wanted to make fun of this franchise, it'd be hard to muster up anything better than, like, "If nobody goes to see a shitty hockey team play, do they even really exist?" Now, Carolina has an identity, something that sticks

in opposing teams' heads and establishes them as a real group of players and not an empty void on every other team's schedule. People are actually offended when they win, and what could be better than that? A healthy NHL-level goalie, perhaps, but otherwise, they're doing fine.



## Carolina Hurricanes help blind athletes learn to play hockey

By Bridget Condon

RALEIGH, N.C. (WTVD) --

Taking the ice for the first time is challenging, no matter your age.

"Hockey is not the easiest thing to do," said Carolina Hurricanes forward Jordal Staal. "Skating in general for any person is hard. "

"I wish he could actually hear me because I'm sitting there going yes, yes, I can't believe you're actually doing this," said Allison Morgan, the mother of one of the athletes.

These young hockey players have even inspired Jordan Staal. "You know to watch these kids just cruise around and do what they're doing it definitely cool and inspiring," he said.

The United State Blind Hockey Federation and the Morehead School for the Blind teamed up with the Carolina Hurricanes to help get kids on the ice.

"The three things I asked them to do out there are number one try as hard as they can out there," said Craig Fitzpatrick, a United States blind hockey player. "Number two, get up every time they fall and number three show everybody that they can do something that they didn't know they were capable of doing including themselves."

Fitzpatrick is helping show the blind athletes they too can play hockey.

"I'm just really appreciative that there's people out there...organizations out there that are doing things like this," said Morgan.

Morgan's 9-year-old son, Elijah, was recently diagnosed with Juvenile Batten disease.

"We thought it was just going to be a vision issue but it turns out there's a lot more involved with it," she said. "Mobility is going to decline so that's why I was really excited about going out here and doing this because I don't know how long he will be able to be physically active."

"The fortitude and just the mental strength it takes to get out here is unmeasurable," said Joseph Gray.

Gray, a track and field Paralympian, has always wanted to play hockey.

"My Dad put me in a camp just because he knew I wanted to play so bad," he said. "Once I went to the camp I realized that it wasn't a sport I was going to be able to play due to when the puck would leave my stick it would get lost."

Blind hockey is played with an adapted puck that makes noise and is bigger than a tradition puck so that even without sight, players can find it.

"To actually come out here on the ice, have a stick and a puck that I can hit and score a goal, I mean I'll never forget this," said Gray.



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### SB NATION CANES COUNTRY

### Carolina Hurricanes vs. Pittsburgh Penguins: Game Preview and Storm Advisory

The Hurricanes kick off their season-long five game road trip tonight as they take on the division rival Penguins in Pittsburgh.

By Andrew Ahr

Carolina Hurricanes (25-21-6) vs. Pittsburgh Penguins (28-18-6)

Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2019 - 7:00 PM ET

PPG Paints Arena - Pittsburgh, PA

TV: Fox Sports Carolinas

Radio: 99.9 The Fan

SBN Opponent: Pensburgh

The Hurricanes try to rebound after a bitter loss against the Flames on Sunday as they take on the Penguins tonight for the second time this season.

#### Vital Statistics

Category	Hurricanes	Penguins
Record	25-21-6	28-18-6
Points	56	62
Division Rank	5 Metro	2 Metro
Conference Rank	T9 EC	T6 EC
Last 10 Games	5-4-1	5-5-0
Streak	Lost 1	Lost 1
Goals/Game	2.83	3.50
Goals Against/Game	2.94	3.04
Shots/Game	35.7	32.8
Shots Against/Game	27.9	32.8
Faceoff %	49.2%	50.1%
Power Play % (Rank)	16.1% (T24)	24.5% (6)

Category	Hurricanes	Penguins
Penalty Kill % (Rank)	79.5% (T17)	81.9% (T9)
ES Corsi For %	55.49%	49.52%
ES PDO	98.2	101.7
PIM/Game	7:40	7:35

#### Goaltender #1

Category	Petr Mrazek	Matt Murray
Record	11-11-3	15-8-1
Save %	.894	.910
GAA	2.83	2.96

#### Goaltender #2

Category	Curtis McElhinney	Casey DeSmith
Record	11-6-1	2-5-0
Save %	.914	.918
GAA	2.51	2.69

#### Game Notes

Tonight's matchup is the second of four between the teams this season. The Penguins blanked the Canes by a score of 3-0 in the first matchup of the season on December 22nd.

The Hurricanes have a relatively solid record against the Penguins all-time: 62-67-7 with 11 ties overall, 27-35-4 with six ties on the road. However, since Mike Sullivan took over as Penguins coach in December 2015, the Canes have struggled, going just 3-9-1 in that time.

The Hurricanes recalled Haydn Fleury yesterday in preparation for their longest road trip of the season. Their five game swing will take them through the Metropolitan and



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Atlantic Divisions as they try to keep pace with their hot month of January.

Sebastian Aho tallied a goal and an assist on Sunday against Calgary, becoming the fastest Hurricanes player to reach 60 points since Eric Staal in 2005-06. Aho has posted 34 points in 25 games (17g, 17a) since December 7th.

Hard as this may be to believe, Sidney Crosby is just two games away from tying Mario Lemieux's Penguins record for games played with the team. Tonight will be Crosby's 914th game; Lemieux holds the club record at 915.

Storm Advisory

So, Deadspin wrote about us? [Deadspin]

Ferland was once again mentioned by Pierre LeBrun.

After much speculation, it didn't happen in the Super Bowl. But it did happen in Dallas!

Raleigh Youth Hockey Association and the Carolina Eagles have announced a merger, ending a long-running compartmentalization of youth travel hockey in the Triangle.

Eric Tulsky and Hurricanes' Hockey Ops are hiring!

How did Hurricanes players choose the numbers that they wear? [The Athletic (\$)]

Hurricanes military appreciation jerseys are available now!

The Hurricanes partnered with US Blind Hockey Federation and Morehead School for the Blind for a hockey clinic at PNC Arena yesterday.

## Quick Whistles: Life without Jordan Staal and the most crucial road trip in years

Staal's absence has forced the young Canes to grow up, but the hole he has left isn't easy to fill.

By Brett Finger

After a deflating loss on home ice against the league-worst Ottawa Senators before the All-Star break, Rod Brind'Amour pointed to something that often gets overlooked.

"We didn't start with the puck, ever," the Canes' head coach noted. "You have to start with the puck. If you lose a draw and you're in your own end for 20 seconds, or whatever, you wasted that shift. That's a huge area we have to get better at, among other things.

"You gotta remember, we're missing a big guy here (Jordan Staal). This is the stuff that starts to creep in, I've been saying it for a long time. He takes 30 faceoffs every night for us and he hasn't been there for a while. The deficiencies that we have are starting to creep in, and tonight it was evident. Generally, that's a stat (faceoffs) that you can look at and see if you're engaged or not."

The areas that Staal, who has now missed 23 games with a concussion, leaves his stamp on a game aren't very glamorous. He won't score 30 goals and he'll be lucky to reach 50 points, but you know for damn sure that he will win upwards of 60% of his draws on a nightly basis and play his defensive role at a high enough level that makes him worth his lofty \$6 million price tag on an annual basis.

Despite playing with a distinct disadvantage in that area, the Hurricanes have put together their best stretch of hockey this season. They brought a 10-3-1 run into Sunday's matinee against the Calgary Flames before losing in controversial fashion by a final tally of 4-3.

In the veteran pivot's absence, a few things have been exposed about this Hurricanes team. For starters, they are giving up more goals. What doesn't help is that their strong penalty kill has hit a rut of as of late. One would have to put two and two together there and assume that having their best penalty killer gone for a long period of time has finally started to take a toll there.

Those negatives have been accompanied by some real positives.

Sebastian Aho has been forced to be the number one center. On top of his offense, he has to play on the penalty kill and go up against some tough matchups. The result has been further growth in his game. In his last 18 games, Aho has 26 points while averaging 20:30 of ice time. Over his last five games, he has nine points and has averaged 21:39 of ice time. Those are pretty eye-popping numbers from a 21-year-old in his first season playing center in the NHL. That's a place where going without a key player has forced a different player to step up. In Aho's case, he has done so in remarkable fashion and his big point totals and well-rounded play has driven up his value. He will reap the benefits from that outcome here in the next few months when he signs what is expected to be a superstar-level contract.

He has earned it.

While the team has struggled at times to keep the puck out of the net, they have been scoring more goals. A lot more goals.

Over their last 15 games, the Canes have scored 57 goals. That's good for 3.8 goals per game. In their first 37 games, they scored 90 total goals and averaged 2.43 per game. That's a huge disparity. That's the difference between losing and winning a game in many, many instances. That's nearly a 1.4 goal per game swing.

The easy thing to do here is pin it on Staal's lack of offensive prowess. It's a secret to no one that #11 isn't the most capable offensive player. It's irresponsible to say that Staal makes the Hurricanes worse. It's simply not true. He's one of the best faceoff guys in the league, he kills penalties at an extremely high level, drives possession at an elite level and does everything other than contribute offense.

Granted, that is a big exception.

I do want to point to one thing here, though. At age 30, Staal is averaging 19:40 of ice time this season. That's his highest



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count since the 2013 lockout-shortened season - when he was 24.

For me, the solution to all of this is easy. When he returns, you use him less. It's really as simple as that. Instead of using him for nearly one-third of the game, use him on the top PK unit, use him in defensive situations, and keep him away from the power play and from all offensive situations that don't involve him needing to win a big faceoff - he is still, far and away, the best option to win a faceoff.

Let's rein in that TOI number. That's not only the best thing for this team's present; it's also the best thing for its long-term wellbeing. Staal is under contract for four more seasons beyond 2018-19 and it would just be peachy if they didn't run him into the ground and make his contract a total albatross down the road when they will be competitive and in serious need of cap space.

For the time being, though, he has to get healthy. His journey back has been difficult to follow and you just have to hope for the absolute best for a guy as genuine and selfless as he is. It's been an unthinkable rough year for him. This team is better with Jordan Staal, both on the ice and in the locker room.

Five games to decide a season

Three points separate the Carolina Hurricanes from the eighth-place Columbus Blue Jackets in the Eastern Conference standings, and the upcoming road trip will decide whether or not the Canes remain in the hunt.

Starting on Tuesday in Pittsburgh, the Canes will play five games in five cities in eight days. That's a meaty road trip, and it comes at a very crucial point. No matter which way you slice it, Carolina has to have a winning road trip.

If the Hurricanes return home with only one or two wins, it's hard to make a strong case for them to be buyers at the deadline or even go out of their way to make this team better at any cost of its future. On the flip side, winning four of those games might just put them in (or just barely out of) a playoff spot. That would make things very interesting with the trade deadline just three weeks away.

It's entirely possible that more than one of the players on this roster have played their last game at PNC Arena while donning the red and black. Micheal Ferland could be gone at any second if things head south. Pesce, Hamilton, and Faulk all have trade potential.

It's a tough time for players, coaches, and executives alike. No matter how this road trip shakes out, the next few weeks are going to be rather crazy. Get ready to hang on for dear life.

## Behind Enemy Lines: Previewing the Penguins, Sabres, Rangers and Devils

A momentous five-game road trip will determine if the Canes are a postseason threat.

By Andy House

Pittsburgh Penguins

Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. at PPG Paints Arena

The Pittsburgh Penguins have one again positioned themselves for a playoff run, as they have for each of the previous 12 seasons. Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin, and Phil Kessel form the now familiar trio that has powered the Pens to another top-five offensive output and have them keeping pace near the top of the Metropolitan Division standings.

This past week, with Malkin on the mend from a lower body injury (no word on if he will be ready to play Tuesday), the Penguins pulled the trigger on a trade that shipped the disappointing Derick Brassard (who only managed 15 points in 40 games) and Riley Sheahan to the Florida Panthers in exchange for Nick Bjugstad and defenseman Jared McCann. Bjugstad, while never a prolific scorer (he has two 40+ point seasons in seven years) has been a consistent presence in Florida when healthy. The idea is that the bigger body in place of the floundering Brassard will be much tougher to play against and provide some of the toughness that the Penguins have had to divest themselves of as cap restrictions have forced tough roster decisions in recent years.

If the Pens are to make another deep playoff run, however, they will need Matt Murray to remain healthy and show that

he is the same player who led the Pens to back-to-back Stanley Cups just a few short years ago. In sharing time with Casey DeSmith most of the season, Murray has been outperformed. While a .910 save percentage is not terrible, he inconsistency has caused Mike Sullivan to lose confidence in his netminder, and has raised into question if Murray is the true long-term solution in the Steel City.

As the main core for the Penguins continues to age (Crosby, 31 - Kessel, 31 - Malkin, 32 - Letang, 31), expect GM Jim Rutherford to empty the system in an effort to take advantage of the final remaining prime seasons of his core roster. The Pens will be as active as they can with their current cap situation at the trade deadline, so don't expect the Bjugstad move to be the final shuffling of the cards as the Pens attempt to maintain their hold on a Metro Division playoff spot.

What to Watch For

Both Malkin, who has missed a few games with a lower body injury and defenseman Justin Schultz, who has been out all season with a leg fracture could potentially return on Tuesday. Keep an eye out for them.

While the big three performers for the Pens remain their leaders, Jake Guentzel has actually become their top goal-scorer with 26 on the season. Keep an eye out for the dynamic Guentzel, who has slotted in with Crosby with a recent line shuffling with Malkin out.

Buffalo Sabres

Thursday, 7:00 p.m. at KeyBank Center



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The Sabres have cooled off dramatically over the past six weeks, posting a 5-11-1 record since December 18th and falling from a comfortable position in the Atlantic Division standings to fifth and on the outside looking in at the playoff picture. Much of that downfall has been a result of a porous defense that has yielded four or more goals eight different times over that recent 17 game stretch.

Interestingly, when you look at the statistics for the Sabres, there is no particular weak link in the defensive structure that would appear to jump out as the problem to solve. Carter Hutton and Linus Ullmark have combined for a productive pairing in net with a .911 save percentage and 2.87 goals against. Defensively, the Sabres have allowed the 11th most shots on goal, but that rates better than several current playoff contenders. Their penalty kill has produced at a top-10 rate (82.1% kill rate).

The offense, which has been below average over the course of the season has continued to falter and now rests at 23rd in the league, as the Sabres have actually been outscored by eight goals on the season. The bulk of the offensive burden has been placed on Jack Eichel, Sam Reinhart, and of course, former-Cane Jeff Skinner. Each of those three have produced over 40 points to date, and Skinner has potted 31 goals, which is tied for second in the NHL. It appears as though the level of performance may have leveled off for the Sabres as they won a number of close contests in the early going, and now those same games have broken the other way.

For the Hurricanes, Thursday's matchup in Buffalo carries significant weight as the Canes and Sabres sit tied at 56 points in the chase for a wild card spot in the Eastern Conference. Garnering two points, and doing so in regulation, would be a big piece in what must be billed as a massive road trip for their playoff hopes. If Carolina can stifle the top line of the Sabres, there will be an excellent opportunity to get a leg up on an Eastern Conference rival.

## What to Watch For

The Canes continually have been burned by ex-mates over the course of the season. Skinner tallied in the Sabres' trip to PNC Arena earlier this season, and the three ex-Canes on the Flames all scored on Sunday to deal a loss to Carolina at home. Can the Canes contain Skinner?

Carter Hutton has been battling an undisclosed illness this week, and his status as the week moves forward is unclear. Keep an eye on who is in net for the Sabres.

## New York Rangers

Friday, 8 p.m. at Madison Square Garden

Look, there is no easy way around it. The Canes enter Madison Square Garden on a 16-game losing streak at Madison Square Garden. They rolled into MSG a few short weeks ago seeking to end that misery, and were steamrolled 6-2. If you would like to see more about the Rangers as a team, check out the write-up from just a few weeks ago.

For Friday night, the Canes simply must put together a better all-around effort than they have in New York. In the 16-game streak, which dates back to 2011, the Canes have given up four or more goals in 10 of the 16 contests. No team can

withstand that level of defensive ineptitude and win on a consistent basis. The first order of business will be to contain the Rangers and perhaps jump out to an early lead for a change.

Matters are further complicated for the Canes on Friday because they will be in the second of a back-to-back, while the Rangers will be fresh following a Wednesday night home tilt with the Bruins. A strong start will be imperative to withstand what is likely to be stronger legs late from the Rangers.

While the deck may be stacked against the Canes for Friday, perhaps this can be viewed as an opportunity. If the Canes are able to crack the MSG code, the confidence that would ensue could be contagious. This game, as with the important road trip as a whole, must be viewed as a tremendous opportunity to not only help the team in the standings, but to create the confidence and momentum that could propel them into a playoff position.

## What to Watch For

Mika Zibanejad is riding a hot streak into the week. Zibanejad tallied six points, including a hat trick against the Devils, over his past two contests. Containing the Rangers' offensive leader will be key for Carolina.

Winning the special teams battle is a big factor. The Rangers remain potent on the power play as they have produced at a 21.2% rate (12th), but their penalty kill has been substandard at 76.7% (25th). Can Carolina play even or better?

Who will see the net for the Canes? Curtis McElhinney is healthy again, but struggled mightily in MSG in January. We should have a good idea based on who plays in Buffalo on Thursday.

## New Jersey Devils

Sunday, 3:00 p.m. at Prudential Center

The Devils were a surprise playoff team a season ago as they rode a Hart Trophy campaign from Taylor Hall into a wildcard berth. This season has gone far worse than planned, as Hall remains on Injured Reserve with a lower body injury and the list of impactful Devils on the mend only grows from there. Veterans Travis Zajac, Ben Lovejoy, and Sami Vatanen are all out with various injuries. Zajac and Lovejoy should return soon. Lastly, the other major injury is four-time All Star goalie Cory Schneider. Schneider has been sidelined with an abdominal issues since prior to Christmas, but is expected to be back sometime this week.

In the absence of such talent and leadership, the Devils have fallen to four games below NHL .500, and sit in the Metropolitan Division basement. Backup goalie Keith Kinkaid (who has given the Canes fits at times in the past) has been over-exposed and faltered to a .898 save percentage and 3.12 goals against. With just a mediocre offense (16th in goals) and a well below average defensive structure (26th in goals against), the Devils are likely to look at moves which they can make that will strengthen the roster around Hall going forward. Having a 27-year-old MVP and a 20-year-old former first overall draft pick (Nico Hischier) to build around is a pretty good start. Now New Jersey must determine how to best do that going forward.



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Pieces such as Marcus Johansson may be available at the deadline for contenders, but Johansson's quiet season (20 points in 39 games) may depress his return. Brian Boyle is a veteran presence that has been through the playoff wars, but at 34, likely would only bring a late pick. Perhaps the only thing the Devils can do is play out the rest of this season, and hope that fate looks upon them more kindly next season as they attempt to vault back into the postseason conversation. Until then, games like this on Sunday against a battered and bruised opponent are the kind of games where a hungry team fighting for a playoff spot must take control of the action and score a decisive victory. No matter the results that lead to Sunday's tilt, finishing off the challenging week

with a victory in Newark is a near must for the Canes in order for them to achieve their goals.

## What to Watch For

The tables will turn for the Canes on Sunday as they will be the relatively fresher team as the Devils will be coming off of a Saturday afternoon matinee against the Wild. All the more reason to take advantage of an ailing roster.

With Hall out, All-Star Kyle Palmieri becomes the clear focal point for the Devils attack. Can the Canes keep Palmieri off the scoresheet, as they did in each of the previous two meetings earlier this season?



## Shaya's 10 Thoughts: Feb. 4, 2019

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

1. Janne Koukkanen is recovering from a lower-body injury that sidelined him from the AHL All-Star Game. He's been dealing with the issue for a few weeks but practiced today and might return to action tomorrow against Cleveland. Koukkanen, selected to represent Charlotte at the All-Star Game because of his stellar year, will be a needed addition to the team once he recovers and gets going full speed.

2. When you're 30 years old and had several months between competitive hockey games, it takes a little while to get back to game shape. Bobby Sanguinetti, the three-time AHL All Star and US Olympian, is getting better with every shift. The third period against Providence on Friday night was a window into the remarkable skill he possesses. With Fleury going up, Bobby continues to give the team another threat on the blue line.

3. I don't remember a better weekend of goaltending than we witnessed on Friday and Saturday. Alex Nedeljkovic, who is playing the best hockey of his career, was spectacular on Friday in an overtime loss. The following night, Scott Darling displayed the kind of poise and efficiency that made him a Stanley Cup-winning goaltender. The only thing the Checkers goalies didn't do to help was score a goal.

4. One of the issues the Checkers have had as of late is the underperformance of several forwards who helped carry this team earlier this season. The team will not be able to rely solely on its first line to score every night. They must get

contributions from everyone. The only way you can ascend to the top of the standings is by having all 20 players working together. Right now, the team record only indicates what they accomplished in the past.

5. Tom Brady is the greatest athlete in the history of professional football. Nick Lidstrom is the greatest of all time in any sport ever. That is all.

6. The Checkers are ahead of the Monsters in the AHL standings by 21 points. Having said that, there is never an easy night against anyone. Every team that steps on the ice against Charlotte wants to measure themselves against the league's best. I doubt Tuesday or Wednesday will be any different at the Coliseum. The one break Charlotte gets is that former Checkers forward Zac Dalpe is out injured. Dalpe, who was drafted by Carolina and played over 170 games for the Checkers over three seasons still remains a legend here.

7. Hurricanes' captain Justin Williams was not happy his team lost to the Flames yesterday afternoon. The entire squad came out flying and if it wasn't for the goaltending of David Rittich, the outcome would've been different. Against the top team in the Western Conference, Carolina stood toe-to-toe. Former Checkers captain and overall great guy Derek Ryan ended up being the difference maker when the smoke cleared. Even though they get paid to play and they're expected to bring their best to the ice every night, emotion plays a major factor and can propel players to do great things. The mental is to the physical what three is to one.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

**NEWS CLIPPINGS • February 5, 2019**

8. Flyers goalie Carter Hart is turning heads with his performance since being called up. He has a .928 save percentage and a 2.58 goals against average in 15 games played with a record of 9-5-1. I think he will be a good goalie but I also think an adjustment period will come sooner rather than later.

9. Andrew Poturalski and Aleksi Saarela are going to put up career numbers this year. Right now, they are the best offensive threats on the team. As long as those two are

## Canes Recall Haydn Fleury

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

Haydn Fleury is headed back to Raleigh as the Hurricanes have recalled the defenseman from Charlotte.

The third-year blue liner has appeared in 14 games with the Checkers and put up four points (1g, 3a) along the way.

Fleury now heads back to the Canes, where he has one

going the way they have all year, this team will be competitive every single night.

10. It looks like Martin Necas is getting more comfortable playing center. With the loss of Greg McKegg to Carolina, Necas has no choice but to lead the way as the team's first-line center. He's getting there with the help of coach Mike Vellucci.

Broadcasts for both games this week begin at 6:45 p.m. on AHLTV and ESPN 730 with puck drop at 7 p.m.

assist in 12 games this season.

The Canes and Checkers are both in action tomorrow night, with Carolina traveling to Pittsburgh and Charlotte hosting Cleveland.

### TODAY'S LINKS

<https://theathletic.com/798495/2019/02/04/that-guy-on-the-rangers-wore-it-and-37-was-taken-stories-behind-the-hurricanes-numbers/>

<https://theathletic.com/799589/2019/02/04/lebrun-notebook-ferland-market-cools-down-boyle-on-the-block-howards-future/>

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<http://gocheckers.com/articles/features/shaya-s-10-thoughts-feb-4-2019>

<http://gocheckers.com/articles/transactions/canes-recall-haydn-fleury>



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • February 5, 2019

## SportScan

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

1128941 Carolina Hurricanes

That guy on the Rangers wore it and 37 was taken: Stories behind the Hurricanes' numbers

By Sara Civian Feb 4, 2019

Jersey numbers are a polarizing topic in the National Hockey League. Where a superstitious player might wax poetic about the time he got a hat trick in bantam and the rest was history, another might look at you like you're a nut job for even asking.

The Hurricanes were in a unique situation when they relocated — they could decide for themselves if they'd keep the Whalers numbers retired or have a fresh start. The Stars and the Coyotes are teams that kept numbers retired, while the Avalanche and Hurricanes opted for the fresh start. Three Hurricanes since have their numbers in the rafters: Rod Brind'Amour (17), Ron Francis (10) and Glen Wesley (2). The numbers of Steve Chiasson (3) and Gordie Howe (9) are unofficially retired and have been removed from circulation.

Here are the stories behind most of the Hurricanes' players and the numbers they wear:

No. 4 Haydn Fleury

"I've always worn No. 4. My dad said it was a cool number, so. My first year here at camp I actually wore No. 5 because Andrej Sekera was No. 4, then the next year I got it. I've always worn it, ever since I can remember. I had it in Junior, I had it at World Juniors, everything I can remember. It's just always been my number."

No. 13 Warren Foegele

"I've always had a three. You can't wear it here (unofficially retired), and 37's not ...

Points next door to Andrei Svechnikov

... I wore that in Junior. So I just chose 13. No big reason but I just like the number three so I thought that's the closest thing."

No. 14 Justin Williams

"(Former Flyers GM) Bobby Clarke came down one day and he gave me three numbers and asked which one I want. I forget what they were, but I was like 14 sounds good."

No. 17 Rod Brind'Amour (No, he's not on the roster. But he definitely still could be.)

"Well, when I got to Philly I had no choice. I was No. 19 in St. Louis and somebody was wearing that, then they said here you go. I think I was 20 (years old) so you just take what you get. Unfortunately no story there."

No. 19 Dougie Hamilton

"I wore it when I was 13 or 14 years old. I started liking Shane Doan a lot, and at that time I wanted to be Shane Doan, so I wore it. I

always liked the number. I like Steve Yzerman too, but mainly because of Shane Doan."

No. 20 Sebastian Aho

"I was No. 6 growing up but when I went to play National U20 (in Finland's Liiga) it was retired. So I was between No. 13 and No. 20. I wore No. 20 in a tournament and we won, so ever since it's been my number."

No. 22 Brett Pesce

"My dad wore it ... and uh ... Brad Parks? Is that a hockey guy?"

