



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Teuvo Teravainen, 'Turbo,' hitting another gear for the Canes since signing extension

By Chip Alexander

Teuvo Teravainen said he was tiring, the legs burning, but he had the game on his stick, open ice and two points in sight.

Fake the backhand, go forehand, and it was over. Teravainen had scored and the Carolina Hurricanes had beaten the Buffalo Sabres 6-5 on Thursday, in overtime, moving up in the standings, moving on.

Teravainen had enough energy left to let out a big yell after the winner. Then, another one before being swarmed by teammates.

Teravainen's game production: two goals, one assist. Add in any number of smart stick plays and responsible defense and other slick passes and it was quite the game for the Finnish forward, enough for him to be named the game's first star.

The Canes recently made a sizable commitment to Teravainen, signing him to a five-year contract extension that bumps his salary up to an average of \$5.4 million a season. Teravainen, in turn, has made a commitment -- to taking more ownership of a team that didn't draft him but traded for him, that brought him to Raleigh from the Chicago Blackhawks in 2016.

"It's of course a good feeling and I'm excited about it," Teravainen said in an interview this week. "I believe in this team a lot. I feel like we have a lot of good, young players and can be really good in the near future and I want to be part of that.

"Signing takes some stress away for me. But there's a little more pressure on me to make a difference, I feel like. I have to be one of the guys who is good every night and help the team every night. That's a lot of responsibility for me but I'm pretty excited about it. It's a good challenge for me."

PENALTY KILLING

Teravainen, 24, signed the extension Jan. 21. In the six games since pen went to paper, the guy his teammates call "Turbo" has four goals and five assists, pushing his season totals to 14 goals and 34 assists.

"Since he signed he's been one of our best players for sure, so that's great to see," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Maybe it's taking some of the pressure off. Just let him go play.

"All year, he's been solid. There are a lot of things you don't notice about the way he plays. You see the high-skill things he does but there another level he's been at this year, which is the defensive side of things He's been really aware and we've upped his role because of it."

Brind'Amour, looking to improve the Canes' penalty killing, began using Teravainen and Sebastian Aho in shorthanded

situations. Good move, too. Both are adept at getting sticks on pucks, anticipate well, break up passes, throw off the rhythm of the other team's power play.

Added aggressiveness rubbed off on Teravainen, became more noticeable at even strength, all over the ice. His plus-19 rating after the Buffalo game tied defenseman Brett Pesce as the team high in plus/minus.

"He's so damn smart," Canes general manager Don Waddell said. "He's a got a great stick. His hockey sense is so good. We always think of him as an offensive player but he's a very reliable defensive player and he's showing it now. There's a lot to like."

Against Buffalo at the Key Bank Center, Teravainen gave the Canes a 2-0 lead in the second period, snaring the puck after it banged off the crossbar and then slinging it into the net. In the third, a nice setup pass led to a Nino Niederreiter power-play goal and 5-3 lead.

"He has that elite talent. That's what he can do for us," Brind'Amour said.

'I GOT LUCKY'

Then, the overtime. Teravainen found himself alone with the puck on the right wing.

"I was pretty tired but I figured I gotta go myself," he said. "I got lucky."

Buffalo goalie Linus Ullmark might disagree. Teravainen made a quick, decisive move, first making the goalie commit to his backhand feint, then beating him with the forehand.

The Canes (27-21-6), having won the second game of their five-game road trip, improved to 7-2-1 in their past 10 road games and 12-4-1 in their past 17 games overall. Teravainen has 19 points (six goals, 13 assists) in the 17 games.

When Teravainen was traded to the Canes in June 2016, he had no say in the matter. The Helsinki native was a first-round draft pick by the Blackhawks in 2012 and had a Stanley Cup ring, yet was made a part of the deal that also brought forward Bryan Bickell to Carolina as Chicago looked to free up salary-cup space.

At first, it was a shock to his system.

"It was new team, new staff, city, everything," Teravainen said. "It took a little while and now I'm pretty comfortable around here and enjoy my time here. I feel like we're going in the right direction.

"We haven't been in the playoffs in a long time but everything we're building is to be there. It takes some time but when we get there we're going to stay there for a while. That's our goal, to stay there for many years and win something."



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THE ATHLETIC

Duhatschek Notebook: Some reasonable trade scenarios that benefit both sides

By Eric Duhatschek

Last week I made a case for why teams should proceed cautiously when pondering whether to go all in at the NHL trading deadline. Some readers applauded my sober, measured argument, especially those who took the time to document every move Peter Chiarelli made as the Edmonton Oilers general manager and realized that if he had done nothing at all in three-and-three quarter years on the job, the team would be much farther ahead than they are now. Thank you for the positive reinforcement!

Most, however, thought I was being a killjoy – that the trading deadline is like a big circus and I was the meanie that snatched away their balloons and candy floss.

In the interest of keeping everybody happy (irony alert: In this business, you learn early that you can never make everybody happy!), I'm going all in on rumor, gossip and speculation this week. By the way, as any of your favorite NHL insiders – from Pierre LeBrun to Elliotte Friedman, Scott Burnside to Craig Custance – can attest, I am a positively crazy man when it comes to making trades in fantasy hockey – never satisfied and always looking for one final tweak.

But in fantasy sport, your players only have to transfer from one spreadsheet to another. They're like pieces on a chess board.

In real life, they're people with families and kids in school, living in neighborhoods they like, with roots in their communities. Accordingly, when their lives are abruptly altered by an instant change in scenery, it can be a challenge to wrap their heads around the move – and attend to all the disruption and turmoil that arises. Historically, unsettling their personal lives can also spill into and undermine on-ice performance. It is why teams nowadays like to make their moves early – to give players (and their families) time to settle into their new digs, so when the playoffs actually begin, the focus can strictly be on the hockey.

But I get it: There's no giddier feeling than trying to anticipate how the team you follow might conjure up one final piece of a championship puzzle, via a smart trade-deadline acquisition. Years ago, at a previous place of employ, I did an annual schtick that revolved around an imaginary website I labelled NHLfaketrades.com. It was partly as a response to all the tricksters on social media who would create false Twitter accounts to mimic, as closely as possible, those of genuine reporters – and then concoct phony deals to see who they might fool. Some of these transactions were ingenious because the manufactured trades had a whiff of possibility, which made you think, "well, maybe ..."

One of my favorite moments during the time I was dreaming up this exercise occurred right around this point seven years ago, sitting in Dean Lombardi's office, when he was still the Los Angeles Kings' general manager. Lombardi used to enjoy long philosophical conversations that sometimes would last hours. This was the February before the Kings won their first Stanley Cup and Lombardi was venting about all the

misinformation that was circulating – not just on social media, but in all the gossipy forums that had developed online.

His point was that it was getting harder and harder every day to separate fact from fiction – and that rampant trade speculation was making some players uneasy, forcing him to debunk some of the wilder theories making the rounds to those involved. Remember, these were changing, evolving times in the industry. Analytics were just getting a foothold. Twitter was booming, but not everyone understood all of its nuances. I made the point to Lombardi – that it had just become too easy for a percentage of mischievous reasonably informed fans to play a game of connect-the-dots.

Then I cited his team as an example: That with the Kings' relative surplus on defence, any trade rumor involving Jack Johnson would have a ring of truth to it – and that no one would be surprised if Johnson ended up playing for either Philadelphia or Columbus prior to the deadline.

Lombardi visibly blanched – and sure enough, a few days later, Johnson did get traded to Columbus (for Jeff Carter, not Rick Nash, who was the original ask) and the rest is history. The Kings won the first of their two Stanley Cups and it could be argued that Lombardi's move that year was as impactful as any trade-deadline transaction in history – right next to Butch Goring to the Islanders from the Kings in '79, which is pretty much the gold standard for a trade deadline acquisition and actually ushered in the current trade-deadline mania that engulfs the NHL.

That's really the goal here – to helpfully create scenarios that could unfold, in some fashion, at some point, in real life.

Of course, every trade deadline presents its own unique complications and this year, one of the great challenges is separating the buyers from the sellers in the Western Conference, where the logjam in the middle of the standings has even teams that looked out of contention at Christmas, clinging to a faint hope that if things fall their way in the final third of the season, they might actually squeak into the playoffs.

This, by the way, is another area where you cannot get a consensus.

Some people – even GMs – believe it is pointless to push for a playoff spot if you know you probably aren't deep enough or strong enough to win four rounds. I'm going to put the Anaheim Ducks in that category.

Others believe that it doesn't matter how you get in, or why you get in, only that you do get in – and cite the Nashville Predators, 2016-17, as an example of what can happen if you qualify for post-season play. Nashville was the 16th seed that year and gave the Pittsburgh Penguins all they could handle in the Stanley Cup final. The next year, as a No. 1 seed, the Predators didn't fare nearly as well, exiting in the second round. You never know what can happen – and if you're St. Louis or Chicago and you could actually salvage the year by



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squeezing into the playoffs, maybe you don't offer your UFAs to the highest bidder.

There's a little more clarity in the East, with a handful of teams such as Detroit wise enough to know that as far back as they are, and with as many teams as they would have to leapfrog to get in, the playoffs are a pipe dream for the spring of 2018-19.

But even with the Red Wings, it's not going to be a complete fire sale because within the context of the younger group, they're developing and they will need a handful of adults in the dressing room to teach the prospects how to conduct themselves at the NHL level. It means that not everyone you think might be available is – and some trade targets, such as veteran defenceman Nik Kronwall, who might look good as a rental, actually have little desire to change teams at this late stage of their careers. Carter, another useful player who still has a handful of attractive years remaining on his contract, probably falls into that category as well.

All of which is a long preamble to the point that I am trying to make: I understand the impulse to assist the teams you support in making the correct move on or before the Feb. 25 deadline. I did it myself in college when a few of us hardcore hockey fans would concoct a series of brilliant transactions that would land the Maple Leafs the talent they needed to win the Stanley Cup.

Just about every time, through a series of circuitous and complicated transactions, we'd find a way of turning Pat Boutette and Jerry Butler into Steve Shutt and Guy Lafleur – and even had the good sense to laugh about it afterward. We'd do in on the whiteboards in an empty Scarborough College classroom.

Now, of course, there are online forums devoted specifically to pie-in-the-sky trade talk. It tells me that the desire to assist the GM of the local heroes knows no generational bounds.

So, let's have at it.

There are 17 days remaining before the trade deadline. Let's try to find homes for as many wayward potential UFAs as we possibly can – and maybe even try to complete a hockey deal or two while we're at it.

Gustav Nyquist to the Dallas Stars for Roope Hintz

After any trade, you always look for threads that exist between the two teams.

When Minnesota picks up Pontus Aberg from Anaheim, you go "ah-ha" – that's Wild GM Paul Fenton repatriating a player he originally drafted in his Nashville days. When Nashville acquires Brian Boyle from the New Jersey Devils for a second-round pick, you look at the two GMs involved in the transaction and say, "ah-ha" – David Poile and Ray Shero are friends and spent years working together in the Predators organization.

It isn't the only reason you do business, but it helps when there's trust from both side; as there is between Red Wings' GM Ken Holland and his former protégé Jim Nill, the Dallas GM. Nill, of course, knows Nyquist better than most GMs because he was still working for Detroit back in 2008 when the Red Wings originally drafted him. Again, not the deciding factor, but a factor nonetheless. Nill would know Nyquist's

strengths and weaknesses but if the goal is to add scoring to a team that has all of its offensive eggs mostly in one basket, Nyquist could be a useful addition – for the rest of this year and possibly beyond, depending upon the fit.

Dallas could potentially offer picks to land Nyquist, but I suspect the Red Wings would rather have a warm body and Hintz, 49th overall in 2015, looks as if he'll be an NHL regular; and could probably crack Detroit's NHL lineup next year. That would be a Red Wings' organizational priority at the deadline and preferable to adding picks for players that could be three or more years away.

Mats Zuccarello to the Colorado Avalanche for a second-round pick

And while we're discussing Central Division teams that need more scoring because they are top heavy on a single line, let's look at the underachieving Avs, who've mostly been undermined by mediocre goaltending from both Semyon Varlamov and Phillipp Grubauer. Despite that, they aren't likely to do much about it at the deadline.

Short-term, they need help up front but aren't willing to part with either an A-level prospect or presumably either of their first-round picks.

GM Joe Sakic is enough of a big-picture thinker that he can look beyond the 2019 playoff horizon and imagine a bright future that might even include Jack Hughes, which would enhance his scoring depth in due time. But short term, someone like Zuccarello, or Nyquist, available for a relatively modest acquisition cost, might be the answer for the rest of this season.

Ilya Kovalchuk to the Boston Bruins for future considerations

If it wasn't for the financial complication, part of me could see Kovalchuk as a fit in San Jose, reunited with his former coach in New Jersey, Peter DeBoer, for whom he had an incredible playoff run when the two were together in 2012.

Kovalchuk sounds as if he'd be willing to move from L.A. under the right circumstances. Furthermore, L.A. would love to shed what's left of the three-year, \$18.75-million contract they signed him to last summer. And while the actual dollars shrink from year to year (\$8.5 million this year, \$6 million next year, \$4.25 million in Year 3), Kovalchuk's cap hit will stay at a pricey \$6.25 million – too much for a lot of contenders, even if L.A. is willing to take some money back to make the deal happen.

Adding Kovalchuk would probably disqualify the Sharks from signing Erik Karlsson to an extension next summer, which makes it even less likely.

Boston, on the other hand, is reasonably well-positioned cap-wise. I expect them to be casting the collective net far and wide – to Wayne Simmonds, Artemi Panarin and others, all of whom would command a hefty price. Kovalchuk's saving grace is, he wouldn't. He is playing better lately, and the Kings visit the Bruins for a Saturday matinee, which would be a nice showcase opportunity.

Carl Hagelin to the Nashville Predators for a 2020 fourth-round pick



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I'm going to use Hagelin to make a point about the trade deadline that is often overlooked in hypotheticals such as these. Most of the time, you want to focus on the big names – which I'll get to shortly.

The reality is, half of the deals made, especially the ones made at the 11th hour, feature roster tweaks, where teams are trying to add depth players for minimal costs. The Kings have two pending UFAs – Hagelin and Nate Thompson – and you can almost guarantee both will be heading out of town.

When the Kings acquired Hagelin from Pittsburgh in the first place, it was because he was on an expiring contract and they were happy to shed the remaining two-and-a-half years of Tanner Pearson's deal. Hagelin's contributions have been undermined by injury, but teams are going to look at his playoff pedigree – between 2012 and 2017, he played a total of 112 NHL playoff games, and no fewer than 12 in any given season during that span. He also has two Stanley Cups in that time and in 2016, playing for the Penguins, his line – with Phil Kessel and Nick Bonino – was spectacular in the playoffs, especially in the finals against the Predators.

Nashville signed Bonino as a free agent, partly as a result of that playoff performance. Now that Kyle Turris is finally back playing, the Predators will spend the next two weeks assessing where they're at, and in the meantime, integrating their two new faces into the lineup. Depending upon what they see between now and then, they may swing for the fences one more time for a Mark Stone, a Panarin or a Matt Duchene.

But they also might just make a middling deal – and the notion of reuniting Hagelin with Bonino on their third or fourth line has to be compelling.

Cam Talbot to the Carolina Hurricanes for Petr Mrazek

It is hard to forecast how Edmonton, under interim GM Keith Gretzky, is going to approach this trade deadline. Some think the Oilers will do very little and then wait until they hire a full-time GM before addressing their various issues in the summer.

I believe Carolina will have interest in Talbot as a UFA next summer, and I always figure that if you are genuinely interested in signing a UFA, it makes sense if you can get him for the remainder of the season, so you can actually learn more about them first hand – who they are as people; and what parts of their game might need to be repaired. My guess is if they brought Talbot in, they'd like all of his intangibles and the only real issue is, he's had so much trouble stopping the puck the last two years. Do you think you can get him back to the level he was at in 2016-17? If so, then he might be your goaltending answer.

If anyone understands the value of try before you buy, it should be Carolina.

The problem was, the last time the Hurricanes went shopping in the UFA goalie market, they ended up with Scott Darling and that was a fail. Here's an opportunity with Talbot to get a preview of what he might bring – and if you're the Oilers and you've already turned your back on Talbot, why not audition Mrazek in the final six weeks to see what you think of him, for all the same reasons why Carolina might want to get to know Talbot? Anyway, there's some logic to the switch; it would be

low risk, but the rewards – in the information department – could be invaluable.

Jonathan Quick to the Columbus Blue Jackets for Sonny Milano and Oliver Bjorkstrand

This suggestion, which is far more likely to be considered in the summer than at the deadline, involves a few moving parts, the first of which presupposes that the Jackets can find a home for Sergei Bobrovsky at the deadline instead of losing him as a UFA for nothing in the summer.

Goalie moves usually require multiple dominoes to fall. If Bobrovsky does move at the deadline, most people have him going to Florida, where the Panthers could then sign him to an eight-year contract extension this summer (he would qualify only for a seven-year term if he relocates as a UFA).

Does Florida want to part with the acquisition cost – for Bobrovsky and even for Panarin – when they could potentially get them for only the cost of their contracts on July 1? Tough to say – and it would obviously depend upon the price. But Columbus is a team in its window to compete, and if Bobrovsky is on the move, then someone such as Quick – who is playing well again and has four years to go at a reasonable cap hit of \$5.8 million – might be the answer, for this year and beyond.

Quick, of course, could also be a solution in Florida. Now, the asking price is said to be a first-round pick and a top prospect and that's where things get muddled. Quick is only one year removed from a Jennings trophy, but he is 33 and his injury history will raise a red flag – the notion that his body is deteriorating after years of an uncommonly heavy workload is going to be an issue.

On the other hand, the biggest criticism of Bobrovsky in Columbus is that his postseason performance has never quite matched his work in the regular season. With Quick, that's not a worry. He does, after all, have two Stanley Cups – and one Conn Smythe trophy – on his resume.

Matt Duchene to the Winnipeg Jets for a first-round pick (or a prospect such as Kristian Vesalainen)

The Jets are at a fascinating crossroads. They are the No. 1 team in the Central Division, a Stanley Cup semifinalist a year ago and a team that when it has all-hands-on-deck has as good a chance as any to contend for a championship.

And not only this year but for several more to come. In Winnipeg, that's always the goal – finding that precarious balance between the future and the present; and in the upcoming summer, there is the very real challenge of signing two expensive RFAs, Kyle Connor and Patrik Laine, to extensions.

Last year, they rented Paul Stastny for the playoffs and he was a decent fit; and now they are in exactly the same position, the only real glaring need is for depth down the middle. Many people have connected Kevin Hayes with the Jets here; also: Derick Brassard, who is temporarily in Florida, but was the other player they kicked the tires on last year before settling on Stastny.

But if you're going to go all in, Duchene is the best option of the three as a rental. They are familiar with him from his



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Central Division past; he is versatile enough to play both centre and the wing and his speed afoot would mesh nicely with the Jets' style of play. Duchene and Nik Ehlers would be fun to watch, going up the ice together.

Duchene said something interesting in the Ottawa dressing room this past week – that whatever decision he eventually makes, it won't be determined by the money. To some, that probably sounded disingenuous.

To me, it made perfect sense. Ottawa works for him on a personal level, but he's at the point in his career where it also has to work on a professional level – if not necessarily this year or next, soon after that. Because the money is going to be there for Duchene, no matter what he ultimately decides – go or stay.

If Duchene wants to defer the decision about his long-term future to the summer, which he might conceivably do, there is nothing to prevent the Sens from circling back with a contract offer on July 1. But they are almost certainly obliged to move Duchene and Stone if they can't get them signed – and then the arm's race is going to begin.

Where might they land? What might they cost? The Sens will almost certainly be asking for a prospect and a first-rounder for both Duchene and Stone – and then it becomes a game of chicken, playing potential suitors off against one another with the clock ticking. That'll be a fascinating outcome.

Presumably, the Jets would be prepared to make the same offer for Duchene (or Hayes) that they made last year for Stastny, but might not be prepared to sweeten the deal any further. And while bringing back a Manitoban such as Stone makes perfect sense, short term the greater need is obviously at centre.

Stone to the Calgary Flames for a first-round pick

I'm throwing this out as a possibility only because I think Stone really, really tempts Calgary in the short term. Now, scoring hasn't been an issue for them this year, and so they don't actually need to bolster that part of their team. Furthermore, they hope to see James Neal find his stride in the next two months and if they brought in Stone, that would almost certainly limit his ice time and effectiveness.

But Stone is such a complete player and would probably be a relatively seamless fit (his brother Michael plays for the Flames, although he's missed most of the season because of injury). But that family connection should provide a little intel as to what Mark might be thinking.

And if you're Calgary, with unexpectedly the top record in the Western Conference, and if you can add a versatile player like Mark Stone – well, that's a war-room call that's worth pondering.

And of course, when it comes to ex-Brandon Wheat Kings, you never rule out the Vegas Golden Knights, where the organization's No. 2, Kelly McCrimmon, still runs the show at arms-length and knows everybody that ever passed through there.

Panarin to ... whomever

I'm not even going to try and find a destination for Panarin because any of Boston, Nashville, Dallas, Colorado, the New York Islanders or Florida all make sense on some level.

Why wouldn't you want arguably the most dynamic scorer available? But at what price? I don't know and I can't say. About the only thing that interests me here is the timing – does Panarin linger on the trade board until right up to the deadline, or does Columbus get pro-active and move him sooner rather than later, with a view to flipping the assets they acquire in any deal for him to add reinforcements for a 2019 playoff push?

They're all good questions. The answers will come soon.



Category 5: Notes from the Carolina Hurricanes, Feb. 8

By Cory Lavalette

The Hurricanes started off their pivotal five-game road trip with wins in Pittsburgh and Buffalo, and they now look to continue their winning ways Friday at Madison Square Garden, followed by visits to New Jersey and Ottawa.

This week's Category 5 looks at Carolina's success when scoring two goals, the team's home attendance, goalie Curtis McElhinney's big season, one player's Cy Young bid, and how the Hurricanes' kids are carrying the team's scoring.

Category 1: As I first mentioned ahead of Carolina's home game last Friday against the Vegas Golden Knights, the Hurricanes have a phenomenal record when they manage to score at least two goals.

Take this for what it's worth, but in all 16 of his career NHL appearances, Lagace has allowed at least two goals.

Hurricanes are 24-4-4 this season when scoring two goals or more.

— Cory Lavalette (@corylav) February 1, 2019

The Hurricanes kept it rolling that night, beating Vegas 5-2, and have won two of three since (4-3 loss to Calgary, 4-0 win at Pittsburgh, 6-5 overtime win in Buffalo last night) to improve to 27-5-4 when scoring twice. That's among the best in the NHL, though it's not necessarily an indicator of success.

The Coyotes' "when scoring two" record was similar to Carolina's until they went 0-3-1 in their last four games, dropping their record in such instances to 23-8-5.



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The Lightning, the NHL's top team, unsurprisingly have the league's best record when scoring twice, going 37-5-3.

It's another indicator that the Hurricanes are poised for a big road trip. Games against the Penguins and Sabres were against teams that, on average, allow more than three goals a game. The same is true of the team's next four opponents: the Rangers, Devils, Senators and Oilers are all in the bottom seven in the NHL in team goals-against average.

Category 2: Hurricanes vice president of marketing Mike Forman sent out some good attendance news on Saturday.

Averaging 16,500 over the last 8 home games. Thanks, #Canes Fam. pic.twitter.com/gc1jwU2hIR

— Mike Forman (@MForman5) February 2, 2019

The team knew Sunday's game against Calgary would snap that streak — the Super Bowl Sunday matinee drew only 12,621 — so they might as well pump their tires a little until the run was snapped.

And, of course, someone felt the need to bash the fact that the Hurricanes are doing well at the gate.

Weird flex, but OK.

Why not flex 100% capacity for X number of games.

— Justin (@primetimey) February 3, 2019

Never mind that this tweeter is, according to their profile, from Winnipeg, where Bell MTS Place seats a maximum of 15,321, or that they are seemingly a Dallas fan and the Stars haven't put together more than two straight sellouts this year.

Such is life for Forman and the Hurricanes, who face the ever-moving attendance goalposts from critics. Carolina's attendance still isn't anywhere near as good as it once was, but at nearly 14,000 a night it is on the rise. Attendance at PNC Arena bottomed out in 2016-17 (11,776) after peaking in the mid-17,000s.

There's certainly still work to be done, but since the team drew an average of 17,560 in 2012-13 and fell to its low two seasons ago, it has climbed two straight years. Last season, Carolina drew 13,321, and this year it's up to 13,973.

If the team stays in playoff contention, it can expect to eclipse a 14,000 average. It also helps that seven of the team's remaining 14 home games are on Friday and Saturday, and another is on a Sunday, and that midweek games include a few teams that usually draw well: the Rangers, Penguins and Capitals.

Category 3: Twenty games played seems to be the current threshold for which goalies can be included in any statistical discussion, so with Curtis McElhinney playing his 20th game Thursday in Buffalo it seems like a good time to see how he stacks up.

Goalies, ultimately, get judged on wins, and few have been as good at winning as McElhinney this season. Here's the very short list of goalies this season with 20 games played and twice as many wins as losses (regulation and OT/shootout combined):

David Rittich, Calgary: 20-4-4
Louis Dominique, Tampa Bay: 17-4-0
Juuse Saros, Nashville: 14-6-1

McElhinney is just off that pace at 13-6-1.

But the thing separating McElhinney from the others is, simply, the team that plays in front of them. The Lightning, Flames and Predators are currently first, second and fifth in points, respectively, this season, while Carolina is 15th.

McElhinney ranks 13th in save percentage among goalies with 20 appearances with a .915, and his 2.50 goals-against average is tied for 10th. In both of those categories, the goaltenders ahead of him are on teams currently holding a playoff spot.

The Hurricanes won't be able to ride McElhinney down the stretch — his 35-year-old body, specifically a degenerative knee, is unlikely to hold up if he starts, say, 22 of the final 28 games. But if Carolina can continue to get 1.35 points in the standings per McElhinney start and an even split from Petr Mrazek (25 points in 25 games this season), a playoff berth doesn't hinge on overplaying McElhinney.

If the tandem were to split the final 28 games and perform as they have, that would mean Mrazek banks 14 points and McElhinney rounds up to 19 (from 18.9). If you swing three more starts to McElhinney (17 for him, 11 for Mrazek), the Hurricanes project out to 94 points. So if McElhinney continues to win (and his knee holds up) or if Mrazek can outperform his season numbers (since the calendar flipped to 2019, he's actually 5-3-1, so 1.22 points per start), that sounds like a path to the playoffs.

Category 4: Jordan Martinook has a career-high 12 goals — a lot for him, especially through just 54 games, but it's not a total showing up at the top of any goal-scoring lists.

Unless you're looking for this year's Cy Young winner.

The Cy Young Award, of course, is given annually to the best MLB pitchers in both the American and National leagues. The fictitious NHL Cy Young Award goes to the player with the most impressive goals-to-assists ratio — mimicking a pitcher's record.

Martinook currently has 12 goals and — after his first two-assist game with the Hurricanes on Thursday in Buffalo — five assists, a solid 12-5 "record" that puts him among the 12 players who currently have at least 12 goals but fewer than 10 assists.

The Cy Young frontrunner right now is Nashville's Viktor Arvidsson, who has 22 goals and just eight assists on the year. Other contenders are Columbus' Josh Anderson (18-9), Edmonton's Alex Chiasson (17-9), Boston's Jake DeBrusk (14-5), and recently traded (from New Jersey to Nashville) Brian Boyle and Tampa Bay rookie Mathieu Joseph (13-6).

And then there's Winnipeg sniper Patrik Laine, who has 25 goals and 10 assists. Are 10 assists too many to be considered for the hockey Cy Young? The last MLB Cy Young-winning pitchers to have double-digit losses were Roy Halladay (Philadelphia, 21-10) and Felix Hernandez (Seattle, 13-12), both in 2010. After that, you have to go all the way



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back to 1996 for the 10-loss pitcher who won the award last, when Pat Hentgen won it with the Blue Jays in 1996.

My past five “winners” for the NHL version of the award are:

2017-18: Michael Grabner, Arizona/New Jersey, 27-9
2016-17: Andrew Ladd, Islanders, 23-8
2015-16: Zack Smith, Ottawa, 25-11
2014-15: Brandon Pirri, Florida, 22-2 (!!)
2013-14: Rick Nash, Rangers, 26-13

So are Laine’s 10 assists (which project out to about 15 on the season) too many to be considered for this make-believe honor? And could Martinook sneak into consideration is he stays on pace and finishes with 18 goals with 7-8 assists? Stay tuned.

Category 5: According to Hockey-Reference.com — arguably the greatest website in existence — the Hurricanes are

currently tied for the league’s third-youngest roster at 26.5 with the Sabres. Columbus is the youngest at 26.3, followed by Winnipeg at 26.4. Minnesota (29.6), Detroit (29.4) and Los Angeles (29.2) are the oldest.

The good news for Carolina, beyond being young and on the rise, is that all but 21 of their 157 goals this season have been scored by players who are currently 26 or younger — just 13.4 percent. Buffalo is at 32 of 154 (20.8 percent), while Winnipeg (59 of 187; 31.6 percent) and Columbus (72 of 173; 41.6 percent) get a lot of their goals from veteran players.

Carolina’s gotten goals from just four players this season who are currently older than 26: Justin Williams (37), 13 goals; Jordan Staal (30), five goals; Trevor van Riemsdyk (27), two goals; and Calvin de Haan (27), one goal. But it’s the young guys who are doing the most of the work.



Gold: Hurricanes' team effort breaks curse of Manhattan

By Adam Gold

Every 3,025 days, whether they need it or not, the Carolina Hurricanes win a hockey game at Madison Square Garden. Friday night, Warren Foegele’s 7th goal of the season was enough support for Petr Mrazek as the Canes snapped a 16-game Manhattan losing streak with a 3-0 win and crept two points closer to the Pittsburgh Penguins in the race for the second Wild Card. Carolina got a pair of empty net goals from Andrei Svechnikov and Brock McGinn as they moved a season-best seven points above NHL-.500 and won their 3rd in a row.

That’s the what. The how and the why are really the story of this team. Mrazek tossed his second shut out of the season and that it came two games after Curtis McElhinney blanked the Penguins in Pittsburgh is indicative of how the Canes have partnered as a group. McElhinney has been phenomenal — especially when you consider that he wasn’t even on the roster until the start of the regular season. Mrazek was brought here to compete with Scott Darling (remember him?) and while the numbers don’t tell the whole story, he’s been very good and he was that and then some against the Rangers.

A year after the Cam Ward/Scott Darling tandem proved inadequate, Mrazek and McElhinney have eliminated any conversation about goaltending through 55 team games. While both have been down with injury at times, they’ve combined for a record of 25-17-4. Petr’s gone 6-3-1 in his last 10 starts and McElhinney has won a career best 13 games.

At the other end of the ice, there was a time that if Sebastian Aho, Teuvo Teravainen or Michael Ferland wasn’t scoring it was a fair bet that the Hurricanes were going to lose. Now? The fourth line produced a goal for the second straight night.

Thursday in Buffalo it was Greg McKeeg who potted his 4th of the year, the best he’s done in a single season. Tonight, it was Foegele’s turn, as he snapped home a crossing feed from Saku Maenalanen at 6:43 of the third for the only goal the Hurricanes would need.

