



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 19, 2017



Rangers hold on to win Game 4, even series with Canadiens

End six-game home losing streak in Stanley Cup Playoffs

by Brian Compton [@BComptonNHL](#) / NHL.com Deputy Managing Editor

April 18th, 2017

NEW YORK -- [Rick Nash](#) broke a tie early in the second period, and [Henrik Lundqvist](#) made 23 saves to help the New York Rangers defeat the Montreal Canadiens 2-1 in Game 4 of the Eastern Conference First Round at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday.

The best-of-7 series is tied 2-2 with Game 5 at Montreal on Thursday.

Jesper Fast scored for the Rangers, who had lost six consecutive Stanley Cup Playoff games at home.

"It was our best home game [of the series], for sure," Nash said. "It was a tough couple of days after Game 3 (a 3-1 loss on Sunday), and we knew we needed to come with a good effort. I still think the third period could be a bit better, we could create more. But you've got to give them a little credit too. They came hard."

[Torrey Mitchell](#) scored for Montreal, which nearly tied the game when [Shea Weber](#)'s slap shot from the left point hit the goal post with 1:18 remaining. [Carey Price](#) made 30 saves.

"They were desperate tonight," Price said. "They executed a pretty good game plan. You have to give that team credit; they played well tonight."

Fast gave the Rangers a 1-0 lead at 11:39 of the first period. [Brady Skjei](#) sent the puck around the boards and it deflected off the stick of Canadiens defenseman Andrei Markov stick in front to Fast, who poked the puck between Price's pads for his first goal of the playoffs.

"I think we just forced passes tonight," Canadiens coach Claude Julien said. "We weren't as good tonight as we were [Sunday] night. I thought that we were forcing things more than just managing the puck better, and that resulted in a lot of icings. Same thing on the faceoffs; we had a lot of draws on our own hand, so we needed to manage the puck better tonight."

Montreal tied it 1-1 with 1:23 left in the first period when Mitchell scored his first of the playoffs.

Goal of the game

Rangers defenseman [Ryan McDonagh](#) kept the puck in the offensive zone from the blue line and found Nash cutting to the net, where he backhanded a shot past Price at 4:28 of

the second period to make it 2-1. It was Nash's second goal of the playoffs.

"I saw a hole to the net right away," Nash said. "I haven't seen the replay; I don't know if I beat the guy off the wall or if he kind of cheated out, I'm not sure. But right away, I thought I had a lane. Once I took to my backhand, I saw the five-hole kind of open up."

Save of the game

[Alex Galchenyuk](#) made a pass through the neutral zone to send [Andrew Shaw](#) in on a breakaway, but Lundqvist stood his ground and managed to get his glove on Shaw's wrist shot with 9:11 remaining in the first period. Fast scored less than one minute later.

Highlight of the game

[Alexander Radulov](#) won a puck battle against Skjei at the Rangers blue line and made a no-look backhand pass to set up Mitchell and Weber on a 2-on-1. Mitchell one-timed Weber's pass from the left circle past Lundqvist.

Unsung performance of the game

Rangers forward [J.T. Miller](#) blocked three shots, had two hits and two takeaways in 15:38 of ice time.

They said it

"Two of the best goalies in the League going head to head. I know that they were frustrated, especially last game. We got a little bit frustrated. The team that stays even-keeled and just worries about that next shot is the team that normally ends up on top. We've got to do a better job of sticking with it, sticking with the system, and trusting it when you're down. We need to trust that our shots will go in." -- *Canadiens captain [Max Pacioretty](#)*

"We knew we had to respond as a group, and that's what this group did tonight and has proved that in the past. I thought we talked about managing the puck better, I thought we managed the puck better tonight. We had a better game. We were able to give ourselves an opportunity; it's a two out of three, and that's what we wanted." -- *Rangers coach [Alain Vigneault](#)*

"When we play to our strengths, it gives us a chance to win. It doesn't mean it's going to happen every time, but we've got to give ourselves a chance. By doing that, playing with pace and playing in their face, that's going to give us a chance." -- *Rangers captain [Ryan McDonagh](#)*

Need to know



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New York was 0-for-2 on the power play and is 0-for-12 in the series. Montreal was 0-for-3. ... Rangers forward [Pavel Buchnevich](#) played his first Stanley Cup Playoff game. [Tanner Glass](#) was a healthy scratch. Defenseman [Nick Holden](#) played after being a healthy scratch for Game 3. He replaced [Kevin Klein](#). ... New York last won a home playoff

game on May 16, 2015, Game 1 of the Eastern Conference Final against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

What's next

Game 5 of Eastern Conference First Round at Bell Centre on Thursday (7 p.m. ET; USA, CBC, TVA Sports, MSG)

Blue Jackets avoid sweep by Penguins with Game 4 win

Columbus scores five goals to extend Eastern Conference First Round series

by Craig Merz / NHL.com Correspondent

April 18th, 2017

COLUMBUS -- The Columbus Blue Jackets defeated the Pittsburgh Penguins 5-4 in Game 4 to avoid being swept out of the Eastern Conference First Round at Nationwide Arena on Tuesday.

The Penguins lead the best-of-7 series 3-1 with Game 5 at Pittsburgh on Thursday.

Blue Jackets coach John Tortorella said the goal Tuesday was simple.

"I just wanted them to see what it was like to win a playoff game with this team together," he said. "They accomplished that."

[William Karlsson](#), [Boone Jenner](#) and [Markus Nutivaara](#) each had a goal and an assist for the Blue Jackets. [Jack Johnson](#) and [Josh Anderson](#) scored, [Brandon Saad](#) had two assists, and [Sergei Bobrovsky](#) made 27 saves.

Columbus won a playoff game in regulation for the first time; it is 3-11 in its history, with all of the wins against Pittsburgh.

[Jake Guentzel](#) scored a shorthanded goal while Pittsburgh had an extra attacker to make it 5-4 with 28 seconds left in the third period, but the Penguins did not have another shot.

"You earn your bounces," Pittsburgh captain [Sidney Crosby](#) said. "They were better. They earned the win. We didn't have the desperation we needed to win the game."

Columbus built a 3-0 lead 4:48 into the second period. Pittsburgh pulled within 3-2 when [Patric Hornqvist](#) and [Ron Hainsey](#) scored. [Phil Kessel](#) had two assists, and [Marc-Andre Fleury](#) made 29 saves.

Karlsson made it 4-2 on a wraparound off his shot 27 seconds into the third period.

"That was a big goal by Karlsson. That boosted our play," Jenner said.

[Tom Kuhnhackl](#) scored for the Penguins at 2:10 of the third to make it 4-3, but Jenner tapped in a shot by Saad at 5:37 for a 5-3 lead.

Nutivaara, a rookie defenseman playing his first Stanley Cup Playoff game, made it 3-0 at 4:48 of the second period when he scored off a rebound of a Jenner shot.

Hornqvist scored a power-play goal at 6:43 to make it 3-1, and Hainsey, a veteran of 907 regular-season games, got his first goal in his fourth playoff game, using a screen by [Bryan Rust](#) to score from a low angle at 16:24.

Goal of the game

Karlsson persevered in scoring the fourth goal for the Blue Jackets, taking the initial shot on the right side and coming around the net to beat Fleury to the left post.

Save of the game

Bobrovsky made a point-blank save on Hainsey coming down the slot with 6:35 left in the third period.

Unsung performance of the game

Blue Jackets defenseman [Kyle Quincey](#) was a healthy scratch the first three games but made an early impact with a jarring hit on Guentzel in the first period. Quincey had an assist, four hits, four blocks and was plus-1 playing 20:48.

Highlight of the game

Guentzel scored with a shot from the high slot while everyone was scrambling around him in the closing seconds.

They said it

"I don't think we were good enough. You have to give them credit. They came out with a lot of urgency. We certainly talked about it before the game, being ready." -- *Penguins coach Mike Sullivan*

"Last period, win the period, win the game. That was our mentality." -- *Blue Jackets right wing Brandon Saad*

"They've all been good games. It's been a competitive series. They've had great starts in the games that we've weathered and come back and played well for stretches at a time. It hasn't been a one-team-dominant series to this point. We knew they were going to come out, try to get one game. They've got nothing to lose. They got the job done. We've got to get ourselves regrouped tomorrow and get ready for Thursday." -- *Penguins defenseman Ron Hainsey*

"The most important part of it is, we bent a little bit but we end up scoring. When they get closer, we end up with a shift and score a goal." -- *Blue Jackets coach John Tortorella*

Need to know

Crosby did not have shot attempt. ... Guentzel, a rookie, has five goals to lead the series. ... Karlsson's assist on Anderson's goal was his first NHL playoff point, in his fourth game. ... Blue Jackets center [Lukas Sedlak](#), who was out with an injury the first three games, was 6-0 on faceoffs. ... The Blue Jackets have allowed at least three goals in each of their 14 playoff games and 10 times have given up four or more. ... Columbus defeated Pittsburgh twice in the 2014 Eastern Conference First Round.

What's next



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Game 5 of the Eastern Conference First Round at PPG Paints Arena on Thursday (7 p.m. ET; NHLN, SN, TVA

Sports 2, ROOT, FS-O)

Sharks score seven goals in Game 4 win, even series

[Joe Pavelski](#), [Logan Couture](#) each get two, [Martin Jones](#) makes 23 saves for shutout

by Eric Gilmore / NHL.com Correspondent

2:53 AM

SAN JOSE -- The San Jose Sharks had been shut out by the Edmonton Oilers in back-to-back games entering Game 4 of their Western Conference First Round series at SAP Center on Tuesday.

It took [Joe Pavelski](#) 15 seconds to give San Jose a 1-0 lead, and the Sharks kept scoring on their way to a 7-0 victory against the Oilers.

The best-of-7 series is tied 2-2 with Game 5 in Edmonton on Thursday.

Pavelski and [Logan Couture](#) each scored two goals, and [Martin Jones](#) made 23 saves for the fourth Stanley Cup Playoff shutout of his career, the previous three coming last season in San Jose's run to the Final.

The Sharks tied their postseason record for most goals in a game and set their record with four power-play goals in eight opportunities.

[Patrick Marleau](#), [Marcus Sorensen](#) and [David Schlemko](#) each scored, and [Brent Burns](#) had three assists for San Jose.

"That was something we wanted to do, obviously, was get one early," Couture said of Pavelski's goal, the fastest to start a playoff game in Sharks history. "This is an intimidating building to play in, and it is even more when you've got a lead early. [Pavelski] made a great tip on that one, the building got into it, and we rode that momentum."

Oilers goaltender [Cam Talbot](#) made saves on all 39 shots he faced in Games 2 and 3 but gave up five goals on 24 shots Tuesday and was replaced by [Laurent Brossoit](#) at 12:52 of the second period.

"We didn't start the night the way we wanted to," Talbot said. "I mean, we gave up a goal right away and we knew they were going to come hard after that and re-establish themselves. We talk about that 10-minute game and starting on the right foot, and we didn't do that tonight. We gave them all the momentum they needed to carry through the rest of the game."

Pavelski gave the Sharks the early lead when he redirected [Justin Braun](#)'s shot past Talbot for his first goal of the playoffs. It was the first time San Jose opened the scoring in the series.

"Our first period was probably similar to last game's first period except we got on the board and got things rolling," Sharks coach Peter DeBoer said. "That's an important piece, getting that momentum. We weren't able to do it last game. To get it early tonight and get that feeling was critical."

San Jose increased its lead to 2-0 on a power-play goal by Couture at 11:02 of the first. It was his first goal of the series.

Marleau made it 3-0 at 2:02 of the second period when he scored his first goal of the series, also on the power play.

Sorensen knocked a rebound past Talbot from close range for his first goal of the series, extending San Jose's lead to 4-0 at 9:46 of the second.

Couture scored his second goal of the game at 12:52 of the second on a snap shot from the right faceoff circle to make it 5-0.

The Sharks went on their fourth power play of the game at 13:44 of the second when Oilers forward [Leon Draisaitl](#) received a five-minute major and a game misconduct for spearing [Chris Tierney](#), who went to the locker room in pain but returned for the third period.

Pavelski tipped in a Burns shot for his second goal of the game at 16:46 of the second to make it 6-0, and Schlemko scored a power-play goal at 6:45 of the third period.

"Tonight was a big lesson to learn," Oilers coach Todd McLellan said. "That just proves to our group that teams can get to another level. The momentum right off the bat was real important. Undisciplined play especially catches up with you. Tonight was their night finally."

Goal of the game

Pavelski went to the slot after winning a faceoff against [Connor McDavid](#) and got his stick on Braun's wrist shot from the right point for San Jose's first goal since [Melker Karlsson](#) scored 3:22 into overtime in Game 1.

Save of the game

Jones made 12 saves in the first period, including with 7:04 left and the Oilers on the power play when he got his left pad on [Mark Letestu](#)'s redirection from the slot.

Unsung performance of the game

Sharks defensemen [Marc-Edouard Vlasic](#) and Braun spent much of the game playing against McDavid and held the NHL scoring champion without a point for the second straight game.

Highlight of the game

The Sharks entered the game with one power-play goal in 14 chances, but Couture took a cross-ice pass from Pavelski and beat Talbot from the right circle on San Jose's first man-advantage opportunity of the game.

