



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 14, 2019

## THE NEWS & OBSERVER

### Action, anger and agita: Playoff hockey is back, and it has been far too long

By Luke DeCock

Long before overtime, even, by the end of a second period full of action, anger and agita, there was only one question to ask, with no apparent answer: How did we ever live without playoff hockey for 10 years?

It was all there in Saturday's middle frame, from a slumping star finally breaking through, to a controversial hit with an excessive accompanying penalty that could come to define a series, to a coach ripping the officiating on national television. And all of that after the Carolina Hurricanes somehow dug themselves out of a two-goal hole.

Are you not entertained?

The Hurricanes will still return home down 2-0 in the series thanks to Saturday's 4-3 overtime loss to the Washington Capitals, a not-entirely-unexpected state of affairs, but the series itself is anything but decided and decidedly a battle of antagonists, bad blood everywhere if not actual blood, yet.

It took the Caps only 108 seconds in OT for Brooks Orpik to get the winner past Petr Mrazek, who was generally spectacular. Teuvo Teravainen, at the end of a long shift and without his stick, dove to block it at the left circle but couldn't get there in time.

"I got a piece of it, too," Mrazek said. "I thought it was enough. It wasn't. I could have had that goal."

The flashpoint was Micheal Ferland's match penalty for a hit to the head of Washington's Nic Dowd on the rush, with the Hurricanes down 2-1 at that point. It was a penalty, but with Dowd leaning over and making contact with Ferland's back, certainly not a five-minute penalty by any definition.

While the Hurricanes managed to kill off the major, a furious Rod Brind'Amour somehow managed to keep it PG during a bench interview with Pierre McGuire — making reference to a far worse Alex Ovechkin hit to Brock McGinn's nose in the first that was only a two-minute minor.

Dougie Hamilton, meanwhile, got two minutes for an elbow to Evgeny Kuznetsov's head later in the second, and the Orwellian-monickered Department of Player Safety will have some video to review before Game 3 in Raleigh on Monday. Ferland should be sentenced to time already served and Ovechkin and Hamilton should be treated equally, whatever that is — but you never know in the NHL.

There was a lot of message-sending Saturday, not all with elbows. The Canes were completely outplayed in the first 10 minutes, but rallied with a Lucas Wallmark tip and a Sebastian Aho goal off Braden Holtby's ankle from below the goal line, his first in a month.

The penalty-kill, such a disaster Thursday, was more than adequate. Mrazek was spectacular, as he has been since the first goal of the series, even after taking a shot that knocked his mask off. And the Hurricanes responded to Tom Wilson's go-ahead goal early in the third with a power-play goal of their own, a Jordan Staal tip with five minutes to go to force overtime.

The Hurricanes gave themselves at least a chance to get back into Game 1 and they gave themselves an equal shot at Game 2 despite continuing lackluster performances from some of their top players and failing to score on a two-man advantage.

"The guys played hard, that's the one thing," Brind'Amour said. "They gave it all you can. You can't really fault anything. Can we be better? Yes. For sure."

Regardless of the results, not to mention the emotional swings, this is a dead-even series, probably more of a fight than the Capitals were expecting, and with everything that's gone on so far, PNC will be a cauldron of bile and rage on Monday night.

All as it should be. It's the playoffs. It has been too long, far too long.



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## Orpik, Caps turn back Canes in overtime, 4-3

By Chip Alexander

Playoff hockey is coming to Raleigh, finally.

The Carolina Hurricanes will need a victory, badly.

The Canes played hard and played well for the most part Saturday in Game 2 against the Washington Capitals, but lost 4-3 in overtime to fall behind 2-0 in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference first-round series.

A goal by defenseman Brooks Orpik from the left circle at 1:48 of overtime decided it. It was a sudden winner for the Caps and a jolt to the Canes, who rallied twice in regulation to tie the score and then force overtime at Capital One Arena.

The Hurricanes have not hosted a Stanley Cup playoff game since 2009. But PNC Arena figures to be filled and loud when Game 3 is played Monday night.

"I hope we get a good lift," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Our fans are excited. It's been a long time coming.

"It's tough right now. The loss obviously stings. But we'll be refreshed and ready to go and we'll give them a good show."

Tom Wilson's goal, on a shot from the right circle off the rush, had given the Caps a 3-2 lead with 11:05 left in regulation. But the Canes tied the score 3-3 on a power play, as Jordan Staal redirected a Dougie Hamilton shot with five minutes remaining in the third.

Canes goalie Petr Mrazek, who took a heavy shot off the mask during the game, made a glove save on a Wilson shot in front of the crease with less than two minutes left in the third. Mrazek then made what he called a "reflex save" on a John Carlson shot from the slot in the final seconds of regulation.

In overtime, Canes defenseman Brett Pesce lost his stick trying to make a play in the neutral zone. Forward Teuvo Teravainen handed Pesce his stick, then tried to go low to block the shot by Orpik, who came off the bench on a change to unleash the winner.

For the second straight game, the Canes fell behind early. For the second straight game, the Canes fought back despite losing forward Micheal Ferland, who was ejected in the second period on a call that had Brind'Amour and Ferland steaming.

In Game 1, it was a 3-0 deficit. On Saturday, first-period goals by Nicklas Backstrom — his third in the series — and T.J. Oshie staked the Caps to a 2-0 lead midway through the period.

The Canes' fourth line produced a first-period score, with some strong forechecking resulting in a Lucas Wallmark goal.

They then tied the score 2-2 in the second as Sebastian Aho converted on a sharp-angle shot.

Aho, the Canes' leading scorer, had gone 15 games without a goal, including Game 1. But that ended after Justin Williams sent the puck banging off the end boards and Aho, at the post to goalie Braden Holtby's right, quickly popped the puck off Holtby's leg and into the net.

The 4-2 loss to the Caps in Game 1 had the Canes talking about the need to both stay out of the penalty box and kill off penalties if they were called. The Canes' penalty killers were tested again Saturday.

Ferland received a five-minute match penalty at 4:09 of the second period after a collision with Nic Dowd. Brind'Amour was livid over the call, as animated as he has been in this season.

Dowd, who briefly left the game, had his head down when Ferland banged into him, a point Brind'Amour angrily made to the ref. It also angered Brind'Amour that the Caps' Alex Ovechkin had hit Brock McGinn in the head in the first, receiving only a two-minute elbowing penalty.

"I thought it was a clean hit and I don't agree with the call," Ferland said. "I don't think I deserve to be suspended. I take pride in my game, in being a clean hitter. I never want to hurt anybody."

But the Canes got the hard work done, working they way through the Ferland penalty. Had their power play been sharper, especially on 67 seconds of a 5-on-3 in the second, it would have been a dominant period.

"That was a big turning point in the game," Brind'Amour said of the 5-on-3.

The Caps came into the game wanting better 5-on-5 play after managing just 13 shots in 5-on-5 play in Game 1. They got it as Backstrom and then Oshie scored in the first period for the 2-0 lead.

In Game 1, the Caps had two power-play goals in the first period in taking a 3-0 lead. The Canes made it a tight game in the third as rookie forward Andrei Svechnikov scored twice to make it a one-goal game before the Caps sealed it with an empty-net score in the final minute.

Brind'Amour made one lineup change for Game 2, inserting forward Saku Maenalanen for Greg McKeeg. Maenalanen figured in the Wallmark goal, getting in front of Holtby.

"We have to take all the positives that I think we played two games hard here," Mrazek said. "We battled hard. They got the win on their side today but we have to put it behind us."



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## Ejected Canes' forward Ferland: 'A clean hit ... I don't agree with the call'

By Luke DeCock

Long dressed in a purple-patterned shirt and purple knit tie, Micheal Ferland was unapologetic for his match penalty in a way not many players in his position often are. Then again, not many believe they're entirely innocent — and have reason to believe it.

The Carolina Hurricanes forward was given a match penalty for a hit to the head — an infraction that carries with it a five-minute penalty and an ejection — during the second period of Saturday's 4-3 overtime Game 2 loss to the Washington Capitals, but both Ferland and Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour insisted that the primary point of contact with Capitals forward Nic Dowd was Ferland's back as he let up on the hit.

"To be honest with you, I let up," Ferland said. "I seen him reach for the puck, I could have finished with my shoulder and I didn't. I came and hit him with my butt. I thought it was a clean hit. I don't agree with the call."

Asked whether he was worried about being suspended, Ferland shrugged.

"Like I said, I don't think it was a dirty hit," Ferland said. "I don't think I deserve to be suspended. I take pride in my game of being a clean hitter. I never want to hurt anybody. So, I don't think it was a bad hit."

Dowd, who went immediately to the Capitals' locker room, returned as soon as the penalty had been assessed and was ticketed for two high-sticking penalties later in the game.

Brind'Amour, who later defended the officials' job as difficult, maybe even too difficult for humans, was nonetheless frustrated to lose a player and have to kill a lengthy major penalty, although the Hurricanes did, successfully.

"I thought it was a good hit," Brind'Amour said. "Originally, it did look bad, when you first watch it live. But then you watch

it, and you see it, I get to sit and stare at it on the screen, he doesn't hit his head. The contact is, the first point of contact for sure, is not the head. That's frustrating. We lose a player, have to kill a five-minute penalty, that gets frustrating for sure."

MAN BEHIND THE MASK Petr Mrazek has been stellar in goal for the Hurricanes since allowing a questionable goal to Nicklas Backstrom to start Game 1, and his point-blank save on John Carlson at the regulation buzzer got things to overtime. He survived a scary moment in the second period when a Carlson shot caught him in the mask and knocked it loose.

"It catch me a little bit on the chin there," Mrazek said. "When I fell, I didn't have the mask on and I hit the ice pretty hard with my face. I think that was worse than the shot."

MORE FROM THE TOP Andrei Svechnikov and Lucas Wallmark are tied for the Hurricanes' lead with three points apiece through two games, and while Sebastian Aho broke his scoring drought Saturday, it's hard to keep up with Nicklas Backstrom (three goals, one assist) and Alex Ovechkin (one goal, two assists) without the Hurricanes' top two lines contributing more.

"We have to be better, our line in general," Hurricanes captain Justin Williams said. "I haven't been good this series, and if you talk to our other top scorers, we have to be a lot better. And we will be in Game 3."

TAILWINDS Justin Faulk, at fault for both of the goals that gave the Capitals a 2-0 lead, finished minus-3. ... Saku Manaalanen, who was left behind at the team hotel and had to take a cab to the arena, drew into the lineup for Greg McKeeg. "He was fine," Brind'Amour said. "He didn't play that much. I didn't get him out there that much." ... The Hurricanes' pregame soccer warmup produced an unwanted guest when a shot dislodged a ceiling tile and a dead rat fell to the concrete floor.



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## THE ATHLETIC

### Hurricanes Report Cards: Game 2 vs. Washington

By Sara Civian

WASHINGTON — There have been flashes of brilliance, there have been game-defining lucky (and unlucky) bounces, there has been questionable officiating.

Welcome back to the playoffs, Hurricanes fans. Enjoy your stay.

The Canes are headed back to Raleigh down 0-2 on the series. Let's break down Game 2, a 4-3 overtime thriller, before we look ahead to an increasingly important Game 3.

How did the team look?

Even Strength — \* \* \*

This was looking like a very sad one star at first, as the Capitals were pretty much having their way with the Hurricanes in the first half of the first period. It was enough for them to take a 2-0 lead (Nicklas Backstrom at 3:37 and TJ Oshie at 9:26).

This first period trajectory chart via Natural Stat Trick really says it all. This ended up a thrilling, even-matched game at even strength, but not before the damage was done. The Hurricanes found their way via physicality about halfway through the first, around the time Micheal Ferland laid a big hit on Carl Hagelin. They wound up with two even strength goals (Lucas Wallmark aka #playoffWallmark aka 1-2—3 in 2 GP, and Sebastian Aho's first goal since March 9) of their own.

They still allowed first two.

They're going to need to hurry up the soul-searching process in Game 3. They've proved capable in these first two games, but the starts keep killing them.

Power Play — \* \* \*

You could argue the power play was decent because it worked once (Jordan Staal, of all power play heroes, sent it into overtime on the man advantage). There were some good looks on the five opportunities the Canes got, but it would be hard not to get a few good looks on five power play opportunities, so ...

I would argue the fruitless 5-on-3 was the Hurricanes' best chance to change this game before it was too late. So would head coach Rod Brind'Amour. The Hurricanes' baffling 5-on-3 woes are something we've discussed and he's openly criticized all season, so I respected that he owned up again Saturday night.

"That's a big turning point in the game," he said. "The only part I didn't like (of the power play) was the 5-on-3. It was stagnant. It was only a minute, but that could've been the difference in the game, being able to get one there."

The Hurricanes had 1:07 to find a way there. This is three stars instead of two because at least it's an improvement on Game 1, in which the Canes gave up two power play goals and couldn't convert any of their own. Not even two chances to tie

it up in the third. They did just that Saturday, so props where props are due.

I do think it's worth mentioning that it was the second power play unit's goal. Dougie Hamilton and Andrei Svechnikov had the assists. It was part of a series of events that make you wonder what they're still doing on the second unit ...

Penalty Kill — \* \* \* \* \*

Simply outstanding.

Brind'Amour summed up the second period: "I felt like we were shorthanded the whole period, then we actually came out of it tied."

The Hurricanes had 4:09 of a questionable-at-best (we'll get to that) five-minute major to kill. They did it with guts. They were a perfect 4-for-4 on the game, killing 10:09 minutes worth of penalties total — without their unsung shot blocker Calvin de Haan.

It's not often a team builds on the momentum of a penalty kill to score an equalizer. That was encouraging, and kind of fitting how it was Aho's first-ever playoff goal.

Obviously, a penalty kill is only as good as its goalie. Petr Mrazek gave the Canes a chance to come back and win through this stretch and the intense final minutes of the third.

Player Reports

\* \* \* \* \*

Best player on the ice: Jordan Staal — Staal led the Canes by far in expected goals (.64) and scoring chances (seven, the next best was three), tied for second in shots with three, tied for first with two high danger chances, created a rebound (in this economy?!), recorded three hits and drew a penalty. All while taking the brunt of the face-offs, where he went 14-11.

If you actually #watchedthegame, of course he got the power play going at the same time he scored the 3-3 equalizer that sent the Hurricanes to overtime.

There's only so much one man can do.

Lucas Wallmark — I have no idea where #playoffWallmark came from but the man cannot be stopped. Actually, part of it has to be residual from stepping up for so long when Staal was out with his concussion. He'd had to match up against top players in the league for more than a month. Now he's back in the bottom six, with one goal and two assists in two playoff games under his belt.

He went 13-2 on the face-off dot Saturday.

13-2!

He netted the all-important goal that stopped the even strength bleeding early. He had two overall high danger chances. He did it all in 13:12 TOI.



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Jacob Slavin — Slavin was a bright spot in an uncharacteristically weak showing for the Hurricanes' defense. He led all skaters with 28:90 TOI, totaling two assists, three shots, three blocks, the sole Hurricanes rush attempt and two takeaways. He was also a plus-1 as the best defenseman on the team logging the most time in a loss, which is pretty impressive despite the general meaninglessness of that stat. Handling the brunt of the time on ice well is obviously super important in the playoffs.

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Warren Foegele — All hail the penalty drawing monster. Foegele somehow manages to remain in the top 20 in the league in penalty drawing, among the Johnny Gaudreaus and Connor McDavids of the world, as a fourth line winger. I also see him doing push-ups on the ice after practice by himself all the time. He tries so hard. He takes Andrei Svechnikov on scenic Horse and Buggy rides. We must protect him at all costs.

Andrei Svechnikov — The second Svechnikov moved up to Staal's line (unfortunately due to the Ferland match penalty), he had some of the most noticeable shifts of the game. His assist was timely, he tied for the team lead in hits (3), no one took more hits than him (5), and he managed to roll with them.

Justin Williams — Sure, he was a minus-2 along with his linemates but he at least tried to set the tone in his 17:02 TOI with a team-leading five shots. His assist on Aho's goal struck me as a complete "screw it, I'm shooting this puck hard and creating the ugliest pass/rebound if I have to, because I know I have to against Holtby" type moment. Those are the moments the Canes need for a chance in this series.

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Sebastian Aho — Aho got multiple monkeys off his back with his first goal since March 9 and his first career playoff goal in one fell swoop Saturday. He logged 21:55 TOI, cashing in on his only shot of the game. He went 7-6 on the face-off dot. It wasn't terrible, but it wasn't your best player being your best player, and he'll be the first to take accountability.

"(Playing) just OK isn't OK," he said.

It isn't, but it's a start.

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Brett Pesce — I hate to do this, I consider Pesce a top-three defenseman on this team. He's consistent, he's an unsung hero, he literally broke the regular season franchise record for plus/minus with plus-35, then he told me he's not a big plus/minus guy.

None of us should be.

Still, his minus-3 was rough. I think he was a little nervous, extremely desperate to win, and/or both so you can't hate the effort. But you can hate the execution ...

Pesce has a super bright future with the Canes. He'll learn from this. He wasn't the worst player on the ice ...

\*

Worst player(s) on the ice: Justin Faulk — I'm the first to call out overreaction in the Faulk scapegoat sweepstakes, but you won't find me putting a positive spin on whatever this was Saturday. He looked totally lost on both goals he was if not directly, than peripherally, responsible. It's not like he made up for the minus-3 with the offensive flair we've seen out of him recently. He only took two shots on goal in 27:58 TOI. Like, he wasn't even trying to shoot directly into Holtby's chest. We didn't even see that.

I get it now, you guys.

Are we sure he actually played tonight? Teuvo Teravainen — Teravainen led all forwards and was third overall in ice time with 22:37 TOI. Zero goals, zero assists, three shots, two scoring chances, zero rebound attempts or rebounds created.

He had a really good look on the power play, but that was about his most notable contribution to Game 2, save for his lost stick in overtime. That obviously wasn't his fault, but it's never a good sign when a player trying to defend without a stick in a do-or-die situation is his Top 2 most memorable moment in the game. There's pressure on Teravainen in this series as a skilled forward in his prime who has ample playoff experience and a Stanley Cup. It might not be totally fair, but it's the truth. He can't lead Canes forwards in TOI and disappear.

Nino Neiderreiter—□

Player(s) that made you whisper-yell into the void

Dougie Hamilton — First, I was whisper-yelling that Hamilton should be on the first power play unit, something I'm about two more broken Faulk sticks away from engraving on my tombstone.

Then, I was whisper-yelling that his second period elbow to Evgeny Kuznetsov's head might warrant a call from the Department of Player Safety.

Micheal Ferland— Was his hit upon exiting the box the most necessary thing in the world?

No.

Did the beast known for somehow delivering devastating-yet-clean hits deserve an ejection for it?

You decide. (No.)

Brind'Amour's veins were bulging out of his head at an alarming rate while talking to the referees about it. Clearly, he disagreed with the call. I asked him about it after the game.

"I thought it was a good hit," he said. "The first point of contact, for sure, is not his head. That's frustrating. You lose a player and have to kill a penalty."

"I don't think it was a dirty hit. I don't think I deserve to be suspended," Ferland said. "I take pride in my game of being a clean hitter. I never want to hurt anybody. I don't think it was a dirty hit."

Final Thoughts

Officiating is a tough job, but this was a mess. Let them play, like you let Alex Ovechkin play ...



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It seems we're at a crossroads with officiating in general, and I honestly can't imagine how hard that is. Brind'Amour had a good point about that postgame, and as always with him, it's much better received when you see his facial expressions:

Either way, the Canes are in a hole, but obviously showing fight. This whole season they've made it hard on themselves

but managed to persevere. That's going to be nearly impossible against the defending Cup champs with a skilled roster like this, but not letting multiple, early goals in would be a good start. That might be easier done in front of the Caniacs.

Final Grade: C for execution, A- for effort



## Gold: Canes fall in overtime, but series far from settled

By Adam Gold

Is it possible to be encouraged while trailing a series two games to none? Is it okay to feel good about the Hurricanes position in spite of the sting of losing — and quickly — in overtime on a Brooks Orpik goal? BROOKS ORPIK for cryin' out loud! Is it possible that there were enough good signs to think that this is still going to be a long series?

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Carolina showed all of their mettle and character and resilience, battling back from an early, self-inflicted 2-0 deficit, extending the defending Stanley Cup champs into overtime before Orpik ended the day at 1:48 of extra innings.

In game one, Carolina was a catastrophe in the defensive zone over the last half of the first period and Washington made them pay a heavy price. It was 3-0 after one and, while Carolina battled back to make a game of it, it was took steep a hill to climb. Saturday afternoon at Capital One Arena, the tomfoolery started right away for the Canes.

Justin Faulk lost touch with Nicklas Backstrom at the top of the crease for an easy, tap-in goal for a 1-0 lead less than four minutes in. Six minutes later, T.J. Oshie took a feed from Andrei Kuznetsov and eluded Justin Williams before snapping a backhand shot over Mrazek for a 2-0 lead.

Unlike Thursday, Carolina responded. The Hurricanes ramped up their play, cleaned up most of the mistakes and grinded back into the game.

Lucas Wallmark redirected a Jacob Slavin pass through traffic for a 2-1 game late in the 1st. Sebastian Aho got back on the score sheet with a hard-working goal from the right side of the Washington net in the waning stages of the second period to send the game into the 3rd all even. Then, after Tom Wilson made it 3-2 with just over 11 minutes left in regulation, Jordan Staal deflected Dougie Hamilton's point drive past Braden Holtby for the equalizer.

The story of this Hurricanes season was resilience. Beyond the goals, Carolina had to deal with the adversity of losing forward Michael Ferland to a match penalty for an early second period hit on Nic Dowd. We could talk for a long time about whether or not the call was justified — or whether it should have been a penalty at all — but, the bottom line is that the Canes needed to kill off a 5-minute major penalty against a Washington team with a lethal power play.

They did.

The Canes may have lost in overtime. They might trail 2-0 in the series to the defending Stanley Cup champions. And it might seem daunting to know that in order to escape this series, the Hurricanes are going to have to win four of the next five games from a team they've yet to beat all year.

But, Carolina put their character and resilience on display Saturday afternoon. And, for a team that hasn't had much in those departments the last eight or nine years, having that in their back pocket is good feeling. You don't come from where the Canes were to where they are without the ability to persevere.

No one said, beating the Capitals was going to be easy. But, if there's a group capable of coming back, it's this resilient group of Jerks that's very comfortable grinding it out to the end.

\* Sebastian Aho scored a goal. That is all. There's more coming.

\* The Hurricanes were 1 for 5 on the power play, thanks to Jordan Staal's high slot deflection. Washington was 0 for 4 with the man advantage including more than 4 minutes of 5-on-4 time while Michael Ferland was given a match penalty and a 5-minute major.

\* I would expect Ferland will be cleared to play Game 3 in Raleigh and the match penalty will be rescinded upon league review.

\* Dougie Hamilton, however, may earn a suspension for his elbowing hit on Evgeny Kuznetsov. He only received a minor penalty for the hit, but it was far worse than Ferland's hit on Nic Dowd.

\* Alexander Ovechkin was penalized for a high hit on Brock McGinn and it will be interesting to see how the league reacts to the fact that Ovechkin appeared to leave his skates and hit McGinn in the head.

\* Warren Foegele and Saku Maenalanen figured prominently on the Canes first goal. It was a relentless forecheck by Foegele that created the opportunity. Maenalanen, who drew back into the line up after sitting out game 1, created traffic in front of the net that made it possible for Lucas Wallmark to deflect the puck through a sprawling Holtby. And, when I say "sprawling Holtby", I mean a faking, diving Holtby. He clearly



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initiated contact with Maenalanen, outside the crease, then embellished the contact with a triple toe loop that Dorothy Hamill would be proud of. The goal was allowed, obviously.

\* Game 3 will be at PNA Arena on Monday night at 7:00.



## Game 2 Recap: Canes Fall in Overtime

Staal ties game late in regulation, but Orpik wins it in OT

by Michael Smith

WASHINGTON - The Carolina Hurricanes netted a power-play goal with five minutes left in regulation to force overtime in Game 2, but the Washington Capitals scored early in overtime to win, 4-3, and take a 2-0 lead in the first-round series.

Brooks Orpik tallied the game-winning goal just 1:48 into the overtime session in what was a fiery, competitive game of playoff hockey.

Here are five takeaways from Game 2.

### 1. Overtime Heartbreaker

Playoff hockey is a different beast, and Game 2 was a battle right up until the crowd was sent into a frenzy with Orpik's overtime-winning goal.

It was a tough loss for the Canes, for sure, who fall down 2-0 in their first best-of-seven series in 10 years. The team battled hard, just as they have all season.

"At the end of the day, the guys give everything they had, and that's really all you can ask for," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said.

Twice the team fought back to tie the score after being down 2-0 in the first period and 3-2 in the third period. Resiliency has been a calling card of this team, especially since the new year. Now, they need to find a way to take and then play with a lead.

"It's really hard when you spot teams leads like we have in the last two games," Justin Williams said. "We battled back, but it's not enough."

Early in overtime, Evgeny Kuznetsov surveyed the scene from behind Petr Mrazek's net. Orpik snuck in from the point and blasted a one-timer past Teuvo Teravainen, who had given his stick to Brett Pesce, and Mrazek.

Heartbreaker.

"We have to take all the positives," Mrazek said. "We played two hard games here. We battled hard."

"It's tough, but we'll pick ourselves up and get back at it for Game 3," Williams said.

### 2. Aho Awakens

Sebastian Aho found the back of the net for his first career playoff goal in the second period.

Williams' shot took a bounce off the end boards right to Aho, who popped the puck in from a tough angle along the near side of the net.

It was a critical goal for a number of reasons. One, it tied the score at two in what was one of the most heated periods of hockey these two teams have played. Two, it broke a goalless drought that spanned over a month for Aho, who had last scored on March 9 in Nashville.

"It's all about wins right now," Aho said, downplaying his statistics. "That's all that matters."

It's not like Aho hasn't contributed in some way in the last month - he recorded six assists in the final 14 games of the regular season - but the Canes need him and their other top players on the scoresheet in the goal column if they want to be successful in this series.

"It's not like we're playing bad, but this time of year, you've got to get that extra step and play even better," Aho said. "OK is not OK. We just have to try to play our best."

"We have to be better, our line in general," Williams said. "I haven't been good this series, and I think if you talk to our other top scorers, we need to be a lot better and we will be in Game 3."