You’ve heard the cliches all before. “We need everyone pulling on the rope”, “everyone has to buy in”, blah blah blah. But, they’re all true. The Hurricanes have some high end talent, Aho is a star who’s becoming more Super by the game. But, this team is still a work in progress, one with four rookies in the line up right now and several others that have been asked to contribute during the season.

And, while the team is 16-8-2 without him, that they’ve played as well without Jordan Staal is, frankly, astonishing. I’m not sure they’ve won a face off since Christmas. They won just 19 of 45 draws in New York, which is great when you recall that the number was 24 of 71 (!!!) in Buffalo on Thursday.

As for what happened on the corner of 8th and 34th in New York, sports is just like life and there are some things that aren’t really logically explained. The Rangers have been better than Carolina over the years, but not to THAT degree. To have lost 16 straight at the World’s Most Famous Arena is more than physical or psychological. It was mystical.

Well, curse broken. The Canes, thanks to a total team effort, great goaltending from Mrazek and a bottom six goal from Foegele, have picked up another win on this make-or-break road trip. This team, which is such an extension of the head coach and it’s captain, Justin Williams, isn’t there yet, but they’re giving chase and giving everything they have in the process.

As a team.



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* The Hurricanes are 8-2-1 on the road since New Year's Eve.

* The last year the Hurricanes were as many as seven points over .500 this late in the year was in 2010-11, when the team had a high water mark of 40-30-11 in early April.

* Mrazek was credited with 27 saves. Jaccob Slavin wasn't credited with any, though by my count he had at three. He swept the puck off the goal line so many times last night he should have worn a mask.

If defense doesn't work out, maybe goaltending is in his future.

* Brett Pesce had two assists and now has three multi-point games this season. One more than Justin Williams. Brett has two goals, three assists and is a +9 since the All Star break.

* Brock McGinn has scored in two straight games, has a point in three in a row and has four goals, 12 points and is a +14 in his last 17 games.

* Saku Maenalanen has three points (2g, 1a) in two career games against Henrik Lundqvist. He had the primary helper on the Foegele goal with a backhand pass from the right wall.

* Carolina plays in New Jersey on Sunday at 3:00, the last time they played in Newark, they were shutout, 2-0.

* It's a full night of scoreboard watching for the Hurricanes. Boston, Buffalo, Montreal, Washington, Columbus and Pittsburgh are all in action. The Blue Jackets, who have won two in a row, are in Vegas. The Pens, who right now is the rabbit Carolina is chasing, skates at Tampa Bay.



Recap: Mrazek, Canes Blank Rangers

Canes win first game at MSG since Oct. 2010

by Michael Smith

NEW YORK - The Carolina Hurricanes battled their way to their third straight victory on this five-game road trip in a 3-0 shutout win over the New York Rangers.

Petr Mrazek made 27 saves in his second shutout of the season, and Warren Foegelescored the game-winning goal at the 6:43 mark of the third period, as the Canes won their first game at Madison Square Garden since Oct. 2010.

Here are five takeaways from the only Friday night game on the NHL docket.

One

In two of their three wins on this road trip, the Hurricanes have gotten a shutout from each of their goaltenders.

Tonight, it was Mrazek, as he turned away all 27 shots he saw to earn his second shutout of the season.

"You're always focused," Mrazek said. "Those are the types of games where one bad bounce can decide the game." ebruary 8th, 2019

"Petr made some great saves," Foegele said. "We knew once we got one we needed to shut it down, and that's what we did there at the end."

"[Goaltending] is the difference in our season. These guys have both been great," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "It just gives us a lot of confidence that when we're not playing our best, we still have a chance to win. That's special, really."

Two

Speaking of goaltenders, how about Jaccob Slavin?

He's listed as a defenseman, sure, but he made three unbelievable defensive plays tonight, including two that

directly prevented the puck from going in the net and a third that at least broke up what would have been a scoring opportunity at the top of the crease.

In the first period, he tied up Jimmy Vesey to prevent him from getting a stick on a rebound that would have been an easy tap-in.

In the second, as Kevin Hayes tried to tuck one in around Mrazek's outstretch pad, Slavin positioned his stick on the goal line and whacked the puck out of harm's way.

"That was a big save by him," Mrazek said. "He did a nice job. A big save by Slav."

Later, Filip Chytil attempted to center the puck, but Slavin sprawled to the ice and broke up the feed and then cleared the puck with his outstretched stick.

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Simply, he was phenomenal. But, that's just another night for Slavin.

Three

It's been said since the beginning of the season: The Hurricanes need everyone all-in in order to be successful.

It only makes sense then that the Canes fourth line was the one to break the ice in a 0-0 hockey game in the third period.

Greg McKeeg walked the puck up through the neutral zone, gained the blue line and laid it off to Saku Maenalanen. Maenalanen then backhanded a pass through a collection of defending sticks, putting the puck right on Foegele's tape, and his quick snap shot beat Henrik Lundqvist glove side.

"It was a great play by Kegger to join the rush with speed and an amazing pass by Saku," Foegele said. "I was just trying to get it off quick."



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"It was a great play, especially at a time in the game where somebody needs to do something," Brind'Amour said. "You don't maybe necessarily think it's going to be those guys, but it was a pretty nice play. That's what's been going right lately. We've had contributions from everybody. That's definitely the recipe for success."

That trio has formulated a fourth line that excels in its purpose.

"We all have something in common. We all work hard. A lot of our success is from working hard and forechecking," Foegele said. "We need that if we want to keep moving forward."

Four

On the scoreboard, this game stood in stark contrast to the one the Canes played the night prior in Buffalo. That was a wild, back-and-forth affair, especially in the final 20 minutes of regulation.

This was a back-and-forth game, as well, but only in chances. It was a grind in the most entertaining way, and with a 0-0 score heading into the third period, it felt like the first goal might win the game.

Sure enough.

"We were going chances back and forth," Foegele said. "It's fun playing in those tight games because you know that next goal could be the winner. It's good to see both teams bring out the best, and I'm pretty happy we got the win."

The Hurricanes began the third period by dispatching 72 seconds of carryover power play time for the Rangers.

Projected Lineup: Hurricanes at Rangers

Canes aim to win first game at MSG since Oct. 2010

by Michael Smith

NEW YORK - The Carolina Hurricanes began their season-long, five-game road trip with two big victories. Now, they're looking for a third in a building where they haven't won since Oct. 2010 (0-13-3).

Petr Mrazek will take to the crease, as the Canes square off with the Rangers for the third of four times this season.

Here is the projected lineup for the Hurricanes.

Forwards

Niederreiter-Aho-Williams
Ferland-Wallmark-Teravainen

"It was a real timely kill. I didn't think we gave them too much there," Brind'Amour said. "They didn't get any momentum going or anything like that, so it was a real good third and a gutsy win."

Andrei Svechnikov and Brock McGinn sealed the win with a pair of empty-net goals in the final minutes of regulation.

Five

It's over. It's finally over.

After 16 straight losses at Madison Square Garden (0-13-3), an unfortunate streak that didn't make much sense in the first place, the Canes finally broke the hex.

Maybe it was the red jerseys on the road. Maybe it's just that type of season.

But it's thankfully over.

"The guys don't even know that stuff. Most of them have played one game in here," Brind'Amour said. "It's definitely nice to have that so we don't have to talk about it anymore."

Up Next

The Hurricanes don't have to travel far. They face the New Jersey Devils in a Sunday matinee.

"I think we're rolling, but we've got to keep the foot on the pedal. No steps back," Foegele said. "We need each win, and I think everyone in this room knows that."

"These guys, from day one, have bought into what we're trying to do. It's playing for each other," Brind'Amour said. "It's given us a chance every night. That's what you hope for."

Svechnikov-Martinook-McGinn
Foegele-McKegg-Maenalanen

Defense

Slavin-Hamilton
Pesce-Faulk
de Haan-van Riemsdyk

Goalies

Mrazek
McElhinney

Scratches: Fleury (healthy). Staal (upper body; injured reserve)

Note: Lineup subject to change prior to opening faceoff.



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Preview: Hurricanes at Rangers

Canes looking to stay perfect on their five-game road trip

by Michael Smith

NEW YORK - A night after a wild 6-5 overtime win over the Buffalo Sabres, the Carolina Hurricanes will look to remain perfect on their season-long, five-game road trip when they visit the New York Rangers.

The Hurricanes, who have won three of four games to begin the month of February and are 11-4-1 since the beginning of the new year, have worked their way square into the Eastern Conference playoff race.

Road Warriors

This five-game road trip began with two opponents that the Hurricanes were chasing in the standings - and they beat both of them, shutting out the Pittsburgh Penguins, 4-0, and dispatching the Sabres, 6-5, in overtime. The win in Buffalo on Thursday night leapfrogged the Hurricanes over the Sabres, but they remain three points back of the playoff cut line in the Eastern Conference.

"It was huge. We know Buffalo is right there," said Teuvo Teravainen, who scored two goals, including the game-winner in overtime. "We knew it was our biggest game of the year. It's big to get the win."

Now the Hurricanes will face three teams below them in the standings, beginning on Friday night with the Rangers in a building in which the Canes haven't won since Oct. 2010.

It's the biggest game of the season, all over again.

"Yeah, again, it's the biggest game of the year. We're in a position where we have to win every game," Teravainen said. "We have to be ready, especially on the road. We have to fight for any point."

Finding a Way

The Hurricanes didn't have their best in Buffalo on Thursday, at least not for the full 60 minutes and change. They started off strong, with Justin Faulk netting a goal to give the team an early lead in the first period. But the Sabres pushed back and

controlled much of the second half of the first and the second period.

The Canes eventually got to their game in a back-and-forth, six-goal third period, but they saw a two-goal lead dissipate in the game's final five minutes.

That could have been a back-breaker. Instead, the Canes responded with a solid overtime, and it was Teravainen netting the game-winner on a breakaway.

"It's two desperate teams fighting their way to get into a playoff spot right now. We're just about there, but we've got to keep pushing," Curtis McElhinney said. "I think you saw a little bit of desperation at both ends at times and maybe some poor play in both ends at the same time. I'm just thankful to be on the right side of it."

"I love this group. I've been saying it all year. They've been kicked down a lot and had a lot of bad things happen, and they keep bouncing back," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Even tonight, the game should have been over and we let them back in. That could have easily been a way to just look the other way, but they found a way. I appreciate the effort this group gives every night."

The Last Meeting

Less than a month ago, the Hurricanes' winless streak at Madison Square Garden was elongated to 16 games (0-13-3) in a 6-2 loss to the Rangers. Saku Maenalanen scored a pair of goals, but the Rangers were a perfect 3-for-3 on the power play and each of Mika Zibanejad, Pavel Buchnevich and Tony DeAngelo scored two goals.

The Opposition

That win over the Canes was the first of three straight for the Rangers prior to their bye week and All-Star Weekend. Since the break, the Rangers are 2-2-1, and they topped the Boston Bruins in a shootout, 4-3, in their most recent game. Tonight's game, which will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the 1994 Stanley Cup champion Rangers team, is the fourth in a five-game homestand.



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Mrazek makes 27 saves, Hurricanes shut out Rangers

Foegele breaks tie in third for Carolina, which wins at Madison Square Garden for first time since 2010

by David Satriano

NEW YORK -- Petr Mrazek made 27 saves, and the Carolina Hurricanes won at Madison Square Garden for the first time in 17 games with a 3-0 victory against the New York Rangers on Friday.

It was Mrazek's second shutout of the season and 16th in the NHL.

"Big win for us. We have two more games to go (on the road trip) and we have to keep going game by game and see what happens," Mrazek said. "You're always focused but those are the kind of games when one bad bounce can decide a goal. It looked like who's going to score the first goal is going to win, and I'm happy that it was us."

Brock McGinn had a goal and an assist, Warren Foegele and Andrei Svechnikov scored, and Brett Pesce had two assists for the Hurricanes (28-21-6), who hadn't won in New York since Oct. 29, 2010 (0-13-3).

"It's definitely nice to have that so we don't have to talk about it anymore, but it doesn't affect the guys at all," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said.

Carolina, which has two shutouts in its past three games and is 6-1-1 in its past eight, is one point behind the Pittsburgh Penguins for the second wild card into the Stanley Cup Playoffs from the Eastern Conference.

"[Our goalies] have been the difference in our season," Brind'Amour said. "[Mrazek and Curtis McElhinney] have both just been great and it just gives us a lot of confidence that when we're not playing out best, we still have a chance to win."

Henrik Lundqvist made 30 saves for the Rangers (23-23-8), who have lost three of their past four games (1-2-1).

"We definitely had our looks, especially in the second period, but it came down to one play and that was the difference, and unfortunately we were on the wrong end," Lundqvist said.

Foegele gave the Hurricanes a 1-0 lead at 6:43 of the third period, beating Lundqvist glove side on a shot from the slot. It was his first goal in eight games.

"I think we just know where we are in the standings and how important each game is," Foegele said. "Everyone's battling

here, and we need to get wins and it's important that we got two points."

Svechnikov (18:45) and McGinn (19:31) each scored an empty-net goal to extend the lead to 3-0.

"We didn't capitalize on our chances and we couldn't find a way in the third to get one," Rangers defenseman Marc Staal said. "It's just one of those games where you know that first [goal] was important."

The Rangers went 0-for-2 on the power play with one shot on goal.

"Our power play just hurt us," Rangers coach David Quinn said. "We got demoralized off the power play, and I thought they fed off that kill to start the third and we were never able to match what they were doing."

They said it

"I think everyone in here knows how important this stretch is, so I think everyone in here believes in each other and it's blocking shots and making those little simple plays to get the puck out. This group believes, and we just need to take it day by day." -- Hurricanes forward Warren Foegele

"It was a real good third and a gutsy win I think, back-to-back (won at Buffalo Sabres on Friday), played three in four, just a lot of hockey here lately and we've done a nice job." -- Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour

"Not good enough. We were lacking that urgency we had these last couple of weeks. ... We shouldn't be happy about this." -- Rangers forward Mats Zuccarello

Need to know

Carolina is 5-0-1 in its past six road games. ... It was McGinn's second two-point game of the season (Jan. 6 against Ottawa Senators). ... Hurricanes defenseman Jaccob Slavin was plus-3 and blocked three shots. ... The Rangers won 57.8 percent of face-offs (26-for-45), led by Kevin Hayes, who won 12 of 14 (85.7 percent). ... New York was shut out for the fifth time this season.

What's next

Hurricanes: At the New Jersey Devils on Sunday (3 p.m. ET; MSG, FS-CR, NHL.TV)

Rangers: Host the Toronto Maple Leafs on Sunday (7 p.m. ET; NBCSN, SN, TVAS, NHL.TV)



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Facts and Figures: Hurricanes continue surge in 2019

Lead NHL in points and wins since Jan. 1 after defeating Rangers

The surging Carolina Hurricanes won their third straight game and improved to an NHL-best 12-4-1 in 2019 with a 3-0 victory against the New York Rangers at Madison Square Garden on Friday.

The Hurricanes scored three goals in the third period and Petr Mrazek made 27 saves for his second shutout in as many appearances this week; he defeated the Pittsburgh Penguins 4-0 on Tuesday. It's the first time that the Hurricanes have had two shutout wins in a three-game span since Nov. 5-11, 2005, when Martin Gerber had 27- and 26-save victories against the Florida Panthers.

Carolina's 12 wins and 25 points since Jan. 1 are the most in the NHL.

The victory moved the Hurricanes (28-21-6) within one point of the Penguins for the second wild card into the Stanley Cup Playoffs from the Eastern Conference. Carolina also ended a 16-game losing streak (0-13-3) at Madison Square Garden.

Hockey Day in Canada highlights

All seven of the NHL's Canadian teams will be in action Saturday on Scotiabank Hockey Day in Canada. Some things to watch.

Forward Joe Thornton (London, Ontario) is Canada's highest-scoring active player (1,454 points) entering the San Jose Sharks' game against the Edmonton Oilers at Rogers Place (7 p.m. ET; SN, SN360, NBCSCA, NHL.TV). Thornton has 1,047 assists, two shy of tying Gordie Howe (1,049) for ninth place on the NHL's all-time list. He is three points from tying Teemu Selanne (1,457) for 15th place on the NHL's all-time scoring list.

Sharks forward Evander Kane is second in the NHL in goals since Jan. 1 with 12 (in 14 games), trailing Nashville Predators forward Viktor Arvidsson (13 in 16 games). Oilers forward Leon Draisaitl, who has scored five times in a three-game goal-scoring streak, is tied for third in goals with 11 (in 15 games); Dallas Stars forward Tyler Seguin (14 games) and New York Rangers forward Mika Zibanejad (16 games) also have 11 goals since Jan. 1.

Forward Blake Wheeler enters the Winnipeg Jets' game against the Ottawa Senators at Canadian Tire Centre (2 p.m. ET; CBC, SN, SN1, TVAS, NHL.TV) ranked second in the NHL with 54 assists, trailing only Tampa Bay Lightning forward Nikita Kucherov (59). Through 54 games, Wheeler already has the fourth-highest single-season assists total in Jets/Atlanta Thrashers history. Winnipeg's captain had 68 assists last season, one shy of the franchise record set by Marc Savard with the Thrashers in 2005-06. Marian Hossa (57 assists with the Thrashers in 2006-07) is the only other player with at least 54 in a season for Winnipeg/Atlanta.

Goalie Carey Price is likely to play in his 600th NHL game when the Montreal Canadiens host the Toronto Maple Leafs at Bell Centre (7 p.m. ET; CBC, SN1, CITY, TVAS, NHL.TV). Price (Anahim Lake, British Columbia) has 309 wins and is second in wins among British Columbia-born goaltenders, trailing only Andy Moog (372).

Price could be the second goalie to reach the 600-game mark on Saturday. Ottawa's Craig Anderson, whose game starts about five hours before Price's, also has played in 599 NHL games. If both play, they would be the 49th and 50th goalies to reach 600 games.

Canadiens forward Jesperi Kotkaniemi (18 years, 218 days) can become the seventh different 18-year-old in NHL history to score a goal in at least five consecutive games. The only players to do so: Jordan Staal (five games in 2006-07), Sidney Crosby (five games in 2005-06), Jeff Friesen (five games in 1994-95), Jimmy Carson (seven games in 1986-87), Steve Yzerman (six games and five games in 1983-84) and Dale Hawerchuk (six games and five games in 1981-82).

Montreal is 4-1-1 entering the finale of a team record-tying seven-game homestand. The only other time the Canadiens played seven consecutive games at home in the same season was Nov. 29-Dec. 13, 2008, when they finished 4-2-1.

The Western Conference-leading Calgary Flames visit Rogers Arena for the first time since their season-opener on Oct. 3 when they play the Vancouver Canucks (10 p.m. ET; CBC, SN, SN1, SN360, CITY, NHL.TV). Calgary captain Mark Giordano has 54 points (11 goals, 43 assists) in 52 games and is three points shy of establishing a single-season NHL career high. Also, the 35-year-old needs one point to become the 11th different defenseman in NHL history to have at least 55 points in a season at age 35 or older.



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Hurricanes spoil Rangers' Cup celebration with 3-0 victory

By Simmi Buttar

NEW YORK (AP) — Petr Mrazek and the Carolina Hurricanes had a reason to enjoy themselves, too, on Friday night.

Mrazek made 27 saves and the Hurricanes spoiled a celebration at Madison Square Garden that honored the last Rangers team to win the Stanley Cup, blanking New York 3-0.

Warren Foegele scored the go-ahead goal early in the third period as the Hurricanes ended a 16-game losing streak at the Garden. He took a pass from Saku Maenalanen in the slot and wristed a shot past Henrik Lundqvist at 6:43.

"It was nice to get rewarded there," Foegele said. "It was a great play by (Kegger) Greg McKegg to enter the zone with speed and then a beautiful pass by Saku."

Rookie Andrei Svechnikov and Brock McGinn added empty-net goals as Carolina won its third in a row. It was Carolina's first win at MSG since a 4-3 victory on Oct. 29, 2010.

In a 45-minute pregame ceremony, Mark Messier, Brian Leetch and the players and coaches from the Rangers' 1994 Stanley Cup team were introduced. They were seated at center ice as a sellout crowd cheered the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of that championship.

To honor that club, Lundqvist wore a goaltender's mask similar to Mike Richter's with the Statue of Liberty prominently displayed on the front. Lundqvist's mask also has "1994" painted on the right side with a picture of Richter, his name and number.

"Unbelievable. It's a humbling thing. What a great statement by him," Richter said before the game.

"(He) didn't have to do it. It's very classy. I was shocked. ... Coming from him, look at the career the man has put together. He's been nothing but consistent from the day he arrived. He's had just a remarkable career, so it means a lot coming from him."

Rangers coach David Quinn was disappointed in his team's effort in the game.

"There was definitely a lack of urgency which was surprising," he said. "It certainly was set up to be a special night. We just didn't capitalize on it."

Carolina, which is 13-4-1 in its past 18 games, climbed within a point of the Pittsburgh Penguins for the final playoff position in the Eastern Conference.

"I think we know where we are in the standings and how important each game is," Foegele said. "We need wins and it's important we got two points there."

These Rangers are near the bottom of the Eastern Conference.

After a tightly played opening period, both teams had better scoring chances in the second.

Kevin Hayes took a pass from Jimmy Vesey and faked Mrazek and attempted to stuff the puck into the net, but Hurricanes defenseman Jaccob Slavin swept it out from the crease.

"That was a big save by him," Mrazek said. "Hayes did a nice job holding the puck for a little bit, I get out and a great save by Slavin."

Mrazek closed the second period by making a stellar stick-side save on Mika Zibanejad with the Rangers on the power play.

Lundqvist kept the game scoreless late in the opening period as he stopped Nino Niederreiter on a breakaway. He finished with 30 saves.

"We definitely had our looks, especially in the second period," Lundqvist said. "It came down to one play. Unfortunately we were on the wrong end. We had our opportunities. But they defended really well the whole game."

NOTES: For the national anthem, the Garden replayed John Amirante's version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" that he performed during the '94 Cup Final. ... The Rangers are 1-2-1 on their homestand. ... Defenseman Haydn Fleury was scratched for Carolina. Center Brett Howden and defenseman Neal Pionk were scratched by the Rangers.

UP NEXT:

Hurricanes: At the Devils on Sunday in the fourth game of a five-game road trip.

Rangers: Host Toronto on Sunday to close out a five-game homestand.



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The Buzzer: Mrazek shutout spoils Rangers 25th Stanley Cup anniversary

By Scott Billeck

Three stars

1. Petr Mrazek, Carolina Hurricanes

Curtis McElhinney has a heck of a night against the Buffalo Sabres, so it was Mrazek's turn to step into the crease in the second half of a back to back. And boy, did he fill in and then some.

Mrazek made 27 saves in the game to hand the Rangers an eventual 3-0 loss. It was his second shutout of the season, slightly bumping his .894 save percentage coming into the game to .898.

More importantly, the Hurricanes grabbed two points and are now just one back of the Pittsburgh Penguins for the second wildcard in the East.

The win also snapped an ugly record for the Hurricanes, who hadn't won at Madison Square Garden in their past 16 attempts dating back to Oct. 29, 2010.

2. Warren Foegele, Carolina Hurricanes

The Hurricanes top guns put in work on Thursday, so Friday's game was going to be about secondary scoring.

Step up Warren Foegele, the Hurricanes' fourth line left wing, who broke a 0-0 tie in the third period, scoring the game-winner.

Here's the goal:

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3. Henrik Lundqvist, New York Rangers

The 3-0 scoreline might suggest Lundqvist had a worse night, but two of the goals allowed slid into the empty net.

Lundqvist gave his team a chance to win, like most nights. He stopped 30 of 31 in the game and got some help (like Mrazek) from a couple of shots that went off posts.

The problem was the lack of run support, due in large part to Mrazek.

Highlights of the night

The Rangers celebrated the 25th anniversary of winning the Stanley Cup in 1994 on Friday. There weren't many games on the schedule tonight — exactly one — so here's some highlights of the night that was at MSG.



Curse breakers: Canes win at MSG for first time since 2010

Thanks to a huge goal from Warren Foegele, a 27-save shutout from Petr Mrazek and some insane stick work from Jaccob Slavin, the Canes have their first win at Madison Square Garden since Oct. 29, 2010 with a 3-0 victory over the Rangers.

By Andrew Schnittker

The demons have been exorcised. The dragon has been slain. Our long national nightmare is over. Whatever your hyperbole of choice may be, Friday was a momentous night for the Carolina Hurricanes. With a 3-0 win over the New York Rangers, the Canes have won at Madison Square Garden for the first time since Oct. 29, 2010.

Warren Foegele scored the game-winning goal to snap the Canes' (28-21-6) 16-game road losing streak to the Rangers (23-23-8). Last time the Canes won at MSG, Erik Cole scored the game winner with a power-play goal late in the third period.

Andrei Svechnikov and Brock McGinn picking up empty netters to seal the deal. Petr Mrazek was flawless in net, stopping 27 of 27 shots for his second shutout of the season.

With the win, the Canes have won three straight and are a point back of the Pittsburgh Penguins for the East's final wild card and the Columbus Blue Jackets for third place in the Metropolitan Division.

Following a scoreless game to that point, the Canes finally broke through about seven minutes into the third period as the fourth line came up big. Greg McKeeg brought the puck into the zone, dropped it back to Saku Maenalanen and Maenalanen set up Foegele between the circles. Foegele made no mistake, snapping a puck past Henrik Lundqvist to make it 1-0.

The Canes got a couple grade-A chances to take the lead late in the first period, but could not find the back of the net.

Micheal Ferland tipped a Lucas Wallmark shot off the post on a power play, and Henrik Lundqvist stopped Nino



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Niederreiter on a clear-cut breakaway, sending the teams to the intermission scoreless.

Jacob Slavin served as the Canes' second goalie, using his stick to stop the Rangers from scoring with Mrazek out of position in both the first and second periods.

Svechnikov came inches from breaking the ice with about seven minutes left in the second with a shot off the rush that beat Lundqvist but hit the goal post.

Slavin made his third goal-saving stick play shortly after, sprawling on the ice to break up a cross-crease pass that would have given the Blueshirts a tap-in.

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Not to be shown up by Slavin, Mrazek kept the game scoreless with a point-blank, shorthanded save on Mika Zibanejad in the dying seconds of the middle frame.

The Rangers pulled Lundqvist for an extra skater with about a minute and a half left, but Svechnikov iced the game with biggest empty-net goal for the Canes in quite some time. McGinn added another empty netter on the backhand from 190 feet out with 28.8 seconds left to remove any remaining, nagging doubt that the streak would come to an end.

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The Canes are now 12-4-1 since the calendar flipped to 2019, and their 12 wins and 25 points in that span lead the NHL. The team will continue this road trip with a visit to the New Jersey Devils on Sunday.

As a bonus, here's a few things that took place during the calendar year 2010, the last time the Canes won at MSG:

- Barack Obama was in his first term as POTUS
- The iPad was released
- Duke defeated Butler in the 2010 NCAA men's basketball championship
- The New Orleans Saints defeated the Indianapolis Colts in Super Bowl 44
- The final season of Lost aired
- Simon Cowell left American Idol

Keep an eye on Canes lease negotiations, but don't panic

Remembering that a lot of negotiations are nothing more than posturing is going to be key to maintaining your sanity while the Canes renegotiate their lease.

By Brian LeBlanc

The Carolina Hurricanes' lease at PNC Arena is up in five years and, as the News and Observer's Luke DeCock wrote yesterday, the jockeying for position has already begun.

From DeCock:

Under the current arrangement, the Hurricanes pay the Centennial Authority \$2.45 million in rent in return for use by the hockey team and the right to manage the arena, making money by booking concerts, conventions and the like. But the

- Popular movies released included The Social Network, Toy Story 3, The King's Speech, and Inception
- The year-end top 10 on the Billboard 100 was as follows:

Tik-Tok, Kesha

Need You Yow, Lady Antebellum

Hey Soul Sister, Train

California Gurls, Katy Perry featuring Snoop Dogg

OMG, Usher featuring will.i.am

Airplanes, B.o.B. featuring Hayley Williams

Love the Way you Lie, Eminem featuring Rihanna

Bad Romance, Lady Gaga

Dynamite, Taio Cruz

Break your Heart, Taio Cruz featuring Ludacris

- This writer, who *knocks on wood* graduates from NC State in May, was a couple months into eighth grade

On the ice, during the 2010-11 NHL season:

- The Canes began their first season without Rod Brind'Amour on the ice
- Jeff Skinner won the Calder Memorial Trophy as the league's rookie of the year
- The NHL All-Star Game host Carolina Hurricanes were represented by Skinner, Eric Staal, Cam Ward and Jamie McBain (rookie group)
- The Canes lost their final game of the season to the Tampa Bay Lightning to miss the playoffs by two points
- Led by the stellar play of Conn Smythe Trophy-winning goalie Tim Thomas, the Boston Bruins defeated the Vancouver Canucks in seven games to capture the Stanley Cup

Hurricanes have never been able to generate the kind of profits envisioned operating the arena, in part because despite its growth Raleigh still isn't at the same level as big-city metropolitan markets, in part because the team has struggled in recent years.

A bit of a history lesson is in order at this point. The Centennial Authority was originally created as a quasi-public body representing a partnership between N.C. State University, Wake County, the city of Raleigh and North Carolina state government. Planning for the arena was already well underway when the Hurricanes arrived on the scene, but since ground had yet to be broken - the first dirt was turned in July 1997, two months after the Hurricanes moved to North



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Carolina - redesigning the arena to accommodate the hockey team was a fairly straightforward endeavor.

Having the Hurricanes in the picture was a win-win for both entities. Instead of needing to outsource things like event booking and operations to a third party, the Hurricanes agreed to operate the arena themselves, taking responsibility for revenue surpluses or deficits while paying rent to the Authority. In other words, the team is both a tenant and an operator, but not the landlord. To that end, arena general manager Dave Olsen is a Hurricanes employee, reporting to team president Don Waddell.

But since the arena was originally proposed as a facility for N.C. State basketball, the Hurricanes' lease with the Authority had a bit of give and take in it, most notably in scheduling: N.C. State has priority for selecting dates for games at the arena. At varying times over the past 20 years, the Authority has had to play peacemaker when N.C. State and the Hurricanes had occasional squabbles - the first of which occurred before the building even opened, when the university deemed that the original seats that the Hurricanes had installed in the arena were not the proper shade of "Wolfpack red," in violation of the university's agreement with the Authority.

So, it's with that backdrop that negotiations get underway to extend the Hurricanes' lease. Waddell, speaking with DeCock yesterday, said that the lease was fine 20 years ago, but times have changed and the Hurricanes' business model, based in large part on their responsibilities to the Authority, needs to change with it.

"If we're going to be a sustainable franchise in this marketplace for a long time, the lease plays an important role," Waddell told DeCock. "The economics of the deal have to change in our favor."

Sounds ominous, right? Let's unpack a bit; it's not quite as bad as it sounds.

First, this is not an issue of the Hurricanes looking for more direct funding from the Authority. To that end, Tom Dundon has been up front in saying that he would finance upgrades where prudent, and he's done so in a few places: the on-ice projection system, the remodeled Hurricanes locker room, and the eventual upgrades to the scoreboard all came out of his pocket, with Authority approval. (Think of this as being similar to when you redecorate your apartment: if you make any substantial changes, generally your landlord needs to sign off.)

