



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • March 16, 2020

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Canes owner Tom Dundon commits to relief for PNC part-timers: “We’ll do something”

By Luke DeCock

PNC Arena part-time workers’ shifts for the next few weeks disappeared from the scheduling system Friday and there’s no telling when they might be called back to the building for a hockey game or a concert or a convention. The Carolina Hurricanes weren’t the first team to pledge to helping them, but they won’t be among those that do not.

Hurricanes owner Tom Dundon said Saturday that there would be some form of relief for part-time arena employees who will be without work while the NHL is shut down for social-distancing because of the novel coronavirus. He said the plan was expected to be finalized by Monday.

“They’re pulling together who works consistently, how many games are we actually going to miss,” Dundon said. “We’ll do something, though.”

The Hurricanes have eight home games remaining on the original schedule, the most of any NHL team. The NHL paused its season Thursday over concerns about COVID-19, and two team staffers are self-quarantined after potentially being exposed at a Detroit hotel.

Across the NHL and NBA, owners and players have stepped up to help cover those employees. Zion Williamson donated \$100,000 to New Orleans Pelicans employees, following the example of Kevin Love and Giannis Antetokounmpo and Blake Griffin. Florida Panthers goalie Sergei Bobrovsky did the same. Owners like Mark Cuban, Dan Gilbert and the Ilitch family have pledged to help — in the NHL, the owners of 13 other teams have done the same.

Meanwhile, in places like Winnipeg and Calgary — where Hurricanes defenseman Jake Bean’s father is the team president — owners have made it clear there will be no assistance. The employees they depend on to bring their arenas to life will be left to fend for themselves while sports are shut down for social-distancing because of the novel coronavirus.

In Boston, where Bruins owner Jeremy Jacobs has so far declined to help out, fans started a gofundme fundraising page for arena employees. Bruins players are donating to it.

What form the Hurricanes’ assistance will actually take remains unclear. In Vancouver, employees are being asked to

apply on a need-only basis. It’s possible the Hurricanes will ask employees to work games at a reduced per-game rate when games and events resume.

Dundon said he had been told Saturday that Hurricanes players were considering helping as well. Attempts to reach Justin Williams — the team’s most senior player — for comment Saturday were unsuccessful. But Dundon said any money donated by players would be above and beyond what the team intended to do.

“I’ve heard the players are asking about being involved,” Dundon said. “I haven’t asked them to be involved. I just found out about an hour ago that the players want to help.”

Anyone who is in the building regularly knows the names of the people who make their experience enjoyable, as they do those of the owners and players. There are some logistical hurdles, to be sure, but it’s better to commit to doing the right thing first — like the NCAA awarding an extra season of eligibility to spring-sport athletes — and figure out the details later.

In some arenas, part-time staff are paid and managed by companies or contractors otherwise unaffiliated with the teams that play there. Those cases are a little more complicated, but that’s not the case here.

While PNC is publicly owned, the Hurricanes manage the building. These part-timers are their people, from the catering workers to the elevator operators to the security guards, all of whom show up, shift after shift, game after game, concert after concert. Many have worked there since the building opened, not part of the organization but certainly part of the family.

Nationwide, there’s another group of sports-based part-timers being left out: With no television broadcasts, the freelancers who get paid by the show and do almost everything behind the scenes are going to be hurting as well. That’s a tougher group to help: Many work for multiple networks broadcasting multiple sports in multiple venues.

But there are going to be many part-time groups like that across the spectrum of our lives, some obvious and others not, and eventually, we’re going to have to figure out a way to help them all, because people like that fuel the machinery of our daily routine.



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Hurricanes making contingency plans for resumption of season

By Chip Alexander

The Carolina Hurricanes and the NHL are on hold, the 2019-20 season suspended and the future uncertain because of the coronavirus pandemic.

But contingency plans are being made for a possible resumption of the season, Hurricanes president and general manager Don Waddell told the Centennial Authority on Friday during a board meeting at PNC Arena.

Waddell said the league has asked for tentative playing dates at PNC Arena through the end of July.

"There's no time frame because no one knows how big (a crisis) this is going to be," Waddell told the authority, the arena landlord. "The Stanley Cup playoffs are the most important thing to the league and (the NHL) has asked internally for the dates. The hope is to come back and play some regular-season games, then the postseason."

That's the hope. NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, in announcing the season postponement on Thursday, referred to it as a pause or hiatus, although no one can say for now when or if the season will resume.

"I think we're doing the right thing as a league," Waddell said in an interview. "We've got to get this thing under control. Have we seen the height of it yet? Probably not. So let's do the proper things and keep people as safe as we can."

The Hurricanes, who had won three straight games and were in a wild-card playoff position, were in New Jersey on Thursday for a game against the Devils. The team flew back to Raleigh after the announcement was made by Bettman.

The Canes' last game was against the Detroit Red Wings on Tuesday in Detroit. The team shared the same Detroit hotel, the Westin Book Cadillac, that had been used by the Utah

Jazz, which had a Saturday game against the Detroit Pistons. The Jazz have had two players --- Rudy Gobert and Donovan Mitchell -- test positive for the coronavirus.

Waddell said none of the Canes players or staff members have taken the coronavirus test or been symptomatic.

"You can't test unless there are symptoms," Waddell said. "No one in the traveling party had symptoms. There were some issues with a couple of people having the hotel rooms (at the Westin) but there were no symptoms."

John Forslund, the Canes' longtime television play-by-play man, told the N&O on Friday that he was in the same hotel room used by Gobert in Detroit and was in self-quarantine at his home in Apex.

The authority again met in closed session Friday to be updated on the lease negotiations with Gale Force Sports & Entertainment, the Canes' parent company.

Before the closed session, arena manager Dave Olsen told the authority all scheduled events would be postponed after the Millennium Tour 2020 event Friday. Olsen said the Billie Eilish Show on Thursday had a crowd of 14,000.

Olsen said promoters whose shows are being postponed are being open to booking future dates. Refunds will be made, Olsen said.

Gov. Roy Cooper said Thursday that he was recommending the cancellation or postponement of all gatherings with 100 or more people to help combat the spread of the disease.

"Everyone is cooperating, everyone understands the crisis internationally," Olsen said. "We'll just keep moving forward a day at a time. We are trying to adhere to all the requests from the Governor. Once we get through (Friday) night we're shutting 'er down."

John Forslund one of two Hurricanes staffers possibly exposed to coronavirus

By Luke DeCock

There are times when an international news story hits so close to home that one sentence can almost make your head spin, and the next sentence is one of them.

Carolina Hurricanes broadcaster John Forslund is self-quarantined in his basement in Apex after staying in the same Detroit hotel room as Utah Jazz player Rudy Gobert, the first NBA player to test positive for the novel coronavirus.

All politics really is local.

"It's serious," Forslund said Friday morning. "We've got to listen to what we're supposed to do. And act accordingly. You know me. I can be as sarcastic as anybody. Initially, we were all kind of in the same boat. And now look where we are. It's a serious thing. You just hope and pray everybody's going to be OK. What I'm going through is no big deal, because there are people who are going to have complications."

Forslund isn't the only one. Team videographer Zack Brame, who stayed in one of three rooms the CDC identified for possible exposure after the Jazz moved out of the Detroit

Westin Book Cadillac on Saturday and the Hurricanes moved in on Sunday. (The third room was not occupied by the team.)

"Before we even let them on our plane, we checked with our medical people," Hurricanes president Don Waddell said Friday. "There's such a low possibility it could be transmitted through the hotel room, but the recommendation from our medical team was that they should fly back with us and then self-quarantine for two weeks."

In a whirlwind 48 hours for the sports world, Forslund now finds himself at the epicenter of it.

Forslund was sitting on one of the team buses just after 2 p.m. Thursday as the Hurricanes prepared to come home from New Jersey after the suspension of the NHL season when Hurricanes vice president Mike Sundheim, who manages the team's travel, came aboard and asked the other passenger to exit. Sundheim told him that the Jazz had stayed at the hotel before their game against the Detroit Pistons on Saturday night, and the Hurricanes checked in about 8 p.m. Sunday.

After Gobert tested positive for the COVID-19 disease Wednesday night, the hotel told Sundheim that Forslund and



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Brame had potentially been exposed as well. The two were isolated at the front of the team plane on the flight home from Newark on Thursday — “That felt like a cross-country flight,” Forslund said — and briefed by team physician Josh Bloom on what comes next.