"If we get those guys going, which they have all year, it will give us a better chance to win, that's for sure," Brind'Amour said. "We're hanging around, and I don't think we're playing our best hockey."

### 3. Mrazek Dazzle

Mrazek made 29 saves in regulation, and he made a pair of stops late in the third period that saved the game. The first came when Tom Wilson got loose in the slot, and Mrazek knocked his chance away with the glove. The second was right at the buzzer, a shot from John Carlson that Mrazek kicked away with his left pad.

"He's been making those kinds of saves for us all year," Aho said. "That's what you need sometimes when there is a bad bounce or something."

Mrazek has been no stranger to clutch performances in the face of immense pressure all season. He's been up to the task in the first two games of this series, once again giving the Hurricanes a fighting chance.



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"He made a few big saves for us just to get us to have a chance to win," Brind'Amour said. "I thought he was solid."

### 4. Winning the Special Teams Battle

In Game 1, the Hurricanes surrendered two power-play goals and could not convert on their own man advantages, including two they had in the third period with a chance to tie the game.

In Game 2, the Canes won the special teams battle, scoring once on five power plays and finishing a perfect 4-for-4 on the penalty kill.

With exactly five minutes left in regulation, Jordan Staal redirected a point shot from Dougie Hamilton to notch a power-play marker and tie the game at three.

Among the penalties the Canes killed was 4:09 of a five-minute major (more on that in the fifth takeaway) in the second period. That was a momentum swinger, until the Canes came up empty on 67 seconds worth of a 5-on-3 shortly after.

"The power play, we got one, but we missed out on a 5-on-3," Brind'Amour said. "That's a big turning point in the game for me."

Swinging the special teams pendulum in their favor is an encouraging sign for the Canes, though.

Not encouraging was the fact that they got outplayed 5-on-5 early in the game, when the Capitals took a 2-0 lead with goals from Nicklas Backstrom and T.J. Oshie. The Hurricanes settled into their game about 10 minutes in, around the same time that Micheal Ferland leveled Carl Hagelin in open ice with a booming body check. Lucas Wallmark then redirected Jaccob Slavin's point shot to get the Canes on the board in the second half of the period.

### 5. Ferland Ejected for Controversial Hit

In the second period, the puck rolled off Nic Dowd's stick at right blue line, and Micheal Ferland rubbed him out with what was deemed an illegal check to the head. As a result, Ferland was assessed a match penalty.

## Game 2 Projected Lineup: Hurricanes at Capitals

Mrazek back in net for Game 2

by Michael Smith

WASHINGTON - A Saturday matinee in The District is the setting for Game 2 of this first-round series between the Carolina Hurricanes and Washington Capitals.

Petr Mrazek will be back in net, while head coach Rod Brind'Amour said, "We've got one guy who might go in. Game-time decision." It won't be Calvin de Haan, who remains out with an upper-body injury.

Here is the projected lineup for the Hurricanes based on lines used in practice on Friday.

### Forwards

Niederreiter-Aho-Teravainen  
Ferland-Staal-Williams

Brind'Amour was, at the very least, not pleased with the call. His, um, discussion with referee Steve Kozari was heated, Brind'Amour's face becoming an ever-darker shade of Hurricanes red with every breath.

"I thought it was a good hit," Brind'Amour said after the game. "The first point of contact, for sure, is not his head. That's frustrating. You lose a player and have to kill a penalty."

Here's the thing: Brind'Amour was right. It wasn't a check to the head. The primary point of contact looked to be Ferland's midsection with Dowd's shoulder. Dowd's head planted on Ferland's back as a result of the collision.

"I saw him reach for the puck. I could have finished with my shoulder, but I didn't," Ferland said. "I came and hit him with my butt. I thought it was a clean hit, and I don't agree with the call."

Was it a penalty? Sure. Two minutes for interference, at most, since Ferland impeded Dowd's progress toward the puck. You can't fault Ferland for playing his brand of hockey, though, even considering how head contact (in this case, perceived head contact) is policed in today's game. But, was it a dirty hit worthy of a match penalty and subsequent suspension? Absolutely not, and it could have been much worse had Ferland not pulled up.

It was a bad call - the wrong call - and it cost the Hurricanes their most physical player in a series that is only ramping up in physicality.

"I don't think it was a dirty hit. I don't think I deserve to be suspended," Ferland said. "I take pride in my game of being a clean hitter. I never want to hurt anybody. I don't think it was a dirty hit."

### Up Next

This series now shifts to Raleigh for Games 3 and 4 on Monday and Thursday, respectively.

Svechnikov-Martinook-McGinn  
Foegele-Wallmark-Maenalanen

### Defense

Slavin-Hamilton  
Pesce-Faulk  
Fleury-van Riemsdyk

### Goalies

Mrazek  
McElhinney

Scratches: Bean (healthy), McKegg (healthy), de Haan (upper body)

Note: Lineup is not official and is subject to change prior to opening faceoff.



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## Capitals extend series lead against Hurricanes with OT win in Game 2

Orpik scores at 1:48 after Washington blows two-goal edge

by Harvey Valentine

WASHINGTON -- Brooks Orpik scored 1:48 into overtime to give the Washington Capitals a 4-3 win against the Carolina Hurricanes in Game 2 of the Eastern Conference First Round at Capital One Arena on Saturday.

Orpik received a pass from behind the net by Evgeny Kuznetsov and scored against Petr Mrazek from the left face-off circle.

It was Orpik's fourth goal in 151 NHL playoff games; three have been game-winners, including two in overtime.

"Kind of had them pinned in there," Orpik said. "[The] winger on my side didn't have [his] stick. I saw [Kuznetsov] had full possession, dove in there and he made a perfect pass."

Washington took a 2-0 lead in the best-of-7 series. Game 3 is at Carolina on Monday.

Nicklas Backstrom, T.J. Oshie and Tom Wilson scored for Washington, and Braden Holtby made 25 saves.

"The playoffs start, you try to go one shift at a time, one period at a time," Oshie said. "But maybe somewhere in the back of your mind you're hoping you can get away from the two home games with a 2-0 (lead). We were able to do that. It feels good."

Jordan Staal, Lucas Wallmark and Sebastian Aho scored for the Hurricanes. Mrazek made 29 saves, including against John Carlson with one second remaining in the third period.

"[Aho] has one goal. Our top guys are not on the score sheet. Theirs are," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "I feel pretty good that if we get those guys going, which they have all year, it'll give us a better chance to win, that's for sure."

Staal tied it 3-3 with 5:00 remaining in the third period, deflecting Dougie Hamilton's shot. It was Carolina's first power-play goal in eight opportunities in the series.

Wilson gave the Capitals a 3-2 lead at 8:55 of the third period with a wrist shot through a screen on a pass from Alex Ovechkin, who had two assists.

"He's made some pretty good plays to me over the course of the year," Wilson said. "If he does pass it, you want to score because if you don't, he's got a pretty good shot, too, so he might be upset."

Carolina tied it 2-2 at 16:49 of the second period when a shot rebounded off the end boards and Aho poked the puck in off Holtby for his first goal since March 9 (16 games).

"You'd hope it's big," Brind'Amour said of Aho ending his drought. "We've got to find another gear."

Backstrom gave the Capitals a 1-0 lead with his third goal of the series at 3:37 of the first. Ovechkin entered the zone, faked the shot and passed to Backstrom in front for the tip in. Oshie lifted a backhand past Mrazek at 9:26 for a 2-0 lead.

Wallmark got the Hurricanes within 2-1 at 15:54 of the first when he redirected Jaccob Slavin's shot from the point. The Capitals used a coach's challenge for goaltender interference but the call on the ice stood.

"It's really hard when you spot teams leads like that, like we have in the last two games," Hurricanes captain Justin Williams said. "We battled back. It's not enough."

They said it

"It's not like we're playing bad, but this time of year you've got to get that extra step and play even better. OK is not OK, so just try to play our best." -- Hurricanes forward Sebastian Aho

"He's played a lot of playoff games. You cannot put a price on experience in playoff hockey. I've been through it the last 10 years in the League, actually 10 years with him (with Washington and the Pittsburgh Penguins), and I know what happens in playoff time playing against a player like that." -- Capitals coach Todd Reirden on Brooks Orpik

Need to know

Hurricanes forward Micheal Ferland received a match penalty for a check to the head on Nic Dowd at 4:09 of the second period. Dowd remained in the game. ... The Hurricanes won 39 of 62 face-offs (62.9 percent). ... Backstrom's goal was his 101st point in the playoffs, passing Daniel Alfredsson for fourth place on the NHL list among Sweden-born players. Nicklas Lidstrom is first with 183 points. ... The Capitals have won Game 2 in 10 of their past 14 playoff series. ... Teams that win the first two games of a best-of-7 playoff series have a series record of 318-50 (86.4 percent), including 241-30 when those victories come at home (88.9 percent).

What's next

Game 3 of Eastern Conference First Round at PNC Arena on Monday (7 p.m. ET; CNBC, SN, TVAS2, FS-CR, NBCSWA)



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## Hurricanes not discouraged after Game 2 loss to Capitals

Head home looking for first win in Eastern series

by William Douglas

WASHINGTON -- The Carolina Hurricanes head home down 2-0 to the Washington Capitals in the best-of-7 Eastern Conference First Round but aren't dejected after a 4-3 overtime loss to the defending Stanley Cup champions at Capital One Arena on Saturday.

Coach Rod Brind'Amour said the Hurricanes have "got to find another gear" for Game 3 at PNC Arena on Monday (7 p.m. ET; CNBC, SN, TVAS, FS-CR, NBCSWA).

"Our top guys are not on the score sheet," Brind'Amour said. "... I feel pretty good that if we get those guys going, which they have all year, it'll give us a better chance to win, that's for sure. Because we're hanging around and I don't think we're playing our best hockey. So that's, I guess, somewhat positive."

The Hurricanes haven't had a home playoff game since 2009, so the crowd in Raleigh, North Carolina should be energized, something Capitals coach Todd Reirden said could fuel Carolina.

"I have seen playoff hockey in that building and it's loud," Reirden said. "It's no fun to play in. It'll be a great challenge for us."

Forwards Sebastian Aho, who led the Hurricanes with 30 goals during the regular season, scored his first of the series at 16:49 of the second period, and Jordan Staal scored his first at 15:00 of the third.

It was Aho's first goal since March 9 against the Nashville Predators (16 games).

"Oh yeah, it's not like we're playing bad, but this time of year you've got to get that extra step and play even better," Aho said. "OK is not OK, so just try to play our best."

Defenseman Brooks Orpik, who scored the game-winning goal at 1:48 in overtime, acknowledged the Hurricanes' effort.

"You've got to give them credit for what they're doing," Orpik said. "They're playing really hard and have a good game plan. They've got a lot of youthful energy over there, a lot of guys' first playoffs. It's actually easier to play when everybody counts you out."

The Hurricanes held the Capitals scoreless in four power-play chances, including on a five-minute match penalty on forward Micheal Ferland at 4:09 of the second period. The Capitals scored two power-play goals on four chances in Game 1.

"That gave us momentum, for sure," Hurricanes goalie Petr Mrazek said. "When you kill five minutes against teams like that, their power play is one of the best in the League, so a really fantastic job on the penalty kill today."

The Hurricanes came up short on their power play, going 1-for-5 Saturday, including not scoring on a 1:07, 5-on-3 advantage in the second period. They went 0-for-3 in Game 1.

"The only part I didn't like was the 5-on-3," Brind'Amour said. "That got stagnant again. It was only a minute that could have been the difference in the game if we'd been able to get one there."

## Fans welcome Hurricanes back at airport after OT loss to Capitals

Carolina supporters had their flags, cheers ready for the evening arrival

by Pat Pickens

Carolina Hurricanes fans are undeterred even after two straight Stanley Cup Playoff losses.

A group of diehard Carolina fans went to Raleigh-Durham Airport to welcome home the Hurricanes after their 4-3 overtime loss to the Washington Capitals in Game 2 of the Eastern Conference First Round.

Carolina fell behind 2-0 in the best-of-7 series by dropping a pair of games against the Capitals in Washington, but that didn't stop fans with Hurricanes hats, shirts and flags from voicing their support as the players and staff left the airport.

The Hurricanes haven't hosted a playoff game since 2009, but that will change when the series shifts to PNC Arena for Game 3 on Monday (7 p.m. ET; NBCSN, CBC, TVAS2, FS-CR, NBCSWA). The Raleigh region is hype for the return of playoff hockey. The Sir Walter Raleigh statue in downtown Raleigh is sporting a Hurricanes shirt along with black and red socks.



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## Orpik scores in OT, Capitals take 2-0 lead over Hurricanes

By Stephen Whyno

WASHINGTON (AP) — A rat falling out of the arena hallway ceiling during the Carolina Hurricanes' warmup game of soccer was just a precursor to a wacky afternoon of playoff hockey.

Long after the dead rodent was removed, Game 2 between the Hurricanes and Washington Capitals included a questionable ejection for a check to the head, a shot off one goalie's mask and another that went in off the other goalie's backside. It fittingly ended with an overtime goal from an unlikely source that sent the defending Stanley Cup champions into a wild celebration around the team's most popular player.

Veteran leader Brooks Orpik scored 1:48 into overtime Saturday to give Washington a 4-3 victory and a 2-0 lead over Carolina in the first-round series. His fourth goal in his 151st playoff game was his third winner, and Orpik became just the 11th defenseman in NHL history with two postseason overtime goals.

"I'm probably not counted on for too many goals, but I think if you want to have the long runs, you need everybody kind of chipping in and doing things they don't normally do," Orpik said. "Always feels good when the team comes out on top."

The Capitals came out on top thanks to Alex Ovechkin's two perfect passes, a 5-on-3 penalty kill and a stick shortage by Carolina that allowed Evgeny Kuznetsov to find Orpik for his goal. Afterward, owner Ted Leonsis quipped, "Just like it was drawn up."

There was no way to script the strange happenings that unfolded on and off the ice. Perhaps it was an omen for things to come when the ball used in the Hurricanes' pregame soccer ritual knocked a rat down from the ceiling.

"I saw that," Carolina's Sebastian Aho said. "First time I've seen it. Kind of odd."

Then the game happened. Just like Game 1, the Capitals jumped out to an early 2-0 lead — this time on goals by Nicklas Backstrom and T.J. Oshie — but this time the Hurricanes didn't wait until the third period to come back.

Lucas Wallmark scored late in the first after teammate Saku Maenalanen brushed Braden Holtby, which Capitals coach Todd Reirden challenged for goaltender interference. It held up because the NHL situation room and referees determined the contact wasn't significant enough to disallow the goal.

"Playing the position, you know that that's interference," said Holtby, who made 25 saves. "But there's a point in hockey where you've just got to battle, too. I'm not going to complain about a call or no-call. I know that doing that is giving me the best chance to stop that puck. We move on."

Things only got stranger in the second period. Less than a minute after exiting the penalty box, Hurricanes forward Micheal Ferland hit Nic Dowd while bent over and was given a five-minute match penalty for an illegal check to the head and ejected.

After officials conferred and decided to make it a five-minute major, coach Rod Brind'Amour screamed at referee Steve Kozari that it was a clean hit, pointing to his hip to emphasize Ferland made mostly hip to shoulder contact. Dowd left to go through concussion protocol but returned.

"To be honest with you, I let up," said Ferland, who added he doesn't expect to be suspended. "I could have finished with my shoulder, but I didn't. I came, hit him with my butt. I thought it was a clean hit. I don't agree with the call."

During the ensuing power play, a one-timer from defenseman John Carlson hit Hurricanes goaltender Petr Mrazek on the right side of his mask and knocked it off. Mrazek winced in pain but did not get pulled for concussion protocol and stayed in the game.

"It caught me a little bit on the chin there," said Mrazek, who made 29 saves. "When I fell, I didn't have the mask on and I hit the ice pretty hard with my face. That was the worst."

The worst moment for Holtby came when Aho ended a 15-game goal drought by banking the puck off him from a bad angle. Wilson and Jordan Staal traded third-period goals, and Mrazek stopped Carlson in the final seconds of regulation.

That only set the stage for Orpik's heroics. After Hurricanes defenseman Brett Pesce lost his stick and got one from forward Teuvo Teravainen, the Capitals had the opening they needed to take a 2-0 series lead and players mobbed Orpik to celebrate the father figure's clutch goal.

"There's really no better guy to score an OT winner," Wilson said. "We were pumped up, and he deserves it. Huge goal for us."

NOTES: Ten of the Capitals' last 14 first-round games went to overtime. ... With his 101st playoff point, Backstrom moved ahead of Daniel Alfredsson into sole possession of fourth place among Swedish players. ... Hurricanes D Calvin de Haan missed his fifth game in a row with an upper-body injury. ... Maenalanen replaced Greg McKeeg in Carolina's lineup. ... Capitals C Lars Eller played after missing practice Friday for upper-body maintenance.

UP NEXT

Game 3 Monday night in Raleigh is the Hurricanes' first home playoff game since May 26, 2009.



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## Carolina Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour rips officials during in-game television interview

By Kevin Allen

Live in-game television interviews with coaches are not often passionate or critical during the NHL playoffs.

But Carolina Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour was both Saturday when NBC's Pierre McGuire asked for his take on his player Micheal Ferland being given a match penalty for a head hit against the Washington Capitals' Nic Dowd.

The incident came in the second period of Game 2 of their Eastern Conference quarterfinal.

"I don't see it as a hit to the head," Brind'Amour said. "If four (officials) are going to get together, someone should at least see it that way."

Replays seem to show that Dowd's head was not the initial point of contact. Brind'Amour was incensed on the bench after the officials conferred and gave Ferland the match penalty.

"I think we just let them play," Brind'Amour said. "That's what I would like to see."

The Capitals had a 2-1 lead when the five-minute major was called, and the 'Canes killed off the penalty. The controversial call seemed to fire them up because they tied the game later in the period.

The Capitals won in overtime on Brooks Orpik's goal at 1:48 to take a 2-0 series lead.

It seems probable that Ferland's match penalty will be rescinded Sunday. He said he wasn't worried about being suspended.

"To be honest with you, I let up," he told reporters. "I see him reaching for the puck, I could have finished with my shoulder, but I didn't. I came and hit him with my butt. I thought it was a clean hit. I don't agree with the call."

But the Hurricanes could still end up with one player suspended. Carolina defenseman Dougie Hamilton was penalized for elbowing Evgeni Kuznetsov, and that hit should attract the attention of the Department of Player Safety.



## Capitals top Hurricanes in heart-stopping Game 2 thriller

The Canes gave as well as they got on Saturday, but they return to Raleigh down 2-0 after a wild overtime loss.

By Brian LeBlanc

WASHINGTON — The Carolina Hurricanes clearly got the message on how playoff hockey is played after Thursday's Game 1 loss. Unfortunately, another slow start condemned the Canes to their fate again, and they return home still looking for their first playoff win in ten years.

Brooks Orpik scored the game-winning goal 1:48 into overtime as the Washington Capitals pulled out a 4-3 win over the Hurricanes, taking a 2-0 lead in the first-round series on Saturday afternoon at Capital One Arena.

Sebastian Aho's second-period goal, his first since March 9 and his first against a goaltender since March 5, encapsulated a gritty afternoon for the Hurricanes, who needed to grow into the game again but got their bearings before the end of the first period, in a change from Thursday's Game 1. Yet again, Nicklas Backstrom opened the scoring for the Capitals, taking a centering pass from Alex Ovechkin past an out-of-

position Justin Faulk 3:37 into the game. T.J. Oshieten doubled the Caps lead six minutes later, and the Canes bench had a discomfiting sense of deja vu.

But in a change of the script, Lucas Wallmark beat Braden Holtby on a redirection after Holtbyspun around trying to draw a penalty. It didn't work, and he was badly out of position to defend against Wallmark's tip of Jacob Slavin's point shot.

It was a physical game, much more so than Game 1, and it started early when Ovechkin caught Brett Pesce along the boards, sending the Canes defenseman to the locker room for a few minutes. Micheal Ferland floored Carl Hagelin with the Canes on a first period power play. Ovechkin later launched himself into Brock McGinn in the corner, earning a two-minute elbowing call.

That call was what sent Rod Brind'Amour into orbit early in the second period, when Ferland was ejected for a hit to the head against Nic Dowd. Brind'Amour, using extraordinarily colorful language even by his standards, absolutely unloaded on



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referee Steve Kozari after Ferland was sent to an early shower.

Brind'Amour's words fell on deaf ears, despite his pleas that Ovechkin's hit on McGinn as just as bad, if not worse, and did not receive the same level of punishment. Dowd went to the locker room briefly, but miraculously returned to the bench no more than 30 seconds into the man advantage.

Mrazek even got in on the action, taking a John Carlson slap shot flush off the right side of his mask and sending him to the ice with his helmet popping off. Trainer Doug Bennett came out to tend to the Canes goaltender, but he stayed on the ice.

The Canes killed the penalty, but then just after Oshie finished a hooking penalty Hamilton was sent to the box for a two-minute elbowing penalty on Evgeni Kuznetsov that seemed much more dangerous than what Ferland was kicked out of the game for.

Then, Aho finally broke his hex, on a goal that won't exactly go on the career highlight reel but counted just the same. On a carom behind the net, the puck bounced out of the back of the net and Aho banked it in off Holtby's leg to tie the game.

The second period that never seemed to end gave way to a third period that as played at an up-and-down pace and saw the teams trade quality scoring chances from the opening shift, none better than McGinn missing the net on a 3-on-2 with Holtby prone on the ice.

The Caps were the first to cash in on their chances to get the go-ahead goal. Ovechkin led an odd-man rush, Backstrom set a pick to take Jaccob Slavin out of the play, and that allowed Ovechkin to find Tom Wilson unmarked at the top of the far circle. Wilson made no mistake, wristing a shot home that beat Petr Mrazek under the glove to give the Caps the lead back.

The Canes, though, weren't done. They earned a power play when Dowd went to the box for high-sticking Jordan Staal with 5:35 to go, and they cashed in, Staal tipping home a Hamilton shot at the 15:00 mark. All of a sudden, the Capital One Arena crowd was stunned, and the Hurricanes had new life.

Mrazek then made a miraculous save to preserve the stalemate, robbing Wilson from point-blank range with 90 seconds to go. And then he came up enormous at the horn, somehow robbing Carlson who had the game-winner on his stick ten feet from the net but was denied by Mrazek's left pad.

And on the second shift of overtime, Brett Pesce lost his stick and Teuvo Teravainen gave the defenseman his own. That boded poorly when Kuznetsov passed it from behind the net under Pesce's (Teravainen's) stick and out to Orpik, who ended it 1:48 into overtime and sent the Canes home without the reward they worked so hard to earn.

They Said It

Rod Brind'Amour:

[Mrazek] made quite a few big saves for us, just to get us to have a chance to win. I thought he was solid. Tough one for him. I thought he played well.

At the end of the day, our top guys aren't on the scoresheet. Theirs are. I feel pretty good that, if we get those guys going -

which they have all year - it will give us a better chance to win, that's for sure. We're hanging around, and I don't think we're playing our best hockey. I guess that's somewhat positive.

I thought it [Ferland] was a good hit. Originally it did look bad. When you first watch it live you're like "ooh," but then you watch it on the screen, he doesn't hit his head. It's body contact. That's the first point of contact for sure, it was not the head. So that's frustrating, lose a player, have to kill a five minute penalty. That gets frustrating for sure.

[The PP] was good. The first one we zipped it around, had a lot of good looks. The only part I didn't like was the 5-on-3. We got stagnant again, it was only a minute but that could have been the difference in the game if we had been able to get one there.

[On Aho finally scoring:] You'd hope it's big. Obviously we need to find another gear. You can tell he's a little fatigued. You haven't seen him really crank it up like he can this time of year. Again, we had to push pretty hard to get to this point, and I think you're seeing that a little bit. Obviously tomorrow will be a nice day off, but I think he'll bounce back. He's a competitor.

Justin Williams:

It's playoff hockey. Every game's different. I thought we did a really good job on their power play, negating a lot of penalties against us. We scored a big power play goal. It's really hard when you spot teams leads like that, like we have in the last two games. We battled back. It's not enough.

It usually breaks down one way or another on every goal. There's something that happened that resulted in this. Yeah, it's tough. We'll pick ourselves up and get back at it in Game 3.

We have to be better. Our line and just in general. I haven't been good this series, I think if you talk to our other top scorers, we need to be a lot better, and we will be in Game 3.

Micheal Ferland:

I thought I hit him with my butt. I thought it was a clean hit. I don't agree with the call. I don't think it was a dirty hit. I don't think I deserve to be suspended. I take pride in my game and being a clean hitter, and I never want to hurt anybody. I don't think it was a dirty hit.

I'm thinking I'm going to finish my hit on this guy. I see him reaching for the puck. Like I said, I could have finished with my shoulder but he was reaching and I thought I let up, and I hit him with my back. I didn't make any contact with his head with my shoulder. I didn't leave my feet. I don't agree with the call.

Petr Mrazek:

I don't think we started how we wanted to start. The first game I thought we started really well, didn't give them much the first ten minutes. Today it was the opposite. They were coming hard, we couldn't get the pucks out, and they scored two quick ones.

[The five-minute PK] gave us momentum for sure. When you kill five minutes against a team like that, their power play is



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one of the best in the league. We did fantastic on the PK today and I wish we would have won the game.

It caught me a little on the chin. When I fell I didn't have a mask on and I hit the ice pretty hard with my face. That was worse than the shot.

I didn't see [Orpik] coming. I think he came from the bench. I got a piece of it too. I thought it was enough, but it wasn't. I could have had that goal.

## Game Notes

- Well, that was certainly something. Thirteen years after Orpik broke Erik Cole's neck, he broke the Hurricanes' hearts. The Canes probably deserved better, but their first 10-15 minutes were eye-poppingly bad. The Ferland hit on Hagelin was a big momentum-shifter, and I think they really missed Ferland late in the third, when the Caps started carrying play following Staal's goal.
- To that point, the Canes were lucky to get it to overtime. Mrazek said that his save on Carlson at the horn was pure reaction, and you could see that: the puck had hit his pad and was already bounced off

before he kicked his leg out. It was very nearly a repeat of Tom Dundon's first game as Canes owner, when Jay Beagle scored with two seconds left to give the Caps a regulation win.