But the full-arena makeover that's necessary benefits every tenant and event at the arena, and that's where the Authority comes in. If the Hurricanes, via Dundon, are going to front the money to upgrade the facility, it's not unreasonable to expect

concessions from the other side in acknowledgement of the investment.

One of those concessions could be in scheduling. Former Hurricanes president Jim Rutherford and soon-to-be retired N.C. State athletic director Debbie Yow got in a spat years ago over the scheduling provisions of the arena, and the Centennial Authority had to once again step in to make everyone...well, happy isn't the word, but at least to broker an armistice. Those issues haven't disappeared, although the major players have, with Waddell and incoming AD Boo Corrigan now the point people in charge of making it work.

If the Hurricanes are going to operate the arena, they deserve to be given the chance to do so. That doesn't mean that N.C. State shouldn't be able to reserve dates; they should. But perhaps a new lease could limit the number of dates that the Wolfpack can block out from scheduling.

The Authority, as stated above, is in a good spot here. Having the Hurricanes operate the arena reduces the number of stakeholders, because if it was a third party they would have to be dealing simultaneously with the Hurricanes, N.C. State and a separate arena management company, and the likelihood of butting heads would increase exponentially.

It's always worth remembering that PNC Arena is much more valuable with a professional sports team calling it home than it is without. The Authority will have no interest in taking such a hard line that the Hurricanes threaten to leave. It would cripple the arena and, potentially, foist the operating losses on North Carolina taxpayers - and with the Authority, at its core, a political entity, there's zero chance they want that to happen.

Finally, always remember that this is a negotiation, and a good negotiator never starts from where they plan to finish. There is a deal out there to be made, and while making that deal requires some concessions, it doesn't require a wholesale ground-up restart.

You know how the NHL conveniently begins hemorrhaging money once a new collective bargaining agreement needs to be negotiated? The same thing is happening here. Waddell and Dundon want to renegotiate the deal to be more favorable to them, and saying "it's great right now but we want it to be more great" won't get them anywhere.

Similar to a CBA, the Hurricanes' lease with the Authority needs to have the ability to change with the times. There's nothing wrong with that. While negotiations might occasionally spill out into awkwardness, the fact is that it's in the best interests of both the Authority and the Hurricanes to reach a deal, and that deal won't require major structural changes from what's currently in place. This is all part of the process, and while it might get uncomfortable, it should ultimately end well, as long both parties are realistic in their expectations.



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About Last Night: Avoiding Heartbreak

Teravainen saved the day in overtime, but last night was almost heartbreaking for the Canes.

By Cody Hagan

Thanks to Teuvo Teravainen, the Carolina Hurricanes somehow escaped Buffalo with a win last night. The Sabres, more specifically Jeff Skinner, did everything in their (his) power to send the Canes packing with nothing to show for their effort. The 6-5 overtime victory showed the Canes' ability to be resilient and not give up despite plenty of opportunities to do so.

The Good - We Got The Goals

The Canes scored not one, not two, not three, but six goals against a goaltender last night — which is something they have only done three other times this season. To no one's surprise, they have won all four of those games now.

The offensive outpouring came in all different forms last night. Justin Faulk got things off and running in the first period after receiving a very nice pass from Sebastian Aho.

Teravainen tallied the Canes' only goal of the second period thanks to a good bounce off the top of the net and back in to play. While there was certainly some luck involved in the play Teravainen's good positioning and fight to get to the loose puck is what created the goal.

A wild third period feature Greg McKegg and Brock McGinn scoring goals as a direct result of getting to the front of the net. Both guys found an open area and won the battle in front for tap in goals.

The Hurricanes even got a power play goal last night. If that isn't a sign that their offense was really rolling nothing is. Nino Niederreiter continued his torrid pace as a Hurricanes off a feed from Teravainen which at the time put the Canes up by two late in the third period.

It feels like the offensive drought of December was such a long time ago seeing as the Canes are having few issues scoring in bunches now. It's unrealistic to score six goals every game, but if they can continue to put up three or more every night their odds of winning skyrocket. They will need to keep getting contributions from their blue line if they want to keep up this pace, but with guys like Brett Pesce, Justin Faulk, and Dougie Hamilton heating up, there's no reason to believe that isn't possible.

The Bad - Almost Letting Skinner Steal The Game

It has been a rough few weeks when it comes to former Hurricanes scoring against the current Hurricanes. Elias Lindholm, Derek Ryan and Noah Hanifin all scored on Sunday when the Flames were in town. Jeff Skinner scored when the Sabres were in town back in January. (Amazingly Matt Cullen did not score against the Canes on Tuesday night in Pittsburgh.) But the show continued last night — once again, at the hands of Skinner.

Everyone on the Canes knows how dangerous Skinner is and how motivated he is going to be against Carolina, and yet they still allowed him to nearly steal the game from them.

Skinner scored his first of the game in the third period when the Sabres were down 3-2. In typical Skinner fashion the goal was one for the highlight reels as he completely outworked Justin Faulk and beat Curtis McElhinney.

That was bad enough but it only gets worse. Skinner would once again score to tie the game but this time it was with less than a minute to go and the Sabres had their goaltender pulled. Somehow the defense for Carolina let Skinner creep in all alone and he was set up by Sam Reinhart for the game tying tally.

That goal was allowed because every Carolina player got puck focused. They were trying to hold on the lead late and let #53 get wide open. That play gifted Buffalo a point in the standings that the Canes desperately did not want to give up.

Jeff Skinner has always been a very competitive person and one day we won't be taken aback by him scoring goals against the Canes. Right now the wounds are still very fresh from his trade and from seeing how well he has succeeded in Buffalo. It was easy to see he was out to break the hearts of every one of the Hurricanes last night and they almost let him pull it off.

Just as when you play the Penguins and you have to know where Sidney Crosby is at all times or Alex Ovechkin for the Capitals, you absolutely have to know where Skinner is at all times when you play against him. The Hurricanes failed miserably at that last night and they have to hope that single point does not cost them in April.

The Great - Turbo Time

Teuvo Teravainen continues to prove night in and night out that he is much more than Sebastian Aho's sidekick. Turbo is a valuable asset to the Hurricanes and he has earned every penny of his new contract. Last night he scored three points including the game winning goal in overtime in just another example of how good he really is.

After the puck rimmed around the board Teravainen was set up with a breakaway to end things in overtime. He pulled a fancy little deke out of his back pocket and sent the Canes off to New York City with two points.

After the game Teuvo could have taken all the credit but he chose to credit the entire team. As an entire group they pulled off a much needed victory but they couldn't have done it without Teuvo.

Moral of the Story

If you didn't know, now you know: the Carolina Hurricanes are hot. They have won the two biggest games of the road trip already and now have a chance to break their nearly decade-long curse in Madison Square Garden. It took a while, but Rod Brind'Amour has the team headed in the right direction. They all care for each other and are playing together as one unit. That is the recipe for success. You can have all the talent in the world but if they don't come together as one they will never win.

Caring about one another and giving it their all every night has led to numerous victories like last night. These are games we have become accustomed to seeing the Canes lose over the



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years but they are finding ways to get it done. They face a tough challenge tonight but if they can find a way to break the

curse of MSG on top of their last two massive victories, you may want to start clearing your calendar for April.



Checkers recall Callum Booth from Reading

By Nicholas Niedzielski

Callum Booth is headed to Hershey to meet with the team as the Checkers have recalled the netminder from the ECHL's Reading Royals.

Booth's most recent stint saw him get the start in three of Reading's last four games and go 2-1-0, including a shutout in his most recent appearance. In fact, Booth turned aside 49 of 50 shots over consecutive wins against Manchester and Norfolk. This season with the Royals Booth is 9-6-1 with a 2.51 goals-against average and a .909 save percentage.

The 21-year-old now returns to Charlotte where he is 4-1-0 with a 2.53 goals-against average and an .898 save percentage. After allowing just one goal on 29 shots in a win over Utica on Dec. 16, Booth has appeared in just two games for the Checkers since then.

The Checkers are in Hershey for a pair of games Saturday and Sunday, the first leg of a five-game road trip.

TODAY'S LINKS

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SportScan

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

1129755 Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes spoil Rangers' Cup celebration with 3-0 victory

BY SIMMI BUTTAR AP SPORTS WRITER

FEBRUARY 09, 2019 12:08 AM

Petr Mrazek and the Carolina Hurricanes had a reason to enjoy themselves, too, on Friday night.

Mrazek made 27 saves and the Hurricanes spoiled a celebration at Madison Square Garden that honored the last Rangers team to win the Stanley Cup, blanking New York 3-0.

Warren Foegele scored the go-ahead goal early in the third period as the Hurricanes ended a 16-game losing streak at the Garden. He took a pass from Saku Maenalanen in the slot and wristed a shot past Henrik Lundqvist at 6:43.

"It was nice to get rewarded there," Foegele said. "It was a great play by (Kegger) Greg McKeeg to enter the zone with speed and then a beautiful pass by Saku."

Rookie Andrei Svechnikov and Brock McGinn added empty-net goals as Carolina won its third in a row. It was Carolina's first win at MSG since a 4-3 victory on Oct. 29, 2010.

In a 45-minute pregame ceremony, Mark Messier, Brian Leetch and the players and coaches from the Rangers' 1994 Stanley Cup team were introduced. They were seated at center ice as a sellout crowd cheered the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of that championship.

To honor that club, Lundqvist wore a goaltender's mask similar to Mike Richter's with the Statue of Liberty prominently displayed on the front. Lundqvist's mask also has "1994" painted on the right side with a picture of Richter, his name and number.

"Unbelievable. It's a humbling thing. What a great statement by him," Richter said before the game.

"(He) didn't have to do it. It's very classy. I was shocked. ... Coming from him, look at the career the man has put together. He's been nothing but consistent from the day he arrived. He's had just a remarkable career, so it means a lot coming from him."

Rangers coach David Quinn was disappointed in his team's effort in the game.

"There was definitely a lack of urgency which was surprising," he said. "It certainly was set up to be a special night. We just didn't capitalize on it."

Carolina, which is 13-4-1 in its past 18 games, climbed within a point of the Pittsburgh Penguins for the final playoff position in the Eastern Conference.

"I think we know where we are in the standings and how important each game is," Foegele said. "We need wins and it's important we got two points there."

These Rangers are near the bottom of the Eastern Conference.

After a tightly played opening period, both teams had better scoring chances in the second.

Kevin Hayes took a pass from Jimmy Vesey and faked Mrazek and attempted to stuff the puck into the net, but Hurricanes defenseman Jaccob Slavin swept it out from the crease.

"That was a big save by him," Mrazek said. "Hayes did a nice job holding the puck for a little bit, I get out and a great save by Slavin."

Mrazek closed the second period by making a stellar stick-side save on Mika Zibanejad with the Rangers on the power play.

Lundqvist kept the game scoreless late in the opening period as he stopped Nino Niederreiter on a breakaway. He finished with 30 saves.

"We definitely had our looks, especially in the second period," Lundqvist said. "It came down to one play. Unfortunately we were on the wrong end. We had our opportunities. But they defended really well the whole game."

NOTES: For the national anthem, the Garden replayed John Amirante's version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" that he performed during the '94 Cup Final. ... The Rangers are 1-2-1 on their homestand. ... Defenseman Haydn Fleury was scratched for Carolina. Center Brett Howden and defenseman Neal Pionk were scratched by the Rangers.

UP NEXT:

Hurricanes: At the Devils on Sunday in the fourth game of a five-game road trip.

Rangers: Host Toronto on Sunday to close out a five-game homestand.

News Observer LOADED: 02.09.2019

1129756 Carolina Hurricanes

Teuvo Teravainen, 'Turbo,' hitting another gear for the Canes since signing extension

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

FEBRUARY 08, 2019 10:32 AM

Teuvo Teravainen said he was tiring, the legs burning, but he had the game on his stick, open ice and two points in sight.

Fake the backhand, go forehand, and it was over. Teravainen had scored and the Carolina Hurricanes had beaten the Buffalo Sabres 6-5 on Thursday, in overtime, moving up in the standings, moving on.

Teravainen had enough energy left to let out a big yell after the winner. Then, another one before being swarmed by teammates.

Teravainen's game production: two goals, one assist. Add in any number of smart stick plays and responsible defense and other slick passes and



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it was quite the game for the Finnish forward, enough for him to be named the game's first star.

The Canes recently made a sizable commitment to Teravainen, signing him to a five-year contract extension that bumps his salary up to an average of \$5.4 million a season. Teravainen, in turn, has made a commitment -- to taking more ownership of a team that didn't draft him but traded for him, that brought him to Raleigh from the Chicago Blackhawks in 2016.

"It's of course a good feeling and I'm excited about it," Teravainen said in an interview this week. "I believe in this team a lot. I feel like we have a lot of good, young players and can be really good in the near future and I want to be part of that.

"Signing takes some stress away for me. But there's a little more pressure on me to make a difference, I feel like. I have to be one of the guys who is good every night and help the team every night. That's a lot of responsibility for me but I'm pretty excited about it. It's a good challenge for me."

PENALTY KILLING

Teravainen, 24, signed the extension Jan. 21. In the six games since pen went to paper, the guy his teammates call "Turbo" has four goals and five assists, pushing his season totals to 14 goals and 34 assists.

"Since he signed he's been one of our best players for sure, so that's great to see," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Maybe it's taking some of the pressure off. Just let him go play.

"All year, he's been solid. There are a lot of things you don't notice about the way he plays. You see the high-skill things he does but there another level he's been at this year, which is the defensive side of things He's been really aware and we've upped his role because of it."

Brind'Amour, looking to improve the Canes' penalty killing, began using Teravainen and Sebastian Aho in shorthanded situations. Good move, too. Both are adept at getting sticks on pucks, anticipate well, break up passes, throw off the rhythm of the other team's power play.

Added aggressiveness rubbed off on Teravainen, became more noticeable at even strength, all over the ice. His plus-19 rating after the Buffalo game tied defenseman Brett Pesce as the team high in plus/minus.

"He's so damn smart," Canes general manager Don Waddell said. "He's a got a great stick. His hockey sense is so good. We always think of him as an offensive player but he's a very reliable defensive player and he's showing it now. There's a lot to like."

Jeffrey T. Barnes AP

Against Buffalo at the Key Bank Center, Teravainen gave the Canes a 2-0 lead in the second period, snaring the puck after it banged off the crossbar and then slinging it into the net. In the third, a nice setup pass led to a Nino Niederreiter power-play goal and 5-3 lead.

"He has that elite talent. That's what he can do for us," Brind'Amour said.

'I GOT LUCKY'

Then, the overtime. Teravainen found himself alone with the puck on the right wing.

"I was pretty tired but I figured I gotta go myself," he said. "I got lucky."

Buffalo goalie Linus Ullmark might disagree. Teravainen made a quick, decisive move, first making the goalie commit to his backhand feint, then beating him with the forehand.

The Canes (27-21-6), having won the second game of their five-game road trip, improved to 7-2-1 in their past 10 road games and 12-4-1 in their past 17 games overall. Teravainen has 19 points (six goals, 13 assists) in the 17 games.

When Teravainen was traded to the Canes in June 2016, he had no say in the matter. The Helsinki native was a first-round draft pick by the Blackhawks in 2012 and had a Stanley Cup ring, yet was made a part of the deal that also brought forward Bryan Bickell to Carolina as Chicago looked to free up salary-cup space.

At first, it was a shock to his system.

"It was new team, new staff, city, everything," Teravainen said. "It took a little while and now I'm pretty comfortable around here and enjoy my time here. I feel like we're going in the right direction.

"We haven't been in the playoffs in a long time but everything we're building is to be there. It takes some time but when we get there we're going to stay there for a while. That's our goal, to stay there for many years and win something."

News Observer LOADED: 02.09.2019

1129757 Carolina Hurricanes

Civian: Serious about winning? If you can't see that with these Hurricanes, you're not watching

By Sara Civian Feb 8, 2019

BUFFALO, N.Y. — From the moment the Hurricanes first Storm Surged (is that a verb?), I have wanted to stay out of it.

The idea that anybody should care what The Media thinks about a post-game celebration always seemed way too self-important.

It's not for us. It has nothing to do with us. I want nothing to do with evaluating it.

The first time someone asked me about it I distinctly remember laughing at the idea of a "Storm Surge Expert" lower third graphic popping up on the evening news or something.

Anyway, it seemed like all of the riveting discourse was finally dying down until Duck, Duck, Goose really pissed off some of the more traditional folks.

It's one thing to dislike a non-traditional hockey market's silly new ritual. (Again, I think it's weird for the media to care either way — but you do you.) It's another thing entirely to imply this team doesn't work hard enough, isn't legit or doesn't take winning seriously because the players clap a few times and smile after home wins.

That was a new flavor of Storm Surge criticism after Duck, Duck, Goosegate.

For some reason, it was all I could think about after the 6-5 overtime win at Buffalo on Thursday that kept the Hurricanes within reach of the playoffs.

"We were talking before the game (about how) this was going to be a big one and we needed to win this," overtime hero Teuvo Teravainen refreshingly admitted. "... it was the biggest game of the year."

So they won it the hard way, via total team effort, which is pretty much how they have to win these things.

Maybe those concerned with the Hurricanes' effort level just don't see it like I do. Or as blunt head coach Rod Brind'Amour pointed out in response to out-of-town media a few weeks ago, maybe "no one really watches us."



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I'm leaning toward the latter because if you actually watched the 2018-19 Carolina Hurricanes you'd see a whole lot more than a post-game celebration.

First, you'd notice Sebastian Aho growing into stardom. He reached his career-high in assists with his 37th in Buffalo, but his overtime game-saver showcased the hard work that is, for some reason, in question.

"To be honest, you don't think too much out there," he told me postgame. "You just play. You just try to win those first (overtime) faceoffs and get the puck. You try to build off it and get the first scoring chance."

But when he doesn't, he doesn't give up.

If you watched these Canes, eventually you'd realize the journeymen are having career years, like goaltender Curtis McElhinney standing sharp as ever at 35 years old. You'd see Greg McKegg, the 26-year-old center several franchises have given up on perhaps a bit too soon, getting his minutes and running with them on his career-high Hurricanes stint.

Of course, there are the glue guys like Brock McGinn, who absorbs shots with virtually every body part so that the skill guys can do their thing. Jordan Martinook qualifies too, though he's another one having a pleasantly surprising career scoring year with 12 goals. Two of them came right after the birth of his son, Chase, and his new contract extension.

"If I can keep scoring like this while he's alive then we're going to be a pretty happy family for the foreseeable future," he said in Pittsburgh.

Surely you wouldn't question the Hurricanes' drive if you've ever seen their penalty kill, where the skill guys log serious minutes right next to the glue guys.

Everyone does everything. Look at this roster, for crying out loud. They have to.

"Everyone needs to buy in," Brind'Amour often says.

I don't know if it's crazier that they've actually bought in or that it's working, but here we are. The Canes lead the league in goals scored in 2019 (58). What's more telling about their character is how they kept pushing with the same relentless forecheck when pucks weren't going in.

How could anyone imply these people aren't serious about winning?

You must be glossing over Nino Niederreiter's six goals and one assist in eight games since joining the team where offense allegedly goes to die. Doesn't seem like 45 seconds of Duck, Duck, Goose threw a wrench in any of his plans.

The Hurricanes' mistakes are as routine as they are brutal, their lack of talent is glaring, yet somehow an outright refusal to give up despite either of those realities has been taking over these days. Doesn't that say more about how hard they work than two minutes of fan love after wins?

"I love this group. I've been saying it all year. They've been kicked down a lot and had a lot of bad things happen, and they keep bouncing back," Brind'Amour said after the win Thursday. "Even tonight, the game should have been over and we let them back in. That could have easily been a way to just look the other way, but they found a way. I appreciate the effort this group gives every night."

There have been plenty of instances where you couldn't exactly blame this group stacked against the odds for giving up. Excuses are there if they want them. But like Storm Surge ringleader and three-time Stanley Cup champion Justin Williams says, "excuses are for losers."

These Hurricanes deserve to enjoy each win. Those who are actually watching know they don't come easily.

You don't have to like the Storm Surge, but if the Hurricanes are putting in enough effort for Rod Brind'Amour of all people, maybe sit this one out.

The Athletic LOADED: 02.09.2019

1129817 New Jersey Devils

'Let's get it on!' Devils will give away 'Seinfeld' inspired David Puddy bobbleheads

February 8, 2019 at 4:12 PM

Chris Ryan

If you support the team like David Puddy, you'll be able to take home part of his iconic "Seinfeld" character.

The Devils will give away Puddy-inspired bobbleheads to the first 9,000 fans at a home game against the Pittsburgh Penguins on Feb. 19 at Prudential Center in Newark, part of the team's 1990s theme night.

The bobblehead will feature Patrick Warburton's character in his trademark Devils face paint, used to support his favorite team in the 1995 episode called "The Face Painter," where Puddy geared up for a playoff game against the Rangers.

Yea that's right #devils #njdevils @NJDevils
pic.twitter.com/eQVYw2c6gW

— patrick warburton (@paddywarbucks) February 7, 2019

Warburton, a Paterson native, recreated his ensemble during the Devils' 2018 playoff appearance against the Tampa Bay Lightning, where he joined the crowd at The Rock to support the team in Game 4.

Clips from Warburton's appearance still make routine cameos at current Devils games, and his scene from the episode, which aired more than 20 years ago, is featured at road games each season.

Star Ledger LOADED: 02.09.2019

1129818 New Jersey Devils

Will Devils' Taylor Hall play again this season? Injury updates on Joey Anderson, Miles Wood

February 8, 2019 at 2:50 PM

Chris Ryan

Coach John Hynes fully expects forward Taylor Hall to play again this season.

The Devils forward hasn't played since Dec. 23, missing the team's past 18 games while dealing with a nagging a lower body injury that popped up in early December. He has missed 20 games total this season.

Hynes didn't put a percentage on the odds of Hall returning to the lineup, but he remained steadfast in his assertion that the reigning Hart Trophy winner will be able to suit up in the coming two months.

"As of now, we are planning on him coming back and playing," Hynes said Friday. "He is on a progression plan to play, and we're anticipating that. Right now there's no plans of him not playing this year."

Is Schneider back after strong outing?

Hall's rehab work has remained primarily off the ice, though he has skated on occasion in recent weeks. At this point, Hynes said the Devils



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are going to take every step to ensure is 100 percent healthy when he returns to the lineup.

"He wants to play. Any player that comes into the NHL wants to play," Hynes said. "I know he's been frustrated with his injury and coming back and trying to make it work. But he's also very conscious of when he does come back, he's truly ready to come back and play and get his game back and work to get better as a player."

Forward Joey Anderson is expected to make his return to the lineup when the Devils host the Minnesota Wild at 1 p.m. on Saturday at Prudential Center in Newark. Anderson has not played since breaking his ankle on Nov. 21 and undergoing surgery eight days later.

Anderson will take Miles Wood's spot in the lineup. Wood won't play Saturday after leaving Thursday's 2-1 shootout loss to the New York Islanders after hitting the ice hard in the second period. The Devils called him day-to-day with an upper body injury.

Wood's status helped make the decision on Anderson's next step. The Devils toyed with the idea of giving Anderson a game in the AHL over the weekend before having him join the NHL team on its three-game road trip next week.

But with Wood out, Hynes was comfortable with Anderson's work and progress in practice to put him right back into the NHL lineup.

"He's been here, he's played well. He was a big part of our team when he got hurt," Hynes said. "So we'll give him a chance and see how he does here first."

The Devils' lineup on Saturday should look the same other than the swap of Wood and Anderson. The Devils also play the Carolina Hurricanes at 3 p.m. on Sunday, and Hynes said goalies Cory Schneider and Keith Kinkaid will both get one start in the back-to-back. The decision on the order will come down to how Schneider felt physically after Friday's practice.

Star Ledger LOADED: 02.09.2019

1129819 New Jersey Devils

NHL trade rumors: Top 35 targets before 2019 deadline | Artemi Panarin switches agents; Wayne Simmonds, Mark Stone available

Chris Ryan

The 2018-19 NHL season is approaching the trade deadline, where contending teams around the league will turn into buyers, looking to add key players for the end of the regular season and the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

Teams out of postseason contention will be selling some strong pieces, and some good players could be on the move prior to the Feb. 25 trade deadline.

Columbus Blue Jackets forward Artemi Panarin ranks among the top players potentially available, and he fired agent Dan Milstein in early February, according to multiple reports, to switch to Paul Theofanous. Under Milstein, Panarin said he would not negotiate a contract extension in Columbus during the season.

Goalie and fellow Blue Jacket Sergei Bobrovsky is also represented by Theofanous. Bobrovsky is another potential trade target, and both players will be unrestricted free agents this summer.

Ottawa Senators forwards Mark Stone and Matt Duchene, New York Rangers forward Mats Zuccarello and Detroit Red Wings goalie Jimmy Howard are also some of the names to watch in the coming weeks. The

New Jersey Devils, Philadelphia Flyers, Edmonton Oilers and other could be among the teams looking to move players.

Here's a look at 35 of the top targets potentially on the trade market approaching the deadline.

35-Michael Raffl

Current team: Philadelphia Flyers

Position: LW

2018-19 stats: 39 GP, 3 G, 6 A, 9 P

Contract after 2018-19: Unrestricted Free Agent

Raffl's not a big scorer, but he brings some bottom-six and penalty kill stability for a team looking for an extra piece. With new management in place in Philly with GM Chuck Fletcher, the team could look to move the pending free agent, even if the Flyers' hot streak continues.

34-Adam McQuaid

34-Adam McQuaid

Current team: New York Rangers

Position: D

Age: 32

2018-19 stats: 28 GP, 1 G, 3 A, 4 P

Contract after 2018-19: UFA

McQuaid was traded during training camp in September, joining the Rangers after spending his entire career with the Bruins. The pending free agent could fetch something from a contender looking for a cheap defensive addition.

33-Ryan Dzingel

Current team: Ottawa Senators

Position: LW

Age: 26

2018-19 stats: 50 GP, 20 G, 19 A, 39 P

Contract after 2018-19: UFA

In a lost season for Ottawa, Dzingel has been a bright spot. His numbers have increased in each of his four NHL seasons. Since he's just 26, he is someone the Senators could look to lock up long term, but he could bring back a decent return if the team tried to move him.

32-Richard Panik

Current team: Arizona Coyotes

Position: LW/RW

Age: 27

2018-19 stats: 50 GP, 10 G, 12 A, 22 P

Contract after 2018-19: UFA

Panik has been traded twice since 2016, and with the Coyotes not in contention this season, he's a candidate to move again.

Courtesy of the Toronto Marlies

31-Kasper Kapanen

Current team: Toronto Maple Leafs

Position: RW

Age: 22



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2018-19 stats: 52 GP, 15 G, 15 A, 30 P

Contract after 2018-19: RFA

Kapanen will be coming off his entry level contract this summer, so he has years of team control in front of him. If the Leafs are looking to bolster their roster for a Stanley Cup run, using Kapanen to do so is a possibility.

30-Cam Fowler

Current team: Anaheim Ducks

Position: D

Age: 27

2018-19 stats: 31 GP, 3 G, 8 A, 11 P

Contract after 2018-19: 7 years, \$6.5 million AAV

The idea of moving a player with that much term left on a contract might sound crazy, but things are strange in Anaheim right now. Outside of John Gibson, the team has struggled for most of the season, and their recent run has them outside of the playoff picture. If the team wants to blow everything up, trading Fowler to another team looking to rebuild its blue line could make sense.

29-Eric Fehr

Current team: Minnesota Wild

Position: C

Age: 33

2018-19 stats: 43 GP, 5 G, 5 A, 10 P

Contract after 2018-19: UFA

Fehr was traded prior to the 2018 deadline, going from the Maple Leafs to the Sharks, and he signed a one-year deal with the Wild last summer. If the Wild sell, he's another option to move this month.

28-Jeff Carter

Current team: Los Angeles Kings

Position: C

Age: 34

2018-19 stats: 51 GP, 10 G, 15 A, 25 P

Contract after 2018-19: 3 years, \$5,272,727 AAV

Carter still has a lot of term left on his contract, but considering the Kings have already started shedding some of their older talent, he could also be a player the team looks to move this month. If he stays, a summer deal is always an option, too.

Chris Ryan

27-Eric Staal

Current team: Minnesota Wild

Position: C

Age: 34

2018-19 stats: 52 GP, 17 G, 20 A, 37 P

Contract after 2018-19: UFA

The Wild are very much in contention for the postseason in the Western Conference, so they're a team that could look to add rather than sell at the deadline. But considering the front office changed hands last summer, new GM Paul Fenton could see Staal as an asset to sell before his deal expires. Considering he has 87 goals and 91 assists since signing a three-year deal with the Wild, his \$3.5 million AAV is a steal.

26-Cam Talbot

Current team: Edmonton Oilers

Position: G

Age: 31 2

2018-19 stats: 28 GP, 9-13-3, 3.34 GAA, .893 save percentage

Contract after 2018-19: UFA

The Oilers already gave a three-year contract extension to goalie Mikko Koskinen, who has played one more game than Talbot this season. If the Oilers have the chance to move Talbot, they'll likely take it.

25-Alex Edler

Current team: Vancouver Canucks

Position: D

Age: 32

2018-19 stats: 38 GP, 5 G, 15 A, 20 P

Contract after 2018-19: UFA

Edler has spent his entire career in Vancouver, but if the Canucks fall out of the race approaching the trade deadline, he's a name to keep an eye on. He is currently sidelined with a concussion.

24-Jamie McGinn

Current team: Florida Panthers

Position: LW/RW

Age: 30

2018-19 stats: 0 GP, 0 G, 0 A, 0 P

Contract after 2018-19: UFA

McGinn hasn't played an NHL game this season while dealing with a back injury, but he recently made his first AHL appearance after clearing waivers. If he gets going in the next few weeks at either level, he's a possible gamble for a team looking for forward depth.

Ilya Kovalchuk scores to cap off dreadful 3rd period for Devils in loss to Kings | Rapid reaction

23-Cody Ceci

Current team: Ottawa Senators

Position: D

Age: 25

2018-19 stats: 48 GP, 5 G, 10 A, 15 P

Contract after 2018-19: Restricted Free Agent

Ceci still has one season of restricted free agency left before he's eligible to hit the open market as early as the summer of 2020. So if the rebuilding Senators get the right package, Ceci could be another trade option for a selling team.

22-Carl Hagelin

Current team: Los Angeles Kings

Position: LW

Age: 30

2018-19 stats: 31 GP, 2 G, 5 A, 7 P

Contract after 2018-19: UFA



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Hagelin has already been traded once this season, going from the Penguins to the Kings. With the Kings set to sell, Hagelin is a natural option to move. His stats this season aren't overwhelming, but he has the experience of 121 postseason games.

21-Keith Kinkaid

Current team: New Jersey Devils

Position: G

Age: 29

2018-19 stats: 36 GP, 14-15-6, 3.12 GAA, .893 save percentage

Contract after 2018-19: UFA

Kinkaid is in the final year of his contract, and with the presence of Cory Schneider on a long-term deal and the emergence of Mackenzie Blackwood in New Jersey, the Devils could have the opening to trade him before the deadline. Kinkaid hasn't posted the same numbers as last season, but he's still had strong outings and has shown he can win consistently in the NHL.