Upon arriving home, Forslund moved into the basement of his home for the next 10 days, where he will wait to see if he develops symptoms — but only then would he be tested.

“I can’t get tested, that’s the thing,” Forslund said. “I’m like everybody else. That’s the problem right now, as a country.”

So Forslund’s wife Natalie is leaving his meals at the basement door. One of his daughters is staying with neighbors. Another is still at Clemson, where she’s a graduate student and has teaching responsibilities. His son is on his way home from college in Pennsylvania after all of his classes

were moved online. He’s fortunate to have able family to support him and space to quarantine.

But Forslund is also not sure what he’s going to do for the next 10 days.

“It’s different. It’s a long time,” Forslund said. “Today it doesn’t seem like much. As the days march on here, you’re just hoping nothing happens. That’s different. Every time I sneeze or I cough, you wonder, ‘Where’s this going?’

“I’ll go as day by day as I can. I can’t do much. There’s nothing professionally for me to stay connected with. I’m not a big TV guy. In the season, I honestly just watch hockey and pay attention to the news. That’s all I do. I’m not a binge-watcher. Not a big movie guy. I don’t want to think about what to do because there isn’t much to do.”

THE ATHLETIC

Media Circus: How Hurricanes broadcaster John Forslund ended up quarantined

By Richard Deitsch

You can understand John Forslund’s reaction when he learned the name of the guest who occupied his hotel room in Detroit last week immediately prior to his stay.

Rudy Gobert.

“I think surreal is a good word because that’s how I felt when I found out,” Forslund said. “What are the odds of this happening? It’s nothing but a strange coincidence. Wrong place at the wrong time — and for him, too. He has gone through a lot. Of course, I know who he is, and I am sure he does not know who I am but we are kind of linked now. I hope he gets over it and has a great career.”

Forslund has been the television voice of the Carolina Hurricanes since 1995 and also calls the NHL for NBC. Last week, his world changed. He is currently on Day 4 of his self-quarantine at his home in North Carolina. The good news is he feels well. He has no outward symptoms at the moment of COVID-19 and is currently living in his finished basement, which has a living area, a game room, a bathroom and exercise equipment. The heating zones are separate from the rest of the house so his setup is good given the circumstances. Forslund does suffer from allergies. and in North Carolina, the first wave of pollen is hitting. Like all of us, any sign of breathing discomfort raises anxiety.

“If I get that I will be thinking, is that something connected to the coronavirus or is it just my allergies?” Forslund said. “I’m not alone that way. I don’t have symptoms of either so far. But I am getting a little antsy because it’s different than being sick. I want to do something but I can’t. I have very little interaction with anybody in the house except when the weather’s okay. Then I can step outside a little bit and talk to them from a distance of about 10 feet away from me.”

How did Forslund arrive in his basement? He traveled with the Hurricanes from Pittsburgh to Detroit on March 8, where he checked into the same hotel as the Jazz did for Utah’s game against Detroit on March 7. After calling Carolina’s win over

Detroit on March 10, he checked out of his hotel room and traveled with the team to New Jersey for Carolina’s planned March 12 game against the Devils.

It was last Wednesday night when news broke that Gobert has tested positive for the virus. That prompted the cancelation of the Jazz’s scheduled game against the Thunder in Oklahoma City and, shortly afterward, the NBA decided to suspend its season indefinitely.

The next day, as he prepared to call the Hurricanes-Devils game, the NHL announced it was suspending its season. Forslund was told that the team buses would leave from Jersey City at 2:30 p.m. ET and on that bus, his life would change.

“There is a player bus and a media bus and I got on the media bus and sat in the back row,” Forslund said. “I was one of the first people on the bus along with some people from our television crew. Mike Sundheim (the team’s VP of media relations and team services) gets on the bus and starts coming back towards me. He asks the other two people on the bus to leave. I mean, the look on his face, I thought either someone passed away, God forbid, or I’m getting fired for something I did.

“So I said, ‘OK, Sunny, what’s going on here?’ He said, ‘Well, I hate to tell you this, but you were in the same room as some of the NBA players in Detroit.’ I said, ‘OK, what does this mean?’ He said, ‘We are trying to see if you can fly back with us, which we’re pretty sure you can, but we don’t know 100 percent yet. But get on the phone with your doctor.’”

So that’s what Forslund did. His family doctor is also the team physician for the Hurricanes (Dr. Josh Bloom) and Bloom and an assistant told him the protocol he needed to follow. Forslund then called his wife Natalie because he wanted to let her know what had happened before he arrived home. Natalie immediately started making preparations for meals and living conditions. Sundheim told Forslund that the hotel believed the room had been sanitized by housekeeping after Gobert checked out, which gave him a slight bit of ease. On the flight



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back home, Forslund said there were five or six rows between himself and the next closest person, the team's videographer. (The Athletic's Sara Civan spoke to members of the team, including the team's digital content producer who also slept in the room of someone who tested positive.)

Forslund believed he would get tested for COVID-19 upon arriving in North Carolina. But Bloom informed him that he was too low-risk for the virus to be tested (given testing shortages) even with his age (58) and some arthritis issues. He is unlikely to get tested unless his condition worsens.

"The thing you have to do is what's right," Forslund said. "It's easy to sluff it, get angry, start whining about not getting tested, to start saying things like the hell with this I feel fine. I feel like I would do this anyway no matter what, but that fact that I have kind of a public job, I think it's important to do the right things and that's why I'm trying to do. This is such a bad thing that's going on right now. I don't think people get that 100 percent. We better wake up and figure this one out because there's a lot of people worse than I am, and they can't get tested. So I'll just bide my time and get through it."

Forslund has most of his immediate family at home. His son Matt is home from Lebanon Valley College, where he plays goalie for the hockey team. He is starting online classes this week. His youngest daughter, Kara, is a high school sophomore. His oldest child, Erika, is a graduate student at Clemson. She has been told not to go home by the school.

"My wife has been great," Forslund said. "The hardest part about our relationship right now is the fact that other than a few conversations outside, we're 10 feet apart. We haven't seen each other in two weeks. I've been on the road the whole time. I'm down here and I can hear them upstairs and I want to be up there. And I can't be. You feel detached. But the best thing you can do is just try to stay as tough as possible and get through it."

Members of Carolina's staff have stayed in touch with Forslund and so have many in the hockey community. But Forslund says isolation has been hard for him given he admits he has zero hobbies and has lived hockey 24/7 for years. A big Red Sox fan, he is setting a goal to read "If These Walls Could Talk: Boston Red Sox" by Jerry Remy and the late Nick Cafardo.

"I'm not a big movie guy or a binge-watcher of shows on Netflix or anything like that. There's no professional stimulation. There's nothing I can do right now to get me ready for whatever it is I'm going to do next. At this time of the year, every season, with the exception of the lockouts, you're working, you're preparing, you're organizing yourself for the next day. Then when night comes around, you're watching one, two, maybe three games. That's the usual protocol for me. Now that's gone. This is just the beginning and I already miss it a great deal.

"The hockey community has been great. The phone keeps going off with people texting and people I haven't heard from in a long time. I am kind of taken back by it because my good friends Eddie Olczyk and Pierre McGuire both went through cancer situations. This is just an inconvenience in my life. Fear of the unknown. Yes. Country in peril. Yes. But it's not even close to what others have gone through."

I asked Forslund if he had interest in speaking with Gobert one day given the unique nexus of their lives.

"I would definitely have interest in talking to him one day," Forslund. "I don't know if he would with me but I just think it is interesting, a strange twist of life. It is a unique circumstance for both of us."

The Ink Report

1. On Sunday the NFLPA announced it had approved a new 10-year collective bargaining agreement with the NFL. Among the major deal points: a 17-game regular season, expanded playoffs, and an increased share of revenue for the players. The agreement will run through 2030.

The deal has massive implications for the NFL's next round of media negotiations given the league gets half of its revenue from broadcast rights. To get some perspective on what it means, I asked two industry experts with decades of experience in consulting on sports media rights deals. Lee Berke is a longtime sports TV consultant, who has clients across NFL, MLB, NBA, NCAA, NHL and NASCAR. Patrick Crakes is a former Fox Sports executive who now owns his own broadcasting consultancy. Their thoughts are below:

Berke

The opening kickoff of the Super Bowl, the start of the Kentucky Derby, the opening pitch to the World Series. Any metaphor you choose for the start of a major sports event — that's what the NFLPA's ratification of the CBA is for the looming competition for NFL media rights. Not to say that there haven't been informal discussions up until now, but with the CBA approved, all parties can aggressively prepare to negotiate for what will be, in total, the most expensive set of pro league media rights in U.S. history.