Me: "Oh, I don't know. If you don't know I wouldn't know."

Pesce: "Hey, Tripper, who's the guy that used to be on the Rangers?"

Tripp Tracy: "There are a lot of guys that used to be on the Rangers."

Pesce: "Something Park? Brad Park?"

Tracy: "Brad Park. He's one of the greatest of all-time!"

Pesce: "Brad Park."

Me: "So your dad liked him?"

Pesce: "I guess."

Millennials...

No. 27 Justin Faulk

"Just because."

No. 37 Andrei Svechnikov

"My brother's No. 37 too. It was the first number I chose."

No. 42 (noted journeyman) Greg McKegg

"It's what was given to me. I don't even know if I've worn it before, I don't think I have. I don't mind it though, actually. I wore No. 14 in Charlotte, I wore No. 9 growing up. No. 9 was probably my favorite. I started wearing No. 14 in Junior because when I got to Erie (OHL), Ryan O'Reilly had No. 9."

No. 44 Calvin de Haan

"I believe it was my first season in Bridgeport, didn't make the team out of camp and since the day I was drafted I was assigned No. 3. Travis Hamonic made the team that year and ended up taking No. 3 and then I was assigned No. 24. The Isles signed someone who took 24, ever since then I've been No. 44."

No. 57 Trevor van Riemsdyk

"It was given to me my rookie year and then we started winning so I didn't want to change it."

No. 71 Lucas Wallmark

"I got it at camp and haven't changed. Pretty easy, right?"

No. 74 Jaccob Slavin



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • February 5, 2019

"It's what they gave me. I was No. 7 growing up, then I got No. 74. Kept it and that's it."

The Athletic LOADED: 02.05.2019

1128942 Carolina Hurricanes

LeBrun Notebook: Ferland market cools down, Boyle on the block, Howard's future

By Pierre LeBrun Feb 4, 2019

A week ago, there seemed to be a sense of urgency for the Carolina Hurricanes to move Micheal Ferland as soon as possible, hoping to make a deal before other forwards flooded the market.

But he wasn't moved. The offers never firmed up quite the way Carolina wanted. And then the likes of Artemi Panarin hit the market, perhaps soon to be followed by Matt Duchene and/or Mark Stone depending on how contract talks go with the Ottawa Senators.

So what I'm hearing now is that the Ferland market has slowed down a bit, contending teams wanting to see how all these other potential names could play out. If you're Nashville or Boston, for example, don't you want to see how things play out on Panarin, Duchene or Stone before you spend assets to acquire Ferland?

Plus, well, the Canes continue to play terrific hockey and have a shot at making the playoffs. So there's that to consider.

Now, deep down, I don't think Canes GM Don Waddell feels he can allow Ferland to walk out the door July 1 and get nothing in return. But if his team keeps winning games between now and Feb. 25, it's going to be a tough call on Ferland. At the end of the day, it's going to really depend on the quality of the offers.

If that first-round pick is there for the taking how can they say no?

Silfverberg talks

There's been some progress in contract talks between the Anaheim Ducks and Jakob Silfverberg, a pending UFA July 1, according to sources.

One of the game's top two-way wingers, he's seen as part of the solution for the re-tooling Ducks, not a guy they want to move out. But they'll have no choice if he isn't signed by Feb. 25.

So we'll see if the Ducks can bring this across the finish line soon in terms of an extension for the 28-year-old, who otherwise would be an intriguing name to have on the trade market.

By the way, the Ducks, meanwhile, seemed to be listening on a lot of their other players. Watch out for GM Bob Murray, he won't be afraid to let loose if the offers are fair. He wants to re-tool his roster big time.

Boyle on the block?

Any contender looking for a bottom six upgrade would do well to reach out to the Devils on Brian Boyle. And I'm told a few already have.

The 34-year-old pending UFA forward has 13 goals in 46 games, kills penalties and provides a beauty screen on the power play (check out the Devils' power-play goal Saturday afternoon at Montreal). His pace might worry some clubs but his leadership and work ethic are through the roof.

I'm not sure Boyle loved his last trade deadline experience, going from Tampa to Toronto two years ago. He didn't quite fit in with the

Maple Leafs in terms of their scheme but then again, that's often the case with trade deadline pickups late in the season.

Still, given his special teams acumen and versatility as both a winger (where he's played most of season in New Jersey) and centre, depending on the price he'd be a solid rental.

Boyle has an eight-team no-trade list, so there's that to navigate for Devils GM Ray Shero but my sense is Boyle will likely find a new home for a few months. And I mean, there's nothing stopping the Devils from perhaps offering him a deal again come July 1.

Martinez staying put

Now that Jake Muzzin has been moved, my sense is that the Los Angeles Kings will likely hold onto to Alec Martinez.

He's signed for two more years after this season at a reasonable \$4-million cap hit. Yes, the Kings are rebuilding/re-tooling but I think GM Rob Blake feels Martinez is important to keep on board through that.

So really now it's about a pair of pending UFAs for the Kings in terms of moving out Carl Hagelin and Nate Thompson before the deadline.

Panthers plans for Brassard

Folks were quick to point out that Derick Brassard's stay in South Florida might not be a long one and certainly I do agree he's got a reasonable chance to get flipped before the deadline.

However, not right now.

Panthers GM Dale Tallon hopes his team goes on a run here like last year and Brassard, for now, is part of that roster he hopes can pull it off.

Florida opened the week nine points behind Columbus for the last wild-card spot with four other teams ahead of them so I don't like their chances.

More likely than not Brassard packs his suitcase again closer to Feb. 25.

Wings have decision to make on Howard

Feels to me like the Jimmy Howard situation will go right to the wire.

It all depends, I think, on the quality of offers the Red Wings get for the pending UFA netminder.

There's mutual interest in having Howard re-sign in Detroit but I think the organization has no choice to examine the asset(s) it could net if demand surges on him.

He's been terrific on a non-playoff team this season with a .916 save percentage.

One team I wonder about is Columbus. If the Blue Jackets decide to move pending UFA netminder Sergei Bobrovsky (who has a full no-move so he'd have to okay any trade), no question GM Jarmo Kekalainen would want some insurance in net. Howard would fit that bill perfectly, depending on the cost, of course.

The Athletic LOADED: 02.05.2019

1129002 NHL

Seattle's team must prepare for incoming tidal wave of advanced NHL stats

By Geoff Baker



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • February 5, 2019

Seattle's incoming NHL team will soon face a hiring decision potentially just as important as the general manager and coach.

That's because new puck and player tracking technology unveiled at the recent NHL All-Star Game in San Jose could soon be felt as resoundingly as any Milan Lucic or Tom Wilson bodycheck. The technology will be fully implemented next season with sensors embedded in player shoulder pads and in 40 pucks per game, transmitting data to antennae positioned in arena rafters.

Fans watching a television broadcast of a game will be able to see, among other things, how fast a player is skating, his ice time logged per shift and how hard was that slap shot he just took. More importantly for teams, they will soon have an estimated 10,000 data events per game to sift through – up from the current 350 – in order to glean an advantage over opponents.

Ah, but there's the issue. Data is great. But having reams and reams of it means nothing to sports teams without the proper analytics staff to interpret what it all means and best implement it.

NHL Seattle senior adviser Dave Tippett agreed Friday this city's team will need a top-flight analytics department to keep pace. But he and others want a more-detailed look at the data next season before deciding what that analytics department should focus on and who should be hired based on specific expertise.

"To me, there's some stuff that possibly could help the game planning and the rest is more of what I'd call 'fan-friendly' stuff that's more for watching on TV," Tippett said. "For instance, I want to know how fast a player reacts to a situation rather than how fast he skates."

That said, Tippett knows there will likely be uses for the data that no one's even thought of yet. He has some initial ideas.

"There may be ways of watching patterns of where the players are and how they play together," Tippett said. "It will be interesting to watch and see what new stuff comes out of it that we can't already get."

And how teams, especially the creative ones, put the information to use.

One of the biggest advantages gleaned off new pitch-and-hit-tracking technology in Major League Baseball this past decade had nothing to do with anyone actually pitching or hitting the ball.

Instead, the smarter, quick-thinking teams figured out how to incorporate the new data into how they positioned infielders in anticipation of having balls hit their way. From 2011 through 2017, the number of infield shifts in MLB increased twentyfold as all teams and their analytics departments gradually caught on.

Today, there's debate as to whether such shifting truly works anymore as hitters – with help from analytics specialists – devise ways to counteract the defensive shifting ploy.

So, if recent sports history has taught us anything, it's that Seattle's NHL analytics group will need to be creative, adaptable to changing trends and – most importantly – collaborative with the front office, coaches and even players.

After all, the data means nothing without the delivery method.

MLB teams in recent years like the Houston Astros began employing data "translators" to break down complex information and relay it to players in an on-field manner. The Philadelphia Phillies, among others, allow fielders to use laminated note cards on opposing hitters so they can best position themselves. MLB even issued an edict last season that pitchers can use similar note cards on the mound to gauge stats tendencies of hitters they're about to face.

In the NHL, teams are allowed to keep three iPads on the bench during games so coaches and players can study video clips taken in real time. NHL coaches have become increasingly adept at

incorporating detailed video into their player analysis – breaking down clips into ever-smaller, specific bits to glean information they need.

And now, in coming weeks, the NHL is expected to allow an additional iPad Pro on every bench containing a "Coaching Insights" application with 60 league-generated real-time stats. The move is part of a lead-in to next season's broader data dump, giving coaches a greater ability to employ data as it's received.

The iPad Pro stats will deliver data as obscure as unblocked shot attempts and successful backhanded shots in shootouts. It will allow coaches to set thresholds for player ice time and warn them when they've approached their limit. And the application will allow teams to privately customize their own proprietary data within it.

"There's a lot of information out there, but coaches are still writing it down on pieces of paper," NHL senior vice president of business development and innovation David Lehanski told NHL.com. "They're not using it the way that they could use it because there really hasn't been a platform that will allow them to do it easily and efficiently and to quickly customize it to see what they want to see."

Tippett was one of those video-adept coaches, having worked behind the bench for much of the last decade and this one after an NHL playing career in the 1980s and 1990s. He's excited to see what the new tools bring to a league widely considered the slowest of the "Big 4" to embrace analytics.

But Tippett also knows many NHL teams already use stats far more advanced than much of the general public is aware of.

While a few teams have been widely praised by fans and the media for their analytics usage – the Tampa Bay Lightning, Toronto Maple Leafs and Carolina Hurricanes among them – Tippett said other clubs are also very successful without getting noticed.

"Some teams may talk more about it than others do," Tippett said. "But they're all doing it and a lot of them are very good at it, but you may not hear that much about them because they don't want you to know."

So, Seattle's team in 2021-22 will inevitably start off behind some squads with long-established analytics departments. But our city's team does already have one inherent advantage: The time to gauge the impact of next season's data dump and then tailor a new department around it rather than having to overhaul how an existing analytics group does its work.

Worth noting: NHL Seattle CEO Tod Leiweke worked for years in Tampa with Lightning stats guru Michael Peterson, Tippett once played in Hartford with now ex-Hurricanes GM Ron Francis, who helped usher in Carolina's analytics era and is now a potential Seattle GM candidate. So the Seattle team will have some resources to consult ahead of careful hiring they must do for analytics positions about to be made tougher by an onslaught of information.

And while local NHL fans will have to wait a while to see how well that hiring goes, they can have fun in the meantime watching game broadcasts that should become a lot more informative and entertaining.

Geoff Baker:

Seattle Times LOADED: 02.05.2019

1129025 Pittsburgh Penguins

Mark Madden: Teddy Blueger belongs on Penguins, not in minors



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • February 5, 2019

MARK MADDEN | Monday, Feb. 4, 2019, 8:02 p.m.

The NFL has no offseason. Maybe that's why the Super Bowl drew its lowest TV rating in a decade: The citizens are tiring of football, or weary of New England winning, or maybe America just hates Maroon 5. But everybody loves refreshing sports notes.

- When the Penguins get healthy, Teddy Blueger shouldn't automatically go back to the minors. The 24-year-old rookie scored twice in 20 minutes of ice during Friday and Saturday's games, and adds energy reminiscent of when kids like Jake Guentzel, Bryan Rust and Conor Sheary provided a needed injection thereof in the Stanley Cup years of 2016 and '17. Let Blueger play until he proves he can't. Give him a chance at third-line center if Nick Bjugstad gets a shot on Sidney Crosby's right wing.
- Bjugstad probably will, by the way. General manager Jim Rutherford and coach Mike Sullivan are reportedly intrigued with the notion of Bjugstad on Crosby's line. But has anybody asked Crosby? Bjugstad did some top-six duty in Florida on Aleksander Barkov's wing.
- Derrick Brassard wouldn't accept being third-line center in Pittsburgh behind Crosby and Evgeni Malkin. Now, in Florida, Brassard is third-line center behind Barkov and Vince Trocheck, unless he's moved to wing. But Brassard won't be there long. Brassard's failure with the Penguins is totally on Brassard. He just wouldn't adjust.
- Rust scored one goal in his first 29 games this season. He has 13 goals in his past 22 games. Roll over, Mike Bossy, and tell Rocket Richard the news. It's a deserved reward for a player denied a comfort zone because versatility and necessity bounce him all over the depth chart. Rust isn't netting garbage, either. Bar, down and in.
- Did Malkin get hurt fighting Tampa Bay's Steve Stamkos on Wednesday? No one will say, so he likely did. Stars shouldn't fight. They don't know how, and there's too much risk. Here's betting Malkin was injured when he and Stamkos fell to the ice.
- Defenseman Justin Schultz is due back from injury soon. The main beneficiary from that will be Malkin, once he returns. Kris Letang often plays behind Crosby, getting him the puck with speed and precision through the neutral zone. Schultz will do the same for Malkin.
- Rutherford was on my radio program Monday. He dispelled the notion that the Penguins need a wing. (They don't. They rank fifth among NHL teams in goals.) He also said he's trying to not trade this year's first-round pick because it's a good draft. He also said the Penguins remain committed to speed despite trading for size in the form of the 6-foot-6 Bjugstad (who doesn't necessarily play big).
- In their last three games, the Penguins have blown a 2-0 lead and lost 3-2 at Toronto, watched a 4-1 advantage dwindle to 4-3 in the last seven minutes at home against Ottawa, and seen a 4-0 edge shrink to 4-2 in the last five minutes at home vs. Tampa Bay. The Penguins just keep trying to score. They refuse to wisely manage leads.
- The Steelers may use the transition tag on Le'Veon Bell. They might mend fences with Antonio Brown if no team offers more than a second-round pick for him. The Steelers are like a boyfriend who gets dumped but keeps calling and leaves messages despite the calls not being answered or returned. (Brown definitely isn't answering or returning calls.) The Steelers are stalkers. Why won't they cut ties with the Toxic Twins?
- Diminishing New England's accomplishments because the Patriots "cheated" is pitiful and petty. Each instance of the Patriots "cheating" was addressed and disciplined. None of the punishments prohibited winning. Julian Edelman's four-game suspension for PED use did not ban him from being open constantly in Sunday's Super Bowl.

Winning six Super Bowls since 2001 in a league using a salary cap defies logic.

- Suddenly thinking of Edelman as a Pro Football Hall of Famer after he got Super Bowl MVP also defies logic. Edelman has 499 catches in nine seasons. Isaac Bruce has 1,024 receptions and Hines Ward has 1,000. They can't get in. You can't induct Edelman merely because he won a Super Bowl MVP. That's silly. Ward won one of those, too.
- I'd rather have Edelman than Brown. Edelman knows how to win, cares about winning, and wins.
- The Super Bowl was a good game despite the low score. But fantasy culture has us convinced the scoreboard should be akin to a pinball machine. Los Angeles receiver Brandin Cooks had his hands on two balls in the end zone. They weren't easy catches, but what happens if he holds onto one? That game was on a knife's edge.
- The millionaire who runs Barstool Sports got thrown out of the Super Bowl, and then ejected from the Patriots' after-party. That's a unique way to cover sports: Get the boot from everything. By unique, I mean pathetic. What's accomplished?

Tribune Review LOADED: 02.05.2019

1129026 Pittsburgh Penguins

Team games played record a taboo topic to Sidney Crosby

JONATHAN BOMBULIE | Monday, Feb. 4, 2019, 3:27 p.m.

Pittsburgh Penguins' Sidney Crosby (87) and Dominik Simon (12) prepare for a face-off during an NHL hockey game against the New Jersey Devils in Pittsburgh, Monday, Jan. 28, 2019.

Pittsburgh Penguins captain Sidney Crosby does literally hundreds of interviews during the course of any given season, politely answering thousands of questions.

After Monday's practice in Cranberry, he finally found a hockey-related topic he refused to discuss.

Crosby has played in 913 games in his career. Mario Lemieux holds the franchise record for games played with 915. If all goes according to plan, Crosby will tie the record Thursday night at Florida.

Discussing the possibility that far in advance tempted fate too much for the superstitious Crosby to handle.

"I'm not going there," he said. "We'll talk about it when we get there."

Tribune Review LOADED: 02.05.2019

1129027 Pittsburgh Penguins

Potential position switch doesn't faze newest Penguins

JONATHAN BOMBULIE | Monday, Feb. 4, 2019, 3:12 p.m.

Toronto Maple Leafs center Auston Matthews (34) and Pittsburgh Penguins center Nick Bjugstad (27) battle during the second period of an NHL hockey game in Toronto on Saturday, Feb. 2, 2019.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • February 5, 2019

Newly acquired Pittsburgh Penguins forward Jared McCann hasn't exactly made the smoothest of transitions from the climate of South Florida to his new home in Western Pennsylvania.

"I might have to go to the mall and pick up some more pants. I brought a lot of shorts for some reason," he joked after practice Monday in Cranberry.

The transition should be much easier if the Penguins ask him to leave his familiar position of center to play on the wing.

When the Penguins made the trade to pick up McCann and Nick Bjugstad from the Florida Panthers for Derick Brassard, Riley Sheahan and three draft picks on Friday, both general manager Jim Rutherford and coach Mike Sullivan raved about the lineup versatility the move gives the team.

McCann and Bjugstad both confirmed that theory Monday. If either has any misgivings about moving from center to wing and back, they hid them well.

"Anywhere I'll play," McCann said. "I played a little bit of wing in Vancouver my first year. I feel like I can pick things up pretty quickly. It's a great opportunity."

Bjugstad's case might be the more intriguing one.

He centered Bryan Rust and Phil Kessel on the team's second line in his first two games with the Penguins, but once Evgeni Malkin returns from an upper-body injury – he skated on his own before practice Monday – that could change.

"We can use him as a third-line center if we so choose, and he'd be very good at that, but he's also an offensively gifted player that has the ability to play in a top-six capacity," coach Mike Sullivan said. "It just gives us a lot of flexibility."

Bjugstad probably had his greatest success in Florida playing on the wing with Aleksander Barkov and Jonathan Huberdeau. A stint on the right side with Sidney Crosby and Jake Guentzel could be in his future.

"I don't really have a preference," Bjugstad said. "I played center basically my whole life growing up. Last few years, I've played in and out, mostly wing. There's advantages to both, definitely. Wherever they put me, I'll be happy. Obviously this is a deep lineup, lots of good players to play with."

Tribune Review LOADED: 02.05.2019

1129028 Pittsburgh Penguins

Return of Justin Schultz could help Penguins strengthen weak point in their game

JONATHAN BOMBULIE | Monday, Feb. 4, 2019, 2:45 p.m.

Pittsburgh Penguins' Justin Schultz looks to pass the puck during their game against the Capitals inside of PPG Paints Arena on May 3, 2018.

A little after 11 a.m. Monday, Pittsburgh Penguins defenseman Justin Schultz stepped on the ice for his first full contact practice since breaking his leg in October.

About a half-hour later, coach Mike Sullivan stopped a drill with a sharp tweet of his whistle and loudly dressed down his team for the way they were handling the puck in the defensive zone.

These two developments could be very much related.

Sullivan hasn't been pleased with the cleanliness of his team's breakouts in recent outings, and it just so happens that Schultz's specialty is that part of the game.

"I just want us to execute better," Sullivan said, explaining his drill-stopping harangue. "I have higher expectations of our guys. They're good players. We don't want hope to be part of our strategy, and that's what I told them.

"If we've got to hope to connect on a pass, we're better off not making a pass. Sometimes the best play is no play and keeping the puck in the safe part of the ice and not trying to do something that puts us in vulnerable positions. I thought we did a lot of hoping in that particular drill. That was the message."

In a 3-2 loss to the Toronto Maple Leafs on Saturday night, Sullivan felt the Penguins were unable to push back as a two-goal lead began to slip away in the second period because they were spending too much time in the defensive zone.

The stats indicate it's been an issue all season. The Penguins rank 26th in the league in shot attempts allowed per game.

Some of that can be explained by looking at the pace at which the Penguins play; it's high. But an ineffective breakout is also partially to blame.

Schultz's return could help alleviate the problem for two reasons. First, he's a naturally talented offensive player. Second, it would allow the team to up its total of right-handed defensemen from one to two.

"I think it's beneficial to have defensemen on their strong sides," Sullivan said. "When the puck comes around the wall in the offensive zone, it's a much easier play to make on the forehand when you're under pressure. Same thing on a neutral-zone counter or a breakout. When you can make the play on your forehand, it makes it a little bit easier, a little bit more efficient.

"When you add a right-handed shot like Schultz, now you're adding a guy that has offensive instincts, that is a really good puck mover, that can help us with our transition game in so many different capacities."

Schultz reported no problems after his first full practice Monday, but he added that he won't quite be ready to return to the lineup Tuesday night against Carolina.

In addition to the required medical clearances, he needs a little bit of time to develop confidence that his leg will hold up to whatever rigors a regular-season game throws at him.

"If anything, I think it's just more mental," Schultz said. "When you're out for that long with the type of injury I had, there's a little hurdle you have to get over in your head and be comfortable out there. I thought I was today. Still not completely there, but it's getting there. It's positive."

Sullivan said the coaching staff hadn't decided whether Schultz will simply slot in with Olli Maatta once he returns or if a further reshuffling of the defense pairs will be in order.

If he does end up with Schultz skating on his right side, Maatta surely won't complain.

"He's really good to play with," Maatta said. "He's really good at being in the right position and helping you out."

Follow the Pittsburgh Penguins all season long.

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1129029 Pittsburgh Penguins



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Super Bowl wasn't super boring to Penguins coach Mike Sullivan

JONATHAN BOMBULIE | Monday, Feb. 4, 2019, 2:09 p.m.

Pittsburgh Penguins head coach Mike Sullivan, left rear, talks with referee Brian Pochmara (16) with assistant coach Mark Recchi listening during the first period of an NHL hockey game against the Philadelphia Flyers in Pittsburgh, Saturday, Dec. 1, 2018.

Complaints were rampant on social media. Television ratings were not good.

The average sports fan was not particularly enamored with the entertainment value of the New England Patriots' 13-3 victory over the Los Angeles Rams in Sunday's Super Bowl.

Pittsburgh Penguins coach Mike Sullivan is apparently not an average sports fan. He loved every minute of the defensive struggle, and not just because he's a Boston-area native and Patriots fan.

Sullivan deeply appreciated the game of chess played between the team's coaching staffs and players.

"I thought it was terrific. I really did," Sullivan said. "It's a different challenge. Whenever I watch another sport, I try to draw the correlation to our sport because there's lessons to be learned. You have to tip your hat to both teams. I thought they showed so much resolve and discipline in not making the big mistake or just taking what your opponent gives you. It's not unlike winning a hockey game 1-0 or 2-1. I think we can all learn something from that."

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1129030 Pittsburgh Penguins

Tim Benz: Some Penguins hockey karma — a Tugnut scored on a Primeau

TIM BENZ | Monday, Feb. 4, 2019,

Philadelphia Flyers Keith Primeau takes out Penguins goalie Ron Tugnut on April 27, 2000, in the Stanley Cup Playoffs. Five days later, Primeau would score the winner on Tugnut in the classic 5OT game.

Here's one of those "hockey is a small world" kind of stories — with an ironic twist that I hope makes Pittsburgh Penguins fans smile.

I was doing ESPN Pittsburgh play-by-play for the Robert Morris hockey team as they played Sacred Heart this weekend. One of the Pioneers' leading point producers is Matt Tugnut.

Yeah. Pretty memorable name, right? And, yes, he is the son of former Penguins goalie Ron Tugnut.

Ron was in attendance at the Island Sports Center to watch his son play. Good choice by him as the Pioneers won both games and his son scored along the way Friday night.

Ron Tugnut joined our broadcast for an intermission interview Saturday. And in just six minutes, we covered a lot of ground.

When you play 537 games over 14 NHL seasons in eight cities, there's a lot to cram into one intermission segment. But, of course, I eventually got around to ... that night.

Any Pittsburgh hockey fan who hears the name Ron Tugnut knows what night I'm talking about. It was May 4, 2000. Penguins versus Flyers at Mellon Arena. Game Four of the Eastern Conference semifinals.

Tugnut stopped 70 of 72 shots. And lost. It was the infamous five-overtime defeat to Philadelphia. Keith Primeau was the guy to end it on the 72nd shot.

The contest set the record for the longest overtime game in the modern era of the NHL. The Flyers ended up winning the series 4-2.

"We started at 7 at night and ended at 2:30 in the morning," Tugnut said. "I lost 12 pounds that night. One of the best things about that story is that they ran out of beer at the arena."

I assume Primeau and Tugnut found one somewhere afterward, though. Primeau to celebrate. Tugnut to drown his sorrows.

"Well, he was in better shape than everyone else," Tugnut joked. "He missed half the year. He held out. So he had more juice left than everybody else."

I asked Tugnut if he had ever spoken with Primeau about that memorable moment in Penguins-Flyers lore.

"It's funny. I ran into him when Matt was playing Northeastern," Tugnut said of a game back on Oct. 12. "His son (Cayden) is a goalie at Northeastern. And immediately there's a big smile. And we both know why we are smiling."

But this is where the story takes a turn in the name of Black-and-Gold karma.

"I said to some friends, wouldn't it be nice if my son could score on his son to get at least a little payback," Tugnut said. "Sure enough, Matt scored on him."