- It would be no surprise for Dougie Hamilton to get a call to the principal's office tomorrow after his elbow to Kuznetsov's head. Will it warrant a game? In the playoffs, probably not, but I fully expect a fine.
- Ferland, meanwhile, will almost certainly have his match penalty rescinded. I would be absolutely stunned if he doesn't play Monday.
- Nino Niederreiter has been awfully quiet in these two games. Williams, as you saw above, talked about how it's important that he get himself back on the right side of the coin, but Niederreiter (and Teravainen too, for that matter) can't be passengers if the Canes are going to come back in the series.
- The Canes are off tomorrow. They'll be back on the ice for the morning skate Monday at PNC prior to Game 3. Time to start the drive home. Talk to y'all tomorrow.

## Hurricanes vs Capitals: Game 2 keys for the Canes, lineups, and game hub

The Hurricanes seek revenge in game two in Washington.

By Brett Finger

Special teams told the tale of game one between the Carolina Hurricanes and the Washington Capitals on Thursday, but the Canes hope that the way they closed out game one is a positive sign of things to come.

A game two win for the Hurricanes would be a massive turn of events in this series. The possibility of returning home to PNC Arena with a tied series would certainly add a lot of drama to this opening round. For that to happen, though, they'll have to play their game and follow these game keys.

Stay. Out. Of. The. Box.

This was one of my keys for game one, but clearly they didn't read that.

The Canes went to the box four times and got burned twice, both in the first period. It wasn't just Alex Ovechkin doing damage, though. The Russian goal-scoring king did capitalize late in the opening frame, but his partner in crime Nicklas Backstrom scored Washington's first power play goal and was often left wide open along the goal line. He scored once on the man advantage and once on a low-danger shot at even-strength just over half way through the first period.

A lot of this also hinges on the zebras. I'd describe game one as a... questionably officiated game in terms of consistency. The Capitals got away with a lot throughout the course of the game, likely because of their status as the defending champions, which is to be expected, but the Hurricanes certainly didn't get much benefit of the doubt.

Carolina really needs to play smart and not take any dangerous chances with their sticks on the back check.

No soft goals

The tone of game one was really set when Washington's first shot, a long-distance pea-shooter found its way by Petr Mrazek. It killed Carolina's hot start in an instant and had the road team playing from behind from the jump.

Mrazek had an excellent final two periods, though, making some crucial stops as Carolina started to press offensively. If he can bring that into game two, the Canes should have a chance to steal the game.

Player usage

Down the stretch in game one, the Hurricanes opted to not use hot hands Andrei Svechnikov and Dougie Hamilton as much as they likely should have, at least not until the final two minutes.

Obviously, experience plays a role in who gets more ice time, but if there are certain players who are feeling it, they have to use them.

Even beyond the hot hands, I think there's a case to be made that Sebastian Aho shouldn't be seeing north of 26 minutes of ice time. I think that has to be reigned in a good bit. He is the team's best player, but he's been worn down with fatigued and injuries throughout the year and there is enough depth on this team to justify his ice time coming closer to 20 or 21 minutes.

Lucas Wallmark, for instance, played a strong game one and could handle some extra looks, as would Jordan Staal.

Hurricanes Lineup

Rod Brind'Amour went full-on blender mode in the third period in game one, and it brought some very good results. The Canes will go back to their original lines for game two, though, at least to start.



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That means the top line will be reunited.

Look for RB'A to tinker with things again if the Canes get off to a slow start. Seeing his willingness to mix things up was very encouraging. The rookie coach needs to make those bold decisions when the time is right.

Jacob Slavin didn't practice yesterday, but Brind'Amour said it was just a maintenance day. Calvin de Haan skated, but he won't be in the lineup for game two. He'll be a big addition if/when he does return.

Brind'Amour teased that one player is a "game-time decision". He didn't specify who that could be, but reading between the lines, it could mean that someone is coming out of the lineup for Saku Maenalanen. We'll see what happens.

Nino Niederreiter - Sebastian Aho - Justin Williams  
Micheal Ferland - Jordan Staal - Teuvo Teravainen  
Andrei Svechnikov - Jordan Martinook - Brock McGinn  
Warren Foegele - Lucas Wallmark - Greg McKegg

Jacob Slavin - Dougie Hamilton  
Brett Pesce - Justin Faulk  
Haydn Fleury - Trevor van Riemsdyk

Petr Mrazek  
Curtis McElhinney

Injuries and scratches: Calvin de Haan (upper-body), Saku Maenalanen (healthy), Jake Bean(healthy)

Capitals Lineup

Despite Washington's near-collapse down in the third period of game one, expect them to go back to the group that got them their 3-0 lead.

Alex Ovechkin - Nicklas Backstrom - Tom Wilson  
Carl Hagelin - Evgeny Kuznetsov - T.J. Oshie  
Jakub Vrana - Lars Eller - Brett Connolly  
Andre Burakovsky - Nic Dowd - Chandler Stephenson

John Carlson - Nick Jensen  
Dmitry Orlov - Matt Niskanen  
Brooks Orpik - Christian Djoos

Braden Holtby  
Pheonix Copley



### Hurricanes drop overtime thriller in Washington, trail 2-0 in series

By Andrew Schnittker

WASHINGTON-- The old hockey saying goes that you're not in trouble in a playoff series until you lose at home. The Carolina Hurricanes will need to hope that's the case, as they'll head back to Raleigh down 2-0 in their first-round series after a 4-3 overtime loss to the Washington Capitals in game two at Capital One Arena Saturday.

Forwards Lucas Wallmark, Sebastian Aho both picked up their first career playoff goals, and forward Jordan Staal scored for the Hurricanes (0-2). After a poor performance on special teams in game one, Carolina held the Capitals' (2-0) power play scoreless on four tries, including a five-minute major in the second period, and scored a power-play goal with five minutes left to send the game to OT.

"It's tough right now," said head coach Rod Brind'Amour. "[Aho] has one goal; our top guys are not on the scoresheet. Theirs are. I feel pretty good that if we get those guys going, which they have all year, it'll give us a better chance to win, that's for sure. Because we're hanging around and I don't think we're playing our best hockey. That's, I guess, somewhat of a positive."

Less than two minutes into overtime, with Hurricanes forward Teuvo Teravainen missing a stick after giving his to defenseman Brett Pesce, who lost his in the neutral zone, Capitals defenseman Brooks Orpik crept in from the point and rocketed a shot past Canes goalie Petr Mrazek for the overtime winner.

Despite the loss, Mrazek played a strong game in net, stopping 29 of 33 Capitals shots, including one from Caps defenseman John Carlson at the buzzer.

"He made quite a few big saves for us just to get us to have a chance to win so I thought he was solid," Brind'Amour said. "Tough one for him, thought he played well."

The Canes had to battle back to get the game to overtime after Capitals forward Tom Wilson put Washington up 3-2 with 11:05 to play in the third period.

For the second time in the series, Carolina got a chance to tie the game down 3-2 with a late power play, Staal took a stick up high from Dowd with 5:36 to play. This time the team made good; Staal tipped a point shot from defenseman Dougie Hamilton with exactly five minutes left, tying the game at three with Carolina's first power-play tally of the series.

Much like in game one, the Canes found themselves behind the eight-ball early, as goals from Washington forwards Nicklas Backstrom and T.J. Oshie put the Capitals up 2-0 less than 10 minutes in.

"That's playoff hockey," said forward Justin Williams. "Every game's different. We did a really good job on the power play and we get a lot of penalties against us. We got a big power-play goal. It's really hard when you spot teams leads like that like we have in the last two to battle back."

Wallmark got the Canes on the board with 4:06 left in the first with his third point of the postseason, tipping a shot from the side-boards by defenseman Jacob Slavin past Capitals



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goalie Braden Holtby. The Capitals challenged that Canes forward Saku Maenalanen interfered with Holtby on the goal, but it was upheld after a brief review.

Less than five minutes into the second period, the Canes were put in a serious bind when forward Micheal Ferland hit Capitals forward Nic Dowd off the rush, and received a questionable five-minute match penalty for a hit to the head, giving the Capitals a five-minute power play. Dowd briefly went to the Caps' locker room but returned to the bench. Brind'Amour was visibly angry during an exchange with an official after the call.

"I don't think it was a dirty hit," Ferland said. "I don't think I deserve to be suspended. I take pride in my game of being a clean hitter and I never want to hurt anybody. So I don't think it was a dirty hit."

There was a scary moment late in that Caps' power play when a point shot from Carlson hit Mrazek in the mask, knocking his mask off. Mrazek, however; after getting checked out by Canes trainer Doug Bennett, seemed to be alright and remained in the game.

The Canes killed the major penalty to Ferland, as a hook against Oshie ended Washington's power play early, leading

to 51 seconds of four-on-four play before a Hurricanes power play.

"That gave us momentum for sure," Mrazek said. "When you kill five minutes against a team like that ... Their power play is one of the best in the league. We did fantastic on the PK today."

Directly after Ferland's penalty ended, Dowd was whistled for high-sticking, giving the Canes a golden chance to tie the game with 1:07 of a five-on-three power play. They could not convert, however, and remained down 2-1.

Aho evened the score for Carolina with 3:11 left in the second period, stuffing a puck between Holtby and the post off rebound of a shot off the end boards, snapping a personal 15-game goal drought going back to the regular season.

"It's not like we're playing bad but this time of year you've got to get that extra step and play even better," Aho said. "Ok is not ok, so it's just trying to play our best."

The Canes will now head back to Raleigh with work to do, trailing by a pair of games in the series. The best-of-seven will resume Monday at PNC Arena with a 7 p.m. puck drop for the Canes' first home playoff game since 2009.



## Checkers to face Providence Bruins in First Round

The Charlotte Checkers today announced their first-round playoff schedule against the Providence Bruins.

The best-of-five Atlantic Division Semifinal matchup will begin with Games 1 and 2 in Providence on Saturday, April 20, and Sunday, April 21, respectively, before moving to Charlotte for Game 3 on Wednesday, April 24, followed by Games 4 and 5 on Friday, April 26, and Saturday, April 27, if necessary.

This marks the first-ever playoff meeting between Charlotte, the league's regular-season champions with a record of 51-17-8, and Providence, the Atlantic's No. 4 seed which is 38-26-11 with one game left to play. Each team won four games in the eight-game season series, with two of Charlotte's losses coming in overtime (4-2-2).

Charlotte concluded the best regular-season in team history with a 2-1 win over Cleveland on Friday. They enter the postseason on a three-game win streak and with 17 wins in their last 21 games dating back to Feb. 22.

Individual tickets for all three Checkers home playoff games are available now via Ticketmaster and the Bojangles' Coliseum box office. All first-round games will feature concession specials including \$2 hot dogs, popcorn and domestic draught beer and \$4 craft draught beer. "Pay-as-we-Play" ticket packages requiring no money up front and guaranteeing the best seats throughout the postseason are also available now. To learn more, [click here](#).



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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## SportScan

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

1140615 Carolina Hurricanes

Ejected Canes' forward Ferland: 'A clean hit ... I don't agree with the call'

BY LUKE DECOCK

APRIL 13, 2019 07:22 PM

Washington

Long dressed in a purple-patterned shirt and purple knit tie, Micheal Ferland was unapologetic for his match penalty in a way not many players in his position often are. Then again, not many believe they're entirely innocent — and have reason to believe it.

The Carolina Hurricanes forward was given a match penalty for a hit to the head — an infraction that carries with it a five-minute penalty and an ejection — during the second period of Saturday's 4-3 overtime Game 2 loss to the Washington Capitals, but both Ferland and Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour insisted that the primary point of contact with Capitals forward Nic Dowd was Ferland's back as he let up on the hit.

"To be honest with you, I let up," Ferland said. "I seen him reach for the puck, I could have finished with my shoulder and I didn't. I came and hit him with my butt. I thought it was a clean hit. I don't agree with the call."

Asked whether he was worried about being suspended, Ferland shrugged.

"Like I said, I don't think it was a dirty hit," Ferland said. "I don't think I deserve to be suspended. I take pride in my game of being a clean hitter. I never want to hurt anybody. So, I don't think it was a bad hit."

Dowd, who went immediately to the Capitals' locker room, returned as soon as the penalty had been assessed and was ticketed for two high-sticking penalties later in the game.

Brind'Amour, who later defended the officials' job as difficult, maybe even too difficult for humans, was nonetheless frustrated to lose a player and have to kill a lengthy major penalty, although the Hurricanes did, successfully.

"I thought it was a good hit," Brind'Amour said. "Originally, it did look bad, when you first watch it live. But then you watch it, and you see it, I get to sit and stare at it on the screen, he doesn't hit his head. The contact is, the first point of contact for sure, is not the head. That's frustrating. We lose a player, have to kill a five-minute penalty, that gets frustrating for sure."

MAN BEHIND THE MASK Petr Mrazek has been stellar in goal for the Hurricanes since allowing a questionable goal to Nicklas Backstrom to start Game 1, and his point-blank save on John Carlson at the regulation buzzer got things to overtime. He survived a scary moment in the second period when a Carlson shot caught him in the mask and knocked it loose.

"It catch me a little bit on the chin there," Mrazek said. "When I fell, I didn't have the mask on and I hit the ice pretty hard with my face. I think that was worse than the shot."

MORE FROM THE TOP Andrei Svechnikov and Lucas Wallmark are tied for the Hurricanes' lead with three points apiece through two games, and while Sebastian Aho broke his scoring drought Saturday, it's hard to keep up with Nicklas Backstrom (three goals, one assist) and Alex Ovechkin (one goal, two assists) without the Hurricanes' top two lines contributing more.

"We have to be better, our line in general," Hurricanes captain Justin Williams said. "I haven't been good this series, and if you talk to our other top scorers, we have to be a lot better. And we will be in Game 3."

TAILWINDS Justin Faulk, at fault for both of the goals that gave the Capitals a 2-0 lead, finished minus-3. ... Saku Manaen, who was left behind at the team hotel and had to take a cab to the arena, drew into the lineup for Greg McKegg. "He was fine," Brind'Amour said. "He didn't play that much. I didn't get him out there that much." ... The Hurricanes'



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pregame soccer warmup produced an unwanted guest when a shot dislodged a ceiling tile and a dead rat fell to the concrete floor.

News Observer LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140616 Carolina Hurricanes

Action, anger and agita: Playoff hockey is back, and it has been far too long

BY LUKE DECOCK

APRIL 13, 2019 06:19 PM

Washington

Long before overtime, even, by the end of a second period full of action, anger and agita, there was only one question to ask, with no apparent answer: How did we ever live without playoff hockey for 10 years?

It was all there in Saturday's middle frame, from a slumping star finally breaking through, to a controversial hit with an excessive accompanying penalty that could come to define a series, to a coach ripping the officiating on national television. And all of that after the Carolina Hurricanes somehow dug themselves out of a two-goal hole.

Are you not entertained?

The Hurricanes will still return home down 2-0 in the series thanks to Saturday's 4-3 overtime loss to the Washington Capitals, a not-entirely-unexpected state of affairs, but the series itself is anything but decided and decidedly a battle of antagonists, bad blood everywhere if not actual blood, yet.

It took the Caps only 108 seconds in OT for Brooks Orpik to get the winner past Petr Mrazek, who was generally spectacular. Teuvo Teravainen, at the end of a long shift and without his stick, dove to block it at the left circle but couldn't get there in time.

"I got a piece of it, too," Mrazek said. "I thought it was enough. It wasn't. I could have had that goal."

The flashpoint was Micheal Ferland's match penalty for a hit to the head of Washington's Nic Dowd on the rush, with the Hurricanes down 2-1 at that point. It was a penalty, but with Dowd leaning over and making contact with Ferland's back, certainly not a five-minute penalty by any definition.

Hurricanes forward Sebastian Aho scored his first goal in 16 games but said it "all about the wins right now, that's all that matters" after the Canes' 4-3 overtime loss to the Washington Capitals in Game 2 on April 13, 2019. By

While the Hurricanes managed to kill off the major, a furious Rod Brind'Amour somehow managed to keep it PG during a bench interview with Pierre McGuire — making reference to a far worse Alex Ovechkin hit to Brock McGinn's nose in the first that was only a two-minute minor.

Dougie Hamilton, meanwhile, got two minutes for an elbow to Evgeny Kuznetsov's head later in the second, and the Orwellian-monickered Department of Player Safety will have some video to review before Game 3 in Raleigh on Monday. Ferland should be sentenced to time already served and Ovechkin and Hamilton should be treated equally, whatever that is — but you never know in the NHL.

There was a lot of message-sending Saturday, not all with elbows. The Canes were completely outplayed in the first 10 minutes, but rallied with

a Lucas Wallmark tip and a Sebastian Aho goal off Braden Holtby's ankle from below the goal line, his first in a month.

The penalty-kill, such a disaster Thursday, was more than adequate. Mrazek was spectacular, as he has been since the first goal of the series, even after taking a shot that knocked his mask off. And the Hurricanes responded to Tom Wilson's go-ahead goal early in the third with a power-play goal of their own, a Jordan Staal tip with five minutes to go to force overtime.

Washington Capitals right wing Tom Wilson (43) chases the puck against Carolina Hurricanes goaltender Petr Mrazek (34), of the Czech Republic, during the third period of Game 2 of an NHL hockey first-round playoff series, Saturday, April 13, 2019, in Washington. The Capitals won 4-3 in overtime. Nick Wass AP

The Hurricanes gave themselves at least a chance to get back into Game 1 and they gave themselves an equal shot at Game 2 despite continuing lackluster performances from some of their top players and failing to score on a two-man advantage.

"The guys played hard, that's the one thing," Brind'Amour said. "They gave it all you can. You can't really fault anything. Can we be better? Yes. For sure."

Regardless of the results, not to mention the emotional swings, this is a dead-even series, probably more of a fight than the Capitals were expecting, and with everything that's gone on so far, PNC will be a cauldron of bile and rage on Monday night.

All as it should be. It's the playoffs. It has been too long, far too long.

News Observer LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140617 Carolina Hurricanes

Orpik, Caps turn back Canes in overtime, 4-3

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

APRIL 13, 2019 06:18 PM

Washington

Playoff hockey is coming to Raleigh, finally.

The Carolina Hurricanes will need a victory, badly.

The Canes played hard and played well for the most part Saturday in Game 2 against the Washington Capitals, but lost 4-3 in overtime to fall behind 2-0 in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference first-round series.

A goal by defenseman Brooks Orpik from the left circle at 1:48 of overtime decided it. It was a sudden winner for the Caps and a jolt to the Canes, who rallied twice in regulation to tie the score and then force overtime at Capital One Arena.

The Hurricanes have not hosted a Stanley Cup playoff game since 2009. But PNC Arena figures to be filled and loud when Game 3 is played Monday night.

"I hope we get a good lift," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Our fans are excited. It's been a long time coming.

"It's tough right now. The loss obviously stings. But we'll be refreshed and ready to go and we'll give them a good show."

Tom Wilson's goal, on a shot from the right circle off the rush, had given the Caps a 3-2 lead with 11:05 left in regulation. But the Canes tied the



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score 3-3 on a power play, as Jordan Staal redirected a Dougie Hamilton shot with five minutes remaining in the third.

Canes goalie Petr Mrazek, who took a heavy shot off the mask during the game, made a glove save on a Wilson shot in front of the crease with less than two minutes left in the third. Mrazek then made what he called a "reflex save" on a John Carlson shot from the slot in the final seconds of regulation.

In overtime, Canes defenseman Brett Pesce lost his stick in the Carolina zone. Forward Teuvo Teravainen handed Pesce his stick, then tried to go low to block the shot by Orpik, who came off the bench on a change to unleash the winner.

For the second straight game, the Canes fell behind early. For the second straight game, the Canes fought back despite losing forward Micheal Ferland, who was ejected in the second period on a call that had Brind'Amour and Ferland steaming.

In Game 1, it was a 3-0 deficit. On Saturday, first-period goals by Nicklas Backstrom — his third in the series — and T.J. Oshie staked the Caps to a 2-0 lead midway through the period.

The Canes' fourth line produced a first-period score, with some strong forechecking resulting in a Lucas Wallmark goal. They then tied the score 2-2 in the second as Sebastian Aho converted on a sharp-angle shot.

Aho, the Canes' leading scorer, had gone 15 games without a goal, including Game 1. But that ended after Justin Williams sent the puck banging off the end boards and Aho, at the post to goalie Braden Holtby's right, quickly popped the puck off Holtby's leg and into the net.

The 4-2 loss to the Caps in Game 1 had the Canes talking about the need to both stay out of the penalty box and kill off penalties if they were called. The Canes' penalty killers were tested again Saturday.

Ferland received a five-minute match penalty at 4:09 of the second period after a collision with Nic Dowd. Brind'Amour was livid over the call, as animated as he has been in this season.

Hurricanes forward Micheal Ferland disagreed with the five-minute penalty and ejection he received in the second period for his hit on Nic Dowd in the 4-3 overtime loss to the Capitals in Game 2 of their playoff series on April 13, 2019. By

Dowd, who briefly left the game, had his head down when Ferland banged into him, a point Brind'Amour angrily made to the ref. It also angered Brind'Amour that the Caps' Alex Ovechkin had hit Brock McGinn in the head in the first, receiving only a two-minute elbowing penalty.

"I thought it was a clean hit and I don't agree with the call," Ferland said. "I don't think I deserve to be suspended. I take pride in my game, in being a clean hitter. I never want to hurt anybody."

But the Canes got the hard work done, working their way through the Ferland penalty. Had their power play been sharper, especially on 67 seconds of a 5-on-3 in the second, it would have been a dominant period.

"That was a big turning point in the game," Brind'Amour said of the 5-on-3.

The Caps came into the game wanting better 5-on-5 play after managing just 13 shots in 5-on-5 play in Game 1. They got it as Backstrom and then Oshie scored in the first period for the 2-0 lead.

In Game 1, the Caps had two power-play goals in the first period in taking a 3-0 lead. The Canes made it a tight game in the third as rookie forward Andrei Svechnikov scored twice to make it a one-goal game before the Caps sealed it with an empty-net score in the final minute.

Brind'Amour made one lineup change for Game 2, inserting forward Saku Maenalanen for Greg McKeeg. Maenalanen figured in the Wallmark goal, getting in front of Holtby.

"We have to take all the positives that I think we played two games hard here," Mrazek said. "We battled hard. They got the win on their side today but we have to put it behind us."

News Observer LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140618 Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes Report Cards: Game 2 vs. Washington

By Sara Civian

Apr 13, 2019

WASHINGTON — There have been flashes of brilliance, there have been game-defining lucky (and unlucky) bounces, there has been questionable officiating.

Welcome back to the playoffs, Hurricanes fans. Enjoy your stay.

The Canes are headed back to Raleigh down 0-2 on the series. Let's break down Game 2, a 4-3 overtime thriller, before we look ahead to an increasingly important Game 3.

How did the team look?

Even Strength — \* \* \*

This was looking like a very sad one star at first, as the Capitals were pretty much having their way with the Hurricanes in the first half of the first period. It was enough for them to take a 2-0 lead (Nicklas Backstrom at 3:37 and T.J. Oshie at 9:26).

This first period trajectory chart via Natural Stat Trick really says it all. This ended up a thrilling, even-matched game at even strength, but not before the damage was done. The Hurricanes found their way via physicality about halfway through the first, around the time Micheal Ferland laid a big hit on Carl Hagelin. They wound up with two even strength goals (Lucas Wallmark aka #playoffWallmark aka 1-2—3 in 2 GP, and Sebastian Aho's first goal since March 9) of their own.

They still allowed first two.

They're going to need to hurry up the soul-searching process in Game 3. They've proved capable in these first two games, but the starts keep killing them.

Power Play — \* \* \*

You could argue the power play was decent because it worked once (Jordan Staal, of all power play heroes, sent it into overtime on the man advantage). There were some good looks on the five opportunities the Canes got, but it would be hard not to get a few good looks on five power play opportunities, so ...

I would argue the fruitless 5-on-3 was the Hurricanes' best chance to change this game before it was too late. So would head coach Rod Brind'Amour. The Hurricanes' baffling 5-on-3 woes are something we've discussed and he's openly criticized all season, so I respected that he owned up again Saturday night.

"That's a big turning point in the game," he said. "The only part I didn't like (of the power play) was the 5-on-3. It was stagnant. It was only a minute, but that could've been the difference in the game, being able to get one there."

The Hurricanes had 1:07 to find a way there. This is three stars instead of two because at least it's an improvement on Game 1, in which the Canes gave up two power play goals and couldn't convert any of their



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own. Not even two chances to tie it up in the third. They did just that Saturday, so props where props are due.

I do think it's worth mentioning that it was the second power play unit's goal. Dougie Hamilton and Andrei Svechnikov had the assists. It was part of a series of events that make you wonder what they're still doing on the second unit ...

Penalty Kill — \* \* \* \* \*

Simply outstanding.

Brind'Amour summed up the second period: "I felt like we were shorthanded the whole period, then we actually came out of it tied."

The Hurricanes had 4:09 of a questionable-at-best (we'll get to that) five-minute major to kill. They did it with guts. They were a perfect 4-for-4 on the game, killing 10:09 minutes worth of penalties total — without their unsung shot blocker Calvin de Haan.

It's not often a team builds on the momentum of a penalty kill to score an equalizer. That was encouraging, and kind of fitting how it was Aho's first-ever playoff goal.

Obviously, a penalty kill is only as good as its goalie. Petr Mrazek gave the Canes a chance to come back and win through this stretch and the intense final minutes of the third.

Player Reports

\* \* \* \* \*

Best player on the ice: Jordan Staal — Staal led the Canes by far in expected goals (.64) and scoring chances (seven, the next best was three), tied for second in shots with three, tied for first with two high danger chances, created a rebound (in this economy?!), recorded three hits and drew a penalty. All while taking the brunt of the face-offs, where he went 14-11.

If you actually #watchedthegame, of course he got the power play going at the same time he scored the 3-3 equalizer that sent the Hurricanes to overtime.

There's only so much one man can do.

Lucas Wallmark — I have no idea where #playoffWallmark came from but the man cannot be stopped. Actually, part of it has to be residual from stepping up for so long when Staal was out with his concussion. He'd had to match up against top players in the league for more than a month. Now he's back in the bottom six, with one goal and two assists in two playoff games under his belt.

He went 13-2 on the face-off dot Saturday.

13-2!

He netted the all-important goal that stopped the even strength bleeding early. He had two overall high danger chances. He did it all in 13:12 TOI.