Breaking it down further, the ratification provides two major benefits to the NFL and its current and potential media suitors — expanded content and increased confidence. An additional week of games and an expanded set of playoffs is more than just a 1/17th increase in the regular season and the addition of two playoff games. The new deal gives the NFL the increased flexibility to create and offer additional packages to incumbents like NBC, CBS, NBC, Fox and ESPN as well as OTT streamers like Amazon, Apple and DAZN. Potential opportunities could include an international/neutral site series of games, the addition of a third set of Sunday afternoon games, an expansion of Sunday Ticket and the further development of blended AFC/NFC packages. Moreover, many of these packages could be multiplatform in scope, akin to how ESPN offers up multiple feeds for the College Football Championship, allowing multiplatform outlets like Disney/ABC/ESPN/ESPN+, Viacom/CBS/CBS/CBS All Access and NBC/NBCSN/Peacock to supersize each NFL gamecast.

The increased confidence comes from the NFLPA's approval of a 10-year agreement, which ensures labor peace for the next decade — a timeframe that intentionally covers the potential length of the next set of NFL media agreements. Media outlets can enter into NFL negotiations with the confidence that there won't be a labor disruption, which in turn would further enhance their willingness to bid aggressively for NFL rights going forward.



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That noted, the current pandemic ensures that this confidence that won't be absolute. Force majeure — the concept that games may not be played due to floods, earthquakes, pandemics and other natural disasters — will be front of mind for everyone as these negotiations proceed. Also, the process may be slowed as everyone attends first and foremost to issues of health and safety. Yet, force majeure will eventually be addressed, and once the games are re-started, fans will be eager for the escapism and excitement that the NFL and other major sports properties can provide.

Bottom line: When expanded NFL content and increased confidence are added to a sports media marketplace already eager to access the ratings, sales and other business benefits that come from partnering with the League, a substantial increase in rights fees will result. Even if the CBA hadn't been approved, the potential total increase in NFL media rights would have been around 50 percent. Now, it could be an increase of 60-70 percent or more. Multiple well-funded media companies and NFL football are the ingredients for a months-long competition for media rights that truly begins now.

Crakes

The new player CBA enables the NFL to quickly enter into conversations with established (and perhaps new) telecast partners about broadcast contracts past 2022. New wrinkles such as a 17th week of regular-season games and expanded playoffs offer telecast partners a meaningful incremental value to build off the current game inventory structure. It will drive what was already going to be huge growth in current contractual renewal totals much higher.

Importantly, the increase in regular-season game inventory allows the NFL — if it chooses — to carve out one or two new game packages that will add significant incremental economic value without impacting established packages/partners much. Some new package possibilities include a new set of games for broadcast TV and an exclusive streaming window. Once the new broadcast deals are completed (sooner rather than later I would think), established partners (who will retain the lion's share of the game inventory and thus pay nearly all of the rights fees) can then in turn strike long-term retransmission and pay TV fee increases from distributors who place great value on NFL programming, which remains some of the last "must see live" content across all platforms.

The early renewals will also ensure that networks and the NFL can strike max value deals that may not be available in a few years thanks to the decline in effective broadcast reach, which currently stands at 82 percent vs. 99 percent a decade ago. This secular negative trend in broadcast television reach is an extensional threat to the retransmission fee growth that is fueling the majority of the current sports rights boom. In other words, if the NFL were to wait a few years to get its broadcast partners the valuable rights they needed to negotiate effectively with distributors, the NFL may find itself with a still huge increase in rights fees but maybe not as great as the one

that's available be right now. Rule number one of TV deals is don't leave money on the table and the league has probably avoided that thanks to the new CBA.

2. I spoke to ESPN's Ryan Ruocco and Doris Burke about what it was like to broadcast the final game (Denver Nuggets-Dallas Mavericks) of the NBA season for now. It was unlike any broadcast they had ever worked.

3. PBS as of Sunday began streaming Ken Burns's multi-part baseball doc for free on pbs.org and all PBS streaming platforms.

4. Sports pieces of note:

- By Tariq Panja and Edu Bayer: The Stranded Stars of Wuhan F.C.
- Where Does Allen Iverson Fit In? By John Gonzalez of The Ringer.
- Why Would Iona Hire Rick Pitino? By Pat Forde of Sports Illustrated.
- Via Tim Layden of NBC Sports: On our complicated relationship with sports, even in a time of national crisis. The games are not important enough to play, but it's perfectly reasonable to miss them.

Non-sports pieces of note:

- The piece everyone should read. Why outbreaks like coronavirus spread exponentially, and how to "flatten the curve." By Harry Stevens of The Washington Post.
- This is beautiful and sad: A Photographer's Parents Wave Farewell. By Eren Orbey of New Yorker.
- By Alex French of Wired: The Secret History of a Cold War Mastermind.
- How Judith Jones Radically Transformed American Food Writing By Sara B. Franklin of Lit Hub.
- Stephen Sondheim, the Man Who Felt Too Much. By Ben Brantley of the New York Times.
- How long have we got? By Agnes Callard of The Point Magazine.
- The role of dogs in war. By Jason Daley, on Medium.
- How a blogger in Florida put out an early warning about the coronavirus crisis. By Paul Fahri of The Washington Post.
- Inside the final days of Warren's campaign. By Jess Bidgood and Liz Goodwin of The Boston Globe.
- Here is Rich Cohen's Murder in Fairfield County series for Air Mail.



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'Now I'm just scared': Members of the Hurricanes detail quarantine

By Sara Civian

Editor's note: The original headline and story incorrectly stated that staff members of the Hurricanes were tested for COVID-19. We apologize for the error.

This is weird.

Do you hold off on this story? Do you tell this story in a column? Do you force those involved to respond?

Nobody knows.

Sometimes things are better left ignored, but sometimes folks deserve to know what's going on with the athletes when their favorite league pauses for the season.

As the hours wane in what feels like some post-apocalyptic movie, as I feel like I'm winning the silent competition of "Who has the cleanest hands in America," I can't stop oscillating between morbid humor and outright panic about the global pandemic that has rightfully paused our nation.

What was once a must-win tear throughout the Metropolitan Division — one the Hurricanes lived up to — turned into an unprecedented paused season.

The season is postponed.

But when did that happen? Why did that happen? How did those who rely on the season happening react?

Let's start with the why: The coronavirus was a growing issue, but when did it become impossible to ignore?

When did you realize this was sort of a big deal?

Mike Sundheim, vice president of Hurricanes communications and team services: "I think just reading some of the stories and accounts from Italy, we could start understanding just how serious this could get for people here. So it felt important that we take some responsibility in how we could personally play a role in the spread, given our travel and the crowds at the games. At the start of our trip, our doctors suggested that we tell the guys to avoid signing autographs or having contact with fans, so I think that was a wake-up call for just how seriously the medical community was taking this."

That was about the time the Hurricanes were traveling from Long Island to Detroit. I'd already been given my last one-on-one interview — from Jacob Slavin, about Brett Pesce.

Then, while in Detroit ...

Sundheim: "At the end of the day, the moment that turned the whole conversation was the doctor running on the court in Oklahoma City. It didn't take long after that for us to realize that Rudy Gobert had played a game in Detroit just before our arrival there."

There's a popular Detroit hotel athletes tend to stay at. Unfortunately, that coincided with the Utah Jazz's stay and the Carolina Hurricanes' check-in less than 24 hours later. The Hurricanes stayed at the same hotel as the Jazz. Play-by-play announcer John Forslund discovered that he stayed in the same room as an infected person had less than 48 hours earlier.

When did folks realize they were at risk, and what happened next?

Forslund: "Mike told me I might've stayed in the same room as (Gobert) and because of that we're gonna make some changes. He said, 'You're still gonna fly with us.' Then I got on the phone with Dr. Josh Bloom, and he said to just be extra aware of things.

"Enough time elapsed between when (Gobert) left and when I got in the room that (Forslund) should be all right," Sundheim and experts said. "We're just gonna take the precautions."