As for the final score? Well, chalk up another one for the Primeau family tree. The Huskies ended up winning 5-2 with Primeau in net. But Tugnut didn't seem to mind.

"I felt pretty good that day," Tugnut said with a grin. "I slept a little better that night."

Tim Benz is a Tribune-Review staff writer. You can contact Tim at [tbenz@tribweb.com](mailto:tbenz@tribweb.com) or via Twitter @TimBenzPGH. All tweets could be reposted. All emails are subject to publication unless specified otherwise.

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1129031 Pittsburgh Penguins

Justin Schultz tracking toward return on Penguins' upcoming road trip

JASON MACKEY

Last week's addition of forwards Nick Bjugstad and Jared McCann gave the Penguins a jump on their trade-deadline needs, netting a pair of versatile forwards whom they hope can give them a little more balance up front.

It looks like they're soon going to add a key piece on the back end, too, as there's a good chance Justin Schultz hits the road with the club and plays either at Florida, Tampa Bay or Philadelphia in the next seven days.

Schultz, who ruled himself out for Tuesday's home game against Carolina, took contact for the first time during Monday's practice at



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UPMC Lemieux Sports Complex and said he's progressing nicely from the fractured left leg that has kept him out of games since Oct. 13.

"Feels good," Schultz said. "It was a good step [Monday]. Everything felt fine. We'll see how it feels [Tuesday] morning, but everything felt good out there for me."

Finally, Nick Bjugstad and Jared McCann practice with the Penguins

Although Schultz worked with Chad Ruhwedel — indicating he's not yet among the Penguins' top-six — coach Mike Sullivan did make sure to get Schultz some power-play reps later in practice.

When Schultz returns, it seems logical he would supplant Juuso Riihola on the right side of the Penguins' No. 2 defense pairing with Olli Maatta, although Sullivan said the Penguins are still working through exactly how to construct their lineup whenever Schultz returns.

"We've talked about combinations," Sullivan said. "We haven't come up with a game plan yet. That's certainly one that is a possibility. Olli and Schultz have played together in the past. They've been a strong pair for us. We've talked about a number of different combinations here moving forward. We'll see when we have our full complement of defensemen."

This time of year can be a tense one for NHL teams. The trade deadline is Feb. 25, and there's a significant amount of moving and shaking expected, especially in the Eastern Conference.

Adding a top-four defenseman who's right-handed and excels on the power play would typically come at an exorbitant cost, one the Penguins almost assuredly can afford.

But they'll be lucky to welcome back a gamebreaker such as Schultz, who two years ago was tied for seventh league-wide in points by a defenseman (51). From 2016-18, Schultz led all NHL defensemen in plus/minus (plus-49).

"It's huge," Jack Johnson said. "It's almost like a deadline acquisition. He was out pretty much the whole year. It's a big boost for the team. You're getting a good player back in the lineup. I don't see anything but exciting and positive things about it."

This season, Schultz was injured Oct. 13 in Montreal, flew back to Pittsburgh that night and had surgery the next morning.

Although he did plenty on the bike, elliptical and even on an underwater treadmill, nothing has been able to replace skating for Schultz, 28. But now that he's been on the ice a while, Schultz has been building his leg and lung strength.

And finally, after an excruciatingly long wait, Schultz is only a couple days away.

"Things are going in the right direction," Schultz said. "Hopefully I can help the team when I get back."

Mike Sullivan stops practice

Roughly a third of the way through Monday's practice, Sullivan stopped the Penguins mid-drill and ripped into his players for making too many sloppy passes.

Sullivan's language was ... colorful, his frustration blindingly obvious.

"He wants us to practice how you play," Brian Dumoulin said. "He wants things crisp. He thought we weren't really playing that well, so he yelled.

"We know as a team we have to be sharper."

In explaining his side, Sullivan basically said the Penguins were making too many careless passes, and he wanted to try and nip the issue in the bud.

"I just want us to execute better," Sullivan said. "I have higher expectations of our guys. They're good players. I think sometimes we don't want hope to be part of our strategy. That's what I told them. If we've got to hope to connect on a pass, we're better off not making the pass.

"Sometimes the best play is keeping the puck in the safe part of the ice and not trying to do something that puts us in vulnerable positions. I thought we did a lot of hoping in that particular drill."

Evgeni Malkin injury update

Evgeni Malkin (upper-body) and Zach Aston-Reese (left hand) skated on their own before Monday's practice. Sullivan did not explicitly rule Malkin out, but given the fact that Malkin hasn't participated in team activities since last Wednesday's game against Tampa, the likelihood of him playing Tuesday is not very good.

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1129032 Pittsburgh Penguins

Mike Sullivan loved the Super Bowl, but not for the reasons you might think Peter Diana/Post-Gazette

JASON MACKEY

Penguins coach Mike Sullivan watched the 2019 Super Bowl and was actually entertained.

No, seriously.

And it had nothing to do with the fact that he's from Marshfield, Mass., and a big Boston sports fan.

Sullivan loves the in-game strategy that played a part in New England's 13-3 win.

"I thought it was terrific," Sullivan said. "I really did. It's a different challenge. Whenever I watch another sport, I always try to draw the correlation to our sport, because there's lessons to be learned.

"You have to tip your hat to both teams. I thought they both showed so much resolve and discipline in not making the big mistake and taking what your opponent gives you. It's not unlike winning a hockey game 1-0 or 2-1. We can all learn something from that."

Whenever Sullivan is asked about the Patriots, he tends to choose his words carefully. You can tell he never wants to say the wrong thing.

Sullivan took the diplomatic route when asked about the Patriots winning yet another championship.

"You have to tip your hat to the Patriots, that's the way I look at it," Sullivan said. "I'm just a big sports fan in general. I have a lot of respect for people who exceed and excel. We're always trying to strive and get better as individuals and as a group. I always look for others examples on how to improve and get better as a coach. Those guys, you can't help but respect what they've accomplished."

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Finally, Nick Bjugstad and Jared McCann practice with the Penguins



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ARI LEVIN

Imagine going to work in the morning, leaving in the afternoon, moving across the country, and starting a new job that night.

Nick Bjugstad and Jared McCann did that on Friday after a trade from the Florida Panthers to the Penguins. They practiced in Florida on Friday morning and played in games on Friday in Pittsburgh and Saturday in Toronto.

"Coming in here with a Florida Panthers bag and putting on a Pittsburgh jersey was a crazy experience," Bjugstad said.

Monday, they finally had a chance to participate in a full practice and settle in with their new team.

Bjugstad learned about the trade a little after noon on Friday, right after his pregame meal. He packed his and his teammate's gear, since McCann had already gone back home for a nap. The two were at the Pittsburgh airport in a few hours and landed after 6 p.m. for a game an hour later.

"Luckily, we had that police escort. Otherwise we wouldn't have made it, I don't think, with the traffic," Bjugstad said.

They scrambled to get dressed at PPG Paints Arena and joined their teammates on the bench during the national anthem without warming up. Soon, both were on the ice with their new team, playing with players they hadn't met.

After their first Penguins game — a 5-3 victory — when Bjugstad had an assist, they were right back on a plane, headed to Toronto on an 11 p.m. flight for a game the next day.

"After the game in Toronto," McCann said, "I was with my dad, and we both just kind of smiled at each other and said, 'This is a great opportunity for me.'"

The wild weekend behind them, Bjugstad and McCann had time on Sunday to relax and meet their teammates at the Penguins' Super Bowl watch party.

"I grew up watching Sid [Crosby] play, and to walk into the dressing room, you're just kind of starstruck looking at him," said the 22-year-old McCann. "I don't know what my first sentence was to him."

Monday, the pair had to quickly adjust to Penguins practices with players such as Crosby.

"It's very high tempo," Bjugstad said. "These guys, you can tell, they practice like they play."

Thankfully for them, the Penguins travel to Florida this week for a Thursday game against the Panthers. That trip gives Bjugstad and McCann a chance to return home and actually finish packing.

Of course, they also have to adjust to the new climate. Friday saw a 60-degree difference between Pittsburgh and Sunrise, Fla., where they thought they'd be playing that night.

"I was looking for my winter hat and couldn't find it. So, I'll have to run to the mall here today and get one," Bjugstad said.

"I might have to go to the mall and pick up some more pants," McCann said. "I brought a lot of shorts for some reason."

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1129034 Pittsburgh Penguins

From cactus prick to coma: The strange medical journey of former Penguin Lyle Odelein

ANYA SOSTEK

Broken jaw. Busted knee. Broken nose. Through his 19-year career in the NHL, former Penguin Lyle Odelein was well-acquainted with pain. But none of it compared to what he went through last spring at Allegheny General Hospital, simply trying to stand up and take a step. "Nothing was like being as sick as I was," he said. "Everything was just so hard and frustrating."

Mr. Odelein, who lives in Fox Chapel and is retired from the NHL, had been living the good life well: a steady diet of golf, travel and socializing. But while playing golf in Arizona in March, an encounter with the porcupine-like spike of a cactus set off a chain of events that would land him — like Sleeping Beauty pricked by a spindle — in a month-long coma, a rare and risky transplant procedure his only chance at survival.

Mr. Odelein, 50, built a career in the NHL as a hard-hitting defenseman. Beloved in Montreal, where he won a Stanley Cup with the Canadiens in 1993, Mr. Odelein was known as much for his smile as for his fists, which were used so much on the ice that the arena came up with a personalized fight song for him. After leaving Montreal in 1996, he played for seven different teams, including Pittsburgh for his final season in 2005 to 2006.

Although he grew up on a farm in Saskatchewan, he stayed in Pittsburgh after retirement. "I played in a lot of cities — it's something about the people in Pittsburgh," he said. "It's been great." One of those Pittsburgh people became his second wife, Laurel Odelein. The two own 54 SuperCuts hair salon franchises in Pittsburgh and beyond.

In March of last year, Mr. Odelein was golfing with friends in Arizona when he ventured into the rough to retrieve a ball ("wasn't mine by the way," he laughed). He was, as he puts it, "attacked" by a jumping cactus — a spiky ball that detaches from its stalk at only the slightest touch. The cactus embedded itself into Mr. Odelein's leg, through his pants. Impossible to pull out by hand because the spines are so sharp, Mr. Odelein and his friends used his golf club to pry it off of his leg.

About a week later, Mr. Odelein was back home in Fox Chapel complaining of leg pain and flu-like symptoms. When he decided to stay home rather than fly to Pebble Beach in California for a golf trip, Ms. Odelein knew it was serious. In California for a business trip of her own, she asked a friend to check on him. Shocked by his condition, the friend took him to the hospital, calling their mutual friend, Allegheny General Hospital transplant surgeon Ngoc Thai, on the way to let them know they were coming.

'Sheer hell'

"His threshold for pain after his career was a blessing and a curse," said Ms. Odelein. "I don't think anyone else would have sat in bed as long as he did."

Dr. Thai met them at the hospital, where it became clear that Mr. Odelein was seriously ill from a blood infection, likely originating from the cactus stick in his leg. He was taken to the surgical intensive care unit and given antibiotics, and it was assumed that he'd be going home in a few days. Briefly, he improved. And then, according to Dr. Thai, was "what we would call a crash." For Ms. Odelein, it was what she would call "sheer hell."

Mr. Odelein was intubated and placed in a medically induced coma. Doctors determined that the infection had attacked his aortic valve, which controls the blood pumped from the heart to the rest of the body.

"Basically it's like a one-way check valve," said Stephen Bailey, director of cardiac surgery at Allegheny General, who later operated



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on Mr. Odelein. "It allows blood to go in one direction. The heart beats, the valve opens. The heart relaxes, the valve closes."

The infection damaged Mr. Odelein's aortic valve so badly that half of the blood pumped out was coming back into the heart, rather than into his body. Mr. Odelein already had a mild underlying liver and kidney condition and the decreased blood flow stressed both organs, causing them to fail entirely.

Without a working liver and kidneys, said Dr. Thai, the relatively straightforward problem of a repairing a damaged aortic valve became a very complicated one — "He was very very very sick," said Dr. Thai, sitting in his office at AGH last month. "There were only two options. Either we intervened and he got better or Lyle was going to die."

The only option for intervention was a simultaneous triple transplant of the aortic valve, liver and kidney, an extremely rare transplant that has been performed only a handful of times and never in Western Pennsylvania.

"In the Tour de France, they have different levels of climbs, with the 'beyond' category for climbs that are straight up a mountain," said Dr. Bailey. "Any kind of a risk calculator that you put on his situation — this was a 'beyond' category risk."

A rare hat trick

It was risky enough for doctors to deliberate whether it was worth attempting at all — would those organs be better served going to a patient with a better chance of survival? While Mr. Odelein's new aortic valve would come from a cow, he would need a liver and kidney from a person.

"The last thing we want to do is take on somebody who is so high risk that they won't benefit," said Dr. Bailey. "We had the knowledge that he's a big strong guy who could take a hit. At the end of the day, our assessment was that he had a good enough chance to survive and thrive."

From Dr. Thai's perspective, the odds of success weren't great, but the alternative was worse. "It was 100 percent death or, I don't know, 90-whatever-it-is percent death," he said. "Whatever chance he had, the only chance he had was that we would do all of this. After the case, some people approached me and said, 'I can't believe you did it. I can't believe you guys did this.'"

The surgery was so unusual that a case study will be published in an upcoming issue of the Journal of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Anesthesia.

Mr. Odelein was so sick that he was placed at the top of the transplant waiting list for the region. AGH said that neither his friendship with Dr. Thai nor his status as a former professional athlete affected that placement, adding that it was based on his MELD score (model for end-stage liver disease). For a week, while Mr. Odelein continued to deteriorate, they waited. "He probably had another 24-48 hours," said Dr. Thai. "We were nervous."

Finally, they received news that a 49-year-old organ donor had died with a healthy kidney and liver. Mr. Odelein, who by this point had spent nearly a month in a coma, was taken into surgery. The plan was for Dr. Bailey and his team to first replace the aortic valve, and then for Dr. Thai's team to step in for the liver transplant. With his chest left open, Mr. Odelein would then rest overnight, to allow the liver to resuscitate. The next morning, Dr. Thai would transplant the kidney.

For hours, Ms. Odelein and many family members sat in the waiting room. She sat near a mirror that reflected a hallway, where she could see Dr. Thai walking even before he entered the room. Each time he came by — after the aortic valve transplant that took about five hours, after the liver transplant that took six hours, the next day after the kidney transplant that took eight more hours, it was to tell her that things had gone smoothly.

A couple weeks after the operation, Mr. Odelein came out of his coma and while he couldn't talk yet, he was winking at the nurses and showing signs of awareness.

"About two weeks after I came in, I looked at him, I said you know, 'I haven't seen him move around,'" said Dr. Thai. "I said, 'Lyle, can you move something?' And he couldn't move. He really couldn't move. He could shrug his shoulders. From here up was OK but everything down, he had lost. He was paralyzed."

Mr. Odelein was suffering from a post-surgical complication called critical illness polyneuropathy, in which the body becomes paralyzed following trauma or infection. "The sad thing was, as he was coming out of that delirium, and being more conscious, he was conscious of the fact that he was paralyzed," said Dr. Thai. "That was hard. I could tell that was hard. That was hard for us."

And then, one day in May, Mr. Odelein felt a tingle in his finger. And then the true work began. He threw himself into a rehab regimen that he said was more painful and rigorous than all the hits he'd taken in the NHL. "Every day got a little bit better," he said. "The hardest thing was probably trying to stand up to take that first step."

Gradual recovery

Through the ordeal, he had plenty of support from friends in the hockey world. At one point early on, former Penguins general manager Craig Patrick showed up to see Mr. Odelein in the ICU, even though Ms. Odelein hadn't told anyone where he was because he wasn't supposed to have visitors. Dr. Thai remembers her asking him at one point, "What do I say? The entire NHL is texting me."

In early June, he was discharged from AGH into a rehab unit at West Penn Hospital. He began to build strength, slowly gaining back some of the 70 pounds he had lost during the ordeal. And in July, he got to go home, still unable to walk by himself. At their house, Ms. Odelein pointed to the office, which not long ago had a full hospital bed in it. Sitting on a couch in their living room, he and his wife recalled the nights when he would sit on that same couch and be unable to stand back up — on a couple of occasions, friends had to be called over to move him.

In October, Mr. Odelein flew to Montreal to attend a 25th anniversary celebration for the 1993 Stanley Cup team before the Canadiens home opener. Though he was still using a cane at home, he decided — much to Ms. Odelein's surprise — that he wouldn't be using it on the trip. "I'm not using a cane to walk in front of 20,000 people," he said. "When you have to do something, your brain will overcome."

And with Jefferson Starship's "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now" blaring over the Bell Centre arena's loudspeaker, he did indeed stand and wave unassisted, to a huge ovation from fans.

Now able to walk with ease, Mr. Odelein is still working on his balance and hopes to soon return to the golf course. He is also in the process of exchanging letters with the family of the organ donor, and plans to arrange a meeting. And he is extremely grateful — both to the donor and to the doctors who saved his life.

"I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for them," he said. "I'm very lucky."

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1129035 Pittsburgh Penguins

The Penguins will keep fighting, no matter the health risks

By Josh Yohe Feb 4, 2019



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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The Penguins have been assessed with 10 fighting major this season. On three of those occasions, the player involved in the altercation — Evgeni Malkin, Zach Aston-Reese and Jamie Oleksiak, respectively — has sustained a somewhat serious injury.

So, is fighting really worth it if a player subsequently misses action 30 percent of the time?

According to the Penguins, the answer is yes.

While the Penguins aren't exactly renowned for their toughness — speed and skill have been their identity under Mike Sullivan — only 10 NHL teams have fought more this season.

Don't expect them to stop.

"You just play the game," Jack Johnson said. "It's the way the game is played. We're not going to back off because people have gotten hurt. Shit happens."

The three fights that resulted in injuries this season all showcased drastically different circumstances:

- On Dec. 19 against the Capitals, Oleksiak and Tom Wilson fought early in the contest. It was the Penguins' first crack at Wilson since last spring, when his nasty hit broke Aston-Reese's jaw. Oleksiak, the biggest of the Penguins on the ice that night, collided with Wilson, who knew a confrontation was inevitable. Wilson gave Oleksiak a concussion with a brutal right hand. Oleksiak only played in four more games with the Penguins before being traded.

- On Jan. 8 against Florida, Aston-Reese was penalized because of a late hit. He was then challenged to a fight by Colton Sceviour. Aston-Reese won the battle but lost the war, knocking Sceviour to the ice but breaking his hand in the process.

- On Jan. 30 against the Lightning, Malkin and Steven Stamkos found themselves in an animated scrap. Stamkos was presumably unhappy because his team was in the middle of laying an egg, and Malkin was presumably unhappy because the Lightning played an abrasive game against the Penguins. So, they fought. Malkin sustained an upper-body injury and hasn't played since.

To a man, the Penguins don't seem interested in ditching the occasional fight from their night's work.

"But," Bryan Rust said, "I do think you've got to pick your spots. If fighting is going to change momentum in a game or if someone has really taken liberties with a teammate, that's one thing. But if you're just dealing with a personal dispute or a personal rift, then I don't think it's always really worth it."

Matt Cullen's first NHL fight came early in Bill Clinton's second term. At 42, he has witnessed the game evolve away from fighting to a large extent.

So, why doesn't it evolve all the way from fisticuffs?

"The staged fights are pretty much gone from our game now," Cullen said. "What happened with Geno and Stamkos, that was just a spur of the moment thing. That's kind of what we love about our game, right? The passion, the heat of the moment stuff like that. There are risks involved, but as long as it's part of the rules, you're going to see moments like that happen. And I'm OK with that."

It didn't use to be particularly common for fights to cause injuries. Heavyweights from previous generations almost certainly played with concussions following fights, of course. But the freak injuries — Aston-Reese didn't even break his hand while landing a punch — seem more commonplace in this generation.

"I think you see skill guys fighting a lot more than you used to," Brian Dumoulin said. "And I think that's why you're seeing guys get hurt more."

More skilled players, who generally don't possess much experience at dropping the gloves, likely aren't able to naturally protect themselves in such settings.

The toughest Penguin of them all would love to be of assistance so that such fights aren't as necessary.

"There's no doubt that the game has changed a lot," Garrett Wilson said. "Some nights, it's hard for me to find a willing combatant, honestly. But I find that if you're playing a physical, gritty game, the fights will still find you."

So will the injuries, unfortunately.

"It's true," he said. "It's not always from the violence of it all. I've broken fingers getting them stuck in people's jerseys during fights, stuff like that. Unfortunately, freak accidents do happen in fights sometimes."

The belief in the locker room was universal: Fighting is fine, but if you're worried about getting hurt before a fight, that's when the injuries can occur.

"Believe me, you think about it after a fight," Cullen said. "You're checking yourself, hoping you're OK. But the way hockey players think isn't going to change that much. Your first instinct is to stick up for people and play the game the way it's always been played."

Injuries or not, the Penguins won't be turning the cheek anytime soon.

"There's always a chance you can get hurt in a game," Johnson said. "It's a contact sport. We all signed up for it."

Practice tidbits

Penguins center Evgeni Malkin has not played since suffering an undisclosed injury following a fight with Lightning center Steven Stamkos at PPG Paints Arena on Wednesday. (Charles LeClaire/USA Today)

- Malkin did not practice with the Penguins on Monday after missing both games over the weekend with an upper-body injury. However, Malkin did skate on his own Monday morning. It's unknown how much longer Malkin will be out of the lineup, though there is no sense that his injury is significant.

"He's making progress," Sullivan said.

- Aston-Reese skated with Malkin before practice. He has been skating almost daily since sustaining the injury four weeks ago but isn't practicing with the team yet.

- Justin Schultz absorbed contact in practice and looks very close to making his return to the lineup. Schultz ran the second power-play unit during practice and looked sharp.

"He's getting close," Sullivan said. "He looked strong out there today. He's getting anxious to play."

- It seems likely that Schultz will play with Olli Maatta on the Penguins' second defense pairing once he returns. The Penguins will not split Kris Letang or Dumoulin on the top pairing.

"We've talked about combinations," Sullivan said. "We haven't come up with a game plan yet. This is a possibility though. Ollie and Schultz have played together in the past. They've been a strong pair."

- Sullivan erupted on the Penguins halfway through practice, his voice booming throughout the UMPC Lemieux Sports Complex. He rarely snaps on the Penguins during practice, but when he does, the entire building notices.

"I just want us to execute better," Sullivan said. "I have higher expectations for our guys. I don't want hope to be part of our strategy. If we have to hope to connect on a pass, sometimes we're



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better off not making the pass. I thought we did a lot of hoping in that drill."

While explaining his displeasure to the Penguins on the ice, he was slightly less diplomatic.

• Sidney Crosby has a long history of making new players with the Penguins feel comfortable in their new surroundings. It's no surprise, then, that the final three players remaining in the locker room following practice were Crosby, Nick Bjugstad and Jared McCann.

The Athletic LOADED: 02.05.2019

1128936 Buffalo Sabres

Frustrated by Sabres' recent failures, Housley blows up all 4 lines

By Jason Wolf|

Published Mon, Feb 4, 2019|Updated Mon, Feb 4, 2019

Phil Housley blew it all up.

The Buffalo Sabres' coach made major changes to all four lines, top three defensive pairings and both power play units at practice Monday, as the Sabres look to keep their season from running off the rails, remain in the playoff hunt and avoid their first three-game home losing streak when they host the Minnesota Wild on Tuesday at KeyBank Center.

The Sabres are 3-7 in their last 10 games and are in the midst of a critical seven-game homestand, which began with a 7-3 loss to Chicago on Friday. They're nevertheless only three points behind Columbus for the final playoff spot with 31 games remaining in the regular season.

"We tried different combinations within the last 10 games, 15 games, trying to find a balance, maybe a spark, some continuity within the lines," Housley said. "Those are all subject to change as we move forward here. And we addressed the situation on Saturday after our game. We pushed forward. We're trying to find some chemistry, some balance, a spark within those groups, and we're going to talk more about it (Monday)."

Major changes to #Sabres lines at today's practice:

Sheary-Eichel-Okposo

Skinner-Mittelstadt-Pominville

Smith-Rodrigues-Reinhart

Girgensons-Sobotka-Thompson

(Larsson extra)

— Jason Wolf (@JasonWolf) February 4, 2019

The once supremely effective top line of Jack Eichel, Jeff Skinner and Sam Reinhart was disbanded, with Eichel centering a new top line featuring Conor Sheary and Kyle Okposo.

Casey Mittelstadt centered a second line alongside Skinner and Jason Pominville.

Evan Rodrigues centered the third line, alongside Reinhart and C.J. Smith, who was called up from Rochester earlier in the day.

Vladimir Sobotka centered the fourth line, alongside Zemgus Girgensons and Tage Thompson. Johan Larsson was the extra skater and remains day-to-day with an upper body injury.

"Jack's a great player, but a lot goes into playing on a team," Skinner said about moving to the second line and being separated from his

fellow All-Star teammate. "If we're going to have success, we're going to have to have success as a unit, everyone, all four lines, all six D, both goalies, and for me, I just want to try and be a piece of the puzzle and sort of contribute in a way that helps the team win. I'll just keep plugging away."

The top three defensive pairings were also remade, with Rasmus Dahlin and Rasmus Ristolainen serving as the top duo, followed by Lawrence Pilut and Zach Bogosian; Marco Scandella and Jake McCabe; and Nathan Beaulieu and Matt Hunwick.

The top power play unit featured Eichel and Dahlin at the points with Skinner, Mittelstadt and Reinhart up front.

The second power play unit was Ristolainen, Rodrigues, Sheary, Okposo and Thompson.

"I think every team, no matter how good their players are, the power play hits a wall at some point," Mittelstadt said. "I think that's just how it goes, and it's more about how you get out of it or how quick you get out of it, rather than actually having the lull, so I think just go out and simplify it and make the plays that are in front of us and shoot the puck, and we should be fine."

The Sabres' power play snapped an 0-for-16 slump over the previous six games by going 1 for 3 against Chicago.

The power play is just 3 for 33 over the last 13 games, and its 17 percent success rate ranks 22nd in the NHL this season.