20-Chris Kreider

Current team: New York Rangers

Position: LW

Age: 27

2018-19 stats: 52 GP, 24 G, 16 A, 40 P

Contract after 2018-19: 1 year, \$4.625 million AAV

The Rangers have two forwards in the final years of their respective contracts — both will be mentioned soon — so they're not in a spot where they have to deal Kreider. But the team hasn't shied away from trading players with term on their contracts over the past two seasons, so he will be an option if the Rangers sell.

19-Jakub Silfverberg

Current team: Anaheim Ducks

Position: RW

Age: 28

2018-19 stats: 45 GP, 12 G, 8 A, 20 P

Contract after 2018-19: UFA

With the Ducks trending away from the postseason picture, Silfverberg could be one of the players the team moves ahead of the deadline before his current contract expires on July 1.

Star Ledger LOADED: 02.09.2019

1129820 New Jersey Devils

Is Cory Schneider back? How Devils goalie found form in loss to Islanders: 6 observations | Blake Coleman, Kevin Rooney, more

Chris Ryan

The Devils aren't in the business of moral victories. However, Cory Schneider's performance on Thursday gave the team plenty of reason for optimism about the goalie.

In his first start since Dec. 14, Schneider made 27 saves on 28 shots in regulation and overtime, and after stopping three straight shots to start

the shootout, Josh Bailey eventually beat him in the fourth round to cap off a 2-1 New York Islanders win at Prudential Center in Newark.

Short of actually winning, Schneider did everything in his power to get the Devils two points, even though his 13-month regular-season winless drought stayed in tact.

Here's what the goalie and the Devils saw in arguably his best performance during that stretch, plus more on the loss to the Islanders.

What Cory Schneider's best outing of the season means

The biggest difference defenseman Andy Greene noticed came on rebounds. When shots reached Schneider earlier this season, some rebounds got loose in the crease or got out of control, leading to scrambling and some second opportunities.

When most shots hit Schneider on Thursday, if they weren't deflected cleanly to the corners, the play died right in front of the goalie.

"Every puck hit him, and it stopped or laid right there," the Devils captain said. "The rebounds are right there. He was gobbling them. He sucked them in, whereas before some were leaking through or a little out of reach for him. It seemed like tonight they were all perfect. I don't think you could change anything he did."

Throughout his last week at practice, Schneider said he felt more comfortable in every aspect of his game, and that confidence rolled over into Thursday's action.

He didn't do anything drastically different from his games earlier this season, but a little more refinement and trust made a big difference.

"Sometimes it just comes down to competing on pucks a little bit harder," Schneider said. "You think you're doing it, but until you get to that level, there's a difference there. But I felt just a little more fluid, a little more athletic, just able to explode and move around the net a little bit better.

"Getting better pushes, getting to my spots sooner, which sets you up for the next shot or the next pass, instead of sitting back and reacting and being late to the puck in the zone. Doesn't sound like much, but you know it when you feel it, and it makes a big difference."

Those subtleties can make evaluating goalie play difficult, and often times it takes a fine-tooth comb for coaches to identify and pinpoint things in a net minder's play to find improvement.

But just watching Thursday's game live, Devils coach John Hynes didn't need a detailed video review to detect a different level to Schneider's play.

"You could see he was square, particularly early in the game. There were a couple chances in the first period where he had to make some point-blank saves. He looked much more confident in the net," Hynes said. "He wasn't guessing. He looked more of what Cory is. Really strong positional goalie. Squared up to the shots. He was good on his rebounds, and the other thing, I thought he did a really good job of fighting to find pucks through traffic."

The win still evaded Schneider, who oddly enough, lost a shootout to the Islanders in his last start against them in January of 2018.

The big step for him came when his practice play made it's way into an NHL game, and replicating that performance will produce winning results.

"I was confident that I could come out tonight and play a good game, just as a I got into it more and more, it just felt more natural and got into the rhythm of the game," Schneider said. "It's only one, it'd be nice to get a win, but if I'm able to repeat how I felt and my technique and all that stuff going forward, then hopefully sooner than later."

Are Devils feeling pressure to get Schneider a win?

As much as Schneider feels the pressure to win his first regular-season game since Dec. 27, 2017, his teammates around him are certainly sharing the burden.



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They may not be actively thinking about it in the middle of games, but the skaters want to lift the weight of the drought as much as the goalie.

"You dig in and try to get it for him. You don't change anything that you're trying to do, but I don't want to say we're playing harder just because it's him," Greene said. "It's just, it's tough that we didn't get to reward him tonight. Over all the games over the last whatever, that was the one we should have gotten for him."

Outside of a mental miscue that led to Mathew Barzal's breakaway goal in the first period, the Devils didn't make many mistakes in front of Schneider, giving him the best chance to make his 27 saves.

The Devils also matched the physicality of an Islanders team that controlled both ends of the ice in the teams' previous meeting.

"We came prepared to play. It was a real strong game for us, and we didn't find a way to get two points," Hynes said. "Cory, he's a well-liked and well-respected member of our team and a big part of the brotherhood. He's a leader. He's a guy that's gone through a lot of adversity, but I think when he's going through that himself, he's never been in a situation where it became about him. It's always been about the team first."

And as much as the Devils want Schneider to get back in the win column, teammates and coaches don't doubt it's coming. For all the goalie's struggles this season, they still trust Schneider is capable of playing at a high level.

"All those questions came from outside the locker room," Hynes said. "They didn't come from inside the locker room, they didn't come from our management, they didn't come from our ownership, they didn't come from the teammates, they didn't come from the coaches. They came from everybody else that has opinions outside the room. So no one in that locker room or in our organization is surprised by that."

Coaches will talk to Coleman about penalties

Blake Coleman took a pair of minor penalties on Thursday, giving him six total for 12 penalty minutes over his past four games. In 23 games prior to that stretch, Coleman had 10 penalty minutes.

The forward's game involves the tenacity and aggression that requires toeing the line between physical plays and penalties, so it's possible this small stretch is just a case of Coleman going a tad too far.

But considering Coleman is one of the team's top penalty killers, alongside Travis Zajac, having him in the box takes away from one of the team's strengths.

"I'm going to sit down and talk with Blake. Really his last three games, we need better from him," Hynes said. "We need more, we need him a little bit more focused, back to what his identity is. We don't need him in the penalty box. He's one of our best penalty killers and he's such an important player for us. I think there needs to be a little bit of a mental rest for him, and we'll discuss that with him, and we'll look for a better Blake Coleman against the Wild."

One of Coleman's penalties was offset by a Barzal roughing call, so the Devils needed to kill just one penalty with Coleman in the box. But on a night where Zajac briefly left after getting hit in the head with a puck and the Devils were playing without Brian Boyle for the first time, the penalty kill depth passed a test.

Fourth line actively involved

As the home team, the Devils got the chance to pick their starting lineup after the Islanders, so when Hynes saw Barry Trotz trot out his fourth line to start the game, he did the same.

That trio of Kurtis Gabriel, Kevin Rooney and Brett Seney went on to have a big night.

Rooney connected for the Devils' lone goal, taking a Gabriel pass and racing into the offensive zone before snapping a shot home from the inside of the left circle.

Physically, all three were hard on the boards and in front of both nets. They caused turnovers on the forecheck and caused some havoc.

Even if they didn't score the goal, it would have been a successful night.

Gabriel in particular had his most efficient game in a Devils uniform.

"When you look at the energy he brings, he's a physical presence," Hynes said. "He's a guy that knows how to play. He's got better hands than I think people give him credit for. He's a smart player. He's defensively responsible when he's in the D-zone. He's a tough kid. He's physical. He doesn't pass cup checks and he brings a lot of energy to the room."

How PK played without Brian Boyle

Even when the Devils were at full strength and had their pick of players for the PK, Hynes called Rooney one of the organization's best on the ice shorthanded. Now with the opportunity there, Hynes won't hesitate to give him the ice time.

Rooney played 3:58 of penalty kill time on Thursday, ranking him second on the team behind just Greene, who leads the NHL in shorthanded time.

"A real positive tonight, even over the last few games, has been Kevin Rooney," Hynes said. "He's a guy we felt coming in (to training camp) could be a guy that could elevate the team. I think when you see his physicality that he's playing with, his speed, he's got good size. You can tell he's a lot more comfortable and I think now, he's has multiple opportunities to become an NHL regular. Now you're starting to see an identity with him, and he's an excellent penalty killer."

It's also worth mentioning on Greene that only three players since the 2012-13 season have averaged more shorthanded ice time per game for a full season than his current 3:58 per game clip. One of those players was Greene himself, who averaged 3:59 during the 2014-15 campaign.

Thursday was an identity game for Devils

From almost every aspect, Thursday was a difficult day for the Devils.

They played a game just 24 hours after trading away one of the key figures in their locker room in Brian Boyle, and then playing against the Metropolitan Division's leading team, they had Zajac and Miles Wood leave the game with injuries. Zajac returned, but Wood did not after suffering what Hynes called an upper body injury from falling hard to the ice.

Despite that, they came within a Jesper Bratt double doink in overtime — where he hit the post and crossbar with a shot — or one conversion on three shootout chances from winning the game.

"Being in an adverse situation today, where you've got a key member of our team gets traded," Hynes said. "We've got a lot of guys stepping up into the lineup. We had injuries during the game. It was a strong culture game, a brotherhood game from that perspective."

Star Ledger LOADED: 02.09.2019

1129821 New Jersey Devils

Devils waste a Cory Schneider gem in shootout loss to Islanders | Rapid reaction

Feb 8, 12:25 PM

Chris Ryan

Cory Schneider did everything possible to end his personal losing streak. It still wasn't enough.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Despite making several difficult saves on dangerous shots over the course of the night, the Devils couldn't muster enough offense to win in regulation or overtime, and the New York Islanders got the deciding goal from Josh Bailey in a shootout for a 2-1 victory on Thursday at Prudential Center in Newark.

Schneider stopped 24 of the 25 shots he faced in regulation, surrendering his only goal on a Mathew Barzal uncontested breakaway in the first period. He then stopped all four shots he faced in overtime, including a glove save on Bailey from the slot.

The Devils nearly ended the game in OT when Jesper Brett drilled the crossbar on a rush.

Brian Boyle was a member of the New Jersey Devils for less than two seasons, but he left a distinct mark on his teammates and the organization prior to his trade to the Nashville Predators on Wednesday, February 6, 2019 (2/6/19).

Scoring plays

Kevin Rooney got the scoring going for the Devils with a quick strike at 5:32 of the first period when he raced over the blue line and into the left side of the slot, where he snapped a shot past Thomas Greiss for his second goal of the season.

Schneider avoided the early-game goals that plagued him earlier this season, but a Barzal breakaway got the Islanders on the board before the first intermission. Barzal took a pass from Ryan Pulock after emerging from the penalty box, giving him a clear path to net. He went to his backhand and flipped a shot past Schneider at the left post at 13:42 of the first.

The Islanders got another breakaway later in the period when Valtteri Filppula took a pass while emerging from the box. Schneider stopped his shot, but Ben Lovejoy took a tripping penalty while in pursuit. The Devils successfully killed that power play during a 4-for-4 night on the PK.

One of those kills came early in the third period when the Islanders put the Devils under siege, pinning them in the defensive zone for a majority of the opening minutes.

Schneider stayed strong in those moments, making a sliding save on a close shot at the crease before gloving a shot from the point was heading to the left post through traffic.

Miles Wood leaves early

Miles Wood hit the ice hard during the second period while battling with an Islanders defender in the offensive zone, and he skated to the bench in pain. He took his next shift, but he then returned to the bench and went down the tunnel.

He did not return to the game. Devils coach John Hynes called it an upper body injury, but he did not have any further update on Wood.

Next up

The Devils will end their four-game home stand with back-to-back games over the weekend. They host the Minnesota Wild at 1 p.m. on Saturday before welcoming the Carolina Hurricanes to Prudential Center at 3 p.m. on Sunday.

They will go on a three-game road trip next week, starting with a Tuesday game against the St. Louis Blues, and they will also have stops to play the Chicago Blackhawks and Wild.

Star Ledger LOADED: 02.09.2019

1129822 New Jersey Devils

Devils practice notes: Joey Anderson set to make return from injury, but with NJ?

Abbey Mastracco

5:26 p.m. ET Feb. 8, 2019

NEWARK – Sometimes playing time has a way of working itself out. That's exactly what happened with Joey Anderson and why he'll be remaining in Newark with Devils this weekend instead of heading to Binghamton to play with the team's American Hockey League affiliate.

An unfortunate collision with the net left Anderson needing surgery on his right ankle on Nov. 21. Even more unfortunate, his parents and girlfriend were in attendance, having come to New Jersey from Minnesota for the Thanksgiving week and to watch him play as an NHL pro for the first time.

Devils' brass debated sending Anderson back to Binghamton for a few games to test the ankle and get his legs back underneath him, but Miles Wood will be unable to play Saturday against the Minnesota Wild. The upper-body injury he suffered in the second period of Thursday's 2-1 shootout loss against the Islanders won't land him on injured reserve but it is serious enough to force him out of at least one, possibly two games this weekend, opening up a spot for Anderson.

New Jersey Devils right wing Joey Anderson (49) celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal against the Philadelphia Flyers during the first period at Wells Fargo Center.

"Joey has looked really good in practice and we really debated that yesterday afternoon, just what's the best thing for him," coach John Hynes said Friday after practice at RWJBarnabas Health Hockey House. "Maybe have him go down and play a few games in Binghamton and then come up with us for the road trip. But with Miles going down, we feel like he's been here, he's played well and he was a big part of our team before he went down."

The 20-year-old Anderson, a product of Minnesota-Duluth, had just scored his first NHL goal a few days before the injury. But Anderson isn't exactly an offensive force, what he does well is the things the Devils have not been doing well: He plays hard on pucks, on the forecheck and he's a physical, yet deceptively speedy forward who can match up with heavier teams.

"I want to keep showing the intangible things that have gotten me where I am in hockey," Anderson said. "Winning puck battles, being smart on the puck, being in good spots, winning battles. The biggest thing is being hard to play against, being heavy and playing a fast game."

Taylor on track

Nov 23, 2018; Newark, NJ, USA; New Jersey Devils left wing Taylor Hall (9) skates with the puck against New York Islanders right wing Leo Komarov (47) during the second period at Prudential Center.

The Devils have yet to update or upgrade the status of Taylor Hall, who has been on IR with a lower-body injury since New Year's Day. He has been on the ice but not consistently and he does not appear to be anywhere close to a return.

With the playoffs out of reach and the team already selling off assets it seems unreasonable to bring back the reigning Hart Trophy winner and risk further injury but Hynes insists it's important to Hall to play again this season and the trainers currently have him on a progression that will lead to him playing again.

"I know he's been frustrated with his injury and coming back and trying to make it work," Hynes said. "But he's also conscious that when he does come back, he is truly ready to come back and play. He wants to get his game back and work and continue to get better as a player. That's what we're anticipating."

Hall's agent, Darren Ferris, shed little light on the injury during an interview with Sirius/XM Radio earlier this week but he did say Hall is still



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happy in New Jersey and he's confident a deal will get done to extend his contract this summer.

Weekend split

Cory Schneider will get another start this weekend against either the Wild or the Carolina Hurricanes. The decision will be made by Saturday morning with the coaches waiting to see how Schneider's body responds to practice and the treatment he received Friday.

Bergen Record LOADED: 02.09.2019

1129823 New Jersey Devils

'Vintage' Cory Schneider is biggest takeaway in NJ Devils' shootout loss

Abbey Mastracco

8:13 a.m. ET Feb. 8, 2019

NEWARK – A lot of noise has surrounded Cory Schneider this season, and I don't mean the sound of pucks ringing off the posts of his net. The Devils' goalie hasn't had a ton of help from the iron.

Many in hockey wondered if he would ever be able to return to his old form after he posted the worst stats of his career through the first nine games of the season. Between the hip surgery last spring and the GAA over 4.50, many wondered if he was done.

Coach John Hynes would like to remind everyone that that narrative was never one within the organization, but the only person who could truly answer that question was Schneider himself. Based on what he did Thursday night at Prudential Center in the Devils' 2-1 shootout loss to the Islanders, the answer is no, he's not done.

"I don't want to say vintage, but yeah, that's the Cory I know and we know and it's good to see it," captain Andy Greene said. "Now let's build on it."

Feb 7, 2019; Newark, NJ, USA; New Jersey Devils goaltender Cory Schneider (35) makes a glove save during the third period against the New York Islanders at Prudential Center.

Schneider knows he'll need to show more than just one 27-save shootout performance before everyone stops asking.

"It might be nice to get a win," Schneider said. "But if I'm able to repeat how I felt and my technique and all of that stuff moving forward then it might be sooner rather than later."

Here are three takeaways from the loss.

Schneider bounced back

Goaltending has been the Devils' Achilles heel all season but it didn't look like there were many weaknesses in his game. He stopped 27 of 28 shots faced and three of the Islanders' four shooters in the shootout.

"He looked more of what Cory is," Hynes said. "A really strong positional goalie who squares up to the shots."

Why he bounced back

The Devils gave Schneider good defense in front of his net but he was certainly challenged. The Islanders had more high-danger scoring chances than the Devils and Schneider used his athleticism to cut down angles and get to his spots. He also showed good rebound control and vision through traffic.

"I was competing on pucks harder," Schneider said. "I felt more fluid, more athletic, able to explode and move around the net a little bit better

and get to my spot sooner. I was getting stronger pushes and that sets you up for the next shot or the next pass instead of sitting back and reacting.

"Just a couple things. It doesn't sound like much but you know it when you feel it."

'Fight and focus'

What Hynes liked the most from the skaters in front of Schneider was the increased physicality and decreased mental lapses. They outshot the Islanders 31-28, out-hit them 31-23 and blocked key shots to help Schneider out.

"Coming into the game, we talked about the fight and the focus," he said. "The fight is winning your 1-on-1s, it's second-efforts, it's playing hard in the hard areas of the game, the net-fronts, the board play."

The focus part has been particularly difficult for the Devils in recent games but they were able to adjust when things didn't go their way against the Islanders.

"When you look at the focus part, that's what's kind of undone us a few times," Hynes said. "We've missed some assignments, we've made some mistakes. We talked about guys doing their job and understanding getting into the game, you can compete but you can't beat yourself. I thought you saw that focus a lot."

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1129836 Ottawa Senators

WARREN: A surging penalty kill, in praise of the Jets skill, who starts in goal and what about Paajarvi?

Ken Warren

Published:February 8, 2019

Updated:February 8, 2019 7:53 PM EST

With the group of grumpy, but highly talented Winnipeg Jets coming to town Saturday afternoon, the Ottawa Senators might have preferred to keep quiet about the major turnaround in their penalty-killing record in the past month.

After being shut out with the man advantage for the past two games, including allowing 53 shots to the Montreal Canadiens in Thursday's 5-2 loss, the Jets are certainly overdue to cash in.

But it is hard to overlook the recent success of the once much-maligned Senators penalty-killing teams.

They've gone seven games without allowing a goal, shutting down opponents on their past 13 opportunities, including all three in Thursday's 4-0 win over the Ducks. In their past 18 games, they've killed off 33-of-38 chances — an 86.7% success rate.

You'll recall that back in the first month of the season, the Senators were only killing off two out of every three opposition chances.

"I don't think I really made the big difference," said Jean-Gabriel Pageau, who has been a central part of the story since returning from injury 12 games ago. "We changed our system a little bit on the PK and we needed to change it. It wasn't working. Everyone seems to have adjusted pretty well."

Senators coach Guy Boucher says the fundamental system change came on Nov. 14, a move designed to take pressure off the team's overwhelmed young defence.



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We'll trust Boucher, who is fond of crunching numbers, when he says the Senators have been the league's seventh-best penalty killing team since then.

But they've been ever better since Pageau's return, stopping 21-of-24 chances.

"Having added Pageau there, again, it has to do with personnel, it always has to do with personnel," Boucher said. "The minute you add on some expertise to whatever you're doing, you're efficiency is good. Adding Pageau is huge."

FREING UP STONE

The added bonus to having Pageau back to kill penalties is that Boucher isn't relying on Mark Stone as often in shorthanded situations, giving him more "juice" to contribute at even-strength and on power-play opportunities.

IN ANDERS(ON) THEY TRUST

Following Friday's workout, Boucher was still mulling over who to start in goal against the Jets. Craig Anderson was the club's MVP in the first three months of the season, but Anders Nilsson has turned countless heads while winning five of his past seven starts. His 45-save shutout against the Ducks was his first since October 2017.

"A guy that size, I think he knows his strengths," Stone said of the 6-foot-6 Nilsson. "Which is being big and he's athletic when he needs to make the saves. He's got a lot of combinations that help him be successful."

SLOWING DOWN THE JETS

Stone and Boucher were running out of superlatives Friday in describing the Jets' strengths.

"They're outstanding," said Boucher, who skipped skipped the quick 27-minute skate in order to focus on watching video of the Jets.

"It's one of the most impressive teams in the league, for sure. They've got everything: Goaltending, size, speed, skill. That's a team that's going to be good for many, many years, so it's an intimidating team in that respect because they come at you with everything."

They boast a sense of humour, too. After Thursday's loss in Montreal, Jets coach Paul Maurice said, "the coaches were no good, the players were no good, the food was no good, hopefully the plane works."

THE BELLEVILLE SHUTTLE

With defencemen Christian Jaros and Ben Harpur healthy enough to practice Friday (and likely play Saturday), Cody Goloubeff was returned to Belleville of the AHL after making his Senators debut against the Ducks. Goloubeff was quietly effective, blocking four shots and delivering three hits in 13:20 of ice time ... Jack Rodewald, who was also called up from Belleville this week, suffered a lower-body injury and played only 3:22 against the Ducks. The Senators were expected to call up another forward from Belleville, following the B-Sens game against Laval ... Considering the recent inspired play of Magnus Paajarvi, is it possible a team or two would be interested in him as a depth player for a playoff run? Paajarvi was a presence again Thursday against the Ducks, firing five shots on goal. He scored twice in Wednesday's 5-4 loss to Toronto ... If you're going to live in Canada, you've got to love Hockey Day in Canada, a time for us to embrace our weather and culture to stay inside to watch the world's greatest sport from the comfort of our couches, for hours upon hours.

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1129837 Ottawa Senators

Before making decisions on the future, there's history for Stone and Duchene to ponder

Ken Warren

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The everyday questions pitched to Mark Stone and Matt Duchene about whether they'll re-sign long-term extensions with the Ottawa Senators are routinely fouled off, unanswered, over and over again.

"Everything I do is going to be between myself, (my agents) and the team," Stone said again Friday when pressed about the tense negotiations with the hard deadlines closing in fast.

After scoring twice in Thursday's 4-0 win over the Anaheim Ducks, Duchene said he was "digesting" any and all background information he could, including the latest controversial comments from Senators owner Eugene Melnyk.

We'll get to a refresher course on some of the recent history of signings, trades and salaries that Duchene is chewing on in a moment.

In case you somehow missed the Wednesday statement from Melnyk — which has only further added to the angst among Senators fans — he pledged to spend "close" to the salary cap beginning in 2021, when the youngsters of today are hopefully skating into their prime years.

By and large, the Senators' drafting record has been good, including the Thomas Chabot home run, and the current crop of young talent is among the NHL's best. At the same time, though, the promises of keeping the kids down the road is a deflection from how the Senators have painted themselves into their current corner.

It doesn't take a CSI: Ottawa investigative team to realize that it's the recent ownership commitments and attitudes towards keeping stars and attracting new ones that are weighing so heavily on Stone and Duchene.

If Stone stays, he will become the Senators next captain. But Stone has also grown up in the organization, seeing first-hand what has happened with previous three captains Daniel Alfredsson, Jason Spezza and Erik Karlsson, along with former alternate captain Kyle Turris. All of them either walked out or were pushed out the dressing-room door amid squabbles with ownership about the financial commitment towards winning, as their own unrestricted free agency loomed in the background.

The most recent contract the Senators handed out to a star pending unrestricted free agent was the seven-year, \$50.75-million deal signed by Bobby Ryan in Oct. 2014.

The Senators have made some medium-term investments in depth players who could have left as free agents, including a four-year extension to defenceman Marc Methot in 2016 and to forward Zack Smith in 2017, but the most recent impact outside unrestricted free agent signed by the Senators was Clarke MacArthur back in 2013.

Tied into all of the above, trading has also become a tricky dance for general manager Pierre Dorion. In the majority of big trades in the past few years, the Senators have either shed salary or dealt away players who were due for significant pay raises.

Take, for instance, the July 2016 deal that saw Mika Zibanejad go to the New York Rangers for Derick Brassard. Brassard made \$3 million in 2016-17 and \$3.5 million in 2017-18. Zibanejad earned \$3.25 million in 2016-17, but he was also due a big raise as a restricted free agent following the season. Eventually, he signed his current five-year, \$26.75-million deal with the Rangers in July 2017.

When the Senators lost their way last season, Brassard was traded to Pittsburgh for goaltending prospect Filip Gustavsson, currently developing with Belleville in the American Hockey League.



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While the Senators took on an additional \$2 million in salary in the three-way trade that brought in Duchene and sent Turriss to Nashville in November 2017, a significant reason for the deal was the Senators inability to sign Turriss — a pending unrestricted free agent — to an extension. At the time, of course, Duchene had one year remaining on his existing contract.

Then came the turmoil of last summer, when the Senators traded away both Karlsson and Hoffman to the San Jose Sharks.

Yes, there are future prospects and draft picks coming in the Karlsson deal, including promising centre Josh Norris, a former San Jose first-round pick. In the short term, though, Karlsson's \$7.5-million salary this season was replaced by the combined \$3.8 million that Chris Tierney and Dylan DeMelo earn.

Meanwhile, the \$5.65 million due to Hoffman this season and next has been replaced by Mikkel Boedker's \$4-million salary for this season and next.

The above number-crunching is only a snapshot of what has occurred here in the past few years and there are countless other issues involved for Stone and Duchene as they digest the full picture before making their decisions on whether to sign.

If they don't commit here, the Senators will have no choice but to trade them. Accordingly, as the Feb. 25 trade deadline fast approaches, every game could potentially be the last one either one plays in a Senators uniform.

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Senators gameday versus Jets

Ken Warren

Published:February 9, 2019

Updated:February 9, 2019 12:18 AM EST

Ottawa Sun Sports Hockey Ottawa Senators

Winnipeg Jets at Ottawa Senators

Saturday, 2 p.m., Canadian Tire Centre.

TV: CBC, TVA. Radio: TSN 1200-AM, Unique 94,5-FM

Five Keys To The Game:

Maintaining momentum: The Senators didn't get down on themselves, knowing a win was close before dumping the Anaheim Ducks 4-0 Thursday. Staying positive is a primary goal in a season that will end without a playoff berth.

Yesterday is gone: By the same token, the Senators can't get too high, knowing that the Stanley Cup contending Jets will also be looking to put behind them Thursday's ugly 5-2 loss in Montreal.

Eliminating the big errors: The Senators did allow 45 shots against the goal-starved Ducks. Do that against the highly-talented Jets and they risk being blown out of their own building.

Return of strong penalty killing: The Senators have gone a season-high seven games without allowing a power play goal, successfully killing off 24 opportunities in that span.

Shutting down Scheifele: The Jets are a pick-your-poison kind of squad, with numerous potential game-breakers. But chances do improve if you

can find an answer for number one centre Mark Scheifele, who leads the team with 27 goals.

Special Teams

Senators: PP: 20.7 (16th), PK: 77.1 (25th)

Jets: PP: 26.5 (4th), PK: 80.4 (14th)

Senators Gameday Lines

Brady Tkachuk-Colin White-Mark Stone

Ryan Dzingel-Matt Duchene-Bobby Ryan

Zack Smith-Jean-Gabriel Pageau-Magnus Paajarvi

Rudolfs Balcers-Chris Tierney

Defence

Max Lajoie-Cody Ceci

Thomas Chabot-Dylan DeMelo

Mark Borowiecki-Christian Jaros

Ben Harpur

Goalies

Craig Anderson

Anders Nilsson

Sick Bay

Marian Gaborik

Jets Gameday Lines

Kyle Connor-Mark Scheifele-Blake Wheeler

Patrick Laine-Bryan Little-Jack Roslovic

Mathieu Perreault-Adam Lowry-Brandon Tanev

Brendan Lemieux-Andrew Copp-Mason Appleton

Defence

Joe Morrow-Jacob Trouba

Ben Chariot-Dustin Byfuglien

Dmitry Kulikov-Tyler Myers

Goaltending

Connor Hellebuyck

Laurent Brossoit

Sick Bay

Nikolai Ehlers, Josh Morrissey

THE BIG MATCH-UP

Blake Wheeler versus Matt Duchene:

Wheeler is the most productive set-up man in the NHL these days, with 54 assists in 54 games, to go along with 11 goals. He's a big part of the powerhouse Jets offence, which will be motivated following Thursday's 5-2 loss in Montreal.

Duchene, meanwhile, pocketed a pair of goals in Thursday's 4-0 whitewash of the Anaheim Ducks, giving him 11 goals and five assists in his past 16 games and 100 points in a Senators uniform. It's also career game number 700 for Duchene, who is facing the distinct possibility that every game could be his last one in an Ottawa uniform.

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1129839 Ottawa Senators

Senators exec goes on offensive with spin that's unfair to previous ownership

By Chris Stevenson Feb 8, 2019

While working on the TSN 1200 Senators pre-game show Thursday, I had the chance to ask a couple of questions of Senators chief operating officer Nicolas Ruzskowski.

He joined us about 23 hours after the Senators put out a press release summarizing comments owner Eugene Melnyk had made to business types at the Hockey Hall of Fame on Tuesday, which I wrote about here.

Ruzskowski's job is to advance the Senators' agenda. He is going to bridge, parry and pivot and that's what he did when I asked why Senators fans should believe Melnyk is going to spend close to the salary cap's upper limit starting in 2021. My point was we've seen this team flip flop on its team-building strategy in the past 16 months, so why believe it now?

In November 2017, they went all in with the deal to acquire Matt Duchene. A little more than a month later, Melnyk was on Parliament Hill before the outdoor game warning of cuts to player payroll if attendance didn't pick up.

By February, the team was entertaining trade offers for generational defenceman Erik Karlsson and was shifting into full rebuild mode. That's a pretty big U-turn in the space of four months.

In answering the question about the owner's lack of credibility with the Senators fanbase, Ruzskowski asked fans to take a broader perspective of Melnyk's ownership, but I think that doesn't help Melnyk's cause, at least in the way Ruzskowski chose to frame it.

From Ruzskowski:

"I understand how frustrating certain elements of the last 16 months have been. We hear their concerns loud and clear. That being said what I would like to say is yes, you have a right to be concerned about what's happened in the last 16 months.

"But it is also reasonable for us to ask if we're asking ourselves by what actions are you measuring the credibility of this team to look at the 16-year track record of this owner and this team and remember very well that we are about 10 percent better in terms of the number of wins that we have as a percentage of games played under Eugene Melnyk than we were under the previous ownership structure.