Jacob Slavin — Slavin was a bright spot in an uncharacteristically weak showing for the Hurricanes' defense. He led all skaters with 28:90 TOI, totaling two assists, three shots, three blocks, the sole Hurricanes rush attempt and two takeaways. He was also a plus-1 as the best defenseman on the team logging the most time in a loss, which is pretty impressive despite the general meaningless of that stat. Handling the brunt of the time on ice well is obviously super important in the playoffs.

\* \* \* \* \*

Warren Foegele — All hail the penalty drawing monster. Foegele somehow manages to remain in the top 20 in the league in penalty drawing, among the Johnny Gaudreaux and Connor McDavid's of the world, as a fourth line winger. I also see him doing push-ups on the ice after practice by himself all the time. He tries so hard. He takes Andrei Svechnikov on scenic Horse and Buggy rides. We must protect him at all costs.

Andrei Svechnikov — The second Svechnikov moved up to Staal's line (unfortunately due to the Ferland match penalty), he had some of the most noticeable shifts of the game. His assist was timely, he tied for the team lead in hits (3), no one took more hits than him (5), and he managed to roll with them.

Justin Williams — Sure, he was a minus-2 along with his linemates but he at least tried to set the tone in his 17:02 TOI with a team-leading five shots. His assist on Aho's goal struck me as a complete "screw it, I'm shooting this puck hard and creating the ugliest pass/rebound if I have to, because I know I have to against Holtby" type moment. Those are the moments the Canes need for a chance in this series.

\* \* \*

Sebastian Aho — Aho got multiple monkeys off his back with his first goal since March 9 and his first career playoff goal in one fell swoop Saturday. He logged 21:55 TOI, cashing in on his only shot of the game. He went 7-6 on the face-off dot. It wasn't terrible, but it wasn't your best player being your best player, and he'll be the first to take accountability.

"(Playing) just OK isn't OK," he said.

It isn't, but it's a start.

\* \*

Brett Pesce — I hate to do this, I consider Pesce a top-three defenseman on this team. He's consistent, he's an unsung hero, he literally broke the regular season franchise record for plus/minus with plus-35, then he told me he's not a big plus/minus guy.

None of us should be.

Still, his minus-3 was rough. I think he was a little nervous, extremely desperate to win, and/or both so you can't hate the effort. But you can hate the execution ...

Pesce has a super bright future with the Canes. He'll learn from this. He wasn't the worst player on the ice ...

\*

Worst player(s) on the ice: Justin Faulk — I'm the first to call out overreaction in the Faulk scapegoat sweepstakes, but you won't find me putting a positive spin on whatever this was Saturday. He looked totally lost on both goals he was if not directly, than peripherally, responsible. It's not like he made up for the minus-3 with the offensive flair we've seen out of him recently. He only took two shots on goal in 27:58 TOI. Like, he wasn't even trying to shoot directly into Holtby's chest. We didn't even see that.

I get it now, you guys.

Are we sure he actually played tonight? Teuvo Teravainen — Teravainen led all forwards and was third overall in ice time with 22:37 TOI. Zero goals, zero assists, three shots, two scoring chances, zero rebound attempts or rebounds created.

He had a really good look on the power play, but that was about his most notable contribution to Game 2, save for his lost stick in overtime. That obviously wasn't his fault, but it's never a good sign when a player trying to defend without a stick in a do-or-die situation is his Top 2 most memorable moment in the game. There's pressure on Teravainen in this series as a skilled forward in his prime who has ample playoff experience and a Stanley Cup. It might not be totally fair, but it's the truth. He can't lead Canes forwards in TOI and disappear.

Dougie Hamilton — First, I was whisper-yelling that Hamilton should be on the first power play unit, something I'm about two more broken Faulk sticks away from engraving on my tombstone.

Then, I was whisper-yelling that his second period elbow to Evgeny Kuznetsov's head might warrant a call from the Department of Player Safety.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 14, 2019

Micheal Ferland— Was his hit upon exiting the box the most necessary thing in the world?

No.

Did the beast known for somehow delivering devastating-yet-clean hits deserve an ejection for it?

You decide. (No.)

Brind'Amour's veins were bulging out of his head at an alarming rate while talking to the referees about it. Clearly, he disagreed with the call. I asked him about it after the game.

"I thought it was a good hit," he said. "The first point of contact, for sure, is not his head. That's frustrating. You lose a player and have to kill a penalty."

"I don't think it was a dirty hit. I don't think I deserve to be suspended," Ferland said. "I take pride in my game of being a clean hitter. I never want to hurt anybody. I don't think it was a dirty hit."

Final Thoughts

Officiating is a tough job, but this was a mess. Let them play, like you let Alex Ovechkin play ...

It seems we're at a crossroads with officiating in general, and I honestly can't imagine how hard that is. Brind'Amour had a good point about that postgame, and as always with him, it's much better received when you see his facial expressions:

Either way, the Canes are in a hole, but obviously showing fight. This whole season they've made it hard on themselves but managed to persevere. That's going to be nearly impossible against the defending Cup champs with a skilled roster like this, but not letting multiple, early goals in would be a good start. That might be easier done in front of the Caniacs.

Final Grade: C for execution, A- for effort

The Athletic LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140673 NHL

Blue Jackets surge sets tone for unpredictable NHL playoffs

April 13, 2019 at 11:58 am Updated April 13, 2019 at 3:30 PM

By Mitch Stacy

The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — The Tampa Bay Lightning, the NHL's best team, lost their first two playoff games at home to the Columbus Blue Jackets and are vulnerable without their top scorer for Game 3.

Winnipeg lost its first two at home, leaving the Jets fighting for their postseason relevance as that series shifts to St. Louis.

The Pittsburgh Penguins are loaded with stars who have years of playoff experience. The Pens are down 2-0 to the New York Islanders as their series moves to the Steel City.

So much for home-ice advantage and conventional thinking in these NHL playoffs.

The Blue Jackets have been in this heady position before in the postseason, just before they fell on their faces.

Now they have the Tampa Bay on the ropes and are enticingly closer to winning the first playoff series in franchise history. The series shifts to Columbus on Sunday night (7 p.m., NBCSN). The Lightning will be without 128-point scorer Nikita Kucherov, who was suspended for a game for boarding the Markus Nutivaara on Friday night.

Last year the Blue Jackets went up 2-0 in the first round against Washington on the road before the Capitals won four straight and rolled on a Stanley Cup championship. In other words, there's a lot of hockey left to the play in the series, and the Blue Jackets players know it all too well.

"I think we should still have a sour taste in our mouth from last year," said wing Cam Atkinson, who scored the first goal for Columbus in the 5-1 rout of Tampa Bay on Friday. "It's a series for a reason. They're obviously the best team in the league. We just can't take our foot off the gas pedal."

Columbus has risen to the occasion and hasn't backed down from their opponents.

"We're in a hole, we're in a tough position, but we are not going to quit," Lightning center Steven Stamkos said. "We have to take a page out of their book and go on the road and win a hockey game. We just have to focus on Game 3. It's tough, it just hasn't gone our way right now."

Or, as coach Jon Cooper put it: "This is a five-alarm fire."

Islanders at Penguins, New York leads series 2-0 (noon EDT, NBC).

During their current run of 13 consecutive playoff appearances, the Pittsburgh Penguins lost in the first round three times. They'll need to turn things around quickly to avoid a fourth.

Pittsburgh took its first lead in the series in the second period of Game 2 before the Islanders tied it minutes later and then pulled away in the third period for a 3-1 win.

The Penguins will look to regroup as they head home for the next two games. They know it's not an insurmountable deficit.

"It's the first team to win four games, not two," coach Mike Sullivan said when asked about his message to the team after Game 2. "We got to go back home, we got to control what we can. We got to win one game, and then we'll go from there."

The Islanders have held Jake Guentzel, who led the Penguins with 40 goals during the season, and star center Sidney Crosby (35 goals, 65 assists) off the scoresheet in the first two games.

Pittsburgh, sixth in the NHL in scoring during the season, has scored four times on 76 shots against an Islanders team that allowed the fewest goals in the league. After finishing fifth on the power play at 24.6 percent, the Penguins are 1 for 5 so far.

Jets at Blues, St. Louis leads series 2-0 (7:30 p.m. EDT, CNBC)

The Jets' confidence is not shaken after losing each of the first two games of the series by one goal.

"For the most part, we've played two pretty solid games," Winnipeg center Adam Lowry said after the Jets fell 4-3 on Friday night. "It comes down to a couple breaks. I feel like we're right there. I don't think we're frustrated. I don't think you can let that creep into this room."

Oskar Sundqvist scored twice, and Ryan O'Reilly broke the tie early in the third period to give the Blues the edge as the series shifts to St. Louis.

"They are going to give us their best game. Game 3 at home," Blues coach Craig Berube said. "And there's no reason to get too high. You've got to stay ready and you gotta play even better than we've played."

Jordan Binnington made 26 saves for St. Louis, becoming the second goalie in franchise history to win his first two playoff games.

Sharks at Golden Knights, series tied 1-1 (10 p.m. EDT, NBCSN)



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Taking penalties against San Jose usually isn't the right recipe for success, especially with the Sharks' two potent power-play units led by dynamic defensemen Brent Burns and Erik Karlsson and a talented group of forwards.

Vegas survived that in Game 2 and even came out ahead when the Sharks had the man advantage. The Golden Knights committed eight minor penalties that gave San Jose power plays, including one minute of five-on-three action in Game 2.

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But Vegas got the better of the play in those situations, scoring two short-handed goals and allowing just one on the power play, which proved to be pivotal.

"It's hard to win this time of year if you don't win special teams," Sharks coach Peter DeBoer said.

San Jose is just 2 for 13 on the power play this series, with two goals allowed, a far cry from a unit that ranked sixth in the league in the regular season at 23.7%.

Seattle Times LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140726 Washington Capitals

Capitals beat Hurricanes 4-3 on OT for 2-0 series lead

Staff Writer

April 14 at 2:25 AM

WASHINGTON — Brooks Orpik scored less than two minutes into overtime, Alex Ovechkin had two assists and the Washington Capitals beat the Carolina Hurricanes 4-3 on Saturday to give the defending Stanley Cup champions a 2-0 lead in the first-round series.

The tone was set for a wacky afternoon when a rat fell out of a hallway ceiling during the Hurricanes' pregame soccer match. The weird vibes lasted long after the dead rat was removed — from a questionable ejection for a check to the head to a shot off one goalie's mask and another that went in off the other goalie's backside.

Ovechkin assisted on goals by Nicklas Backstrom and Tom Wilson to help put Washington up two games to none in a series for just the third time in the past five years. In perhaps his final NHL postseason, Orpik scored 1:48 into the extra period of the Capitals' first overtime playoff game since they eliminated Pittsburgh in the second round a year ago.

Braden Holtby stopped 25 shots, and T.J. Oshie also scored. Holtby allowed goals to Lucas Wallmark, Sebastian Aho and Jordan Staal, the last on a Carolina power play with 5 minutes left in regulation.

Carolina goaltender Petr Mrazek rebounded from an inconsistent Game 1 to make 29 saves.

Game 3 Monday night in Raleigh in the Hurricanes' first home playoff game since May 26, 2009.

BRUINS 4, MAPLE LEAFS 1

BOSTON — Brad Marchand and Patrice Bergeron scored, Tuukka Rask stopped 30 shots and Boston beat Toronto to tie the series at one game apiece.

Two nights after Toronto beat Boston 4-1 in the opener to steal away home-ice advantage, the Bruins dominated their Atlantic Division rivals, taking a 3-0 lead with a 29-16 edge in shots on goal into the third period. Charlie Coyle and Danton Heinen also scored for the Bruins.

Nazem Kadri scored the Leafs' only goal midway through the third, and Frederik Andersen made 37 saves for Toronto, which returns home for Games 3 and 4 on Monday and Wednesday nights.

PREDATORS 2, STARS 1, OT

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Craig Smith scored five minutes into overtime to give Nashville the victory over Dallas, tying the first-round Western Conference series 1-1.

Smith scored his first this postseason from the inside edge of the left circle to snap a three-game playoff skid on home ice for Nashville.

Rocco Grimaldi also scored for Nashville, and Pekka Rinne made 22 saves. The Predators had lost five of their last six postseason games in the place they call Smashville.

Jamie Benn scored for Dallas. Game 3 is Monday night in Dallas.

AVALANCHE 3, FLAMES 2, OT

CALGARY, Alberta — Nathan MacKinnon scored 8:27 into overtime and the Colorado Avalanche tied their first-round series with the Flames at a game apiece.

After Philipp Grubauer stopped Michael Frolik at one end, the puck went up ice, where a pass from Mikko Rantanen sprung MacKinnon down the left wing and he fired a shot into the top corner on Mike Smith.

Matt Nieto and J.T. Compher also scored for the Avalanche. Rasmus Andersson and Sean Monahan had goals for the Flames.

The series continues Monday night in Colorado.

Washington Post LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140727 Washington Capitals

The Capitals are in total control — only in what truly matters

Jerry Brewer

April 13 at 9:28 PM

More than any other long postseason, the Stanley Cup playoffs have this mystical ability to skew. Good or bad, you rarely get what you deserve. Scrunch quality teams into a bracket, drop an always high-strung puck, and that's just the nature of high-level, small-margin hockey. It never gets old to watch because it never gets easy to play, especially under these jumpy conditions.

On Saturday afternoon, after a 4-3 sudden-death triumph at Capital One Arena that gave you all the feels, the Washington Capitals found themselves leading the Carolina Hurricanes 2-0 in this best-of-seven series. It seems like a tenuous 2-0. It seems more like 1-1. But this sport has no tolerance for illusion. The Capitals aren't dominating this series, and despite taking significant first-period leads in both games, they aren't exactly controlling it, either. Nonetheless, they are playing from ahead.

They should feel fortunate. And while Carolina, truly playing like it has nothing to lose, is such a challenge that the Capitals shouldn't avert their eyes for too long, it's only human nature to glance at their side of the bracket and realize this tournament is showing major signs of breaking favorably for the defending champions.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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The playoff nemesis Pittsburgh Penguins are already down two games to the New York Islanders. Even crazier, the Tampa Bay Lightning find their Greatest Team Ever status in jeopardy as they've fallen behind 0-2 to the same Columbus Blue Jackets — okay, this one is better because of trade-deadline enhancements — that had the Capitals in the same first-round predicament last year.

In most other sports, you could trust the road has widened. In the NHL, well, you should sense opportunity building, for now, and leave it at that. As Washington knows, situations can change dramatically at this time of year. But if the Capitals have it in them, and if the hockey playoff gods will bless them, they have a sweet chance to finish this series early and, at the very least, watch a couple of other prime contenders get pushed to the limit.

They'll stay in the moment, however. As the series shifts to Raleigh for Games 3 and 4, the Capitals leave home needing to put together a more complete game. So far, their first punch has been incredible, but the rest of their game hasn't been clean. Put all 122 minutes together, and the Hurricanes have been better at playing their game for longer stretches.

Still, the series is 2-0. So what does that mean? The Hurricanes shouldn't feel desperate. They have a pathway to staying in this thing. But the Capitals are one good game from putting their season at death's door.

"I expect them to stick with their game," forward T.J. Oshie said. "There's a lot of desperation whether you're down two or starting the series."

Game 2 illuminated that point. It was strange and disjointed even for the Stanley Cup playoffs. As the most unstable postseason tournament in sports, there is a high standard for kooky, and this game qualified. It featured another sizzling Capitals start, with goals by Nicklas Backstrom (again) and Oshie during a six-minute stretch within the first half of the first period. And similar to Game 1, Carolina immediately followed it by hogging possession and challenging the Washington defense with its volume-shooting style.

But unlike that first game, when the Capitals led 3-0 and spent 2½ periods essentially fending off the opponent, the rest of this contest would turn into a back-and-forth exchange, with so many momentum swings, questionable calls, missed opportunities and late theatrics that it could have caused rampant hyperventilation.

The Hurricanes tied it at 2 late in the second period when Sebastian Aho rebounded a Justin Williams shot that went wide off the end boards and slipped the puck into the side of the net, past Braden Holtby. It came after a wild period in which Carolina's Micheal Ferland received a rather weak five-minute match penalty for a high hit on Washington center Nic Dowd. But the Capitals failed to capitalize. The Carolina special teams also couldn't convert a wonderful opportunity despite a five-on-three advantage for 67 seconds of the second period. For the game, the teams were a combined 1 of 9 on power plays.

As the play seesawed, the Capitals were more aggressive, taking 33 shots to the Hurricanes' 28. Ovechkin dominated, collecting two assists and seven hits, lifting the Capitals with his effort. In obvious and subtle ways, he showed his complete game. Afterward, his teammates raved about his passing.

"A lot of people and a lot of players expect him to shoot all the time," said Backstrom, whose goal came after Ovechkin faked out the defense and slipped a beautiful assist to him. "He's not just a great goal scorer. He's a great setup man, too."

About midway through the third period, Ovechkin had an even niftier assist to set up Tom Wilson for a goal that gave Washington a 3-2 lead. It held until Jordan Staal tied the game with five minutes remaining. The Capitals almost won the game in regulation, but Petr Mrazek made two brilliant saves in the final 97 seconds. On the final one, he stretched his left pad as far as he could to stop a John Carlson attempt from the high slot.

It felt like Carolina was about to steal a road victory. But nothing is ever as it appears during these playoffs. Less than two minutes into overtime, Brooks Orpik won the game. Of course, it was Orpik.

Asked what Orpik means to this team, Wilson kept it simple.

"Everything," he said.

Said Holtby: "If you asked anyone on our team who you would be the happiest to see score an overtime goal, it's probably Brooks Orpik."

And so, the Capitals, at 2-0, are squeaking by. Carolina Coach Rod Brind'Amour was disappointed about opportunities missed, but ultimately he indicated some satisfaction with how his team has played.

"I hope we get a good lift," Brind'Amour said.

An uplifting 2-0 deficit? Why not?

"It's tough right now," he said. "The loss obviously stings."

But it's not over. Unless it is. The Capitals have yet to play their best, but perhaps that makes them dangerous. They still have a chance to make this a quick series. Sometimes, surviving is thriving.

"We've got a lot of experience handling those emotions," Oshie said. "Those momentum swings are something we want to get away from, though."

Despite feeling out of control at times, the Capitals have taken control. Now they need a killer instinct to combat the zany nature of this sport. Before they can take advantage of playoff volatility, they have to survive it.

Washington Post LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140728 Washington Capitals

Orpik scores in OT, Capitals take 2-0 lead over Hurricanes

Stephen Whyno

April 13 at 7:50 PM

WASHINGTON — A rat falling out of the arena hallway ceiling during the Carolina Hurricanes' warmup game of soccer was just a precursor to a wacky afternoon of playoff hockey.

Long after the dead rodent was removed, Game 2 between the Hurricanes and Washington Capitals included a questionable ejection for a check to the head, a shot off one goalie's mask and another that went in off the other goalie's backside. It fittingly ended with an overtime goal from an unlikely source that sent the defending Stanley Cup champions into a wild celebration around the team's most popular player.

Veteran leader Brooks Orpik scored 1:48 into overtime Saturday to give Washington a 4-3 victory and a 2-0 lead over Carolina in the first-round series. His fourth goal in his 151st playoff game was his third winner, and Orpik became just the 11th defenseman in NHL history with two postseason overtime goals.

"I'm probably not counted on for too many goals, but I think if you want to have the long runs, you need everybody kind of chipping in and doing things they don't normally do," Orpik said. "Always feels good when the team comes out on top."

The Capitals came out on top thanks to Alex Ovechkin's two perfect passes, a 5-on-3 penalty kill and a stick shortage by Carolina that allowed Evgeny Kuznetsov to find Orpik for his goal. Afterward, owner Ted Leonsis quipped, "Just like it was drawn up."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 14, 2019

There was no way to script the strange happenings that unfolded on and off the ice. Perhaps it was an omen for things to come when the ball used in the Hurricanes' pregame soccer ritual knocked a rat down from the ceiling.

"I saw that," Carolina's Sebastian Aho said. "First time I've seen it. Kind of odd."

Then the game happened. Just like Game 1, the Capitals jumped out to an early 2-0 lead — this time on goals by Nicklas Backstrom and T.J. Oshie — but this time the Hurricanes didn't wait until the third period to come back.

Lucas Wallmark scored late in the first after teammate Saku Maenalanen brushed Braden Holtby, which Capitals coach Todd Reirden challenged for goaltender interference. It held up because the NHL situation room and referees determined the contact wasn't significant enough to disallow the goal.

"Playing the position, you know that that's interference," said Holtby, who made 25 saves. "But there's a point in hockey where you've just got to battle, too. I'm not going to complain about a call or no-call. I know that doing that is giving me the best chance to stop that puck. We move on."

Things only got stranger in the second period. Less than a minute after exiting the penalty box, Hurricanes forward Micheal Ferland hit Nic Dowd while bent over and was given a five-minute match penalty for an illegal check to the head and ejected.

After officials conferred and decided to make it a five-minute major, coach Rod Brind'Amour screamed at referee Steve Kozari that it was a clean hit, pointing to his hip to emphasize Ferland made mostly hip to shoulder contact. Dowd left to go through concussion protocol but returned.

"To be honest with you, I let up," said Ferland, who added he doesn't expect to be suspended. "I could have finished with my shoulder, but I didn't. I came, hit him with my butt. I thought it was a clean hit. I don't agree with the call."

During the ensuing power play, a one-timer from defenseman John Carlson hit Hurricanes goaltender Petr Mrazek on the right side of his mask and knocked it off. Mrazek winced in pain but did not get pulled for concussion protocol and stayed in the game.

"It caught me a little bit on the chin there," said Mrazek, who made 29 saves. "When I fell, I didn't have the mask on and I hit the ice pretty hard with my face. That was the worst."

The worst moment for Holtby came when Aho ended a 15-game goal drought by banking the puck off him from a bad angle. Wilson and Jordan Staal traded third-period goals, and Mrazek stopped Carlson in the final seconds of regulation.

That only set the stage for Orpik's heroics. After Hurricanes defenseman Brett Pesce lost his stick and got one from forward Teuvo Teravainen, the Capitals had the opening they needed to take a 2-0 series lead and players mobbed Orpik to celebrate the father figure's clutch goal.

"There's really no better guy to score an OT winner," Wilson said. "We were pumped up, and he deserves it. Huge goal for us."

NOTES: Ten of the Capitals' last 14 first-round games went to overtime. ... With his 101st playoff point, Backstrom moved ahead of Daniel Alfredsson into sole possession of fourth place among Swedish players. ... Hurricanes D Calvin de Haan missed his fifth game in a row with an upper-body injury. ... Maenalanen replaced Greg McKeeg in Carolina's lineup. ... Capitals C Lars Eller played after missing practice Friday for upper-body maintenance.

UP NEXT

Game 3 Monday night in Raleigh is the Hurricanes' first home playoff game since May 26, 2009.

Washington Post LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140729 Washington Capitals

Unlikely hero Brooks Orpik gives Capitals Game 2 win, 2-0 series lead on Hurricanes

Isabelle Khurshudyan , Samantha Pell and Neil Greenberg

April 13 at 8:33 PM

Flying off the bench on a line change early in overtime, Washington Capitals defenseman Brooks Orpik found himself all alone at the left faceoff circle. Few noticed his arrival there, but Evgeny Kuznetsov spotted him from behind the net and sent a perfect pass to his stick. Orpik, a 15-year veteran with just three career playoff goals before Saturday, beat Carolina Hurricanes goaltender Petr Mrazek to secure a 4-3 win at Capital One Arena and a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven series.

Orpik, who admitted after the game that he "probably wasn't counted on for too many goals" in the postseason, became the Capitals' unexpected hero as the series shifts to Raleigh, N.C., for Game 3 on Monday.

"If you asked anyone on our team who you would be the happiest to see score an overtime goal, it's probably Brooks Orpik," goaltender Braden Holtby said. "It's exciting. It's a big moment. All his hard work and everything, it pays off in wins like that."

His previous playoff goal? That would be the winner in Game 2 of last season's Stanley Cup finals against the Vegas Golden Knights. Orpik, who has a whopping 18 regular season goals in his NHL career, is one of 11 defensemen with at least two overtime goals in the playoffs; he also scored one for the Pittsburgh Penguins to beat the New York Islanders in 2013.

In a game full of momentum swings and uncanny special teams play, the Capitals struck last to seize control of the series. In last season's first-round playoff series, Washington found itself down 2-0 to the Columbus Blue Jackets. This year, the Capitals have the advantage — thanks to an unlikely player and the strong postseason play of captain Alex Ovechkin and forward Nicklas Backstrom.

"We played hard to the finish; they played a good game, too," Holtby said. "It was just a good playoff hockey game. They're fun to play. I wouldn't expect anything else in Game 3."

The tone of the game was up and down from the start, with the Capitals jumping out to a 2-0 lead for the second straight game. The Hurricanes didn't go away, however, and equalized with five minutes left in regulation when center Jordan Staal beat Holtby with Carolina on a power play.

Washington had its chances against Mrazek in the waning minutes of the third, but Mrazek saved a flurry of shots, including one each from Tom Wilson and John Carlson.

Wilson's goal 8:55 into the third period snapped a 2-2 tie, and he appeared set to be the Game 2 hero before Staal changed the narrative. The Capitals were unfazed.

"It's the response of an experienced team," Capitals Coach Todd Reirden said. "No panic. No panic. . . . We're going to get back on our toes here and play the right way and give ourselves a chance to have success, and that's I think a strong showing by our team. I'm not surprised based upon what we were able to accomplish in the past that way."

The second period set the stage for the drama to follow. The Capitals opened the frame with two failed power plays, with the more telling of the two a five-minute man-advantage after a major match penalty was assessed to Carolina forward Micheal Ferland for his illegal check to the head of center Nic Dowd 4:09 into the second period.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 14, 2019

Dowd had to go down the tunnel and into the Capitals' dressing room after the hit, but he returned to the bench shortly after.

After the Capitals' power play produced two goals in Game 1, the unit struggled Saturday.

"I think today was a tough game," Ovechkin said. "It doesn't matter we got the lead 2-0; it was a tough game. We have too much chances in the second period, especially on the power play."

However, the Capitals' penalty-kill unit was formidable early, fending off 1:07 of five-on-three play by Carolina 9:11 into the second period before Carolina forward Sebastian Aho was able to sneak one past Holtby at even strength with 3:11 to play in the second period to knot the game at 2.

Ovechkin and Backstrom connected for the game's first goal 3:37 into the first when the captain put a pass on Backstrom's stick right on the doorstep of the crease and Backstrom beat Mrazek. T.J. Oshie tacked on the Capitals' second goal nearly six minutes later with a smooth backhand shot.