"You start searching for answers," Okposo said, "and I think stuff like this, when you change lines like that, it can't distract us from the way that we need to play. It all comes back to that. Different lines are going to be different lines, but we have to play better without the puck and we have to defend better. It doesn't matter what line combinations you throw out there. If you don't do that, you're not going to win games. I don't think we can lose sight of that."

"We have to play the right way. I think the work ethic has really been there for the most part this year. I think that's been really good. And I just think our attention to detail needs to be a little bit better."

#Sabres PP 1: Eichel-Dahlin at points.... Skinner-Mittelstadt-Reinhart up front

PP 2: Ristolainen-Rodrigues at points ... Sheary-Okposo-Thompson up front

— Jason Wolf (@JasonWolf) February 4, 2019

Housley's last major reshuffle, when he struck gold with the line of Eichel, Skinner and Reinhart, occurred on Oct. 19 in Los Angeles and sparked a major resurgence.

The next day, Skinner scored a hat trick in a 5-1 rout of the Kings, and the Sabres went 14-2-2 over their next 18 games, including the 10-game winning streak.

"I think just that everybody had a role, an identity," Housley said. "But in saying that, I think we were playing the game the right way back then, making good puck decisions, managing our game, our checking detail was really solid and we have to get back to that. You can mix the lines up all you want, but if you don't manage the game and you don't have a respect for your own end, you're going to get the same results, so we addressed those things and we've got to continue to focus on that moving forward."

Housley said it wasn't an easy decision to break up what had been one of the top lines in the NHL — a move similar to Colorado last week splitting up Gabriel Landeskog, Nathan MacKinnon and Mikko Rantanen — but it was necessary given the team's struggles.

Eichel has two goals and three assists in his last 10 games. Skinner has three goals and three assists in his last 10, with two of those assists coming in the loss to Chicago.



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"It's always difficult, especially when they were really rolling," Housley said. "Sometimes we tried to change the lines in between the second and third period, you try to give them an opportunity to dig themselves out of it. It didn't work."

"Some things get stale at times. Or maybe you just need a new look, a new fresh look with new linemates. It was tough, but we're going to try to spread it around, and again, we'll see how that works out. Hopefully it works out for the betterment of our team, but those things are always subject to change, as well."

Buffalo News LOADED: 02.05.2019

1128937 Buffalo Sabres

Sabres recall C.J. Smith from Rochester

By Jason Wolf

Published Mon, Feb 4, 2019|Updated Mon, Feb 4, 2019

The Sabres recalled forward C.J. Smith, their top scoring prospect, from the Rochester Americans on Monday and will give him another chance to make an impact in the NHL.

"He deserves a shot to get back and an opportunity," Sabres coach Phil Housley said. "I like what he brings, the spark and the speed and the skill. Obviously, he's going to get an opportunity."

Smith, 24, skated on the Sabres' third line alongside center Evan Rodrigues and forward Sam Reinhart during practice Monday, in advance of Tuesday's game against the Minnesota Wild at KeyBank Center.

Smith is leading the Amerks in scoring with 41 points (18 goals, 23 assists) in 41 games.

He has appeared in four games with the Sabres this season.

Smith scored his first career NHL goal in a 5-1 victory against New Jersey on Jan. 9, before being sent back to the AHL two days later, when Jack Eichel returned from an injury.

"It was kind of just a numbers game at the time," Smith said. "They said they liked how I played when I was here and just stick with it and obviously I'm back up here and getting another opportunity."

Smith returned to Rochester with a positive mindset, recording a hat trick in a 5-1 victory at the Toronto Marlies in his first game back.

He racked up 12 points (five goals, seven assists) in eight games before being recalled.

"I just went back with a lot of confidence," Smith said. "I think it kind of showed in my game down there, too. Obviously playing up here, it's a little different pace and a little different level. I just wanted to go back down there and work hard and work for the guys down there in Rochester."

Smith takes the roster spot of Remi Elie, who cleared waivers Sunday and was assigned to the Amerks.

Injury updates

Center Johan Larsson was an extra skater Monday and remains day-to-day with an upper body injury, Housley said. Larsson missed the Sabres' 7-3 loss to Chicago on Friday.

Defenseman Matt Hunwick, who last played in the Sabres' 5-4 victory at Columbus on Jan. 29 and has been dealing with a lower body injury, skated with Nathan Beaulieu as the team's fourth defensive pairing.

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1128938 Buffalo Sabres

Thrust into adulthood, NHL's youngest players learn as they go

By Lance Lysowski

Published Mon, Feb 4, 2019|Updated Mon, Feb 4, 2019

Casey Mittelstadt sat quietly at his spot in the home dressing room in KeyBank Center and looked over to his left, where a dozen reporters were gathered around Jack Eichel.

Mittelstadt, a 20-year-old center for the Buffalo Sabres, had just left the ice following an exhaustive post-practice skate with his fellow rookie teammates – additional work to get young players acclimated to the grind of an 82-game season. He then expressed unbridled optimism about his progress on the ice.

Mittelstadt was more concerned with an off-ice problem on this frigid, late December morning. "I got a flat tire when I got [to Buffalo], and I just got another one somehow," he said. "I have to get that fixed. It's actually been like that for a while. Other than that, I've had no problems."

Young players such as Mittelstadt, who began his professional career last March at 19 years old after one season at the University of Minnesota, often face more challenges away from the rink when adjusting to life in the NHL. They previously relied on their parents or billet families to cook, clean and do laundry.

Suddenly, these teenagers are far away from home and have no experience with the responsibilities of adulthood. Like most NHL teams, the Sabres do not have one position dedicated to helping players, including veterans, with off-ice tasks. However, people throughout the organization – including General Manager Jason Botterill – are available as resources when players are trying to find a place to live or have any other needs.

Mittelstadt and his roommate, 18-year-old defenseman Rasmus Dahlin, have a number of teammates with whom they can seek advice. After all, Eichel, Jeff Skinner, Sam Reinhart, Kyle Okposo, Zach Bogosian, Tage Thompson and Rasmus Ristolainen were also teenagers when they debuted in the NHL.

Though teammates can be a valuable resource, experiences – both good and bad – are typically the only way to learn, Eichel said.

Bogosian, drafted third overall by the Atlanta Thrashers in 2008, shared a duplex with the team's equipment manager, Joey Guilmet, during his rookie season. Bogosian had experience cooking for himself from playing two seasons with the Peterborough Petes of the Ontario Hockey League, but many of his rookie meals came from the arena or local restaurants because he despised cleaning.

"Any hockey player would say when you walk in the rink you feel at home," Bogosian said. "It's what you do. The off-ice transition was much bigger for me than the on-the-ice-stuff. It's funny looking back now because you don't know about anything. These kids are playing in the NHL and the rest of their buddies are in college -- going to school or partying. You live a different lifestyle at 18 or 19 than most



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kids do. That's the beauty of it. That's what you work hard for. I grew up quick. You have to if you want to play this game."

Admittedly, Bogosian's transition was much easier than that of the Sabres' youngest defenseman. Dahlin, 18, had already lived away from home for three years when the Sabres drafted him first overall last June. He previously shared an apartment with "two best friends" in Gothenburg, Sweden – 47 miles from his hometown, Trollhattan – while playing for Frolunda of the Swedish Hockey League. That experience taught Dahlin how to prepare his meals and the discipline of cleaning.

Still, Dahlin's mother, Asa, traveled with him to Buffalo following the draft and lived here for nearly two months as he adjusted to life in a new country. That allowed her to help him move, as well as off-ice tasks such as filling out paperwork.

Shortly after Dahlin settled in Western New York, the Mittelstadt family arrived at his doorstep. The two bonded in those early days before training camp, and they have helped each other since. When Dahlin does not feel comfortable making a phone call or has a question about English, Mittelstadt is there to help.

"I was nervous when I got here," Dahlin said. "Coming to an NHL club, it's my dream. ... I was here a month before training camp, so I worked with the trainers and on the ice. No one was really here. It was just me and Casey. It was good to get to know him earlier, so you had one guy before the season started. He's been so helpful."

Eichel had similar help during his rookie season. Shortly after being drafted second overall in June 2015, he received a message from then-Sabres veteran winger Matt Moulson, who offered Eichel a room in his home. Moulson did the same for John Tavares when the two were teammates with the New York Islanders.

Eichel had experience taking care of himself while playing one season at Boston University and during his time with the U.S. National Development Program in Ann Arbor, Mich.; however, Moulson knew such an offer would take some of the stress off Eichel.

"For one, it helps you grow up a lot," Eichel, who was 19 when he debuted with the Sabres in October 2015, recalled of his early days in the NHL. "You see a lot that you wouldn't see otherwise. The biggest thing is you learn to understand people a little bit better. ... You start to mature. The same stuff you do in college and junior isn't going to fly around here. You learn to grow up being around older guys. You learn good habits. It's a lot.

"A teenager's mentality is so much different. When I was coming in, my mentality was probably so much different than Brian Gionta's mentality. At first I really didn't understand that."

Players eventually figure out how to take care of themselves and most call home for advice. Reinhart and Thompson, both former first-round draft picks, have a unique resource: fathers who played in the NHL. Reinhart credited his family with helping him deal with the mental grind – on and off the ice – of his first NHL season.

But failure can be the greatest learning tool, Okposo said. Drafted seventh overall by the Islanders in 2006, he played two seasons at the University of Minnesota and attended Shattuck St. Mary's, a boarding school in Fairbault, Minn., beginning at 14 years old. As a result, Okposo was accustomed to completing many off-ice chores.

There was one exception.

As a rookie in 2007-08, Okposo shared a house with teammates Blake Comeau and Jeff Tambellini near the Islanders' AHL affiliate in Bridgeport, Conn., and was the last of the three to be recalled to the NHL. Upon being sent back to Bridgeport three weeks later, Okposo discovered their house did not have power. He forgot to pay the electric bill.

"It's little stuff like that you don't really think about when you're on your own," he said with a laugh.

A number of former players have struggled with substance abuse or financial management during their early years in the NHL. For example, the Columbus Dispatch reported in 2014 that current Pittsburgh Penguins defenseman Jack Johnson declared for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection after defaulting on more than \$6 million in debt – the result of his parents mismanaging his finances.

Many young players were not aware of the possible dangers of trusting someone else with their money or surrounding themselves with the wrong people. In an attempt to remedy the problem, the NHL and its players' association launched the Rookie Orientation Program in 2013.

A three-day event, the program serves approximately 80-90 players each summer with a number of speakers and presentations on the topics of financial education, wealth management, personal branding, sensitivity training, substance abuse and life skills. Former players attend to give firsthand accounts on the struggles they faced.

Teams are encouraged to send up to three players whom they believe will help their team in the near future – Mittelstadt, Dahlin and Rochester center Rasmus Asplund, a second-round draft pick in 2016, represented the Sabres at the event last summer in Washington, D.C.

"All the speakers were really good," Mittelstadt said of the event. "They did a good job of filling us in on what it's going to be like. It was more about what to stay away from and what to manage, which was really good. It might be a little overwhelming throughout the week since there are so many meetings, but you're prepared for it."

Those principles and life skills are repeated to young players and veterans when players' association officials make an annual visit to each NHL team during the season. That provides players with a platform to raise any questions and concerns about life away from the rink.

When Skinner was drafted seventh overall by Carolina in 2010, his parents, Andy and Chuffy, both lawyers in the Toronto area, questioned how well the league was preparing 18-year-old players for the drastic transition. Before implementing the orientation program, the NHL and NHLPA conducted a session on the first morning of the draft every year.

Early in Jeff's career, Andy would spend approximately one week in Raleigh, N.C., just to be there in the event help was needed.

"One thing about the NHL and going to Carolina when he was 18 – that was another thing that was important to us – we didn't really want other people parenting," Chuffy said. "We wanted to make sure we still had our oar in the water. You want to be available if they need you or need to talk to you, they have a dilemma or whatever. The NHL doesn't provide a lot of that for 18-year-olds going into this. They're playing with men who have families and so on."

Mittelstadt's father, Tom, has taken a similar approach, though his trips to watch the Sabres are more frequent. Like most teenagers moving into a college apartment, Casey needed help assembling a bed frame and a few other tasks. His car also encountered a flat tire during that first week, and Tom helped with the second flat tire during a trip to Buffalo last month.

When Casey returned to the Minneapolis area for the brief holiday break in December, his family members asked if he missed living close to home. He laughed at the question. Though Mittelstadt and Dahlin are under immense pressure to perform on the ice and are learning to navigate the challenges of adulthood, neither would trade the opportunity for homecooked meals or having someone around to fix a flat tire.



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"There are obviously things you need help with and don't know how to do," Mittelstadt said. "My parents do a good job of helping me, so I can just call them and ask them for advice at any point in time. I don't think it's been bad. It's nice having Ras to live with.

"If I was living on my own it might be a little harder, but living with him and helping each other out has been nice."

Buffalo News LOADED: 02.05.2019

1128939 Buffalo Sabres

In need of balanced scoring — and more of it — the Sabres shuffle their lines

By John Vogl

Feb 4, 2019

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Jack Eichel, Jeff Skinner and Sam Reinhart are going to show up on the scoresheet. They produce points and, for a short stretch, can lift an entire team.

But having just one line doesn't work forever. In fact, it hasn't worked for more than two months. During that time, Buffalo has reclaimed the dubious distinction of being among the NHL's worst teams.

If the Sabres can lose with Eichel, Skinner and Reinhart together, it's time to see if they can win apart. Here were the lines coach Phil Housley unveiled Monday.

The idea of wholesale line changes didn't come easily to Housley. The coach loved sending his first line over the boards, and it rewarded him. Of the Sabres' 145 goals, Eichel has been on the ice for 75 of them (51.7 percent). Skinner is right behind with 74 celebrations (51 percent), followed by Reinhart with 65 (44.8 percent).

From there, the production drops in a big, big way.

With six consecutive home games that could determine whether Buffalo stays in playoff contention, Housley had little choice but to shake things up.

"It's always difficult, especially when they were really rolling," he said. "You try to give them an opportunity to dig themselves out of it. It didn't work."

Here's a look at the scoring lines Housley hopes will work, though the coach cautioned that they are subject to change. Most stats courtesy of NaturalStatTrick.com.

Sheary-Eichel-Okposo

Sheary could use an Eichel boost. After scoring in three straight games in early November, the left winger has potted just two goals in his past 31.

Eichel has had Sheary on his left side for just 85 minutes this season. They've created their share of scoring chances (38), but they've combined for just two goals.

Despite being the Sabres' highest-paid players, Eichel and Okposo have rarely played together. During the past three seasons, they've skated just 387:46; by comparison, Eichel and Reinhart have been together for 1,238:55. Eichel and Okposo have been outscored 18-10 with a scoring-chance deficit of 158-134.

But Okposo is one of the few players with multiple goals since New Year's Eve, scoring four times to trail just the five goals by Skinner.

"Jack's a world-class player, and he's played at an extremely high level this year," Okposo said. "Yeah, anytime that you get to play with him, you'd like to take advantage of that opportunity. I'm just looking to go play my game, play hard. I feel like I've been going pretty good here the last 15 games, and I like where my game's at."

Skinner-Mittelstadt-Pominville

One of the big storylines this month will be whether Buffalo can extend the contract of Skinner, who is a pending unrestricted free agent. Some may worry that splitting him from Eichel will prompt him to split from Buffalo, but the left winger says daily changes don't impact long-term thinking.

"Jack's a great player, but I think a lot goes into sort of playing on a team," Skinner said. "If we're going to have success, we're going to have to have success as a unit: all four lines, all six D, both goalies. For me, I just want to try to be a piece of the puzzle and sort of contribute in a way that helps the team win."

Yet there's no denying the success of Eichel and Skinner together in terms of goals and scoring chances.

"Throughout the course of a season, lines change all the time," Skinner said. "Everyone in here is an NHL player, so just go on your new line and get to know your linemates and sort of get the chemistry going as quick as you can."

Pominville preceded Reinhart as the right winger for Eichel and Skinner, so the reunited wingers have a history of success (24 goals in 197 minutes). Pominville also played alongside Mittelstadt during the rookie's six-game introduction to the NHL last season. They combined for four goals while attempting 47 shots in 48 minutes.

"I'm excited, for sure," Mittelstadt said.

During the past nine games, Mittelstadt has seen a reduction in minutes and an uptick in production. He's skating just 12:55 per night but has two goals and five points.

The rookie gets a great chance to multiply those alongside Skinner and his 31 goals.

"It's getting better," Mittelstadt said of his season. "Obviously, it wasn't an ideal start. It's not what I wanted, but I think you get more comfortable, start making plays, realize what you can and can't do."

Smith-Rodrigues-Reinhart

Reinhart gets another chance to carry a line. During the past three years, he's played without Eichel almost as much as he's played with him. There's a big difference in goal production.

Smith, who leads Rochester of the American Hockey League with 41 points in 41 games, is back after putting up five goals and 12 points in eight games. Smith and Reinhart join the similarly sizzling Rodrigues, who has four goals and seven points in his past nine games.

For the first time in a while, the Sabres could have three scoring lines instead of one. If they keep giving up 3.6 goals per game, which they've done since Christmas, they'll need them.

"When you change lines like that, it can't distract us from the way that we need to play," Okposo said. "Different lines are going to be different lines, but we have to play better without the puck and we have to defend better.

"We're in a decent spot," he said of sitting three points out of the playoffs. "We're playing meaningful games at this point of the year, and it's only going to get harder. We have to really trust the process, trust the identity that we've forged because that's how we're going to win games."



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The Athletic LOADED: 02.05.2019

1128994 New York Rangers

Rangers allow late goal in regulation and lose heartbreaker to Kings in OT

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FEB 04, 2019 | 10:15 PM

The Los Angeles Kings have had a tough time winning this season.

Against the Rangers on Monday night, a late goal and a shot in overtime that clanged off the post helped secure a needed victory.

Tyler Toffoli scored 25 seconds into overtime as the Kings rallied to beat the Rangers 4-3.

Toffoli's ninth goal of the season came moments after the Rangers' Mika Zibanejad rang the puck off the post behind Kings goaltender Jonathan Quick. Toffoli was mobbed by his teammates as Rangers netminder Henrik Lundqvist skated away in disgust.

"We were in it the whole game and we found a way to come back," Toffoli said. "I think it was overdue for us. We are really happy with this win."

Adrian Kempe, who assisted on the overtime winner, scored twice and Anze Kopitar added a goal for the Kings, who scored in the last minute of regulation and the first minute of 3-on-3 overtime.

Toffoli and Michael Amadio assisted on the tying goal off a scramble in front of Lundqvist. Quick finished with 24 saves.

"They found a way to tie it," Rangers defenseman Marc Staal said. "And overtime isn't real hockey, so anything goes there."

Zibanejad, Chris Kreider and Adam McQuaid scored for the Rangers.

Lundqvist, who made 26 saves, was exasperated after yet another excruciating home loss. The Rangers have four overtime defeats at Madison Square Garden this season and two more in shootouts.

"That overtime goal sums it up — not only this game but a lot of games," he said. "It's just really frustrating. Not getting rewarded two points for this effort, that hurts."

The Kings tied the game at the 19-minute mark of the third on Kempe's second goal of the game and seventh of the season after Los Angeles had pulled Quick for an extra skater.

"You've got to play 60 minutes," Rangers coach David Quinn said. "I thought as the game went on we got more sloppy. You've got to finish the job."

McQuaid had put the Rangers ahead 3-2 at 9:15 of the third when his fluttering shot from the point eluded Quick. It was McQuaid's first goal of the season and his first as a member of the Rangers.

The Rangers top line of Kreider, Zibanejad and Mats Zuccarello continued to surge. The trio has 39 points — 18 goals and 21 assists — over the last eight games together.

Despite his stellar production lately, Zibanejad was frustrated after a vexing and stunning defeat.

"We put ourselves in a great place to win, but we couldn't close it," said Zibanejad, who has had multi-point games in four of his last five contests. "It's just disappointing."

The contest was another close game between the teams. Since Feb. 5, 2008, 17 of 18 meetings between the Rangers and Kings have been decided by two or fewer goals, and 11 have been decided by one goal. The Rangers won this season's earlier meeting, 4-3 in Los Angeles on Oct. 28.

Kreider opened the scoring with his team-leading 24th goal at 8:32 of the first period. The goal came on a crisp cross-ice pass from defenseman Tony DeAngelo, who had been a healthy scratch the past two games. Zibanejad also assisted.

Kempe tied it for the Kings at 17:23 of the first on a setup by former Ranger Carl Hagelin and former Devil Ilya Kovalchuk. It was Kempe's first goal since Dec. 11.

Zibanejad put the Rangers back on top 32 seconds into the second period with his 21st goal. It was his ninth goal in the last seven games, which included his first hat trick as a member of the Rangers on Jan. 31 against the Devils in Newark.

Zibanejad has 10 goals and eight assists over his last 11 games, and has a career-high 52 points this season.

Zuccarello and Staal assisted on Zibanejad's goal. That extended Zuccarello's consecutive games points streak to eight. The Norwegian forward has five goals and nine assists in that stretch.

Kopitar tied the game for a second time at 5:04 of the third with his 16th goal of the season. Kovalchuk had the lone assist.

The Rangers were coming off a 3-2 loss to the league-leading Tampa Bay Lightning on Saturday night, while the Kings, who have the fewest points in the Western Conference, were playing the second game of a six-game trip. They lost 4-2 to the Islanders on Saturday night.

In a season of struggles, Monday night's victory represented much needed relief for his squad, Kings coach Willie Desjardins emphasized.

"Our guys are excited. It was a good feeling tonight winning," he said. "Quickie was great for us and we found a way."

New York Daily News LOADED: 02.05.2019

1128995 New York Rangers

Mika Zibanejad writes his name into Rangers' history book

By Brett Cyrgalis

February 5, 2019 | 12:31am

It's been some run for Mika Zibanejad, and now he's atop an impressive list in the Rangers' history book.

The top-line center broke a franchise record when he contributed on the ninth and 10th consecutive goals for the Rangers during their 4-3 overtime loss to the Kings on Monday night at the Garden. The streak goes back to the Jan. 19 game in Boston just before the break, extended when he assisted on Chris Kreider's game-opening goal and then got his own 21st of the season at 32 seconds of the second period. It ended when Adam McQuaid got an unassisted goal at 9:15 of the third.

Zibanejad now has at least one point in nine of the past 11 games, with 10 goals and eight assists during that streak. He also set career highs with his team-leading 31 assists and 52 points.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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His line with Chris Kreider and Mats Zuccarello is also carrying all of the offensive load, 39 points (18 goals, 21 assists) in the last eight games when all three players were in the lineup (Zuccarello missed one game with a foot infection). It's nice to have a top line, but the rest of the forwards are producing almost nothing.

"Guys have to be better," coach David Quinn said. "Guys get plenty of chances and plenty of ice time. They have to take advantage of it."

Tony DeAngelo

How Tony DeAngelo is getting help to tackle his 'maturity issue'

Defenseman Freddy Claesson joined his team in a non-contact jersey for Monday's morning skate, the first time he's been with the team since suffering a right-shoulder injury against the Islanders on Jan. 12. He admitted that he has a target date in mind for his return to the lineup.

"I would say not this week, but the week after that. Probably the Winnipeg game would be good to go," he said, referring to next Tuesday's game in frigid Manitoba that opens a four-game road trip. "We'll see. Feels pretty good."

Quinn dressed seven defensemen and 11 forwards again for the second time in four games. The coach has said he "doesn't love" the unorthodox setup, but his team did play a good game with that lineup when it lost 1-0 to the Flyers on Jan. 29, the first game out of the break.

"I'm liking it a little more," Quinn said. "I just think it's our best lineup tonight. I guess I am getting more comfortable with the seven 'D'."

Tony DeAngelo came back into the lineup following a two-game stretch as a healthy scratch due to a "maturity issue," according to Quinn. He replaced winger Cody McLeod.

"Tony has played well," said Quinn, who put DeAngelo back on the top pair next to Marc Staal. "To me, it's dressing your best 18. Ideally, it's 12 forwards and six 'D', but sometimes that's not the case."

New York Post LOADED: 02.05.2019

1128996 New York Rangers

Rangers find a new way to let the Kings break their hearts

By Brett Cyrgalis

February 4, 2019 | 9:50PM

This wasn't anywhere close to the 2014 Stanley Cup final, but boy, the Kings have a special way of breaking the Rangers' hearts.

Despite the Blueshirts holding a one-goal lead with less than a minute to play in regulation Monday night at the Garden, they ended up losing, 4-3 in overtime, on a sequence of events that left them utterly stunned.

"That last goal kind of sums it up, doesn't it?" Henrik Lundqvist said after he was beaten by Tyler Toffoli just 25 seconds into the three-on-three extra period, which came just moments after Mika Zibanejad rang one off the Kings crossbar. "We hit the crossbar, they go down and [Toffoli] totally misses his shot, it fools me and goes five-hole. Game over."

What made it worse was the Rangers (22-22-8) seemingly had the game in hand, a 3-2 lead when the Kings (21-27-4) pulled goalie Jonathan Quick for the extra attacker. That's when Adam McQuaid got hit with a high stick that went uncalled, leaving just enough room for Adrian Kempe to score his second of the night, tying it with 59.6 seconds remaining in regulation.

"As soon as he shot it, I felt like I was late," said Lundqvist, who finished with 26 saves. "It surprised me, the fact that he was there."

Brady Skjei

Not even Brady Skjei feels safe from Rangers' trade potential

It's hard to imagine how many more of these body shots the Rangers can absorb before they become a broken team. With the Feb. 25 trade deadline rapidly approaching, they will soon be partially dismantled, only making matters worse.

But the scar tissue is building for a group that is relatively happy with its overall game, but is making just enough small mistakes that end up costing it. And at this juncture, it's less about the points than it is about the mentality and atmosphere. Even on a night when it was two teams on the outside of the playoff picture, there was still joy on one side and discouragement on the other.

"It sucks," said Zibanejad, who continued his torrid points streak with a goal and an assist. "In overtime, anything can happen. But we're up by one with a minute to go and we don't do a good enough job coming back and they score. We lost a point already there. It's just disappointing."