"1992 to 2003 was a period in time where we won less than 40 percent of the games that we played. In the last 16 years, we've won roughly 50 percent of the games that we've played, on the heels, I might add, on the heels of the last five years of inconsistency. So what we are trying to address are those last five years inconsistency with a rebuild that, yes, is going to take a few years to get to its peak performance window. But when that happens, as any good investor would, the owner is going to open his wallet and make that five-year commitment to actually make it happen.

"You can also judge him by his business track record which has been pretty good by the standards of most of us who aspire to be entrepreneurs at some point in our life."

I have two big issues with comparing Melnyk's run as Senators owner with that of Bruce Firestone and then Rod Bryden.

The first is the Senators and the Tampa Bay Lightning were saddled with perhaps the worst expansion rules ever for their \$50 million expansion

fees. It took a combined 14 seasons before either the Senators or the Lightning had a season of at least 40 wins (the Senators had their breakthrough 44-23-15 season in 1998-99).

Those horrendous seasons were the fault of their fellow NHL owners rather than the owners of the Senators or the Lightning.

My second point: When Bryden lost his grip on the under-capitalized Senators in 2003, Melnyk swooped in and got himself a bargain. His deal to buy the Senators and the Corel Centre closed in August, three months after the Senators lost in the 2003 Eastern Conference final.

So Melnyk benefited greatly from the work of president Roy Mlakar and the work of general managers Pierre Gauthier, Rick Dudley and Marshall Johnston. He bought a ready-made contender, so I don't think it's fair to use the wins that were a result of the foundation put down by his predecessor as evidence Melnyk's ownership has been better.

It's an unfair comparison.

On the issue of re-signing potential free agents Mark Stone, Matt Duchene and Ryan Dzingel, Ruzskowski said it is the Senators priority to get them signed, but if it winds up that doesn't happen, there is life on the other side. TSN 1200 host Ian Mendes suggested not signing Stone, in particular, would be "the last straw" for some Senators fans.

While emphasizing signing the trio to contract extensions is the Senators priority right now, Ruzskowski added:

"I would encourage people not to look at that as the final straw but to look at that as opportunity in the context of the rebuild.

"The reason I say that is very simple. Whatever we do we have to stay at the bottom of the salary cap at a minimum. So any transaction that puts us below that requires us to get back either an equivalent return in the form of a roster player or to make an equivalent investment in free agency.

"If you look at this a little bit dispassionately, you can do the job of understanding how important the leadership, the character, the integrity of a guy like Stone is to the team while at the same doing the exercise of trying to take a broader look at modern life economics in the NHL and understanding that one setback is not permanent. There is a land of opportunity beyond those decisions and it's our job to be ready for every eventuality."

"We have a duty because of collective bargaining to be at a certain level based on salary cap rules. We can't be below that."

Right now, the Senators have 14 players on their current roster under contract for next season with a cap hit of about \$48 million. That doesn't include injured players Marian Gaborik, Clarke MacArthur and goaltender Mike Condon, which could add about another \$11 million.

Add players like forwards Drake Batherson, Alex Formenton and Filip Chlapik and defenceman Christian Wolanin (who needs a new contract) who could all reasonably be expected to make the team next season in a rebuild at a cost of another \$4 million or so.

Centre Colin White can be restricted free agent and needs a new deal which would bring the Senators to 20 players at a cost of about \$63 million, roughly speaking, which is right around where the cap floor is expected to be.

Making the big assumption the Senators don't sign Stone, Duchene and Dzingel, a projected Senators roster for 2019-20 could look like this:

Forwards (11)

Rudolfs Balcers

Drake Batherson

Mikkel Boedker

Filip Chlapik



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Alex Formenton

Jean-Gabriel Pageau

Bobby Ryan

Zack Smith

Chris Tierney

Brady Tkachuk

Colin White

Defence (7)

Mark Borowiecki

Thomas Chabot

Ben Harpur

Dylan DeMelo

Christian Jaros

Maxime Lajoie

Christian Wolanin

Goaltenders (2)

Craig Anderson

Mike Condon

Injured – Marian Gaborik, Clarke MacArthur

Retained salary – Dion Phaneuf

Even saying good-bye to Stone, Duchene, Dzingel and potentially defenceman Cody Ceci, the Senators already look like they could be around the salary floor.

They could fill out the roster with some (relatively) cheap free agents or the players potentially returned in deals for Stone, Duchene and Dzingel if they are not signed to contract extensions.

That doesn't sound like much of a land of opportunity, at least for next season.

The Athletic LOADED: 02.09.2019

1129840 Ottawa Senators

Analyzing the adjustments made by Logan Brown who is beginning to fulfill his draft promise

By Mitch Brown Feb 8, 2019

Logan Brown is one of the hockey's most polarizing prospects. Selected by the Ottawa Senators 11th overall in 2016, one thing that is not debatable is Brown's skill. He has high-end vision, soft hands and an underused shot that can beat NHL goaltenders, all packed into a 6-foot-6 frame.

Despite his unique skill set, the draft day concerns were numerous. With those skills, critics say, Brown should be a dominating presence both on and off the puck. But he isn't. For all the skill that he has, he goes through stretches of limited impact. His skating has shown limited improvement and he often plays at a slow pace. And compounding all these concerns is a lengthy injury history.

For most of the two seasons since being drafted, Brown's development flat-lined. But that has changed these past couple months. Since joining the Belleville Senators, Brown is producing a point per game over his last 17 contests. He's arguably been Belleville's best player in the last month.

There are numerous reasons for his recent success, perhaps none more influential than his performance on the powerplay. There's this extra assertiveness that he has on the man advantage; a glimpse into what he could become with the same mindset at even strength. The extra ice masks Brown's lack of three-step acceleration and he takes full advantage of the extra space.

That mindset is most evident through the way that his pass-first mentality dissipates and he becomes a balanced offensive threat. He's so dangerous as a shooter from the left circle as a left shot. He often casually strolls into the circle. The opposition expects a shot, but they don't expect this:

That patient, unassuming movement is actually Brown locating a hole in the goaltender and waiting for the opportunity to fire a perfectly placed shot. Goaltenders and defenders know a shot is coming, but they don't know when. He enters the shot with his skates pointing towards the corner or even the weak-side boards, instead of towards the net like most players. As he drags the puck behind his feet to maximize the shot's power, he cuts on the outside foot towards goal and fires. That unassuming stance suddenly becomes weight shift and the speed of his release is what allows that shot to beat goaltenders cleanly.

Brown's ability to set up teammates around the goal makes him a multidimensional threat on the powerplay. He's an avid user of the shot-pass, a hard shot along the ice usually created with a fake wind up that's really meant for a one-timer or redirection around the goal. It's a deceptive play that's particularly dangerous when facing wedge penalty kill formations, like what the Marlies employed below.

When you put both the shooting and passing skills together, you get stretches of powerplay dominance. He's imaginative, diverse and a controller of the pace. Take the sequence below, for example. Brown starts the play with a powerful shot from the top of the slot. Then, he sets up a shot by drawing the puck and using a slip pass to move the puck under a defender's stick. Brown stays active, moves back up to the point and then back down. He takes the cross-ice feed from Batherson and uses the same shot we discussed earlier—unassuming stances with skates pointed towards the boards, only to use that stance to shift his weight into a powerful shot.

Brown could probably help the Senators' 14th-ranked powerplay right now. He might've been able to two years ago. But most of the game is played at 5-on-5, and Brown's 5-on-5 play has often been a point of contention. Aside from 2016-2017, he's historically been a top point producer at 5-on-5. Last season, he was fifth in the OHL (1.03). This season, Brown is fifth among under-21 AHL skaters with 0.55 5-on-5 points per game, ahead of a number of players from his class like Luke Kunin, Michael McLeod and Alex Nylander.

It's Brown's play away from the puck that has always been a question mark at 5-on-5. It's not that he's mediocre defensively—it's that rarely do you know what type of effort Brown will give. Despite his large frame, he's not going to be some huge hitter and that's OK. But, he loses more battles that you'd think given his stature and he's particularly susceptible to losing battles on a second effort from the opposition due his lack of separation speed.

In recent weeks, that wavering defensive effort hasn't been an issue—he's been as consistent without the puck as he's been on the score sheet. He's been a puck thief, keeping his feet moving and using his reach to intercept passes and tie up attackers.

On the forecheck, he's exceptional at turning those steals directly into offence. Below is an example. Brown starts off the play by missing the puck, but ties up his man to allow the puck to slide to a teammate. Then, he sets up a teammate in the slot from behind the goal line. Utica recovers the puck, but Brown tracks it and steals it right back, setting up



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a point-blank chance on a redirection. To finish the shift off, he pressures the opposition into a failed clearance.

Playmaking is, undeniably, Brown's best trait. That same patience that makes him dangerous on the powerplay applies on 5-on-5, too. Brown loves to maintain possession around the perimeter to wait for the perfect opportunity to find a teammate in the slot.

Brown's top speed is average and his acceleration is below-average. Instead of forcing a play, Brown passes in situations that other players would separate with their feet. He plays within his strengths, an admirable trait for a young player.

While passes like those are great examples of Brown's vision and skill, they also highlight an issue with Brown beyond skating. He gets stuck in this loop of gaining the zone to the outside and slowing down; attacking without pace is predictable. If a player attacks with little pace all the time, they are forced to rely on fighting through contact and winning battles and that's not where Brown is at his best. Too often he's too easily funneled to the outside as he avoids leaning on defenders to gain the inside. This hasn't just been evident in transition, but also when he avoids taking the puck to the net deep in the zone.

That's starting to change. And sure, cutting to the inside to jockey for position is never going to be Brown's defining trait, but he's adding more layers to his game. And more layers means more ways to score. And more ways to score means a higher chance of bringing offence to the NHL.

It's evident in this goal, from Dec. 7, that came before his recent surge. He passes to the slot and immediately heads towards the net. Because both Brown and the defender are left shots, and Brown's a huge guy, there's no way the defender can tie Brown up. It's a tap-in for Brown.

This past month the positive examples have started to pile up. On Jan. 9, he recognized open space in the slot and attacked it. Brown has often passed up those opportunities to set up behind the net, but in this goal and many other plays, he takes the puck right to the net. That he took the puck to the slot, rather than wrap it around, is a clever play too—it's a better scoring opportunity.

On Feb. 5, he boxed out a defender with his frame to leave the loose puck for Nick Paul, who immediately scored. That's a great example of what Brown is starting to do better: Using contact to create.

These might not seem like significant plays, but attention to these details turn skilled prospects into scoring NHLers. These are details that will allow Brown to use those nifty handles or long passes in the NHL.

From the dual power-play threat, to the long-range shooting ability, to the deft playmaking—these are skills of one of hockey's most talented prospects. But these skills coupled with a wavering on-ice work ethic and lack of pace also make Brown one of hockey's most polarizing prospects.

Now, Brown is looking like the prospect the Senators expected when they drafted him: A potential top-six centre. He still has flaws to fix, such as attacking off the rush with more pace, but he's trending up.

If Brown's performance in the last month is indicative of what's to come, it won't be long before he showcases those talents in the NHL.

The Athletic LOADED: 02.09.2019

1129786 Edmonton Oilers

Worst wildcard race ever gives Edmonton Oilers reason to believe

Robert Tychkowski

The standings don't lie.

A team might think it's making progress, but if it's 15 teams deep when people click on the standings, that's pretty much the end of the discussion.

It works the other way, too. A team can lose five or six in a row, fire its coach and general manager a few months apart and struggle mightily at home, but if the standings say it's right in the hunt, that's all that matters.

It's certainly all that matters to the Edmonton Oilers. Despite all that's gone wrong for them this season they are two points out of playoff spot. They shouldn't be. They probably don't deserve to be. But they are. And they make no apologies for the reprieve being granted by the slowest wildcard race ever.

"It's crazy," said goaltender Cam Talbot. "In most other years we probably wouldn't be in this position. We're lucky that we still have a chance here and we have to take advantage of it."

Being this close to a wildcard spot makes it easy to forget a few blown leads, some unbalanced scoring and a six-game winless skid. Instead of being down on themselves, the Oilers are buoyed by this rare opportunity to make everything right.

"By looking at the spot we're in it can give you a little bit more motivation, push you a little more," said Ryan Nugent-Hopkins. "I don't think it's a bad thing at this point to look at the standings."

"It can put more fire under you knowing that we need to start stringing some together here."

They know they dodged a few bullets, but with 28 games to go things are nowhere near as bad as they seem. Just ask the standings.

"It's crazy to look at," said Leon Draisaitl. "We're three or four points from last place and two points from a wildcard spot. It's very, very tight. We have to keep pushing, keep moving forward, bank as many points as we can right now."

LEON ON FIRE

Draisaitl is supposed to be a set-up man, not the third-leading goal scorer in the NHL, but who says people can't change?

It's been a scoring rampage for the Oilers forward lately as he's potted nine goals in the last nine games to break his career high (29 two years ago) and move onto the top page of the goal scoring leaderboard with 32, just five back of Alex Ovechkin.

"The guys have been setting me up pretty nicely lately, there's not much to it," said the 23-year-old winger. "Some really nice plays by those guys and I'm trying to convert on them."

Breaking his career high with almost a third of the season to play is pretty heady stuff, though. If he stays hot he'll have an outside shot at 50, something nobody ever expected from his style of game.

"I knew that I know how to score goals," he said. "I've scored before. I'm more of a passer than anything, probably, but I try and be unpredictable. I try and shoot more and use my shot to my advantage and lately it's been working."

Lately he's been finding the soft spot in the defence and unleashing a pretty good one-timer.

"He has a great ability to hide outside the coverage, in quiet spaces on the ice where people are caught staring at the puck and he's wide open," said head coach Ken Hitchcock. "You can practice that and teach that your whole life and guys don't get it."

"He knows where to go and where people are improperly positioned and he finds those spots and hammers it from there. It's a very unique quality, not many players in the league have that."

MAKING IT RIGHT



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • February 9, 2019

All's well that ends well and Talbot's makeup game with the Minnesota Wild ended with 35 saves and a 4-1 win. It was a perfect script after the awkward events of two nights earlier, when Hitchcock yanked a furious Talbot five minutes into the third period against Chicago.

"Cam played the last game because the players and the coaches let him down and I felt we owed him something," said Hitchcock, who liked the way the Oilers rallied around their goalie. "I don't care which guy plays, we have to play FOR them. If you have that attitude, the front of your net becomes a battle zone and you don't give up quality chances.

"Winning one-on-ones and not getting beat back to the net become really important and if those things become important you become harder to play against."

The Oilers, who had some pretty bad defensive lapses during their six-game winless streak, knew that Talbot had been hung out to dry in recent starts and made a pointed effort to play harder and smarter in front of him. The results spoke for themselves.

"Everybody knew what was at stake," Talbot said of needing to catch Minnesota for one of the wildcard spots. "I was trying to rally behind them as much as they were trying to rally behind me. That's what makes a good team."

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1129787 Edmonton Oilers

Edmonton Oilers: Time to fire the arena?

Robert Tychkowski

Fire the arena?

In a season that's already been strange enough — they canned their head coach the morning of a game and skidded their GM during a second intermission — the Edmonton Oilers might have to complete the hat-trick by pink-slipping Rogers Place.

Call the \$480 million underachiever into CEO Bob Nicholson's office for a sit down and break the news.

"Listen, you tried your best, but it's just not working out. We have more home-ice losses than any other team in the NHL. Even Calgary is better at home and their building looks like a saddle. Plus you're colder than a meat locker. And we can't fire 23 players, so we're letting you go. Don't let your door hit you on your way out."

Unless there is some drastic home improvement scheduled for this month, that might be the only way to keep Edmonton alive in the hunt for a wild card spot that nobody else in the Western Conference seems to want.

"I don't know," said winger Leon Draisaitl, when asked if he had any idea why things have turned so sour for them on home ice. "We've had some good games at home this year, but obviously lately we haven't been good at home."

It doesn't make a whole lot of sense that a team with a 6-3-3 record in its last 12 road games is 2-10-0 in its last 12 at home.

How can the same group of players who've compiled more regulation losses on home ice (14) than any other team in the league have the fifth fewest regulation road losses (11 in 27 games) in their conference?

If you're a fan of the team, you have to be thinking half a billion dollars is a lot of money to spend on a place where people go to be disappointed.

It would have been a lot cheaper to build a theatre and show movies with Ronda Rousey in them.

"You don't want to say you have to bring your road game home, but I think we get caught up in being something that we're not at home," said head coach Ken Hitchcock. "We have to figure that out."

A simple .500 at home over their last 12 at home and the Oilers would be locked into the top wildcard spot, with six points worth of breathing room.

So, yes, figuring this thing out is kind of important. They delivered a perfect formula in beating Minnesota 4-1 on Thursday, but that was in Minnesota. Now they have to execute that game plan at home against, ugh, San Jose.

"The big thing at home is the start, establishing momentum and taking control of the game right from the get go," said centre Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, well aware that Edmonton often waits to see what the other team is going to do instead of dictating the pace themselves.

"You want to make it tough for teams to come into your building to play and that starts right off the bat and gets the fans into it. We can rally behind each other from there."

Some have suggested it's the pressure of playing in a market that places too much importance on its hockey team, and that Edmonton is a tough place to play when you're trying to break out of a slump.

But Canadian pressure doesn't seem to be bothering anyone else. Winnipeg is tied for the best home record in the NHL (20-6-3). Toronto and Montreal are tied with the third most home ice wins in the east (17). Calgary (17-5-5) is tied for the second fewest regulation losses on home ice in the NHL.

Even the hapless Ottawa Senators have made better use of home ice advantage (13-11-4) and their arena isn't anywhere near Ottawa.

"We play a different game on the road," said Hitchcock. "We get impatient at home and don't stay on task at times and it hurts us.

"I'd like to see us play with more grit in the right areas than try to hit home runs. The one thing we do on the road really well is not try to hit home runs. At home we're trying to do that and it gets away on us sometimes."

It doesn't help matters that San Jose is here Saturday. The Sharks aren't the first team anyone wants knocking on the door when they're trying to figure things out at home, but that's who's coming.

"The team we're playing Saturday is as good as there is in the NHL and they're probably playing as well as anyone in the NHL right now," said Hitchcock. "We have our work cut out for us just to be competitive."

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1129788 Edmonton Oilers

MATHESON: Oscar Klefbom's return has made things easier for Edmonton Oilers

Jim Matheson

When opposing players are interrogated about Edmonton Oilers, their response is always the same.

"Lots of skill, fast, they can score."

It's like name, rank and serial number. Rote reply.

Not sure what Oilers team they've been watching, but take away those 96 goals from Leon Draisaitl, Connor McDavid, Alex Chiasson and Ryan



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Nugent-Hopkins, and nobody else scores. Oilers coach Ken Hitchcock says the consistency of scoring on the left side has "fallen off a cliff," which is why Draisaitl was on left-wing with McDavid in Minnesota Thursday.

The real story is this: the coach knows he has to get his team out of what they think they are into what they really are ... a team that has to check and play determined to win hockey games. They had both covered in Minnesota and they won for fun. They do not have a lot of skill, they can't get into a track meet with San Jose Sharks on Saturday because they'll get kicked in the shins. They tried that the last two games and how did they work out? 7-4, 7-2 drubbing.

So, while we should be applauding the Oilers work in Minnesota on Thursday from first to last shift, Wild coach Bruce Boudreau was apoplectic at their lack of will and skill losing 4-1 to Edmonton.

One of their core guys, Mikael Granlund, has two goals in his last 37 games. Fans would like to run him out of town.

The real test will be against the Sharks, who have just beaten Winnipeg and Calgary on the road. Hitchcock says they can't dance with the Sharks, and he's right.

But let's take a look at three other things:

OSCAR IS NO SLOUCH

Klefbon is the second most indispensable player after McDavid, with apologies to Draisaitl and those 32 goals (eight in the last six games) and 66 points. When he was out for those 21 games and two months with a busted finger the Oilers were 6-15. His partner Adam Larsson looked as lost as a husband trying to buy shoes for his wife. He was minus-12 over that stretch and fully admitted he was a shadow of his usual sturdy, shutdown self.

To hear Hitchcock talk about Klefbon when he was out, you'd you'd have thought he was talking about Drew Doughty meets Victor Hedman, which seemed a bit of a reach. But Klefbon was getting some love to be on Sweden's World Cup 2020 defence before they cancelled that. He's the guy who would be playing against McDavid if on different teams.

He played a rocking chair 24-plus minutes against the Wild, closing fast on puck-carriers, getting to lose pucks and moving it north, and he still has one of the most effective, heavy sticks in the league when he's checking. He's made Larsson whole again, and his return has allowed the head coach to not overwork Darnell Nurse (nine games of 28 or more minutes) and Kris Russell where extra ice was meaning extra mistakes because they were playing above their station.

Klefbon isn't yet a true No. 1 D in this league — there's only about 12-15 of those — but he's close.

RATTIE COULD BE FIRST-LINE WINGER

Ty Rattie has a shorter leash with Hitchcock than other players because the coach had him in St Louis and Rattie teased with his offensive ability but not on a regular-basis. He kept wanting more and Rattie found himself more on the fourth than the first or second line or sitting out, and fact is when he played briefly in Carolina after that, he couldn't do it either.

But, no more doghouse. On an Oilers team with so little natural offence, he deserves a nightly shot with the big boys just as Alex Chiasson got his early and ran with it. Rattie works well with McDavid and Draisaitl, or with his childhood friend Nugent-Hopkins.

The coach is right when he says the right-winger doesn't always move his feet, or has to skate as hard from the red-line back as the other way, but he's not alone there. There's no way he should be healthy scratched as he's been 14 times.

McDavid likes playing with him, likes how he thinks the game offensively. So does Nugent-Hopkins.

Keep Rattie playing and not on a fourth line. Stick with him even if he makes a mistake.

He's not lighting it up but has one more point (10-9) than Jesse Puljujarvi in 10 fewer games, and Puljujarvi has played every single game since Nov. 25, 32 in a row. Rattie is minus-1, Puljujarvi is minus-13.

Which, of course, brings us to Jesse...

DOESN'T PULJUJARVI BELONG IN BAKERSFIELD?

This is baffling stuff. He was playing right-wing with Colby Cave and Tobias Rieder in the win over Minnesota. He got 8 and-a-half minutes, missing some time when he got a stick in the face. Hitchcock pushed hard to bring him up from Bakersfield when he was hired in mid-November, but Puljujarvi has played on the fourth line for weeks now.

That would be fine for, say, Jack Roslovic, another first-round pick, in Winnipeg, because the Jets have a juggernaut roster and that's where he fits, for now. Roslovic's outgrown the AHL.

Puljujarvi has not done that in Bakersfield in two trips there.

It's like he's skipped elementary school.

There are precious few shifts where he takes over and you go "wow." He works and steals passes with his long reach, but there's no offensive juice in his limited ice-time. Hitchcock says he's trying to keep his minutes to 10-12 a night in the NHL because he feels the kid runs out of energy after that, which seems odd for somebody who is 20, not 35. But the coach is trying to manage the asset. We get that

The numbers scream at you, though.

Puljujarvi has three goals in 34 shots in the last 32 games.

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1129789 Edmonton Oilers

'He's got a bit of confidence going': Talbot outduels Dubnyk in Oilers win over Wild

Jim Matheson

ST. PAUL, Minn — As Cam Talbot hurriedly packed his equipment bag for the trip home — pads, check, mask, check, skates, check — something else was under the pile of gear, something he hadn't seen much of.

The motorcycle helmet that goes to the best Edmonton Oiler player.

"You're not wearing that for us?" a reporter asked the goalie.

"Nah, maybe later," said Talbot, who stopped 35 of 36 Minnesota Wild shots Thursday, his best statistical game since a 39-save shutout in Anaheim about a month earlier.

Talbot, who got the hook in the 6-2 loss to the Hawks when his collapsed around him after a very strong first 40 minutes, came into the game with a 3.39 average and an .892 save percentage. But, he looked like the solid, calm, old Talbot in this one — in a game the Oilers absolutely had to have.

He had help, of course. The Oilers weren't the neighbourhood Welcome Wagon around their net as they had been in their previous six losses, where they gave up a stinking 30 goals. They played hard, taking the dirt road to move people so Talbot could see shots.

They won the battles all over the ice, really. Playing for each other.



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But mostly for Talbot because their coach Ken Hitchcock had challenged them to do so after he was pulled against the Hawks when it wasn't his fault. The coach wanted a response, a pulse defensively for a full 60, and he got it, especially from their returning blueliner Oscar Klefbom, resoundingly terrific in 24 minutes.

They scored early 135 seconds in on a shot that Devan Dubnyk whiffed on as Darnell Nurse unloaded an unscreened 45-footer, they got one on their PP (Leon Draisaitl), killed all three of Minnesota's PPs and didn't give them a single shot on any of them. And Zack Kassian was the poster boy for the foot-soldiers up front with an empty-netter, an assist on Nurse's goal, and a big-time wall-paper job on Zach Parise, who got caught in the train-tracks in the third.

But, Talbot was mostly unflappable, beaten only by Joel Eriksson Ek's bullet as the Oilers crazy run to a wild-card playoff spot continued. Minnesota holds down the first WC at 57 points with St. Louis and Vancouver at 55 for the second WC. The Oilers, Colorado and Chicago have 53 points.

Now, the San Jose Sharks will be a much tougher kettle of fish Saturday afternoon at Rogers Place than the Wild, but a win is a win is a win, especially after six straight L's.

"We did such a good job of clearing pucks...there were a few scrambles early but our guys were dialed in, boxing people out. Really, one of the best defensive games we've had all year," said Talbot. "They made it 2-1 but getting the big power play goal right afterwards was huge. We hadn't been able to hold leads in the third but the goal by them didn't faze us."

"I wanted a good start tonight, make the saves early to settle us down. That Minnesota team sifts pucks through (defencemen) and they always have two guys converging (for loose change). There weren't too many shots I couldn't see from the point, which tells you how good the guys in front of me played," said Talbot, who has started three of the last four games now.

"I would love to keep the net. This is the first time I've played two in a row, maybe back to before the break when I played four straight," said Talbot. "Thought I played well in Philly, even if it sounds stupid when you give up five, then against Chicago I made a lot of good saves."

Hitchcock liked Talbot's play, a lot.

"I thought the guys played hard for Cam and he played hard for them...he's got a bit of confidence going," said Hitchcock, who doesn't care that Mikko Koskinen got a three-year, \$13.5 million deal just before Peter Chiarelli was fired, which seemed to leave the UFA Talbot adrift.

"People talk about next year, but I'm only concerned about the next day," said Hitchcock.

"Whatever goalie gives us the best chance to win, that's who we're going with. If one guy gets on a roll, I don't care who it is. He's playing."

In the morning, Dubnyk, who had a 9-3 record and a 1.59 average and .937 save percentage in 12 games against his old team prior to this one, had empathized for what Talbot's been going through.

"I guess he would know," said Talbot, appreciating the gesture.

"If you see him, thank him for saying it."

ON THE BENCH — Jesse Puljujarvi, once again playing right-wing on the fourth line, took a stick in the face and had to go the dressing room for repairs. He only played two shifts in the third period, just 8:27 in all...Hitchcock really didn't use his fourth line—Tobias Rieder got 6:29 and Colby Cave 5:51...Brad Malone did a nice, safe job as the third-line C, with 12 1/2 minutes.

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1129790 Edmonton Oilers

Lowetide: Is Ken Hitchcock helping Jesse Puljujarvi find his way as an NHL player?

Allan Mitchell

Feb 8, 2019

In the days after Ken Hitchcock was named head coach by the Edmonton Oilers, he took advantage of the team's West Coast trip (the Oilers played in San Jose on Nov. 20) to skip over to Bakersfield and have a look at Jesse Puljujarvi. The youngster had struggled over two seasons and the beginning of another under Todd McLellan, and was playing for the Condors at the time of Hitchcock's hire. With his usual larger than life flair, Hitch convinced general manager Peter Chiarelli to bring him to the NHL right away, saying "when you see something that good, and that much (of it), as a coach you want to take responsibility for the growth of the player. You don't want to sit there and watch him play in the American Hockey League."

Thirty games later Puljujarvi is lining up on the fourth line and playing depth minutes. Has the new coach found a way to unlock Puljujarvi and deploy him as a productive NHL player? Is Puljujarvi contributing more to the team's offence? Is the puck heading in a good direction?

Jesse Puljujarvi's 2018-19 season

The numbers show an increase in 5-on-5 and power-play offence, although Puljujarvi remains shy of acceptable levels for an NHL skill winger. There's a slight increase in playing time and a better shooting percentage. On the other hand, the possession (Corsi) numbers are down markedly under Hitchcock.

Usage: McLellan and Puljujarvi

Under Todd McLellan, in the first 20 games of the season, Puljujarvi played just 11 contests and was eventually sent to the minors. For this section, I'm going to use Natural Stat Trick's line tool per game. The beauty of the line tool is that we get to see deployment by the coach, with superfluous ice time (overlap of shifts, et cetera) taken out of the conversation. When we drill down strictly on line usage by each coach, it's easy to see how McLellan was deploying the young winger in the early days of the season.

The one 5-on-5 goal Puljujarvi scored while McLellan was coach came during a sequence where Connor McDavid jumped on the ice, passed the puck to Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, who sent a dart to Puljujarvi for a goal. As much as that goal showed skill from all three forwards, JP spent 57 seconds with Nuge and 1:39 with McDavid 5-on-5 during the game Oct. 16 against the Winnipeg Jets.

The McLellan usage chart shows the coach was interested in finding a spot in the lineup where the youngster could be protected and the team would have less exposure. The trading of Strome, who played about one hour with the big Finn at 5-on-5 while maintaining a strong possession number, put Puljujarvi's future path in some doubt. It also explains the demotion to Bakersfield.

Usage: Hitchcock and Puljujarvi

Hitchcock didn't have Strome as an option, so the usage comparison isn't perfect. However, I do think it is clear that the new coach used Puljujarvi as more of a feature player than McLellan did in the season's first 20 games. The increased offence (1.00 points per 60 at 5-on-5) came at the expense of possession, and JP was a drag on Nugent-Hopkins over almost 175 minutes. That isn't a good trade for the Oilers, although it should be mentioned there aren't a large number of replacement level players in the organization at this time.

Puljujarvi as an NHL player under Ken Hitchcock



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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During the NHL games Puljujarvi has played with Hitchcock as his coach, he has averaged 11:37 at 5-on-5, plus 17 seconds on the power play and two seconds on the penalty kill per game. The big part of Puljujarvi's game is 5-on-5 and he needs to score enough to remain in the lineup. The exercise above suggests (based on quality of centre) his 5-on-5 minutes are something close to a feature role, a top-nine forward deployment.

Is he scoring enough? Since Hitchcock took over Nov. 20, Puljujarvi has scored three goals and six points in 360 minutes and 28 seconds. That's 0.5 goals per 60 and 1.00 points per 60 (all at 5-on-5). Using the entire NHL forward group as a pool, and including only those who have played 200 or more minutes since Nov. 20, we gather a pool of exactly 372 players via Natural Stat Trick. That gives us exactly 12 forwards per 31 teams ($12 \times 31 = 372$).

It stands to reason first-line forwards would total the first 93, second line would populate spots 94-186 and on it goes. Where do the Oilers rank? Is Puljujarvi a top-nine forward?