"I don't have symptoms, so that's good — and I am not alone in this," Forslund said. "To a lot of people, my day is normal. I have a set routine, and it didn't change. I just figured once the NHL settled it, (we) would have to follow suit."

When was it over?

Sundheim: "We talked about it this morning at breakfast. My impressions from a lot of the guys seemed to match my own feelings — we're pretty much ready to get home to our loved ones."

Digital content producer Zack Brame: "I kinda had a feeling; I was a little nervous about getting it. I obviously took precautions from our awesome medical staff."

To clarify, Brame also slept in the room of someone who tested positive. Along with Gobert, Donovan Mitchell, tested positive for the COVID-19.

Brame: "I was told, 'Hey, you slept in a room where someone on an NBA team might have (the coronavirus).'"

"I'm trying (not to freak out). I went from not worrying at all to being scared to being what I am right now. Now I'm just scared — like, no one's ever lived through something like this before. And, I mean, yeah, I'm not gonna bullshit. I got that sinking feeling where your ears ring and your vision gets kind of blurry — I could not believe that (hearing he was at risk) after everything I did. The scariest thing is just sitting here and waiting to see if I have it or not."

So, what's next?

Tom Dundon, team owner: "I think it's gonna take longer to sort this out. And this isn't the NHL's position, this is me looking at life. Two to three weeks is probably not realistic."

So we probably won't arrive at a solution in three weeks.



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Forslund: "I have 500 channels and there's nothing on!"

By Adam Gold

"There's nothing on! Forget 57 channels with nothing on, there's 500 channels with nothing on."

John Forslund, the only television voice the Carolina Hurricanes have ever had, is a hockey junkie through and through. During the season, other than the time spent with his family, he is only about hockey. When John isn't calling a Hurricanes game or the nearly 30 national telecasts he'll end up doing for NBC, he's watching other games. John studies the league thoroughly, especially upcoming Canes opponents as he will make a point to watch their five most recent games to get a feel for how each player is performing.

Right now, because of an odd and unfortunate coincidence, John is trapped in the basement of his home in Apex. It was discovered Thursday afternoon that Forslund was the next person to occupy a Detroit hotel room after Utah Jazz forward Rudy Gobert had checked out. Gobert tested positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19) this week and because John may have been exposed to the virus he is now self-quarantined until March 22.

So, for the next week or so, John will live in his basement, have his meals left at the door, and occasionally sit outside on their back patio.

"You guys know me, I'm intense during the season. There's not a lot attached to me other than what I do", Forslund told Adam & Joe on 99.9 the Fan Friday afternoon. "I have no hobbies, not much of anything, so I've got to develop some things as we go along. I can exercise. I have an area down here where I do that."

Me: "Do you have a treadmill? Do you have a Peloton?"

John chuckled, "I've got a bike, a treadmill, an elliptical. I can use all three in one day. I have enough time."

So what is there to do? Movies? TV?

"I'm not a binge-watcher, I don't watch these shows."

Joe: "Have you ever watched Star Wars", Joe Ovies asked"

"Not one second of it", John deadpanned. However, after Joe pressed him to review the first episode, Forslund appeased Ovies. "Four or five days of this though, you might be right on the money." More likely, however, will be watching old games, and not just hockey. "It's amazing what's out there, full broadcasts. Like Monday Night Football from way back. I like to watch how they did it, how they produced it, how they delivered it."

After the joking, and there is always joking with Forslund, who always manages to put things into the proper perspective, we talked about how he was informed about his situation. The team was in New Jersey on Thursday where they were

scheduled to play the Devils that night when the NHL put the season on pause.

"I got the news as we were about to shove off for the airport...and that was not good, it was a little uneasy", John recalled. "Then I had to call home and let Natalie know what the heck is going on and that wasn't easy. It's not like you can walk through the door and say 'hey, I'm back and guess what, I could have coronavirus!'"

So, his wife -- his "hero" -- went to work, getting him supplies, stocking him up with whatever he would need to take care of himself for his time in the basement. "As long as I don't develop any symptoms between now and the 22nd of March I'm going to be okay and that's when I can get back to the real world."

As for whether or not John has been tested for the virus, he can't, just yet. Until you have symptoms, you're not eligible to be tested. This is a problem that transcends sports and games. "That's why I'm happy talking about this because it has nothing to do with me. It's got everything to do with what's happening in the country and the testing is the issue. We better wake up and figure that out."

Keep in mind that John wasn't the only member of the traveling party to stay in that hotel. The entire team did as well, including Digital Content Producer Zack Brame, who stayed in the same room that was once occupied by the other Utah Jazz player to later test positive, Donovan Mitchell. But, the worry stretches to the entire traveling party and the NHL has asked all players to self-quarantine.

The trip back home was just weird, according to John. "I know they all know, so what do you do, you don't walk up to someone and hug them. You stay away." Head coach Rod Brind'Amour did spend some time with John, because that's Rod and he cares about people and the rest of the coaches offered their support as well, but it was just the beginning of a difficult week ahead.

We talked about the team, the way the Canes played their last three games and looked ahead to a potential restart if event warrant. Then as we were saying our goodbyes, we asked if we could bother him again.

"Any day, all day, whatever you guys wanna do. Three minutes, it's all good. I'll be listening. You know I'm listening to every word and I'm always available to comment on anything."

Man, he's already bored. Here's to sending every positive thought I can muster to my friend, the incomparable, John Forslund.

May the force be with him.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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NHL Players can return home, should self-quarantine through March 27

League issues update following latest CDC directive on large events, mass gatherings

In light of the CDC's new directive on large events and mass gatherings issued Sunday covering "the next 8 weeks," the NHL announced the following on Monday:

1. Effective immediately, players can opt to return home (outside of the club's home city, including outside of North America, to the extent flights are available).
2. The self-quarantine period should continue within the player's home through and including Friday, March 27, unless a longer period may be required in accordance with local mandates related to travel. Players should continue to report

immediately any symptoms or testing results to club medical staff.

3. At the end of the self-quarantine period, and depending on world developments between now and then, consideration will be given to allowing the opening of club facilities to players in scheduled and coordinated small groups for voluntary training and care of the players on the same basis as in the off-season.

4. Our objective will be that, in addition to continuing regular updates, we will be able to provide high-level guidance on the potential of opening a training camp period roughly 45 days into the 60-day period covered by the CDC's directive.



NHL players allowed to go home, isolate until end of March

By Stephen Whyno and John Wawrow

NHL players have been told they can go home and must self-isolate there until the end of March, suggesting any potential return to play is many weeks away.

The National Hockey League and NHL Players' Association sent out separate memos Monday detailing the new directive, which comes on the heels of the CDC's recommendation the U.S. not hold gatherings of 50 or more people for the next eight weeks because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Players had previously been told to remain in their team's city and await direction.

After saying last week the season was on "pause," Commissioner Gary Bettman had refused to put a time frame on when the NHL could resume play. Sending players home, including to other countries, pushes back the earliest possible return to at least May.

"The pause will be until it's appropriate and prudent and safe to start back up," Bettman said last week. "Nobody knows how long the hiatus may be. Nobody, even the medical community,

can predict it with certainty. And what we're doing is, we're modeling every conceivable alternative so that when it's appropriate to go back to work, we will know what our options and our alternatives are."

The league and PA had also previously discussed the possibility of players returning to team training facilities within the next week or so, but that plan has similarly changed. Those facilities are currently closed to players.

"We'll be constantly in touch with the NHL and constantly re-evaluating," NHLPA executive director Don Fehr told The Associated Press last week. "There's no other way to do it. Any date you pick out is merely going to be a best guess and it has about as much likelihood of being right as any other best guess."

The NHL suspended its season with 189 games remaining before the playoffs. Bettman said he remained optimistic about resuming and still awarding the Stanley Cup, which has only not been handed out twice since 1893: 1919 during the Spanish flu outbreak and 2005 because of a lockout.



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Shaya's 10 Thoughts: March 13, 2020

by Nicholas Niedzielski

During the season, Checkers broadcaster Jason Shaya checks in each week with his 10 Thoughts - a series of observations about the team and the hockey world in general.