They said it

"We need a little more from everybody. No time to panic, no time to start second-guessing ourselves, no time for doubt to start creeping in. We've just got to find a way to bounce back as quick as possible." -- Oilers forward [Milan Lucic](#)



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"We were just ready. Everyone was ready. ... We just got inside and made a few plays and the power play responded with a little momentum, for sure, scoring some goals and being dangerous. We were just building off it. There weren't really any lapses in our game." -- *Sharks captain [Joe Pavelski](#)*

"A lot of times with players looking for answers, it's as simple as that. Come in and shuffle the deck and start fresh." -- *Sharks coach Peter DeBoer on playing Patrick Marleau on the top line with Pavelski and center [Joe Thornton](#), among other lineup moves for Game 4*

Need to know

The Sharks scored seven goals April 30, 1999, in Game 4 of the Western Conference Quarterfinals against the Colorado Avalanche and April 20, 2014, in Game 2 of the Western Conference First Round against the Los Angeles Kings. ... San Jose forward [Mikkel Boedker](#) was scratched for the second straight game.

What's next

Game 5 of Western Conference First Round at Rogers Place on Thursday (10:30 p.m. ET; NBCSN, SN, TVA Sports, NBCSCA)

Expansion Draft will be part of NHL Awards in Las Vegas

Selections made by Golden Knights revealed during show June 21

by NHL Public Relations [@PR_NHL](#) / NHL.com

April 18th, 2017

NEW YORK -- The National Hockey League today announced that the 2017 NHL Awards™ will return to Las Vegas to celebrate the League's top talent from the 2016-17 season on Wednesday, June 21 at T-Mobile Arena. In addition, it was announced that the NHL Expansion Draft™, a special event revealing the initial roster of the League's 31st team, the Vegas Golden Knights™, will be incorporated into the 2017 NHL Awards™.

Televised live in the United States on NBCSN and in Canada on Sportsnet at 7:30 p.m. ET / 4:30 p.m. PT, the 2017 NHL Awards™ will showcase hockey and Hollywood's biggest stars with the excitement and energy that only Las Vegas can provide. As part of the program, the Golden Knights' 30 selections in the NHL Expansion Draft™ will be revealed, providing the home fans - and national viewing audience - the opportunity to learn the initial composition of the team's roster. The show will highlight team Majority Owner Bill Foley, General Manager George McPhee, Head Coach Gerard Gallant, as well as select players chosen by the Golden Knights, who begin NHL play in 2017-18.

The 2017 NHL Awards™ will again honor the top individual regular-season performances in a wide range of categories, including most valuable player (Hart Trophy), outstanding goaltender (Vezina Trophy), outstanding defenseman (Norris Trophy) and outstanding rookie (Calder Trophy). The Ted Lindsay Award, which is presented annually to the "most outstanding player" in the NHL as voted by fellow members of the National Hockey League Players' Association (NHLPA), also will be awarded.

"We are thrilled to be in Las Vegas again for the NHL Awards," said Steve Mayer, NHL Chief Content Officer and Executive Vice President. "To be able to pair this perennial show with the excitement of the expansion draft for the Vegas Golden Knights is a unique opportunity that we think our fans will enjoy greatly."

The 2017 NHL Awards™ is the eighth time the League will honor the best hockey players in the world and the top performances of the season in Las Vegas. This will mark the NHL Awards™ debut for T-Mobile Arena. Other Las Vegas

venues that have hosted include the Palms Hotel (2009-2011), Encore at Wynn Las Vegas (2012, 2014), MGM Grand (2015) and The Joint at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino (2016). Encore at Wynn Las Vegas will serve as NHL® Headquarters during the 2017 NHL Awards™ & NHL Expansion Draft™.

"June 21 will be an incredible day for the city of Las Vegas and our fans," said Vegas Golden Knights Chairman and CEO Bill Foley. "The anticipation around the Expansion Draft has been building for months and that excitement will continue to grow as we get closer to Draft Day. By combining the draft with the NHL Awards, Golden Knights fans will get to experience a monumental day in our team's history while enjoying one of the premier NHL events that features the game's biggest stars."

"During the 2017 NHL Awards, Las Vegas will celebrate the NHL's top players and teams, and for the first time the destination will be represented by our new home team, the Vegas Golden Knights," said Cathy Tull, Senior Vice President of Marketing for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. "Las Vegas and the NHL are a winning combination, and we look forward to kicking off the Golden Knights' highly anticipated first season."

Information on an exclusive ticket pre-sale for Vegas Golden Knights season-ticket holders will be sent by the club in the coming days. This opportunity is for tickets to the 2017 NHL Awards™ & NHL Expansion Draft™ and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis, while supplies last. Tickets will be available for purchase to the general public beginning on Wednesday, May 3 at 1 p.m. ET / 10 a.m. PT.

A full line up of presenters and entertainment as well as official fan travel and hospitality packages through PrimeSport will be announced at a future date. In addition, fans can tweet about the event using the official hashtag #NHLAwards.

Finalists for each award will be announced beginning Wednesday, April 19 with nominees for each award revealed daily. Following is the schedule of nominee announcements. Please note that all announcement dates are subject to change.

Wednesday, April 19

Selke Trophy (forward who best excels in the defensive aspects of the game)



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Thursday, April 20

Calder Trophy (top rookie)

Friday, April 21

Norris Trophy (top defenseman)

Saturday, April 22

Vezina Trophy (top goaltender)

Sunday, April 23

Lady Byng Trophy (player best combining sportsmanship and ability)

Monday, April 24

Masterton Trophy (perseverance and dedication to hockey)

Tuesday, April 25

NHL Foundation Player Award (community service)

Wednesday, April 26

Jack Adams Award (top head coach)

Thursday, April 27

Mark Messier Leadership Award

Monday, May 1

Hart Trophy (most valuable player to his team)

Tuesday, May 2

Ted Lindsay Award (most outstanding player as voted by the Players)



Checkers Using Week To Break Down First-Round Opponent Chicago

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

Published: April 18, 2017

Three days ago, the Checkers clinched a playoff berth. Two days from now the puck will drop on Game 1. That's not a lot of preparation time. So how is the team getting ready?

For video coach Myles Fee, it's pretty simple.

"No sleep and abuse of our laptops," he said after Tuesday's practice. "I think the RAM is overheating as we speak, I'm baking some video back at the rink so when we get back there's more to give to Ulf. It's a culmination of work."

Even before scouring the video, the coaching staff is confident in their assessment of Chicago, a team that the Checkers have faced eight times this season and will again square off with in the first round.

"Chicago can score a lot of goals," said head coach Ulf Sameulsson. "They're a fast transition team and they have a lot of good players."

"They have a good offense," said Phil Di Giuseppe. "They tend to win games 5-4 or 4-3. They give up goals, but they do a good job of scoring them too."

A quick look at the numbers backs up those descriptions – the Wolves finished the season tied for the fourth-best offense in the AHL, averaging 3.3 goals per game.

So the job this week for the coaching staff is examining what specifically drives that high-powered offense.

"They're really good in their system and they've got a really strong first line," said Fee. "Give them respect, the team is

really good, but those three guys in particular have a really good knack of finding each other and getting in the sweet spot to get those shots off and crash the net."

Those three guys Fee is referring to are the trio of AHL MVP and leading scorer Kenny Agostino, AHL leading goal scorer Wade Megan and 54-point scorer Andrew Agozzino. Not only did those three lead the team in scoring, but they torched the Checkers, with Megan netting 11 points in eight games and Agostino chipping in 10 in six.

With Chicago's biggest strength identified, the team has shifted their focus this week to slowing down the Wolves' high-end weapons.

"Ulf is grabbing video for a couple guys and we're really watching those guys," said Fee. "As a coaching staff, we made today's practice all about our defensive mindset – coming in, boxing out, tracking back. Not just skating with abandon, but skating with a purpose and finding the open men and killing their plays."

The Checkers got a first-hand look at just what Chicago's offense is capable of in the season finale, when the home team rushed back to erase a two-goal deficit and win in overtime. Granted, there were extenuating circumstances that may have led the Checkers to let down their guards late in that game, but make no mistake about it, Thursday will be different.

"They turned on their jets and we were just playing for a tie, which is something we obviously can't do in the playoffs," said Fee of Saturday's overtime loss. "We'll have to go for the throat, so to speak. Not to say our guys let up, but there was a culmination of fatigue from these 30 games where we've been fighting for a playoff spot. It was so close that we



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were just trying to box out and hold on. Our mindset is going to be a lot different in Game 1 and we'll be a much more gelled and stronger team as we're going to get three or four guys back into our lineup."

Those returning players who Fee spoke optimistically of are Lucas Wallmark, Danny Kristo and Aleksii Saarela. All three were deemed "close" and labeled day-to-day on Monday by Samuelsson and, while there was no update to their statuses Tuesday morning, both Wallmark and Kristo were full participants in the team practice. Saarela took part while wearing a yellow no-contact jersey.

Receiving any combination of those players back into the lineup will give the Checkers an immeasurable boost, one

that should help them go toe-to-toe with Chicago's offense.

"It's amazing to watch our guys," said Fee. "One guy turns it on each game. That's not to say the others don't, but every game there's one guy who wants it and he takes it up that much higher. It's really nice to see."

The team will continue to prepare for the impending Game 1 with another practice today, as well as video sessions and meetings leading up to game time. All that work and studying will come to a head with this opening-round series, bringing with it an air of confidence.

"It's all about our tactics," said Fee. "If we stay in our structure I think we'll have a really good chance."

Shaya's 10 Thoughts: April 18, 2017

Published: April 18, 2017

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

1. Over the course of the season, no one has improved more than Haydn Fleury. He has shown remarkable gains in efficiency on the ice and has improved both defensively and towards the season's conclusion, he is offense has ramped up as well. He ends the year with a team high +16.

2. It is amazing considering how close the standings were going into the final week of the season that the Checkers could lose the final three games and still get in to the playoffs. It is also remarkable that the power play, which had been relatively abysmal the entire year, played such a huge role in getting points out of Grand Rapids and Chicago.

3. Michael Leighton is edging closer to a return but there is no doubt about who the starting goaltender is for Charlotte to begin the playoffs. Plain and simple: The team doesn't get into the postseason without the brilliance of Tom McCollum. Going back to the second game in Grand Rapids this past week, McCollum's play in the first period alone gave Charlotte a chance to find their footing and press forward. Even though he has only been with the team since the AHL trade deadline, he would have to be considered a candidate for team MVP.

4. If Kenny Agostino, the league's leading scorer, can't play this series as a result of the injury he is nursing, it gives the Checkers a gigantic advantage. Chicago is incredibly deep at forward, but no team is able to shrug off the loss of a player who registered 83 points (24g, 59a) in 65 games.

5. If you had to pick one player to watch from each team that might be "under-the-radar" for the upcoming Charlotte vs. Chicago series it would be Samuel Blais for Chicago and and Valentin Zykov for Charlotte.

6. This is the first time since 2013 that Charlotte has qualified for the postseason. In that year, Rob Madore was the starting goalie in the playoffs and Game 1 ended in overtime with a Brody Sutter goal against the Oklahoma City Barons.

7. Even though Chicago won the Central Division, in my estimation, having watched both Chicago and Grand Rapids in the final week, Grand Rapids will be the toughest opponent. Their Achilles heel is their defense and goaltending. Although a monster of a goalie, Jared Coreau has been prone to the soft goal. As it pertains to Chicago's goalie, they will start with Ville Husso. He has given Charlotte all they can handle this year and I fully expect him to be the goalie of the St. Louis Blues' future. This is Husso's first appearance in the playoffs in North America. I don't expect him to let nerves get into his head but who knows what kind of pressure a young goalie will feel.

8. Chicago defeated Charlotte six out of eight times this season but I expect a full lineup for the Checkers coming into Thursday night. I am guessing that everyone previously out due to injury, with perhaps the exception of Leighton, will be available to play. That would mean the Checkers would have many more options down the middle with a healthy Lucas Wallmark and Aleski Saarela.

9. As I write this, Nashville is up in the series against the Blackhawks 3-0. Like everyone else, I expect Nashville won't lose four games in a row and they will eventually move on in the tournament. However, if there was ever a team to come back from down 0-3, it would be the Hawks. Way too much experience in that locker room. Whether or not it gets them going, I don't know.

10. All the games can be streamed on our Checkers app so make sure you have it downloaded. You can also watch the games on AHLLive.com and there is a link for the free audio stream on our home page. Pregame shows begin 15 minutes before every puck drop. We should have Kyle Hagel on color commentary as his availability permits. I am predicting this series goes the full five games.



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ESPN / Young Leafs' leap of faith: Toronto's turnaround keyed by callow-but-confident stars

Pierre LeBrun

TORONTO -- It was almost a year ago that the lottery ball fell the Toronto Maple Leafs' way.

On April 30, 2016, the last-place Maple Leafs won the Auston Matthews sweepstakes.

Some 353 days later, hockey's lovable losers are two wins away from knocking off the No. 1 team in the NHL. And whether or not Toronto ousts the Washington Capitals -- against whom it has taken a 2-1 lead in their best-of-seven, first-round series -- it's clear that the Leafs are light-years ahead of schedule.

The learning curve for a team that dressed anywhere from six to eight rookies on any given night this season, and features 10 players who are playing in their first Stanley Cup playoffs this spring, has been nothing short of stunning.

"They're going to be good for a long time, but I never thought they'd this good, this quickly," observed a veteran NHL scout on Monday night.

No kidding.

Remember the good old days, when it actually took a few years to rebuild a team? It's as if somebody with the Leafs pressed the fast-forward button in mid-December and never let go.