No. 19 Connor McDavid (2.94 points per 60 at 5-on-5)

No. 37 Leon Draisaitl (2.57)

No. 91 Ryan Nugent-Hopkins (1.93)

Edmonton has three men who can be considered first-line forwards based purely on math, as shown here. This is Nov. 20 through Feb. 6 (it doesn't include Thursday's Minnesota game). The Oilers have no second-line players based on this quick math look, but there are three Oilers scoring at a third-line clip:

No. 199 Jujhar Khaira (1.57)

No. 248 Zack Kassian (1.33)

No. 261 Ty Rattie (1.29)

The Oilers have six top-nine forwards in the games Nov. 20 through Feb. 6 and that's a problem. The fourth-liners run forever:

No. 288 Alex Chiasson (1.19)

No. 318 Jesse Puljujarvi (1.00)

No. 330 Ryan Spooner (0.90)

No. 362 Kyle Brodziak (0.67)

No. 366 Tobias Rieder (0.54)

When the post-mortem is delivered to the 2018-19 Oilers, one of the main stories is going to surround terrible bets made on wingers and the disappointing offence delivered. Chiasson's fast start faded, Spooner didn't help at all and free agents Brodziak and Rieder were largely ineffective with the puck on their stick.

Puljujarvi's audition under Hitchcock

Jesse Puljujarvi's promise is enormous and the Oilers need to find a way to unlock him. I have wondered since his draft day about Puljujarvi's offence and those questions remain. Hitchcock's usage has the young man in the NHL and pushing and that's something we're likely to see for the rest of this season and beyond.

The Finn's entry-level contract will expire this summer and he won't clear waivers in 2019-20 so trips to the farm will be unavailable as an option. In just over 230 minutes with Nuge as his centre, Puljujarvi is producing at 1.55 points per 60. Based on usage, it appears Hitchcock believes that is the best spot in the order for Edmonton's struggling phenom. But the question today is the same one we had on draft day: Is it enough?

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1129835 NHL

The Goalie Is a Hired Gun, and He's Yours for \$50 a Game

In Toronto, a surplus of amateur hockey teams has led to a thriving marketplace for that most sought-after of necessities: someone willing to play goalie.

Curtis Rush

Feb. 8, 2019

TORONTO — Keith Hamilton carried himself like an N.H.L. goaltender even before he made his first save in a pickup game at Moss Park Arena. Standing 6 feet tall — and looking much bigger in skates — he made the net behind him appear to shrink.

But this was hardly the N.H.L. Hamilton, 39, was guarding the cage against a team of middle-age men from an Ontario public utility. He wore a replica Colorado Avalanche jersey. Every other player was differentiated by tones more than colors, turning the sessions into light versus dark, a hockey version of shirts and skins.

After an hourlong scrimmage, Hamilton cut a lonely figure as he skated off the ice. There were no handshakes, no fist bumps. He collected the cash he was promised — the going rate is about 50 Canadian dollars per game — changed out of his gear and drove off to the next arena. This was his third game of the day. He had two to go.

Hamilton is a hockey mercenary, one of the estimated 150 to 200 hired guns in Toronto's recreation leagues who are in demand as much for their position — goaltender — as for their skills. With 143 indoor publicly owned arenas in the Toronto metropolitan area, there are many more teams than there are available goalies.

Teams can do without one of their skaters. There are plenty of them. But if the goalie can't make it, a game could be forfeited, which can feel like a puck to the mouth when ice time costs more than 400 dollars an hour.

"It's not like soccer, where a player can just go in net," said Niki Sawni, 27, who runs a goalie-rental service called Puck App.

By various estimates, there are as many as 8,000 rental-goalie orders every year in the Toronto area, which suggests there is a sizable marketplace for the kind of person willing to play the bull's-eye in a game of target practice.

"I've got a screw loose, sure," said Mark Philipps, 46, who still tends goal but not so much as a rental goalie anymore. "It takes a special type of person to want to get a puck in the head."

"You'll run into some crazy ones," said John McLeod, 55, a film actor who picks up work as a rental goalie in his off hours. "Very unusual characters, and I worry that I may be one of them, too."

In Toronto, rental goalies — a cohort of mostly men and a few women — generally range in age from 18 to 65 and come from all walks of life: engineering, acting, education, policing, the trades.

Some even try to make itinerant goaltending their profession. Hamilton is one of those.

A musician who plays the vibraphone in a six-person folk band called Beams, Hamilton said he makes more money being a rental goalie than playing music in clubs.

He averages 10 games a week and keeps 40 Canadian dollars per game, paying 10 dollars in commission to a rental agency. His cut works out to about 1,600 Canadian dollars, or \$1,220 in United States currency, a month. By his estimate, he has made well over 100,000 dollars in eight



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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years as a rental goalie. And, yes, he said, he declares all of his income on his taxes.

"It's not enough for a mortgage and kids' education, but it's just enough to get by," he said. "There's certainly more taxing ways to make a living. But I sweat and I come home with bruises."

The rent-a-goalie concept has been around since at least 1985, when Doug Cardy, a former top junior goalie for the Toronto Marlboros, got tired of people "bugging me" to fill in on teams five or six times a week while he juggled a full-time job.

"I started telling them, 'I want some money,'" said Cardy, a short-haul trucker. "And I started with a little cardboard sign in one of the arenas with my phone number."

Cardy set up a business in which his goalies used pagers to check in for work. The money he scratched out wasn't worth it, though, and Cardy, now 61, got out.

Goalies Unlimited was one of the first agencies to match games with goalies, in the mid-1990s. Since then, online competitors have proliferated, with names like Book a Goalie, MyPuck, Goalies to Go, Puck App, Rent a Goalie and Get a Goalie, which serves Buffalo and Chicago. Most of the agencies are run by current or former goaltenders.

Ian Peters, 44, started his operation in New York after growing tired of paying a \$35 Uber fare each way to play goal in pickup games. He made a proposal three years ago to Ron Burse, 37, who runs the Canadian operation Book a Goalie, and a New York tab was added to the Toronto-based website.

"It started like wildfire and the business blew up," said Peters, who has about 70 goalies serving New Jersey, Connecticut and New York. "I do it all from my phone. There was resistance in the beginning, because New Yorkers weren't used to paying for this service."

Peters charges clients \$70 a game, and a goalie gets \$25 for his first five bookings and \$30 for his next five. A goalie's pay maxes out at \$35.

In Canada, rental agencies tend to take about 15 dollars in commission from the typical rate of \$50 a game. Goalies like Hamilton, with eight years experience, can negotiate a lower commission. Sometimes, the business keeps it all.

Daniel Smith, 57, a former high-level hockey player who became a jockey, runs Goalies Unlimited. He likes to play four times a week, and as a rental goalie, he collects the full \$50 fee each time.

Puck App, which Sawni founded three years ago, markets itself as the Uber of the goalie-rental business. With a smartphone app, it can undercut other services by charging a top rate of 45 dollars in Toronto, and even less in other cities.

Sawni has a database of 8,000 users across Canada, both goalies looking for paid work (about 5,000 so far) and clients looking for help in net.

On Puck App, a team can specify the site, the game's starting time and the level of play. The offer is sent to all of the goalies in the database who match the criteria.

Patrick Herman, the owner of the MyPuck agency, has a roster of over 300 goaltenders and fills orders for 15 to 20 games a day. The business can be cutthroat, he said, and he has little time for teams who try to play one service off another to get a better deal.

"If you want a pizza tonight, it's not like you call Pizza Hut and Domino's and tell them, 'The first delivery driver that gets to my door gets my money,'" Herman said.

Some teams try to make side deals with players they like, but the agencies discourage goalies from disclosing their personal contact information to clients.

Occasionally, the client is a fascinating character.

Joe Vercillo, 37, once got a late request to work for a certain Canadian superstar in the music industry.

"I got a call around 12:30 at night," said Vercillo, who is in charge of acquisitions for a small publishing company. "It woke me up. My agent said: 'Drake has rented the ice. Can you get over in 10 minutes?'"

Vercillo thought it was a prank because no one was inside the arena when he turned up. But soon Drake and his associates arrived, and Vercillo suited up for about 45 minutes of work.

"They gave me 80 or 100 bucks for that," Vercillo said.

A representative for another well-known singer-songwriter called Burse's agency in December 2017, requesting two goalies. Justin Bieber wanted to put together a game with some friends at a Toronto arena.

"Bieber had his own entire dressing room," Burse said, adding that one of the goalies had told him that by the end of the game, "Teenage girls were all over the rink watching."

As at every level of the sport, some goaltenders are better than others.

Daniel Altshuler, 24, a third-round draft pick of the N.H.L.'s Carolina Hurricanes in 2012, became a rental goalie last year to stay sharp after taking a season off.

"I had moved to Toronto and I didn't know anybody," Altshuler said. "I was just doing it mostly to find somewhere to play hockey."

Others enter the marketplace for decidedly less professional reasons. Dan Madeiros, a commercial airline pilot, advertises his services at \$40 an hour in the online classified forum Kijiji because, he said, he just likes to play.

"I have a job that pays me well," said Madeiros, 42. "So I look at it that it's paid exercise."

New York Times LOADED: 02.09.2019

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The Athletic / Duhatschek Notebook: Some reasonable trade scenarios that benefit both sides

By Eric Duhatschek Feb 8, 2019

Last week I made a case for why teams should proceed cautiously when pondering whether to go all in at the NHL trading deadline. Some readers applauded my sober, measured argument, especially those who took the time to document every move Peter Chiarelli made as the Edmonton Oilers general manager and realized that if he had done nothing at all in three-and-three quarter years on the job, the team would be much farther ahead than they are now. Thank you for the positive reinforcement!

Most, however, thought I was being a killjoy – that the trading deadline is like a big circus and I was the meanie that snatched away their balloons and candy floss.

In the interest of keeping everybody happy (irony alert: In this business, you learn early that you can never make everybody happy!), I'm going all in on rumor, gossip and speculation this week. By the way, as any of your favorite NHL insiders – from Pierre LeBrun to Elliotte Friedman, Scott Burnside to Craig Custance – can attest, I am a positively crazy man when it comes to making trades in fantasy hockey — never satisfied and always looking for one final tweak.

But in fantasy sport, your players only have to transfer from one spreadsheet to another. They're like pieces on a chess board.



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In real life, they're people with families and kids in school, living in neighborhoods they like, with roots in their communities. Accordingly, when their lives are abruptly altered by an instant change in scenery, it can be a challenge to wrap their heads around the move – and attend to all the disruption and turmoil that arises. Historically, unsettling their personal lives can also spill into and undermine on-ice performance. It is why teams nowadays like to make their moves early – to give players (and their families) time to settle into their new digs, so when the playoffs actually begin, the focus can strictly be on the hockey.

But I get it: There's no giddier feeling than trying to anticipate how the team you follow might conjure up one final piece of a championship puzzle, via a smart trade-deadline acquisition. Years ago, at a previous place of employ, I did an annual schtick that revolved around an imaginary website I labelled NHLfaketrades.com. It was partly as a response to all the tricksters on social media who would create false Twitter accounts to mimic, as closely as possible, those of genuine reporters – and then concoct phony deals to see who they might fool. Some of these transactions were ingenious because the manufactured trades had a whiff of possibility, which made you think, "well, maybe ..."

One of my favorite moments during the time I was dreaming up this exercise occurred right around this point seven years ago, sitting in Dean Lombardi's office, when he was still the Los Angeles Kings' general manager. Lombardi used to enjoy long philosophical conversations that sometimes would last hours. This was the February before the Kings won their first Stanley Cup and Lombardi was venting about all the misinformation that was circulating – not just on social media, but in all the gossipy forums that had developed online.

His point was that it was getting harder and harder every day to separate fact from fiction – and that rampant trade speculation was making some players uneasy, forcing him to debunk some of the wilder theories making the rounds to those involved. Remember, these were changing, evolving times in the industry. Analytics were just getting a foothold. Twitter was booming, but not everyone understood all of its nuances. I made the point to Lombardi – that it had just become too easy for a percentage of mischievous reasonably informed fans to play a game of connect-the-dots.

Then I cited his team as an example: That with the Kings' relative surplus on defence, any trade rumor involving Jack Johnson would have a ring of truth to it – and that no one would be surprised if Johnson ended up playing for either Philadelphia or Columbus prior to the deadline.

Lombardi visibly blanched – and sure enough, a few days later, Johnson did get traded to Columbus (for Jeff Carter, not Rick Nash, who was the original ask) and the rest is history. The Kings won the first of their two Stanley Cups and it could be argued that Lombardi's move that year was as impactful as any trade-deadline transaction in history – right next to Butch Goring to the Islanders from the Kings in '79, which is pretty much the gold standard for a trade deadline acquisition and actually ushered in the current trade-deadline mania that engulfs the NHL.

That's really the goal here – to helpfully create scenarios that could unfold, in some fashion, at some point, in real life.

Of course, every trade deadline presents its own unique complications and this year, one of the great challenges is separating the buyers from the sellers in the Western Conference, where the logjam in the middle of the standings has even teams that looked out of contention at Christmas, clinging to a faint hope that if things fall their way in the final third of the season, they might actually squeak into the playoffs.

This, by the way, is another area where you cannot get a consensus.

Some people – even GMs – believe it is pointless to push for a playoff spot if you know you probably aren't deep enough or strong enough to win four rounds. I'm going to put the Anaheim Ducks in that category.

Others believe that it doesn't matter how you get in, or why you get in, only that you do get in – and cite the Nashville Predators, 2016-17, as an example of what can happen if you qualify for post-season play.

Nashville was the 16th seed that year and gave the Pittsburgh Penguins all they could handle in the Stanley Cup final. The next year, as a No. 1 seed, the Predators didn't fare nearly as well, exiting in the second round. You never know what can happen – and if you're St. Louis or Chicago and you could actually salvage the year by squeezing into the playoffs, maybe you don't offer your UFAs to the highest bidder.

There's a little more clarity in the East, with a handful of teams such as Detroit wise enough to know that as far back as they are, and with as many teams as they would have to leapfrog to get in, the playoffs are a pipe dream for the spring of 2018-19.

But even with the Red Wings, it's not going to be a complete fire sale because within the context of the younger group, they're developing and they will need a handful of adults in the dressing room to teach the prospects how to conduct themselves at the NHL level. It means that not everyone you think might be available is – and some trade targets, such as veteran defenceman Nik Kronwall, who might look good as a rental, actually have little desire to change teams at this late stage of their careers. Carter, another useful player who still has a handful of attractive years remaining on his contract, probably falls into that category as well.

All of which is a long preamble to the point that I am trying to make: I understand the impulse to assist the teams you support in making the correct move on or before the Feb. 25 deadline. I did it myself in college when a few of us hardcore hockey fans would concoct a series of brilliant transactions that would land the Maple Leafs the talent they needed to win the Stanley Cup.

Just about every time, through a series of circuitous and complicated transactions, we'd find a way of turning Pat Boutette and Jerry Butler into Steve Shutt and Guy Lafleur – and even had the good sense to laugh about it afterward. We'd do in on the whiteboards in an empty Scarborough College classroom.

Now, of course, there are online forums devoted specifically to pie-in-the-sky trade talk. It tells me that the desire to assist the GM of the local heroes knows no generational bounds.

So, let's have at it.

There are 17 days remaining before the trade deadline. Let's try to find homes for as many wayward potential UFAs as we possibly can – and maybe even try to complete a hockey deal or two while we're at it.

Gustav Nyquist to the Dallas Stars for Roope Hintz

After any trade, you always look for threads that exist between the two teams.

When Minnesota picks up Pontus Aberg from Anaheim, you go "ah-ha" – that's Wild GM Paul Fenton repatriating a player he originally drafted in his Nashville days. When Nashville acquires Brian Boyle from the New Jersey Devils for a second-round pick, you look at the two GMs involved in the transaction and say, "ah-ha" – David Poile and Ray Shero are friends and spent years working together in the Predators organization.

It isn't the only reason you do business, but it helps when there's trust from both side; as there is between Red Wings' GM Ken Holland and his former protégé Jim Nill, the Dallas GM. Nill, of course, knows Nyquist better than most GMs because he was still working for Detroit back in 2008 when the Red Wings originally drafted him. Again, not the deciding factor, but a factor nonetheless. Nill would know Nyquist's strengths and weaknesses but if the goal is to add scoring to a team that has all of its offensive eggs mostly in one basket, Nyquist could be a useful addition – for the rest of this year and possibly beyond, depending upon the fit.

Dallas could potentially offer picks to land Nyquist, but I suspect the Red Wings would rather have a warm body and Hintz, 49th overall in 2015, looks as if he'll be an NHL regular; and could probably crack Detroit's NHL lineup next year. That would be a Red Wings' organizational priority at the deadline and preferable to adding picks for players that could be three or more years away.

Mats Zuccarello to the Colorado Avalanche for a second-round pick



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And while we're discussing Central Division teams that need more scoring because they are top heavy on a single line, let's look at the underachieving Avs, who've mostly been undermined by mediocre goaltending from both Semyon Varlamov and Philipp Grubauer. Despite that, they aren't likely to do much about it at the deadline.

Short-term, they need help up front but aren't willing to part with either an A-level prospect or presumably either of their first-round picks.

GM Joe Sakic is enough of a big-picture thinker that he can look beyond the 2019 playoff horizon and imagine a bright future that might even include Jack Hughes, which would enhance his scoring depth in due time. But short term, someone like Zuccarello, or Nyquist, available for a relatively modest acquisition cost, might be the answer for the rest of this season.

Ilya Kovalchuk to the Boston Bruins for future considerations

If it wasn't for the financial complication, part of me could see Kovalchuk as a fit in San Jose, reunited with his former coach in New Jersey, Peter DeBoer, for whom he had an incredible playoff run when the two were together in 2012.

Kovalchuk sounds as if he'd be willing to move from L.A. under the right circumstances. Furthermore, L.A. would love to shed what's left of the three-year, \$18.75-million contract they signed him to last summer. And while the actual dollars shrink from year to year (\$8.5 million this year, \$6 million next year, \$4.25 million in Year 3), Kovalchuk's cap hit will stay at a pricey \$6.25 million – too much for a lot of contenders, even if L.A. is willing to take some money back to make the deal happen.

Adding Kovalchuk would probably disqualify the Sharks from signing Erik Karlsson to an extension next summer, which makes it even less likely.

Boston, on the other hand, is reasonably well-positioned cap-wise. I expect them to be casting the collective net far and wide – to Wayne Simmonds, Artemi Panarin and others, all of whom would command a hefty price. Kovalchuk's saving grace is, he wouldn't. He is playing better lately, and the Kings visit the Bruins for a Saturday matinee, which would be a nice showcase opportunity.

Carl Hagelin to the Nashville Predators for a 2020 fourth-round pick

I'm going to use Hagelin to make a point about the trade deadline that is often overlooked in hypotheticals such as these. Most of the time, you want to focus on the big names – which I'll get to shortly.

The reality is, half of the deals made, especially the ones made at the 11th hour, feature roster tweaks, where teams are trying to add depth players for minimal costs. The Kings have two pending UFAs – Hagelin and Nate Thompson – and you can almost guarantee both will be heading out of town.

When the Kings acquired Hagelin from Pittsburgh in the first place, it was because he was on an expiring contract and they were happy to shed the remaining two-and-a-half years of Tanner Pearson's deal. Hagelin's contributions have been undermined by injury, but teams are going to look at his playoff pedigree – between 2012 and 2017, he played a total of 112 NHL playoff games, and no fewer than 12 in any given season during that span. He also has two Stanley Cups in that time and in 2016, playing for the Penguins, his line – with Phil Kessel and Nick Bonino – was spectacular in the playoffs, especially in the finals against the Predators.

Nashville signed Bonino as a free agent, partly as a result of that playoff performance. Now that Kyle Turris is finally back playing, the Predators will spend the next two weeks assessing where they're at, and in the meantime, integrating their two new faces into the lineup. Depending upon what they see between now and then, they may swing for the fences one more time for a Mark Stone, a Panarin or a Matt Duchene.

But they also might just make a middling deal – and the notion of reuniting Hagelin with Bonino on their third or fourth line has to be compelling.

Cam Talbot to the Carolina Hurricanes for Petr Mrazek

It is hard to forecast how Edmonton, under interim GM Keith Gretzky, is going to approach this trade deadline. Some think the Oilers will do very little and then wait until they hire a full-time GM before addressing their various issues in the summer.

I believe Carolina will have interest in Talbot as a UFA next summer, and I always figure that if you are genuinely interested in signing a UFA, it makes sense if you can get him for the remainder of the season, so you can actually learn more about them first hand – who they are as people; and what parts of their game might need to be repaired. My guess is if they brought Talbot in, they'd like all of his intangibles and the only real issue is, he's had so much trouble stopping the puck the last two years. Do you think you can get him back to the level he was at in 2016-17? If so, then he might be your goaltending answer.

If anyone understands the value of try before you buy, it should be Carolina.

The problem was, the last time the Hurricanes went shopping in the UFA goalie market, they ended up with Scott Darling and that was a fail. Here's an opportunity with Talbot to get a preview of what he might bring – and if you're the Oilers and you've already turned your back on Talbot, why not audition Mrazek in the final six weeks to see what you think of him, for all the same reasons why Carolina might want to get to know Talbot? Anyway, there's some logic to the switch; it would be low risk, but the rewards – in the information department – could be invaluable.

Jonathan Quick to the Columbus Blue Jackets for Sonny Milano and Oliver Bjorkstrand

This suggestion, which is far more likely to be considered in the summer than at the deadline, involves a few moving parts, the first of which presupposes that the Jackets can find a home for Sergei Bobrovsky at the deadline instead of losing him as a UFA for nothing in the summer.

Goalie moves usually require multiple dominoes to fall. If Bobrovsky does move at the deadline, most people have him going to Florida, where the Panthers could then sign him to an eight-year contract extension this summer (he would qualify only for a seven-year term if he relocates as a UFA).

Does Florida want to part with the acquisition cost – for Bobrovsky and even for Panarin – when they could potentially get them for only the cost of their contracts on July 1? Tough to say – and it would obviously depend upon the price. But Columbus is a team in its window to compete, and if Bobrovsky is on the move, then someone such as Quick – who is playing well again and has four years to go at a reasonable cap hit of \$5.8 million – might be the answer, for this year and beyond.

Quick, of course, could also be a solution in Florida. Now, the asking price is said to be a first-round pick and a top prospect and that's where things get muddled. Quick is only one year removed from a Jennings trophy, but he is 33 and his injury history will raise a red flag – the notion that his body is deteriorating after years of an uncommonly heavy workload is going to be an issue.

On the other hand, the biggest criticism of Bobrovsky in Columbus is that his postseason performance has never quite matched his work in the regular season. With Quick, that's not a worry. He does, after all, have two Stanley Cups – and one Conn Smythe trophy – on his resume.

Matt Duchene to the Winnipeg Jets for a first-round pick (or a prospect such as Kristian Vesalainen)

The Jets are at a fascinating crossroads. They are the No. 1 team in the Central Division, a Stanley Cup semifinalist a year ago and a team that when it has all-hands-on-deck has as good a chance as any to contend for a championship.

And not only this year but for several more to come. In Winnipeg, that's always the goal – finding that precarious balance between the future and the present; and in the upcoming summer, there is the very real



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challenge of signing two expensive RFAs, Kyle Connor and Patrik Laine, to extensions.

Last year, they rented Paul Stastny for the playoffs and he was a decent fit; and now they are in exactly the same position, the only real glaring need is for depth down the middle. Many people have connected Kevin Hayes with the Jets here; ALSO: Derick Brassard, who is temporarily in Florida, but was the other player they kicked the tires on last year before settling on Stastny.

But if you're going to go all in, Duchene is the best option of the three as a rental. They are familiar with him from his Central Division past; he is versatile enough to play both centre and the wing and his speed afoot would mesh nicely with the Jets' style of play. Duchene and Nik Ehlers would be fun to watch, going up the ice together.

Duchene said something interesting in the Ottawa dressing room this past week – that whatever decision he eventually makes, it won't be determined by the money. To some, that probably sounded disingenuous.

To me, it made perfect sense. Ottawa works for him on a personal level, but he's at the point in his career where it also has to work on a professional level – if not necessarily this year or next, soon after that. Because the money is going to be there for Duchene, no matter what he ultimately decides – go or stay.

If Duchene wants to defer the decision about his long-term future to the summer, which he might conceivably do, there is nothing to prevent the Sens from circling back with a contract offer on July 1. But they are almost certainly obliged to move Duchene and Stone if they can't get them signed – and then the arm's race is going to begin.

Where might they land? What might they cost? The Sens will almost certainly be asking for a prospect and a first-rounder for both Duchene and Stone – and then it becomes a game of chicken, playing potential suitors off against one another with the clock ticking. That'll be a fascinating outcome.

Presumably, the Jets would be prepared to make the same offer for Duchene (or Hayes) that they made last year for Stastny, but might not be prepared to sweeten the deal any further. And while bringing back a Manitoban such as Stone makes perfect sense, short term the greater need is obviously at centre.

Stone to the Calgary Flames for a first-round pick

I'm throwing this out as a possibility only because I think Stone really, really tempts Calgary in the short term. Now, scoring hasn't been an issue for them this year, and so they don't actually need to bolster that part of their team. Furthermore, they hope to see James Neal find his stride in the next two months and if they brought in Stone, that would almost certainly limit his ice time and effectiveness.

But Stone is such a complete player and would probably be a relatively seamless fit (his brother Michael plays for the Flames, although he's missed most of the season because of injury). But that family connection should provide a little intel as to what Mark might be thinking.

And if you're Calgary, with unexpectedly the top record in the Western Conference, and if you can add a versatile player like Mark Stone – well, that's a war-room call that's worth pondering.

And of course, when it comes to ex-Brandon Wheat Kings, you never rule out the Vegas Golden Knights, where the organization's No. 2, Kelly McCrimmon, still runs the show at arms-length and knows everybody that ever passed through there.

Panarin to ... whomever

I'm not even going to try and find a destination for Panarin because any of Boston, Nashville, Dallas, Colorado, the New York Islanders or Florida all make sense on some level.

Why wouldn't you want arguably the most dynamic scorer available? But at what price? I don't know and I can't say. About the only thing that interests me here is the timing – does Panarin linger on the trade board until right up to the deadline, or does Columbus get pro-active and move him sooner rather than later, with a view to flipping the assets they acquire in any deal for him to add reinforcements for a 2019 playoff push?

They're all good questions. The answers will come soon.

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The Athletic / Growing up Subban: Meet the matriarch of one of hockey's first families

Katie Strang Feb 8, 2019

By now, you may have seen the video, which went viral courtesy of NBC's NHL Twitter account. The 45-second clip shows Maria Subban dialed in while watching son P.K. Subban during a recent game.

With each zone entry and scoring chance, Maria is transfixed, grimacing, shaking her head, and guffawing with such zeal that the video is spliced with the now-famous clip of Olympic gymnast Aly Raisman's mom watching her uneven bar routine at the 2012 London Olympic Games.

In less than a minute, Maria urges on P.K. ("Take him right there, buddy!"), chirping opponents ("Too bad, Johnny!"), and vehemently arguing with a call, turning to her husband for backup ("That's out! It's out! Wasn't that out?"). The clip culminates with one particularly humorous barb:

"Get it, Number 38. What are you waiting for? Christmas?!"

.@PKSUBBAN1'S MOM IS GOALS

A NEW EPISODE OF THE P.K. PROJECT DROPS THIS WEDNESDAY. WATCH MORE EPISODES HERE → [HTTPS://T.CO/J1F4U42XGU](https://t.co/J1F4U42XGU) PIC.TWITTER.COM/LH6RCZNGE8

— NHL ON NBC (@NHLONNBCSPORTS) JANUARY 28, 2019

It is a rare glimpse into the woman behind one of the NHL's biggest stars — one who is known for his joyful demeanor, philanthropic efforts, and captivating playing style. So perhaps it shouldn't be a huge surprise that the 29-year-old defenseman's mom has a personality to match.

"Of course I get a little wacky," Maria said in a recent interview with The Athletic. "I'm just a happy mom."

And if anyone thinks that was Maria putting on a show for the cameras, P.K. is quick to dispel any such notion: "Anyone that thinks that was a fabrication should go check every single one of my (childhood) hockey tapes," Subban said in a telephone conversation this week.

While Subban's ascent to fame within the NHL is well documented, less is known about his mother, Maria. Many articles describing Subban's upbringing focus on the efforts of his father, Karl, who even wrote a book called "How We Did It: The Subban Plan for Success in Hockey, School and Life," but few go into detail about Maria's influence on Subban and his four siblings.

Subban's two brothers are also rising professional hockey players; Malcom, 25, is a goaltender for the Vegas Golden Knights; Jordan is a 23-year-old defenseman who plays for the AHL's Toronto Marlies. Subban's two sisters — Natassia a former basketball standout and Natasha, who was gifted in the arts — are educators. Maria's influence



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on each child was a pivotal one, even if she has received little by way of accolades.

"She's the backbone of our family," P.K. said. "I don't think any of us would have the type of success we've had in life — not just professionally, but in life — without our mom. Everyone talks about our dad, but ask anyone in our family and mom is the backbone for what she does every day. She's a mother but she's also your best friend."

So who is the woman behind it all?

Maria Subban immigrated to Canada in 1970 at age 11 from Montserrat, a tiny Caribbean island (11 miles long, 7 miles wide) of approximately 5,000 residents that is part of the Lesser Antilles chain in the West Indies. She came over with her siblings after both of her parents passed away and found Canada to be a stark change from her native country.

"It was so very hard. It was tough to make adjustments, having friends," Maria said. "Coming to a strange place that was strange and cold — Oh my God. Trust me, after time, I adjusted. (Back home in Montserrat), I had no parents to go back to."

Just as she clung close to her own siblings during that transition, she has encouraged her children to do the same. Above all else, she'd stress, stick together.

Maria ran a household that may have been short on serenity but was abundant with love. The Subban home was a bustling one, with five kids and two working parents; Karl was a school principal and Maria worked in a bank. Discipline was key for Maria, who served four years in the army in the Royal Regiment of Canada; she was a corporal by the time she left her service.

The house was bursting with activity and full of what Maria described as "very happy kids." Natasha, the second oldest, said there was always a game of mini-sticks taking place in the hallway and that a house guest would've had trouble hearing over the racket — she and P.K., who were natural rivals and also extremely close, were constantly fighting over the television ("P.K. was always an annoying brother, so we'd be going at it," Natasha joked).

Jordan was the baby of the family, and, according to Natasha, Maria's "favorite." He was also the one with the shortest fuse, which prompted his older siblings to provoke him. There was a lot of good-natured roughhousing and a constant cacophony of activity.

Maria was always there putting out fires when needed. She was doctor, nurse, accountant, teacher and confidant to whichever child needed her that day. She'd wake up early each morning before heading off to her job at a bank at 6 a.m. and make dinner so that Natasha and P.K. would have something warm to eat when they arrived home from school — greek salads, lasagna, Shepherd's Pie, chicken fried rice, the whole nine yards.

"We never ate leftovers," Natasha said. "I don't even know what that is unless it's Christmas, Easter or Thanksgiving."

But while Maria was both doting and a nurturer ("We are her baby cubs and no one is coming close to us," Natasha said. "She is that protector."), she was not someone to be underestimated.