Zibanejad's line, with Chris Kreider and Mats Zuccarello, continued to be the only unit carrying the offensive load. Kreider got his 24th of the season at 8:32 of the first to go up 1-0, and then Zibanejad scored 32 seconds into the third to give the Rangers a 2-1 lead.

But even that lead wasn't safe, as Anze Kopitar lifted a backhand past Lundqvist at 5:04 of the third, tying it, 2-2.

"We have a tendency at times, when we're winning 2-1, to act like it's 5-1," coach David Quinn said. "Just such a fine line between winning and losing at this level. You have to finish the job."

Henrik Lundqvist

Quinn decided to dress seven defensemen for the second time in the first four games out of the All-Star break, and his insertion of Tony DeAngelo proved a good move with him assisting on Kreider's game-opening goal. Another defenseman, McQuaid, was the one who allowed the Rangers to take the lead on a seeing-eye floater that beat Quick at 9:15 of the third.

But no one on the team could stop the Kings when the Rangers needed to put the game away. The ringing from the pipe hit by Zibanejad in overtime was still pretty loud in the ears of the Garden faithful when Toffoli went the other way and scored on his half-shank.

That's just the way it's going for the Rangers right now, trying to hang on to some sense of optimism before everything turns south.

"That overtime goal sums it up — not only this game, but a lot of games," Lundqvist said. "The effort is there, but crossbar and out, he misses his shot. I mean, I don't know what to think. It's really frustrating."

New York Post LOADED: 02.05.2019

1128997 New York Rangers

How Tony DeAngelo is getting help to tackle his 'maturity issue'



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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By Larry Brooks

February 4, 2019 | 6:25pm | Updated

Tony DeAngelo talks with the hubris of a 23-year-old, one-time 19th-overall entry draft selection who can skate like the wind, move the puck, and possesses both an edge and elite offensive instincts, rather than as the fourth-year pro on his third organization off a two-game sentence in street clothes because of what his coach called, "A maturity issue."

So it was the talent talking when DeAngelo, reinstated for Monday's Garden match against the Kings, all but laughed when asked following the morning skate if he has contemplated the possibility this already might be his last chance in the NHL, five years after he was drafted by Tampa Bay, four years after he was traded to Arizona, and two years after he came to New York as part of the return for Derek Stepan and Antti Raanta.

"No; I'm pretty confident in myself as a player," No. 77 told The Post before the Blueshirts' 4-3 overtime defeat. "I'm also not as crazy as people might think I am."

All righty then.

Rangers find a new way to let the Kings break their hearts

To catch you up on this, DeAngelo was scratched from both last Thursday's match in New Jersey and Saturday's contest at the Garden against the Lightning despite being in the midst of a six-game run as Marc Staal's top-pair partner that represented the most impressive stretch of his brief Broadway tenure.

David Quinn then told The Post that DeAngelo was sitting because of "a maturity issue" related to an episode that occurred during last Tuesday's match against the Flyers. This was a behavioral, rather than a hockey, matter.

"He and I have talked about it and are working on it," the coach said. "He's too good to let maturity issues get in the way of him becoming the kind of player he can be. It's something he needs to work on and we need to help him with." On Saturday, Quinn talked about focusing on the "big picture" as it relates to DeAngelo. He also said he thought the righty defenseman was "in the best place he's been mentally" in the wake of several conversations between the men. Scratches, thus, perhaps as an intervention?

"We have had good talks. I know exactly what [Quinn] thinks of me, expects of me, and what he believes my career can become," said DeAngelo, who played an impressive 17:49 paired primarily with Staal and set up Chris Kreider for the first goal with a centering feed from the right corner off a neat dash down the wall. "He explained that he's trying to do what's best for me over the long haul. We did talk about the big picture and what he wants for me as a player.

"There's no problem between us. We're on the same page."

DeAngelo has been scratched a team-high 19 times this season. Suffice to say, these past two don't represent the first time(s) he's been held out for reasons other than performance. Behavioral matters have been an issue for years, with DeAngelo suspended a handful of times through his junior and pro career for hateful things that came out of his mouth.

"It's an emotional game, I'm a competitor and sometimes I can lose control a little bit, but I'm working on it," the South Jersey native said. "But I have to say that I'm much better now than I was in the past. I've got people helping me with it, but I'm also working on helping myself. I want to be able to stay on the ice."

David Quinn

How David Quinn addressed Tony DeAngelo's 'maturity issue'

DeAngelo said the subject of visiting with a sports psychologist had been broached during discussions with management people, but that he is not seeing one at this point. "I've been through that, Tampa had someone, there was someone in Arizona, there was someone in the Soo [OHL Sault Ste. Marie]. I've talked to so many different people that at this point I don't think that's the way to go."

The Rangers are putting in the effort with DeAngelo not because it is the civically responsible thing to do, but because they believe the payoff is worth the work. There are holes throughout the organization, but the team's largest hole is on the right side of the blue line, where there is a desperate need for a player with DeAngelo's exact and considerable skill set.

Now there is the not incidental matter of enabling that talent to trump the human frailties and impulse-control issues that have held him back. DeAngelo insists he is committed to the communal cause. We'll see.

New York Post LOADED: 02.05.2019

1128998 New York Rangers

Not even Brady Skjei feels safe from Rangers' trade potential

By Brett Cyrgalis

February 4, 2019 | 3:44PM

Job security is all relative, especially in the NHL and especially around this time of year.

All it takes to drive home that point is a few minutes talking to Brady Skjei, the lone Ranger signed beyond the 2021-22 season. As the 24-year-old defenseman knows, there are a few players on his team who are more than likely going to be traded before the Feb. 25 deadline, and that is mostly because of their expiring contracts. But despite having signed a six-year, \$31.5 million deal this past summer, he still lives with uncertainty.

"You never know," Skjei told The Post on Monday morning before his team's Garden match against the Kings. "The team invested in you for a long period of time, that makes you feel a little extra good. Still, you never know. If somebody gets offered a big deal, you never know what's going to happen. But the organization has a lot of trust in me as a player and a person, so that's good to know."

It's true that the organization does think very highly of the fresh-faced Minnesotan, which is why the start to this season was so worrisome. For all of his skating ability and good offensive instincts, Skjei struggled and lost confidence. Suddenly, the contract looked more albatross than security blanket.

"Obviously the start of the year was tough. Might have been overthinking a little too much," Skjei said. "I don't think it was contract or anything like that, but it might creep into your mind a little bit, put a little extra pressure on yourself knowing you're a bigger part of the team. I feel like the last probably month or so, I feel like I've settled in. I'm playing well."

What has helped Skjei settle in was the Dec. 16 return of steady partner Adam McQuaid after a two-month absence due to a lower-body injury. When Skjei plays with a stay-at-home defenseman like McQuaid, it enables him to more freely jump up into the play and use his premier skating ability. When he was paired with another offensive player, like Tony DeAngelo, it became a bit chaotic. That



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unsettling feeling led to Skjei making poor reads and bad decisions with the puck, and watching as the lack of confidence snowballed.

Adam McQuaid and Brady Skjei

"With Adam, he still can, but more often than not, it's probably me that's going to jump up in the play," Skjei said. "Personally, that allows me to try to get my offense going, try to produce some off the rush and use my speed to join it. Knowing that I probably have the green light most of the time is pretty nice."

It has been very beneficial for first-year head coach David Quinn to have Skjei back playing at a high level. Quinn had played him over 20 minutes in each of the past six games, and that is almost all 5-on-5.

It's in stark contrast to either time Quinn chose to scratch Skjei, one two-game stretch in mid-November and another one-game benching on Dec. 2 against the Jets.

"I think there is much more anticipation in his game," Quinn said. "I think one of the things that was happening earlier in the year was there wasn't a lot of anticipation, defensively or offensively. I think one of the things he's done a better of job, there is more anticipation of what his responsibilities are, no matter what zone he's in. He's been more decisive, and he's just playing with more confidence."

And still, he looks across the locker room and sees Mats Zuccarello and Kevin Hayes, two players who are likely to be traded and two friends who have been on the team with him since he came up for a cup of coffee in 2015-16 and then became a permanent fixture the following season. Even McQuaid might get dealt.

"Love them as guys, and you want them to have the most success they can. Obviously don't want to see them leave," Skjei said. "But at the end of the day, everyone knows it's a business. Sometimes you have to make hard decisions. Obviously we love them in here, it just stinks when they go."

New York Post LOADED: 02.05.2019

1128999 New York Rangers

Mika Zibanejad sets Rangers record in OT loss to Kings

By Colin Stephenson

Updated February 4, 2019 11:43 PM

This one was excruciating.

In a game the Rangers believed they needed to win as they attempt to get back into the playoff chase, it looked as if they had accomplished their mission Monday night against the Kings.

The Rangers had gone ahead on a goal from the unlikeliest of sources, and all they needed to do was close out the last minute to secure two badly needed points.

But they couldn't do it.

Adrian Kempe tied it with 59.6 seconds remaining and, after red-hot Mika Zibanejad hit the crossbar in the first few seconds of overtime, Kings forward Tyler Toffoli took off the other way and beat Henrik Lundqvist 25 seconds into the extra period to deal the Rangers a 4-3 loss.

"That last goal kind of sums it up, doesn't it?" Lundqvist said when asked how frustrating this one was. "Hit the crossbar, they go down,

[Toffoli] totally misses his shot and fools me, it goes five-hole and game over. We definitely played well enough to win this game."

"It [stinks]," Zibanejad said. "I mean, I don't know, in overtime, anything can happen, but we're up by one with a minute to go and we don't do a good job coming back and they score. We lost a point right there, and it's just disappointing."

The Rangers are 0-1-1 in the first two games of their five-game homestand and 1-2-1 in four games since the All-Star break.

That's three games in four since the break that the Rangers felt they played well enough to win but didn't.

They wasted a record-breaking performance by Zibanejad, who assisted on their first goal and scored the second to make it 10 consecutive Rangers goals he had either scored or assisted, a team record.

Zibanejad was named the NHL's third star of the week Monday after scoring six points (three goals, three assists) in three games last week.

He got the secondary assist on Chris Kreider's goal at 8:32 of the first period, which opened the scoring, and popped in the rebound of Mats Zuccarello's shot for his 21st goal 32 seconds into the second period for a 2-1 lead.

The goal gave Zibanejad a career-high 52 points (in 52 games). He has eight points (four goals, four assists) in the last three games and 15 points (nine goals, six assists) in his last seven games.

Kings captain Anze Kopitar tied it at 2 with a backhand over Lundqvist's catching glove at 5:04 of the third, but the Rangers went ahead on Adam McQuaid's first goal of the season — and first as a Ranger — at 9:15.

That looked as if it would be the game-winner until Kempe (who scored the Kings' first goal late in the first) got to a puck in front of the net and jammed it in to force overtime. Lundqvist took the blame for allowing that goal.

"I need to make a better read on the third one," he said. "I thought we had it covered, and it kind of surprised me that he got that shot, and the pass, too, to be honest. It definitely hurts."

"Listen, you've got to play 60 minutes," coach David Quinn said. "You can't give an opportunity to a team like that that's got some high-end guys that can take advantage of opportunities."

"We've had a tendency, at times, when we're winning 2-1, to act like it's 5-1. And there's such a fine line between winning and losing at this level. And you've got to finish the job."

Mika Zibanejad at one point had assisted on or scored the Rangers' last 10 goals:

Jan. 19, at Boston

1. Goal, 2nd period

2. PP goal, 3rd period

Jan. 31, at New Jersey

3. PP goal, 1st period

4. PP goal, 2nd period

5. Assist, Chris Kreider goal, 3rd period

6. Goal, 3rd period

Feb. 2, vs. Tampa Bay

7. Assist, Mats Zuccarello goal, 2nd period

8. Assist, Kevin Hayes, goal, 3rd period



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Monday vs. Los Angeles

9. Assist, Kreider goal, 1st period

10. Goal, 2nd period

Totals: 6 goals, 4 assists

Colin

By Colin Stephenson

Newsday LOADED: LOADED: 02.05.2019

1129000 New York Rangers

Tony DeAngelo returns to Rangers' lineup against Kings

By Colin Stephenson

Updated February 5, 2019 12:07 AM

With defenseman Tony DeAngelo returning to the lineup after being scratched the previous two games, Rangers coach David Quinn opted to dress seven defensemen and 11 forwards Monday night against the Kings. Enforcer Cody McLeod came out of the lineup to make room for DeAngelo.

"I'm liking it more and more," Quinn said of the 11-and-7 look, which he previously said he did not prefer.

Quinn said he was pleased with the performance of all six of his defensemen in each of the previous two games, but he also wanted to get DeAngelo back in the lineup. The Rangers played well with seven defensemen in their 1-0 loss to Philadelphia last Tuesday, so he decided to try it again.

"Tony's played well, so you know, to me, it's dressing your best 18 [non-goalties]," Quinn said. "Ideally, it's 12 forwards and six 'D,' but sometimes that's not the case."

DeAngelo wasted little time in showing the Rangers what they missed. He earned the primary assist on Chris Kreider's goal at 8:32 of the first period, which opened the scoring. DeAngelo slid a pass over from the right-wing goalpost to the top of the crease, where Kreider tapped it in for his team-leading 24th goal.

The Rangers got together at Henrik Lundqvist's place to watch the Super Bowl.

"I think it's the third time we did the Super Bowl," he said. "It's nice. We get everybody together and watch the game."

Though the game was a snoozer, it didn't seem to bother anyone.

"At least it was a tight game," Lundqvist said. "At least it made it a little exciting, I thought. It was all defense, but it's good enough."

Claesson closer

Defenseman Freddie Claesson, out with a shoulder injury since Jan. 12, participated at the team's morning skate while wearing a red non-contact jersey.

By Colin Stephenson

Newsday LOADED: LOADED: 02.05.2019

1129001 New York Rangers

Top line has been lifeline for listing Rangers

By Rick Carpiniello

Feb 4, 2019

NEW YORK — The bottom of the NHL standings, where the Los Angeles Kings reside, will welcome the Rangers if this continues, not that there's anything wrong with that given what the organization is doing.

And there's plenty of reason to think it will continue once the Rangers trade Kevin Hayes and Mats Zuccarello, and it's a great bet that they will, within the next three weeks.

ICYMI: With the deadline three weeks away, why it makes sense for the Rangers to trade Hayes and Zuccarello.

If not for the Zuccarello-Mika Zibanejad-Chris Kreider line, plus Hayes, the Rangers would be in free-fall mode already because, after those four, they get virtually nothing in terms of goals from their other forwards.

So, yeah, the Rangers lost 4-3 in overtime Monday night to those Kings, who came in dead last in the NHL in goals scored, and second-to-last in overall standings. Which, ideally, is where the Rangers would be better off when it comes time for the draft lottery.

Instead the Rangers are simply NHL-.500 at 22-22-8 (in actuality 22-30) after getting a point, but very much blowing this game — just as they had in October in L.A., when Alec Martinez (remember him from 2014?) scored the game-winner with 55 seconds left.

This time it was an Adrian Kempke goal with 59.6 seconds left that tied it, and an overtime that lasted a little longer than a sneeze — Zibanejad hitting a crossbar, and Tyler Toffoli whiffing on a short shot that fooled Henrik Lundqvist and ended the game.

MIKA ZIBANEJAD (6-4—10) IS THE 9TH DIFFERENT PLAYER IN NHL HISTORY WITH A POINT ON 10 OR MORE CONSECUTIVE TEAM GOALS, AND 2ND TO DO SO IN 2018-19 (BLAKE WHEELER W/ WPG: 1-9—10, NOV. 1-9).

THERE HAVE BEEN 6 LONGER SUCH RUNS (LAST: SAM GAGNER IN 2011-12, 11 EDM GOALS).#NHLSTATS  
PIC.TWITTER.COM/ZLNLTJ5BK

— NHL PUBLIC RELATIONS (@PR\_NHL) FEBRUARY 5, 2019

The Rangers are 5-3-1 in their last nine, but only because Zibanejad, Zuccarello and Kreider and to a lesser degree, Hayes, have performed magic. You could argue that they've played relatively well in those nine, but you could also argue that they've played some of the NHL's worst teams. And that they could be 3-5-1, or much worse, if not for the No. 1 line.

Because (numerically): Cody McLeod has no goals in 15 games, Ryan Strome none in 7 (and four in 25), Jesper Fast none in 9 (and two in 15), Boo Nieves none in 14, Jimmy Vesey none in 7 (and two in 24), Filip Chytil none in 4 (and four in 29), Pavel Buchnevich none in 5 (and four in 20), Vlad Namestnikov none in 19 ... and before he was injured, Brett Howden none in 31.

This, to a large degree, is who the Rangers' forwards are.

"Guys got to be better," Rangers coach David Quinn said. "Guys get plenty of chances and ice time. They've got to take advantage of it. Right now too many guys aren't doing that. They're doing some



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good things. They're playing hard. We're getting chances. You've got to bury them. You've got to find ways to put pucks in the net."

Not that goal-scoring is the only issue. While they've played, as mentioned earlier, relatively well, there are long stretches almost every night when they don't. Against the Kings that came in the third period.

"I thought as the game went on we got more sloppy and we weren't as responsible as we were early, and got away from some of the things we were doing that allowed us to have a really good first period," Quinn said. "We have a tendency at times when we're winning 2-1 to at times act like it's 5-1. There's such a fine line between winning and losing at this level. We've got to finish the job."

Still, the vibe is 180 degrees different if Zibanejad's rocket hadn't loudly rung the crossbar in the opening seconds of overtime.

"It sucks," Zibanejad said. "I mean, overtime anything can happen, but we're up by one with a minute to go and we don't do a good enough job coming back and they score. Just disappointing right now."

Lundqvist was slumped in his locker, as he has so many nights this season.

"I think that last goal kind of sums it up, doesn't it? We hit the crossbar, they go down, Toffoli misses his shot, it fools me and goes five-hole and game over. ... That overtime goal sums it up, not only this game but a lot of games. The effort is there. Crossbar and out, missed the shot, and I don't know what to think. Frustrating. Yeah."

### Thoughts

1) Daily Zucc-O-Meter: Right out of the gate, another energetic, involved, trade value-increasing performance from Zuccarello. He has an assist on Zibanejad's goal to increase his points streak (in games played; he missed one) to eight games (5-9-14). And yes, he's quicker now than he was earlier in the season, and he's on pucks. But I think one of the major reasons for his reversal is simple. He's shooting the puck. In his last seven games he's had 26 shots on goal. In his first 31 games he had one or zero 19 times.

2) Quinn Bin: McLeod, who was one of the forwards trapped for a big goal by Tampa on Saturday, got a seat.

3) I don't think this playing seven defensemen and 11 forwards is helping the defensemen, who are constantly working with new partners. I especially don't think it's helped Neal Pionk, as he has hit some kind of wall after a terrific first half. Maybe it's just a smallish guy pulling big minutes. Whatever, he's struggled the last few games especially. And frankly, while it's not a big deal when McLeod is scratched. I don't see the value of dressing Brendan Smith regularly, especially now that Tony DeAngelo (when he can keep his mouth filtered) is playing the best hockey of his pro career. Obviously the people making those decisions know more than I and have more info than I. But to me, the traditional 12-6 works much more smoothly. Particularly when the chosen six aren't so great collectively or individually.

4) Early first, two-thirds of the fourth line on, Nieves split the defense and moved in, set up Vesey, but Wagner just got a piece of Vesey's stick, preventing him from hitting the empty net.

5) Marc Staal took one of those automatic slashing penalties because he broke an opponent's stick. Which is fine, in terms of rules, but the same slash over a hand, a forearm, a neck, the back of a leg, is not nearly as automatic. Just lunacy.

6) During the kill, Nieves, off a Toffoli turnover at center ice forced by Zuccarello, had a short-handed breakaway stuffed by Jonathan Quick.

Back at even strength, the reunited Staal-DeAngelo pair did some good offensive-zone work, which resulted in DeAngelo's centering pass redirected home by Kreider. Los Angeles coach Willie

Desjardins challenged that the play was offside — the video challenge of such being the dumbest rule in hockey — and after a long delay, the goal stood, and L.A. received a delay-of-game penalty. 1-0. Kreider's 24th.

ANOTHER  AT THE KREIDER GOAL OFF A GREAT SET UP BY TONY D. #NYR PIC.TWITTER.COM/XSQTXGZHQJ

— NEW YORK RANGERS (@NYRANGERS) FEBRUARY 5, 2019

7) The assist by Zibanejad made him the first player in franchise history to have a point on nine consecutive Rangers goals.

8) Uncontested Goal of the Night (still without a sponsor): The Rangers gave it back late in the first when a long Drew Doughty pass to speedster Carl Hagelin backed off Brady Skjei on a three-on-two break. Hagelin got the puck to former future Ranger Ilya Kovalchuk, who was challenged by Kevin Shattenkirk. Kovalchuk found Adrian Kempe in behind Fast to beat Lundqvist. 1-1.

9) Make that points on 10 consecutive goals by Zibanejad. Moments after Lundqvist robbed Alex Iafallo to open the second, Zuccarello's shot hit Quick up high, and the rebound caromed across the crease, where Zibanejad popped it into the empty side. 2-1. Quick followed that with a breakaway save on Chytil. Late in the second, Quick stopped Strome's shot on a two-on-one with Buchnevich.

10) Pionk iced the puck in the third then, off the ensuing faceoff, was beaten off the boards by Anze Kopitar, who got to the crease ahead of Nieves and put a back-hander past Lundqvist. 2-2.

11) But in the middle of the third, Adam McQuaid — shortly after serving his own delay-of-game penalty — sent a long wrister through the screen of Derek Forbort and Namestnikov. 3-2. McQuaid's first goal as a Ranger ... and no, that won't have any bearing on his trade value. And yes, it ended Zibanejad's streak of points on consecutive goals.

12) With 59.6 seconds left, Kempke, working on McQuaid, inadvertently raked McQuaid's face with his stick, enabling Kempke to get free for just a fraction of a moment to put a puck past Lundqvist, who said he misread it because it looked as if McQuaid had his man. 3-3. "He was stunned by (the high stick)," Quinn said. "It let (Kempke) get to the puck. But we've got to do a better job net-front on that. It shouldn't be the reason they get that tying goal."

13) In OT, Zibanejad ripped one off the crossbar behind Quick, and Toffoli, two-on-one vs. Skjei, fooled Lundqvist with the changeup at :25.

14) I thought it was a really strong game by Boo Nieves, even if his minutes (9:29) were limited by the decision to dress 11 forwards. He battled Dion Phaneuf (woof) all night long. Kid's been a much better player than I anticipated.

15) Kovalchuk had two assists, but ... the Rangers drew the line at one year when they had interest in signing him last summer. They should be pleased by, and praised for, that decision. Los Angeles surely has regret after signing him for three years at \$6.25 million per. Holy shish kebab.

16) It was Darryl Sutter's fault. Obviously.

17) Probably means nothing but Rangers GM Jeff Gorton was up on The Bridge, in L.A. GM Rob Blake's suite, between periods.

### My Three Rangers Stars

1. Mika Zibanejad
2. Mats Zuccarello
3. Tony DeAngelo

Rick Carpiello



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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The Athletic LOADED: 02.05.2019

1129085 Websites

The Athletic / DGB weekend power rankings: It's time to start getting excited about the trade deadline

By Sean McIndoe Feb 4, 2019

Trades are the best.

I mean, not for the players, who have to pack up on short notice and move to new cities, severing friendships and disrupting family lives. And not for the GMs, some of whom are going to make a mistake that ultimately gets them fired over the next few weeks.

But for fans? Yeah, for us, trades are the best.

We all know the song-and-dance that goes on in the NHL. You can't make trades after free agency, because everybody likes their roster. And you can't make them in training camp, because everybody's healthy. And you can't make them early in the season, because we can't overreact to a few weeks. And you can't make them in the middle of the season, because the salary cap makes that too hard even though it doesn't.

But the trade deadline? Yes, you can make trades at the deadline. It can be done. So get to wheeling and dealing, boys. Let's see some moves.

Granted, we're still three weeks away from deadline day, and in a typical year, we might be getting ahead of ourselves. But the trend in recent seasons has been away from the do-it-all-on-one-day approach, and more toward spreading out the action over the days and weeks before. That's not good if you're a TV producer with a 10-hour deadline day show to fill, but it works for the rest of us. And we've already seen two fairly big deals in the last week, so it's possible that the deadline crunch is already here.

The first of those deals came on Monday, with the Leafs adding Jake Muzzin from the Kings. The Penguins and Panthers got into the act over the weekend, with Pittsburgh landing Nick Bjugstad and Jared McCann in exchange for Derick Brassard, Riley Sheahan and three picks. That one was really the best kind of pre-deadline deal, in that it gave us plenty to talk about without actually taking a big name out of play since the Panthers are expected to flip Brassard again in the coming weeks.

We've still got plenty of big names on the board, including perhaps the biggest we've seen out there at deadline time in years. Artemi Panarin sure sounds like he's going to be moved, even if there are arguments to be made that the Blue Jackets should keep him. Columbus has lost five straight and are in danger of falling out of a wild-card spot, so the situation there is getting to the critical stage. Patiently waiting three more weeks to see how everything shakes out may not be an option.

The Senators aren't under quite the same pressure, but their decisions over the next few weeks will be just as important. There's still no extensions in place for Mark Stone or Matt Duchene, or even really all that much buzz that they're close. The latest word is that it may be trending towards both players being traded, which makes the Senators one of the key teams to watch.

We're all still waiting for the Rangers to start making moves, with the Jets apparently a leading contender for Kevin Hayes. The Kings still have Jeff Carter and Alec Martinez. The Flyers will move Wayne Simmonds, if and when they stop winning every game they play. Micheal Ferland has become this year's annual "guy that everyone

is treating as a superstar so you just kind of go with it even though you didn't think he was that good" deadline name. The Blackhawks might be open to moving Duncan Keith. And then there's Jimmy Howard, Dougie Hamilton, Jay Bouwmeester and whatever hijinks the Oilers might get up to.

Not all of those guys will get moved, but it's shaping up to be a fun few weeks. And now that it's February, we can stop treating the deadline like some far-off destination and start talking about it in the present tense. It's here. Or at least, it's close enough. Let's get crazy.