They were not supposed to make the playoffs this season. Even privately, the Leafs' brass simply hoped they could stay within shouting distance of the postseason long enough to play meaningful games in March.

And they certainly weren't supposed to give the Capitals this kind of a series.

Somebody forgot to tell the players.

"If we don't think we can beat them coming into the series, we don't deserve to be in the series," wise old Auston Matthews, 19, said Monday night after his team's 4-3 overtime win in Game 3 of the series. "That's been our mindset since Game 1, 'We can play with these guys.' We can skate, get in behind their D and create some havoc. That's never been a doubt in our mind."

This isn't just a quote for public consumption, something for the Toronto media to eat up and spit out to the legion of Leafs fans who are collectively pinching themselves.

No, this is truly how Matthews and his merry band of cherubic teammates actually think.

And why not? They lead the best-of-seven series over the Presidents' Trophy winners 2-1. All three games have gone to overtime. Game 4 is Wednesday in Toronto.

"I thought we gained confidence in Game 1 because we showed we can play," said Leafs head coach Mike Babcock. "Game 2 was a big confidence-builder. And obviously now our guys think they're a good hockey team. They're playing a good hockey team, but I think you gain respect for yourself in the process and you start believing that maybe you can do this."

If winning the Matthews lottery was the seminal moment for the franchise, a close second was the day -- two years ago next month -- that Babcock chose the Leafs over the Buffalo Sabres as his next place of employment.

Babcock's imprint is all over this lightning-quick turnaround. The young Leafs are as prepared as any team in the league. Over the course of the season, Babcock convinced a bunch of goal-hungry thoroughbreds to make smarter decisions with the puck and not always go for glory.

No one is ever going to confuse this team with the neutral-zone-trapping 1995 New Jersey Devils, but the transformation of this Toronto squad into a more responsible team away from the puck and in its defensive zone is nothing short of remarkable.

It starts, however, with the Leafs' speed and their ability to put opposing players on their heels. That speed is giving the slower-footed Capitals fits.

"We think we're quick, we really do," Babcock said.

After being largely outplayed by the veteran Capitals in the opening half of Monday's game, Toronto was down 3-1 and lucky the deficit wasn't double that. The Leafs killed a full 5-on-3 Caps power play in the second period -- and suddenly found their legs.

And just like that, a team that looked overwhelmed for almost 30 minutes took over the game. The key, however, is that they've come far enough in their learning curve this season that despite being outplayed to that point, they did not take a knee. Some inexperienced playoff teams might have.

Instead, the Leafs persevered. That tells you a lot about how far they've come in their belief system.

"You can't feel overwhelmed," said Leafs center Nazem Kadri, whose goal cut the lead to 3-2. "That's an important thing because they're a team that can put you away quick. You've got to understand, they're going to push, they're going to have those times when they hem us in our zone. We've just got to stay strong, Freddie [Andersen] again was great making timely saves. We just have to understand that if you survive a shift, the next one is a new one."

The self-assurance in the Toronto dressing room was unmistakable on Monday night. The Leafs players each have that look in their eyes.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 19, 2017

"I think it's gone up," Matthews, who got his first goal of the playoffs Monday, said of his team's confidence after three games. "Once you get into the playoffs, the seeding doesn't really matter. It's who wants it more."

Leafs center Tyler Bozak scored the winner in Game 3 on a power play 1:37 into overtime.

"We've always believed in ourselves," Bozak said. "It's never bad to be in the underdog position. There's a little less pressure. But we put a lot of pressure on ourselves to perform. We believe in ourselves in this room."

As the self-belief builds for the No. 8 seed, the pressure mounts on the No. 1 seed, the club that carries the mantle of perennial playoff underachiever.

EDITOR'S PICKS

Better believe in the Leafs' kids now

This thing just got serious. The Toronto Maple Leafs won for the second straight time in overtime and all of a sudden are in the driver's seat against the heavily favored Washington Capitals.

A crazy Monday night in the NHL

Recapping a crazy night of hockey where all four playoff games went to OT. A look at how rare that is and other storylines from around the NHL.

Leafs learning the hard way

The young and untested Toronto Maple Leafs could collapse completely under the weight of the pressure or instead learn to embrace the experience to build on for the future.

What do the Capitals, who dominated the Leafs for half a game on Monday night but still found a way to lose, do now?

"Just forget it and move forward," captain Alex Ovechkin said.

"Obviously, we're losing the series, but it's not over yet. I think we should [have won] this game, but we make a couple mistakes and there was a couple lucky bounces. We move forward."

Washington head coach Barry Trotz spent his morning and postgame media sessions Monday trying to convince the media that there really wasn't much difference between the talent levels of both squads.

"They've got really dynamic forwards, as we do. They have four lines; we have four lines," Trotz said after Game 3. "Their goaltender's playing good, and we've got good goaltending. The defense is matching up pretty good. It's a lot closer match than people let on. It's not David and Goliath. They're a good hockey team. They wouldn't be here if they weren't."

That's his way of taking the pressure off his team, perhaps. Too late. It's on. Big-time.

The Leafs? They insist they knew they had a chance before this series started.

"We came into this series doing our homework, knowing what to expect, and being prepared, and being organized," Kadri said. "That's what our philosophy has been about. And that's what is going to help us win."

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ESPN / Blackhawks take the biggest hit after a wild night of OT games

ESPN.com

Of the four games with blown two-goal leads Monday night, which was the most damaging?

Craig Custance: Both the Calgary Flames and Chicago Blackhawks are now in trouble, down 3-0 after Monday night's losses, and both teams had high playoff hopes. The Flames are early enough in their development curve where every one of these losses is a lesson. At least

that's a silver lining. For the Blackhawks, it's just pure disappointment. A shot at another Stanley Cup is nearly gone.

Pierre LeBrun: It certainly feels like the end for both Chicago and Calgary. The Flames even chased John Gibson from the net, but then saw the Ducks rally back for the 5-4 win. Given Calgary's dismal record in Anaheim, I don't see how they could win the next four games. If there's a team that you can believe has that kind of miracle run in them, it's the Blackhawks, given their pedigree -- but not only did the Predators come back from two goals down Monday night, they completely owned overtime. I picked the Preds back in September to make it to the Stanley Cup finals. They finally look like that team after an inconsistent regular season.

EDITOR'S PICKS

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Ryan's OT goal gives Senators series lead

Bobby Ryan's power-play goal in OT came after the Ottawa Senators blew a three-goal lead, and the Senators' win put the Boston Bruins down 2-1 in the first-round series.

2017 Stanley Cup playoffs coverage

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Scott Burnside: Have to say that when the Blackhawks went up 2-0 in the second period on Patrick Kane's power-play goal, I was thinking history was about to repeat itself for Nashville, which had the Blackhawks on the ropes the previous two times they've met in the playoffs but couldn't match Chicago's depth and will to win. But talk about redefining your character by coming back with two third-period goals and the OT winner to go up 3-0 in the series. So if I was wrong about Nashville, does that mean I was wrong about Chicago, the top team in the Western Conference? Apparently. Chicago is cooked.

Rob Vollman: Psychologically, Calgary's loss has to be the most devastating, unquestionably. But statistically, Chicago's was probably the loss that stings most, because the Blackhawks' chances of winning the series dropped by the greatest extent Monday night. With a win, they were still very much in this series, but now their odds are near zero. The Ottawa Senators blew a 3-0 lead before redeeming themselves in overtime, the Washington Capitals are still very much in their series with the Toronto Maple Leafs even with their Game 3 loss, and Calgary's chances of winning its series were quite modest to begin with.

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FOXSports.com / Oilers' Leon Draisaitl ejected after spearing Sharks player in the groin

Pete Blackburn

Leon Draisaitl had a pretty awful night in San Jose on Tuesday.

Not only did Draisaitl's Oilers get stomped by the Sharks in a 7-0 Game 4 blowout, but the 21-year-old forward didn't even get to see it through. He was sent to the showers early following a dirty, brutal spear to the groin of an opponent.

While trailing by five goals in the second period, Draisaitl's frustration boiled over when he drove his stick right into the privates of the Sharks' Chris Tierney. That turned out to be unwise when he was caught and penalized with a five-minute major and game misconduct for spearing.

Considering the blowout was well underway at that point, Draisaitl's loss wasn't necessarily a big one for the team. However, if the Department of Player Safety decides that the incident is worthy of a suspension, that's



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 19, 2017

where this could really bite the Oilers. The series is currently locked at two games apiece and Draisaitl was Edmonton's second-leading scorer during the regular season.

The series is currently locked at two games apiece and Draisaitl was Edmonton's second-leading scorer during the regular season.

Draisaitl may be able to escape a suspension since lower-body spearing isn't typically answered with bans unless you've got a rap sheet like Brad Marchand's. The league also tends to be more lenient during the playoffs and Tierney did Draisaitl a favor by returning to the game after a brief absence.

However, Matt Calvert was suspended for one playoff game after delivering a couple of cheap shots in a game that was all but over last week. The NHL's Department of Player Safety felt that Calvert's actions fell into the category of "message-sending" heading into the next game, and it's possible that Draisaitl's incident could possibly be viewed in a similar light.

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FOXSports.com / Zach Werenski gives signed jersey to Blue Jackets fan wearing his fractured face on a t-shirt

Pete Blackburn

It's been a really strange week for Zach Werenski. It seems to only keep getting weirder.

The 19-year-old Blue Jackets defenseman scored his first career playoff goal on Sunday, then suffered a facial fracture after blocking a shot with his face in the same game. Werenski returned to the game after suffering the injury, which earned him serious "Hockey Guy" respect points, but then he had to leave the game because his right eye swelled up so much that he lost vision.

Werenski was ruled out for the remainder of the playoffs, but it's clear that Columbus fans won't soon forget the sacrifice he made for the team.

this is...something pic.twitter.com/FgtvVX19ne

— ColumbusBlueJackets (@BlueJacketsNHL) April 18, 2017

Why yes, that is a t-shirt featuring the gruesome selfie that Werenski shared in the aftermath of the injury. It was spotted at Nationwide Arena in Columbus for Game 4 on Tuesday. While it might now be Werenski's unofficial playoff jersey, the Jackets' star decided to show some love by hooking the fan up with something a little more legit.

happy to add some formal attire to the wardrobe
pic.twitter.com/WB31fk4Y90

— ColumbusBlueJackets (@BlueJacketsNHL) April 19, 2017

Come to the game in a custom, slightly disturbing t-shirt and leave with a signed jersey. The Stanley Cup playoffs are certainly unpredictable.

As for Werenski, his face may be broken but it's clear his spirit isn't. Meanwhile, he's slowly morphing into a James Bond villain...

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FOXSports.com / The Bruins got shafted by a controversial call in OT and it may have cost them the game

Pete Blackburn

The Bruins were lucky to even make it to overtime on Monday night in Boston. They started Game 3 against Ottawa completely flat and fell into a 3-0 hole to the Senators early.

After climbing back in dramatic fashion, the Bruins forced OT and had in front of them an opportunity to win one of those games that leaves an opponent demoralized and potentially alters the course of a series.

Instead, it was Boston that was ultimately left demoralized, thanks in large part to a brutal job of officiating in the extra frame. That poor officiating paved the way for the Sens to take a 2-1 series lead on a power-play goal.

About five minutes into OT, play was blown dead and Bruins forward Riley Nash was handed a two-minute minor penalty for roughing. The call came after Nash took a swipe at Senators forward Bobby Ryan and caught him in the face with a quick gloved jab. Ryan may have helped the call along, but the two minutes for Nash were fair.

Upon review of the replay, though, the jab came in response to a clear-cut check to the head from Ryan. There's no question that Ryan's hit also deserved a penalty, but one never came. Nash headed to the box by himself and the Senators headed to the power play.

It was such an egregious ruling that even NBC's Pierre McGuire seemed pretty steamed over it on the broadcast.

You don't often hear Pierre McGuire get this fired up, but he's not wrong pic.twitter.com/f1UjENtvhM

— Pete Blackburn (@PeteBlackburn) April 18, 2017

To give him credit, Pierre's assessment is spot-on. That's a sequence that can't result in a man-advantage for the Senators, especially in overtime of a playoff game. If you're going to send Nash off, you have to send Ryan off with a matching minor as well.

The ruling is bad enough in a vacuum, but it becomes even worse when you consider how inconsistent it was with the way the game was called during regulation. Here's a third period exchange that resulted in matching roughing minors:

Ottawa's Marc Methot delivers a punch straight to the grill of Boston's Tim Schaller, who doesn't respond, yet both players were sent off.

It was still a poor decision on Nash's part to retaliate the way that he did — even if the refs had called Ryan's check, a power play for the Boston would have been negated by Nash's jab — and after the game the Bruins forward called his actions "selfish." Regardless of the way the game had previously been called, if Nash assumed Ryan would be penalized and he wouldn't be, he was wrong to do so.

Still, it's a tough pill to swallow for the Bruins. Boston head coach Bruce Cassidy called the ruling "terrible" but acknowledged that it was on his team to kill the penalty regardless, which they failed to do.

The refs didn't score the overtime goal or force the Bruins to blow coverage on the deciding tally from, who else, Ryan, but it's still frustrating when the officials play such a strong factor in the outcome of a game, especially when it's a playoff game between two teams who battled pretty evenly all night long.

Now, it's on the Bruins to put it behind them and bounce back in Game 4 or head back to Ottawa while staring down a first-round exit.