1. Not getting a chance to watch and be a part of Saturday and Sunday's games against Providence feels surreal and awful. I think everyone whose normal routine is interrupted by this event is reeling. Having a career and a job you love helps coordinate and direct your life. I remember during the road trip when I spoke to Stelio Mattheos, he said the best part about coming back to hockey after his cancer treatment finished was that his life had purpose again. When your life's work is taken from you, there is a time of disequilibrium. But, we will all pull out of this soon and life will return to how it was before. That I believe. Until then, let's talk about the sport we love.
2. No one around here is surprised that Morgan Geekie made a successful NHL debut. He's progressed significantly since the start of his pro career and was one of the most consistent offensive producers for Charlotte this season. He was already in the mix for a spot on the big club next year and took a giant leap forward with his play in his first two NHL games. Well done, Morgan.
3. If there's one moment that defines goaltender Keith Kinkaid's relatively short time with the Checkers, it's his save with 6.4 seconds left against Cleveland on Tuesday night. The Checkers were up by a goal and if it goes to overtime, they could've lost a point. Kinkaid, as poised as ever, made the save and won the game.
4. Michael Kahn's name rightfully now hangs in the rafters at the Coliseum. There is no more important person to Charlotte hockey than Michael. What people might not know about Michael is that, even with his personal success, he's a humble man who's simply a fan that loves the game. Someone once asked me how much Michael enjoys standing at the glass nearly every home game. My answer is that the only way to measure it is by the dollars he paid in fines during last year's playoffs. So, I'd say he likes the games a lot. Congrats, MK.
5. I think it's safe to say that when play resumes in the AHL, forwards Colin Markison and Brian Gibbons will be available for Charlotte. That will be a tremendous addition.
6. What do Checkers VP of Hockey Ops Derek Wilkinson and Charlotte Mayor Alex Nedeljkovic have in common in their NHL careers? Both men have allowed goals to Patrick Marleau. That makes Patrick Marleau a very old man.
7. Great coaching definitely matters and Checkers head coach Ryan Warsofsky made an interesting decision during the overtime win on Wednesday. For Charlotte's power play, he decided to move Lorentz to the right side for a one-timer instead of his usual net-front position. Once Jake Bean put a perfect pass on the stick of Lorentz, the game was over. I didn't see that coming and I don't think the Monsters did either.
8. Speaking of Jake Bean, he received high praise during my interview with Hurricanes Sr. VP of Hockey Operations Paul Krepelka, who said once Jake goes up to the NHL he'd be surprised if he ever came back down. Bean and Roland McKeown probably played over 30 minutes on both Tuesday and Wednesday night. It was an impressive performance by both men.
9. With the time between games, the Checkers office is looking to add some new content. Next week, we will stream a live show on our app. Details will follow but we will have special guests call-in and take questions right from twitter. If you don't have the app, download it now!
10. Let me make one final thought about John Forslund, a man who is one of the biggest influences in my career. When you walk into PNC Arena and you step inside the booth, it's very daunting trying to fill in for one of sports' most eminent play-by-play broadcasters. His goal calls seemingly reverberate off the walls even when he's not there. Yet what is most characteristic of John is his humility and his humor. He'll be fine and we'll be listening to him soon enough. Life as it should be will return. That's hockey, baby.

TODAY'S LINKS

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SportScan

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

1181006 NHL

CDC's latest guidance could mean no sports for much longer

March 15, 2020 at 5:39 pm Updated March 16, 2020 at 1:18 am

By TIM REYNOLDS

The Associated Press

The already-delayed professional sports seasons in North America could be on hiatus for significantly longer than first planned after federal officials said Sunday that they recommend all in-person events involving 50 people or more be called off for the next eight weeks.

That's twice as long as the 30-day shutdowns that the NBA, NHL and Major League Soccer decided to put into place last week in response to the global coronavirus pandemic that has already made a deep impact on the U.S. financial markets and has been blamed for at least 64 deaths in this country.

Major League Baseball also was going with what essentially was a 30-day shutdown after canceling the rest of spring training and pushing back the start of regular season play for two weeks; opening day was to have been March 26.

But new recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Sunday night seem to suggest that sports in this country could for all intents and purposes be gone until May, if not later.

"CDC, in accordance with its guidance for large events and mass gatherings, recommends that for the next 8 weeks, organizers ... cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more throughout the United States," it said. "Events of any size should only be continued if they can be carried out with adherence to guidelines for protecting vulnerable populations, hand hygiene, and social distancing."

The eight-week window easily exceeds what would have been the remainder of the NBA and NHL regular seasons, plus would cover about the first 25% of the MLB season — or roughly 40 games per team. It would also cast serious doubt on the ability to hold other major U.S. sporting events as planned, such as the Kentucky Derby in early May.

The NBA was already bracing to play games without fans in arenas, something that would have started late last week had a player — Rudy Gobert of the Utah Jazz — not tested positive for the virus, COVID-19. Utah teammate Donovan Mitchell and Detroit's Christian Wood have tested positive since, but Gobert's diagnosis was enough for the league to say that it was suspending play.

"I've been feeling a little better every single day," Gobert said in a video posted Sunday. He added, "I wish I would have took this thing more seriously."

Later Sunday, a person with knowledge of the matter said the NBA has sent teams a memo saying players can leave their home markets during the shutdown if they so choose — yet another clear sign that the game's

hiatus is not ending anytime soon. But if those players do leave for another market, they must do so after coordinating plans with their teams and medical advisers.

The memo also told teams formal practices will remain off indefinitely, individual workouts at team facilities may continue and detailed other safeguards teams should be taking at this point, according to the person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the memo had not been released publicly.

The NBA has already been asking teams to share availability for their arenas through the end of July, a sign that the league is prepared to extend the season at least that long if necessary — and those moves came a couple of days before the CDC made its latest recommendation. The NBA regular season was to have ended April 15 and the NBA Finals were to have started June 4, with the season done on or before June 21.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover. In mainland China, where the virus first exploded, more than 80,000 people have been diagnosed and more than 58,000 have so far recovered.

It's not just the team sports that have been shut down: Pro tennis and golf have basically been called off for the next several weeks, with such marquee events as Indian Wells and the Miami Open in tennis and The Players Championship and Masters in golf either canceled or postponed. The NCAA men's Division I college basketball tournament — March Madness — was to release its bracket Sunday and start the now-canceled 68-team tournament Tuesday. The women's Division I tournament was to have started this week.

They've all been called off, as have all other winter- and spring-sport seasons at all levels of the NCAA. Most high school state associations have also had to cancel seasons and championships as well. Some minor-league hockey leagues have canceled seasons, and it seems increasingly unlikely that the G League — the NBA's minor league — will resume play this season. Even a polo match in South Florida on Sunday was played without fans or reporters present, with organizers saying they needed to take ultimate precautions.

Some NBA players were spending Sunday at home playing video games; Miami's Goran Dragic posted a video of himself outside his house kicking a soccer ball around. Others, like Golden State's Stephen Curry, were urging their fans to continue taking the pandemic seriously.

"We all have to take responsibility for ourselves and do whatever it takes to #stopthespread," Curry told his 14.1 million followers on Twitter.

"There's a sense of urgency to flatten the curve and give ourselves and the healthcare system the best chance to get through this pandemic. Share this message and let's protect each other!"

Seattle Times LOADED: 03.16.2020



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1181027 Websites

The Athletic / LeBrun: Inside the NHL's conference call with GMs and what to expect next

By Pierre LeBrun Mar 15, 2020 111

The NHL held a conference call with its 31 GMs on Saturday as the changing-by-the-hour COVID-19 crisis continued to fuel more questions than answers as far as next steps for the league.

Via a few sources who were on the call, some highlights:

The NHL essentially went over the memo from Friday as far as trying to explain how the league is trying to prepare to resume if and when it becomes appropriate.

The league heard from its medical professionals that shutting the whole operation down entirely for a period of time is the best way to assess and take the pulse of what the health of the NHL community is.

The NHL hasn't had a positive COVID-19 test yet as of Saturday evening although it should be noted, not surprisingly, that certain NHL players have been tested and the NHL doesn't have those results back yet.

Other players are also going to be tested over time. Everyone is going to have to see how that all plays out and whether the NHL has an issue to deal with immediately or not.

The assumption is that the odds are the NHL will probably have some positive tests.

But eventually, after all that is dealt with, the league plans to move into the next phase which is the offseason/training period where club facilities open to players who may be allowed to have coordinated workouts/skates, probably in small groups.

If things eventually start progressing in a positive manner with the COVID-19 crisis (and I think it's clear it's going to get worse before it gets better), then the next phase after that is a mini training camp period before the league can resume play.