Road to the Cup

The five teams that look like they're headed towards a summer of keg stands and fountain pool parties.

Good news, hockey fans: We've made it past the bye weeks. Group high-five.

This was the first year that the NHL grouped everyone's byes into the two weeks surrounding the all-star game. It resulted in huge chunks of the league being off at the same time, but it made a certain amount of sense. And it had the advantage of making it easier to ensure that we wouldn't get those matchups where one team is coming off of their bye while the other has already been back in action.

Except that, well, it didn't do that after all. Almost half the league still got those type of matchups. That seems odd and is further evidence that none of us will ever understand how the NHL schedule works.

5. Nashville Predators (31-19-4, +27 true goals differential\*) – Their next five are against the Coyotes, Stars, the Blues twice and then the Red Wings. Arizona's playing well and they lost to Dallas just a few days ago, but that's a stretch where a team like the Predators should pick up some serious points. If they can't, we might be getting close to the point where we can call the race in the Central.

4. San Jose Sharks (30-16-7, +24) – Brent Burns scored a nifty OT winner on Saturday to help the Sharks keep pace with/gain ground on the Flames. But the bigger news in the Pacific these days is the Knights, who've lost four straight. We spent the last month watching these three teams pull away from the pack, and wondering which one would blink first. Now we know, and the question becomes whether the Knights get an opportunity to regain that ground, or whether we pencil them in for third spot and a road opener in the playoffs.

3. Winnipeg Jets (34-16-2, +38) – Patrik Laine's scoring slump continues; he hasn't scored in seven straight and has just two goals in his last 20. Dom Luszczyszyn took a look at the numbers behind the slump earlier this week, including the pressing question of whether Laine's production is tied to how much Fortnite he's playing. No really, there's a graph and everything, it's pretty fantastic.

2. Calgary Flames (34-14-5, +47) – Good lord, Mikael Backlund. Maybe take the game difficulty off of tutorial mode.

And that might have only been the second-meanest thing that a Flame did to an opponent this weekend.

By the way, in case you were wondering: Yes, this is the exact same top five in the same order that we had last week. It's the first time that's happened this year and a reminder that we're starting to see some separation and stability at the top of the league. But with the deadline looming, we should expect to see some shifting around as some teams step up with big moves and others decide to stay the course.

1. Tampa Bay Lightning (39-11-2, +55) – Brayden Point missed Saturday night's game with a lower-body injury; he's considered day-to-day. That's obviously not good news for the Lightning. But it is a reminder that being 15 points up for top seed in the conference puts them in a nice position down the stretch. Guys are going to get



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banged up, and the Lightning can afford to be cautious where other teams might be tempted to rush a star back into the lineup when every point is crucial. Tampa may even decide to rest players outright in the final few weeks. It's yet another reason to like their chances once the playoffs arrive.

\*Goals differential without counting shootout decisions like the NHL does for some reason.

Not ranked: Buffalo Sabres – Remember when they were in the top five? That feels like it was a long time ago. Maybe it was. This weekend, they lost. Again.

And Friday night wasn't just a run-of-the-mill loss, although they'd had plenty of those too. Friday was a loss on home ice in which one of the worst teams in the league lit them up for seven goals. It came on the heels of a 1-0 loss to the Stars, so at least they're mixing in a little variety. That's something, right?

The state of the Sabres these days is such that you can look back over the schedule and pick just about any arbitrary cutoff, and it's bad. They've lost three of four. Seven of 10, all in regulation. Ten of 14. And 18 of their last 26. That last chunk takes us all the way back to Nov. 29, the night that the Sabres went into Tampa and coughed up a third-period lead. That snapped their 10-game win streak, one that had seen them rise to the very top of the overall standings.

That 17-6-2 start covered 25 games, which means we're now at the point where the slump covers more ground than the hot start, which means it's not really a slump anymore. It may be more accurate to say that the first few months were the outlier, and what we're seeing now is just who the Sabres are. And these Sabres are bad.

So now what? As rough as the last few months have been, the Sabres are still just three points back of a wild-card spot, so it's not like their season is over. They're underdogs to make the playoffs now, sure, but not yet in that "how adorable, they still think they actually have a chance" zone. But they're not far off, and another bad week might spell the end. Buffalo media is calling them "soft" and "a broken team" and demanding "drastic measures". Others are calling for a new direction in goal.

With three weeks until the deadline, all eyes are on Jason Botterill. The Sabres look like a team that desperately needs a shakeup, although those are notoriously tough to pull off when a season is circling the drain. There's also the possibility that they fall further out of the race and become sellers, which would add a new wrinkle to the Jeff Skinner situation. But after seven straight years of missing the playoffs, this feels like a year where the Sabres have to at least stay in the race and let their young core experience some meaningful games down the stretch, so throwing in the towel doesn't seem like an option.

The good news is that they're at home for their next six games, so there's a chance to right the ship. They've got the Wild on Tuesday, and a potentially crucial matchup with the Hurricanes on Thursday. With the Wings and Jets in town over the weekend, there's a good chance we'll have a much clearer picture of where the Sabres stand by this time next week.

The bottom five

The five teams that look like they're headed towards hoping the ping-pong balls deliver Jack Hughes.

The biggest game of the weekend might have been Saturday's tilt between the Canucks and Avalanche. And man, did Vancouver ever look good, jumping out to an early lead and coming out with a 5-1 road win. There are no favourites in the Western traffic jam, but the Canucks have as good a shot as anyone right now.

5. Chicago Blackhawks (20-24-9, -29) – Four straight wins have them kind of sort of back in the race, despite having lost 13 games more than they've won. And with Edmonton and Vancouver on this

week's schedule, there's a chance to gain some ground on the (many) teams ahead of them.

Would a few more wins be enough to convince Stan Bowman to shift out of seller's mode? It doesn't sound like it, and when you've won three Cups I'm not sure how desperately you want to limp into a wild-card spot just to lose in Round 1. But as the Flyers have been showing us, a pre-deadline win streak can at least make things more complicated for a team that's supposed to be a seller.

4. Detroit Red Wings (21-25-7, -21) – Earlier in the week, I ranked the teams who were in the best position to tank the rest of the season. The Red Wings came out on top of the list, largely based on the potential for a deadline sell-off that could include a Jimmy Howard trade. But I also mentioned that it would help their chances if they could "find a reason to shut down Dylan Larkin at some point". Days later, Larkin will miss a week or two with a strained oblique. Close enough.

Unfortunately for Detroit, they've won three straight, including a pair against the Ontario teams over the weekend. Saturday's win in Ottawa jumped the Wings past the Devils and Panthers and Blackhawks, six points up on the last-place Senators. So there's some work to do down the stretch if this tank is going to be holding a fire sale.

3. New Jersey Devils (20-24-7, -20) – One big name that won't be moving, at least according to the Hockey Night in Canada insiders: Taylor Hall. That's no big surprise since he's signed through next year and there hadn't been all that much buzz about him moving during the season. But it's a reminder that the Devils may be facing a tough call on the reigning MVP this summer, and it's not impossible to imagine a scenario in which it makes sense for a rebuilding team to move him then rather than commit to a potential eight-year deal that would lock him up until he was 36.

2. Los Angeles Kings (20-27-4, -38) – They're the first of the bad teams to start moving out major names. In a close race for the bottom, that first-mover advantage could turn out to be important.

1. Ottawa Senators (19-28-5, -35) – Cody Ceci isn't anywhere close to being the best player on the block heading into the deadline, but he may be one of the most interesting. Word out of Ottawa is that the Senators would be willing to move him if they could get a Jake Muzzin-type of deal. Which seems like a longshot since, uh, Muzzin is pretty good and Ceci often isn't.

You can't blame Pierre Dorion for trying – shoot your shot, and all that – and normally you might just write this off as a team being comically unrealistic about the value of its own assets. But it's hard not to hear all of this and not think back to 2017 when the Dorion's rumoured asking price for Curtis Lazar was a high pick. We all had a good laugh since Lazar had one point in 33 games and had recently been a healthy scratch. And then Dorion actually found somebody to take the deal.

Could he do it again with Ceci? Probably not, but you have to give Dorion some credit. While his trading record isn't exactly spotless, the guy knows how to set the market. If he actually can get some team to give up a first-round pick or more for Ceci, the trade should probably also include a GM of the Year trophy to be named later.

Not ranked: Anaheim Ducks – They were this close to landing in the bottom five this week. That might seem odd since they've never been in the bottom five in the actual standings. We take the long view around here, so the rule of thumb is that we don't overreact to one game here or there.

But there's an exception to the rule of thumb, and it goes like this: When you give up six goals in the first period and nine in the game, you are a terrible team that deserves to be in the bottom five and you should feel bad because you are bad.



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That might be harsh, but the Ducks were embarrassed on Saturday. And the thing is, I'm not even sure we can chalk it up as Anaheim having a bad game. Maybe John Gibson had a bad game, and this is just what the Ducks looks like when their goalies aren't single-handedly keeping them in games.

He's also been keeping them in the playoff race, although even that's hanging by a thread these days. The Ducks have lost three straight and 15 of 17, and the fact that they're even still on the bubble is a sad statement on the Western Conference these days. But they are, so there's an opportunity here. The problem is that the Ducks don't look like a decent team. They now have the worst goal differential in the league. Good thing Bob Murray already ruled out a coaching change. Wouldn't want to panic and accidentally do something that saves the season.

So now what? Saturday was the first of five on the road, and normally a road trip might be a welcome respite for a team on the ropes. Unfortunately, this one includes stops in Toronto and Montreal, towns that I'm told have a handful of hockey writers who might be looking for a story. So that could be fun.

The one bit of good news is that Corey Perry is back, returning to the lineup on Saturday for the first time all season. He went pointless, but he did play more than 16 minutes and had four shots. So that's something.

The other good news is that the Ducks still play in the West, where losing 15 of 17 doesn't cost you all that much ground. They're three points out, which isn't insurmountable, and unlike most of the teams around them, they have a goaltender who could get red hot for a month and steal the spot for them.

But right now, they're not a good team. And with three weeks till the deadline, it's going to be fascinating to see if Murray is willing to admit that, and what he might be able to do about it.

The Athletic LOADED: 02.05.2019

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The Athletic / The Athletic's 2019 NHL trade deadline tracker

By Sarah Goldstein Feb 4, 2019

The countdown has begun to the NHL trade deadline on Feb. 25. The Athletic team will keep you informed of all the trades and rumblings they hear about, so keep checking back to see which players are on the move.

Not a subscriber to The Athletic? Take advantage of our 40 percent off trade deadline deal and get access to writers in every market plus our national team.

Feb. 4

With reports that the Panthers are in talks to acquire Sergei Bobrovsky in return for a package that would include newly-acquired Derick Brassard, a source within the organization said the Panthers are not currently talking with Columbus GM Jarmo Kekalainen about Bobrovsky and that the report was "just speculation." Brassard asserted that he wants to stay in Florida.

— George Richards

The Coyotes received inquiries on forwards Richard Panik (UFA after this season) and Nick Cousins (RFA after this season), per league sources. President of hockey operations John Chayka would not comment on specific players that have drawn interest from other

clubs, but he is hesitant to make any changes right now. "The majority of it comes down to the health of our group," Chayka said. "If we get healthy and we have a logjam of bodies, we'll be open to making moves. Right now, we need everybody we have."

— Craig Morgan

Brent Seabrook says he hasn't been asked by the Blackhawks if he would drop his no-movement clause. He's unsure where that information came from. He also said he hasn't thought about whether or not he would waive it if asked.

— Scott Powers

The Micheal Ferland market has slowed down a bit, as contending teams want to see how other potential names – Artemi Panarin, Matt Duchene and Mark Stone – could play out.

Brian Boyle has an eight-team no-trade list, so there's that to navigate for Devils GM Ray Shero, but my sense is Boyle will likely find a new home for a few months.

Now that Jake Muzzin has been moved, my sense is that the Kings will likely hold onto Alec Martinez.

— Pierre LeBrun

The Rangers are looking for a Rick Nash-type of return — a first-rounder and a young player/prospect — for Kevin Hayes. In addition to Winnipeg's interest, there is speculation that Colorado and Boston are interested. But Avs GM Joe Sakic isn't giving up Ottawa's first-round pick or prospect Cale Makar for Hayes. And the Bruins aren't trading defenseman Charlie McAvoy. I am led to believe that the Rangers are going to speed up their rebuild between now and July.

— Rick Carpiello

While refusing to call the Kings' current strategy a "rebuild," GM Rob Blake did reveal that the team would like to add some high-end forwards to the system.

— Lisa Dillman

General manager Brian MacLellan said Capitals are "active" in trade discussions. He believes there are hockey trades to be made.

— Chris Kuc

Feb. 2

Only a handful of scouts were at the Garden to see Kevin Hayes and his teammates on Saturday, because, well, most of the scouting of the Rangers has been completed. Word was that Winnipeg is ramping up its interest in Hayes, as Hayes' camp and the Rangers are not in any serious discussions, if at all, on a contract extension.

— Rick Carpiello

Contract talks are progressing between the camp for pending UFA winger Jakob Silfverberg and the Ducks. Anaheim really wants to keep him but needs resolution before Feb 25.

— Pierre LeBrun

The Stars will sign free-agent forward prospect Tye Felhaber, said two sources familiar with the situation.

— Sean Shapiro

Feb. 1

TRADE: Panthers acquire forward Derick Brassard, forward Riley Sheahan, 2019 second-round pick and two 2019 fourth-round picks. Penguins acquire forwards Nick Bjugstad and Jared McCann.

Florida hopes to take a run at Artemi Panarin and Sergei Bobrovsky, so after today's trade they have more flexibility to do it. And while they could wait until July 1 to go after them, they could also inquire before Feb 25 if something makes sense. I suspect waiting until July



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1 makes more sense given that the Panthers wouldn't have to give up assets to sign them but we'll see.

— Pierre LeBrun

Blackhawks GM Stan Bowman will ask Duncan Keith if he's open to being traded to a contender, according to LeBrun, and Keith didn't just flat-out say no, that he absolutely would never waive his no-movement clause when asked about it.

— Mark Lazerus

Penguins GM Jim Rutherford insists he isn't likely to deal the Penguins' first-round pick, which has become a winter tradition in Pittsburgh, saying he really likes the upcoming draft class.

— Josh Yohe

A source confirmed Devils pending unrestricted free agent Brian Boyle has a modified no-trade clause — he can provide a list of up to eight teams to which he would not accept a trade. A source close to goaltender Keith Kinkaid, also a pending UFA, said there had been no communication with the Devils about his future, which could include a new contract or a trade

— Corey Masisak

Jan. 31

Artemi Panarin's agent Daniel Milstein has not been asked to provide a list of teams with which Panarin would be open to signing long term, Milstein said.

— Aaron Portzline

The Blackhawks appear to be willing to trade John Hayden and are receiving interest in him, a league source said.

— Scott Powers

Jan. 30

The sense is that the Hurricanes don't want to wait until too close to Feb. 25 to move Micheal Ferland. In fact, it wouldn't be a surprise if he got dealt within the next two weeks, according to sources.

While much of the media focus this season has been on Brett Pesce and Dougie Hamilton, the fact is more and more teams recently have also been asking about Justin Faulk.

My sense is that progress continues on the Auston Matthews contract front and, if all goes well, there could be a deal done within the next month. The question is whether it will be a five-year deal or six-year deal as I think it's less and less likely going to be the max eight-year deal.

The focus in both camps is to explore a way to get Matt Duchene re-signed in Ottawa, but Duchene's camp is examining the merits of a sign-and-trade (eight years) or a trade-and-sign (seven years).

— Pierre LeBrun

Eric Staal hopes to remain in Minnesota, and he is well aware the way the Wild play this next month will very likely determine that. "The next several games will probably decide everything," Staal said.

— Michael Russo

Jan. 28

Artemi Panarin still doesn't want to negotiate a contract extension with the Blue Jackets. Panarin's agent, Daniel Milstein, informed Columbus GM Jarmo Kekalainen of his client's decision Monday. "We have informed the team that we are willing to discuss Artemi's future after the season," Milstein said in a statement posted on Twitter.

— Aaron Portzline

Hurricanes GM Don Waddell wants at least a first-round pick in a Micheal Ferland deal and preferably a first plus a prospect. I would think Wayne Simmonds would fetch a slightly better package based on his more polished pedigree.

David Poile wants to see his roster as healthy as possible first, but if he decides he needs a piece? "There's nothing off the table for me," said the Preds GM.

— Pierre LeBrun

TRADE: Maple Leafs acquire defenseman Jake Muzzin. Kings acquire forward Carl Grundstrom, defenseman Sean Durzi and a 2019 first-round pick.

TRADE: Stars acquire defenseman Jamie Oleksiak. Penguins acquire a 2019 fourth-round pick.

Jan. 24

I do get the impression from talking to other teams around the league that Mikael Granlund can be had, whether that's in the next month or around June NHL's draft.

— Michael Russo

Jan. 22

Arizona, Vancouver, Colorado and Dallas are among the teams that have called the Capitals about Andre Burakovsky, and the reigning Cup champs are certainly listening to offers. The tricky part is that the Caps would no doubt want to replace him with a veteran, top-nine piece.

— Pierre LeBrun

Jan. 17

TRADE: Ducks acquire defenseman Michael Del Zotto. Canucks acquire defenseman Luke Schenn and a 2020 seventh-round pick.

TRADE: Hurricanes acquire forward Nino Niederreiter. Wild acquire forward Victor Rask.

Jan. 16

TRADE: Wild acquire forward Pontus Aberg. Ducks acquire forward Justin Kloos.

Jan. 15

In talking to a few people around the league over the past week, my understanding is that Sergei Bobrovsky informed the Blue Jackets months ago he'd waive his no-move for a trade he'd approve and, I believe, provided a list of teams.

The Ducks have made it clear they want to re-sign two-way winger Jakob Silfverberg, who can become a UFA on July 1, but they won't let him walk into free agency and get nothing in return.

The Maple Leafs are willing to trade their first-round pick in a deal that would bring them a top-four defenseman before the trade deadline.

— Pierre LeBrun

Jan. 14

TRADE: Ducks acquire forward Devin Shore. Stars acquire forward Andrew Cogliano.

The Sharks are on the market for a rental player, with a depth winger or fourth-line center being the most likely addition.

— Kevin Kurz

Jan. 11



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TRADE: Lightning acquire defenseman Jan Rutta and 2019 seventh-round pick. Blackhawks acquire defenseman Slater Koekoek and 2019 fifth-round pick.

Jan. 9

Both the Sabres and the camp for Jeff Skinner are eager to begin negotiations on an extension for the forward.

Artemi Panarin's camp plans to meet over the All-Star break to discuss the star pending UFA's future.

The Senators are trying to firm up plans to begin talks with the camps for Mark Stone and Matt Duchene. Teams are drooling at the prospect of Stone hitting the market, and I'd keep an eye on Vegas. Assistant GM Kelly McCrimmon has a close relationship with Stone dating back to their WHL days together.

Wayne Simmonds' agent may soon put some heat on the Flyers to make a decision about their plans for Simmonds.

Erik Karlsson's agent has traded messages with Sharks GM Doug Wilson and there could be a plan afoot for them to talk during the All-Star break.

Leafs GM Kyle Dubas suggested it would be nice to know where contract talks with the camps for Auston Matthews and Mitch Marner, but Marner's agent reiterated that they do not want to have discussions until after the season.

— Pierre LeBrun

Jan. 7

Multiple sources confirmed that the Hurricanes are open to trading Dougie Hamilton, not necessarily because they've soured on him but because they're trying to get the best possible offer for a defenseman not named Jaccob Slavin. Also, Carolina is already getting calls on Micheal Ferland.

A source suggested the Maple Leafs might prefer to use Timothy Liljegren instead of Kasperii Kapanen to make a significant move at the trade deadline, in part because of the emergence of Rasmus Sandin.

The Capitals, according to multiple sources, are looking for a similar aged young player in return for Andre Burakovsky at this point.

— Craig Custance

The Athletic LOADED: 02.05.2019

1129087 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Maple Leafs' Jake Muzzin quickly winning over teammates and fans

Chris Johnston | February 4, 2019, 9:52 PM

TORONTO — Jake Muzzin has seen some things. Start with the rise and fall of California's era of Big Boy Hockey, one that got his name inscribed on the Stanley Cup with the Los Angeles Kings and included many spirited battles with the Anaheim Ducks.

Times have changed. The former Southern Californian powerhouses are sinking.

"I think the game of hockey is transitioning to a skilled, fast game like we have here [in Toronto] and over there it's tough," Muzzin said after the Maple Leafs' 6-1 dismantling of the Ducks. "The big guys,

sometimes they just can't handle the speed and skill that some of these Eastern teams have."

Fortunately, Muzzin is able to play it any way you like it.

He's looked remarkably at home in Toronto so far, bringing a couple fresh elements to his new team and quickly winning over the fans at Scotiabank Arena. In the span of about 30 seconds on Monday, he hammered Corey Perry to the ice, drew a retaliatory cross-checking penalty from Nick Ritchie and scored on the power play with a bomb of a one-timer.

"We were joking about him being on Legend's Row after the game because of the way he was playing," said Morgan Rielly.

Even in a town where you were hard-pressed to find someone who didn't like last week's Muzzin trade, this has been a noteworthy entrance. Muzzin brought the crowd to its feet when he laid a thundering hit on Jake Guentzel in Saturday's 3-2 victory over Pittsburgh and added two assists to go with the goal, hit and penalty drawn against the Ducks.

Most importantly, he's looked like the stabilizing presence the Leafs thought they were getting in the Jan. 28 trade with Los Angeles. He makes simple passes that produce clean exits from the defensive zone and has seen Toronto control 62 per cent of even-strength shot attempts while he's on the ice across three games.

"You don't win two Stanley Cups by accident. You know how to play," said Leafs coach Mike Babcock. "He's really good in his own zone, denies the back[-door pass], makes a good outlet pass, he's a big body and plays real hard between the whistles. Obviously, with his experience and the kind of man he is, he's going to make us a better team."

There's also something about his style that fans and teammates are gravitating towards in a big way. Whether it's his bushy beard, or the big hits, or the cannon of a shot ... Muzzin is quickly gaining appreciation for a game that one opponent recently called "low-key amazing."

On Monday, Rielly poked his head out of a back room and yelled "Legend's Row!" when Muzzin met reporters following a first-star turn. Teammates aren't hiding their excitement about his ability to produce a standing ovation in a notoriously conservative building, either.

"The fans get pumped up and we get pumped up, too," said Andreas Johnsson, who had four points against Anaheim. "It creates a lot of energy."

"I couldn't imagine a welcoming like this," said Muzzin, a low-key guy from Woodstock, Ont., population 40,000. "Coming here, I didn't know what to expect, really, with media and hockey really in general. So I'm very pleased with how it's going. Hopefully it continues."

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Muzzin is still living in a hotel and getting used to being recognized while walking around the city. It's been an incredibly hectic time because of the trade and his desire to find a place so that his pregnant wife Courtney and their three dogs can soon join him in Toronto.

A couple weeks before his 30th birthday, this is the dawning of the second act in his NHL career.

He'll hit the 500-game milestone when Ottawa visits on Wednesday, and is clearly enthused about the opportunity the Leafs are giving him to chase glory again.

"Good team. Good coaching. Good plan, and it's easy to follow," he said, when asked why things have started so well in Toronto.



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"They're very clear in how we're supposed to play and that's how we're playing. And especially with Mo, having a good partner helps it out as well."

Muzzin looks like he may be able to give the team's sagging power play a boost because of a shot none of his teammates can match. At minimum, opponents will have to respect it as a threat, which should create some more space below the circles.

On a night where the Leafs manhandled the Ducks, it was a weapon on its own — producing a juicy rebound that Johnsson lifted over John Gibson while also finding a clear lane through penalty killers and hitting twine behind the Anaheim goaltender late in the second period.

Muzzin broke out a unique celebration for his first goal in Maple Leafs colours, going through the fly-by line at the bench with an elbow bump for teammates rather than a fist.

"That started a long time ago," he said. "Just an injury to a hand, really, and I went with an elbow and stuck with it. Not much to it."

That would seem to sum up the man perfectly.

What you see is what you get.

"I think he's a great player, he likes to be physical," said Rielly. "The more comfortable he gets and the more we can help him just be himself, I think the better he'll be."

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Sportsnet.ca / Alex Edler injury could hinder playoff push for Canucks

Iain MacIntyre | February 4, 2019, 9:50 PM

PHILADELPHIA – Hockey is the sport where players miss teeth but not shifts.

Players are sliced open by sticks and they block rubber missiles with their bones, but keep playing unless something more than their skin is broken. Rightly or wrongly, hockey embodies the ideal of playing hurt.

And yet, despite this culture and familiarity with injuries, there are incidents so raw and sickening that they frighten players like they frighten the rest of us. One of these injuries occurred halfway through the third period of the Vancouver Canucks' 2-1 loss Monday to the Philadelphia Flyers when their veteran leader and best defenceman, Alex Edler, lost his balance and gruesomely fell face-first into the ice.

As Edler lay unconscious and bleeding beside the Canucks net, players from both teams immediately waved for medical help, imploring the trainers and doctors to get there quickly.

On a day that began with Canucks winger Sven Baertschi sent home for tests five weeks after returning from a career-threatening concussion, then worsened when Vancouver goalie Thatcher Demko suffered a leg injury in the pre-game warmup, losing to the Flyers amid the NHL playoff race was easily the best thing that happened to the Canucks on Monday.

They fired 42 shots on Flyer phenom Carter Hart, the rookie goalie who may soon prove to be Canucks centre Elias Pettersson's biggest challenger for the Calder Trophy.

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Canucks coach Travis Green said he could argue his team played even better in losing to the Flyers, who have won eight straight games, than it did Saturday while dismantling the Colorado Avalanche 5-1 in Denver.

But nobody could argue that this effort was fair compensation for losing Edler to facial injuries. And nobody could say how the Canucks will respond, physically and emotionally, to such a horrible injury and significant loss when Vancouver visits the Washington Capitals on Tuesday night.