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FOXSports.com / Toronto's young stars have made Maple Leafs-Caps a must-watch series

Pete Blackburn

Stop me if you've heard this before, but things aren't quite going as planned for the Capitals this postseason.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 19, 2017

Fresh off winning their second consecutive Presidents' Trophy as the league's top regular season team, a dominant Caps team looked to be in great position to erase the franchise's postseason demons with a strong run for a Cup this spring.

But that was before the Toronto Maple Leafs decided to remind us all that, yes, they are actually good.

Through the first three games of the opening-round series, Toronto has not only been able to keep up with the Capitals, but fly past them. The young guys, just happy to be there, now find themselves up 2 games to 1, and has the NHL asking: Can the kids really do it?

Geoff Burke Geoff Burke-USA TODAY Sports

Look at the series: After the Leafs let Game 1 slip away, they bounced back nicely and stole a win on the road before heading home to Toronto. Game 3 saw the Leafs' take a second straight win in overtime, giving them a two games to one series lead over Caps.

It may not be time to panic in Washington just yet -- though it'd be hard to blame fans doing just that -- but, at the very least, there's significant cause for concern if you're in the Caps' corner.

At the top of that list of concerns lies the Maple Leafs' top line.

In the winning effort, the Leafs' top trio -- comprised of three rookies in Auston Matthews, William Nylander and Zach Hyman -- was absolutely phenomenal. They dominated possession in all situations and controlled play all night long, against the league's top defense, no less.

They had played well in the previous two games, but were held pointless on the scoresheet. On Monday, that changed. And considering they clock in at 19 (Matthews), 20 (Nylander) and 24 years old (Hyman), this has to be something that the rest of the league is taking note of.

Matthews got on the board with his first career playoff goal, as did William Nylander, who tallied the game-tying goal that would ultimately send the game to OT. Both of his linemates assisted on that goal.

They've gotten a bit of help, but there's no question that the Leafs' top line is the primary reason that they're currently ahead in series. For Capitals' fans, the scary part is that they only seem to be getting better.

That's not to say that the Leafs are running away with the series, by any means. It's been an ultra-competitive series -- all three games have gone to overtime, with Game 2 needing double-overtime -- and it could easily swing back in the Capitals' favor in the next game.

On paper, the Capitals still have a better and much deeper team than the Leafs do. As we all know, the game isn't played on paper, but that depth is going to be key.

If the Capitals can't figure out a way to shut down the Leafs' top line moving forward, they'll need to bank on outplaying the rest of Toronto's lineup. You obviously want contributions from the heavy-hitters up front like Alex Ovechkin, Nicklas Backstrom and T.J. Oshie, but this could be a war of attrition that is won in the trenches.

They'll need to be relentless.

Geoff Burke Geoff Burke-USA TODAY Sports

But don't underestimate the Leafs, even if that's an easy thing to do.

After all, they're a year removed from finishing as the league's worst team. They snuck into the playoffs as the East's eighth-seed after being carried by a crop of promising rookies this year -- including the likely Calder-winner in Matthews, who had the best first-year campaign in the 100-year history of the Leafs' franchise.

It's risky to put your faith in a bunch of inexperienced kids, especially come playoff time. A whopping 11 players have made their playoff debut for the Leafs this year, as opposed to just one for Washington.

And, maybe above all that, they're the Leafs -- the team maybe most notorious for letting its fans down over the past handful of decades.

Geoff Burke Geoff Burke-USA TODAY Sports

Surely a young team and possibly-cursed franchise wouldn't stand a chance at dethroning the league's top team and overwhelming Cup favorite? You would think the Maple Leafs should just be happy to get back to the playoffs and get some postseason experience for their star youngsters, right?

But it's clear they're not just happy to be there. And, as it turns out, the kids have not only rewarded faith -- they're the reason it looks like the Leafs could actually do this thing.

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FOXSports.com / Bruins fan tries to steal stick from Senators player after game, learns his lesson

Pete Blackburn

Bruins fans in attendance for Game 3 against the Senators didn't get to see the result they were hoping for on Monday night, as Boston lost in overtime to Ottawa, 4-3.

One fan tried his best to take home a consolation prize immediately following the game, though that didn't exactly work out for him either.

As the Senators were leaving the ice following the win, which was aided by a controversial penalty call in OT, there was some bitterness and anger from Boston fans surrounding the Ottawa tunnel. A few fans threw trash on the ice and in the direction of Sens players, like this wonderful human in the gray shirt:

But others went for a different approach, like this guy who attempted to jack the stick right out of the hands of Senators defenseman Chris Wideman.

I'm not exactly sure what prompted several Ottawa players to have their sticks up in that area to begin with but I think it's safe to assume there was some sort of exchange between those fans and the team leading up to this.

Either way, that fan in the David Krejci jersey got ahold of Wideman's stick and tried to yank it away from him for a take-home souvenir. If we're being honest here, it's not the most honorable move but I think it's a pretty funny one that would be a great party story forever.

"Hey Sully, how'd you get that stick you have mounted up on the wall?"

"Well, uh, Sully #2, you see, I got wicked pissed aftah a Bruins playoff game and decided to be a jerk and just swipe it from a losah Senatahs playah."

BRO-FIVE

Unfortunately for the would-be thief, his attempts were foiled when Senators' captain Erik Karlsson stepped up and delivered quite a chop to the fan's hand that clearly stung him quite a bit. Wounded and outnumbered, the fan finally gave up the stick and delivered some parting words. We can probably assume they were not words of wisdom or inspiration.

Boston fans don't exactly have the most sterling reputation and this won't help much. The actions of a few certainly shouldn't reflect on an entire fanbase, but it's on these dudes for providing more ammo for the "classless" police.

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Sportsnet.ca / Sharks explode as young Oilers left watching in ugly loss

The Sharks blanked the Oilers 7-0, evening their series at 2-2.

Mark Spector



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 19, 2017

SAN JOSE — On the night that Jerry Rice was brought in to let the Sharks loose, San Jose beat the Edmonton Oilers by a converted touchdown.

The San Francisco 49ers Hall of Fame receiver was shown on the scoreboard opening the San Jose dressing-room door before the game. He let the Sharks out, and in turn they beat up on the Oilers the way Rice and Joe Montana used to pile up points on the Cincinnati Bengals.

"My math still says it's 2-2," a defiant Connor McDavid said after the game, the worst margin of defeat in Oilers playoff history. "You don't get two games for winning 7-0, so the series is still 2-2 and we're still in a good spot. We got a split here and that's what we came to do."

Edmonton scored one goal in two games here in Silicon Valley, and earned a win. But it was the Sharks who took what was the lowest-scoring Round 1 series, and injected some offence, BALCO style.

Joe Pavelski scored on a high-skill deflection just 15 seconds into the game, and the Sharks never gave Edmonton a sniff the rest of the way. It was 2-0 after 20 minutes, 6-0 after 40, and there wasn't a stat on the final game sheet that wasn't sloped towards the San Jose side.

"They were able to score a goal on their first shift and never looked back," said Milan Lucic. "We talked about how lethal their power play is, and we gave them an opportunity to get it going."

"It's them being more hungry to get themselves back in the series, and us not responding the right way."

We've seen these things before in the playoffs, and frankly, there is very seldom any lasting effect either way. Edmonton has two of the final three games at home, and they'll bounce back.

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The one thing that will carry over to Game 5 however, is the Sharks' discovery of their power play in Game 4. After entering the game at 1-for-14, they went 4-for-8 on the night, and as such, all of their big boys got in on the feast.

Brent Burns had three assists. Pavelski had a goal and three points. Logan Couture scored twice. Patrick Marleau had two points.

Leon Draisaitl, meanwhile, decided he'd pile up penalty minutes instead. The young German's maiden playoff voyage has been Hindenberg-esque, with zero points and one shot on goal through four games.

He showed his frustration in the second period when he pitch-forked Chris Tierney in the groin. It was a dangerous and dirty play that earned Draisaitl a spearing major, a game misconduct, and very likely some consideration by the department of player safety.

"That's an ugly play," said Sharks coach Peter DeBoer. "There has already been an incident like that in the playoffs and the league takes care of that stuff. When teams make those types of plays, the answer has to be to make them pay on the power play."

This was a young team that has never dealt with the desperation and experience a defending Stanley Cup finalist can bring when it finds itself staring a 3-1 series deficit in the face. The Sharks came at Edmonton in waves from the very first puck drop, and the inexperienced Oilers were simply overwhelmed.

"In the playoffs, there are little lessons you learn along the way. Tonight was a big one," said Oilers head coach Todd McLellan, who has found he can give his players the heads up, but there are certain things they must experience for themselves.

"It just proves to our group that teams can take it to another level," he said. "That momentum right off the bat is real important. That undisciplined play eventually catches up with you ... which was quite predictable knowing the level of player they can put out on the ice on their power play."

"We wrapped it all up into one night. Hopefully we learned some lessons."

McLellan wanted his team to stew in this defeat for the evening. But by the time they step on to that charter plane Wednesday morning, it will be about Thursday night's Game 5 at home.

And a best-of-seven that is now a best-of-three — with two games at Rogers Place.

"No time to panic. No time to start second-guessing ourselves. No time to for doubt to start creeping in," said Lucic, this club's moral compass. "This time of year, it doesn't matter whether you win by one goal or seven goals."

"You've just got to turn the page and bounce back."

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Sportsnet.ca / Should Leon Draisaitl get suspended for spearing Tierney in groin?

Sportsnet Staff

The Edmonton Oilers came into Game 4 in San Jose with a 2-1 series lead and a general good feeling that they could keep up their regular season fortunes and compete with the NHL's best, possibly leading to a lengthy playoff run.

Game 4, however, was a reminder of how full of adversity the trip to the Stanley Cup can be.

Already trailing the Sharks 5-0 with a little more than a quarter of the second period still to play, the Oilers were at a point in the game where things could get out of hand. Whether those "things" would remain on the scoreboard, or descend into overboard physical or stick play was still to be determined — until Leon Draisaitl stepped up and senselessly gave a good, hard spear to Chris Tierney's groin.

It's not a comfortable one to watch (although you can, at the top of this page).

Draisaitl was given a well-earned five-minute major and game misconduct for the vicious spear and could be hearing from the Department of Player Safety.

Will he be suspended for this tremendously dumb play? Consider this:

When the league suspended Matt Calvert for a cross-check at the end of an out-of-reach game against the Penguins in their series, the reasoning was explained thusly:

"This is not a hockey play in the sense that it has nothing to do with pursuit of the puck or establishing body position..."

"Finally and most importantly, we believe this play falls under the category of message sending. Late in the game with the score out of reach, Calvert delivers this blow to an opponent he will be facing again the next game. While we understand frustration often occurs at the end of a game, dangerous or retaliatory plays delivered in the closing minutes of a playoff game will be viewed in context and punished accordingly."

Draisaitl's spear may not have come in the closing minutes of a game, but the Oilers were well out of it and frustration appears to be a factor here. If message sending and frustration in an out-of-reach game was a factor in suspending Calvert for his "non-hockey play" it would seem likely the same line of thinking could come in to play for Draisaitl.

A couple factors that could work in Draisaitl's favour, though:

1. Since he was booted from the game and missed nearly half of it, that could be viewed by the league as effective discipline and see no need for further punishment.

2. He has no suspension history

3. Tierney returned to the game.

What do you think?



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 19, 2017

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Sportsnet.ca / Up to Canadiens to answer back after Game 4 no-show

Eric Engels

NEW YORK — It was a no-show on Broadway.

From the second the puck dropped to the second the clock stopped, the Montreal Canadiens never found any semblance of the cerebral style of game that had put them up 2-1 in this series on Sunday. They mismanaged the puck, giving it straight to the Rangers on both goals against, and they iced it eight times while chasing the lead in the third period.

When you consider all those factors, the 2-1 score in Game 4 was almost flattering to the visiting side.

"It's not like we didn't work," said Alexander Radulov. "We just made bad decisions. Not bad decisions; just not the right decision at that time. When we couldn't hold onto the puck and make the right play, we forced it with those long stretch passes, and they weren't there.

"Well it's 2-2 right now and it's best of three right now and we're going home. We've gotta focus on one game and get that next one."

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The Canadiens have their work cut out for them in the lead-up to Thursday's Game 5 at the Bell Centre. They'd be wise to take a page out of the Rangers' book, who proved how far a few key adjustments can carry you in a playoff series.

The Rangers, who had finished just one point behind the Canadiens in the regular season, had turned themselves into underdogs with the way they had slept-walked through Games 2 and 3. Their passivity had turned the neutral zone into a raceway for their opponents and turned execution into an impossibility at either end of the ice.

But the reversal from New York in Game 4 was tangible.

"We had jump from the get-go, we created more chances," said goaltender Henrik Lundqvist.

It was unquestionably the Rangers' best start to a game in this series, notching the first few scoring chances and rocking the Canadiens back on their heels and into second place in the race for loose pucks.

A goal from Jesper Fast, which came 11:39 into the first period was the first reward.

"We were able to put pucks in places where we could get it back," said Derek Stepan.

That was a considerable departure from what we saw in Montreal last Friday and at Madison Square Garden on Sunday.

"To be able to compete and play against them you have to make every shift count, and that's what we tried to do tonight," said Rangers coach Alain Vigneault.

Mission accomplished — and just at the right time.

The Rangers stopped their home losing streak in the playoffs — dating back to 2015 — at six games.

"We had to," said Rick Nash, who scored the game winner at the 4:28 mark of the second period. "We couldn't be going back to Montreal down 3-1."