What the NHL resumes play to, format-wise, depends entirely on the timing of the first three phases above and right now there's no way of knowing that including the reality that they may not get through the first three phases if the crisis continues too long to salvage a season.

There was talk on Saturday's call about the rules around signing contracts with new players and loaning rules and regulations and windows. Some GMs had asked about whether they could bring AHL players to their home NHL cities and have them train if/when the training phases arrive but the league, for now, basically punted on those issues, that it would be something they could consider later down the line. In the short term, no NHL team should be flying prospects in from AHL cities or junior.

The league instructed GMs to continue to pay their AHL players in full throughout the season suspension; so that matches the league's instructions from Friday's memo regarding paying NHL players.

OK, so that's a lot to digest. It was for the GMs on that call. These are times in their lives and careers like no other.

In the meantime, in talking to other sources around the NHL, there are other matters to sink our teeth in:

Drop-dead date

At some point on the calendar it's not going to make sense for the season to resume. I don't believe that came up on the GMs call Saturday but it's certainly on everybody's mind. Let's start with what we know, that

the NHL asked teams for their building availabilities through July. So we know that playoff hockey well into July is a possibility.

But how long does the NHL wait through this health crisis before pulling the plug and saying it's not possible to resume play?

I think commissioner Gary Bettman and deputy commissioner Bill Daly — and likely NHLPA executive director Don Fehr — have a sense of what a cut-off date would be. My sense is the end-date scenario will be affected by whether or not the Summer Olympics (July 24-Aug. 9) are staged or not. Obviously the Olympics impact all the other pro leagues. If you're the NHL you wouldn't want your Stanley Cup final up against the Olympics.

But I would also say I'm fairly confident the NHL is more focused on the front end of the window than the back end, which is to say, when exactly can hockey resume if at all? And how long can the NHL wait to make that call?

I don't believe the NHL will wait forever to make that call, I don't think the NHL wants to string people out for months on whether the season resumes. If the NHL gets a strong sense it can't resume the season, I think you'll hear that decision sooner rather than later but if there's light at the end of the tunnel, maybe that announcement waits a bit. The NHL should know more within 2-3 weeks where this whole thing is going.

My guess? By the end of April, we should know whether there's a season resumption or not. I don't mean the NHL needs to be playing by the end of April, I mean the NHL needs to know by then whether players can start training again in a mini-camp before a season gets going again for real in May.

Schedule modelling

There are team executives around the league already reaching out to the NHL with potential format ideas for how the game can resume (if it does).

Does it return with all the teams? Or is it 16, 20, 22, 24 teams still in play? And how would those play-in or playoff scenarios work? Lots of different opinions on that.

No question executive vice-president Colin Campbell is hearing about a lot of different formats from GMs, and that Bettman, Daly and Campbell are having their own conversations about it all.

But in reality, whatever model gets adopted depends entirely on when (if) the NHL can actually resume. The tighter the window, the fewer options are going to work. So for now, my sense is the league feels it's a waste of time to spend too much energy on all this modelling until there's even a sense of when (if) hockey can resume.

The priority right now is on the self-isolation, the testing of players, monitoring the real-life crisis, and seeing how long it is before the next phase (training in small groups) can come into focus. If at all.

The border

Speaking of real-life issues, the Canadian government on Saturday urged Canadians abroad to make arrangements to get home as soon as possible, while there's also talk of domestic flights eventually being grounded in the U.S. and Canada. So should the Canada-U.S. border get closed for a period, that directly impacts the NHL, of course.

Fehr sent out a memo to players Saturday dealing with the growing border issue, specifically that the Canadian government is asking people who travel back from abroad, including the U.S., to self-quarantine for 14 days. Fehr in the memo asks players to stay where they are now with their NHL home cities for 48 hours or until further notice to self-quarantine but to reach out to him or senior NHLPA staff if there are any concerns.

Really, it wouldn't be a long list of players that would be that affected by this but certainly some nonetheless. The guys to think of here are the ones traded across the border before the Feb. 24 deadline, leaving their families behind.



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Friday's memo asked players to self-quarantine in their home NHL cities, however, there were exceptions made in that memo as well for players to re-join their families elsewhere and self-quarantine there instead.

But for the most part, the idea right now for players is to freeze where they are and stay put, particularly from country to country.

In the bigger picture, especially when it comes to figuring out if and when the NHL ever resumes, any wall put up on the border as far as restricting travel grounds the NHL to a halt. The NHL can't even think of making plans to resume play while the border is an issue.

Which is a reminder of how much still needs to play out over the next few weeks on all kind of levels which will impact the whole NHL discussion.

Salary cap

I wrote something right out of the gates about the salary cap in Thursday's piece when the season was suspended because I knew it would be a hot topic eventually. Again, nothing is more important than the health crisis itself but if for no other reason than to pass the time it's always interesting to think of what the NHL may look like on the other side of this because a shortened season will affect hockey-related revenue.

So let me stress this point again, as confirmed by multiple sources yet again around the NHL and NHLPA over the past few days, the idea that the NHL would return next season with a salary cap lowered by millions of dollars and teams scrambling to fit current player salaries under that lower cap makes very little sense. Both the NHL and NHLPA can at their whim — if they both agree of course — to shift aside the current CBA rules on these matters and do what's right in such an exceptional circumstance. So the salary cap next season, whatever that number ends up being, will make sense for everyone involved.

Which is to say, at some point over time here, the NHL and NHLPA will need to come up with "transition rules" to get through this unforeseen time involving the salary cap and other things.

Common sense will prevail when it comes to the cap.

The Athletic LOADED: 03.16.2020

1181028 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Why NHL players must remain in the cities where they play

Chris Johnston | @reporterchris March 15, 2020, 2:23 PM

Every member of society is now being asked to make sacrifices in order to help limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

That includes NHL players, who really have no idea if the resume button will ever be hit on their paused 2019-20 season.

But for now, in addition to self-quarantining, players are being told to stay close to their home NHL cities. In fact, a memo went out Saturday requiring any member of a

Canadian team that left for the U.S. to return immediately so that they can serve their government recommended quarantine expeditiously — especially since that quarantine may become mandatory at some point.

The league views that as an essential step while it tries to piece together a plan that will allow for the Stanley Cup to be awarded this season.

"Two reasons, really," deputy commissioner Bill Daly said via email on Sunday. "For their own protection in avoiding potential at a very high-risk

time. And to give us an opportunity to assess the overall health of the NHL community.

"[It] will allow us to plan reasonable next steps."

Jeff Marek and Elliotte Friedman talk to a lot of people around the hockey world, and then they tell listeners all about what they've heard and what they think about it.

This situation is so fluid that Saturday's memo represented a small change from one issued Friday afternoon, which initially allowed players who lived apart from their families during the year to go back to their primary residences.

With new information comes new instructions.

The NHL and NHL Players' Association are trying to navigate these matters while dealing with a shifting set of parameters in the cities and countries where they operate: In this case, a warning from Foreign Affairs Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne to Canadians on Saturday about the importance of returning home amid escalating restrictions.

"Airlines have cancelled flights," said the ministry. "New restrictions may be imposed with little warning. Your travel plans may be severely disrupted and you may be forced to remain outside of Canada longer than expected."

There's legitimate concern the border could be closed without warning, in which case we'd have much larger things to worry about than questions about when or if the NHL season could resume.

(Depending on the exact circumstances, the answer would likely be 'no chance'.)

However, even if it remains open to commercial travellers, the Canadian government has ordered a mandatory 14-day self-quarantine upon return from other countries. The NHL would like players to observe that period as soon as possible, in part because it's necessary before the next phase of return-to-play protocol can be triggered and also so it can get an accurate read on where they're at.

Somewhat incredibly, no NHL player has a confirmed case of COVID-19 as of early Sunday afternoon, according to Daly. But some players could still be asymptomatic or awaiting the results of tests.

There's also no confirmed count on how many players left their home NHL cities after the season paused and needed to return. The best available estimate was somewhere in the range of 20 to 30 — a handful of which still have special permission to be away. It's a requirement for everyone else because players continue to be paid and thus need to be in the mandated city to properly perform the services spelled out in their contracts.

Otherwise, they could technically be found in breach of their deal.

That's why, regardless of nationality, there are 700-plus players stuck in a holding pattern in the cities where they play. They've been instructed to avoid public gyms and not to rent any ice on their own to skate, since the league has promised an adequate amount of time to get back in shape if the season is able to resume.