Spare defenceman Alex Biega will be in the lineup, and emergency junior call-up Mike DiPietro on the bench to back up starting goalie Jacob Markstrom. But can the Canucks possibly be the same?

"That was awful," Chris Tanev, Edler's defence partner and longest-serving teammate, said amid the funereal pall of the Canucks' dressing room. "I didn't really know what happened. I just saw the ref blow the whistle and went over and saw Eddie was not in very good shape. Everyone started yelling for the paramedics. He wasn't in very good shape."

"As soon as he hit the ice, there was no movement," centre Bo Horvat said. "I think that's the scariest part. When you're knocked unconscious, you just don't know what's wrong. And then you see that much blood. We're just praying for him and hopefully it's not too serious and he recovers fast."

Defending a Philadelphia rush, Edler hooked his stick on Jakub Voracek and was torqued off-balance as the Flyers forward skated to the net. The only defence Edler had as he plunged to the ice was his visor, and that may have done as much harm as good, causing gashes to his forehead and cheek.

He lay face-down on the ice for several seconds, spilling blood and barely moving. He was eventually stretched off and was able to sit up and hold a towel over his bloodied face. The 32-year-old later walked out of the Canucks' dressing room area and went to hospital for X-rays and a CT scan on his face and head.

"It shakes you a bit," veteran centre Brandon Sutter said. "I guess it's part of the game, but that's not fun. I'm sure his head is bugging him but hopefully it's just minor — a minor concussion or something like that. He wasn't moving very much; it's scary. The cuts didn't look great either."

"Our thoughts are with Eagle, not just to see somebody go down but go down in that way," winger Tyler Motte said. "He means a lot to this group. I think we're still trying to gather what happened and what kind of shape he's in, but I'm sure he'll be out for a bit. We're going to miss him."

The questions are: How much and for how long?

"It goes through your head a little bit," coach Travis Green said. "Guys are used to (injuries); it sounds a little bit barbaric. But you are used to it. To see him go off the ice and sitting up, I think was good for both teams. Eddie doesn't go down too often, so you knew he was hurt."

The Canucks have battled their way back into the playoff race by going 13-7-3 the last two months. They survived earlier injuries to forward stars Pettersson and Brock Boeser. But there were only two games when both were out, and there was still Horvat available to drive the attack.

There is no replacement for Edler, who leads the Canucks with an average nightly ice time of 23:30. He is first out on the power play and the penalty kill and the rest of time plays against the opposition's top line.



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It was impressive the way the Canucks pushed for a tying goal in the final 10:22 after Edler was hurt. Hart made a game-saving, diving save on Nikolay Goldobin on a late Vancouver power play.

Voracek decided the game on a beautiful breakaway, reaching like Mario Lemieux – or a 747 aircraft – to tuck the puck around Markstrom and make it 2-0 at 3:20 of the second period, a few seconds after Tanev fanned on the puck and fell at the Philadelphia blue line.

Boeser scored for the Canucks less than two minutes later, shooting into a semi-open net after Hart outraced Brandon Sutter to a loose puck only to play it to Boeser, but Vancouver couldn't generate a tying goal over the final 35 minutes.

"It was a helluva game," Green said.

And still an awful night for the Canucks.

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Sportsnet.ca / Paul Byron injury could leave crucial hole in Canadiens' lineup

Eric Engels February 4, 2019, 3:22 PM

BROSSARD, Que.—It hasn't been determined how long Paul Byron will be out of action, but whether it's a matter of days or weeks, the impact of Byron's absence could be considerable on the Montreal Canadiens.

It was in the second period of Sunday's 4-3 overtime win for the Canadiens over the visiting Edmonton Oilers that Byron came out of a collision with defenceman Matt Benning clutching his left arm. He dropped his stick and gloves, skated straight to Montreal's bench, and punched the glass behind coach Claude Julien three times before storming down the tunnel towards the dressing room.

Byron did not return to the game and was later seen wearing a brace/soft cast on his left forearm.

When Julien was asked for an update on Byron's condition after Monday's optional skate, he said the injury was in the "forearm area" and that Byron would undergo further testing before day's end.

The five-foot-nine winger, who appeared in 159 of the Canadiens' 160 games over the last two seasons, has been anything but fortunate in the injury-department since last April. That's when he had right-shoulder surgery that was supposed to keep him out six months.

Byron aggressively rehabbed post-surgery and managed to start training camp with the Canadiens on time. He then scored four goals and seven points in 11 October contests before suffering a lower-body injury that kept him out for all of November.

Byron scored five goals and eight points through December, and just as he was finding his rhythm, he got himself in hot water with the NHL's Department of Player Safety.

On Jan. 15—in a 5-1 win for the Canadiens over the Florida Panthers—Byron charged defenceman MacKenzie Weegar and hit his head directly into the glass, causing a concussion for Weegar. Byron was suspended three games for the offence.

The Canadiens managed to win two of those games Byron missed, but they've gone 7-8-2 without him this season.

If you want a sense for why Montreal has gone 22-10-4 with Byron at their disposal, Julien summed it up quite well on Monday.

"He's one of those guys that's got speed," the coach said. "He puts other teams' Ds on their heels all the time, a little bit like (Connor) McDavid does to everybody else. Paul's got that unbelievable speed, but he's also got that grit. He plays like a six-foot-three player; he goes into traffic, he pushes, he pushes back, he grinds it. Those are players that inspire the rest of your team; 'If he can do it, we need to be able to do the same thing to.' So he's a good leader that way.

"He comes every day, practice, games, he puts that game-face on. He doesn't come here to goof around; he comes here to work. He comes here to do his job, and I think he sets a real good example for a lot of players—especially younger players."

It's why Byron was named an associate captain to Shea Weber before the season got underway. The former sixth-round pick of the Buffalo Sabres, who came to the Canadiens in 2015 via waivers from Calgary, has 10 goals and 19 points in 36 games, and he plays the game with near-unparalleled intensity.

And while diminutive forwards Brendan Gallagher, Max Domi and Tomas Tatar bring similar qualities—and perhaps a bit more offence to the table—they don't quite offer the same versatility Byron does.

He's a Swiss Army knife; a multi-purpose player who plays well in all three zones, a player who can fill in on any line, and a player who plays a crucial role on a penalty kill that's ranked eighth in 2019.

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Byron's somewhat irreplaceable, but one player who could help fill some of the void in his absence is Andrew Shaw.

Shaw hasn't played since New Year's Eve, when he suffered a neck injury in a 3-2 win for the Canadiens over the Dallas Stars. Given his long history with concussions, the Canadiens decided to treat the injury as one—ruling with extreme caution regarding his eventual return to play.

Shaw said last Friday, after taking part in his first practice with contact since the injury, that it was roughly 10 days ago that he began to feel 100 per cent like himself again. He had been suffering with headaches, but hasn't had one since returning to the ice to skate with his teammates last Thursday.

"If it were up to me, I'd have been playing a lot sooner," Shaw said on Monday. "But that's what we have doctors for—to save us from ourselves."

There's a chance Shaw, who's already bested his totals from last year—he has 11 goals and 13 assists in 36 games after scoring 10 and 10 in 51 games a season ago—could be cleared to play Tuesday, when the Anaheim Ducks visit the Bell Centre.

But as he noted on Friday, it's going to take him some time to get back up to speed.

"You miss a month, it's hard to come back in the middle of the season," said Shaw. "Everyone's at full throttle."

The Canadiens must hope Byron won't be placed in a similar situation after his test results come in.

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# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Sportsnet.ca / Maple Leafs' Kadri finds new respect for 'hardass' Carlyle

Luke Fox | February 4, 2019, 3:17 PM

TORONTO – In what may well be his final spin through Toronto as an NHL head coach, Randy Carlyle had all the time you needed.

The man who was fired out of this town four seasons ago (with a winning record, we remind you), when the Maple Leafs' decision-makers decided to scorch earth and rebuild from the roots, smiled easily, poked fun at a reporter's shoe shine job, and wondered why he wasn't getting royalties from AT&T's "Just OK" ad campaign — a callback to his infamous evaluation of former goalie James Riemer.

As far as morning-skate scrums go? Good one, Randy.

Time, they'll tell you, heals all wounds. It also sheds necessary perspective.

So even as the hockey lifer pilots an unruly Anaheim Ducks—branded 18-wheeler that appears cliff-bound and patrols the bench of a franchise that, like the Leafs, will be forced to get younger and faster to regain relevance, Carlyle happily, smartly held court for more than 12 minutes all that's swerved sideways in Anaheim and the three familiar faces he'll face Monday at Scotiabank Arena: Morgan Rielly, Jake Gardiner and Nazem Kadri.

Of those last remnants of Toronto's Carlyle Era — which spanned parts of four seasons and peaked with a seven-game Bruins playoff series from which swaths of Leafs Nation are still suffering PTSD — Kadri may have most benefitted from the coach's tough love.

"Yeah, he can be a bit of a hardass sometimes. I don't think it's a bad quality to have in a coach. I think there's always a fine line, or you're going to lose some players if you're consistently not positive. He found a fine line," said Kadri, caught in a reflective mood.

"He pushed me. Maybe some guys felt a little different. For me, as a head coach, I felt he maybe could've tweaked some things, but for me he did some really good things."

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Carlyle always appreciated Kadri's competitive nature, but the ups and downs with the first-round centre were more pronounced. But it was under Carlyle that Kadri grew into a 20-goal man and was forced to learn the defensive necessities of his position.

As young, skilled, affordable D-men, Gardiner and Rielly were logical choices to survive the post-Carlyle roster purge.

Carlyle on Gardiner: "It was a myth that there was some sort of dislike for Jake Gardiner. There was never a dislike for Jake Gardiner. You appreciated the player that he was, and you can appreciate the player that he is now. He's a guy, I believe, that had to play 300-plus games before you really found out what he is. He's a player that can control tempo of the game. There's dynamics to him. He's got hockey sense, but he is prone every once in a while to make a mistake — as we all are."

Carlyle on Rielly: "Morgan Rielly is a very slick-skating, strong-skating defenseman. He's a prototype of today's NHL defenceman, what everyone's looking for. They're looking for mobility. They're looking for the minute-muncher, the guy that can go back and carry the puck or move the puck effectively. The surprising part for me, specifically, is the offence he's able to deliver on a consistent basis. He was drafted where he was drafted because of that ability."

Kadri, however, was a different case.

Then a confident star on the rise with No. 1 centre ambitions, Kadri, you'll recall, was skating a fine line himself. His future, his niche, in Toronto was less certain.

"It's a more of a maturing aspect with Nazzy," Carlyle said. "The one thing we wanted was to teach Naz how to play defence, and he's found that's the way he's most useful — to play a complete game."

Today, Kadri — now equally capable of shutting down top-six centres as he is creating on the power play — is grateful for the lessons force-fed to him under Carlyle's watch. He reminds there were good times then, too.

"When things aren't going well, that's where the true judge of character comes into play. You find out who belongs and who doesn't belong. We enjoyed ourselves for the most, but through that tough stretch there, it's definitely hard to stay positive and have that focus," Kadri explained.

"He was a little hard on me to start, but I also think he was fair and gave me opportunity as a young guy. I had to earn my stripes, and I think he's a little old-school with that, not like how it is today. He pushed me in terms of putting me in pressure situations and seeing how I adapt, how I handle it. I think I did a pretty good job of earning that myself, but you still need a head coach to put you in those spots to give you the most success possible, and he did that for me.

"I became an established hockey player under his build."

As affable as he was before the camera lens Monday, Carlyle "isn't happy" these days, reports Ducks captain Ryan Getzlaf.

How could he be?

The Ducks were embarrassed 9-3 in Winnipeg Saturday, the bitter cherry on top of a horrid stretch of hockey in which they've mustered but two wins in their past 17 outings.

"There's not a lot of sympathy going on here because I've been at the bottom too," Rielly said.

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Anaheim's minus-39 goal differential is the worst in hockey. The Ducks rank 30th in goals scored (120, 59 fewer than the Leafs); operate the third-worst power play (14.4%); sit dead last in shots per game (27.1) while surrendering the third most (34.1); their underlying possession metrics are just as horrid; and their MVP, starter John Gibson, was booed out of the All-Star Game in San Jose despite temporarily playing for the "home" team.

"Everything that can go wrong usually does when things are bad," Getzlaf said. "This is a new experience for me, to be at this kind of a level for a month span.

"But Randy is doing his job trying to keep level-headed as well as motivating guys to do what they need to do."

The Ducks closed the doors for a team meeting Sunday, then stormed the ice for an intense, high-tempo practice. Healthy for the first time all season, they're trying to scramble their way from the cliff's edge.

"We're all part of it. We need [Carlyle]; he needs us as a team to play hard. That's a bit what we talked about yesterday: We need everyone in this room, and that's the staff included. It's everybody. We need to lean on each other and be accountable through and through," Adam Henrique said. "The bottom line is, we have to come out and compete and play harder, everywhere. That's it."

The injury bug has eaten its way through the core. Rickard Rakell, Ryan Kesler, Corey Perry, Ondrej Kase, Patrick Eaves, and Cam Fowler have all been touched. But the Ducks' problems also involve work ethic, a dearth of quality scoring chances, and a lack of speed.



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"We're still in a position to challenge," Carlyle said. "Crazy enough, with the season that we've had, that we're still three points out of a playoff spot."

If Anaheim can't make up that ground, rumours surrounding Carlyle's fate — noise that got loud enough that GM Bob Murray felt compelled to publicly announce on Jan. 14 the coach's job is safe, for now — will return with vengeance.

And Carlyle may end up, again, as the last man in change before a true rebuild.

"I don't know about proud," Carlyle considered of his T.O. tenure.

"I look at it as, it was a totally different time, a totally different group of players. The overhaul that's taken place here is something they felt was necessary, and they've done a good job of it."

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Sportsnet.ca / How farm life set up Marc Habscheid for incredible hockey journey

Mike Commito February 4, 2019, 1:30 PM

Marc Habscheid pulled into his family's farm just as he had done countless times before. This time, however, it was different. As his tires crunched over the crust of the winter snow, Habscheid was arriving as the newly appointed head coach for Canada's 2005 World Ice Hockey Championship team.

As Habscheid stepped out of his truck, he was overwhelmed by childhood memories. Standing there in the brisk Saskatchewan air, he looked toward the spot near the barn where his father, Nicholas, used to build the family rink every winter. An immigrant from the tiny country of Luxembourg, Nicholas discovered hockey when he and his wife arrived in Canada in the late 1950s.

After settling on a farm just ten miles south of Swift Current, Nicholas laboured as a farmhand in Maple Creek and occasionally took in some hockey in nearby Medicine Hat, Alta., with his boss. Those games were some of the first that Nicholas had been exposed to and he was immediately drawn in. He didn't know it at the time, but hockey would eventually become a big part of his family's life.

Using what he learned on that outdoor rink, Habscheid went on to play 345 NHL games in Edmonton, Minnesota, Detroit, and Calgary, and represent his country internationally three times as a player.

Then, following his playing days, Habscheid stepped behind the bench and soon established a name for himself there as well. In 2002, he was tapped to coach Team Canada at the World Juniors, becoming the first to represent Canada at the tournament as both a player and coach. His team finished second to Russia, but Habscheid quickly put the loss behind him by guiding the Kelowna Rockets to the Memorial Cup in 2004.

On the heels of his CHL success, Team Canada came calling again, but this time it was for the World Championship team — and this time Habscheid got the gold medal that had eluded him in his first foray into international coaching. He got the job again in 2005.

It was prior to that tournament when he was back at the family farmhouse, staring at the spot where he first learned the fundamentals of the game, that Habscheid really understood how special it all was.

"I thought from where I was as a five-year-old little boy just playing for fun to now being able to have the job that I did was almost unbelievable," Habscheid, now head coach of the Prince Albert Raiders, recently reflected.

While Habscheid's journey began on the farm, it traveled through Swift Current. He joined the town's minor hockey association at the age of six and continued to hone his skills until he began his junior career with the Saskatoon Blades. In his first full campaign with the Blades in 1980–81, Habscheid scored 97 points and was drafted by the Edmonton Oilers at the end of the season.

Habscheid then attended Oilers camp, where he learned to take his game to a new level.

"As a farm kid growing up, you really don't know where you stack up. As you grow up and find out you're a decent player, then you gain confidence," he said. "I think by me going to Edmonton, I gained confidence because I had a good training camp and then I brought that confidence back to junior."

He certainly did. Habscheid had a fantastic season with the Blades, tallying 64 goals and 151 points, and also earned the opportunity to represent Canada at the World Juniors in 1982. Canada ended up winning gold for the first time, a significant moment that was not lost on Habscheid or his teammates.

"We were celebrating after and waiting for the national anthem," he reminisced.

But when they were told that technical issues meant organizers couldn't play the anthem, Habscheid and his teammates wouldn't take no for an answer.

"We went arm in arm on the blue line and we sang it on our own," Habscheid recalled. "I think that's where the tradition started."

Although Habscheid doesn't remember much about his NHL debut for the Oilers, he still recalls how surreal that experience was when he first skated out onto the ice.

"You have one channel on the farm, and you watch Hockey Night in Canada," he said. "You just think there's no way you're ever going to be there."

But Habscheid made it, and he would remain in the NHL for parts of the next decade.

What sticks with him the most from those years isn't any one sequence or game in particular, but the company he shared in Edmonton — from Wayne Gretzky and Mark Messier to Paul Coffey and Grant Fuhr.

"You look around the room at that time and you knew they were good players... but where they stack up in history you never really understand until 40 years later. Now half that team is in the Hall of Fame," Habscheid said. "I was in the same dressing room as the greatest player of all time. How many guys get to do that?"

Marc Habscheid Minnesota North Stars

Hockey provided Habscheid with some special experiences, but none more so than one he was able to give his parents in 1988. That year, Habscheid represented Canada at the Winter Olympics in Calgary. While he was competing at the Games, word travelled that his parents were from Luxembourg. Nestled between Germany, France, and Belgium, the small country had just one representative at the Olympics that year — Marc Girardelli, an alpine skier. When the Grand Duke and Duchess of Luxembourg found out about Habscheid's heritage, they invited him and his parents to a social event, where they rubbed shoulders with royalty from across the globe — and, most importantly, with the Luxembourg throne.

"I think out of all the gifts that I could give my parents, that was probably the greatest. It was indescribable. Never would have



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happened otherwise," Habscheid explained. "I think that's what the game had helped me do for them and try to pay back to them."

Even before Habscheid decided to hang up his skates, he knew he wanted to get into coaching.

"I analyzed too much instead of just playing. I always thought and analyzed, and when you do that your feet stop moving," he said. "But I think that kind of helped me as a coach."

It was during his time in Edmonton that Habscheid became a collector of hockey knowledge.

"I started writing things down and keeping notes. All the handouts I kept. I ended up with about 1,200 pages. A lot of that stuff isn't relevant anymore, but a lot of it still is," Habscheid said.

All these years later, Habscheid still has those pages. And though some of the enclosed lessons may have hit their expiry date, his passion for coaching certainly hasn't. He's now in his 14th season as a Western Hockey League coach and his fourth behind the Prince Albert Raiders bench.

Today, when Habscheid thinks about what drives his love for coaching, he's reminded of his parents.

"My parents always helped other people, even though we didn't have a lot of money," he reflected. "As a coach, that's been ingrained in me. You want to help these kids in hockey, but more so in life. If you can help them have a better life, that's the most rewarding part."

The game he loves took Habscheid out of Swift Current at the age of 16, and provided him with opportunities and experiences that a farm kid from Saskatchewan can only dream of.

"But it will always be home," he stated. "It always feels good to drive into the farm and see the old farmhouse there."

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Sportsnet.ca / Weekend Takeaways: Canucks looking far more like buyers than sellers

Ryan Dixon | February 4, 2019, 10:58 AM

The Columbus Blue Jackets and Vancouver Canucks exist in precisely the same space in terms of the NHL standings, but couldn't be living more different realities.

Columbus has played the entire season plagued by the most troubling Russian subplot this side of election tampering. OK, we don't mean to make light of real-life events, but you can't blame fans in Central Ohio for wanting to barf ever since Sergei Bobrovsky and Artemi Panarin made it clear — without actually spelling it out — that they were bound for different burghs in the summer of 2019 as UFAs.

The initial — and correct, in my opinion — tack seemed to be a "bleep-it" approach from Columbus management. For a franchise with zero playoff series wins in its history and plausible aspirations for a Cup in 2019, it made more sense to keep a star forward and two-time Vezina winner in their midst and let the chips fall where they may on the open market.

Maybe the Jackets shouldn't deviate from that plan, but with the squad now squeezed down to the final wild card spot in the East and Bobrovsky letting in goals like this one during a 4–2 loss to the St.

Louis Blues on Saturday, speculation continues to build that the Blue Jackets and GM Jarmo Kekalainen are ready to reverse course.

Meanwhile, a Vancouver club nobody thought would even sniff the playoffs moved into the second wild-card position in the West thanks to a 5–1 victory over some direct competition, the Colorado Avalanche, on Saturday.

We all assumed Vancouver would be sellers this season, meaning defencemen Alex Edler and Chris Tanev — even with their no-trade protection — could be out the door. Instead, it seems like a no-brainer that the Canucks would want both in the fold as they push through an unlikely playoff run. Tanev has another year to go on his deal and while Edler's is up this summer, the 32-year-old Swede has made it clear that — unlike the pair in Columbus — he loves his surroundings and wants to stick around.

Lock it in, Vancouver. Good luck, Columbus.

Other Weekend Takeaways

- Nikita Kucherov, who picked up an assist in Tampa Bay's 3-2 win over the New York Rangers on Saturday (and a \$5,000 fine for a dangerous trip on Friday), became the first player to reach 80 points for the second straight year. The Bolts, by the way, also have a league-best 80 points. Of course, if past precedent holds, Connor McDavid will usurp Kucherov in the scoring race and a team other than Tampa will raise the Cup.

- If I asked you who had the second-best goals-per-game mark in the NHL, you'd likely be guessing for a while. Viktor Arvidsson bagged a brace in Nashville's Friday night win over Florida and is scoring at a 57-goal pace (0.7 goals-per-game) after missing a month and a half with a broken thumb.

Arvidsson may still have the second-best hands on the team, though, given what Filip Forsberg pulled against the Dallas Stars while killing a penalty on Saturday. 'Flip' Forsberg, it is.

- Habs rookie Jesperi Kotkaniemi — who happens to be the youngest player in the league — has three goals in his past six outings, and each one of them is a tribute to high-end talent. Here's his goal against Florida on Jan. 15:

Here he is Saturday vs. New Jersey:

And here is Sunday vs. Edmonton:

For most of the season, Kotkaniemi's modest point totals meant praise for his game focused on finer points and all-around abilities. Now, we're starting to see the third-overall pick from last June start to sizzle.

- Tip of the cap Pt. 1: Tuukka Rask became the winningest goalie in Boston Bruins history in style on Sunday, using a 1–0 shutout against the Washington Capitals to post his 253rd career victory and pass Tiny Thompson for top spot in Beantown. Assuming Carey Price gets eight more wins to pass Jacques Plante for the all-time Montreal lead this year, by the end of the season three Original Six goalies (Rask, Price and Henrik Lundqvist) will hold the team mark for victories.

- Tip of the cap Pt. 2: Ken Holland watched his team post weekend wins over Toronto and Ottawa, giving the long-time GM 914 victories with the Detroit Red Wings, one more than the previous franchise leader, Jack Adams. Give Holland hell, if you must, for where the Wings are right now, but don't forget he was under the misguided gun to keep pushing for playoff spots when Pavel Datsyuk and Henrik Zetterberg were in the twilight of their careers. Much of the hockey world expects Steve Yzerman to return home and take the wheel of Detroit's rebuild this summer, but I'd wager Holland and his staff would do a fine job now that they're able to focus on building from the ground up instead of being asked to slap together a squad meant to squeak into the playoffs.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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• With two tallies on the weekend, Connor McDavid is on pace for his first 50-goal season. Still, nobody on the Super Bowl-losing Los Angeles Rams has any idea who he is.

Ryan Dixon and Rory Boylen go deep on pucks with a mix of facts and fun, leaning on a varied group of hockey voices to give their take on the country's most beloved game.

### Red and White Power Rankings

1. Calgary Flames (34-14-5): How about Elias Lindholm trolling the Hurricanes after both he and Noah Hanifin scored in a 4–3 win against their old team in Carolina on Sunday?

Elias Lindholm is pretty excited about this victory  
[pic.twitter.com/TGYgxKVTlm](https://pic.twitter.com/TGYgxKVTlm)

— Sportsnet 960 (@Sportsnet960) February 3, 2019

2. Winnipeg Jets (34-16-2): The six goals Winnipeg scored in the opening frame on Saturday during a 9-3 thrashing of Anaheim is a Jets/Atlanta Thrashers franchise record for most goals in a period.

3. Toronto Maple Leafs (31-17-3): Auston Matthews heating up (three goals in his past three games) means the hand-wringing over Toronto's middling recent results (5-7-1 in their past 13) is likely coming to an end.

4. Montreal Canadiens (29-18-6): Two months ago, fans worried Carey Price's contract might be a decade-long albatross for the team: It says here he'll wind up a finalist for the Vezina this season.

5. Vancouver Canucks (24-22-6): It just occurred to me that hot-shot Canucks defence prospect Quinn Hughes — expected to make his NHL debut whenever his NCAA season ends this spring — will almost certainly slug it out with brother Jack Hughes (a slam dunk to go first overall in June) for rookie-of-the-year honours next season. The Sedins weren't even close to the top of Calder voting during their freshman seasons, so can anybody think of brothers who went head to head for rookie honours?

6. Edmonton Oilers (23-24-5): On consecutive afternoons this weekend, Edmonton blew third-period leads and wound up with overtime losses on the road. The bad news has to change immediately if the Oilers are going to scrape into the post-season.

7. Ottawa Senators (19-28-5): The Sens are officially down to three weeks in terms of figuring out what happens with pending-UFAs Mark Stone and Matt Duchene before the Feb. 25 trade deadline.