Even if the Rangers were the best road team in the NHL in the regular season, they knew those odds might've been too steep to overcome.

The Canadiens, who had an opportunity to take the stranglehold, strayed too far from the path. They had some chances, none better than first-period breakaways for Torrey Mitchell and Andrew Shaw, but they fell woefully short.

"We ended up turning it over in the neutral zone trying to make those plays at the blue line when we should've gotten it behind them and tried to wear down their D," said captain Max Pacioretty. "I think their D were able to save up some energy during the game because of that."

It showed — particularly through eight minutes of shot-less hockey from the Canadiens to start the second period.

Pacioretty didn't have one in the game until Canadiens coach Claude Julien took Radulov off his line and replaced him with Shaw.

Julien said afterwards the idea was: "Just to give a little spark."

No fire followed. There wasn't even smoke.

"It wasn't my best," said Pacioretty. "But you know it's one game at a time and [I'm] looking to get better."

It wasn't the Canadiens' best, and they have to be looking at how they can get better.

Julien said that's going to start with a comprehensive look at the game footage, and he didn't have to say it's likely going to result in a reinforcement of the importance of managing the puck properly in all three zones.

It wouldn't be a total shocker if he tweaked the lineup, too, as he has on several occasions since taking over as coach on Feb. 14.

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The Rangers did after their worst performance in the series, bringing in the speedy, skilled Pavel Buchnevich in favour of rugged fourth-liner Tanner Glass and subbing Nick Holden back in on the blue line instead of sticking with Kevin Klein. They both played great. It was all part of a major turnaround.

All the Canadiens had to do was counter with the same style of game that had proven to be so effective on Sunday. Easier said than done.

"The challenge is playing against the same team the next game," said Canadiens goaltender Carey Price. "Every game is going to be different. Every team is going to adjust. It's just a battle of adjustments."

The ball is now in his team's court.

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Sportsnet.ca / Top 5: Most regular season games without a Stanley Cup Playoffs goal

Sportsnet Staff April 18, 2017, 10:42 PM

Ron Hainsey, the 13th overall draft pick from 2000, has experienced a bunch of playoff firsts this spring.

It took this long for the 36-year-old veteran to reach the playoffs at all after spending his career with Montreal, Columbus, Atlanta, Winnipeg and Carolina. Hainsey was acquired by the Penguins at this year's trade deadline, which provided him his first crack at the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

Last week, Hainsey got into his first post-season game, he recorded his first playoff point with a Game 3 assist, and Tuesday night he experienced his first post-season loss as the Penguins fell 5-4 to Columbus in Game 4 of their first round series.



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But it wasn't all sour in Game 4. Hainsey, a stay-at-home defenceman with just 49 goals in his entire career, scored his first playoff goal from below the hash marks, on a pass from Phil Kessel.

Hainsey's run without scoring a post-season goal ends at 14 seasons. He had played 907 career regular season games before registering his first goal, point and game played in the Stanley Cup Playoffs, which may seem like a long time (and it is), but it's still far from the all-time record.

That would belong to defenceman Luke Richardson, who played 1,417 career regular season games, and even 69 Stanley Cup Playoffs games, but never scored a post-season goal. He went on a couple long post-season runs with Edmonton and Toronto, but never won the Stanley Cup.

Hal Gill, who did win a Stanley Cup with the Pittsburgh Penguins, comes in at No. 2 on this list. Gill played 1,108 career regular season games and even 111 playoff games, but he never scored a post-season goal (he did register six assists).

Here's a look at the top five players who have played the most regular season games, without scoring a playoff goal. (Numbers via Sportsnet Stats)

PLAYER REGULAR SEASON GAMES

Luke Richardson	1417
Hal Gill	1108
Jay Bouwmeester	1071
Nick Schultz	1069
Don Awrey	979

Bouwmeester and Schultz are the only active players on this list. Schultz, a member of the Flyers, is already out, and if Bouwmeester doesn't score in the Blues' run this season (they're up 3-0 on Minnesota in Round 1), they could both surpass Gill for No. 2 next season.

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Sportsnet.ca / Blue Jackets fan wears Werenski's face, gets signed sweater

Daniel Goffenberg

Move over Dart Guy, a new superfan is making waves with his own unique fashion choices.

A man in attendance of Game 4 of the Columbus Blue Jackets–Pittsburgh Penguins series has shown up wearing a shirt with the scuzzed-up face of Blue Jackets rookie Zach Werenski, who was hit with a puck in Game 3.

He quickly caught the attention of cameras, and eventually Werenski himself, who adorned the fan with a signed sweater.

happy to add some formal attire to the wardrobe
pic.twitter.com/WB31fk4Y90

— ColumbusBlueJackets (@BlueJacketsNHL) April 19, 2017

Werenski has been shut down for the playoffs, ending a fine first year in the NHL for the 19-year-old.

His bruised face will live on however, both in lore and in a blend of cotton and polyester.

when you know you look good pic.twitter.com/mmMxgNlyAZ

— ColumbusBlueJackets (@BlueJacketsNHL) April 19, 2017

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Sportsnet.ca / Capitals need to solve the Auston Matthews matrix

Luke Fox

TORONTO – How Auston Matthews ended up centring a line of all kids is that he never wanted the easy way out.

His coach, Mike Babcock, defines a specific role for each individual player early and likes to stick to the plan. Babcock also likes pairs of forwards, even though we think of them as trios. This is why Chris Kunitz owns an Olympic gold medal.

Entering the Toronto Maple Leafs' 2016-17 season—one destined to become a happy memory in this city regardless of Round 1's outcome—Babcock knew he wanted to pair veterans Tyler Bozak and James van Riemsdyk on a line and Nazem Kadri and Leo Komarov on another.

The coach and the lottery prize had a talk. They considered smoothing the teenager's learning curve by placing him on the wing and easing him into the middle—a common NHL development strategy that worked for stars like Tyler Seguin and Steven Stamkos.

Jonathan Toews didn't take that path, though. Neither did Sidney Crosby, nor Connor McDavid. Matthews did not want to play on anybody's wing.

"He wants to be the best player in the world," Babcock said.

So with the other pairs in stone and rookies flooding the roster, the coach saw little choice but to flank Matthews with Zach Hyman and Connor Brown (since swapped for William Nylander).

"There wasn't a whole bunch more options," Babcock said. "Hyman and Brown, as much as they're kids, they're dependable.

"Even though you don't consider them veterans, they're veteran-like people with veteran-like habits because they do it right all the time. I don't consider it – I think that line is a load, and I think it's a good line."

Good line? Maybe in Game 1 and early in Game 2. But since then, and especially during Monday's 4-3 OT beauty, the Hyman-Matthews-Nylander trinity were Corsi gods. Five-on-five, their possession metrics were 75%, 71.4% and 82%, respectively.

Matthews scored his first playoff goal as a professional (the wunderkind went 0-fer in the 2016 Swiss post-season), and he and Hyman did the dirty work to set Nylander up for his first NHL playoff goal as well.

Matthews & Nylander are 1st pair of #Leafs rookies to score in the same playoff game since Wendel Clark & Steve Thomas (Apr 10, 1986)

— Sportsnet Stats (@SNstats) April 18, 2017

The Washington Capitals had no answer for them.

"Matty's an elite skill guy. He can play with or without the puck against anybody. Hyman comes every day as dependable as dependable is. Comes with more energy than anybody, I think, in the league. Great forechecker, makes great passes from under the goal line. And Willy can pass it, he can shoot it, he can skate," Babcock said.

"They're a better line for us because we've got Naz and we've got Bozie. That's what's good about having three centres like that—they can pick each other up."

Let's go beyond the kids' goals for a moment and rewind to the first two games of the series, when Matthews—one of the NHL's most prolific shooters—actually blocked more shots (six) than he took (five) over his 46 minutes of ice time.

"Look at the blocks, too," Brian Boyle said. "Some heavy shots, and he's opening up and it hits him in some tender areas. He took one I know that hurt, and he did the same thing right away without thinking—the very next period.

"That's what I think he prides himself on, playing a complete game. He's done enough interviews when he's said that. Many can say that, but he goes out and does it. He's competitive, he works, he has takeaways [three already this series]—that's a skill that takes a while to learn. At 19



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years old, that's impressive. His mental approach, his maturity—that's what it speaks to."

Has Matthews, a guy accustomed to having the puck glued to his stick, ever blocked so many pucks?

"I dunno. Everybody's sacrificing their body. It's all an investment," Matthews said.

"The playoffs are an investment. Not everything is about goals or assists. It's about finishing checks, blocking shots, the little things that go unnoticed behind the scenes that help your team win."

When Barry Trotz visited Toronto at the top of the month, the Capitals' coach described Matthews as a "generational player" four times, then indirectly compared him to Neo out of *The Matrix*.

"He's deceptively fast," Trotz said. "He has this ability to see and do things at a high rate of speed, but I know in his mind everything's slow. He is able to see everything in slow motion."

So on Monday when he streaks up the gut, wrists a puck that caroms off John Carlson's stick, bonks off Nate Schmidt's visor and bounces in front of Braden Holtby, Matthews stays with it for the finish. Maybe there's luck in that play, but there's something else, too.

"We give him respect, first and foremost," Kevin Shattenkirk says. "Most importantly, we know he works hard. He doesn't give up. He makes second and third efforts."

That's the scariest part, and Washington needs a solution fast.

More from Sportsnet

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LUKE FOX

Capitals still haven't 'owned the big moments' vs. Maple Leafs

CHRIS JOHNSTON

How the Washington Capitals are trying to solve the Auston Matthews' line

We surveyed several members of the Capitals on how they're trying to limit the awesome Matthews line.

Kevin Shattenkirk: "They're similar to the way we play, to be honest. Marcus Johansson is similar to Nylander. They're always on the move—that's the thing you need to realize about them. They may not be overly physical on the forecheck, but they keep their speed, and that allows them to have an effective forecheck. They're not hitting you off the puck; they're anticipating where it'll be. That can be tough."

Jay Beagle: "A lot of speed and youth. Good with the puck. Great vision. They're good down low. Sometimes with the young kids, you can push them off the puck more. That's something where usually something has to develop in their game. But that line, it seems they're very well developed. A hard line to play against."

Matt Niskanen: "We're not going out of our way to shadow him or anything ridiculous like that.... He's got a lot of tools. I haven't seen a skill he can't do yet. He's got size and reach, vision, strong on his skates, hockey sense, and he can score. A lot of tools. He had a fantastic year. Forty goals, right? He didn't play like a rookie, as most of those special players don't."

Braden Holtby: "I just try to read, react. You look at tendencies of how the puck comes off his stick, what directions, not where he shoots but how he releases. The more you play against him, you realize whose stick it is. The hardest part with young guys coming in is, you see Crosby's stick and you know who that is. The more you play him, the more you recognize him on the ice."

Mother

Awoke this morn with a smile. Fort Toronto smells of liquor & victory! Alexander shall regroup & attack in the morrow. We wait

A.M

— Cpl. Auston Matthews (@CplMatthews) April 18, 2017

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Sportsnet.ca / Report: Canucks interested in former Oilers coach Ralph Krueger

Sportsnet Staff

After dismissing head coach Willie Desjardins following a 30-43-9 record, the Vancouver Canucks are searching for his replacement.

There are a number of candidates available, including Travis Green who has been behind the bench of Vancouver's AHL affiliate in Utica for the past four seasons. But, according to Sportsnet's Elliott Friedman, there's a chance the Canucks look outside of the NHL for their next hire.

these past weeks, but my focus remains fully on the Saints for now." So there you go.

— Elliott Friedman (@FriedgeHNIC) April 18, 2017

Krueger is currently the chairman of Southampton of the English Premier League. In September, Krueger was the head coach of Team Europe in the World Cup, and led that team to an unlikely appearance in the final against Canada. Prior to that, Krueger served as head coach of the Edmonton Oilers in the lockout-shortened 2012-13 season, when Edmonton went 19-22-7.

After that season, Krueger was replaced by Dallas Eakins, who lasted one full season plus 31 games and won just 36 times.

After Krueger's success at the World Cup, there's been a growing sentiment that he wasn't given enough of a chance with the Oilers and would be a great hire for any NHL team. But with Krueger holding such a high profile job in England, it's not clear he would want to return to an NHL bench.

Still, he leaves the door open for a potential turn by suggesting his focus is on the Saints "for now."

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Sportsnet.ca / Calgary Flames hoping to plant doubt in mind of Ducks

Ryan Dixon April 18, 2017, 5:12 PM

Since they've already dug the hole, the Calgary Flames figure they might as well see about planting a seed.

Roughly 12 hours after a crushing 5-4 overtime loss to the Anaheim Ducks that pushed them to the brink of elimination, the Flames weren't offering much in the way of bold declarations. Their focus goes no further than Thursday's Game 4, when they hope to sow at least a grain of doubt in the Ducks.

"Right now, we have nothing to lose," said Matthew Tkachuk, whose team blew a 4-1 lead in Game 3 to fall behind 0-3 in the series. "We're going to try to do everything in our power and just try to make them a little nervous over there.

"I think they're a team that doesn't want to be embarrassed by a team that's down 3-0. They have some pressure on them as well."

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While the assumption is Brian Elliott will get the call in goal for that do-or-die game, it's worth noting coach Glen Gulutzan did not immediately settle the issue when asked if Elliott — who struggled in Game 3 and early in Game 2 — was definitely getting the tap.

"We haven't decided what we're going to do," said Gulutzan, noting that coaches will talk more this afternoon and let the goalies know what's up by this evening.