Those players are essentially trying to avoid contracting COVID-19 before teams get the go-ahead to open facilities for them to return for skates and workouts in small groups — something the NHL has told its clubs will be at least another full week away, if not longer, according to Daly.

As a result, NHL players are currently in pretty much the same situation as the rest of us: Sitting at home, with little to do but wait and wonder about what comes next.

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Sportsnet.ca / Canucks office staff member tests positive for COVID-19

Sportsnet Staff | @Sportsnet March 15, 2020, 11:03 PM

A full-time office staff member of the Vancouver Canucks has tested positive for COVID-19, the team announced on Sunday night.

"Earlier today, Canucks Sports & Entertainment staff were updated that a member of our fulltime office staff has tested positive for COVID-19," Canucks COO Trent Carroll wrote in a statement. "The diagnosed individual is receiving care, observing 14-day self-quarantine guidelines and is feeling better."

Carroll adds that any individual who has been in contact with the worker has been advised to go into self-quarantine for precautionary reasons. The Canucks are also asking employees to work from home as the team's offices will remain closed as they communicate with health authorities on what the next steps will be.

The team said that the employee was not in contact with players, hockey operations personnel or arena staff and that the public risk of exposure is low.

According to the Government of Canada's official site, there have been 73 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the province of B.C. and 304 across the country as of Sunday night.

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1181030 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Five storylines so far unfinished in the 2019-20 NHL season

Rory Boylen | @RoryBoylen March 15, 2020, 12:26 PM

With the NHL season paused, hopeful for an eventual return to play out the rest of the regular season and playoffs, there are a number of storylines hanging out there that, as of now, remain unfinished.

From goal races, to playoff races, and runs toward futility, we're taking a look today at five interesting storylines that we still hope to follow to conclusion, if it becomes safe to do so.

Auston Matthews' pursuit of 50 goals and the team scoring record

At the time of the season pause Alex Ovechkin (48 goals in 68 games), David Pastrnak (48 in 70) and Matthews (47 in 70) were all in the running for the Rocket Richard Trophy and all seemed like good bets to cross the 50-goal barrier. In Matthews' case, he had a very good possibility of becoming the first Maple Leaf to hit that total since Dave Andreychuk scored 53 in 1993-94.

Further to that, Matthews was within striking distance of Rick Vaive's Leafs record of 54 goals in a season (which happened in 1981-82). Matthews is scoring at a .67 goals per game clip in 2019-20 and if he were to continue at that rate over Toronto's final 12 games, he would add roughly eight to his season total and wrap up with 55 and the record.

Alex Ovechkin's chase of a ninth Rocket Richard Trophy

The Rocket Richard Trophy has been handed out 20 times in its history and Ovechkin has won it an incredible eight times, including the past two.

As noted above, he is getting serious competition this season from a couple of players, but Ovechkin hit the pause as the hottest scorer of the three. With eight goals in his past 10 games, Ovechkin was ahead of Pastrnak (six) and Matthews (five) in the last stretch of games we saw, with games against Detroit, Chicago and Ottawa up soon.

At 34 years old, it's amazing to watch Ovechkin compete with, and outperform, more youthful competition as the league skews toward being about younger stars all the time. Ovechkin is defying this trend as he chases the 50-goal plateau for the ninth time.

And as a minor aside, if we don't get any more regular season games in 2019-20, it would be another (albeit minor) hitch in his attempt at Wayne Gretzky's scoring record. But think of all the games Ovechkin has already lost: the entire 2004-05 season should have been his rookie campaign and the 2012-13 season was shortened by 34 games due to a lockout. In the grand scheme of things, losing another 13 games isn't as significant, but with still 188 goals between him and Gretzky, Ovechkin is going to need all the games he can get. There's no telling when time will start taking its toll, or how hard it could hit.

Senior Writer Ryan Dixon and NHL Editor Rory Boylen always give it 110%, but never rely on clichés when it comes to podcasting. Instead, they use a mix of facts, fun and a varied group of hockey voices to cover Canada's most beloved game.

Ottawa's draft lottery odds and first-round pick scenarios

As Wayne Scanlan wrote, how the rest of the season ultimately plays out (or doesn't), and what that means for the draft lottery is of great interest to the Ottawa Senators. At the pause, the Sens were second-last in the league, which would give them a 13.5 per cent chance at winning the first overall pick and the right to select consensus No. 1 Alexis Lafreniere out of Rimouski of the QMJHL.

But if the standings were to freeze as they are now, the Sens would also have the third-best odds (11.5%) to land the first pick because they also hold San Jose's first-rounder and the Sharks have been falling while the Kings have surged to an 8-1-1 mark in their past 10.

The Senators even have another first-round pick, landing the Islanders' at the trade deadline for J-G Pageau. The Isles have been tumbling for a bit and held a 2-4-4 record in their last 10 games, which left them sitting outside the playoff picture at the time of the season pause.

The Senators would be interested to know how far the Islanders could fall. Right now, that 2020 first-round pick belongs to Ottawa. But there's a condition on the pick, so that if it ended up in the top three the Islanders would retain it and send their unprotected 2021 first-rounder to Ottawa instead.

Granted the Islanders had games in hand of everyone below them in the standings, you could see a path to them falling a few more spots. Winnipeg was surging, the Rangers have life and nothing to lose, Calgary is 6-3-1 in its past 10 and in a heated playoff race, as is Nashville. Even the Florida Panthers are just two points back of the Islanders with only one more game played, so they could still pass New York. It's entirely possible the Islanders could still fall so far that Ottawa would pick three times inside the first 12 selections.

And the 2020 draft is regarded as very strong and deep.

The exciting playoff races in both conference

The Maple Leafs are just three points up on Florida (with one more game played) for third in the Atlantic and if either of those teams missed the playoffs there could be huge off-season implications to follow. Just three points separated five teams in the running for two wild card spots in the Eastern Conference, including the Columbus Blue Jackets and New York Rangers, who have become two of the most surprising teams this season.

In the West, the Vancouver Canucks hit the pause on the outside looking in due to the new tie-breaking rule (Nashville has one more regulation win). Here, six points separate five teams chasing a wild card spot, and



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the third-place team in the Pacific (Calgary for now) is in similar danger to the third place team in the Atlantic — if either gets passed by a surging divisional rival, they could not only fall out of that spot, but right out of the playoffs altogether.

The way things are shaping up, it was looking possible — even likely — that the new tiebreaker would come into play. Parity truly rules the NHL these days and seeing every team go through wild hot-and-cold swings down the stretch really drives this home — and makes for fascinating playoff races.

Jeff Marek and Elliotte Friedman talk to a lot of people around the hockey world, and then they tell listeners all about what they've heard and what they think about it.

The Red Wings' "pursuit" of the lowest point total in the salary cap era

The 2016-17 Colorado Avalanche were bad. Historically bad. Their 22-56-4 record brought 48 points, which was the lowest total for any team in an 82-game season through the salary cap era. Incredibly, the Detroit Red Wings could do even worse.

Detroit is 17-49-5 at the pause, which brings them to 39 points with 11 games to go. That's still enough time to pass those Avalanche, but this "chase" would have come right down to the wire. The Wings went 3-6-1 in their last 10 games before the pause and if they put up that same record in their next 10 they would head into the last game of the season with 46 points.

By points percentage, Detroit is currently at .275, which is behind Colorado's .293 and worse than any team in the lockout-shortened 2012-13 season (Florida's .375 was the worst that season).

One place they would be a good bet to be even worse than the 2016-17 Avalanche is in goal differential. The Avs were -112 in their disastrous season, while Detroit is -122 right now. Would anyone expect them to suddenly be a plus team?

The worst goal differential for a team ever is -265 by the 1974-75 Washington Capitals, so the Red Wings are safe from that level of terrible. However, if the Wings averaged a minus-1 across each of their last 11 games, they would be one of the 19 worst teams ever by this measure. To crack the 15 worst teams, they would need to be a minus-20 team over their final 11 games and that's a pace only slightly worse than their season-long average.

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TSN.CA / "The apocalypse workout kit": How can NHL players stay ready?

Mark Masters

With the NHL season paused and no timeline for a return to game action, players are in limbo. They've been encouraged to self-quarantine in their homes for now. They've gone from intense playoff races to a whole lot of down time.

So, how can they stay in shape amid the uncertainty? We reached out to a couple experts in the field of athlete performance.