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### In Your Ear

Arizona didn't get the win on Saturday, but the team did pick up a point versus the Sharks and continues to hang around the Western Conference playoff picture. On the most recent episode of Tape to Tape, my co-host Rory Boylen and I discussed just how improbable the Coyotes' relative success is given the degree to which they've been decimated by injuries.

Also, consider the fact Arizona traded away Max Domi last summer and the centre, playing for the Habs, is five points away from exceeding his previous personal best of 52 points in a season with 30 games to go in the year. The player Domi was exchanged for, Alex Galchenyuk, missed some time with injury and is scoring at roughly a 15-goal pace.

Oh yeah, the Coyotes also dealt away 21-year-old centre Dylan Strome this season, a player picked third overall in 2015 who has 17 points in his past 15 contests with Chicago. The guy Arizona got back, Nick Schmaltz, was killing it in the desert until he sustained a season-ending knee injury.

How is this team doing it?

### Looking Ahead

• Twenty-year-old rookie Carter Hart goes for his seventh straight win in the Philly crease tonight as the Flyers host the Canucks. If Elias Pettersson didn't exist, Hart would be inserting himself directly into the middle of Calder talk.

• The Sabres and Hurricanes are both three points back of the final Eastern Conference playoff spot and will play a huge tilt Thursday in Buffalo. The Sabres dropped the first contest of a positively critical seven-game homestand on Friday versus Chicago.

• Hockey Day in Canada on Saturday brings, among other heart-warming things, the second matchup of the year between the Canadiens and Leafs, who — somewhat astonishingly — would be facing each other in the playoffs for the first time in 40 years if the big derby started today.

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### 1129093 Websites

TSN.CA / Hard-hitting Muzzin sparks Leafs in rout of hapless Ducks

Kristen Shilton

TORONTO – It's fitting, perhaps, that exactly one week after Jake Muzzin was traded to Toronto from Los Angeles, the defenceman had his blue-and-white coming out party in Monday's 6-1 win over the Kings' biggest rival, the Anaheim Ducks.

And there was no love lost between Muzzin and the Ducks, especially not when he plastered Corey Perry into the boards late in the second period, drew a retaliatory cross-checking penalty on Nick Ritchie, and then scored his first goal as a Leaf seconds later on the power play.

It was one of three points Muzzin would register in the game, tying his career-high and continuing the 29-year-old's seamless transition onto the Leafs' backend.

"[This is a] good team. Good coaching. Good plan, and it's easy to follow," Muzzin said of what's helped him get acclimated so far. "They're very clear in how we're supposed to play, and that's how we're playing. And especially with [Morgan Rielly], having a good partner, it helps out as well."

Muzzin said the hit on Perry was nothing out of the ordinary ("I was just trying to close and force the play before the blueline") but not since before Dion Phaneuf was traded to the Ottawa Senators in 2016 have the Leafs had a hard-hitting defenceman like Muzzin in their top-four.

That could serve to explain Muzzin's polite bemusement over the stir each of his hits seems to draw. But his new teammates can understand why, when Muzzin throws his 6-foot-3 frame around on the ice, it gets everyone's attention.

"It's huge, you have a couple of big hits in the beginning and that's going to create space for the skill guys," said Andreas Johnsson, who tallied two goals and two assists for Toronto in the victory. "I think that was a part we didn't really have before, and he's been doing a great job coming here so far."

"He's been amazing, playing the body, too, and scoring goals; it's lots of fun having him here," added William Nylander, who added a goal and an assist on Monday. "[The hits] gets us going and brings energy into the group."



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Johnsson benefited directly from other new elements Muzzin has brought to the Leafs, too, namely his booming slapshot. John Tavares had already made it 1-0 early in the second period, when Muzzin sent a hard point blast right on Ducks goalie John Gibson, creating a wild rebound Johnsson corralled and put top-shelf off his backhand.

It didn't count as a power play goal – coming just after the holding penalty on Hampus Lindholm expired – but it came with Toronto's second power play unit still on the ice, and gave a glimpse of what they might be capable of the rest of this season with Muzzin on board.

"I thought his shot was important on that," said Leafs coach Mike Babcock. "The way teams have played against us on the power play; they're basically playing down low and not respecting the top, so we have to do a better job of that. [Jake's] a big body, he knows how to play."

Muzzin's own goal six minutes later did come on the power play, putting the Leafs up 3-0. It was just the seventh man-advantage goal Toronto has scored since Dec. 10, putting them at a bleak 7-for-55 in that stretch but presenting hope they could see improvement there.

After Rickard Rakell scored Anaheim's lone goal in the third, Muzzin added another assist on Connor Brown's goal, before Nylander and Johnsson rounded out the scoring.

After so many past battles with the Ducks in his career, regular season and playoffs, Muzzin made sure to check on Perry after their collision and ensure he was all right. That one play and the reaction it encouraged only served to highlight how much Muzzin can't fade into the background anymore, like he could in L.A.

He's front and centre now, and the Leafs couldn't be more pleased so far.

"You don't win a Stanley Cup by accident; you know how to play," Babcock reiterated, referencing Muzzin's 2014 Cup win with L.A. "Really good in his own end, denies the outlet pass, is a big body and plays real hard between the whistles. Obviously with his experience and the kind of man he is, he's going to make us a better team."

"I couldn't imagine a welcoming like this," added Muzzin. "Coming here, I didn't know what to expect with media and hockey and in general. Very pleased with how it's going. Hopefully it continues."

### TAKEAWAYS

#### Johnny in the spot

It wasn't just that Johnsson scored for the first time since Jan. 12 on Monday. Or that he was involved in four of Toronto's six scoring plays, to produce the first four-point game of his career. It was the combination of everything Johnsson did well – from his second efforts to his heads-up playmaking that made Monday one of his best performances of the season.

Coming off a concussion suffered before the bye week, Johnsson hadn't been as visible in Toronto's last two games, but against Anaheim looked like he was back to his old tricks chasing down pucks, intercepting passes and patrolling for open ice around the net to capitalize on.

His first goal was off a great read of Gibson, waiting the goalie out and popping the puck in off his backhand. Late in the third period, with the game well in hand, Johnsson couldn't resist tossing one more shot in, the bookend to a terrific night.

When he wasn't scoring, Johnsson was happy to divvy the puck up. He and linemate Frederik Gauthier set up Tavares' opening score, from their defensive zone breakout to battling through the neutral zone and teeing up the play for Tavares to finish.

And then on Muzzin's goal, it was just quick passing by Johnsson and Jake Gardiner that put the newly acquired blueliner in position to bury the puck four seconds into the man advantage.

If Johnsson can put together more games like Monday night's, he could easily work himself back into the Leafs' top-nine rotation. He finished with 67 per cent possession and four shots on goal.

#### Big-play Willy returns

Since uniting on a line with Brown and Nazem Kadri before the Leafs' bye week, there's been an extra step to Nylander's game, evidence that the winger's confidence is slowly returning after he lost the first two months of the season to contract negotiations.

On Monday, his unit was buzzing throughout the game's first 40 minutes, but in the third period they finally solved Gibson, with Nylander leading the way.

It started with his pass to Brown, a difficult play through Anaheim's defence that had to be perfectly placed to make for an easy tap-in for Brown. In quick succession after that, Nylander broke an 11-game goal-drought with his second score of the season, off a terrific individual play and subsequent shot high-blocker on Gibson.

The two-point effort was Nylander's second multi-point game in his last four outings, after coming up with only one multi-point game in his first 20 contests this season. He also boasted a team-high 72 per cent possession on the night, with three shots on goal in a plus-3 performance.

Nylander said after the game that he's not all the way back just yet, and Babcock concurred, but both are encouraged by the positive strides Nylander has shown in recent games.

#### Focused Freddie

Three years ago, the Ducks had to decide which goalie to keep as a starter – Frederik Andersen or Gibson. After watching them split the crease in 2015-16, Anaheim went with Gibson, and shipped Andersen to Toronto. Fast forward to Monday, and Andersen recorded his 94th win as a Leaf, passing Ed Belfour for sole possession of ninth place on the franchise's all-time wins list by a goalie.

Playing opposite the goaltender that Anaheim chose over him, Andersen was particularly strong, evidenced by every quick-snapping glove save, every sprawled out post-to-post stop, even in the hint of a grin behind his Lego Batman mask when holding an ex-teammate at bay.

One such ex, winger Jakob Silfverberg, came close to putting a game-tying goal past Andersen midway through the second frame, during a good shift for the Ducks outduelling Tavares' line with Mitch Marner and Zach Hyman with a heavy cycle. But Andersen made some impressive close-range saves, including on Silfverberg from the slot.

The Leafs did well holding the Ducks' chances to a minimum, allowing only 25 on Andersen compared to the 44 sent towards Gibson and then Chad Johnson. Other than Rickard's one-timer beating Andersen high, the goaltender held up his end of the bargain on a night dominated by the home team, finishing with a .960 save percentage.

#### Blue and White Trending

#### Tracking Leafs' trends all season long

Monday's win was only the second time Toronto has produced a winning streak of any length since Dec. 6, going 12-9-3 in that stretch.

#### Next up

The Leafs continue their three-game homestand on Wednesday against the Ottawa Senators.



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Open Mike

"If you go back over [Andreas Johnsson's] career here with the Leafs, he's started the same [slow] way every year, so we're going to have to change something there. But, obviously, he's a good player. He's got tenacity, makes people mad out there, which I like. He goes into the hard areas and he's not scared to go into the hard areas. That's why he has the puck a lot. He obviously had himself a good night."

— Coach Mike Babcock, on Andreas Johnsson turning a corner after his slow start to the season

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TSN.CA / Marleau's chemistry with Matthews 'a lot better' now

Mark Masters

TSN Toronto reporter Mark Masters checks in daily with news and notes on the Maple Leafs. The Leafs and Ducks (optional) held morning skates at Scotiabank Arena on Monday

Following Saturday's win, Auston Matthews was asked about his suddenly-surging linemate and good friend Patrick Marleau.

"He's flying," Matthews said with a big grin. "Turks and Caicos must have done him pretty well."

Marleau wasn't on the ice at all during the bye week while enjoying a fun family vacation away from the cold weather. It was a physical break, but also a mental reset, which the 39-year-old said is crucial this time of year.

"It's a huge part of it, because these last 30 games here, it's a sprint to the finish," he said. "Everybody's trying to solidify a playoff spot or get into the playoffs and everybody's ramping up so it's good to get that little bit of mental rest."

After posting 11 goals and 11 assists in the first 49 games this season, Marleau has a goal and two assists in two games since returning with a tan and an extra pep in his step.

"He's skating and who knows why it happens," observed head coach Mike Babcock. "There are ebbs and flows. If you look at Patty's career, he's been like that a bit too. He's had some moments where it wasn't going as good and when you're 25 and it doesn't go as good, everyone says, 'It's no big deal.' When you start getting higher they always say, 'Oh, the wheels are off, you're done.' The wheels ain't off. I mean, he just needed to get going again. I thought he was one of our best players the other night, if not the best."

Marleau's work along the boards has created space for Matthews. The pair started the season together, but it didn't click right away and they were eventually split up. This latest on-ice reunion appears to be working well.

"The chemistry is a lot better than at the start of the year, which is to be expected," Marleau noted. "It's just those split-seconds where you know what he's thinking and where he's going. I mean, different situations come up in the game all the time so you got to talk about them and the next time they happen it happens a little bit quicker and things open up."

Marleau is a beloved figure in Toronto's dressing room. Matthews went out of his way to pay tribute to the ex-Shark during the All-Star Skills Competition in San Jose. It's no surprise, therefore, that even the insinuation that he struggled early in the year doesn't sit well.

"What is it? Two games? We're two games in," said defenceman Morgan Rielly when asked about Marleau's post-break play. "I mean, he's been a great player in this league for 1,600 games, so I think it's hard to take a two-game sample size out of that. It's one of those things where you never have to worry about him. He's always going to be good. He's always going to be flying. He's a leader on this team and we're lucky to have a player like that."

Rumours of Marleau's demise greatly exaggerated

While some players look sluggish after a break, Patrick Marleau looks reinvigorated. The 39-year-old left winger has a goal and two assists in two games and feels like his chemistry with Auston Matthews has grown since they played together at the start of the season. Some R&R with his family in Turks and Caicos helped Marleau reset mentally and physically and now he's ready for the stretch drive.

The Leafs have a better record against last year's playoff teams (21-9-0) than against teams that missed (10-8-3). In their last six games, Toronto lost to Florida, Arizona and Detroit while beating Tampa, Washington and Pittsburgh.

Are they experiencing an emotional letdown against teams below them in the standings?

"We've talked about that," Babcock admitted. "Those (top) teams get you ready, the other teams you've got to get yourself ready. In saying all that, even in the games — like the game against Detroit, I didn't think we were great at all, but we were set up perfect and we didn't execute at the end. That's the bottom line. The same against Phoenix. Any way you look at it, you've got to find a way to do it each night."

The Ducks have lost 15 of 17 games, but Babcock is warning his players this is a dangerous opponent.

"They haven't won in a couple," Babcock said. "You tend to get hungrier and dig in more when things don't go your way. I expect it to be a real good game here. We're excited to play. We've played some really good hockey here of late. Played a real good game against Tampa. Played a real good game against Washington. I didn't mind our game against Phoenix. I liked our game the other night. We've got to do it every night. You can't be hit and miss, you've got to do it every night. We'd like to bottle that and do it on a consistent basis, or more consistent. I think that's the measure of a good team is you can find a way to do it night after night."

Leafs Ice Chips: Why is team playing down to its opponent?

The Leafs have a better record against last year's playoff teams (21-9-0) than against teams that missed (10-8-3). In their last six games, Toronto lost to Florida, Arizona and Detroit while beating Tampa, Washington and Pittsburgh. Mike Babcock's group seems to play down to their opponents. How do they avoid doing that tonight against an Anaheim team that has lost 15 of 17?

Frederik Andersen spent part of his bye week learning about Extreme Performance Training. Per the XPT website, it's "a performance lifestyle rooted in cutting-edge fitness and the most powerful human trait: the ability to adapt." A video posted on Instagram showed the Leafs goalie doing exercises in a tub of ice water. XPT performance director PJ Nestler tells the goalie to plug his nose before submerging for a few seconds.

"Now, just control the breath," Nestler instructed Andersen when he surfaced. "Focus on slowing those exhalations ... start to really focus on the breath."

It didn't look comfortable, but what did Andersen take from the experience?

"It's mostly to try to create a ton of stress in your mind and in your body. Obviously, the cold makes you react a certain way and makes you want to breathe really heavy and quick," he explained, "and



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that's just a practice of putting stress on your body to make sure you can do it when there's a lot of pressure so if there's a moment in the game you can do a reset or something like that."

XPT is inspired by the training techniques of big-wave surfer Laird Hamilton and former professional beach volleyball player Gabrielle Reece.

Breathing easy: Leafs' Andersen becoming a zen master

Frederik Andersen spent part of his bye week in an ice tub learning about XPT (Extreme Performance Training), a lifestyle system focused on breath, movement, and recovery methods created in part by Laird Hamilton. The big wave surfer designed a routine to improve his breath-holding capabilities and stay relaxed and calm when held under giant waves.

What's behind Anaheim's struggles this season?

"The challenge is to play up to speed," coach Randy Carlyle said. "That's the biggest challenge for our group, is to play with the speed of the game ... I wouldn't say that we're a real, real fast team, but we can play fast. We've played fast. And that's what it's all about, playing fast, moving the puck quickly, getting up and down the ice, getting yourself in a position where you can at least maintain some offensive pressure."

Only the Kings average fewer goals per game than the Ducks, while only the Senators and Blackhawks allow more shots per game. Injuries have certainly played a role, but the Ducks are finally starting to get healthy with Corey Perry and Patrick Eaves returning on Saturday in Winnipeg and Ryan Kesler expected back tonight.

"We finally have our lineup," Carlyle said. "The lineup we have tonight will be the closest we have to our team since the beginning of the year ... Perry was okay. He was doing the things that he does. He was antagonizing a bit out there. I don't think that he felt the regular heartbeat to where he would like to be, but that's expected. The guy played his first game of the year."

But regardless of who plays, Carlyle is looking for a higher level of compete from his group after an embarrassing 9-3 loss to the Jets.

"You don't even have a starting point if you're not going to be competitive and you're not going to be inside and not going to win your races to the puck, not going to win your one-on-one battles ... and that's where we have to start. Tonight, that's where our focus is: get inside and we want to start with the puck as often as we possibly can."

Has compete level been something he's had to talk about more than he would've liked this season?

"Yes," Carlyle said leaving it at that.

Carlyle: Biggest challenge for struggling Ducks is to 'play up to speed'

The Ducks arrive in Toronto having lost 15 of 17 games, including an embarrassing 9-3 loss in Winnipeg on Saturday. It's something new for captain Ryan Getzlaf, who has never experienced such a long skid. Coach Randy Carlyle calls it one of the biggest challenges of his career. The veteran bench boss is trying to coax some more compete and more speed from his slumping squad.

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TSN.CA / Dermott taking positives from new pairing with Hainsey

Kristen Shilton

TORONTO – In the last week, Maple Leafs' defenceman Travis Dermott has gone from a partner who is still learning English to one who never stops talking on the ice.

The second-year pro insists he's only too happy to listen.

After Toronto acquired Jake Muzzin in a trade with Los Angeles last Monday, Dermott switched from a pairing with NHL rookie Igor Ozhiganov to having 16-year veteran Ron Hainsey, whose vocal nature is revered by head coach Mike Babcock, by his side.

It has only been two games, but so far so good. Babcock singled-out his two-point performance on Saturday against Pittsburgh as "one of [Dermott's] best games."

"I don't know [if I felt] different," Dermott said Monday, ahead of the Leafs' matchup with Anaheim. "Couple bounces went my way, gave me a little bit of confidence to go forward making more confident and comfortable plays. Over time you develop that, and especially playing with Ron and being the defensive powerhouse that he is, I can hopefully be learning a lot from him and he'll be helping me."

Previously, it had been Dermott trying to steer Ozhiganov in his first North American season, language barrier and all. The Moscow native has been a healthy scratch for Toronto since Muzzin arrived, while Dermott's focus has shifted to refining his own game.

The biggest knock on Dermott since he joined the Leafs last January has been his defensive work, a fact Babcock and general manager Kyle Dubas haven't shied away from addressing.

In discussing the Leafs' blueline last December, Dubas specifically mentioned Dermott and Ozhiganov as players the team was "continuing to look for gains" from in the season's second half.

The opportunity to move Hainsey onto the third pairing with Dermott was a direct trickle-down effect of Muzzin's acquisition, and Babcock already sees a deeper blueline group because of it.

"We don't question [Dermott's] ability to break out the puck. We don't question his ability on the offensive blueline," Babcock explained. "Where he's got to keep growing, and that's what Ron Hainsey is going to do for him, is you've got to stand in the right spot in the D zone. The puck can't come through you in the D zone; you can't step up and have people go by you."

Dermott admits his defensive game is a work in progress, which has made playing with Hainsey so appealing. In their last two games, Dermott is plus-one, with 55 per cent possession and four shots on net.

That his goal and assist on Saturday also accounted for the first multi-point game he's produced since Feb. 14, 2018 was just a bonus.

"[Ron's] a great guy to look up to, especially for me where the defensive part of my game is the part I need to focus on the most," Dermott said. "Just having a guy like that beside me, it's going to be great for me going forward this season and for my career. I'll be learning a lot from him."

Before Dermott, Morgan Rielly was partnered with Hainsey for a season and a half, right up to when Muzzin joined the Leafs. If anyone can appreciate all that Hainsey brings, it's Rielly.

Part of the reason Toronto signed the 37-year-old as a free agent back in 2017 was to give Rielly, then 23, a boost after he finished the 2016-17 campaign with 27 points and sitting at minus-20.

Since then, Rielly's evolved into a true No. 1 defencemen, garnering Norris Trophy buzz in what's shaping up to be a career year this season. There are a multitude of factors that go into that process, but Rielly acknowledges it didn't happen without some help.



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"I think [Ron] had a pretty good impact on me, just him being a veteran and being around the league a long time," Rielly said. "I think that's what's going to happen with Travis as well. Dermy is a great skater, a great puck mover, a good player. Hains has that reputation of being a good leader, being a good veteran and those [players] are important."

"[Dermott's issues] are all the things that are no different than Morgan Rielly," Babcock added. "Everyone raves about you, but you're a dash all the time. The puck is going in your net all the time. So you have to figure that out over time. That's what the league is all about."

The key for Dermott now is to continue building his confidence, even on nights when the bounces aren't coming.

With Hainsey on his side, bringing an expert-level of communication that never subsides, Dermott hopes he can put the pieces together to take an expected step forward in his own career

"I feel like I'm getting better, getting more comfortable every game," Dermott said. "From a defensive standpoint, that's probably the biggest part where I'm getting more comfortable and where you need the confidence. Everyone is going to mess up, but it's just trying to learn from it and get past it."

Maple Leafs projected lines vs. Anaheim:

Hyman-Tavares-Marner

Marleau-Matthews-Kapanen

Brown-Kadri-Nylander

Lindholm-Gauthier-Johnsson

Muzzin-Rielly

Gardiner-Zaitsev

Dermott-Hainsey

Andersen starts

Sparks

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Goalies

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TSN.CA / Dominating blueline driving Sharks' surge in the Pacific

Travis Yost

With the San Jose Sharks beginning a four-game Canadian road trip, two of Canada's best teams and Stanley Cup hopefuls will get a big pre-playoff test.

Winnipeg and Calgary are virtual mathematical locks to reach the postseason, so right now it's more about playoff seeding than anything else. Both teams are not only vying for first place in their respective divisions, but also competing against one another for first overall in the Western Conference.

The Sharks aren't far behind. Remember all of the hand-wringing about their slow start to the 2018-19 season? It seems like decades ago now. Peter DeBoer's team has been a buzz saw for most of the season now – the type of team we expected to see the minute they made the blockbuster Erik Karlsson trade.

This is an issue that the Jets, Flames, and really every other Western Conference contender have to deal with. There are no more questions about integration issues or playing styles. The Sharks have four quality lines and two Norris Trophy-calibre defencemen playing on separate pairings.

The latter part is what separates the Sharks from your generic playoff team. There just aren't many examples of teams having two elite – in every sense of the word – play drivers. Brent Burns would be the No. 1 defenceman on just about every team in the league, but in San Jose he shares that role with Karlsson.

If we look at expected goal rates (shot volume, adjusted for the quality of each shot) around the league and isolate on each team's two most utilized defencemen, San Jose is unsurprisingly at the top of the list. With one of Karlsson or Burns on the ice, San Jose is

getting an expected goal rate around 59 per cent. (Their actual goal rate is at 54 per cent, which is still fantastic!)

The key differentiator between San Jose and other similarly strong teams is that Burns and Karlsson rarely play with each other. Consider a couple of other teams that appear strong by this measure. Minnesota sees great performance from the likes of Jared Spurgeon and Ryan Suter, who have played 530 minutes together. Pittsburgh sees strong results from Kris Letang and Brian Dumoulin, who have played 745 minutes together. St. Louis? That's Colton Parayko and Jay Bouwmeester, who have played 330 minutes with one another.

You can see the dominance at a more micro level on a game-by-game basis. Look at the five-game average expected goal rates for the likes of Karlsson, Burns and the San Jose team generally. You can see that, as their performance goes, so too does San Jose. That's not particularly surprising since one or both of these guys are on for about 70 per cent of all San Jose 5-on-5 ice time. But again, it's about the performance. San Jose plays in the offensive zone shift after shift, regardless of which of the two is out there. It's a big reason why the Sharks have surged in the Pacific:

Think about this for a moment. Burns has played nearly 1,000 minutes to the tune of a 56 per cent expected goal rate (and 54 per cent actual goal rate). That's usually the type of performance that puts a guy in the middle of the Norris Trophy discussion. Karlsson has been even better at 5-on-5. His expected goal rate is above 60 per cent (actual goal rate at 54 per cent). How do you beat a team who should be getting about 60 per cent of the goals across 70 per cent of the minutes?

That is the million-dollar question and I don't know that there's a good answer. Karlsson and Burns have been brilliant all year, and the Sharks – despite the league's worst 5-on-5 goaltending – have all but penciled in their playoff spot with two months left in the regular season.

The Jets and Flames certainly have the talent to stand toe-to-toe with the Sharks, and there's a good chance at least one of these teams will see the Sharks come playoff time. So consider this week an official playoff appetizer.

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USA TODAY / Vancouver Canucks defenseman Alex Edler carted off after his face smashes onto the ice

Mike Brehm, USA TODAY Published 10:40 p.m. ET Feb. 4, 2019 | Updated 11:47 p.m. ET Feb. 4, 2019

Vancouver Canucks defenseman Alex Edler had to be carted off the ice on Monday night after a freak injury in Philadelphia.

Edler's stick got caught in the skate of Flyers forward Jakub Voracek during the third period, causing the defenseman to spin around, lose his balance and smash his face onto the ice.

Edler, who appeared to lose consciousness, slid to the side of the net, and a Flyers player immediately began calling for medical help. The Canucks trainer and the Flyers trainer and team doctor came out to assist. They called for a stretcher.

Eventually, Edler was able to get up on his knees and into the stretcher. He was sitting up as he left, holding a towel to his nose.



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Alex Edler gets tangled up with Voracek and his face slams into the ice □ #Canuckspic.twitter.com/sEhDDgJYiH

— Vanessa Jang (@vanessajang) February 5, 2019

His jersey and the area where he came to rest were covered with blood.

"You don't want to see anyone go down like that, especially your best defenseman and you know it's scary when you see a guy get knocked unconscious like that and see all the blood after," Canucks center Bo Horvat told reporters.

Voracek, who had scored earlier in the game, gave Edler a pat as he went off the ice.

"You don't want it to happen, but unfortunately it happens sometimes," Voracek told reporters. "We were just driving the net and I felt his stick on my skate, and I didn't see him fall, but it was not a good look after. Hopefully he's all right."

There appeared to be some positive early news for Edler as Sportsnet reported that he was seen walking out the trainer's room after the game.

Coach Travis Green told reporters that Edler was being taken for X-rays on his face and that he had no further update.

The Flyers held on to win the game 2-1 and extend their winning streak to eight games.

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