"She wouldn't put up with most stuff," Malcolm said. "She wasn't a pushover."

She had a few non-negotiable rules, one of which her children still groan about to this day — they couldn't leave the house without clean shoes. When Maria was in the army, her major insisted on seeing his reflection in her shoes, and this was something she carried over to her own home.

"Oh man," P.K. says with a laugh. "To this day, she always looks at my shoes first."

She was also emphatic about guiding her children to find what they love and pursue that passion with vigor. She wanted her kids to feel emboldened to chase after what they wanted with a singular focus.

Her message?

"You can't do ten things. Do that one thing and master it. Don't try to do 20 things and be the master of nothing."

Maria was a budding track athlete back home in Montserrat, where summer sports were king. She continued her sprinting career in high school in Canada where she said she once beat Angella Issajenko (who went on to earn a silver medal in the 1984 Olympics for Canada) and was recruited by renowned coach Charlie Francis to join the Scarborough running club. She had little interest in Francis' overtures. Maria thought of it as fun, but had little desire to take her athletic career beyond that.

Regardless, athletics came easily to Maria, so it's no huge surprise that her kids showed an eagerness and aptitude for sports — P.K., Malcolm and Jordan for hockey, and Natassia and Natasha for basketball (Natassia played in university; Natasha pursued a career in visual arts).

P.K. was always a good skater — something his parents recognized at an early age. He learned the game easily and excelled at an early age, impressing power skating coaches with his smooth skating and others with a slapshot that, at age five, was already well-honed. Once he reached the age of 13, approaching the Triple-A ranks, Maria sat him down to gauge just how serious he was about the sport. Taking his hockey training to the next level would require the family to sacrifice a great deal financially, so Maria wanted to interpret his intentions.

Do you want to play hockey professionally? Or just for fun? Because from here on out, Dad and I need to provide a lot of funds to keep you here.

By now, it's obvious what Subban chose. Some 16 years later, he is the face of the Nashville Predators franchise (following a trade from the Montreal Canadiens in 2016), and boasts a Norris Trophy (2013), an Olympic Gold Medal and several All-Star nods. But Maria will correct anyone that suggests P.K. prospered because of some preternatural gift. His success, she said, is all attributed to his hard work — hours playing shinny at night, practicing his shot, continuing to fine-tune his skating.

"The more you practice, the better you become. I'm not going to say he's a special hockey player. If he didn't work hard enough (he wouldn't be where he is)," she said. "People think he's gifted; he's not. He works hard at everything he does. Every trophy he's ever been awarded, he worked hard for. He never took anything for granted."

Jordan, the youngest of the five, is now 23 years old. Like P.K., Malcolm also began as a defenseman (Maria said he was actually a better skater than P.K., "very smooth, very quiet") but kept gravitating toward playing goal. His parents weren't thrilled, particularly at the exorbitant costs of goaltending gear, but eventually they relented when he remained adamant. "Whatever my kids wanted to do. I let them do it," said Maria.

Malcolm is quieter in nature, a born introvert, whereas younger brother Jordan is a bit more like his older brother, a go-getter who works hard and is currently playing in the AHL where he has two goals and 11 points for the Marlies.

Maria has told both Malcolm and Jordan that the difference from where they are now and where they want to be is simply hard work. She says they've got a healthy perspective on that and don't dabble in comparing themselves too much to P.K.

"They all have their own style and their own way," Maria said. "They're excited about their big brother, but we shaped them to be their own person, and want to be successful."

And while P.K. may be Maria's most famous offspring, her mother's pride doesn't discriminate among her five children, all of whom have followed separate paths into adulthood. And she doesn't favor her sons, just because of their athletic achievements and lucrative careers.

When Natasha decided to pursue her interest in the visual arts, her mom was wholly supportive. Natasha gained entry into a prestigious — albeit



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expensive — satellite art program in Florence, Italy through the Ontario College of Arts and Design.

She was hesitant to apply, because she knew the expense it would incur and that she was far from flush with cash. Regardless, Maria encouraged Natasha to pursue the opportunity, pulling money out of her own savings account to pay for the first installment of her studies overseas.

"It was really my mom who enabled me to get there," said Natasha.

If it was Maria's encouragement that was vital toward her children reaching their goals, it was also her guidance that has helped them make an impact with their platform. And P.K., who has his own series with NBC Sports, the recently-released "PK Project," has certainly done the very most to capitalize on his.

P.K. has what some find to be a polarizing personality but few can argue the sincerity of his devoted philanthropic efforts, like the \$10 million pledge he made to the Montreal Children's Hospital in 2015. Maria could have predicted this from an early age even before life experiences like a trip to the earthquake-ravaged Haiti shaped his worldview.

As a kid, P.K. would often come home from school starving, perplexing his mom. When she'd ask why he was famished, he'd sheepishly admit he had given his lunch away to other kids who had nothing to eat. She'd give him lunch money only to see it disappear so quickly, knowing the likely culprit; it would have been more aggravating had Maria not understood the motivation behind it.

"He was always a very giving person," Maria said.

But P.K.'s magnetic personality and willingness to use his platform has prompted some of the old hockey establishment conformists bristle. He doesn't slink away from the spotlight, but rather embraces it.

Do people hold that against Subban?

"Even if they did, he wouldn't care," Maria said. "He doesn't care ... he wants to be who he is and that's who he is. He's not going to change himself. That's not him. P.K. does things because that's who he is. The game has to adapt to him."

Beyond P.K.'s personality and philanthropy, his penchant for dressing with flair has also become one of his calling cards; he is a collaborator for a suiting line Canadian retailer RW&CO. Maria will take credit for that fashion sense — an homage to her own grandmother, whose motto used to be: If you can't look good when leaving the house, don't bother. This was no laughing matter. Malcolm emerged one morning with a pair of trendy Dickies-brand pants that his mom didn't like. She let him wear the pants to school, but not before ripping the tags off the pants entirely.

Maria's style may be a bit more subdued than her son's — she doesn't particularly like wearing fur, for one — but she gravitates toward "beautiful, lovely things" and cites Liz Claiborne as her favorite designer. She takes pride in how her son dresses and encourages more players to do the same.

"Hockey players should damn well dress and look good," Maria said. "They're making enough money."

There has also been speculation that the criticism directed toward Subban — whether it be for his demeanor, sense of flair, etc — is heightened because he is one of the few black players in a league with very little cultural diversity. Maria said her children were not immune to racial taunts and abusive language, but that she taught them to identify what she felt to be the true root behind that vitriol.

They're going to call you names and make it look like racism, Maria would tell her kids. But nobody says a thing about a player who is just average. Recognize why they are singling you out, she'd tell them.

"It's jealousy because you're better," she said.

With her kids, Maria always reinforced the idea that they shouldn't aim to be like anyone else, but rather distinctly themselves. That is what makes Maria feel best about watching all of her kids now.

It's not the highlight-reel goals or saves, or the fame or even the financial security.

"What makes me proud is they're doing what they love to do," she said. "They're not doing it because they were told to, it's what they chose."

And as each kid has made their way into adulthood, they've all taken their own bits of wisdom and advice from their mother. Ask them what they have come to appreciate the most and there are indeed individual differences.

Natassia and Natasha, both of whom have children of their own, have co-opted many of the values they learned from their mother when it comes to rearing their own kids.

Malcolm marvels at her resilience — how she turned a difficult juncture in her own childhood into something that has shaped the way she raised her own children.

"She wants to give us the love that she didn't have (after her parents passed away) and that's just be the best parent she could be could be. We couldn't ask for more," Malcolm said.

"I couldn't imagine going to a new country at a young age, especially after losing both parents at a young age and starting a brand new life for yourself. It's not easy, but mental toughness was one of things she instilled in us. She's incredibly strong and what she did nothing short of amazing,"

P.K. said that his mom has always emboldened his individuality, allowing him to explore what that meant without meddling and micro-managing like a typical stage parent. Having matured and transitioned into adulthood, that's what he thinks he loves most about both of his parents.

"They know when to let go," P.K. said of his parents. "They never tried to shelter me. They never tried to lock me down. They've allowed me to mold into my own person and shape my own life, develop my business and my career on my own. They support me and they'll be there when they need to be (and that's) the sign of a great parent."

For Jordan, she has set an example of the type of person he'd like to be.

"My mom is very caring, very passionate, very loving and she's everything we could hope for in a mom and a best friend," Jordan said. "The best way I can say it is: If I can grow older and become half the person she was, I know once I move on, people will remember me as a pretty good person."

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The Athletic / DGB Grab Bag: Checking in on the remaining RFAs, a no-trade clause proposal and Rob Ray fights a fan

By Sean McIndoe Feb 8, 2019

This week's big news was Auston Matthews' new contract, which will see the young star carry a cap hit north of \$11.6 million for the next five seasons. It's a big chunk of change, to be sure. But it also locks up an elite young star who was just months away from restricted free agency.

That said, there's still a ton of young talent around the league that will need new deals. So today, let's check in on some of the biggest RFA names left in the class of 2019 and see how those negotiations are shaping up.

Brayden Point, Lightning: Given the other salaries already locked in for teammates like Nikita Kucherov, Steven Stamkos and Victor Hedman,



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any long-term commitment will need to factor in the increased risk of a serious shoulder injury from lifting Stanley Cups every damn year.

Mikko Rantanen, Avalanche: Can take advantage of the front office's recent history by reminding them of how Nathan MacKinnon and his agent negotiated his last deal and then telling them that he obviously wants to do the exact opposite of that.

Jacob Trouba, Jets: Will at some point have to sit down with his agent and family and figure out whether he'd prefer a short-term, medium-term or long-term holdout.

Matthew Tkachuk, Flames: Look, we can speculate all we want about how much he's worth and his true value to the team, but we all know he's going to try to sign for exactly one dollar more than Drew Doughty just to be a prick.

Brock Boeser, Canucks: Has probably met Elias Pettersson, so that's got to be worth a few million right there.

Patrick Laine, Jets: Is starting to get a sinking feeling that when his agent said they should be focused on one goal and one goal only, he was probably referring to getting a new contract done and not to his offensive production for 2019.

William Karlsson, Golden Knights: Is going to want a deal that comes front-loaded with a big signing bonus, since he'll need that money to build the time machine he uses to go back and sign a long-term deal last summer when he was good.

Timo Meier, Sharks: Should also be on this list, we guess.

Mitch Marner, Maple Leafs: Has deftly executed a long-game strategy of bidding this time and letting his teammates all sign their big contracts first until there's no more cap room left, so let's see how that works out for him.

Kyle Connor, Jets: Should be just fine as long as he's not like the third Winnipeg player on this list.

Sebastian Aho, Hurricanes: Has been hearing the words "offer sheet" whispered by other teams quite a bit lately, although come to think of it they're always preceded by "We're wimpy NHL GMs so we're never going to" and that last word might not actually be "sheet."

The week's three stars of comedy

The third star: Jose Mourinho – Should this clip even qualify? On the one hand, Mourinho is a soccer guy and this clip is from the KHL, not the NHL. On the other hand, well, it's a guy wiping out on a red carpet.

JOSE MOURINHO WAS A SPECIAL GUEST AT THE SKA – AVANGARD GAME. SOMETHING WENT REALLY WRONG AT THE OPENING FACE-OFF. PAVEL DATSYUK SAVED THE SPECIAL ONE PIC. [TWITTER.COM/I6SBRPOBXI](https://twitter.com/i6sbrpobxi)

&Mdash; IGOR ERONKO (@IGORERONKO) FEBRUARY 4, 2019

The second star: The Maple Leafs – Look, I like just about every move they've made in recent years up to and including the Jake Muzzin trade and Matthews signing, but after seeing this I can say I have zero confidence going forward in the Leafs front office.

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS LMAO PIC. [TWITTER.COM/QANAJXYPJ](https://twitter.com/QANAJXYPJ)

&Mdash; FLINTOR (@THEFLINTOR) FEBRUARY 3, 2019

The first star: Elias Lindholm – He's celebrating a win so this is the GREATEST THING EVER and is SO SUPER FUN and if you don't like it more than anything then you are an OLD MAN YELLING AT A CLOUD. (Am I doing this right, Hurricanes fans?)

Be It Resolved

It's trade deadline season, which means it's no-trade clause season, and earlier in the week I saw this:

THE NO-TRADE LISTS THAT PLAYERS SUBMIT REALLY SHOULD BE MADE PUBLIC. I WANT THE BURN BOOK. GIVE IT TO ME.

— PETE BLACKBURN (@PETEBLACKBURN) FEBRUARY 2, 2019

Pete's a funny guy who you should be following and I'm 80 percent sure he's joking here, but I don't care because this is brilliant. Yes, the NHL should absolutely do this. Show us the lists.

Well, not the specific lists. I can understand why individual players would want their lists to be kept private. Nobody's going to want to make enemies, or get booed every time they visit a city on their list, or create an awkward situation if they wind up playing for a team down the road. That all makes sense.

So no, don't show us the individual lists. Just the aggregate. As in, the league keeps track of every NTC list a player submits over the course of the year, and at the end of the season they tell us how often each team showed up.

Why not, right? There would always be enough deniability built into the system that nobody could trace any answer back to a specific player, with the exception of the rare case where one team showed up on 100 percent of the lists and I think we can all agree that would be hilarious. So let's do it.

The only legitimate argument against the idea that I can think of is that it would be depressing to find out that your favorite team was showing up on most of the "do not want" lists. But while it absolutely would be depressing, it's also useful information to have. No fan wants to find out that their team is capped out, or has a lousy prospect pipeline, or is last in the league in attendance. But they still want to know, because it's worth knowing.

And it can help manage expectations. Think of the small-market GM who's constantly getting roasted for not pulling off trades. Now imagine you find out his team is always ruled out of every big name before the bidding even starts. That changes things, right? And it would be fascinating to see how a team's number changed over the years, as rebuilds and new coaches and deep playoff runs changed perceptions. Our own Craig Custance has occasionally given us an informal look behind the curtain over the years; the NHL should take the next step and make it official.

It goes without saying that the league will never actually do any of this, because they hate giving their fans useful information. Just getting teams to reveal basic contract terms has been a years-long battle that we're only recently starting to win. Remember when the Department of Player Safety insisted on tweeting out suspensions without telling us how many games they were for? And heaven help you if you'd like to know what the conditions on a conditional draft pick look like. Or, you know, you want a website with functional stats.

So no, this isn't ever going to happen. But it should. So be it resolved that the NHL pretend like its fans are paying customers and give us the information we want to see.

Obscure former player of the week

Earlier this week, I set out to determine which trade was the second most important in NHL history. My personal pick ended up being the 1957 deal that sent Ted Lindsay and Glenn Hall from Detroit to Chicago, breaking up the Red Wings' dynasty and paving the way for what would be the Hawks' last Cup for almost 50 years.

As an added bonus, that trade also gives me a chance to mention one of my favorite obscure players: feisty forward Forbes Kennedy.

Despite being small even by the standards of the day, Kennedy made his reputation as a take-no-prisoners power forward in the Quebec junior league in the mid-1950s before signing with Chicago in 1956. He played one year there, scoring 21 points, before being included in the four-player package heading to Detroit in the Lindsay/Hall blockbuster. He'd get two full seasons in Detroit and parts of two more before being dealt to the Bruins, then spend four years in Boston and one in the minors before



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heading to the Flyers in the 1967 expansion draft. He'd last most of two seasons in Philadelphia before being traded to the Maple Leafs late in the 1968-69 season.

By that point, Kennedy was 33 years old and had almost 600 NHL games to his name. But while he didn't play much with the Leafs, he may have had the most memorable game of his career in the blue and white. In a playoff game on April 2, 1969, Leafs blueliner Pat Quinn caught Bobby Orr with his head down and delivered one of the most famous checks of the era, knocking the Bruins star out cold. When a brawl broke out shortly after, Kennedy took on just about all of Boston: he fought goaltender Gerry Cheevers, Johnny Bucyk, Cheevers again, and John McKenzie, all while absorbing punches from Bruins fans leaning over the glass. In all, he received four separate fighting majors for one brawl.

Unfortunately for Kennedy, he also landed a punch on one more opponent during the brawl: linesman George Ashley. That earned him a suspension that spelled the end of his NHL career. He'd spend one more year in the AHL, but never made it back to the big leagues. He'd finish with 603 NHL games, 70 goals, 178 points and 888 PIM in the regular season – and quite a few more in that one memorable playoff game.

Classic YouTube clip breakdown

It's been a rough few months for the Buffalo Sabres. After an early-season win streak pushed them to the top of the overall standings by the end of November, they've struggled badly ever since and have fallen out of a playoff spot. In fact, if you're a Sabres fan, you may be trying to remember what it's like to see this team beat anybody.

Today we're going to refresh your memory, as we look back on one of the most one-sided beatings the Sabres ever handed out.

It's April 1992, and our friends at TSN are recapping one of the week's biggest stories. Our clip joins Paul Romanuk in mid-sentence, and at first he seems to be describing a relatively run-of-the-mill incident in which somebody got thrown to the ice, then got up and tried to engage the Sabres' bench. Pretty standard stuff for the early '90s, really.

Our first clue that something's up is when Romanuk gets serious and makes a reference to someone "getting what was coming to him." He then reveals the twist on our story: he's not talking about a player, but a fan. Specifically, a fan who just tried to fight Rob Ray. If this strikes you as a bad idea, well, it will also strike the fan that way. And so will Rob Ray's fists. Repeatedly. We'll get there.

"I mean the fan has no more business being on the ice or near the bench than a player would have scaling the glass to take after a fan." Wait, would that be bad? Asking for a friend and/or terrible future GM.

We cut to the footage, and yeah, it's pretty much exactly what you'd think. A fan is over by the Sabres bench, and he's getting speed-bagged by Ray and friends. And look, this is a serious incident and I know we're all focused on how many punches this poor guy is absorbing. But can we all take a moment to appreciate the undisputed hero of this clip: the cop who comes flying in like an extra from a Benny Hill chase scene?

Seriously, this guy is fantastic. He sprints in, jumps for no reason, runs in place on the ice for a few seconds like Fred Flintstone and then fixes his hat while failing to help the situation even a little bit. This guy is the best, and I want to hang out with him. God bless the first responders.

Ray is interviewed and lays out a pretty reasonable rationale for what we just saw: The fan came onto the playing surface, the players didn't know who he was or what he might be looking to do and their first attempt to get him away from them hadn't worked. "We started putting it to him pretty good and then threw him back out onto the ice." And he doesn't regret it. All of which, if we're being honest, sounds pretty reasonable.

So here's the background. The incident had come at the end of a chippy game between the Sabres and Nordiques in Quebec City. There had been a minor incident late in the third between Sabres goalie Clint Malarchuk and Nords tough guy Tony Twist, and that had led to Quebec's Herb Raglan running Malarchuk in the final minute. A scrum

breaks out, and as all eyes are on the ice, the fan scales the glass near the Sabres bench and sits there. (He'd later claim that he was trying to win a bet.) Sabres coach John Muckler apparently grabbed a stick and tried to swat him back into the stands, at which point he dropped down into the Buffalo bench like a spider you miss with the first newspaper swat.

If you watch the clip carefully, you can actually see Muckler jabbing the guy with the stick while Ray pummels him. When an old man wildly pitchforking you in the ribs isn't even remotely in the running for the worst thing happening to you at a given moment, you're having a bad day.

We learn that the fan isn't likely to press charges, but that Ray may be punished by the league. Remember, this happened about three years after another case of a fan jumping onto the ice, this time in Boston. We broke that clip down here, and it's worth rewatching from time to time as a reminder that Ron Asselstine will straight-up eat your soul if you anger him.

The last minute of the clip might be my favorite, as we go around the league to get reactions from other players. First up is Adam Graves, who mentions that there are some fans who occasionally don't like him. If you think it's bad now, Adam, wait until you see what happens next month.

Ken Baumgartner is next, wearing the sort of smirk that tells us he desperately wishes he'd been in Ray's place. He also adds that "It wasn't exactly self-defense after the first 10 punches." The Bomber was the best.

"I don't want to see that happen ever again. I don't know who's at fault ... you just want to put it behind you and really, hopefully, it will never happen again." – Don Sweeney, discussing either the Rob Ray fan incident or the first round of the Bruins' 2015 draft, I'm not sure. Maybe both.

We move on to Montreal and Denis Savard says he saw a player "hitting on the fans," which is not quite the same thing and nowhere near as unusual. He's followed by Brian Skrudland, who will be your supply teacher for fourth period math class and is definitely not taking any crap from you kids today.

"Give the fan credit, he hung in there for 15 good ones anyway." Well, yes, technically that's true. He did hang in there, in the sense that four guys were dangling him a foot off the ground while he got pummeled. Fair point there.

Ultimately, no charges were filed and Ray wasn't suspended, although he was apparently fined. Years later, Ray's old pal Tie Domi would find himself in a similar situation and reacted with surprising restraint, so maybe the message was delivered.

And that's it. To this day, the incident is remembered as one of the most unique and one-of-a-kind moments in the history of the NHL, something we'd never seen before and almost certainly will never see again: That time that Rob Ray got into a fight and wasn't creepily half-naked at the end of it.

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Sportsnet.ca / 6 Maple Leafs who could be traded to ease the cap crunch

Luke Fox | February 8, 2019, 8:40 AM

TORONTO – Mitchell Marner stood at the north end of the Toronto Maple Leafs dressing room the morning after Auston Matthews was guaranteed \$58.17 million and surveyed the banks of name plates.



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"It's a great contract for him. I'm very happy for him. It's great for this team as well," Marner said. "We all want, including myself, to be a Leaf for a long time — and I'm sure that'll happen."

Despite this week's agent-fueled drama, we're certain Marner will re-sign in Toronto.

But with Toronto likely carrying three star forwards with eight-digit AAVs — Matthews, Marner and John Tavares — into 2019-20 and beyond, something's gotta give.

The Matthews deal, coach Mike Babcock says, "allows us to understand where we're at and then you know what you can do."

Celebrating heroes of the game, Sportsnet and Scotiabank unite to bring a 4-day hockey festival to Swift Current, Sask., and a 12-hour national NHL broadcast to Canadian fans coast-to-coast on Feb. 9.

The Leafs' trickle-down economics will push one or two middle-class residents out of the room this summer and put an even greater emphasis on the importance of cheap, role-playing labour provided this season by the likes of Par Lindholm (\$975,000) and Tyler Ennis (\$650,000), both of whom will deserve modest raises of their own come July 1.

Fourth-line centre Frederik Gauthier (\$675,000) and winger Trevor Moore (\$775,000), who don't have a guaranteed spot on the current roster when everyone's at full health, are expected to become regulars in 2019-20 — valued for their bargain-basement price points but also because, at 23 years old, both forwards are projecting upwards in their development.

Unless Jake Gardiner wants to win here so badly that he's willing to take — what, \$2 million? — less to remain a Leaf, this is last spring in blue and white.

Igor Ozhiganov (RFA) and Ron Hainsey (UFA) have tumbled down or out of the lineup since Jake Muzzin crashed the party, and there's no guarantee either returns next season.

Righty Ozhiganov, 26, did not leave the KHL to join the Marlies.

We suspect Babcock would appreciate Hainsey's leadership and stability on his third pairing again, and the American did move his family here two years ago, but he'll be 38 when the puck drops on the 2019-20 season, and Dubas hasn't given a major-league contract to anyone over the age of 29 since he got the gig.

Like Moore, expect 25-year-old defenceman Calle Rosen (\$750,000 cap hit through 2021) to get promoted for a similar reason. Maybe Justin Holl (\$650,000) finally gets a legitimate shot, too.

The decisions up front will be even more difficult. And that's where the trade speculation will swirl.

So, let's look, in brief, at the candidates Dubas could move, ordered from least to most desirable.

It's a business, and it can be harsh. They won't all be lifelong Leafs.

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William Nylander, \$6.96 million cap hit through 2024

The \$12 million in salary the Leafs are paying Nylander this season and the juicy \$8.3 million signing bonus cheque they'll cut him on July 1 helps the player with cash up front, but such a structure also makes the contract more transferrable.

This means the dynamic, versatile forward will only cost his club \$6 million in real money from 2020-21 through 2023-24. Nylander has said that Dubas assured him he won't be dealt, but no formal trade protection kicks in until 2023.

Among those listed here, we believe Nylander holds the longest odds of being traded — this autumn's epic contract saga would be a heck of a

battle to endure for a player you don't want, and the Swede is back to buzzing again — but starting July 2, there'd certainly be interest.

Patrick Marleau, \$6.25 million cap hit through 2020

It's not the player; it's the term. From the day Marleau signed in Toronto, all concerns zeroed in on that third year, when he'll be 40 years old and the Matthews and Marner raises kick in.

On paper, this is the cap hit that will cost an emerging Leafs winger his job by September.

The deal is virtually buyout-proof: Once Marleau collects his \$3 million signing bonus on July 1, he'll only be owed \$1.25 million in salary over the course of the 2019-20 schedule. So while we still believe there's an outside chance Marleau ends his career back in San Jose, any waiving of his no-movement clause would be the player's choice. We can't see Marleau — adoptive father of the franchise's fresh faces and the most universally beloved member of the dressing room — getting the Robidas Island treatment.

Plus, he's still a useful player on and off the ice, even as he trends from a top-line to third-line threat.

"There's 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," Babcock defends.

"When you're 25 and it doesn't go as good, everyone says, 'No big deal.' When you start getting higher, they always say, 'Oh, the wheels are off, you're done.' The wheels ain't off. He ain't done."

Kasperii Kapanen, \$863,333 cap hit through 2019

Kapanen has been absolutely soaring this season, the 22-year-old's first full one at the NHL level. After starting on the fourth line, he made the most of his opportunity to leap into the top six during Nylander's stalemate. He's on pace for a 47-point campaign, despite being used significantly more on the penalty kill than the power play.

His trade value is high, but the team loves the trajectory of his development. The push will be to keep him under \$3 million. Kapanen and Andreas Johnsson are precisely the types of player susceptible to a mid-level offer sheet because the cost would be low and Dubas is in a bind.

"Those are relatively both rookies, so both getting their feet wet in the league, and they've developed well under Mike and his staff this year after graduating from the Marlies last year, so we're just continuing to see them grow and mature," Dubas said.

"We know they need contracts as well, but we'll continue to let the season play out and let that sample size grow. We'll begin having some discussions with their people probably after the trade deadline."

Andreas Johnsson, \$787,500 cap hit through 2019

The 24-year-old, late-blooming support player was sluggish this fall in following up his Calder Cup MVP performance, but his confidence and production have exploded of late, despite being limited to fourth-line status.

On Monday, Johnsson became the first Leaf since Kyle Wellwood (2005) to rack up four points in less than 12 minutes, and he sniped again on Wednesday. Fearless on the forecheck, he meshes Connor Brown's work ethic with sharper offensive instincts.

"He's making a case," Babcock said. "The great thing about him is, he hasn't sat there and said, 'I'm not getting any minutes.' He just decided to produce and see if the coach is smart enough to get it figured out."

Like Kapanen, the Leafs like the player but won't like what he'll cost them.

A weekly deep dive into the biggest hockey news in the world with hosts Elliotte Friedman and Jeff Marek. New episodes every Thursday.



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Connor Brown, \$2.1 million cap hit through 2020

Poor Brown. As a 20-goal rookie and giddy-to-be-here local guy, Brown conceded to a very team-friendly bridge extension in 2017 that could well see him ousted in 2019.

Sliding to the bottom six, the 24-year-old has become more dispensable than Babcock favourite Zach Hyman and his goal total is about to drop for the second consecutive year.

How he's currently deployed on a deep Toronto club makes him a candidate to be replaced with entry-level labour, but Brown would excel elsewhere. He kills penalties, is responsible defensively (plus-11), doesn't miss games and does the dirty work pure-skill guys appreciate.

Some baseless speculation: old Erie pal Connor McDavid would love Brown's character and relentlessness in Edmonton.

Nikita Zaitsev, \$4.5 million cap hit through 2024

Hard to think the Maple Leafs would want to allocate less money to their blue line, or rid themselves of their only regular right shot, but Zaitsev has not lived up to the \$31.5-million contract Lou Lamoriello (not Dubas) handed him.

He's 27. Despite getting top-four minutes, his production is set to decline for the second year, and there are too many nights he struggles in his own end.

Would Dubas eat some salary to facilitate a move? How worrisome would it be to see Holl shoot to the right-shot depth chart? Will either Timothy Liljegren or Rasmus Sandin (who both battled injury this season) be ready to make the jump in 2019-20? The Leafs' D depth is in for a shock once Gardiner walks.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 02.09.2019

1129901 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Blue Jackets' Panarin breaks silence on free agency, potential trade

Sportsnet Staff | February 8, 2019, 8:03 PM

With the NHL's Feb. 25 trade deadline only weeks away, the biggest potential name floating above the frenzy remains in limbo. Fifty-one games into his second season in Columbus, Artemi Panarin has the Blue Jackets faithful on edge, as questions remain about whether the club will keep their star winger or ship him out at the deadline if it becomes clear he won't sign an extension.

Panarin opened up about the situation to reporters in Columbus Friday, shedding light on his perspective going into the season's home stretch and reiterating his desire to test free agency.

"I want to see what happens in the summer, and if I have better options," Panarin said, according to The Athletic's Aaron Portzline. "I'm ready for that situation. I know in the summer how hard that will be for me. I'm ready. Still positive."

The 27-year-old seemed hesitant when asked if he'd consider signing a new deal with the Blue Jackets in the off-season. Wrote Portzline of the exchange:

...the suggestion that Panarin could circle back and re-sign with the Blue Jackets this summer via free agency prompted Panarin to grin, and then laugh.

"Yeah, but ..." he said. And then he laughed again awkwardly.

"Ahh, I don't know. I don't know. Yeah, (the Blue Jackets) have a chance, but ... we'll see what happens in the summer. I still want to consider the season and help the team win the Stanley Cup."

While it's unclear where Blue Jackets GM Jarmo Kekalainen stands in regards to wanting to keep Panarin in the fold, others in the city have made it more clear, particularly by way of a billboard aimed at wooing the winger into staying. Though Panarin said he appreciates the city's support, he's still interested in trying to find the best long-term fit for next season and beyond.

"It's amazing. I feel really good after that. I say it's harder for me to keep talking about my free agency because I see how people want me to stay in Columbus, and it's harder," Panarin said.

"But it's my life. We only have one life and I want to, like ... it's 10 per cent of my life, seven or eight years, you know? I want to stay happy every day and I want to see more options."

Far and away the biggest star among the Blue Jackets' forward corps — Panarin currently leads the club in scoring with 60 points through 51 games, and did so last season with a career-best 82-point effort — conventional wisdom suggests the club would be unwise to continue the rest of the season with Panarin on the roster and possibly lose him for nothing in the off-season. However, with Columbus currently sitting third in the Metropolitan Division, there's also the option of keeping him in the fold to try to make one last run at a deep playoff run.

For his part, Panarin said he's open to either option, but the decision doesn't rest with him.

"If Jarmo trades me, it's, 'Get working!'" Panarin said, according to Portzline. "That's it. I understand his business, because (Chicago GM) Stan Bowman didn't ask me (in 2017), he just traded me. Right now, I'm not in control, I'm still just hockey player. That's not my job. That's for Jarmo, but if he still keeps me I play hard. That's it."