Matt Nichol is the owner of Paragenix Systems Inc. where he serves as a coach. Nichol is also the director of player health and performance for the Hamilton Tiger-Cats. He works with 24 NHL players.

Dan Noble is the athletic development coach at The Hill Academy and owner of Noble Sports and Performance. He works with a handful of NHL

players, including Mitch Marner and Anthony Cirelli, and a number of prospects as well.

The interviews were conducted separately, but are being presented together.

Toronto Raptor Serge Ibaka has set-up a makeshift gym in his home. What can NHL players do, specifically, during this isolation period?

Dan Noble: "What we've instructed our guys, is to at least ensure they have access to the bare essentials as not all of them have full in-house gyms. It's what I call the apocalypse workout kit: a pair of dumbbells, some bands, med balls, chin-up bar, and for the players that live in condos, get creative using stairs or ledges for step-ups or plyos. As nice as it is to have access to all the bells and whistles most of these teams have, there's a lot you can do even from a limited space and body-weight perspective. It's really going to test their own will and self-determination, because it's going to be on them as they won't have coaches and teammates around to push them."

Built my own little gym at home during the self quarantine... need to stay in shape! I hope everyone is staying safe, following the experts advise and keeping positive and calm. 🙏 pic.twitter.com/GGXrTk64Nn

— Serge Ibaka (@sergeibaka) March 14, 2020

Matt Nichol: "You mentioned Serge Ibaka so, for a sport like basketball, it's still obviously very complicated and a major disruption, but I think it's less so than a sport like hockey. In basketball, you certainly can keep your cardiovascular fitness up, if you had a gym in your house like Serge does you can certainly stay strong and stay fit and all that, but it's hard to replicate hockey practice all by yourself in your condo, so for the NHL it presents a unique challenge and there's really no way to replicate the demands of a practice, let alone a game, it's very, very tough. The longer this goes on it will present a larger and larger problem."

Dan Noble: "You can do some basic speed work even if you got a small, limited space, there's still stuff you can do. Whether its resisted runs with bands in place or different variation sprint drills that you can do that don't require a lot of space. There's also a ton of good body-weight work you can do such as squats, multi-directional lunges, single-leg squats, step-ups, plyometrics, it's all stuff that if done well can easily help the athlete maintain their fitness. At the end of the day it's about doing what you can to ensure you are as ready as possible for however this plays out ... If this season ends up continuing it's going to be intense and demanding and the players are going to have to do what they can to ensure they are ready."

Bettman doesn't see how he could set a time frame on NHL resuming play

A day after the NHL suspended regular season play indefinitely due to coronavirus concerns, commissioner Gary Bettman was asked by the NHL Network when play could resume.

Assuming the season resumes at some point, how long will guys need to get revved back up and be ready for the most intense games of the year?

Dan Noble: "Hopefully, after this quarantine period, teams will be able to run small group, on and off-ice sessions with the players that have been cleared. This would at least allow them to begin to work with and prepare, what I would think would be a majority of the team, in a controlled and contained environment. In my opinion, the worst-case scenario is if they came back from 30 days off and had minimal time before they jumped back into the start of the season. Going from 0-100 is going to put a lot of players at risk of injury. I have to think you'll have at least a two week transition period or mini-camp prior to picking the season back up."

Matt Nichol: "In the short term most of these guys are over-trained and under slept and beat up and battered and bruised so a little time away might actually enhance the quality of the game, but for every day that it goes beyond three or four weeks you're definitely going to have a pretty



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significant decline in performance. But everybody's in the same boat so I guess that makes it fair."

I have been getting a lot questions lately of what players who are under self isolation can do in terms of training. As a coach that has always had to program with minimal facilities and equipment I have come... <https://t.co/lbyDMNNpnO>

— Coach Noble (@coachnoble45) March 15, 2020

Dan Noble: "Obviously, the on-ice component is another area where these guys can't train, there's nowhere for them to really skate right now, all the (NHL team) rinks are closed and going to a public facility is probably one of the worst things they can do. So, it's about doing what they can to not only physically prepare, but also deal with the bumps and bruises of the season and taking some much-needed time to recover while paying specific attention to their shoulders, backs, groins and hips. That may be the one good thing to come from all of this, if the players do embrace this time period, it's an opportunity to get healthy and get better."

Matt Nichol: "I've been in communication with several players already and there are some that are being more proactive than others but, in general, even the ones that are really staying on top of their health and fitness, even those players will not probably have structured practice or structured on-ice work. That's sort of the silver lining that, relatively speaking, everyone's kind of going to be at the same level so the playing field is level that way."

McKenzie: If normalcy is restored in a few months hockey in July is possible

TSN Hockey Insider Bob McKenzie joins Andi Petrillo and Dave Feschuk to discuss the message the NHL is giving the players regarding travel, if and how they should be staying active and if there is any kind of deadline on when the NHL needs to be cleared to resume play.

How important is nutrition?

Dan Noble: "Nutrition is hugely important right now, especially for the younger guys, who aren't at home cooking five-course meals. Most of these guys are used to going to restaurants or having food services, but a lot of that may not be available to them. So, the nutrition aspect is significant. Players are so accustomed to the teams and staff providing them with whatever they may need nutritionally that it's going to be a big shift for the players to ensure they are self-regulating and ensuring they are fueling their bodies properly."

Matt Nichol: "On a super basic level, the overall caloric demand, if you're not doing team practices and games, is going to be lower. Even if you're making a conscious effort, like Serge Ibaka, to stay fit in your home gym, it's not going to be at the same level of a practice or a game so overall guys need to be mindful of that. If there is any good that's in this situation now, and there's obviously not much, it's made everyone super aware of their immune system health and staying healthy so that's a positive. Overall, guys need to make sure they're eating healthy and they're not consuming an excess of calories with a sudden drop off in their caloric expenditure."

Dan Noble: "In 30 days you can lose 10 pounds or you can gain 20 pounds. Either way that can have a massively and mostly negative impact on performance. The danger is that you have a lot of young athletes that are being told to stay out of public and so the options become them playing video games and watching Netflix and most likely not eating great. Most of the players won't have any issue working out 90 minutes a day as they are accustomed to that, but what do you do the rest of your time? It's the free time that they are not used to and that's where they need to be careful. Unfortunately, there's only so much you can do, especially if you're locked up inside. It's not like, especially in Toronto, the Leafs can go out about town and walk around. It's a pretty limited in terms of what you can do."

Fehr sheds light on NHL's current situation

NHLPA Executive Director Donald Fehr joined the Ray and Dregs podcast on Friday. With the NHL in uncharted waters, Fehr discussed the league's current situation.

What are the most common questions you are getting from players right now?

Matt Nichol: "Everyone's kind of in the dark and from what I understand, and I'm not in communication with league or team sources other than players, but it seems like there's going to be a lot more information that will be disseminated to everybody on Monday. So, for now, everyone is in the same boat, no different than anybody else, concerned for their health and concerned for their families and they're being cognizant of fitness, but that's not the top priority right now. I'd imagine that will change in the next day or days when they realize that there will be a significant amount of time they'll be away from practice and games and they'll need to take a concerted, conscious, planned, scheduled approach to their fitness."

Possibly the single most important quote in business, in athletics and in life #MLKDAY pic.twitter.com/IGV2yg0RaP

— Matt Nichol (@M_Nichol) January 16, 2017

Dan Noble: "My message to the guys was to focus on what you can control and to stay focused on the big picture. No one knows how long this thing can get dragged out, but the worst thing you could do is let all that hard work you have put in all year go to waste. Right now, they have to deal with what's in front of them and take it one step at a time and continue to get better where they can. We always tell our players all summer and I think it rings true even now, 'Find ways to get better every day.'"

Matt Nichol: "The problem is that right now it's really uncharted waters. There's some precedence with the various lockouts that we've had in the past. In the last lockout I was working privately and was slammed in a gym full of people all day and then the previous one I was working for a team and it was a quiet time for me, but this is a completely different situation. In those cases they had maybe not an exact timeline, but they had some reasonably educated guesses on timelines and expectations of what the different circumstances would mean and how exactly teams should and shouldn't interact with players and I don't think they have any of that this time. It seems that every team is conducting themselves in a slightly different fashion. It's no different for these teams than it would be with any other industry or with any other person, it's really a rapidly evolving situation that seems to be changing daily if not hourly."

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