"We've done a great job at the start of games of getting momentum on our side, especially with the crowd behind us out there, making noise for us," Oshie said.

### Statistical Stars

1. Nicklas Backstrom: Goal and an assist, three scoring chances
2. Tom Wilson: Goal, three scoring chances, one rebound attempt
3. Jaccob Slavin: Two assists, four shot attempts and three scoring chances

Washington's top line of Ovechkin, Backstrom and Wilson tortured Carolina all game. The trio accounted for two of the team's three goals in addition to a 6-to-3 scoring chance advantage at even strength, with four of those attempts occurring in the slot, a high-danger area.

Orpik also got redemption with the game winner in overtime (not a typo). Prior to that he was on the ice for a team-high 12 scoring chances against at even strength and three more on the penalty kill, giving him one of Washington's lowest game scores -- an all-in-one number designed to take into account everything a player does on the ice -- of the night.

Low game score aside, his goal gave Washington a lot of optimism for the rest of this series. According to WhoWins, teams with home-ice advantage in the first round like the Capitals who take a 2-0 lead go on to win the series 88 percent of the time (77-11 all-time series record).

### Game highlights

OT = Orpik Time: Brooks Orpik (he of the very few goals in the very many games) gave the Capitals the win in the early minutes of Game 2's first overtime with a one-timer off a feed from behind the Hurricanes' net from Evgeny Kuznetsov. No one expected that sequence, but now Capitals fan would turn it down. More to come after the locker room scrums.

Brooks Orpik with the overtime game winner in Game Two hahaha  
[pic.twitter.com/xfwIYqdlFL](https://pic.twitter.com/xfwIYqdlFL)

— Ian Oland (@ianoland) April 13, 2019

End of regulation: Capitals 3, Hurricanes 3: Washington boasts of its ability to create quality shots but for the second straight game they are trailing Carolina in even-strength scoring chances, 23 to 14, at the end of regulation. Six different skaters have created at least two scoring chances for Carolina — Washington has four skaters with that many or more — and Jordan Staal leads the team with six, including a third-period equalizer that eventually sent the game into overtime.

Opportunities in the high-danger areas are much closer. The Capitals have created seven by seven different skaters and the Hurricanes have eight, with Staal, McGinn and Wallmark each contributing two. The

Niederreiter-Aho-Williams line, however, has struggled: they have been on the ice for three high-danger chances against at even strength with none created.

More hockey ahead: The Capitals and Hurricanes are going to overtime, something Washington tends to do a lot in the playoffs. The team played five overtime games last postseason, including four times in the first round. Carolina goaltender Petr Mrazek had to come up with some pretty impressive stops late in the third period to keep this tied, robbing both Tom Wilson and John Carlson.

John Carlson had the game on his stick in the final second! AND MRAZEK MAKES THE STOP. [pic.twitter.com/BcuQFtbmEW](https://pic.twitter.com/BcuQFtbmEW)

— Ian Oland (@ianoland) April 13, 2019

Have a game, Petr Mrazek! [pic.twitter.com/fZN9F6VcAx](https://pic.twitter.com/fZN9F6VcAx)

— Carolina Hurricanes (@NHLCanes) April 13, 2019

Canes knot it late: The Hurricanes have tied it again. Capitals center Nic Dowd was called for his second high-sticking minor of the game, putting Carolina on the power play with less than six minutes left in regulation. Dougie Hamilton's point shot deflected off Jordan Staal and past goaltender Braden Holtby. That's the second straight game Washington has taken a penalty late in the game, and after the Capitals killed the Hurricanes' first seven man-advantages, Carolina was due.

Wilson scores off Ovechkin assist: The Capitals' top line has come through once again. Washington's skilled players have struggled on the power play this afternoon, but they've been awfully effective at five-on-five. On a rush into Carolina's zone, Alex Ovechkin found Tom Wilson coming in late, all alone at the right faceoff circle. Wilson's goal has lifted the Capitals to a 3-2 lead in the third period, but the bigger story might be Ovechkin's playmaking today. That's his second primary assist, and both have been beauties.

Alex Ovechkin finds the trailer, Tom Wilson, to give the Capitals a 3-2 lead midway through the third period. Ovechkin has primary assists on two of the team's three goals today. [pic.twitter.com/nabDfjH3ld](https://pic.twitter.com/nabDfjH3ld)

— Ian Oland (@ianoland) April 13, 2019

End of second period: Capitals 2, Hurricanes 2 | The Capitals' power play hasn't been able to get many clean entries into the zone, leading to futility on all three opportunities with the man advantage. Ovechkin has three shots on net, Carlson has two with Backstrom, Eller, Niskanen and Oshie putting one each on net — low production from a power-play unit that finished the regular season with the eighth-highest shot attempt rate per 60 minutes this season.

Not sure what's up, but Ovechkin hasn't liked the one-timer today. Maybe the pass from Carlson isn't to his liking?

— Isabelle Khurshudyan (@ikhurshudyan) April 13, 2019

Ferland's hit on Dowd gave Washington an all-you-can-eat five-minute power play but Carolina's penalty killers, including goaltender Petr Mrazek, made sure the Capitals came up empty-handed: Washington mustered three scoring chances, just one from the slot, on that sequence. Carolina also blocked three shots and Mrazek turned away all seven pucks put on net.

The power play has been integral to Washington's success this season. They were 28-8-4 during the 2018-19 regular season when scoring at least one power-play goal and 20-18-4 in games where they didn't have any. During the Stanley Cup run they were 13-3 in games with at least one power play goal and 3-5 in the others.

(Neil Greenberg/Neil Greenberg)

Canes tie it up: This game is finally back to even-strength, and the Hurricanes have tied it. Justin Williams's shot went wide off the end boards and rebounded right to Sebastian Aho at the side of the net. He jammed it past goaltender Braden Holtby, who's been dinged for two funky goals today. That's Aho's first goal of the postseason, and



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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including the end of the regular season and Thursday's playoff opener, it was his first goal in 16 games.

The game is tied 2-2 thanks to @SebastianAho. #StanleyCup  
pic.twitter.com/DEvo721AAp

— NHL GIFs (@NHLGIFs) April 13, 2019

The pendulum swings ... : This second period has featured some crazy swings in momentum. The Capitals failed to capitalize on a five-minute power play from Ferland's illegal check to the head of Dowd, then Washington had to weather 1:07 of five-on-three by Carolina. It did, and Capital One Arena is fired up for the impressive penalty kill work. The Capitals will now get another power play after Dougie Hamilton was called for elbowing Evgeny Kuznetsov. Washington's man-advantage has been getting the zone time, but the passing and shot selection has just been a little off.

No goals for Caps, but Dowd back: Capitals center Nic Dowd is back on the bench after Ferland's hit. Washington didn't take advantage of the five-minute power play. With 51 seconds left in it, T.J. Oshie was called for hooking, so the teams will go to four-on-four before Carolina gets an abbreviated power play. That's a missed opportunity for the Capitals on what was arguable a harsh call against the Hurricanes.

Ferland gone, Caps get a huge power play: Micheal Ferland's day is done after he was assessed a five-minute match penalty for head contact on center Nic Dowd, who went to the locker room for evaluation. The Capitals now have five minutes of power-play time to build their lead, and they've gotten rid of the Hurricanes' main irritant for the rest of the game. Carolina Coach Rod Brind'Amour was peeved on the bench, presumably because he thought Ferland caught Dowd's shoulder.

Ferland gets thrown out of the game for a check to the head  
pic.twitter.com/gSAHQkdoV7

— Pete Blackburn (@PeteBlackburn) April 13, 2019

#unhappy pic.twitter.com/7KKxq6wdR0

— Neil Greenberg (@ngreenberg) April 13, 2019

Djoos is too loose?: Christian Djoos played less than eight minutes last game, including just 1:13 in the third period, but Capitals Coach Todd Reirden explained that his low ice time was just situational with Washington defending a lead for most of the game. But including Lucas Wallmark's goal in the first period, Djoos has now been on the ice for all three of the Hurricanes' goals this series. The second-year defenseman was out of the lineup before Michal Kempny tore his hamstring last month, and he has the experience of playing in 22 playoff games for the team a year ago. But if he continues to struggle, might Reirden try rookie Jonas Siegenthaler in Djoos's place.

End first period: Capitals 2, Hurricanes 1 | Coach Rod Brind'Amour has used both trios in his top six in an effort to stop Ovechkin, Backstrom and Wilson but so far it hasn't worked out as planned. The Aho-Niederreiter-Williams line got torched for two even-strength goals and three scoring chances, all in the slot or crease, in the first period, with one of those goals by Backstrom off a sweet pass by Ovechkin.

(Neil Greenberg/Neil Greenberg)

That two-goal lead held in large part due to the Capitals penalty kill. Washington's PK unit held Carolina's power play to zero goals and just one scoring chance, with a scoring chance of their own, in two opportunities against the man advantage. Carolina's power play is now 0 for 5 for the series.

Canes get one back: The Hurricanes are on the board after a fluky goal by Lucas Wallmark. Following the puck behind the net, Capitals goaltender Braden Holtby made an odd choice to spin around in the crease, which caused him to be out of position with his back to the puck when Jaccob Slavin's shot was tipped in front. Washington challenged that Holtby was interfered with, but Saku Maenalanen wasn't in the crease when he made slight contact with Holtby just before the goal was

scored. Because the Capitals lost the challenge, they don't have a timeout for the rest of the game.

Oshie makes it 2-0: For the second straight game, the Capitals have a multi-goal lead in the first period. On a rush into the offensive zone, T.J. Oshie drove the net, kicked out his left to ward off a stick and lifted a backhand over Hurricanes goaltender Petr Mrazek, who has now allowed two goals on five shots. That's Oshie's first goal of this postseason, and he was a significant part of Washington's Stanley Cup run a year ago with eight goals and 13 assists in 24 games.

Imao TJ Oshie here kicking sticks out of his way  
pic.twitter.com/YbNQGZUec

— Pete Blackburn (@PeteBlackburn) April 13, 2019

Capitals strike first again: The Capitals felt their five-on-five play was lacking in Thursday's 4-2 win, and the team responded with one of its most inspiring starts of the season. On the top line's second shift of the game, captain Alex Ovechkin raced down the ice to disrupt a Carolina odd-man rush, then he laid a crushing hit on Hurricanes defenseman Brett Pesce and finally he set up Nicklas Backstrom for a tap-in goal at the backdoor. Washington is up, 1-0, less than four minutes into Game 2.

Playmaker @ovi8 feeds leading goal scorer @backstrom19 for a 1-0 lead. #StanleyCup pic.twitter.com/sY44XtERMK

— NHL GIFs (@NHLGIFs) April 13, 2019

Hurricanes shake up the lines: While the Capitals kept their lineup from Game 1 the same, the Hurricanes moved Justin Williams to Jordan Staal's line. Look for that to act as a shutdown line against Washington's top trio of Alex Ovechkin, Tom Wilson and center Nicklas Backstrom. That also bumped Carolina's Teuvo Teravainen to a line with center Sebastian Aho, the team's top-scorer who finished the regular season without a goal in 14 games. Evgeny Kuznetsov will likely get that matchup again. The Capitals' top six delivered on the power play in the first period, but the Hurricanes were the better team at five-on-five.

Each of the #Caps' three first-period goals in Game 1 came from its top six, but that group was silent thereafter. After Ovechkin's goal at 18:05 of 1st, Caps went last 41:55 of the game without a SOG from their top six. Need to establish consistent o-zone presence in Game 2.

— Mike Vogel (@VogsCaps) April 13, 2019

Rats are falling from the ceiling: Seriously. A lot of hockey players have a pregame ritual of getting loose by volleying a soccer ball around a circle outside of the locker room. When a touch by a Hurricanes' player collapsed a ceiling tile from the hallways of Capital One Arena, it brought with it a little friend.

This guy just fell from the ceiling outside the Hurricanes locker room when the ball they are kicking around hit a panel #deadonarrival. #omen.  
pic.twitter.com/2VfnSdbCXJ

— Joe Mazur (@joemazurabc11) April 13, 2019

While ABC's Joe Mazur has his interpretation that the rat means the Canes are "dead on arrival" in these playoffs, there was also the case of the Florida Panthers in the 1995-96 season. Just before the Panthers' home opener, Scott Mellanby, so the legend goes, gave a furry intruder a grizzly demise with his hockey stick and then went on to score two goals in that game. The legend grew, rubber rats were made, fans purchased and tossed rats on the ice to celebrate rat, er, hat tricks that season and eventually the Panthers made an improbable run to the Stanley Cup finals. So, you be the judge of whether this is a harbinger of doom for the Hurricanes or the Caps.

Washington Post LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140730 Washington Capitals



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Ovechkin's evolution as passer on display in Game 2

Matthew Paras

Saturday, April 13, 2019

For years, Alex Ovechkin was criticized. In 2014, for instance, Mike Milbury called the Capitals star a "one-dimensional player." A year earlier, TSN's Ray Ferraro said Ovechkin didn't have a "high hockey IQ."

But over time — most notably by winning a Stanley Cup last year — Ovechkin was able to silence his doubters. His game, too, evolved.

That evolution was on full display Saturday in the Capitals' 4-3 overtime win over the Carolina Hurricanes. The 33-year-old did not score a goal, but Ovechkin tallied two assists and had a series of bone-crunching hits to help the Capitals take a 2-0 lead in the Stanley Cup Playoffs first-round series.

Ovechkin precisely found Nicklas Backstrom on the game's first goal. And in the third period, he delivered a perfect pass to a streaking Tom Wilson, who scored a go-ahead goal.

"If he does pass it, you want to score because if you don't, he's got a pretty good shot, too, so he might be upset," Wilson said. "He's one of the best players in the game. You're not going to be that being a one-trick pony. He does it all. He's a leader, so he does it every night."

Against the Hurricanes, Ovechkin was active. He fired off eight shot attempts — tied for a team high — and four of them were on goal. But he continued to play with effort, even as his shot didn't get past Hurricanes goaltender Petr Mzarek.

On the defensive end, Ovechkin led the Capitals with a game-high seven hits. He set the tone early, throwing his body into Carolina's Brett Pesce near the boards to help the Capitals regain possession. On the ensuing rush, Backstrom passed it to Ovechkin — only for the Russian to whip it back to his co-star for the Capitals' first goal.

"When your captain is doing that and your leading goal scorer is doing that," Capitals coach Todd Reirden said, "then all the sudden people fall in line pretty quickly."

Reirden noted Ovechkin's extra activity helped the Capitals win the Stanley Cup last year. Though Ovechkin finished the postseason with 15 goals, he also had 12 assists in 24 games and used his body to block shots. The added effort was part of a bounce-back year for the Russian, who had only 33 goals in 2016-17 and averaged a career-low in ice time. After that season, many wondered if Ovechkin was on the downturn.

But there have been no such questions about whether Ovechkin was on the decline this year. Before the start of the playoffs, Capitals general manager Brian MacLellan said the most impressive part about Ovechkin's season has been his consistency. Ovechkin finished with 51 goals, scoring at least 50 for the eighth time in his career.

This year, Ovechkin had 38 assists in the regular season. Winger T.J. Oshie said Ovechkin draws so much attention from defenders, he's able to create space for the rest of his teammates.

"He's able to put it right on the tape," Oshie said. "I played with him for a long time. Not as much this year, but a long time these past couple years. And my numbers were pretty high, scored a lot of goals and a lot of them Ovi was the primary assist because he drags so many people to him."

Asked about his passing, Ovechkin said when playing with players like Backstrom and center Evgeny Kuznetsov — both of whom are premier passers — "you learn a lot."

As for his effort on both ends, Ovechkin told reporters he was just "playing hockey" — adding that players have to contribute on both ends.

"It doesn't matter who you are," Ovechkin said.

Washington Times LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140731 Washington Capitals

Backstrom saves Capitals from a disaster in the making

Thom Loverro

Saturday, April 13, 2019

No one seemed to wear the Washington Capitals' playoff failures more in the locker room in years past than Nicklas Backstrom.

He would sit in front of his locker in despair, searching for answers when there didn't seem to be any.

If this was 2017, 2016 ... pick a year, and the Capitals had failed to score on a five-minute power play in a playoff game like they did Saturday in the second period against the Carolina Hurricanes, Backstrom would have been sitting in front of his locker crushed by the failure of what likely would have been a loss.

But this is 2019, and because 2018 happened — a Stanley Cup championship for this group of hockey players — Backstrom sat in front of his locker Saturday afternoon with a smile on his face trying to explain how the hero of the game, Brooks Orpik, scored the winning goal in a 4-3 overtime Game 2 win over Carolina, giving Washington a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven opening round playoff series, with Game 3 Monday night in Raleigh, North Carolina.

When the scrum ended, I asked Backstrom about this — how he seemed to suffer the most during those painful playoff seasons, and what has changed.

It's the theme of this Capitals team defending their Stanley Cup title — a disaster in the making doesn't have to be a disaster.

Failing to score on a five-minute power play and giving the opponent momentum doesn't mean you've lost. Losing a 3-2 lead in the final minutes of play to force overtime doesn't mean you've lost.

This seems like a simple notion, but the mantra of the Capitals' locker room illustrates how badly the perennial playoff failures were in their heads before last year's breakthrough success.

"It's something we learned last year," Backstrom answered. "We shouldn't put it on ourselves when you have a good or bad game. If you lose, it's something we learned last year — just move on. Things are going to happen. You're not going to go 16-0 in the playoffs. Just have to move forward to the next game. We had that positive attitude in the locker room last year."

Backstrom, 31, deserves all the good things that come his way. He has three goals in the first two games, including the first score to give Washington the 1-0 lead over Carolina in both of them. And he has made tough defensive plays on shot blocks on the other end.

In a play that won't show up on the stat sheet, when Alex Ovechkin made a brilliant pass to Tom Wilson to take a 3-2 lead about halfway through the third period, it was Backstrom in front of Ovechkin blocking out the Carolina defender like Trent Williams leading Adrian Peterson down the field.

"Nick had a phenomenal game in Game 1," Washington coach Todd Reirden said. "Then tonight — who is out there three on five (when the Capitals faced a 5 on 3 for a minute late in the second period)? Who is out there taking face offs against their top guys? This player (Backstrom)



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is so underrated. He is the guy for us year after year, game in and game out.

"These are the best two back-to-back games I've seen Nick Backstrom play in the five years I've been here."

This idea of avoiding the fatalist notion that bad times in a game will lead to more bad times is a real thing. Reirden spoke about it after Saturday's win.

"One of the more understated parts of our game is the in-game changes in momentum and how important it is when you go on the ice, your response when a couple of extended shifts don't go your way," he said. "They're (the opponent) going to get momentum, but as quickly as we can, how can we stop it. Every game is a fresh start. It's a huge part of the team having success is understanding those key moments."

And for Nicklas Backstrom, not every Stanley Cup playoff season has to end with him sitting in front of his locker with a blank stare on his face. He still has the smile from last year. They haven't wiped that off his face.

Washington Times LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140732 Washington Capitals

Orpik scores overtime winner as Capitals go up 2-0 in series

Adam Zielonka

Saturday, April 13, 2019

Of all the players across several decades of Washington Capitals hockey who could ever score an overtime goal and win a playoff game, 38-year-old defenseman Brooks Orpik isn't the first player to spring to mind. He might actually be last on that list.

But that's why it's playoff hockey. Anything can happen.

Orpik slapped in the game-winner 1:42 into overtime as the Capitals survived a threat from the Carolina Hurricanes, winning 4-3 on Saturday in Game 2 to take a 2-0 series lead in the first round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

Nicklas Backstrom, T.J. Oshie and Tom Wilson also scored for Washington. Alex Ovechkin and Evgeny Kuznetsov notched two assists apiece and Braden Holtby saved 25 shots.

Oshie dropped a pass behind Carolina's net to Kuznetsov, who let the play develop and picked out Orpik sprinting toward the left circle.

"If you've got him or Nicky with full possession that's kind of a dream come true," Orpik said. "(Teuvo) Teravainen was supposed to be covering me, but he had no stick so I just tried to take advantage of that situation."

Orpik's teammates mobbed him; the whole scene was reminiscent of the veteran breaking a 220-game goal drought during the 2018 Stanley Cup Final.

"I thought it was awesome," Oshie said. "Kuzy did a great job slowing the play down and letting someone get open from behind the net there. And Brooksy obviously stepped into that one, putting it right where he needed to to score the goal. Always fun seeing Brooksy score goals. Seems like he likes to do it in big moments for us."

Although he's only scored 18 goals in 16 NHL seasons and three more tallies in the playoffs, this was Orpik's second straight playoff series with an overtime winner and his fourth time overall (regular season and postseason) scoring a game-winner.

It was the 10th game to require overtime in the Capitals' last 14 first-round playoff games, dating back to 2017.

It was also an especially physical game, with a wacky second period that featured five total penalties — including a 5-minute match penalty for Carolina's Micheal Ferland — but no special teams goals.

For the second straight game, Backstrom opened scoring. With the Hurricanes' blueliners not defending aggressively, Ovechkin threaded a pass through them and Petr Mrazek's back door was wide open for Backstrom to score.

Oshie followed that up for a quick 2-0 lead. He picked up his leg to kick away Justin Williams' stick and drifted left of Mrazek to pop in a backhand goal.

"I've done it in the past. Usually it doesn't really work out," Oshie said of the stick kick. "Heat of the moment, it's just my first reaction. Fortunately I was able to get the puck far enough to the weak side so we could set the post."

Carolina eventually answered with a fourth-line goal by Lucas Wallmark. The Capitals challenged, looking for goalie interference, because Holtby was bumped from behind and spun around about 360 degrees. But the challenge failed.

Ferland was ejected in the second period for running into Nic Dowd while pursuing the puck and knocking him in the shoulder and head with his back. Dowd briefly left the game to be checked out, but returned.

Meanwhile, Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour sounded off on the officials.

"When you first watch it live, you're like 'Ooh, that,'" Brind'Amour said, "but then you watch it and you see it. I get to sit and stare at it on the screen. He doesn't hit his head. His body contact — the first point of contact for sure was not the head."

But the Hurricanes weren't affected too much, as Washington's power play suddenly hit the mud. The Capitals peppered Mrazek with 16 shots on goal in the middle period but failed to convert on their chances. Soon, Sebastian Aho squeezed in the tying goal between the right post and Holtby's glove.

It wasn't until the 8:55 mark of the third period that the Capitals' top line broke through yet again. Wilson came off the bench as the last man on a line shift, just as Ovechkin carried the puck into the O-zone. He found Wilson sprinting up-ice and made the key pass, and Wilson wristed it home to take the lead and give the crowd a much-desired jolt.

Washington's penalty kill finally showed a crack and allowed its first power-play goal of the series with five minutes left in regulation. Dougie Hamilton shot from the blue line and Jordan Staal tipped it in traffic to get it past Holtby.

That one forced overtime, despite the Capitals' best efforts in the waning minutes. They forced Mrazek to make four saves in the final 2:20 of regulation, including an elite save to rob a close-range John Carlson shot with one second left.

The Capitals will take their 2-0 series advantage to Raleigh, North Carolina, for Game 3 Monday night on the Hurricanes' home ice.

"Today was better but still not where we can be," Capitals coach Todd Reirden said. "We'll have some other situations systematically that we can improve as well. They've earned their opportunity to be here. They've been, I think, a really extremely hard-working, desperate team for months now to be able to get into the playoffs so they are hardened to it. It's going to be difficult going into their building."

Washington Times LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140733 Washington Capitals



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Capitals vs. Hurricanes Game 2: How to watch and what to watch for

Washington Times Staff

Saturday, April 13, 2019

One win down, 15 to go.

That's the number of games the Washington Capitals still need to win to hoist another Stanley Cup, of course. Nothing is in the bag after their 4-2 win in Game 1 of the first round, but they do have the advantage now.

It's already time for Game 2, so here's everything you need to know before puck drop.

Opponent: Carolina Hurricanes (Capitals lead series 1-0)

When: Saturday, April 13, 3 p.m.

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

TV channel: NBC

Radio: 1500 AM

What to watch for: Lars Eller missed practice to take a "maintenance day" for an upper-body issue — he also missed part of Monday's skate — but he's still expected to play in Game 2 ... The Capitals' power play converted on their first two chances of the game Thursday. In their final 10 regular season games, the unit went just 3-for-25 ... Rookie Andrei Svechnikov only skated on Carolina's third line in Game 1, but scored both the team's goals. The No. 2 overall draft pick might not be promoted back to the top six, but he got some practice time with the Hurricanes' power play Friday ... If you're attending Game 2 and want to drive to the arena, be aware that many streets near Chinatown will be closed for the Cherry Blossom Parade. Click here for the full list of closures and consider public transportation.

Pre-game reading:

On the Capital One Arena ice, the hits just keep coming. @thomloverro writes in his column from the #Caps Game 1 win. <https://t.co/LhxN7BKgh3>

— WashTimes Sports (@WashTimesSports) April 12, 2019

The #Caps are up 1-0 in this series. @Adam\_Zielonka breaks down how last night's game was won. <https://t.co/fjaxAFqRGd>

— WashTimes Sports (@WashTimesSports) April 12, 2019

The #Caps previously-questioned penalty kill came up big in Game 1, @Matthew\_Paras writes <https://t.co/XKSfND2eBz>

— WashTimes Sports (@WashTimesSports) April 12, 2019

He wasn't part of the Stanley Cup run last year, but Nic Dowd impressed the #Caps enough this year to earn a contract extension earlier today. <https://t.co/cZmckPBZpg>

— WashTimes Sports (@WashTimesSports) April 11, 2019

Washington Times LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140734 Washington Capitals

Brooks Orpik is an OT hero again and his Caps teammates are thrilled

Brian McNally

April 13, 2019 9:08 PM

WASHINGTON — Brooks Orpik jumped off the Capitals bench and his eyes lit up.

Teammate Evgeny Kuznetsov was all alone behind the net, Carolina Hurricanes forward Teuvo Teravainen was without his hockey stick and Orpik was steaming into the offensive zone as fast as his 38-year-old legs could carry him.

"We get to this time of the year, I'm probably not counted on for too many goals," Orpik said. "But I think if you want to have the long runs, you need everybody kind of chipping in and doing things they don't normally do."

Kuznetsov hesitated for a heartbeat and then put the puck through to Orpik's stick in overtime of Game 2 of a Stanley Cup playoffs first-round series against Carolina Hurricanes. He made no mistake. For the second time in his career, Orpik ripped a sudden death overtime goal into the back of the net.