While much speculation has circulated about where Panarin wants to be in 2019-20, the winger said he doesn't have any specific destinations in mind.

"Seriously guys, I don't have a team. Not one team where I want to go. But I have many teams. We'll see what happens in the summer, but right now I don't know what I want," he said.

After firing agent Daniel Milstein Friday and bringing in Paul Theofanous — agent for fellow Blue Jackets impending UFA Sergei Bobrovsky — some wondered if Panarin is looking to either sign somewhere alongside his countryman, or angle for a trade to the same club. Panarin said that isn't part of the plan.

"Interesting situation. I really like (Bobrovsky) and we're big friends right now. But we have two different lives."

The Blue Jackets still have more than two weeks before they have to make a decision. However, significant trades have already started to drop in the East, with rivals like Toronto and Pittsburgh recently dealing to try to beef up their squads — moves that likely put pressure on Columbus to decide sooner rather than later whether they have a strong enough chance at a run to roll the dice on keeping Panarin.

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1129902 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / The oral history of Team Canada's 1996 World Cup training camp

by Luke Fox



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • February 9, 2019

The community of Whistler, B.C., might have felt the stinging loss more than any other. A deep connection was forged when Team Canada, led by head coach Glen Sather, descended on the resort municipality on Aug. 14, 1996, and spent seven days tuning up for the battle ahead.

No, the end result of the World Cup wasn't what Canada envisioned, but it didn't sour memories of the camp that left an enduring mark on everyone from players and coaches to residents and security staff. "It was a sh—y ending to a great start," says Fleury.

The following is an oral history of the 1996 camp, told by several people who were there.

BILL BARRATT, former director of parks and recreation for Whistler It was all set up because of our connection to the Vancouver Canucks. Pat Quinn had been to Whistler with the Canucks for training camp. So, they came by, based on Quinn's recommendation.

BOB NICHOLSON, then vice president of Hockey Canada Glen Sather and Pat Quinn had a real strong relationship, so Glen would have been talking to Pat, and Pat recommending all the various venues that Glen would use. It started with those two and their great relationship.

BILL BARRATT They liked what Whistler brought to the table. The facility, Meadow Park Sports Centre, was a big part of it, for sure. But what they loved about it was all the restaurants and golf courses. It was the complete package. And the players were treated pretty good.

THEO FLEURY, right winger Back in those days, training camp wasn't necessarily as intense as it is nowadays. I just remember having lots of fun and enjoying being around all these amazing hockey players.

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1129903 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Bruce Boudreau says some Wild players are 'a shell' of themselves

Rory Boylen February 8, 2019, 12:43 PM

As the Western Conference's snail race for the final two wild card berths continues, the Minnesota Wild are the latest team to grind to a halt.

Since returning from all-star weekend and their bye week, the Wild have lost four games in a row, three of which were to teams right around Minnesota in the standings. The latest, a 4-1 loss to the also-struggling Edmonton Oilers, was close to rock bottom. You could hear it in the lack of spirit from the usually raucous hometown crowd and in coach Bruce Boudreau's post-game conference.

"Yep, this was the quietest I've heard (Xcel Energy Center) in the first period ever," Boudreau noted about his team's six-shot opening frame. "But we didn't do anything to excite them either."

What on one side was a step in the right direction that breathed some "much-needed oxygen" into Edmonton's playoff hopes was, on the other, a lacklustre effort that further opened the door and invited the lineup of wild card hopefuls in.

"There was 55 minutes left in the game. If you're going to give up or get so down after five minutes because you're down a goal, then we're in bigger trouble than we think." — Bruce Boudreau after #EDMvsMIN pic.twitter.com/3WhEvjSvuD

— Minnesota Wild (@mnmwild) February 8, 2019

The Wild has scored nine goals in their four post-bye games and the stretch is a continuation of some underwhelming offensive performances from some of the players who were expected to carry the load.

Eric Staal, well off the 40-goal pace he reached last season, was heating up before the break but has just one assist in the past four games. The long-awaited Jason Zucker breakout happened last season to the tune of 33 goals, but he has just four since Christmas and may not hit 20 this season. And Mikael Granlund, who has nearly hit 70 points the last two seasons, has just one goal since the end of November on just 67 shots.

"I can't go out there and hang on his back and follow him up like a close talker and say 'hey shoot the puck,' Boudreau said of Granlund. "He's a smart enough player. The last two years he was one of the top, I thought, top 10 players in the league. And now he's got two goals in 38 games.

"If I had the magic button to make them play..." Boudreau said of all his struggling players, "I can put the systems together and play the way you want to play, but I mean everything else comes from within."

The Wild's offence ranks 26th in the league on the season and although they still hold the first wild card spot, they have played more games than most of the teams around them and are just two points clear of ninth in the West.

Celebrating heroes of the game, Sportsnet and Scotiabank unite to bring a 4-day hockey festival to Swift Current, Sask., and a 12-hour national NHL broadcast to Canadian fans coast-to-coast on Feb. 9.

When Paul Fenton was officially hired as GM last summer, owner Craig Leipold made it clear the expectation was that this team would challenge for the Stanley Cup and Fenton agreed that the roster as currently constructed was in a good place. Some bad luck has been a factor: Matt Dumba was the NHL's leading defence goal scorer when injury cut his season short in December, and elite two-way pivot Mikko Koivu had a season-ending injury of his own just this week.

But every team deals with injuries — just look at where Nashville sits — and now in Minnesota you have a coach who is bewildered at what's happened to some of his key players as the team has fallen back to the pack.

"There's some guys there that are just a shell of the players I've known for two-and-a-half years," Boudreau said.

"This was sort of the last straw. Everybody now has caught us or within a point. So it's either find your sense of urgency and do what you have to do to win or bad things are going to happen. If you look at our schedule starting at the end of the month this is the time you have to be successful."

It's true. The Wild have 10 games the rest of February with an even home-road split. Each of their next four games are against Eastern Conference teams — two versus New Jersey and one each against Philadelphia and the New York Islanders. After that, the Wild play the hard-charging St. Louis Blues on back-to-back Sundays at the end of the month and have three very winnable games against Anaheim, Detroit and the New York Rangers in between.

After that, the road gets very difficult. The Wild finish February with a road game in Winnipeg then play at Calgary, followed by a home-and-home with Nashville and a matchup in Tampa Bay. If they're still trending the wrong direction at that point, it's a stretch that could bury Minnesota's playoff hopes and maybe even transform them into a deadline seller on Feb. 25.

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1129904 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Oilers' defence trending in right direction at crucial point in season



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Mark Spector | February 8, 2019, 7:45 PM

EDMONTON — Even as the Edmonton Oilers sport the only two 30-plus goal men on the same team in the National Hockey League, the fallacy is that Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl should carry a team to the playoffs.

“How can a team with the best player in the world miss the playoffs?”

Tell us you haven't heard someone say that in reference to the Oilers? Or that you haven't said it yourself?

Then you watch them play, and you see the minus-22 goal differential. And it brings us back to the Taylor Hall years, when they'd draft an offensive superstar first overall and then force him to spend most of every night playing his own end.

Look at McDavid: He has 80 points, one back of Nikita Kucherov prior to Friday's games in the race for the Art Ross Trophy. Yet, he had just a plus-3 defensive rating. Draisaitl had 66 points and was also plus-3.

In Tampa, Kucherov was plus-13, Brayden Point (66 points) is plus-16. In Calgary, Mikael Backlund — who has 50 points less than McDavid — is plus-27.

I get it — plus-minus is an antiquated stat that doesn't tell the whole story. In this case, it doesn't tell us that McDavid is derelict defensively. Not at all.

It tells us that you can be right in the hunt for your third straight Art Ross Trophy, but the team you are on lets in so many pucks that McDavid can be one bad game away from being a minus player.

“Obviously we've been getting scored on way too much — it's no secret,” said Draisaitl. “We've got to find ways to keep the puck out of our net, and find ways to put it into their net. That's actually all hockey really is. You try and keep the puck out of your net, and try and put it into their net.”

Ah, wisdom dropped.

The fact that a team with a minus-22 goal differential sits two points removed from a wild-card spot is testament to what has happened to the Western Conference this season. Remember, when Edmonton last made the playoffs, two springs ago, they were plus-35, and allowed just 212 goals against.

This season they are on pace to let in 271 — but that's a big picture stat. With 28 games to play, and sitting right in the playoff hunt, what matters is how they play defensively from here on in. And after a solid defensive effort in a 4-1 win at Minnesota Thursday, and with No. 1 defenceman Oscar Klefbom back in the lineup, perhaps the Oilers have the makings of a team that can allow two or less more often than not.

“That is the level we need to stay at and play for the remaining 28 games here,” said centre Ryan Nugent-Hopkins. “Since the break we've done a real good job at that — for two periods every night. Last night it was good to see 60 full minutes of defending the right way.”

Yes, imploding in the third period tends to undo any good work accomplished in the opening 40. But does that change with Klefbom back in? It did Thursday in Minnesota, the second game for Klefbom after missing 21 with a busted finger.

With their lead dog back in the lineup, everyone's minutes returned to where they should be versus the Wild. Here was the ice time among Oilers defencemen in a 4-1 win on Thursday: Klefbom — 23:55; Darnell Nurse — 22:16; Adam Larsson — 21:13; Kris Russell — 19:52; Matt Benning — 16:04; Brandon Manning — 13:54.

When your third pairing plays around the 15-minute range, and your top pair no more than 22 or 23 minutes, traditional hockey logic says

everyone can be expected to carry their portion of the load. That no one is being asked to do too much.

Head coach Ken Hitchcock saw something Thursday, when it comes to the defensive game the Oilers will need to play down the stretch.

“The start of it, yes,” he said. “We were harder on pucks in our own zone, harder at our net harder on the forecheck... A step in the right direction. It's a hard game, but that's what's necessary if you want to collect points at this time of year.”

If it's a 3-2 league, and it is, Hitchcock knows his team can get to three most nights. Especially with a powerplay that has scored five times in its past 11 attempts. It's keeping the other guys to two that has been the problem.

“Our power play, if I'm the opposition, looks like it can score all the time. Like it's going to get quality chances,” he said. “But we can't make our power play try to save us ... because we've let in too many chances. We have to cut down on the working chances at the net. There have been too many games where we've lost the red zone battles at both ends of the rink, and we're trying to take the next step.

“(Thursday), at least we broken even.”

Can the Edmonton Oilers keep the puck out, and at least go even in goal differential through to Game 82?

If they do, they'll have a chance to advance.

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1129905 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Truth By Numbers: Has Thomas Chabot adequately replaced Erik Karlsson?

Andrew Berkshire February 8, 2019, 10:56 AM

You may not realize it, but Nashville's Viktor Arvidsson is one of the elite goal scorers in the game today, especially at 5-on-5, which is exactly what his team needs. In the East, when the Ottawa Senators traded Erik Karlsson to San Jose it marked the end of an era and opened up a whole bunch of questions about the future of their blue line — but with Thomas Chabot scoring at nearly a point per game pace, how well is he replacing Karlsson?

That plus notes on Brayden Point, James Neal and more in this week's column.

Celebrating heroes of the game, Sportsnet and Scotiabank unite to bring a 4-day hockey festival to Swift Current, Sask., and a 12-hour national NHL broadcast to Canadian fans coast-to-coast on Feb. 9.

For the past two seasons, Viktor Arvidsson has made good on the promise he showed in his rookie season as a high-volume shooter. In 2016-17 and 2017-18 Arvidsson scored 31 and 29 goals respectively, but this year his totals were in question for a bit when injuries took him out of the lineup a few times. In the games he's managed to play, though, Arvidsson has been scoring like a man possessed, already at 22 goals in 32 games played, including 13 in 16 games since the calendar turned to 2019.

No one has scored more than Arvidsson over that time, and he's managed to get it done without any power play goals as Nashville's man advantage continues to struggle.

In fact, over the past three seasons, only Auston Matthews and Jeff Skinner have scored more 5-on-5 goals per 60 minutes of ice time than



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Arvidsson's 1.27, and no one is scoring more per 60 minutes than he is this season. Arvidsson averages 2.17 goals for every 60 minutes of 5-on-5 action.

For the Predators, who lack offensive depth up front and need 5-on-5 scoring to compensate for a terrible power play, this is great news as we get closer to the playoffs, but Arvidsson is shooting at 19.1 per cent this season, way up from 11.7 per cent last season and 12.6 per cent the season before. Has he changed something up, or is he due to regress a bit?

Well...yeah. As good of a scorer as Arvidsson has been in his career, he's been unbelievable this season in creating scoring chances for himself, shooting from better areas, incorporating more chances off the rush and pouncing on to mistakes generated by forechecks more often. A great season from Ryan Johansen has also given Arvidsson the opportunity to get more scoring chances preceded by passes as well.

Only Brady Tkachuk, Paul Byron, and William Carrier are getting more high danger chances per minute than Arvidsson, only Brendan Gallagher and Timo Meier are getting more scoring chances total, and no one is getting as many scoring chances on net. Clearly, Arvidsson has found an extra gear this season, and this level of goal scoring might be more sustainable than you think.

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.

THE QUESTION

After watching the Ottawa Senators push his Toronto Maple Leafs all season despite being really bad, Steve Dangle is confused about what's going on, but he's been really impressed by one player: Thomas Chabot. So Steve asks a controversial question:

"Has Thomas Chabot adequately replaced Erik Karlsson in Ottawa?"

Wow Steve, can't believe you'd suggest that. Glad I had nothing to do with framing that question so angry Senators fans can't yell at me.

Let's look into it though. We'll use on-ice statistics relative to teammates to avoid the noise of how bad Ottawa is compared to the Sharks.

Obviously Karlsson and Chabot are playing very different minutes on two very different teams, but it's actually pretty shocking — to me at least — how well Chabot has been able to keep the Senators afloat while he's on the ice. Having an impact similar to Karlsson, including improving the Senators' slot pass differential by an insane 11.1 per cent while he's on the ice, is a testament to the quality of player Chabot is.

Obviously the Senators would be a better team if they had both players, so it's not exactly a confirmation that they didn't need Karlsson at all, but their faith in Chabot seems to be well placed early in his career.

Offensively, Chabot has a ways to go before equaling Karlsson's 5.39 scoring chances created per 20 minutes at 5-on-5. He's creating 3.8 right now, but his on-ice impact has been undeniable.

Chabot is a player worth watching among the next generation of future Norris contenders.

BUY OR SELL

- With the big numbers attached to Auston Matthews' contract and the rumours of what Mitch Marner will come in at, you have to wonder how Tampa Bay is going to deal with Brayden Point's contract negotiations this summer. He's currently their cheapest player at a cap hit of only \$686,000, but is seventh in league scoring. Next season Nikita Kucherov's salary basically doubles as well, while Yanni Gourde will get an extra \$4 million. Expect some big names to be moved out around the draft. Even with the Florida tax advantage, there's not enough money to go around. It wouldn't surprise me if Point gets the same contract as Steven Stamkos (\$8.5 million).

- Derick Brassard can blame less ice time for his production drop this season, but what he did with the ice time he got suggests he didn't deserve more in Pittsburgh. Last season he created the 60th-most scoring chances for his teammates in the NHL among forwards, but this year that has dropped to 189th. He has the talent to rebound, but this could be signs of decline at age 31.

- Last season Erik Gustafsson was the only Blackhawks defenceman to finish with a positive high danger scoring chance differential, a hint of being capable of taking on a bigger role. This year only Duncan Keith has more ice time on the Hawks, and while no one on Chicago's disaster defence has positive scoring chance differentials, Gustafsson is staying positive in shot attempts. Plus, his 10.4 scoring chances created per 20 minutes on the power play leads all Blackhawks defenders and ranks 24th in the NHL among all blueliners.

- James Neal's shot rates have been in decline for a while, but going from 25 goals in 71 games last year to on pace for just eight goals total this year is absurd. He's producing about a scoring chance less per 20 minutes of ice time than he did last season at 5-on-5, but he's putting chances on net at almost the same rate as Elias Lindholm and Matthew Tkachuk. Neal just can't catch a break. It would be a nice surprise for the Flames if his fortunes changed in the playoffs.

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1129906 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Black History Month: Jarome Iginla 'did everything the right way'

David Singh | February 8, 2019, 10:48 AM

Jarome Iginla was forced early in his hockey-playing life to confront the fact that things were just going to be different for him. He's relayed the story several times: Other kids were always quick to tell him there were no black players in the NHL. They were wrong, of course, and the young Iginla assuredly countered with several examples: Grant Fuhr, Claude Vilgrain, Tony McKegney. Their names carried power for Iginla, as well as proof that his dreams could become reality.

Iginla was born in Edmonton to a black Nigerian father and a white American mother. He eventually grew to become an Art Ross winner, a revered captain and a six-time all-star. He was the most prominent black hockey player of his generation and one of the most prominent black athletes in Canadian history.

Craig Conroy played with Iginla for parts of nine seasons with the Calgary Flames and had a front-row seat during the peak of No. 12's career. The teammates developed a close friendship, sharing many hours, meals, plane rides and private conversations. We caught up with Conroy, now an assistant general manager with the Flames, to discuss his friend's life and impact.

Sportsnet: Jarome Iginla was the most prominent black player in the NHL when you played with him. When you guys were in Calgary, or on the road, what kind of responsibility came with that?

Conroy: He always set the tone for the whole team. He always went above and beyond, outside the rink, more than any player I have ever seen. If we walked out of the hotel in Toronto — and there's a lot of people in Toronto — there might be 100 to 150 people and he would sign [autographs] for everybody. It used to drive the coaches crazy because they knew if there were 20 kids out there, Jarome was going to do it. He always took time if people wanted to talk to him. That's one thing about Jarome: He's so respectful, and if people would say, "You're my favourite



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player," he would always stop and talk. He's a true ambassador for the sport.

At the [2002] Olympics, when he saw Canadian [fans] down in Salt Lake City and they didn't have hotels and tickets to the game, he made sure to try and help them, behind the scenes. He would never say anything like that [publicly], but that's the type of person he was. As hard a competitor and as tough as he was on the ice, off the ice he was always in the spotlight, but he always carried himself with the dignity that his parents instilled in him.

You couldn't have a better leader for your team. I think he brought more and more [fans] into the game. It just wasn't the same hockey people. He kind of diversified everything that he did and he was proud of that.

Do you recall the types of conversations fans who were people of colour would have with him?

He said, "Hey, wherever you come from, whatever you do in this life, you have to have dreams and you have to work hard and believe you can do it and you can succeed." No matter race; no matter anything. He always had that positive message: Don't let there be any barriers for you. That's the No. 1 thing.

You said in your speech at his retirement announcement that Iginla was very involved in the community. Do you think his background played a role in the commitment level he had for that?

He always took pride in his background. He wanted to make a statement. When he saw Willie O'Ree, he would say, "Hey, look how much he's done for me. I'm going to do as much for the next person." He was about paying it forward. I do think that was part of it. Deep down, though, he would have done that no matter what. He was that type of person. But I do think he felt that responsibility. At the time, there were [other black] players, but he was the most high-profile guy in the league and he took pride in that. He wanted to be that guy. He never shied away from it and that's what made him so special.

It comes from his family and upbringing — his grandparents, especially. You would see when he was with his family, just the respect that, I think, they instilled in him. How to be a good person, how to be humble, respectful, hardworking and that really comes from his parents and his grandparents. He would be the first to give them credit because they brought him up right. He took pride in that. I don't think he ever wanted to let them down or embarrass them.

It wasn't like he would turn it on — Jarome was a true gentleman. Until he put on the equipment. Then, he was a true, fierce competitor. He did everything the right way. He always lived a respectful life and that started right from the time he woke up, driving to the rink and then when he went home. He never deviated from that.

In your time with Iginla, did the topic of race ever come up in closed-door conversations?

It's funny because on the ice, with him being the competitor he is, I was always wondering [if he heard racial taunts]. I never really heard anything when I was out there playing right next to him. I asked him once, "Does anything ever come up as far as race?" He said, "Guys at the NHL level maybe did that before, Craig, but now everything has been changing." It really wasn't an issue for him. He would say, "I would tell you if they said something." It got heated a lot, too, though. He trash-talked with the best of them. But I never saw that line crossed or heard it on my own.

Do you think he had more on his shoulders than other captains you've seen in the NHL?

I don't know if race played a factor in it, but yes, definitely being in a Canadian market with the pressures that go along with it. I was the [Flames] captain prior [to Iginla] and there's a lot. For him, being the best player with everything that goes along with it, he had the pressure, but he loved that pressure. That's what made him a special player. He wanted more pressure. In the last minutes of the game, he wanted to be the guy to score the goal. He wanted to always be in that position. He wouldn't

want it another way. He doesn't want it to be easy. He wanted it to be the hard way. It all started with him and finished with him, as far as that team went. He definitely had lots of pressure on him by being the star, being young and being on that team.

It wasn't always about race. But that was part of who he was. He knew that.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 02.09.2019

1129907 Websites

TSN.CA / Former diplomat says NHL should pause on finalizing next games in China

Rick Westhead

A former Canadian diplomat says the National Hockey League should hold off finalizing plans to hold two preseason games in China this fall.

David Mulrone, who was Canada's ambassador in Beijing from 2009 to 2012, says the league and its players are taking a chance by pursuing games in China at a particularly sensitive time.

"There's a great deal of reputation risks for the NHL and, given where we are, there's no need to rush forward," Mulrone said in an interview with TSN.

Mulrone's warning comes as the NHL has already started talks with ORG Packaging, the Chinese company that was the presenting sponsor of a pair of preseason games in the cities of Shenzhen and Beijing between the Boston Bruins and Calgary Flames last September.

At the same time, officials with the NHL and NHL Players' Association are discussing how a percolating diplomatic crisis could affect the important series in an emerging market, which, according to a source familiar with the matter, generates more than \$5 million in annual revenue for the NHL and NHLPA.

"While we are monitoring international developments, discussions regarding China for potential exhibition games next September are ongoing with the NHL," NHLPA spokesman Jonathan Weatherdon wrote in an emailed statement.

According to an announcement posted on NHL.com in September, the league has a contract to stage games in China in six of the next eight years, although the specific terms of that contract are unclear. An NHL spokesman did not respond to an email seeking comment.

The political backdrop casting a shadow on the negotiations between the NHL and ORG involves deteriorating relations between China and the United States and Canada.

The Chinese government has detained several Canadians and sentenced another to death since the Canadian government arrested Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of Chinese tech company Huawei, in Vancouver on Dec. 1.

Meng is charged in the U.S. with helping her company dodge sanctions on Iran. The American government has requested her extradition from Canada.

Former Canadian diplomat Michael Kovrig and businessman Michael Spavor were arrested in December over charges they had endangered China's national security.

After Meng's arrest, the Chinese government also ordered a retrial for Robert Lloyd Schellenberg, a Canadian who had been sentenced to 15



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years in prison for smuggling methamphetamines in China. During his retrial, a judge sentenced him to death.

The arrests of Kovrig and Spavor and the prospective death sentence of Schellenberg have been widely described by political experts and the Canadian government as retribution for Meng's arrest.

The Canadian government has issued a travel advisory for China, urging Canadians to "exercise a high degree of caution in China due to the risk of arbitrary enforcement of local laws."

Mulroney said completing negotiations on games in China now "would be a big gamble."

"We're looking forward to a protracted and very messy extradition and it's a very tense time," he said, referring to the situation with the detained Huawei executive. "I'd hold off until there's a determination about Ms. Meng and that could take some time. I know that's frustrating, but China has a long memory. ... In China, you don't want to be the person who is cozying up to Canada at a time when the patriotic Chinese are supposed to be mad at Canada."

A spokesperson for Global Affairs Canada declined to comment.

For both the NHL and players' union, games in China represent an opportunity to further develop relationships in a market the NHL considers important.

The league staged its first game in China in Shanghai in September 2017. The official attendance for a game between the Vancouver Canucks and Los Angeles Kings was reported to be 10,088 in an arena that holds more than 18,000.

Still, the NHL and its teams are slowly learning to do business in China.

During the 2013-14 season, the state broadcaster CCTV began showing four live NHL games every week. At the time, NHL games broadcast on the weekend in China attracted an average 800,000 households while airing at 7 a.m. local time.

William Hurst, a political science professor who teaches Chinese foreign policy at Northwestern University, said even if the Chinese government signs off on the NHL games now, it wouldn't commit the country to the games.

"If China decided that relations with either the U.S. or Canada or both are bad, they could pull the plug, even a week or days before the games are supposed to happen," Hurst said.

Another development that could affect the games is the current trade negotiation between the U.S. and China, he said. Leaders of the world's two largest economies have been talking since U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed to a 90-day truce in a trade war in December.

The U.S. has threatened to start imposing 25 per cent tariffs on \$200 billion (U.S.) worth of imports from China on Mar. 1 if a deal cannot be reached to help provide U.S. companies with better access to the Chinese market.

In September, NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly told CNBC that the trade war could affect the league's efforts in China.

"While we currently don't anticipate [the trade war] hampering our continuing efforts to grow hockey in China, we also recognize there may be certain matters that are beyond our control," Daly said.

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TSN.CA / Five Takeaways: Canucks vs Blackhawks

Jeff Paterson

1) After leaving Philadelphia and Washington empty-handed earlier in the week, the Canucks at least salvaged something from their stop in Chicago. After being down 2-0 in the first period and trailing 3-2 with under two minutes to play in the third period, it looked like they were headed to their third consecutive one-goal loss in regulation time. Instead, they lost by a goal, but at least got the game to overtime and picked up a single point for the efforts. The Canucks finished their road trip 1-2-1 picking up three of a possible eight points along the way. They had two terrific chances to win the game in overtime -- first a Jake Virtanen rebound skipped over the stick of a snakebitten Bo Horvat and later Elias Pettersson walked in all alone after taking a headman pass from goalie Jacob Markstrom. The Canucks couldn't convert at the Chicago end and the Hawks made them pay when Jonathan Toews walked past Chris Tanev and beat Markstrom for the winner 3:21 into the extra session. After starting the season 3-0 in games settled in OT, the Canucks have won just two of their last six trips to the 3-on-3 session. Overtime is about creating chances and finishing them. The Canucks had their opportunities, but it was the Blackhawks who capitalized on theirs and in the process ran their win streak to six straight.

2) Chris Tanev played too much in overtime. He played three of five shifts totalling 1:52 of the 3:21 extra period. And it wasn't that he was fatigued on the game winner. That's not the suggestion about his workload. It's just the idea of Chris Tanev as the workhorse in a session that is about time and space and speed and skill doesn't make a lot of sense. At least it gives the appearance -- one we've seen in the past -- of the Canucks being too conservative in overtime. Both Ben Hutton and Troy Stecher push the pace and, frankly, even Derrick Pouliot represents the idea of offense more than Tanev does. Overtime should be about trying to win the game rather than preserve the tie and hope for a shootout (where the Canucks are 1-3 on the season). Usually, Alex Edler would eat up the most minutes in OT, but he's not in the line-up and so the Canucks turned, instead, to Tanev. And further to the conservative approach, Elias Pettersson and Brandon Sutter had the same number of shifts in overtime (one each). Had Pettersson and Brock Boeser started OT, they would likely have a second shift and another chance to win the game. Instead, Pettersson only saw the ice once in overtime and that wasn't enough.

3) Pettersson earned his team the single point with his power play blast with 1:52 remaining and Jacob Markstrom on the bench giving the Canucks a 6-on-4 advantage. It's been a while since he has been able to pull the trigger with the big shot from the right-wing face-off dot. His last power play goal was a similar looking blast in Ottawa on January 2nd when he scored his first NHL hattrick. It's a goal Pettersson scored earlier in the season from the same spot against Montreal and Winnipeg. With the power play showing very little power at all over the past month, the Canucks have to do whatever they can to find Pettersson in his spot. If he gets his shot away cleanly, he's a threat to score every time. And even if he doesn't score, that shot can -- and will -- produce rebounds. It looked for much of the night Thursday like a lifeless power play was again going to be one of the key takeaways from the hockey game. The Hawks won the special teams battle and the game, but Pettersson offered up hope that the Canucks power play can still be productive. They just have to work on their puck movement to free him up in his spot to get that lethal one-timer away far more often.

4) The Canucks were well-aware coming into the game that the Blackhawks had the best power in the league since Christmas. The players and head coach Travis Green talked about it after the morning skate. So it was far from ideal to spot the Hawks a two-man advantage for 37 seconds in the opening period and another for 1:15 midway through the second period. The first one had veterans -- and key penalty killers -- Jay Beagle and Brandon Sutter in the box. Predictably, the Hawks cashed in on both ends of the power play to grab a 2-0 lead. Chicago was active with players and the puck in constant motion drawing



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the Canucks out of their defensive positions. And they shot the puck -- finishing the night with 11 power play shots on goal. The Canucks managed to survive the second two-man advantage, but still walked away from the game giving up a pair of goals as the Hawks finished the night 2/5 with the man-advantage which is about their average (40%) since the holiday break. It was a dangerous way for the Canucks to play and they got torched by a confident power play that is giving the Hawks all sorts of momentum in hockey games.

5) From the moment Michael DiPietro was recalled on an emergency basis people have wondered if he would get the chance to see NHL action. For a few moments in the first period, it looked like he might. With the Canucks on a power play, Jonathan Toews fired a rising slap shot off left wing that caught Jacob Markstrom up around the collarbone. It felled the big Canucks netminder who stayed down on all fours to collect himself as play moved up ice. Markstrom struggled to his feet and stayed in the game until the next whistle at which point he skated to the Canucks bench to get checked over by athletic therapist Jon Sanderson. Markstrom returned to the net and finished the game so DiPietro's moment will have to wait, but it drove home the point that DiPietro is just one Markstrom injury away from being thrust into the spotlight. Markstrom has now made six straight starts and has been in net for 12 of the Canucks last 13 games since the start of January. He's surely going to get the starts against Calgary and San Jose at home on Saturday and Monday, but you do have to wonder if he'll require a break by the time the Canucks go out on the road again and start a three-game in four night California road trip in Anaheim next Wednesday night. By then it will be eight straight starts and 14 of 15 games in net. The games in Washington and Chicago are just the second time since the start of December that Markstrom has surrendered more than two goals in back to back outings.

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USA TODAY / Capitals' Tom Wilson destroys Avalanche's Ian Cole in bloody fight after questionable hit

Adam Woodard, USA TODAY Published 8:42 a.m. ET Feb. 8, 2019

There's no other way to say it: Tom Wilson absolutely destroyed Ian Cole Thursday night.

Midway through the third period of the Capitals' 4-3 overtime win against the Avalanche, Cole laid a questionable hit on Washington forward Evgeny Kuznetsov right in front of his teammate Wilson.

And if there's one person you don't want to take a cheap shot in front of, it's definitely Wilson.

The Capitals winger immediately dropped his gloves and unleashed a fury of punches on Cole. While it's tough to give credit to a human punching bag, Cole somehow stayed on his feet despite the countless punches.

Kuznetsov would return to the game, ultimately scoring the deciding goal in the closing minute of overtime.

After signing a six-year, \$31.02 million contract in the offseason, Wilson was suspended for 20 regular season games for an illegal hit to an opponents head earlier this season. The suspension was reduced two appeals later, leading to Wilson sitting for 16 games. The 24-year-old has 14 goals, 11 assists and five fights in 35 games this season.

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