Elliott, who took responsibility for his poor play on Monday night, said he definitely wants a shot at redemption and has worked to turn the page on a miserable outing. He was one of the few Flames who took part in an optional skate on Tuesday, saying he just wanted to get out there and feel some pucks.

"You have to move on and we have to focus on this next game coming up," Elliott said.

While Elliott's post-season history is somewhat spotty, he did post a .921 save percentage in 18 playoff games with the St. Louis Blues last spring. He also got untracked after a disastrous start to his Calgary career, going 23-6-2 with a .923 save percentage from just before Christmas through the end of March.

Boomer & Warrenner in the Morning

Brunt: Don't see any way they got high stick goal right

Originally aired April 18 2017

"Moose has been great for us," said captain Mark Giordano. "He's the reason we're in the playoffs."

Staying there will require some adjustments from the Flames, but it's not as though the team has been hopelessly outclassed by the Ducks. You don't have to be a complete Calgary apologist to note the Flames likely deserve a better reality than what they've got. Certainly, the club has done its share of foot-shooting, from a brutal line change in Game 1 that led to a momentum-swinging Anaheim goal, to some boneheaded penalties during the games in California, to taking their foot off the pedal in Game 3 instead of pushing back as Anaheim started to close the gap.

But it's also hard to ignore the fact that, whenever a puck has bounced off a body then gone directly into the net guarded by that body's goalie, Calgary has constantly been on the wrong end of the equation. The shot attempts at five-on-five are essentially even through three outings, but the savvy Anaheim boys have done a better job of making theirs count — especially at critical moments.

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"In our opinion, 3-0 is not the way it should be right now, but it is," Giordano said. "They've been better at the momentum swings in the key moments; they've had big-time goals."

Teams have emerged from 0-3 holes before, but the fact many fans can name them off the top of their head is a bad harbinger for Calgary. (Just in case: 1942 Leafs, 1975 Islanders, 2010 Flyers, 2014 Kings.)

"We would have hope [even if it had] never been done before," said Tkachuk, whose team has already shown ample resilience this season.

The Flames certainly won't catch Anaheim off guard if they come blazing out of the gate on Thursday. That's what coach Randy Carlyle expects given the desperate nature of the opponent and the fact it will once again be in front of a ravenous home crowd. Carlyle, of course, knows a thing or two about comebacks, having presided over a Toronto Maple Leafs team that stormed back from a 3-1 series deficit against a favoured Boston Bruins squad in 2013, only to see the Bs wipe out a 4-1 disadvantage in Game 7 to win on home ice.

"I don't think there's a better example of what can happen in sports than what has happened [in Game 3]," Carlyle said of Anaheim's comeback.

That's why, if you're Calgary, you continue to cling to every kernel of hope.

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TSN.CA / STATISTICALLY SPEAKING: The King is back

By Scott Cullen

Henrik Lundqvist helps the Rangers even their series with Montreal; Pavelski, Couture, Saad, Karlsson, Jenner and more in Scott Cullen's Statistically Speaking.

HEROES

Henrik Lundqvist - King Henrik stopped 23 of 24 shots in a 2-1 Game Four win against Montreal, evening the series at two games apiece. Following a regular season in which he posted a career-low .910 save percentage, Lundqvist has a .944 save percentage through four playoff games.

Joe Pavelski and Logan Couture - The Sharks' leaders came up big in a 7-0 Game Four win over Edmonton. Pavelski had two goals and an assist and Couture tallied a pair of goals in the victory. Pavelski has four points (2 G, 2 A) in four playoff games, and those were Couture's first points of the postseason.

Brandon Saad, William Karlsson and Boone Jenner - All three Blue Jackets forwards recorded a couple of points in a 5-4 Game Four win against Pittsburgh, staving off elimination. Saad had a couple of assists, giving him three points (1 G, 2 A) in four games, while Karlsson and Jenner both produced a goal and an assist, their first points in this year's playoffs.

ZEROES

Sidney Crosby - Well, isn't this unexpected? The Penguins' superstar failed to generate a single shot attempt and was on the ice for two goals against in a 5-4 Game Four loss at Columbus.

Leon Draisaitl - It was a tough night at the office for Oilers C Leon Draisaitl, who had poor possession stats (6 for, 16 against, 27.3 CF%, 2-7 scoring chances) before he was ejected for spearing Sharks C Chris Tierney.

Andrei Markov - The 38-year-old Habs blueliner had team-worst possession stats (10 for, 22 against, 31.3 CF%) and had a glaring turnover that directly led to the Rangers' first goal in a 2-1 loss.

Cam Talbot - Coming off back-to-back shutout wins, the Oilers' goaltender was pulled after allowing five goals on 24 shots at San Jose.

STANLEY CUP HALF FULL/HALF EMPTY

Phil Kessel - Pittsburgh's high-scoring right winger had three assists in a 5-4 Game Four loss at Columbus, giving him six points (1 G, 5 A) in four playoff games; a productive night in what was ultimately a losing effort.

SHORT SHIFTS

Rangers D Marc Staal had a strong possession game (24 for, 7 against, 77.4 CF%, 10-4 scoring chances) in a 2-1 Game Four win over Montreal...Penguins RW Phil Kessel had three assists in a 5-4 Game Four loss at Columbus, giving him six points (G, 5 A) in four playoff games...Penguins C Evgeni Malkin added a couple of assists, and has eight points (2 G, 6 A) in four playoff games...Sharks D Brent Burns accumulated three assists in a 7-0 Game Four win against Edmonton, his first points of this year's playoffs...Sharks LW Patrick Marleau and D David Schlemko both had a goal and an assist against Edmonton, also their first points of the postseason...Sharks RW Joel Ward added a couple of assists, giving him three assists in four games...Sharks G Martin Jones posted a 23-save shutout in a 7-0 Game Four win over Edmonton. He has stopped 95 of 100 shots that he's faced through four games...Sharks C Joe Thornton had his ice time managed, but had a strong possession game (14 for, 4 against, 77.8 CF%, 6-0 scoring chances) in Game Four against Edmonton.

FIRSTS

Markus Nutivaara - The Blue Jackets rookie defenceman made his NHL playoff debut (with Zach Werenski sidelined thanks to a puck caving in his face) and contributed a goal and an assist along with team-leading



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possession numbers (22 for, 6 against, 78.6 CF%) in a 5-4 Game Four win over Pittsburgh. Nutivaara had just seven points (2 G, 5 A) in 66 regular-season games.

Marcus Sorensen - San Jose's rookie winger scored his first career playoff goal in his fourth career playoff game, a 7-0 rout over Edmonton

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TSN.CA / Pacioretty's quiet start raises questions for Habs

By Frank Seravalli

NEW YORK — Wave after wave of questions came and Max Pacioretty bore the brunt of them all in the Montreal Canadiens' cramped dressing room, like usual.

Game 4 marked a missed opportunity for Montreal - a blown chance to put a skate to the Rangers' throats. The Canadiens knew they were going to get New York's best punch, but they failed to punch back. Rick Nash flat out said the Rangers couldn't go back to Montreal down 3-1 and expect to win.

Yet, the Habs return to La Belle Province all square, with Game 5 on Thursday night at the Bell Centre marking the beginning of a best-of-three series.

"We knew they had their backs against the wall," Alexander Radulov said. "It's going to be a lesson for us, to make sure we come out better in the next one."

For the Canadiens' captain, too, Tuesday night was a teaching moment.

"Lesson learned," Pacioretty said. "We saw their best."

What the Canadiens haven't seen is Pacioretty at his best in this Eastern Conference first round series, a fact he acknowledged.

"It wasn't my best," Pacioretty said after Game 4. "But you know, it's one game at a time, looking to get better."

Radulov, Shea Weber, even \$6 million man Tomas Plekanec have stepped up in big ways for the Habs, but their leading scorer - the player who carried them on his back in the toughest of times this season - has been conspicuously quiet.

After a 67-point regular season, which tied his career-high, Pacioretty has just one assist in these playoffs. He finished eighth in the NHL with 35 regular season goals.

Halfway through Game 4, coach Claude Julien flipped Radulov down to the second line, moving Andrew Shaw to Pacioretty's right side along with usual lineman Philip Danault.

It was more an attempt to spark Pacioretty than anything else.

"There were changes because we wanted certain matchups," Julien explained. "I thought that line created more after that point, so just an in-game decision by me."

Pacioretty, 28, has notoriously been a slow starter in the Stanley Cup playoffs. The most he's ever scored in the first four games of any of his last four postseasons is one goal and one assist.

That means he's finished strong - as the games have gotten tougher. But with a Canadiens team built to win on defence and goaltending, the margin is so thin that without his production, he might not have the luxury to wait to get hot.

Julien said he would reserve judgment on what he's seeing from his top line.

"Those are things that I'll deal with," Julien said. "I need time to look at things. I'm not going to start talking about things I don't really know about right now."

The truth is this first round series, like life, is full of grey matter. Few aspects are black and white. There is nuance to the discussion; it isn't cut and dried.

Both the Rangers and Habs could make a legitimate claim that they should be leading 3-1. Both teams have traded equal stretches of awesome and atrocious play.

When there was uproar about the Canadiens' offence being shutout in Game 1, only one seeing-eye Tanner Glass backhand separated them from New York. And as convincingly as the Canadiens played in Game 2, they needed a Hail Mary tip from Tomas Plekanec to force overtime.

Even on Tuesday night, the Canadiens played undoubtedly their worst collective game of the series, yet they were one Weber shot off the post away from knotting it again in the dying minutes. They also failed to capitalize on at least two breakaways and one partial attempt. It was close, but it wasn't.

Pacioretty's own game in this series mirrors that same complexity.

It's easy to forget that Plekanec wouldn't have forced overtime in Game 2 - and Montreal wouldn't have even dreamed of a 3-1 edge on Tuesday night - without Pacioretty's brilliant strip in the neutral zone and dogged dash to goal line to setup Plekanec. It saved the Canadiens' season.

The criticism comes in that impressive sequence produced Pacioretty's only point of the series. He was also responsible for not clearing the puck on Nash's game-winning goal in the second period.

The question always comes back to: Where would the Habs be if Pacioretty produced more than one assist in the first four games?

The captain would hate to be asking himself that question all summer long.

"The team that just worries about the next shot is the team that normally ends up on top," Pacioretty said. "We've got to do a better job of sticking with it, sticking with the system, trusting it when you're down. We need to trust that our shots will go in."

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TSN.CA / Leafs emerging as best story of the playoffs

By Kristen Shilton

TORONTO – How did the Toronto Maple Leafs get here?

That's the question being asked across the hockey world in the aftermath of Toronto's overtime win on Monday, putting them up 2-1 on the Washington Capitals in this first-round playoff series.

Here are the Maple Leafs, a rebuilding team that wasn't even supposed to get a ticket to the dance, going toe-to-toe with the Presidents' Trophy winners. A club that had only 10 wins in the first 25 games of the regular season is emerging as the best story of this NHL postseason.

"I think it starts with the coaching staff and the older players, just in terms of being calm," said defenceman Matt Hunwick on Tuesday. "[Head coach Mike Babcock] holds everyone accountable, and treats everyone fairly. Players have to hold one another accountable too, and I think [Babcock will] probably tell you the more the players can do it, the better. He sets the tone and the culture. Then it's up to the veteran guys to do the right thing."

Count Brian Boyle, who was acquired from Tampa Bay for a second-round pick at the trade deadline, as one of the veterans doing the right thing. He has been Toronto's best regular faceoff man in the postseason (62.2 per cent), while helping the fourth line emerge as an X-factor.

Boyle's line, with wingers Matt Martin and Kasperi Kapanen, has the most points (six) at even-strength for the Leafs against what was the league's stingiest defence in the regular season. Washington averaged 2.16 goals against per game this year, and are now giving up the third-



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most in the postseason (3.33) to the regular season's fifth-ranked offence.

"[It's our] skating. That's a big part of our team," said winger Zach Hyman of the Maple Leafs' scoring ability. "We're a fast team, so we have to be able to skate and put the puck behind their D and work them. They have a great goalie, so we have to get pucks to the net with a lot of traffic and score some dirty goals. We've been able to do that."

Hyman is a perfect example of how Toronto has been able to create offence against the Capitals. It was his effort through neutral ice and into the defensive zone that set up William Nylander's tying goal in Game 3. Hyman chipped the puck in past Washington defenders Brooks Orpik and Kevin Shattenkirk, beating them both to the puck so he could force the turnover to the trailing Matthews to feed Nylander.

Hardly a week has gone by this season where Hyman's role on Matthews' line wasn't questioned, but he's the prototypical, high-character, high-motor player Babcock likes.

Toronto's offence can score with anyone in the league in terms of talent, but chances are harder to come by at this time of year as the checking tightens and teams sharpen their focus on matchups. Players like Hyman, Connor Brown and Leo Komarov are more physical than flashy, using energy and grit to help steal momentum back when the Leafs need it most.

"Dependable people are what you want each and every day," Babcock said. "When you have real dependable people, it doesn't matter walk of life you're in, your boss knows whether you're going to get the job done. People you don't have to get started every day are contagious."

The easy narrative materializing in the wake of Monday's game is that these underdogs are now improbably on the cusp of pulling off the ultimate postseason upset. But indicative of their youth, the Maple Leafs came out with too much nervous energy in front of their home crowd, and were badly outworked for half of Game 3.