The Washington bench and the Capital One Arena crowd went nuts. The Capitals took a 4-3 victory and a 2-0 series lead heading to Raleigh for Game 3 on Monday. And Orpik took it all in stride.

A player who broke a goal drought of more than two years and 220 games in Game 2 of the Stanley Cup Final last spring against the Vegas Golden Knights has a penchant for these moments. Orpik also scored an overtime-clinching goal in Game 6 of a first-round series against the New York Islanders in 2013. He has 18 goals in his career during the regular season (1,035 games) and four playoff goals (151 games) during that time.

"You cannot put a price on experience in playoff hockey," Capitals coach Todd Reirden said. "I've been through it the last 10 years in the league, actually 10 years with him, and I know what happens in playoff time playing against a player like that. I've seen him score more than one overtime, series-clinching (goal)."

Reirden was an assistant coach with the Pittsburgh Penguins, where Orpik played the first 11 years of his career. They both arrived in Washington in 2014 — Orpik as a free agent, Reirden joining Barry Trotz's new coaching staff.

Orpik's teammates were thrilled. The man they call "Batya," a colloquial nickname given to him by his Russian teammates years ago that means something akin to "dad" or "father figure" but something you'd never call your actual father, is beloved in the room. That was evident enough during last year's Stanley Cup championship parade. It was no different on Saturday.

"Ropy is a secret weapon," Alex Ovechkin said with a smile.

Added Nicklas Backstrom: "I always said this about Brooks: First of all, he's a terrific guy. He's like a dad in the locker room to everybody, very professional guy. It's a guy you love to have on your team, but you hate to play against. I'm so happy for him that he scored this OT goal. If anyone deserves it, I'd say it's him."

Orpik has had a physical impact against Carolina. He had four hits in Game 2 and seven in Game 1. On the third pair most of the season, he has played 17:27 and 18:37 of ice time the first two games of the series and toggled between the third pair and playing on the top pair with John Carlson.

"He's a guy that's showed I think everyone in this room kind of the way and how to be a pro on and off the ice," forward Tom Wilson said. "He's the ultimate pro, he's friends with the 18-year-old and everyone right across the board. He's just such a good guy. What he does on the ice speaks for itself. I wouldn't want to play against him."

That's what made it hard for Washington to trade Orpik at the NHL draft last year. His \$5 million salary-cap hit was just too much at his age and with other, younger players due big raises, including Carlson, a free agent, and Wilson. Sent to Colorado with backup goalie Philipp Grubauer, Orpik was immediately bought out by the Avalanche and back on the open market. The Capitals brought Orpik back on a one-year, \$1.5



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million deal. They're glad they did. So is he. At 38, you never know what the future holds.

"I think everybody tries to get to a different level at this time of year," Orpik said. "I know me personally, at my age if I try to play at this level for the whole season, I'd be done halfway through the year. I hate to say I pace myself, but you've just got to play a little more conservatively - especially at my age."

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1140735 Washington Capitals

As Brooks Orpik was scoring his game-winner, Adam Eaton homered to help the Nationals beat the Pirates

Josh Luckenbaugh

April 13, 2019 8:00 PM

Call it coincidence if you want, but what happened Saturday afternoon was truly some D.C. sports magic.

In the overtime session of the Capitals' first round playoff game against the Carolina Hurricanes, defenseman Brooks Orpik scored a rocket of a goal to give Washington a 4-3 win and put them up two games to none in the series.

Less than three miles away at Nationals Park and moments after Orpik's goal, Adam Eaton launched a solo home run into the right-center field seats to tie the Nationals' game against the Pirates at two in the bottom of the eighth inning.

And on the very next pitch, Howie Kendrick hit a homer of his own to give the Nats the lead.

THIS IS HOWIE DID IT!

FINAL // #Nats 3, Pirates 2 pic.twitter.com/kMvNvHrtGm

— Washington Nationals (@Nationals) April 13, 2019

Sean Doolittle came in for the top of the ninth and earned the save, the Nats triumphing 3-2.

Eaton said he heard the cheers from the Nats Park crowd as the news of Orpik's game-winner trickled into the stadium.

"I heard that," Eaton told reporters. "That's pretty cool. First off, congratulations to them. They're playing some really important games. We're still in April ... which every game's important. But hat's off to them."

In a matter of moments, the anxieties of an entire city turned into screams of jubilation. As our very own Todd Dybas put it, the simultaneous D.C. victories were like a "sports lightning bolt from the center of town down South Capitol Street."

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1140736 Washington Capitals

Braden Holtby cost himself a goalie interference call in Game 2 and he knows it

J.J. Regan

April 13, 2019 8:26 PM

Jacob Slavin threw a puck from the wall toward the front of the net and the puck deflected off of Lucas Wallmark and in. Those type of deflections can be understandably hard to stop, but the play looked bizarre – and not just the result of a strange deflection catching a goalie off-guard.

Holtby spun around in his crease, the puck suddenly appeared at his feet and he fell over in a desperate attempt to keep it out. It was a discombobulating sequence from a goalie who has proven to be one of the smoothest in the NHL for the last several years.

So what the heck happened?

Replay shows that Carolina forward Saku Maenalanen nudged Holtby in the shoulder right before the goal. Todd Reirden challenged the play for goalie interference, but it was ruled that no goalie interference took place.

Wallmark goal stands. 2-1 game. #CapsCanes  
pic.twitter.com/GemiXV34eO

— NBC Sports Capitals (@NBCSCapitals) April 13, 2019

When you watch the replay, two things stand out. First, there is no question that Maenalanen made contact with Holtby. Second, he did not hit him hard enough to force Holtby to spin around. So why would Holtby spin with the puck still in the defensive zone?

A cynic will say Holtby allowed himself to get spun around in order to sell the goalie interference. Holtby did admit that he spun around on purpose, but not because he was looking for goalie interference. Rather, he actually was trying to play through it.

"We've tried to look at plays to see how to keep battling through things if there's an interference or not, whether it's your guy or their guy," Holtby said. "One of those things is if a guy kind of clips you on your right side, takes your stick, I tried to hopefully spin off it is the only way to have a chance to still stop the puck."

When Maenalanen contacts Holtby, he also makes contact with his goalie stick. Holtby then instinctively spins around in order to free his stick and himself from Maenalanen. It just happened to be poor timing that cost the Caps the goal.

"If I would've stayed there, he would've dragged me across the crease," Holtby said.

The irony of the play is that by trying to play through the interference, it clearly cost him the call.

Had Holtby stayed put, it could have been argued that the contact did not allow Holtby to get set in order to make a save on the deflection, thus making it goalie interference. Since Holtby was clearly spinning around on his own and was not simply pushed around by the contact, it was ruled not to be the result of the interference.

"It's one of those plays where there's been some inconsistency in how things have been called," Holtby said.

"It was one of those where you're a little too proactive and they don't see that," he added. "But it's a tough job making those calls, too. Obviously personally playing the position you know that that's interference. But there's a point in hockey where you've just got to battle, too. I'm not going to complain about a call or no-call. I know that doing that is giving me the best chance to stop that puck. We move on."

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1140737 Washington Capitals



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Micheal Ferland upset with questionable match penalty after hitting Nic Dowd 'with my butt'

J.J. Regan

April 13, 2019 7:56 PM

WASHINGTON – You don't exactly have to be an expert lip-reader to know that both Carolina Hurricanes head coach Rod Brind'Amour and forward Micheal Ferland were not fans of the match penalty Ferland received in the second period of Game 2.

Brind'Amour appeared to be expressing his disbelief quite passionately on the bench after the call was made while Ferland made a detour on his way to the locker room to express his displeasure to the referees.

"I'm tracking back and I'm thinking, 'I'm going to finish my hit on this guy,'" Ferland said. "I see him reaching for the puck. I could have finished with my shoulder but he was reaching, so I thought I'd let up and I hit him with my back, my butt. I didn't make any contact with his head with my shoulder or anything. I didn't leave my feet or nothing. That's what I was thinking. I don't agree with the call."

Ferland was issued a five-minute major and match penalty for a high hit he delivered to Capitals forward Nic Dowd in the second period.

According to the NHL rule book, a match penalty is assessed on a player who "deliberately attempts to injure or who deliberately injures an opponent in any manner."

The play was bad luck for Ferland as Dowd took a high-stick from Warren Foegele just as Ferland was about to hit him. That made Dowd's head snap back as he was getting hit, and it appeared far worse in real-time than it actually was.

"Originally it did look bad," Brind'Amour said. "When you first watch it live, you're like 'Ooh, that...' but then you watch it and you see it. I get to sit and stare at it on the screen. He doesn't hit his head. His body contact...the first point of contact for sure was not the head. So that's frustrating. Lose a player, have to kill a five-minute penalty. That gets frustrating for sure." "

With the Caps clinging to a 2-1 lead, this could have proven to be a major turning point in the game. The penalty ultimately did not cost Carolina other than losing Ferland as Washington failed to score on the resulting five-minute major.

While Carolina was able to overcome the penalty, that is not the end of the story for Ferland. At least not yet.

When a player receives a match penalty, that player is automatically suspended until the league commissioner rules on the issue. The play does not look worthy of a match penalty and certainly not worthy of a further suspension, but Ferland has to hope Gary Bettman agrees, or he could end up missing more time.

"I don't think it was a dirty hit," Ferland said. "I don't think [I] deserve to be suspended. I take pride in my game of being a clean hitter. I never want to hurt anybody."

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1140738 Washington Capitals

Deja vu all over again: Brooks Orpik scores another playoff game-winner

Kimberly Cataudella

April 13, 2019 6:39 PM

In what seemed like a game of deja vu on deja vu, the Washington Capitals' final goal of Game 2 against the Carolina Hurricanes confirmed that we truly have seen lots of this before.

Brooks Orpik's Game 2, game-winning goal in overtime confirmed that history would repeat itself. Orpik also had the game-winning goal in Game 2 of the Stanley Cup Final, though that time, the final score was 3-2.

Orpik has a history of game-winning goals, even before he played for the Caps. While he was a Pittsburgh Penguin, his overtime goal allowed the team to beat the New York Islanders 4-3 in overtime. This game-winning, slapshot goal was his first of the season, and man, was it important.

Don't sleep on Brooks "Secret Weapon" Orpik in the playoffs, folks. Saturday afternoon – and in past games and even for a past team – he was the unlikely hero.

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1140739 Washington Capitals

Brooks Orpik is the overtime hero in Game 2, sends Caps to 2-0 series lead

J.J. Regan

April 13, 2019 6:21 PM

WASHINGTON – Brooks Orpik was the unlikeliest of overtime heroes on Saturday as he scored the game-winner less than two minutes into overtime to give the Capitals the 4-3 Game 2 win. and 2-0 series lead.

With the win, Washington now takes a 2-0 lead as the series shifts to Carolina. This marks the first time Washington has taken a 2-0 lead in the playoffs since the 2018 Eastern Conference Final against Tampa Bay and the first time the Caps have taken a 2-0 series lead at home since 2016 when they defeated the Philadelphia Flyers twice in the first round.

Game 3 will take place in Raleigh on Monday.

Here are four reasons the Caps won Game 2.

### 1. Another strong start

Washington was able to ride a three goal first period to the win in Game 1. Game 2 got off to a similar start with Nicklas Backstrom and T.J. Oshie both tallying in the opening frame to put the Caps up 2-0. After letting in two goals on the first five shots he faced, Petr Mrazek clamped down giving up only two goals on the next 23 shots. Washington does not win this game without those two early goals.

### 2. A tough start for Justin Faulk

This is a game Faulk is going to want to forget.

Faulk was all over the ice on Washington's first goal as he went from the right side of the ice and followed the puck all the way to the left as Dmitry Orlov passed to Backstrom who passed to Alex Ovechkin. As Backstrom cut to the middle, Faulk tried to stick with him, but a subtle bump by Backstrom caused enough separation to get him free for the goal.

On the second goal, a Faulk turnover turned into a rush for the Caps. As Washington brought it up ice, Faulk looked to be in good defensive position, but stuck with Evgeny Kuznetsov as he went hard on net, despite the fact that Oshie had the puck. It may have been Faulk's normal assignment on a rush play like that to cover the man coming to the net, but by doing so he allowed Oshie an open lane to the net which Oshie used to score Washington's second goal of the game.



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### 3. A killed two-man advantage

The Caps were handed a golden opportunity to add to their lead in the second period when Micheal Ferland was given a five-minute match penalty for head contact to Nic Dowd. Washington, however, did not score. A hook by Oshie near the end erased what was left of the power play and Nic Dowd was called for high-sticking just two seconds after the major expired. Suddenly, the Caps found themselves facing a two-man advantage power play for 1:07.

The penalty kill did its job and killed off the penalty, retaking the momentum that Carolina should have seized after the failed major penalty.

### 4. Orpik's overtime winner

Carolina was on its heels early in the overtime as Brett Pesce lost his stick reaching for the puck in the neutral zone. Teuvo Teravainen gave his stick to the defenseman, but the Hurricanes were scrambling defensively as a result. Evgeny Kuznetsov certainly took advantage and stood behind the net with the puck awaiting his chance. He then delivered a beautiful elevated pass to Orpik who roofed the game winner over Mrazek for just his fourth career playoff goal.

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### 1140740 Washington Capitals

Micheal Ferland ejected for dangerous hit on Nic Dowd in Game 2

Sammi Silber

April 13, 2019 4:29 PM

In the Capitals' Game 2 against the Hurricanes Saturday, Washington got a five-minute power-play after Micheal Ferland received a major penalty and game misconduct for a dangerous hit on Nic Dowd.

As Dowd entered the offensive zone, he found himself blindsided when Ferland delivered a high hit to the head, sending Dowd hard onto the ice. Ferland was almost immediately ejected, and Carolina head coach Rob Brind'Amour was visibly livid with the call.

Here's the play:

Micheal Ferland given a five minute match penalty for a high hit on Nic Dowd. #CapsCanes pic.twitter.com/btMANidGKa

— NBC Sports Capitals (@NBCSCapitals) April 13, 2019

Dowd headed off the ice for concussion protocol, but soon returned to game action. Ferland could potentially face a suspension if the hit is deemed dangerous by the league, which would be a major loss for the Hurricanes, as he serves a major role on the top-6.

Rod Brind'Amour is absolutely livid with the Ferland major #TakeWarning #ALLCAPS #StanleyCup pic.twitter.com/LX3oJ3fwZE

— Rob Taub (@RTaub\_) April 13, 2019

Tampa's Nikita Kucherov was given a one-game suspension Saturday after delivering a dangerous hit to Markus Nutivaara in Friday's Game 2 against Columbus.

"I don't see head contact," Brind'Amour told Pierre McGuire during a second-period interview in regards to Ferland's hit.

Brind'Amour also added that Ferland shouldn't receive a suspension for the play.

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### 1140741 Washington Capitals

NHL Playoffs 2019 Roundup: Columbus dominates Tampa, Isles keeps rolling, Blues surging, Knights not vanquished

Sammi Silber

April 13, 2019 10:15 AM

After Wednesday's exciting Game 1 matchups, which included the Columbus Blue Jackets clawing back from a three-goal deficit to win 4-3 over the Tampa Bay Lightning and the New York Islanders taking a 3-2 overtime win over the Pittsburgh Penguins, it can be hard to top those performances. However, Game 2 for these teams proved to have just about – if not more – excitement than each team's postseason debut.

Here's how each matchup went on Friday.

Duchene, Columbus dominate Tampa Bay, 5-1

It was non-stop dominance from the Blue Jackets Friday, as Duchene managed three assists and a four-point night to pave the way for an impressive victory over the Lightning, this year's Stanley Cup favorite and the best team in the regular season.

Artemi Panarin and Zach Werenski also had multi-point performances, each potting a goal and an assist in the win. Sergei Bobrovsky made 23 saves for the Blue Jackets. For the Lightning, Mikhail Sergachev scored the lone goal, and Andrei Vasilevskiy made just 22 saves on 27 shots. It was also a game full of tension, as 13 penalties constantly stopped play as emotions boiled over, and with a dangerous hit and frustrating play, Nikita Kucherov could now face a suspension.

pretty, pretty, pretty passing pic.twitter.com/CYA6GedoFW

— x-Columbus Blue Jackets (@BlueJacketsNHL) April 13, 2019

Columbus has now outscored Tampa 9-1 since being down 3-0 in the first period of Game 1 and extended their series lead to 2-0. However, it is worth noting that each team that has ever been done 2-0 to the Blue Jackets to start a first-round series has gone on to win the Stanley Cup.

Islanders cruise to 3-1 win over Pittsburgh

Though Erik Gudbranson gave the Penguins a 1-0 lead in the second, the Islanders managed to score three unanswered goals to take the Game 2 victory.

Jordan Eberle had a goal and an assist, and Matthew Barzal had two helpers in the win. Josh Bailey also sealed the deal with a late power-play goal, and he now has goals in back-to-back games to kick off the playoffs. Robin Lehner also made 32 saves on 33 shots for New York, while Matt Murray stopped 31 of 34. There were also 12 penalties as tension mounted through the night.

HEEYY JOSH BAILEY!

PPG! 🙌 #LGI pic.twitter.com/S1LjaQXMB5

— x - New York Islanders (@NYIslanders) April 13, 2019

The Islanders now hold a 2-0 series lead over the Penguins. Eberle is also the league's leading playoff scorer with four points through these two games so far.

Sundqvist lifts Blues over Jets in back-and-forth game, 4-3

It was a hard-fought battle Friday between the Blues and Jets, as each team exchanged goals early and often. However, two tallies from Oskar Sundqvist, and a game-winner from Ryan O'Reilly, helped the Blues secure the Game 2 win.



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Pat Maroon also scored for the Blues, while Blake Wheeler, Patrik Laine and Mark Scheifele put up goals for the Jets. After Scheifele tied the game at three in the second period, the game looked even, until O'Reilly put the Blues back by one. From there, Winnipeg couldn't solve Jordan Binnington, who is sporting a 2.00 GAA and .926 save percentage through his two starts so far.

Watch this. #stlblues pic.twitter.com/cicbxTk3LT

— St. Louis Blues (@StLouisBlues) April 13, 2019

St. Louis now holds a 2-0 series lead over Winnipeg, who made the Western Conference Final last season but eventually fell to the Vegas Golden Knights.

Knights even series with 5-3 win over Sharks

After a weak showing in Game 1, the Golden Knights were able to overcome adversity and eventually take the victory in a high-scoring affair. Cody Eakin, Colin Miller and Max Pacioretty gave Vegas an early 3-0 lead in the first period, but as the opening frame winded down, the Sharks got three goals from Logan Couture, Tomas Hertl and Joe Thornton in less than three minutes to make it 3-3 heading into the second.

Despite dropping a three-goal lead, the Golden Knights got a goal from Mark Stone in the second and William Karlsson in the third to put Vegas back on top and eventually get the victory. Pacioretty had a goal and an assist, and Paul Stastny had two helpers in the victory. Couture and Erik Karlsson also had multi-point performances for San Jose.

PARTY ON THE WEST COAST pic.twitter.com/brLMWhrS7P

— x-Vegas Golden Knights (@GoldenKnights) April 13, 2019

It's been a high scoring series so far, and as of right now, it's tied 1-1. So far, this is the only series in the playoffs that is tied and will have to go at least five games.

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1140742 Washington Capitals

Michal Kempny's absence still looms large for Caps' blue line after Game 1

J.J. Regan

April 13, 2019 6:00 AM

ARLINGTON, Va. – Todd Reirden did not have much time before the playoffs to find a way to replace Michal Kempny on the blue line. Now one game into the postseason, the defense still remains very much a work in progress for the Capitals.

Washington escaped with a 4-2 Game 1 win over the Carolina Hurricanes on Thursday after getting outshot 29-18 on the night. That is to be expected considering Carolina is a high shot volume team while the Caps are very selective in when they fire the puck. Having said that, however, this does not seem like a long-term recipe for success:

#NHL playoff teams: 5-on-5 shot attempts in Game 1

Penguins 70

Hurricanes 59

Bruins 56

Islanders 49

Maple Leafs 49

Blues 47

Flames 46

Avalanche 43

Blue Jackets 43

Predators 43

Sharks 42

Jets 41

Lightning 40

Golden Knights 39

Stars 39

Capitals 23 pic.twitter.com/HzUX9pYEta

— The Hockey News (@TheHockeyNews) April 12, 2019

And neither does the defense as it is currently constructed.

When Kempny suffered a torn hamstring in March, the search for his replacement began soon after. Reirden used a number of different players alongside John Carlson to find the right combination, but none of those pairings stood. Instead of choosing one as his new top pair, Reirden now uses multiple different looks over the course of a game.

At the start of Game 1, Carlson played his off-side on the left with fellow righty Nick Jensen on the right. There were also times when Carlson moved back to the right with Brooks Orpik or Christian Djoos playing on the left.

"I think you saw a lot of different combinations yesterday," Reirden said Friday after practice, "But the primary one is Jensen and his ability to be able to skate and take away time and space from the opposition. He's hard in areas around our net. He's willing to block shots and competes hard."

The results were not overwhelmingly positive except for on the scoreboard.

Jensen struggled in what was his first NHL playoff game. One of his real strengths as a player is breaking the puck out of the defensive zone, but that proved difficult against Carolina's aggressive forecheck. In the first period he got caught behind the goal line and tried to pass through the middle right in front of the Caps' own net in the face of the forecheck. It was a bad mistake that could have proved costly.

"I think I played a little too much D-zone and not enough in the O-zone so we've got to find a way to get the puck out of the zone a little better and put them in their zone a little more," Jensen said.

"It's a learning process for all players and especially playoff hockey is a whole different entity," Reirden said. "I thought [Jensen] did some good things and some things that can be improved on as well."

Faith in Djoos seemed to dissipate quickly as he played less than eight minutes for the entire game. He was on the ice for only 1:13 in the third period, but was still on the ice for both of Carolina's goals.

Reirden said after the game that Djoos' lack of ice time was based more on the situation than on his play.

"In that situation last night and in the third period with him playing a little bit less, we had two penalties to kill and then we're in a situation where we're 5-on-6," Reirden said. "We talk all the time about putting players in a situation to succeed. If we were behind that game 3-2 then it probably would have been reversed, but in that situation I felt Orpik was having a strong game. Those were his strengths as a player. That's going to kind of dictate it as well. For me it's situational, for me it's who's having a good game? Who's had an impact in the defensive zone?"

Reirden also cited the team's breakouts as an area in which the defense needed to improve.



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"I thought [the Hurricanes] were extremely aggressive," he said. "Again, they didn't do anything that surprised us. We've seen them. They're a well-coached team that has discipline in terms of how they do things systematically. We knew that they were going to be down aggressively on the forecheck with their defense pinching down often. And for us just the execution of coming out of the defensive zone with possession or getting opportunities from them being aggressive like that could be executed a little bit better. That's a five-man unit. In terms of our defense, the better and the quicker we can move it to our skill players the better."

There were a few positives on defense for Washington worth noting. The team did a tremendous job of clearing rebounds given up by Braden Holtby out of danger, preventing many second-chance opportunities for the Hurricanes.

"We knew that they are a high shot-volume team, but I think we did a pretty good job of taking sticks away in front and those second rebounds," Jensen said. "Those second chances, what they won, that's how they score. They get pucks to the net and then everyone's scrambling in front of the net and then they get those backdoor tap-ins. I think we did a good job protecting kind of those second chances that they had."

Another positive was Orpik who was great and was easily Washington's second-best blueliner on the night next to Carlson.

"I thought he was physical and hard and no fun to play against," Reirden said.

Orpik's physical play throughout the game was one of the team's biggest highlights for Game 1. Against a quick, transitional offense like that of Carolina's, wearing them down through physical play can be an effective means of slowing them down.

"Sometimes you see the result of [physical play] in game and then sometimes it takes more than a couple games to start affecting them," Orpik said. "I think we know that from the last couple years. You usually see the results at some point."

While his performance was encouraging, however, it does not bring any clarity in terms of who should play with Carlson. At 38 years old, you cannot expect Orpik to play top-pair minutes for very long. The 17:27 he played on Thursday is about where you want to keep his playing time. Carlson played 18:31 of 5-on-5 time alone in Game 1, not including power play time. That is too much to ask of Orpik who also is one of the team's top penalty killers.

It makes sense to want to keep Orpik and Carlson together, but you have to limit that time. The question is with who? Jensen must improve on his Game 1 performance to justify staying on the top pair. Even if he does, it still remains fair to wonder if it makes sense to put Carlson, your best defenseman, at a disadvantage by making him play his off-side.

It may be time to explore other possibilities by splitting up Dmitry Orlov and Matt Niskanen. That pair has had its struggles over the course of the season but has played markedly better of late. The issue is that by keeping that pair locked in, it limits your options for what you can do with Carlson. If Jensen and Djoos don't look great on the top pair, then your only other choice is Orpik unless Orlov and Niskanen become options as well.

You also have to wonder about Djoos. Even if limiting his ice time was purely, situational, playing him so few minutes puts a strain on the rest of the defense. Could we see Jonas Siegenthaler get into the lineup at some point? Putting a rookie onto the blue line in the playoffs has obvious risks, but if the bar you are setting is that you just need him to play more than eight minutes, that's not a high bar.

The stats for Game 1 paint a bleak picture for Washington's defense. Their performance was not as bad as those metrics make it look and the Caps did in fact walk away with the victory. Over the course of what the team hopes will be another long playoff run, however, the defense will have to be better. The team has to find a top pair it can rely on besides Orpik-Carlson and it has to find a third-pairing defenseman it can depend on for more than eight minutes per game.

It did not cost the Caps on Thursday and it may not cost them in the first round, but when the competition gets tougher each round, the defense we saw on Thursday will not be enough to earn Washington a second Stanley Cup.

"We feel like we can play better," Reirden said. "We can play better than we did last night."

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1140749 Websites

The Athletic / Roundtable reaction: Are we witnessing one of the biggest collapses in recent NHL playoff history?

Scott Burnside

Apr 13, 2019 65

I recently spoke to Minnesota head coach Bruce Boudreau for a story on what it's like to coach in the playoffs and he recalled the Washington Capitals' collapse in 2010 against the Montreal Canadiens. The Capitals were Presidents' Trophy winners and heavy favorites not just to beat the No. 8 seed but also to win their first Stanley Cup. It didn't happen as Montreal shocked the Caps in seven games. "The thing I've learned more than anything," Boudreau said. "Your regular-season game cannot be your playoff game. You have to ramp it up another 20 percent."

