



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 28, 2019

## THE NEWS & OBSERVER

### Staal scoring big goals for Canes. Brind'Amour says: 'Look out'

By Chip Alexander

Jordan Staal is the strong, silent, dependable type of player that coaches appreciate and teammates admire.

The Carolina Hurricanes center isn't into fanfare or hyped-up acclaim. He's strictly low maintenance. Put him in the lineup every game, line him other against the other team's best forwards, give him his minutes and watch the 6-foot-4, 220-pounder work.

But Canes captain Justin Williams says he has noticed a difference in Staal this season, and especially in the Stanley Cup playoffs. And, no, it's not just that Staal is scoring big goals -- the biggest Friday in overtime to beat the New York Islanders 1-0 in Game 1 of their second-round Eastern Conference series at Barclays Center.

"You can make a case for Jordan for MVP of this team," Williams said. "He just does everything for us and you just don't doubt that he's going to get it done, ever. He's such an integral part of this team, it's silly.

"He's getting a little bit more vocal, which I'm loving to see but he is more of a quiet leader. I think we've got a pretty good leadership group and he's a huge part of that."

Staal won't be the kind to stand up to give impassioned locker-room speeches during games. That's not his style. Even when he was being chirped by forward Jordan Martinook on a Canes vlog after Friday's game -- "We've got the OT hero right beside me," Martinook said -- Staal just reacted with a smile and a thumbs-up, letting Martinook do all the talking.

So why a little more vocal?

"I don't know," Staal said. "I don't know that there's any more reason for it. I think the guys are a little more confident with seeing me as a leader and believing what I'm saying and how to play.

"I guess I've been in the playoffs before. I know how it works. It's a grind. It's investing every game, all that stuff."

Few players invest more than Staal. He always has the physical presence. When he wants to separate an opposing player from the puck, there's usually a separation. If there's a big faceoff, especially in the defensive zone, he usually takes it and often wins it.

Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour has said that Staal is an underrated player offensively, that he's the kind who seems to get few breaks around the net. The effort is there, just not the reward, as coaches like to say.

But with the Canes trailing the Washington Capitals 3-2 in the third period Wednesday, in Game 7 of their series, Staal delivered. Unleashing a shot from the right circle, he beat

goalie Braden Holtby to the far side with a perfectly placed top-shelf shot, Holtby looking back over his shoulder in dismay. The Canes won in double overtime 4-3 on Brock McGinn's goal.

Against the Islanders, Staal was in the right spot to take the right shot in overtime. After Nino Niederreiter was wide with a shot, the hard carom off the end boards came Staal's way and he quickly got off a low shot to the right of the net that beat Robin Lehner at the post for the winner.

It was Staal's fourth goal in the Canes' eight playoff games, to go with his three assists.

"We went through the game again and he was the best player on the ice," Brind'Amour said Saturday.

The Canes did not practice Saturday, again opting for more recovery time. Game 2 is Sunday at 3 p.m.

Staal, 30, is so selfless that when he missed a big chunk of the season following a concussion and then lingering concussion symptoms, he hoped he wouldn't cause any chemistry problems when rejoining the lineup. The Canes, resurgent after New Year's Eve, had played well without him.

"We didn't know when he was coming back and to be honest he didn't even know if he was coming back," Brind'Amour said. "So that's a pretty low point for him.

"He cares so much about our group that he actually felt he was going to disrupt what we were doing. All I kept telling him was, 'Man, imagine if you do come back, what team we can be.'"

It has been a tough go for Staal at times the past seven years. Traded to Carolina by the Pittsburgh Penguins in June 2012, he hoped to join his brother, Eric, in leading the Canes to postseason success. That didn't happen and Eric, long a franchise player and the team captain, was traded. For Jordan, that was a downer.

Last season, Jordan and his wife, Heather, had an infant daughter die because of a terminal birth defect. Jordan kept the situation private, even from teammates, until Hannah's death in February.

The concussion this season wasn't the first of his career. Still, another setback, another challenge.

But the Canes are back in the playoffs for the first time since 2009, coincidentally the year Jordan Staal won the Stanley Cup with the Pens, beating Carolina in the Eastern Conference finals. He feels good, about himself, about his team.

"He's a real caring individual and he's got confidence now," Brind'Amour said. "And that's look out, right?"



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## Not just the pig: Hurricanes aware of Hamilton but won't let him hog all the credit

By Luke DeCock

Hamilton the Pig has somehow become an international viral sensation since appearing in the PNC parking lots before Game 3, which is the kind of random bizarre nonsense that happens in the playoffs.

The team has since become aware of its unofficial porcine good-luck charm – “he’s made it into the room, not like actually,” Justin Faulk said Saturday – and was aware that the ham was hitting the road for Game 7 in Washington, but wasn’t aware until Saturday that Hamilton stayed home for Game 1 of the second-round series against the New York Islanders.

Somehow, the Hurricanes were able to win 1-0 in overtime without him.

“I guess it’s not just Hamilton the Pig, huh?” Faulk said. “Some of the boys get some credit, too.”