If the script was flipped, and it was Washington that won Game 3 in overtime, what would the Maple Leafs' story be? That they were close, but not quite good enough to compete with the Capitals? That they needed too many lucky bounces, like goaltender Braden Holtby being tied up by his own man to leave a gaping net on Nylander's game-tying goal, to be successful?

While Toronto may have recovered from a pair of multi-goal deficits in this series, they've also coughed up a two-goal lead. As promising as their position is, the Maple Leafs will be the first to say their work is far from over, and the Capitals are far from dead.

"I don't deal in [being a surprise or not], I just deal in the fact — here we are," said Babcock. "You try to put your best foot forward each and every day. We thought we were better in Game 2 than we were in Game 3. I don't know if it was nerves or trying to do too much. We weren't as good defensively last night as we should have been. [We] gave up too many free opportunities, so we have to do a better job of that."

TSN.CA LOADED: 04.19.2017

1060407 Websites

TSN.CA / angers have yet to test Price in first round

By Frank Seravalli

NEW YORK — On Friday night, the Montreal Canadiens were 17.3 seconds away from dropping consecutive games at home to start a series for the third time in three postseasons.

They are now in the driver's seat, a Game 4 win at Madison Square Garden away from taking a 3-1 series edge in a building where the Rangers are on the verge of tying an NHL record for consecutive playoff losses (seven) at home.

Playoff hockey comes at you fast.

The Canadiens expect New York's best punch on Tuesday night. But the scary part for the Rangers is that the Canadiens haven't even really needed to rely on Carey Price yet.

"We didn't see the best of them," Canadiens forward Andrew Shaw said Tuesday morning. "They're going to do what they can to break us. We're going to need to do what we can to fight back strong."

This battle of all-world goaltenders has lived up to the billing. Goals have been at a premium, with one tally seemingly enough to tip the scales in two of three games so far.

Price, 29, has been excellent with a .944 save percentage against the team that vanquished his 2014 Stanley Cup dream. Lundqvist, 35, is just behind Price at .941 — but entered Game 3 with a playoff-best .960 mark.

The key for the Canadiens is they've done such a good job at keeping the Rangers' attack at bay that Price has rarely been tested.

The Keg Must See: Shaw hits MSG roof with puck, then catches it on his stick

While taking part in a competition with Brendan Gallagher at the Canadiens' morning skate, in which Andrew Shaw and Galalgher launch pucks from their sticks to try to hit the MSG roof and then catch the puck on their sticks again, Shaw actually pulls it off.

It's one thing to try to score on Price, but you have to actually get there first. Price has seen 29 fewer shots than Lundqvist over three games.

"I think we've been really smothering," Montreal forward Steve Ott said. "I think that has to do with our forecheck. The second man continues to be on them quick, and we've had good pressure and up-ice pressure. When you have that, it's hard to take the puck up the ice 200 feet every time from the goal line."

The Canadiens have also kept New York on the perimeter when in Price's end. They've allowed just five "high danger" shots against — from the inner slot — in the last two games, including the overtime period in Game 2. Montreal's season average is nearly five per game, according to Corsica Hockey.

That's part of the playoff-style system the Canadiens have been trending toward under Claude Julien since mid-February. The reliance is on team defence, then Price — not a firefight, which the Canadiens aren't built to win.

Rangers coach Alain Vigneault admitted Sunday that his fourth line has been his best so far. Chris Kreider, Kevin Hayes and J.T. Miller have all been held off the scoresheet entirely in the series. Vigneault said he would be willing to throw his lines in the blender if need be.

"I'm willing to do anything to help our team win," Vigneault said Tuesday.

Julien and the Canadiens know the series can flip just as quickly as it did in their favour. But considering the Habs haven't needed to play their trump card yet, it isn't a bad place to be heading into Game 4.

"It's nice to have your best player as your goalie," Ott said. "I mean, let's be honest, he's our catalyst. He's got our backs. We try to have his back as much as we can."

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TSN.CA / Maple Leap: Toronto closing on the unthinkable against Caps

By Pierre LeBrun

TORONTO -- It was almost a year ago that the lottery ball fell the Toronto Maple Leafs' way. On April 30, 2016, the last-place Maple Leafs won the Auston Matthews sweepstakes. Some 353 days later, hockey's lovable losers are two wins away from knocking off the No. 1 team in the NHL. And whether or not Toronto ousts the Washington Capitals -- on whom it has taken a 2-1 lead in their best-of-seven, first-round series -- it's clear that the Leafs are light years ahead of schedule.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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The learning curve for a team that dressed anywhere from six to eight rookies on any given night this season, and features 10 players who are playing in their first Stanley Cup playoffs this spring, has been nothing short of stunning.

"They're going to be good for a long time, but I never thought they'd this good, this quickly," observed a veteran NHL scout on Monday night.

No kidding.

Remember the good old days, when it actually took a few years to rebuild a team? It's as if somebody with the Leafs pressed the fast forward button in mid-December and never let go.

They were not supposed to make the playoffs this year. Even privately, the Leafs' brass simply hoped they could stay within shouting distance of the postseason long enough to play meaningful games in March.

Maple Leafs take full advantage of Capitals in comeback win

The Capitals gave the Maple Leafs an advantage to start overtime and they took full advantage as Tyler Bozak redirected a Nazem Kadri shot. TH2N breaks down the play and discusses Toronto's gutsy comeback win and wonder whether or not Washington needs to be worried.

And they certainly weren't supposed to give Washington this kind of a series.

Somebody forgot to tell the players.

"If we don't think we can beat them coming into the series, we don't deserve to be in the series," wise old Auston Matthews, 19, said on Monday night after his team's 4-3 overtime win in Game 3 of the series. "That's been our mindset since Game 1, ' We can play with these guys.' We can skate, get in behind their D and create some havoc. That's never been a doubt in our mind."

This isn't just a quote for public consumption, something for the Toronto media to eat up and spit out to the legion of Leafs fans who are collectively pinching themselves right now.

No, this is truly how Matthews and his merry band of cherubic teammates actually think.

And why not? They lead the best-of-seven series over the President's Trophy winners 2-1. All three games have gone to overtime.

"I thought we gained confidence in Game 1 because we showed we can play," said Leafs head coach Mike Babcock. "Game 2 was a big confidence-builder. And obviously now our guys think they're a good hockey team. They're playing a good hockey team, but I think you gain respect for yourself in the process and you start believing that maybe you can do this."

If winning the Matthews lottery was the seminal moment for the franchise, a close second was the day -- two years ago next month -- that Babcock chose the Leafs over the Buffalo Sabres as his next place of employment.

Babcock's imprints are all over this lightning-quick turnaround. The young Leafs are as prepared as any team in the league. Babcock convinced a bunch of goal-hungry thoroughbreds over the course of this season to make smarter decisions with the puck and not always go for glory.

No one is ever going to confuse this team with the 1995 New Jersey Devils but the transformation of this squad into a more responsible team away from the puck and in their defensive zone is nothing short of unreal.

It starts, however, with their speed and their ability to put teams on their heels. It's giving the slower-footed Capitals fits.

"We think we're quick, we really do, we think we're quick," said Babcock.

After being largely outplayed by the veteran Capitals in the opening half of Monday's game, down 3-1 and lucky it wasn't double that, the Leafs killed on a 5-on-3 Caps power play in the second period and suddenly found their legs.

And just like that, a team that looked overwhelmed for almost 30 minutes, took over the game. The key, however, is that they've come far enough in their learning curve this season that despite being outplayed to that point, they did not take a knee. Some inexperienced playoff teams might have.

Instead, the Leafs persevered. That tells you a lot about how far they've come in their belief system.

"You can't feel overwhelmed," said Leafs center Nazem Kadri, whose goal cut the lead to 3-2. "That's an important thing, because they're a team that can put you away quick. You got to understand, they're going to push, they're going to have those times when they hem us in our zone. We just got to stay strong, Freddie (Andersen) again was great making timely saves. We just have to understand that if you survive a shift, the next one is a new one."

The belief in that Leafs dressing room was unmistakable Monday night. They have that look in their eye.

"I think it's gone up," Matthews, who got his first goal of the playoffs Monday night, said of his team's confidence after three games. "Once you get into the playoffs, the seeding doesn't really matter. It's who wants it more."

The Keg Must See: Bozak's overtime tip wins it for Maple Leafs

The Maple Leafs carried over a power play from regulation and wasted no time in overtime to find the winner as Tyler Bozak tipped Nazem Kadri's shot to give Toronto the 2-1 series lead.

Leafs center Tyler Bozak scored the winner in Game 3 on a power play 1:37 into overtime.

"We've always believed in ourselves," said Bozak. "It's never bad to be in the underdog position. There's a little less pressure. But we put a lot of pressure on ourselves to perform. We believe in ourselves in this room."

As the belief builds for the No. 8 seed, the pressure builds on the No. 1 seed, the club that carries the mantle of perennial playoff underachiever.

What do the Capitals, who dominated the Leafs for half a game on Monday night but still found a way to lose, do now?

"Just forget it and move forward," said captain Alex Ovechkin. "Obviously, we're losing the series, but it's not over yet. I think we should win this game, but we make a couple mistakes and there was a couple lucky bounces. We move forward."

Washington head coach Barry Trotz spent his morning and post-game media sessions on Monday trying to convince the media that there really wasn't much a difference between the talent levels of both squads.

"They've got really dynamic forwards, as we do. They have four lines, we have four lines," said Trotz after Game 3. "Their goaltender's playing good, and we've got good goaltending. The defence is matching up pretty good. It's a lot closer match than people let on. It's not David and Goliath. They're a good hockey team. They wouldn't be here if they weren't."

That's his way of taking the pressure of his team, perhaps. Too late. It's on. Big time.

The Leafs? They insist they knew they had a chance before this series started.

"We came into this series doing our homework, knowing what to expect, and being prepared, and being organized," said Kadri. "That's what our philosophy has been about. And that's what is going to help us win."

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TSN.CA / Post 2 Post: Backup Bernier shuts the door in Ducks' comeback

By Jamie McLennan

Each night during the Stanley Cup Playoffs, TSN Hockey analyst and former NHL goaltender Jamie McLennan provides his Post 2 Post rankings for every goaltender in action.

Braden Holtby (2) - The Caps goalie didn't have too much work early. The first goal he allowed was on a weird bounce that landed on back on Auston Matthews' stick while the second goal was a redirection. On the third tally, the Leafs scored on a scramble when Holtby got hit by his own player on the rebound. He had big saves on Mitch Marner, Matthews,



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Nazem Kadri and Tyler Bozak. The game-winning goal is a high tip with a screen. Holtby has not been his usual self and has not stolen any games in the series.

Frederik Andersen (3) - Andersen had a tough start as he got beat early, but settled in and made some huge saves on Alexander Ovechkin, Niklas Backstrom and Evgeny Kuznetsov to keep it close. The difference in the game was the right pad save on Kuznetsov when the score was 3-2. This one was a game changer and a TSN turning point.

Craig Anderson (3) - Boston had no pressure early, but then climbed back into game with a quick push scoring three goals on nine shots. He had big saves in the final period on David Krejčí, Patrice Bergeron and Riley Nash.

Tuukka Rask (2) - Ottawa pushed early and he held strong while his team got back into it. Rask has big saves on Mike Hoffman, Bobby Ryan and Erik Karlsson, but it was still a struggle at times for him.

Corey Crawford (4) - It was a strong night for the Blackhawks and Crawford gave them a chance to win with big saves on Filip Forsberg, Kevin Fiala, Viktor Arvidsson and Craig Smith. He had an unreal left pad save on Fiala in overtime, but couldn't come up with another great save on the winner.

Pekka Rinne (4) - It was another great night for Rinne as he was dialed in again. Chicago finally burst his bubble when Dennis Rasmussen beat him short side. He had big saves on Nick Schmaltz, Patrick Kane, Jonathan Toews, Marian Hossa and Richard Panik.

John Gibson (1) - He was not sharp and was pulled after allowing four goals on 16 shots. It was not his night.

Jonathan Bernier (5) - Bernier came in and stopped the bleeding as he stopped all 16 shots and gave the Ducks a chance to get back into it.

Brian Elliott (2) - Elliott had a strong start and made good saves on Corey Perry and Jakob Silfverberg early on, but as the game went on the Ducks pressed and he didn't have the answer. He seemed to be distracted after the Nate Thompson high stick goal (challenged and lost). On the game tying goal, Elliott was turned around by his own player and the game-winning goal was a bounce off his own guy. He seemed off when it mattered most when score was 4-2.

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1060410 Websites

USA TODAY / Blackhawks are paying the price for past win-now mentality

Kevin Allen , USA TODAY go

Today's NHL playoff wins must always be paid for with tomorrow's playoff losses.

That's the simplest explanation for why the Chicago Blackhawks could be eliminated in the first round for the second consecutive season. They trail 3-0 going into Thursday's Game 4 against the Nashville Predators in Nashville. They lost in seven games to the St. Louis Blues last season.

Since 2010, the Blackhawks have won 67 playoff games and three Stanley Cup championships.

The Blackhawks, who finished with a Western Conference-high 109 points, are the model franchise of the salary cap era. General manager Stan Bowman has done a remarkable job keeping this team a cut above his competitors in a system that is designed to spread the talent evenly among all of the teams.

But it was inevitable that the Blackhawks would pay a price for their success, and the cost was an erosion of their depth of skill. That has become apparent against the Predators.