And he offered an unsolicited warning for current Presidents' Trophy winners Tampa Bay on the eve of the playoffs: No matter how good you were in the regular season you've got to be better in the playoffs.

With the Lightning staring at an 0-2 deficit against a committed, hard-working Columbus Blue Jackets team the words now seem prophetic. Throw in that regular-season scoring champ and pending Hart Trophy winner Nikita Kucherov is suspended for Game 3 in Columbus Sunday after losing his stuff late in Game 2 and boarding a defenseless Markus Nutivaara and are we witnessing one of the greatest collapses in playoff history? We asked a collection of The Athletic's NHL writers what's next for the Lightning as they teeter on the brink of a historic meltdown.

Scott Burnside: My favorite part of Game 2 was the chirping between Tampa Bay defenseman Victor Hedman and the Columbus bench that, according to analyst Pierre McGuire, went like this: How did going up 2-0 work out for you last year? That was a shot at the Blue Jackets, who blew a 2-0 series lead over Washington in the first round losing four straight times. It's a history lesson that resonates a year later. And it's safe to say Sunday's game looms as one of the most pivotal in the Lightning's history, especially with Kucherov suspended. The undisciplined play follows a disturbing trend for Kucherov and teammate Steven Stamkos, both of whom went AWOL late in last year's conference final loss to Washington. This spring Stamkos, Kucherov and Brayden Point have combined for zero points in the two losses to open this series. In spite of last spring's outcome, our guess is the answer to Hedman's chirp will go something like this; being up 2-0 is going to work out a lot better for Columbus this spring, thanks for asking.

Pierre LeBrun: The five-alarm fire feels like a potential inferno now for a Tampa Bay squad missing Kucherov for a must-win Game 3. It truly is shocking how all of this has played out so far. No one should be surprised Columbus is playing this way. That part was predictable. They're way better than a wild-card team on paper, and we know why their season has had its ups and downs. They have been playing win-or-die hockey for a while now. But regardless of the opposition, the Bolts can control their own play and that's the stunning part. They've lost their composure. One veteran NHL executive texted me today to say now we'll find out how many winners are on that roster with the adversity they're facing. I mean, it's not like this Tampa Bay core hasn't shown itself



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 14, 2019

playoff ready. They've played a ton of playoff hockey the last half-decade. But the next few days will go a long way toward defining a lot of these players' careers. Win without Kucherov on Sunday and the narrative flips on its head. Now the Jackets would be facing questions about what happened last year with Washington. And the Bolts would be feeding off the season-saving momentum of winning without their best player. Sunday night. It's all right there. The most important early playoff moment in the entire NHL.

Aaron Portzline: I'm sure part of the Blue Jackets' thinking is that, sure, they'd rather face the Lightning without their 128-point player in the lineup. But I'd be shocked if they're making too much out of Kucherov's one-game absence. If anything, they may be fearful that Kucherov's absence — and the possible absence of Hedman, who missed practiced on Saturday — will be a rallying cry for the Lightning. Recall last season when the Blue Jackets came back to Columbus with a 2-0 lead on Washington. They certainly didn't let their guard down in Game 3, but they learned first-hand how quickly momentum can shift in a series. The Blue Jackets have gotten to this point by outworking and out-checking the Lightning, forcing them to play a style of game they didn't have to play much in the regular season. The Lightning need to fix their approach, make adjustments or perhaps just roll up their sleeves. As one recent NHL player said about the Lightning: "They like planting flowers, not pulling weeds."

Craig Custance: At this time last year, I was booking a trip to Columbus to go write about the end of the Barry Trotz era in Washington. The Blue Jackets held a 2-0 lead on his Capitals in round one, he was without a contract beyond last season and there already seemed to be a succession plan in place. Columbus just had to finish it off. We know how that turned out. The Capitals won Game 3 in overtime and things worked out just fine for Trotz and everybody else. It's entirely possible here that history repeats itself but that experience becomes invaluable for the Blue Jackets right now. They know they haven't accomplished anything yet. Kucherov's suspension certainly helps the cause but he has just two goals in his last 14 playoff games. It's not like he was lighting it up. The Blue Jackets will be locked in and last season's heartbreak woven into their DNA will be a part of it.

Eric Duhatschek: Even without Kucherov for Game 3, the Lightning have enough depth, talent and goaltending to win one game, which is all they need to do in order to get back in the series and all they care about today. Just win one game — because if you win one game, it's 2-1 in the series, a manageable deficit, and in all likelihood, you start to relax and go back to doing the things that made you a 62-win regular-season team in the first place. Tampa Bay looks uncharacteristically tight and out of sync — the exact opposite of the confidence and poise they played with for most of this past season. Heavy expectations can do that to you. In 2006, a 52-win Carolina Hurricanes team lost two games at home to the Montreal Canadiens to open the playoffs — the first by an embarrassing 6-1 count — but came back, won the series and won the Stanley Cup. It can happen. This is a great Tampa Bay team. I'm not prepared to shovel dirt on them until the final buzzer of the final game.

Joe Smith: Captain Steven Stamkos said the Lightning entered this season with the feeling of "this is our time." But is Tampa Bay's time almost up? It has been stunning to watch the Lightning play the past two games. They've been a shell of the team that relentlessly ripped through the regular season. For such a veteran, experienced group that has been on three deep playoff runs in four years, it was striking to see them lose their composure and their cool in Game 2. Kucherov, the Hart Trophy front-runner, put his team in a bad spot by getting suspended for one game for his needless hit Friday. For all the talk of Kucherov maturing this season, this was not a good look. It was a fitting example of the frustration that has engulfed Tampa Bay's top guys, who have been non-factors (Stamkos, Kucherov and Point with no points and a minus-7). Hedman is banged up and doesn't look like himself. Sunday might be one of the biggest games in this core's history together, and we will learn a lot about them in how they respond. I'm not ready to bury the Lightning yet. They're too talented, with too much character to flop like this. Said former captain Vinny Lecavalier, whose '03 Lightning team overcame an

0-2 deficit to Washington in their 2004 Stanley Cup year: "Win one game and it's a whole new series."

The Athletic LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140750 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Deja vu for Leafs' Kadri after dirty cross-check vs. Bruins

Chris Johnston

April 14, 2019, 2:18 AM

BOSTON — It won't take long for the NHL's Department of Player Safety to write the script for Nazem Kadri's next suspension video, they merely need to change a couple of words from the one they used to announce his three-game ban during last year's playoffs.

But Kadri won't get off so lightly this time around.

In fact, he's not likely to see another shift in this first-round series against the Boston Bruins, nor should he, given his long history of crossing the line with illegal shots to an opponent's head.

There's absolutely no evidence Kadri has learned his lesson or felt contrition. Not after forfeiting nearly \$400,000 in salary for his previous on-ice transgressions, and putting Toronto in a significant hole last spring for a dirty hit no more than 10 feet from where he violently cross-checked Jake DeBrusk to the side of the head Saturday night.

If you feel like history keeps repeating itself in these Bruins-Leafs series, you're not imagining it.

Where things differ this time, is that disciplinarian George Parros offered Kadri an in-person hearing, which leaves the NHL with the option of handing down a suspension of six games or more. The league is not compelled to do so, but the sky's the limit for how high it can go.

Kadri's lengthy rap sheet will work against him because the severity of punishment increases for successive violations.

Each of his previous four career suspensions involved a blow to another player's head — either with his stick, arm or posterior. Tommy Wingels was down in a prone position when Kadri responded to a hit on linemate Mitch Marner in Game 1 of last year's series by leaping toward the Bruins forward and driving him into the boards.

As part of the video explaining his suspension, here's what the NHL DoPS said: "While we acknowledge that Wingels makes contact with Marner moments before, players are never permitted to retaliate in an illegal fashion. This is a forceful and illegal hit delivered on a defenceless opponent for the purpose of retribution and message-sending and such plays will not be tolerated."

Fast forward 366 days and here we are again.

Kadri and DeBrusk were going at it right from puck drop in Game 2. They got tangled up early and DeBrusk hit Kadri with a couple of punches, which somehow led to offsetting penalties at 11:12 of the first period.

The Leafs centre grew visibly frustrated with referees Trevor Hanson and Brad Meier, who turned a blind eye to transgressions from both teams, including an elbow from DeBrusk that bloodied Travis Dermott. The heat continued to rise inside TD Garden and the officials couldn't keep the lid on a boiling pot since they'd lost their whistles.

"It was a physical game," said Leafs coach Mike Babcock. "The referees, the way they reffed the game, let a lot of stuff go, obviously."



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One of the few minors given out was a ticky-tack hooking call on Kadri in the second period. When it was killed off, he raced back into the Leafs' end and was sent flying by DeBrusk after a knee-on-knee hit.

Kadri went straight to the dressing room and wouldn't return until the third period.

"We thought it was [knee-on-knee]," said Leafs centre John Tavares.

"I thought it was clean," said Bruins coach Bruce Cassidy. "Looking back on it, shoulder-to-shoulder. Obviously, Kadri stayed down, I mean that's his prerogative when you get hit."

Toronto clawed back some territory in the final period of a game that was otherwise completely dominated by the Bruins. Kadri even tipped home a Dermott point shot to get the Leafs back to 3-1 down before all hell broke loose.

It happened innocently enough, with DeBrusk driving Patrick Marleau into the rounded glass at the end of Boston's bench on a clean hit. Kadri skated immediately toward the Bruins player and changed the position of his stick before slamming it into the side of DeBrusk's helmet, earning a cross-checking major, game misconduct and a whole lot more trouble.

As if the parallels with last year's incident didn't look bad enough, Kadri was suspended four games in April 2016 for cross-checking Detroit's Luke Glendening in the head. There's a well-established pattern here. The message hasn't gotten through.

Kadri's absence will leave a sizeable hole in the Leafs' lineup, with either Marleau or William Nylander forced to move into the middle to replace him. At least they've got Tavares this time around to help Auston Matthews shoulder the most high-leverage assignments against Boston.

But the positive aspects of Kadri's game — his competitive, agitating side and ability to be a secondary scorer — will be missed dearly.

"Naz is a crucial part of our team," said Tavares.

Still, there was no excuse for his poor decision-making.

Not the spotty refereeing, nor the knee-on-knee hit, nor the fact Boston was clearly trying to send a message by upping its physical play. Had Kadri chosen to cross-check DeBrusk in the shoulder or tried to engage him in a fight, he wouldn't be facing the longest suspension of his career.

"It's not easy," Tavares said of turning another cheek. "Luckily [the knee-on-knee] wasn't serious, but something like that could be very serious."

"In the end, you can't let that get in the way of what you're doing," said Babcock. "Playing in the Stanley Cup playoffs isn't supposed to be easy and it's worth it."

That's a satisfaction Kadri won't experience again soon.

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1140751 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Maple Leafs get full big, bad Bruins experience in Game 2 loss

Luke Fox

April 13, 2019, 10:58 PM

BOSTON — Bruce Cassidy brought a sledgehammer to a chess match.

Sensing a need for an intensity injection after his club was left gasping and flat after the Toronto Maple Leafs' series-opening win Thursday, the Boston Bruins coach vowed to do things differently in Game 2.

So, he tweaked his roster, juggled his match-ups, and unleashed the hounds.

As David Backes walked down from the press box and toward the Bruins dressing room pre-game, the happy-nasty veteran snatched a yellow rally towel off a stack of freebies and giddily twirled it over his head. He was going in.

From the moment Rob Gronkowski slipped on a Pastrnak sweater, whipped the Bruins flag like a madman and body-checked the glass to rile up the locals, the Bruins' 4-1 Saturday-night steamrolling of their visitors had a feeling of inevitability — and the puck hadn't even dropped yet.

"In playoffs, usually the team that loses comes out the next game harder," Maple Leafs defenceman Jake Muzzin said. "We have to understand that."

If the young Leafs didn't grasp that concept before, it was drilled into the heads (and shoulders and faces) in a smash-mouth, lopsided, will-imposing affair that has altered the series' tone, removed some key players, and ratcheted the tension tenfold.

"We didn't play to our identity in Game 1," Cassidy said. "How do you respond? You're physical. Win the puck battles. Control momentum in the first period. Attack when you have the chance. We hit a lot of check lists. Basically, let them know how we're going to play."

Much happened in this one, most of it at Toronto's expense.

By the end of the first period, two Leafs defenders, Travis Dermott and Jake Muzzin, had their faces bloodied by a Bruin's doing. By the end of the second, mild-mannered Frederik Gauthier had been roped into a retaliation penalty and Nazem Kadri had hobbled to the dressing room after going airborne with a knee-on-knee from Jake DeBrusk.

Those big, bad Bruins embraced and enforced their identity, pressuring the Leafs into costly gaffes with aggression.

"We've got some guys who have been through some nasty series in the past. I don't anticipate problems there," Cassidy said. "We're not a team that runs from a physical game. It brings out the best of us at times."

Backes made his case to remain in the lineup early and often, delivering a game-high seven hits. The big winger's fierce forecheck helped spring Massachusetts native Charlie Coyle — Muzzin's man, unchecked — for his first playoff goal as a Bruin, and by the game's eight-minute mark the shots were 10-1 for the men in black.

"We had guys dialed in tonight," Backes said. "Game 1 was a slap in the face, a little wake-up call."

A poor defensive line change, the result of Mike Babcock trying to chase his match-ups, left Nikita Zaitsev hanging on a beautifully executed two-on-one strike by David Pastrnak and Brad Marchand.

And a ghastly William Nylander fumble as he tried to carry the puck harmlessly behind his own net resulted in a gift for Danton Heinen — and a curse for Frederik Andersen, who was otherwise solid in the loss. (Andersen later attributed Nylander's mistake to bad ice.)

Leafs Nation, led by GM Kyle Dubas's grandmother, was outraged by the contest's rather inconsistent officiating.

Nazem Kadri drew an offsetting roughing minor when DeBrusk rammed his face, then another soft hooking call in the second period.

As soon as he'd finished serving his second minor, Kadri hopped the boards and tried to break up a play in the Leafs zone. DeBrusk cruised through middle ice and caught him knee-on-knee.

"I'm not a dirty player," DeBrusk said. "I don't think I intended to knee-on-knee him."

National Hockey League @NHL. Watching the Leafs and Bruins, did you borrow the Officials from the OHL. It sure looks that way. Shameful!



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— Marietta Dubas (@grammadubie) April 14, 2019

That play went unpenalized. Kadri limped off but returned for the third to score on a nifty tip from a Dermott point shot.

When DeBrusk checked winger Patrick Marleau into the stanchion, however, Kadri immediately charged toward him and cross-checked him in the head, drawing a major, a game misconduct, and a request for an in-person hearing from the league's department of player safety.

Kadri's series is essentially over, and there is concern about the health of Boston defenceman Torey Krug, knocked so hard by a clean Muzzin check that he was down on all fours for a while before leaving the game for good. (Krug suffered a concussion in March.)

It's on.

"We're not gonna be pushed around," said Kadri pre-game, more engaged than he's been all year but now at risk of another undisciplined suspension. "I think we made that very clear."

Patrice Bergeron scored on the five-minute power-play, putting this one to rest.

Cassidy also had great success in pulling his Perfection Line away from Babcock's Hyman-Tavares-Marner unit, but he won't have that privilege when the 1-1 series shifts to Scotiabank Arena for Game 3 Monday.

"We just played our style of hockey," Bruins defenceman Charlie McAvoy said. "Everyone's life is on the line, and so we have guys that like to play that kind of style."

It's Babcock's move now — and he won't have the same centre depth, let alone a sledgehammer, in his quiver.

"We don't want to get away from what we do well," John Tavares said.

The series now becomes what it was always intended to be: a battle of wills, of coaches, of attrition, of differing identities.

Big and bad versus skilled and speedy.

"The referees, the way they reffed the game, let a lot of stuff go," Babcock said. "You can't let that get in the way of what you're doing. Playing in the Stanley Cup playoffs isn't supposed to be easy, and it's worth it."

"Every game in this series is supposed to get better, it's supposed to get harder. We have to elevate our game here and respond."

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1140752 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Should Leafs' Kadri be suspended for cross-checking Bruins' DeBrusk?

Emily Sadler

April 13, 2019, 11:10 PM

Toronto Maple Leafs forward Nazem Kadri was the busiest man in Boston on Saturday night in what was a physical game against the Bruins, but he may have taken things too far.

After a fast-paced Game 1, the rough stuff between the Leafs and Bruins ratcheted up several notches in Game 2 and Kadri was in the middle of most of it. The Leafs' lone goal-scorer of the night was warring with Bruins forward Jake DeBrusk all game — the two exchanged more than a few verbal and physical jabs over the course of 60 minutes — and

Kadri even had an injury scare after a knee-on-knee collision with his sparring opponent.

But late in the third period with emotions starting to boil over, Kadri landed himself in hot water when he cross-checked DeBrusk in the face. The incident occurred with six minutes remaining in the game when Kadri took exception to DeBrusk's hard hit on Patrick Marleau. Marleau was fine, jumping up immediately after contact, but Kadri's retaliatory actions sent DeBrusk falling to the ice where he remained while a small scrum ensued.

UPDATE: The NHL Department of Player Safety announced later Saturday that Kadri has been offered an in-person hearing, which means he can be suspended more than five games.

Toronto's Nazem Kadri has been offered an in-person hearing for Cross-checking Boston's Jake DeBrusk. Date and time TBD.

— NHL Player Safety (@NHLPlayerSafety) April 14, 2019

Kadri was given a five-minute major for cross-checking and a game misconduct. If suspended, it won't be his first time sitting out playoff games at the decision of the player safety department. Just last year, the forward earned himself a three-game suspension for boarding then-Bruins forward Tommy Wingels in Game 1 of the teams' first-round series.

The Department of Player Safety factors in repeat offender status into its discipline. Here's Nazem Kadri's history of fines/suspensions [pic.twitter.com/klhzE35S7Z](https://pic.twitter.com/klhzE35S7Z)

— Emily Kaplan (@emilymkaplan) April 14, 2019

The Bruins went on to win 4-1 Saturday to tie the series at one game apiece. Game

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Sportsnet.ca / Coach's Corner: How Tortorella has Blue Jackets up vs. Lightning

Emily Sadler

April 13, 2019, 9:56 PM

Two of the biggest surprises of the Stanley Cup Playoffs so far have been the Columbus Blue Jackets' back-to-back wins over the Tampa Bay Lightning to go up 2-0 in the series.

Aside from the first 20 minutes of the series when the Lightning looked like they'd be running away with the first round, it's been the wild cards of Columbus who have dominated the scoreboard and sounded the alarm bells in Tampa.

According to Don Cherry, the secret to the Blue Jackets' success is in the way head coach John Tortorella is handling his club — and approaching his opponent.

"Here's what John Tortorella's done: He said, 'Look. This team's the best hockey team in the world, go at them.' Everybody else goes in a little afraid. Go at them," Cherry said during Coach's Corner Saturday night.

Since being down 3-0 in the first period of Game 1, the Blue Jackets have outshot Tampa Bay 48-41 and outscored them 9-1.

"They went at them, and that's why they're up," Cherry said.

Also working in Tortorella's favour, said Cherry, is the fact that several players are eying new contracts this off-season.



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Artemi Panarin and Sergei Bobrovsky will be on the hunt for lucrative new deals this summer as unrestricted UFAs, while rentals Ryan Dzingel, Matt Duchene, and Adam McQuaid are also slated to hit the open market. That's some powerful incentive.

"He's got five guys coming up for contracts, so he's got a lot of things going for him right now, up 2-0," said Cherry. "Couldn't be a better guy, John Tortorella, as far as I'm concerned."

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Sportsnet.ca / Tyler Bozak thriving with Blues, cheering on Maple Leafs from afar

Mark Spector

April 13, 2019, 4:52 PM

ST. LOUIS — Tyler Bozak hopped off the St. Louis Blues charter flight on Saturday, kissed his wife when he arrived home, and then settled in for an afternoon with a three-year-old and a nine-month-old — like any dad on any day.

And you know what else he had planned on Saturday that made him no different than any of us? He planned to watch the Maple Leafs play Game 2 in Boston, just to see if his former 'boys' could do what the St. Louis Blues have done to the Winnipeg Jets — win the opening two games of their series on the road.

"I watch the Leafs games, oh yeah," Bozak said. "I cheer for them. Mitchy (Mitch Marner), he's a good friend of mine. Played on a line with him for most of two years. It's pretty cool to see him doing so well."

"He's still getting better and better. It's going to be crazy to see in the next few years what he's doing."

Bozak, of course, could be talking about himself, as he authors an honest, effective National Hockey League career away from the glare of the team he broke in with in Toronto. Somehow having turned 33 right before our eyes, he has landed here in St. Louis, that utility knife, third-line centre that every good team has in its lineup.

Think Guy Carbonneau, or Sami Pahlsson. Maybe a little John Madden, or some Manny Malhotra.

Or perhaps a more recent example?

"How about (Calgary's) Mikael Backlund?" offers Patrick Maroon, Bozak's left-winger on a line that has befuddled the Jets through 120 minutes of playoff hockey.

Backlund has grown into a trusty faceoff man and dependable defensive rock, giving the Flames 20 goals and 45-50 points a year. And what does Bozak do for the Blues?

"Wins faceoffs. Very skilled. Centres a good shutdown line. Can take D-zone faceoffs. Can score goals and make high-end plays," said Maroon. "Bozie just has that veteran presence. He'll get you 15-20 goals, 45-50 points a year, and he'll find ways to grind it out every night."

"You can use him all three zones — he's an all-around player."

It's been a pretty cool journey for a Regina kid who chose the Leafs from a league-wide field of teams that courted him as a college free agent out of the University of Denver. It was then Leafs Assistant GM Joe Nieuwendyk who finally earned Bozak's trust, which was well placed when you consider that Nieuwendyk's Flames pioneered the art of

building an NHL team full of NCAA grads, under the great Badger Bob Johnson.

Today, Bozak centres a line with Maroon and the sublimely skilled rookie Robert Thomas, a unit that produced the game-winner in Game 1, and then erased the Jets' only Game 2 lead when Maroon shovelled one home in a 4-3 win on Friday.

"I feel rejuvenated," Bozak said, chatting easily while sitting in his stall in the visitors' room in Winnipeg. "A new opportunity, in a new role, in a new place. You want to prove to the guys and the general manager that they made the right decision. Took a little time to get used to the systems, playing in the West instead of the East, but it's been awesome. The family loves St. Louis."

Talk about night and day, Bozak moved from the centre of the hockey universe to the equivalent of, say, Neptune. Not the furthest market from the sun, but closing in on it.

"Our fans are awesome, but baseball is the dominant sport in the city. The Cardinals (players) are the big dogs in town," he said.

What's the biggest difference being an NHL player in Missouri?

"Just the attention that you get, or the pressure that it might bring. You don't get bugged everywhere you go around town. When you leave the rink, you're away from hockey."

St. Louis sports fans know who Bozak is, "but they don't really bug you like they might in Toronto. You can forget about the game," he said. "You know, you play so much hockey you're at the rink so much, it's nice to get it off your mind. You turn on a TV in Toronto, you walk around town, it's hockey, hockey, hockey, wherever you go. It's kind of hard to get away from."

The Blues are a franchise that haven't been back to the Stanley Cup Final since Glenn Hall used to take them out of the Western side of the Original 12, only to swept in the Cup Final in each of 1968, 1969 and 1970.

Nearly a half-century later, the path is opening up for St. Louis, who could squeeze the belief out of the Jets with a home-ice win on Sunday night.

Bozak will be an important part of whatever happens in Game 3, but that's for later on. First, he'll put on the Leafs game. Maybe pick up a pizza.

Without having to sign any autographs.

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Sportsnet.ca / 5 things we learned about the 2018-19 Canucks

Iain MacIntyre

April 13, 2019, 10:59 AM

VANCOUVER — An old, inky sportswriter once described the National Hockey League team he covered as the greatest drama going.

Think about it: the plot is a series of cliffhangers (games) involving an ever-changing cast of characters beloved and disparaged, good guys and bad guys who carry their audience to euphoric, thrilling highs or drag them to angry, discouraging lows. Often in the same week.

Sports became the original — and is still the best — reality television. Nowhere do these dramas engage and dominate their markets more than in Canadian NHL cities. Former coach Alain Vigneault aptly



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described coaching the Vancouver Canucks as like coaching the New York Yankees, but without the New York Mets, Knicks, Rangers, Jets and Giants to distract the audience.

The plots in these dramas literally never end. There is always something new, and something else coming around the corner. As the shows spike with the Stanley Cup Playoffs this week in Calgary, Winnipeg and Toronto, here are five things we learned during the Canucks' fourth straight season without them.

## PETEY PANS OUT

Nothing sparks hope like a wispy wizard who arrives in the NHL as a teenager after an MVP season in the Swedish Hockey League and then still surpasses expectations. Elias Pettersson, who turned 20 in November after opening his NHL career with 10 goals in 10 games, really is the most exciting Canucks prospect since Pavel Bure, and like the Russian Rocket is going to win the Calder Trophy.

Even with a couple of injuries and a last-quarter slump when he struggled to adjust to the heightened intensity of the stretch drive along with increased attention and aggressiveness from opponents, Pettersson still led the Canucks as a rookie with 28 goals and 66 points in 71 games. Pettersson is a game-changer, a franchise-changer.

The paramount difference between his arrival in Vancouver and Bure's 28 years earlier is that Bure joined a very good, young team with a solid roster built around Trevor Linden and Kirk McLean, while Pettersson is here soon after the Canucks' nadir and will be the biggest piece of whatever this Vancouver team becomes. Two years ago, after the NHL Draft Lottery fulfilled its function as a fan spectacle by kicking the Canucks down two spots to fifth in the order, general manager Jim Benning believed he found the most talented player in the 2017 draft at No. 5. He also found a cornerstone at centre.

## FOUNDATION FORMING

Had it occurred next fall instead of this spring, Quinn Hughes' arrival in Vancouver would have generated the same levels of frenzied excitement and optimism as Pettersson's did in October. The dynamic defenceman from the University of Michigan, who fell as if from heaven into the Canucks' grateful arms with the seventh pick of the 2018 draft, played only the final five games of the regular season but was everything Vancouver hoped he would be.