Support for the team has been coming from all kinds of unexpected corners. On Friday, the Los Angeles Kings tweeted out a version of their logo tweaked with Hurricanes iconography – and it’s unusual to say the least for one NHL team to jump on another team’s playoff bandwagon.

The connection, of course, is Hurricanes captain Justin Williams, who was an essential part of two Stanley Cups with the Kings. (Williams was tagged in the Twitter post.)

“I did, I actually did see that,” Williams said. “That’s awesome. I love it. But my role in it? I don’t know. It wasn’t provoked, no, but it’s certainly appreciated.”

A Kings spokesperson said in an email: “We all have an affinity for Justin Williams and love the storm surge. We needed to pick a team to root for.”

THE WAY IT IS For Hurricanes coach Rod Brind’Amour, one of the nice things about having a team this young and playoff-inexperienced is most of the players don’t realize that they’re

not supposed to be this tired at this point. They just assume this is how it is in the playoffs.

“We’re young – well, some of us are – in shape and hungry,” Williams said. “It’s a good combination.”

That’s not the reality. Six games and four flights in 11 days with 35 minutes of extra hockey in back-to-back games is about as harsh as the grind gets, especially with three key forwards out of the lineup.

“Having such an emotional week, especially with getting that Game 7 win and coming over here, there’s not much to think about the next game,” Nino Niederreiter said. “You just got to play your game, and that’s what we did, and that helps us keep our minds fresh and our legs fresh.”

And if that weren’t enough, the Hurricanes are going from a double-overtime game to an overtime game to a 3 p.m. start on Sunday, taking another four hours of rest out of the equation.

The Hurricanes took the day off again Saturday, with just the injured players and healthy scratches going to the arena. They have hunkered down at the team hotel, conserving energy, staying quiet.

“This time of year, it’s more mental fatigue for me, than physical,” Brind’Amour said. “Obviously, you get nicked up and banged up. But there’s less travel and we have days off between games. Physically, it’s not as demanding as the mental grind. It’s as important to rest the mind as the body.”

DAY-TO-DAY-TO-DAY Brind’Amour said after Game 1 that Andrei Svechnikov had cleared the concussion protocol but needs a full team practice before he can return. The earliest that could happen is Tuesday in Raleigh ahead of Wednesday’s Game 3

Jordan Martinook remains a game-time decision for Game 2 after sitting out Game 1. Micheal Ferland continues to work toward a return.

“It’s day-to-day with all these guys,” Brind’Amour said.

## Canes fans get taste of what could be with Stanley Cup visit to Raleigh

By Anna Johnson

The Stanley Cup was in downtown Raleigh Saturday afternoon giving Carolina Hurricanes fans a taste of what could be.

It’s the hockey team’s first time in the Stanley Cup playoffs since 2009. The Canes defeated the defending champion Washington Capitals during the first round of the 2019 playoffs and won their first game in the second round against the New York Islanders Friday night. They play again in New York on Sunday.

Fans lined up for over an hour for their chance to win some Canes gear and take a photo with the iconic trophy during the craft beer festival Brewgaloo. At least one fan brought their own trophy.

In a Canes sweater (or jersey, for you non-hockey fans), 5-year-old Oliver Dedene carried a cardboard and tinfoil trophy almost bigger than him. Scrawled on it were the words “let’s go Jerks,” a reference to the comment made by hockey commentator Don Cherry earlier this year about the team’s post-game celebrations. “Bunch of Jerks” is a moniker the team and fans have embraced in recent months.

Oliver just started playing hockey as goalie and tries to stay awake through most of the late Canes matches, but it depends on school, his dad Kevin said.

Kevin grew up in Detroit and made a similar Stanley Cup when the Red Wings won the championship in the late 1990s. He thought his own son would enjoy the experience of seeing the real cup with the one he made. He’s hopeful the cup could be coming back to Raleigh with a Canes championship.



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"The way we're playing right now, I think we could win," he said. "I'm surprised by who was knocked out of the first round and I didn't expect them to make it out, but they did."

But it wasn't just Canes fans who stopped for a photo-op. A pair in Pittsburgh Penguin gear got a few taunts from the crowd during their photo.

John Stampf, wearing an Islander jersey, said he got a few comments from folks in line, but it helped that his 8-year-old son Ethan was decked out in Canes gear. Stampf is a life-long Islander fan but said he also roots for the Canes. They always go to the Islander-Canes games and there is a "friendly father-son rivalry," Stampf said.

His wife Jen was wearing a Whalers hat, the name of the Hurricanes hockey team before it moved to North Carolina in 1997. Their other son, Maxwell, 12, was completely neutral in his Superman t-shirt.

"We want to be together as a family and experience these playoffs together," Jen said. "They haven't gone to the playoffs

since Ethan has been born. So this has been exciting for him. We actually got to go to one of the games."

Ethan has seen the trophy on television but said he'd never seen it in real-life. His favorite part about hockey? Cheap shots.

The cup is touring the nation during the playoffs with Mike Bolt, the "keeper of the cup" who travels with the trophy. Arriving in Raleigh was a way of treating the Canes fans to something special, he said.

"I am sure the fans here would hope the Stanley Cup spends a little bit more time in North Carolina," he said.