A Maple Leafs playoff upset? It's not as crazy as you might think

Four overtime games: NHL playoffs has a night for the ages

When a team has sustained success, three events occur that cause problems in the future. Top players grow older. Their salaries and salary cap hit grows with their success. Finally, the team doesn't draft high and often compounds the problem by including draft picks in trades designed to keep the team competitive.

The Blackhawks' top players have grown expensive. When the Blackhawks won the Cup in 2010, Patrick Kane, Jonathan Toews, Niklas Hjalmarsson, Duncan Keith and Brent Seabrook had a total cap hit of about \$9.2 million. That was 16.2% of the NHL's salary cap that season. Today, those five players have a combined cap hit of about \$37.5 million. That's 51.3% of today's \$73 million cap. If you add in Hossa's \$5.275 million and Crawford's \$6 million, those seven players take up 66.7% of the team's cap space.

The Blackhawks didn't have a first-round pick in the 2015 and 2016 drafts and they haven't drafted higher than 18th in the first round since 2008.

The Blackhawks' core group has been so strong and Bowman has been shrewd enough in his maneuvering that the Blackhawks have managed to stay among the top teams.

But it is clear that they are weaker now. The Blackhawks seem worn down, less dangerous, not as menacing as we have seen in the past.

Bowman has been a magician with his ability to find impactful players and fit them under the cap. The 2015 signing of free agent Artemi Panarin was his best trick as Panarin's cap hit was \$812,500 through this season. Panarin has scored 61 regular-season goals over his first two NHL seasons.

But it's becoming harder to freshen up the Chicago act. Nick Schmaltz, Ryan Hartman and Tanner Kero are playing in their first playoffs. But Hossa is 38 and Keith is 33. The Blackhawks are playing with four defensemen age 31 and over. Hjalmarsson turns 30 in June.

Watching the Blackhawks surrender a two-goal lead in Game 3 against seems telling. Are they growing stale?

Maybe this Chicago group has a miracle in them, but even if they came back in the series they will face trouble ahead.

The more the Blackhawks won the more they had to pay their players. That's not a criticism. That's the reality of pro sports. There's always a cost for success. The Blackhawks seem to be starting to pay their tab now.

USA TODAY LOADED: 04.19.2017

1060411 Websites

Wall Street Journal // A 17-Year-Old's Death Points to Flaws in Concussion Test

By Matthew Futterman

Everyone said Kenney Bui was fine to return to the football field.

The 17-year-old defensive back at Washington's Evergreen High School, where he kept a 4.0 grade-point average, suffered a concussion in a game on Sept. 4, 2015.

Two weeks later, a doctor cleared Bui to begin practicing again. Bui also passed a cognitive test administered by the school's athletic trainers that revealed his brain was functioning as well as it had been before the season.

Then on October 2 of that year, in a game against Highline High, Bui left the field groggy after a collision. He lost consciousness on the sideline, and was rushed to a nearby hospital, where he underwent surgery. Three days later he died.

"We followed the standard protocol," said Terri McMahan, athletic director for the Highline Public Schools, which includes Evergreen High.

New research suggests that the protocol might need to be reexamined. The preliminary findings of the largest-ever study of concussions show that even after athletes are able to pass a battery of tests, their brains



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might not be fully healed. This means athletes of every age and ability—from high-school soccer players to NFL wide receivers—are potentially being sent back on the field when they are at heightened risk for brain injuries.

"There is a period of vulnerability after the athlete's cognition is recovered but before the brain is recovered," said Michael McCrea, professor of neurosurgery and neurology and the director of brain injury research at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

McCrea is one of three scientists leading the CARE Consortium concussion study, which has for three years tracked the health and injury records of 28,000 college athletes, as well as athletes and cadets at the service academies.

That research is raising questions about what for years has been the accepted method for deciding whether an athlete has recovered from a concussion: a physician's check-up combined with a digital test of cognition. The cognition test—the industry standard is created and sold by a company called ImPact—gauges attention span, reaction time and other cognitive skills against the athlete's performance in those areas before the start of the season. When the headaches and other clinical symptoms subside and the athletes perform as well on the test as they did before the season, they get to return to the field, a process referred to everywhere from youth soccer to the NFL as "protocol."

However, McCrea and his team of researchers say their findings, based on advanced neuroimaging, suggest that may be too soon. They believe the research should hasten the need to make advanced brain scans more widely available and, in the meantime, push trainers and doctors to be more cautious about when they allow athletes to begin play again.

A preliminary paper from McCrea's group using a small sample of athletes in the *Journal of Neurotrauma* in 2015 first hypothesized about the lag between diagnostic and biological results. Now McCrea's group has additional studies currently in peer review using the much larger sample. McCrea said the early findings show that the biological symptoms of an injured brain last significantly longer than the clinical signals that health professionals gauge through symptoms and cognitive testing. That finding is crucial because scientists know that after an initial concussion there is a time of heightened danger when athletes face a major risk of significant injury or even death if they experience another head trauma.

"Ultimately, we want to know not only when the athlete is recovered but when his or her brain is safe and ready to play," McCrea said.

It's not clear where Bui was on that spectrum when he returned to the field.

McCahan bought the ImPact test and hired four athletic trainers who learned how to administer the test and analyze its results shortly after she began as athletic director for Highline Public Schools in 2010. Bui took the test before the 2015 season, just like every other Evergreen football, soccer, basketball and volleyball player. The Evergreen protocol required him to take it again in September before he was cleared to return to play.

McCahan wonders whether Bui suffered another brain injury after he returned to practice and didn't tell his coaches. "That is what I think about on a regular basis," she said.

Ngon Bui, Kenney's father, referred questions to his lawyer, Richard Adler. Adler didn't return messages.

ImPact, a closely-held San Diego-based company, was created by neuropsychologist Mark Lovell and neurosurgeon Joe Maroon.

Maroon and Lovell, who worked closely with the Pittsburgh Steelers in the 1990s, initially set out to design a neuropsychological test to establish a baseline for cognitive performance among the players that they could compare with results gathered after players suffered concussions. For instance, players had to perform memory exercises, such as listening to a series of numbers and repeating them backwards and forwards.

Two decades later, exercises like these form the central components of ImPact's signature product, the Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Test. More than 7,400 high schools, 1,000 colleges and universities, 200 professional teams and select military units rely on the test to evaluate recovery from mild traumatic brain injury.

"We don't claim to be the be-all and end-all," said Michael Wahlster, chief executive at ImPACT since 2013. "We do think we are a cornerstone."

Wahlster said he understands that although new research may show that in certain cases brain injuries linger after cognitive performance recovers, his product is the best tool available while scientists test those findings further.

While there are other cognitive tests that gauge recovery from concussion, ImPact's products in 2016 became the first of the type to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration as a Class 2 medical device, a classification that requires the presentation of reams of clinical data to support claims of reliability and safety. The test, which cost between \$435 and \$1,300, with special volume pricing discounts for school districts and state programs, has been administered more than 13 million times since 2006.

Wahlster said the objective test provides no wiggle room for interpretation, removes the guesswork from diagnosis, and prevents athletes from lying about lingering symptoms so they can get back on the field.

But McCrea and others say the latest research suggests that cognitive tests alone are not enough.

Dr. Philip Stieg, chairman of the Weill Cornell Brain and Spine Center, who also evaluates players with head injuries during New York Giants games, said he considers cognitive tests along with clinical criteria, such as whether there are lingering headaches, sleep issues, or sensitivity to light. He has also kept athletes off the field when their scans continue to show contusions on the brain, no matter how well they perform on cognitive tests or how well they say they are feeling.

Stieg compared the discordant results around concussions to evaluating patients with pneumonia, who might no longer feel congested even though chest X-rays and other test signal an infection. But he said further studies are needed before brain specialists can begin making clinical decisions based solely on scans.

"It's the balance between the clinical findings, the laboratory research, and what are we seeing radiographically," he said.

Wahlster, the ImPact chief executive, said it isn't realistic to think that every kid who suffers a concussion will be able to undergo a series of brain scans and MRIs. "We don't make diagnostic claims," he said. "Right now we give providers the best device to help make them do that."

Wall Street Journal LOADED: 04.19.2017

Anaheim Ducks

The Ducks were missing defensemen Cam Fowler (knee) and Sami Vatanen (upper-body injury).

Vatanen skated again Tuesday but gave no hint as to whether he'll be able to return to the Ducks for Game 4. The defenseman has not played since Game 1 because of a lingering upper-body injury.

Randy Carlyle said a decision on Vatanen's availability could come after he skates again Wednesday morning.

The Ducks signed left wing Giovanni Fiore to a three-year entry-level contract. Fiore, 20, led the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League with 52 goals this season for the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles.

Boston Bruins

The team jumped into a full practice at Warrior Ice Arena, with only injured defensemen Torey Krug, Adam McQuaid, and Brandon Carlo missing. Carlo, who has an upper-body injury, did skate on his own before practice. Colin Miller (lower-body injury) skated a full practice. Everybody's day to day, but Miller is closest to a return. Matt Grzelcyk also was at practice, though the Bruins announced his return to Providence during Game 3.

David Krejci, who missed the first two games of the series with an upper-body injury, eased his way back into the play in Game 3. He had 14:38 of ice time, landed one shot on goal, and won 44 percent of his faceoffs. He also felt well enough to practice the day after.

Chicago Blackhawks

The Hawks on Tuesday called up forwards Tyler Motte and Kyle Baun and defenseman Erik Gustafsson from Rockford.

Columbus Blue Jackets



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Zach Werenski (facial fractures) out

Markus Nutivaara was inserted in the lineup due to the injury suffered by Werenski.

The Jackets are adding forwards Matt Calvert (one-game suspension) and Lukas Sedlak (oblique) to the lineup along with defensemen Kyle Quincey and Nutivaara.

Edmonton Oilers

RW Tyler Pitlick (knee)

Minnesota Wild

Erik Haula did not participate in practice. Bruce Boudreau said Haula was taking a "maintenance day," though he added that Haula's status was "questionable" for Game 4. Haula took a couple of nasty hits in Game 2 from Scottie Upshall and Alex Pietrangelo, and he sat out Saturday's practice.

Wild LW/C Erik Haula (maintenance) is questionable.

Montreal Canadiens

The Canadiens started the game with the same forward lines and defence pairings as Game 3. As the game progressed, though, Claude Julien remade his forward corps, most notably putting Alex Radulov on a line with Alex Galchenyuk and Max Pacioretty.

New Jersey Devils

The Devils assigned forward Blake Speers to Albany in the AHL on Tuesday. Speers is eligible to play with Albany in the AHL playoffs now that his season with Sault Ste. Marie in the OHL is over.

New York Rangers

Rangers coach Alain Vigneault made several changes. Defenceman Nick Holden returned after a one-game absence and replaced Kevin Klein. Vigneault rejigged his top line, putting Kevin Hayes between J.T. Miller and Mats Zuccarello and he replaced Tanner Glass with Pavel Buchnevich, who made his NHL playoff debut.

Ottawa Senators

Defenceman Mark Borowiecki, who missed Monday's Game 3 with what's believed to be a leg injury, is still listed as day-to-day.

Pittsburgh Penguins

Coach Mike Sullivan said he had no update on any of his team's players out with lower-body injuries. Wingers Carl Hagelin and Chris Kunitz have resumed skating. There is no timetable for goalie Matt Murray's return.

"There's nothing pending that I can offer you that's a significant update other than they're rehabbing and they're working towards getting back into our lineup," Sullivan said.

St Louis Blues

Blues' Center Paul Stastny, who has been sidelined throughout the first round because of a foot injury, practiced on Tuesday for the first time since he was injured by a Vladimir Tarasenko shot on March 21.

"Paul is day-to-day, same as he was the other day- ... to-days," Blues coach Mike Yeo quipped. When Yeo was asked if Stastny might play Wednesday, he responded, "Well, every day is a new day."

Winger Alex Steen sat out Tuesday's practice. He was hurt in Game 1, and was seen wearing a walking boot on his left foot after Game 3 and left the arena wearing a flip-flop after Game 2. Yeo said Steen will play Wednesday.

Blues C Paul Stastny (foot) practiced Tuesday and is questionable. RW Alex Steen (foot) is probable.

Toronto Maple Leafs

Leafs defenceman Roman Polak was to have surgery Tuesday on his right leg. His season ended prematurely after he fell awkwardly in Game 2 following a hit from Capitals defenceman Brooks Orpik.

Washington Capitals

Capitals defenseman Karl Alzner will not play in Game 4 against the Maple Leafs because of an undisclosed upper-body injury, Coach Barry

Trotz said. Alzner also missed Monday night's game, a 4-3 overtime loss, and he didn't skate during the team's optional practice on Tuesday afternoon. Washington is down in the first-round series against Toronto, 2-1.

With Alzner out, Nate Schmidt is expected to again take his place in the lineup.

Vancouver Canucks

According to Hockey Night in Canada's Elliotte Friedman, the Canucks may have found the face they've been rumoured to be looking to add to their front office: ex-Oilers coach Ralph Krueger.

NHL Daily Transactions

Anaheim Ducks	Giovanni Fiore	Signed as Free Agent, Three-year, entry-level contract
Boston Bruins	Matt Grzelcyk	Sent to minors, Providence-AHL
Chicago Blackhawks	Erik Gustafsson	Called up from minors, from Rockford-AHL
Chicago Blackhawks	Tyler Motte	Called up from minors, from Rockford-AHL
Chicago Blackhawks	Kyle Baun	Called up from minors, from Rockford-AHL
Los Angeles Kings	Alex Iafallo	Signed as Free Agent, Two-year, entry-level contract

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