The 19-year-old, who should have spent the whole season in the NHL but agreed with the Canucks last summer that he would return to Michigan for his sophomore year at college, collected three assists while averaging 18:04 of ice time. He was a one-man breakout, a marvellous skater able to control zone exits and entries and drive possession. And we're not sure five minutes is worth the price of admission with what NHL tickets cost in Canada, but Hughes' brief appearances in overtime with Pettersson and Boeser as three-on-three linemates were mesmerizing.

Boeser, last year's Calder runner-up, finished his second season with 26 goals and 56 points in 69 games, impressive considering the serious back and wrist injuries that ended his rookie campaign and significantly set him back in training last summer. With centre Bo Horvat (27 goals and 61 points) and goalie Jacob Markstrom (28-23-9 and .912 save percentage) getting better again, the future of the team has become clearer with the arrival of Pettersson and Hughes. The foundation still needs another top defenceman and a winger or two, but the Canucks are getting closer.

## PROBLEM IN THE PIPELINE

The most troubling part of the season for the Canucks organization was the Utica Comets. It wasn't that Vancouver's farm team, thinned by injuries in upstate New York and the NHL, struggled down the stretch and will miss the American Hockey League playoffs. It's that it failed to generate much obvious development in a handful of supposedly talented prospect-forwards.

Petrus Palmu went home to Finland and Jonathan Dahlen, arguably the top prospect in Utica, grew so frustrated with his playing time under

coach Trent Cull that he requested and was granted a trade. Second-round picks Kole Lind and Jonah Gadjovich each has only three goals in their first seasons of professional hockey, and talented Czech Lukas Jasek had just 24 points in 60 games after managing seven points in six games at the end of last season.

To be fair to Cull, there were some development successes. Zack MacEwen had 50 points in 66 games, Canucks centre Adam Gaudette benefitted from two brief spells in the AHL, defencemen Ashton Sautner and Guillaume Brisebois got extended looks in the NHL, and second-tier prospect Michael Carcone developed well enough for Vancouver to send him to Toronto in what turned out to be a good trade for Josh Leivo. But it's impossible to overlook the lack of production from so many others, which is why Benning is starting an inquiry into what went wrong.

## NOT A GOALIE GRAVEYARD

It says a lot about the impact of Markstrom's season that the 29-year-old late bloomer was correctly voted by Canucks fans as the team's Most Valuable Player ahead of Pettersson. Only four goalies in the NHL logged more ice time than Markstrom, whose save percentage of .920 after Dec. 1 was even more impressive when factoring in the shot quality he faced behind a spotty defence weakened by injuries.

Markstrom's breakthrough made a couple of things clear. Thatcher Demko, promoted from the minors in January but restricted by injury to just nine mostly-impressive games (.913 save rate), may not have to be the goalie-of-the-future and when further developed could give the Canucks a valuable trade asset. And goaltending guru Ian Clark, who returned to the organization after seven years away and made an obvious impact on Markstrom, better get re-signed before his contract expires after next season.

## UNDER PRESSURE

You couldn't get Benning or coach Travis Green to say it at their year-end press conference this week, but the Canucks' goal next season is making the playoffs. The Canucks will be celebrating 50 years in the NHL, and it will be Benning's sixth season in charge. Local owner Francesco Aquilini, who in his desire to be a populist thinks too much at times like the fans, has been accused of interfering in hockey operations. But he has stomachached this rebuild as well as most owners could and given Benning the time necessary to construct a team. The GM is going into the final year of his contract and would like another extension. He may have to wait until the Aquilini family, which pushed out president of hockey operations Trevor Linden last summer, sees how the Canucks do next season.

The team improved by eight points this year when most observers predicted it would get worse. Benning and Green need to find another 10-15 points next season.

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TSN.CA / Leafs expected pushback, and got it in Game 2

Kristen Shilton

Toronto expected a pushback from Boston in Game 2 of their first-round playoff matchup and that's exactly what happened as the Bruins evened the score with a 4-1 victory over the Leafs on Saturday, tying the series 1-1. Nazem Kadri scored the lone goal for Toronto in the third period before he was tossed from the game for cross-checking Jake DeBrusk. That could impact Kadri's availability going forward for the Leafs, as the series shifts back to Toronto for Game 3.

Takeaways



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 14, 2019

That's more like it

After the Maple Leafs' emphatic 4-1 victory in Game 1, Brad Marchand admitted the Bruins had expected the outing to be "a little easier" on them than it ultimately was. Toronto knew Boston would come back desperate, but from the opening puck drop the Leafs had no response for their hosts' intensity.

The Bruins corrected for their biggest Game 1 mistake early, challenging the Leafs' speed attack with relentless forechecking and smothering physicality. They pounced on loose pucks and ferociously hit back with an early 9-1 edge in shots on goal and 16-2 advantage in shot attempts, with big hits on Nazem Kadri and Jake Gardiner setting a tone.

The game plan rattled Toronto, and Charlie Coyle quickly tallied the game's opening goal. While Nikita Zaitsev and John Tavares were trapped behind their own net, David Backes sent a pass into the slot, Jake Muzzin misplayed it and Coyle fooled Frederik Andersen with a far side shot.

It was the second straight game where Boston has scored first, and marked the Bruins' first even-strength goal of the postseason.

Marchand padded his team's lead before the frame was over, finishing off a two-on-one play beside David Pastrnak with a shot that beat Andersen cleanly.

At the end of the first, Toronto was down 2-0, being outshot 14-7, trailing 24-10 in shot attempts and owned only 22 per cent possession.

The Leafs simply couldn't find any semblance of a rhythm on their one-and-done efforts in the offensive zone, with no one able to sustain pressure on or generate second looks against Tuukka Rask. Toronto didn't even register its 10th shot on goal until well into the second half of the middle frame.

Boston had no such trouble capitalizing in the Leafs' end, and when William Nylander carelessly lost track of the puck next to Andersen, Danton Heinen had the Bruins up 3-0.

Mike Babcock had seen enough of his offensive lines by the start of the third period, blending his forwards to move Auston Matthews between Zach Hyman and Mitch Marner and sliding John Tavares between Kasperii Kapanen and Trevor Moore.

Kadri's line with Patrick Marleau and Nylander stayed the same, and he finally put Toronto on the board midway through the third with a tipped shot past Rask, cutting Boston's lead to 3-1 with 9:16 to play.

The hole Toronto had dug itself was too deep to overcome, though, despite an impressive pushback following Kadri's goal. He would then be thrown out of Saturday's contest late in the third for cross-checking DeBrusk, and Patrice Bergeron sealed the Bruins' 4-1 victory with his second power play goal of the series.

Kadri's history on repeat?

In last season's first-round playoff series against the Bruins, Kadri was suspended three games for an unnecessarily bruising hit on Tommy Wingels. The Leafs' centreman has found himself in hot water again this time around, jettisoned from Saturday's game with a five-minute major and a game misconduct for cross-checking DeBrusk. The NHL's Department of Player Safety announced early Sunday morning that Kadri had been offered an in-person hearing pertaining to the cross-check, date and time to be determined.

In person hearing gives @NHLPlayerSafety the option to suspend for six or more games. Not obliged to go six or more but option is there. A five game suspension would ensure he doesn't play again vs BOS in 1st round. Sky's the limit, though. <https://t.co/kGWJuR6uz2>

— Bob McKenzie (@TSNBobMcKenzie) April 14, 2019

Kadri's issues with DeBrusk started in Game 1, when the two foes went at it physically on the ice and with some colourful exchanges from the benches. Game 2 delivered more of the same between them, but the

officials were far more hesitant to make any calls, which allowed tensions to escalate.

The Leafs' issues with that no-call trend started early on, when Kadri was sent to the box for roughing in the first period after a tussle with DeBrusk, even when he didn't retaliate against the Bruins' forward peppering him with punches (DeBrusk also got the gate for roughing).

In the second period, Kadri was sent to the box again for a hooking call against Marchand while the Bruins were shorthanded. When Kadri came out, full of steam, he entered the attacking zone only to take a knee-on-knee hit from DeBrusk that sent him to the dressing room late in the frame. He skated off under his own power, and would return for the third.

There was no call on DeBrusk for the hit, but the officials were allowing both sides to get away with more physical play as well. And when Marleau was laid out with a big hit by DeBrusk late in the third, Kadri foolishly retaliated with a hit targeting DeBrusk's head, and was sent out of the game.

Given Kadri's history, which includes seven other fines or suspensions, he will almost certainly be given supplemental discipline. And when that happens, it will remove one of the Leafs' greatest strengths in this first-round series - their centre depth. Having Tavares, Auston Matthews and Kadri down the middle was a huge advantage for Toronto, and it will fall on Marleau or Nylander to pick up the slack there if (or when) Kadri has to miss time.

Not-so-starry night

In Game 1, it was Tavares' unit with Hyman and Marner that ran wild, scoring three of the Leafs' four goals and dominating whenever they took the ice. Boston pledged to make adjustments for Game 2, and succeeded in turning Tavares and company into a non-factor.

When the third period began on Saturday, that line had a combined three shots on goal, with Hyman sitting at zero per cent possession, Marner at 11.5 per cent and Tavares at 16. They were broken up for the final 20 minutes after failing to find any measure of success against Bergeron's unit with Marchand and Pastrnak, an all-around disappointing follow-up to a terrific opening outing for the Leafs' top line.

And then in the Game 2 there was Nylander, who had put together one of his best performances of the season in Game 1 and told the media it felt like his "mojo" was all the way back in the wake of a difficult (and late-starting) regular season. But it didn't take long for him to lose that mojo all over again.

The Leafs were careless in their execution all over the ice throughout Game 2, but arguably no one was as repeat an offender as Nylander. The Leafs' winger was lazy with and without the puck, and it cost Toronto when he turned the disc over to Heinen beside the Leafs' net, distractedly looking ahead for a play to make instead of simply clearing the zone.

It was an unacceptable error to make at the best of times, but even more so in a playoff game the Leafs were trailing in by a pair of goals. Even before that, Nylander looked out of his depth against the Bruins' physicality and forechecking, trying to avoid hits by making soft plays on the puck. He finished the game with two shots goal but never matched the level he proved capable of in Game 1.

Andersen answers the bell

If there were questions about Andersen's ability to bounce back from a difficult end to his regular season, the Leafs' starter answered for that with a sensational 37-save performance in Game 1. His teammates gave Andersen a lot of help in that contest, boxing out well in front of him and not allowing many odd-man rushes to materialize.

Andersen started Saturday's game well, too, but the rest of the Leafs didn't give their goaltender the same support as two nights earlier.

The goalie's first big stop came on an opportunistic Pastrnak charging at the net after Morgan Rielly turned the puck over deep in the Leafs' zone. All the confidence Andersen displayed in Game 1 had stayed fully intact,



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even following Coyle's opening goal that was misread by Andersen as a shortside strike that Coyle sent wide to the goaltender's left side.

Andersen didn't let either Coyle or Marchand's scores in the first rattle him, opening the second frame with a big stop on Jake DeBrusk's breakaway chance.

When Nylander fumbled the puck in his crease before Heinen's goal, Andersen was completely caught off guard, having anticipated his teammate either advancing the puck or taking it around the back of the net and out.

Despite the eventual four goals-against and being hung out to dry on several occasions, Andersen remained the Leafs' best player until the very end, doing his part to keep their hopes of a comeback alive. For all the struggles Toronto exhibited throughout Game 2, their goaltending has been about as consistent as they could have asked for. Andersen turned aside 37 shots again on Saturday, for a .902 save percentage.

Top-pairing's luck runs out

In the aftermath of Toronto's Game 1 victory, Muzzin and Zaitsev were praised for their tight-checking performances against the Bergeron line, helping to hold the Bruins' top scorers to zero even-strength points.

Game 2 didn't play out so well for either defenceman, especially Muzzin. When Backes fired a shot from behind the Leafs' net early in the first period, Muzzin was between Backes and Coyle, but he blatantly fumbled the puck, letting Coyle pot the game's opening marker.

Before the Bruins' second goal, Muzzin tried to glove an aerial pass at the Leafs' blueline and send play back the other way, but he flubbed that too, and then was out of position as Pastrnak and Marchand broke in on a two-on-one play that ended in Marchand's first goal of the postseason.

By the third period, Babcock had separated Muzzin and Zaitsev after they were on the ice for all three of Boston's goals, placing them with Dermott and Gardiner respectively. Whether it was the Bruins' adjustments after the series' opener or just an ineffective night for the pairing, Muzzin and Zaitsev both looked outclassed against the Bruins' top gunners, which doesn't bode well for the Leafs' prospects in the series if they can't make adjustments of their own before Game 3.

Muzzin finished minus-three in 18:49 time on ice, while Zaitsev was minus-three while playing 17:40.

Blue and White Trending

Tracking Leafs' trends all season long

Including regular season and playoffs, the Leafs haven't won consecutive games since March 2-4.

TSN.CA LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140757 Websites

TSN.CA / Marner stirs the ice cream and the offence

Mark Masters

TSN Toronto reporter Mark Masters checks in daily with news and notes on the Maple Leafs, who skated at TD Garden on Saturday morning.

Mitch Marner plays with a boundless energy and is so elusive he even earned a comparison to Wayne Gretzky from Bruins coach Bruce Cassidy after Game 1.

Perhaps he's on a sugar high during games. After all, the dynamic Leafs winger will always consume a bowl of vanilla ice cream with chocolate sauce as part of his pre-game meal. But it's the way he eats it that

amuses teammates. Marner stirs the dessert until it's all melted down and looks more like soup. The ritual created a buzz on social media yesterday when the NHL posted a video of it on Twitter and Instagram.

Two goals for @Marner93 last night, must've been the pregame ice cream! 🍦 #StanleyCup Confidential pic.twitter.com/v3rcc6rH5N

— NHL (@NHL) April 12, 2019

"I think it's funny," said teammate Tyler Ennis, who shot the video as part of the league's "Cup Confidential" series. "I used to do that when I was about four-years-old and he's still doing it at whatever he is, 21, so kind of his little ritual and seems to be working ... I thought it was a joke, but it's not a joke, that's how he likes his ice cream."

"As a kid I just always stirred it up like that," Marner explained, "and always thought it tasted better so it's just something I continued to do my whole life and people think it's crazy, but it's pretty fun."

Marner on his ice cream soup pre-game ritual: 'People think it's crazy'

After a video was posted on social media by the NHL showing Mitch Marner digging into a bowl of "ice cream soup" before Game 1, many fans believe it's what helped him shine in the series opener. Tyler Ennis jokes about his teammates unique routine, while Marner sheds light on the origins of his tasty pre-game treat.

Whatever Marner's doing these days he probably shouldn't change a thing. He led the Leafs in scoring with 94 points in the regular season and then potted two goals in Game 1 against the Bruins while helping to shut down the fearsome top line of Brad Marchand, Patrice Bergeron and David Pastrnak.

"He's always played well against us, always played hard against us," Cassidy said in his post game news conference. "Listen, years ago I remember Gretzky, 'Why doesn't anybody hit that guy?' Well, it's not that easy, right? So, I think it becomes containment issues, play him hard, play him honest one-on-one, put him where you want him to go ... He's played well against us, and obviously we need to find an answer to him."

"I'm not sure there is an answer," said Leafs centre Nazem Kadri. "Mitchy's Mitchy and he's going to do his thing. He's just so elusive with the puck. Even when you try and hit him it seems like he can slide checks and create plays so he's a great one-on-one player."

Marner, for his part, downplayed the Gretzky comparison and seemed laser focused on the task at hand.

"It's cool," he said. "I mean, I don't think so, but it's a cool thing. I'm not trying to think about it too much ... Every game's a fresh start. We know they're going to come with a hard push, they don't want to lose two in their building so we got to make sure we're even better tonight than the last game. So, we want to play a fast-paced game, make sure we're trying to put it behind them all night, work'em as hard as we can the first couple minutes of the game and go from there."

Kadri on Bruins' plan to slow down Marner: 'I'm not sure there is an answer'

After a dazzling two-goal performance in Game 1, the Bruins made it known that they need to slow down Mitch Marner in Game 2, but Nazem Kadri explains why he doesn't think there is an answer to solving the crafty Leafs forward. Meanwhile, Marner reacts to Bruce Cassidy's comments comparing his elusiveness to Wayne Gretzky's.

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The Leafs actually outthit the Bruins 33-31 in Game 1 with left wingers Zach Hyman, Andreas Johnsson and Trevor Moore leading the way with four each. Toronto averaged 17 hits per game in the regular season to finish 29th overall, while the Bruins averaged 23, which was 15th in the league.

"They're a pretty big, physical team so we wanted to set the tone," Kadri said. "We made that an emphasis ... we're not going to accept being pushed around and I think we made that very clear so we're going to



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continue doing that. I think that's an important aspect to bringing success."

"We weren't scared to forecheck," observed Marner, "and keep the pressure on them and that's something we have to continue all game."

Kadri supplied three hits including a takedown of winger Jake DeBrusk that led to the pair jawing at the benches afterwards. DeBrusk was a break-out star in last year's playoff series against Toronto scoring five goals, including the series clincher in Game 7.

"He's pretty capable with his feet and he's got good skill so with guys like that it's important to be hard on (them), and any time they touch the puck you want to be kind of in their face and let them know that it's going to be a long night for them," Kadri said. "He's a good player, he's quick so you got to find ways to stop him."

Kadri on Leafs outthitting Bruins: 'We're not going to accept being pushed around'

After outthitting the Bruins in Game 1, Nazem Kadri discusses how critical it is for the Leafs to maintain that level of physicality tonight, especially with desperate Boston expected to take it up a notch. Kadri also comments on how Toronto did a good job being physical with Jake DeBrusk, who had such a great series against the team last year.

DeBrusk missed yesterday's practice for what the team called "maintenance," but skated this morning and declared himself ready for Game 2. What did he think of Kadri's hit?

"It's playoff hockey and that's first in my thoughts when I look at the hit," the 22-year-old told reporters at Boston's practice facility. "I understand that there's times where you get hit. I mean, I thought it was personally, possibly a slew foot, but I think I looked at it and I mean it's just playoff hockey and that's just how it goes sometimes."

Kadri takes down DeBrusk and continues chirping at him on the bench. [pic.twitter.com/fnmfvdAgIG](https://pic.twitter.com/fnmfvdAgIG)

— Flintor (@TheFlintor) April 12, 2019

Boston's line-up will have a more physical edge in Game 2 as David Backes draws in after sitting as a healthy scratch Thursday. The 34-year-old winger has fought Kadri a couple times over the years. "He's probably going to bring some energy," Kadri noted. "It's his first game of the series, so I think he's going to be prepared and eager and anxious so just got to be aware of what he does. He's a big body, likes to play physical so we got to use our speed ... They're going to be pretty desperate tonight and we have to match that intensity and there will be a big difference from Game 1 to Game 2 in terms of that desperate aspect so we have to be ready."

Cassidy didn't reveal which forward will come out of the lineup tonight to make room for Backes.

"We needed maybe a little more leadership," Cassidy told reporters, "a little more intensity in our line-up. So, obviously he brings that, we'll see where it goes."

Bruins looking to turn up the intensity in Game 2, feel Backes will help in that area

The Bruins talk about how important it is to turn up the intensity tonight in hopes of avoiding heading to Toronto down 0-2 in the series, and explain why they feel David Backes can help in that department as he draws back into the lineup.

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The Leafs appeared to play a complete game in Thursday's 4-1 win, but Mike Babcock sees plenty of room for improvement.

"There's lots of things in the last game that, obviously, we need to upgrade on," the coach said.

Shift lengths would appear to be an area of emphasis.

"You've got to eliminate your glide phase at this time of year," Babcock said when asked a general question on puck management. "There can't be anybody out there gliding, you're supposed to be out there for 42 seconds at a time or 43 and going as hard as you can. Obviously, if you want to be on the right side of the puck you've got to work."

Auston Matthews (54 seconds per shift on Thursday) and linemates Kasperii Kapanen (48 seconds) and Johnsson (47 seconds) were the only players above Babcock's requested limit in Game 1.

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The Tampa Bay Lightning, who posted a record tying 62 wins in the regular season, trail the Columbus Blue Jackets two games to none in the other series in the Atlantic Division bracket. It's a surprising development for many, but not Babcock.

"I don't get that surprised at playoff time," he said. "As the league has got tighter and tighter, the separation between top and bottom is almost nothing. So, we know every series is going to be ultra-competitive. Now, maybe in the end, when you look at it and it says 4-0 or 4-1, you didn't think it was competitive, but usually every game is ultra-competitive. Columbus has got a good hockey club, they acquired a lot at the deadline and they had a good hockey club before. Obviously, it looks like it's shaping up to be a good series."

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Lines at Leafs morning skate:

Hyman-Tavares-Marner

Johnsson-Matthews-Kapanen

Marleau-Kadri-Nylander

Moore- Gauthier-Brown

Petan, Ennis

Rielly-Hainsey

Muzzin-Zaitsev

Gardiner-Dermott

Rosen-Marincin

Holl-Ozhiganov

Andersen

Sparks

TSN.CA LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140758 Websites

USA TODAY / Maple Leafs' Nazem Kadri facing lengthy suspension for cross-checking Jake DeBrusk

Mike Brehm

12:42 a.m. ET April 14, 2019

Toronto Maple Leafs forward Nazem Kadri received a three-game suspension last season for a questionable playoff hit against the Boston Bruins.

He is likely looking at an even longer suspension after the league's Department of Player Safety offered him an in-person hearing following another questionable hit against the Bruins on Saturday night. Players get offered that if the suspension could top five games.



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Kadri received a five-minute major and a game misconduct for cross-checking Boston's Jake DeBrusk during the 4-1 Bruins win that tied the series 1-1.

DeBrusk had just hit Toronto's Patrick Marleau hard into the boards and was standing near the boards when Kadri hit him in the face with his stick, knocking DeBrusk to the ice. The Bruins forward didn't return to the game.

Kadri crosschecks DeBrusk after knocking down Marleau. Kadri's night is done. #LeafsForeverpic.twitter.com/ruv30jRvE

— Maple Leafs Hotstove (@LeafsNews) April 14, 2019

Kadri has been suspended four times in his career, the latest for boarding then-Boston forward Tommy Wingels in Game 1 of last year's first-round series.

Kadri and DeBrusk had other incidents in Game 2. They got roughing minors and later DeBrusk forced Kadri out of the game briefly with an unpenalized knee-on-knee hit.

Kadri hurt after knee-to-knee collision with DeBrusk  
pic.twitter.com/OaJOjzibeG

— Pete Blackburn (@PeteBlackburn) April 14, 2019

Kadri returned to the game and scored the Maple Leafs' lone goal.

But the severity of his hit, plus the previous suspensions, mean it could be a long time before he returns to the series.

More: Lightning face added trouble: Down 2-0, Nikita Kucherov suspended for Game 3

More: Carolina Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour rips officials during in-game television interview

"It was a physical game, the referees, the way they reffed the game let a lot of stuff go, obviously," Maple Leafs coach Mike Babcock told reporters, adding that he didn't see the play. "In the end, you can't let that get in the way of what you're doing."

USA TODAY LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140759 Websites

USA TODAY / Lightning face added trouble: Down 2-0, Nikita Kucherov suspended for Game 3

Kevin Allen

6:27 p.m. ET April 13, 2019

The Tampa Bay Lightning's playoff woes became worse Saturday when the NHL suspended Nikita Kucherov, the league's leading scorer, one playoff game for his boarding incident against Columbus Blue Jackets defenseman Markus Nutivaara on Friday night.

Tampa Bay, considered the Stanley Cup favorite, already trails Columbus 2-0 heading into Sunday's Game 3 of their best-of-seven quarterfinal.

Victor Hedman, the Lightning's No. 1 defenseman, also didn't practice Saturday because he is banged up. The Lightning seem hopeful he will play in Game 3.

According to the NHL's department of player safety, Kucherov's boarding penalty against Nutivaara wasn't excessively violent.

But DOPS officials felt Kucherov deserved the penalty because he was in control of the play and it was "a dangerous hit on a player who is in an exposed, defenseless position."

Kucherov, who had 128 points in the regular season, tripped Nutivaara before he boarded him. He was given a major penalty and ejected with 4:26 remaining in the 5-1 loss.

The video announcing the suspension also pointed out the hit was viewed as "message-sending" because it was delivered late in a lopsided game.

The Lightning tied an NHL record this season with 62 wins and didn't face much adversity all year. They led the NHL in scoring, helped by three players (Kucherov, Steven Stamkos and Brayden Point) who scored 41 or more goals.

None of those players have a point thus far against the Blue Jackets and they are a combined -7.

USA TODAY LOADED: 04.14.2019

1140760 Websites

USA TODAY / Carolina Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour rips officials during in-game television interview

Kevin Allen

7:14 p.m. ET April 13, 2019

Live in-game television interviews with coaches are not often passionate or critical during the NHL playoffs.

But Carolina Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour was both Saturday when NBC's Pierre McGuire asked for his take on his player Micheal Ferland being given a match penalty for a head hit against the Washington Capitals' Nic Dowd.

The incident came in the second period of Game 2 of their Eastern Conference quarterfinal.

"I don't see it as a hit to the head," Brind'Amour said. "If four (officials) are going to get together, someone should at least see it that way."

Rob Brind'Amour goes in on the officiating pic.twitter.com/QyvvC02FH5

— Pete Blackburn (@PeteBlackburn) April 13, 2019

Replays seem to show that Dowd's head was not the initial point of contact. Brind'Amour was incensed on the bench after the officials conferred and gave Ferland the match penalty.

"I think we just let them play," Brind'Amour said. "That's what I would like to see."

The Capitals had a 2-1 lead when the five-minute major was called, and the 'Canes killed off the penalty. The controversial call seemed to fire them up because they tied the game later in the period.

The Capitals won in overtime on Brooks Orpik's goal at 1:48 to take a 2-0 series lead.

It seems probable that Ferland's match penalty will be rescinded Sunday. He said he wasn't worried about being suspended.

Michael Ferland has been ejected for a match penalty, an illegal check to the head to Nic Dowd pic.twitter.com/co2EnC7YCN

— Ian Oland (@ianoland) April 13, 2019



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"To be honest with you, I let up," he told reporters. "I see him reaching for the puck, I could have finished with my shoulder, but I didn't. I came and hit him with my butt. I thought it was a clean hit. I don't agree with the call."

But the Hurricanes could still end up with one player suspended. Carolina defenseman Dougie Hamilton was penalized for elbowing Evgeni Kuznetsov, and that hit should attract the attention of the Department of Player Safety.

USA TODAY LOADED: 04.14.2019