The first person to get their photo taken was former Hurricanes trainer Pete Friesen. His name appears on the trophy from the Canes 2006 win.

After Friesen, N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper took a photo, promising not to touch the cup, a tradition among some fans, and led the crowd in a Canes chant.

## Five points for the Hurricanes going into Game 2

By Luke DeCock

1. CLEAN IT UP Lost in the shuffle of the overtime drama and Petr Mrazek's performance Friday night was how loose the Hurricanes played in the first two periods, turning the puck over and doing some uncharacteristically sloppy things. Mental fatigue surely played a role, but the Islanders (like the Hurricanes) are built to feast on such mistakes. The Hurricanes need to tighten things up Sunday.

2. NO-NO NINO Since the midpoint of the Washington series, only one of the Hurricanes' top forwards has yet to have an impact in the playoffs. Nino Niederreiter is still looking for his first goal and has just two points, although he had two great chances Friday – passing up a shot on two-on-one to try to hit the trailer instead, then missing the net on the overtime rush that led to Jordan Staal's overtime goal. Niederreiter has gotten better as the playoffs have worn on, but he has yet to get back to the clinical finishing he displayed upon his arrival in January. Was Friday a sign that he's close to breaking through?

3. POWER UP At some point, Rod Brind'Amour is going to have to shake things up on the power play because the Hurricanes' performance has been abysmal. Friday night was another round of perimeter shooting without screens in front, without any playmaking down low, without any attempt to

create a two-on-one anywhere on the ice. The Hurricanes are 3-for-29 in the playoffs. They're winning in spite of their power play. That's a dangerous game to play.

4. PETR PRINCIPLE Mrazek's numbers weren't great in the first round, which had a little to do with him and a lot to do with how the games were played and the quality of the opposition. Friday was a goaltending masterpiece, and the kind of scramble game that played to his strengths. (The shutout dropped his goals-against average from 2.53 to 2.22 and his save percentage jumped from a subpar .899 to an palatable .914.) Mrazek is a battler, and the Hurricanes needed that Friday more than they would have Curtis McElhinney's calm resolve. McElhinney may yet get a chance to play – and nearly did in Game 5 in Washington – but Mrazek is at the top of his game right now.

5. CHARLOTTE'S GOT A LOT The Hurricanes got good minutes from AHL call-ups Patrick Brown and Clark Bishop on Friday with Andrei Svechnikov and Jordan Martinook still out. Midseason call-ups Greg McKeeg and Saku Maenalanen also played well, with McKeeg having the Hurricanes' best chance to score in regulation. The Checkers, meanwhile, managed to clinch their first-round playoff series Friday night without Brown and Bishop. It has been a good month for hockey in the Carolinas.



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## After long wait, Justin Faulk savoring playoff success

By Luke DeCock

The weight of it was oppressive. Seven years in the league without a playoff appearance, an endless succession of seasons going nowhere, even before Justin Faulk was thrust into a co-captaincy he didn't want. A year ago, Faulk was one of many Carolina Hurricanes players who looked in desperate need of a change of scenery, a fresh start, something – anything – different.

"Especially guys that have been here for a while," Faulk said Saturday, a year and 180 degrees later, "we had some gray, cloudy days."

The Hurricanes defenseman then saw everything around him change in a whirlwind offseason. Bill Peters left, Rod Brind'Amour was promoted to head coach, Justin Williams was elevated to captain. Players came and went. The mix in the room changed.

Faulk, having become uncomfortable in the only home he had known in the NHL, felt at home again.

The game that had become a grind became fun again.

Faulk became the defenseman the Hurricanes once thought he was again.

And, finally given the chance to play in the postseason after 557 regular-season games, Faulk has been even better than that.

"It's been a long time coming," said Minnesota Wild forward J.T. Brown, who won an NCAA title with Faulk as freshmen at Minnesota Duluth. "I've gotten to see what he can do in pressure games. He hasn't been in those situations lately, but I knew all along that player would show up – and has showed up – in big-time games."

With the exception of a rocky start to Game 2 of the Washington series, when Faulk helped spot the Capitals an early 2-0 lead, he's been a rock on the Carolina blue line in the postseason, playing first with Brett Pesce and more recently with Calvin de Haan after the reshuffle late in the Washington series.

While Jacob Slavin's offense has gotten a lot of attention, Faulk is right behind him in ice time – Slavin, at 26:39 per game, is second among active players in the postseason, while Faulk is sixth at 25:58 – and has seen as much duty against the opposition's top lines. He played a team-high 24:27 in Friday's Game 1 overtime win over the New York Islanders.

But the roots of Faulk's postseason performance were planted in the fall, when the Brind'Amour-Williams regime took over and the mood in the room changed. On the day Williams was announced as captain, Faulk was visibly elated, the rare player relieved by an ostensible demotion.

Winning helped, to be sure, but the new coach and captain both demonstrated a lighter touch than the dour Peters, who visibly lost the support of the players last January.

"It's been enjoyable to come to the rink," Faulk said. "That goes a long way. You can probably ask some of the guys who have been here for a while, that really does help a lot."

In Faulk's career arc, it's a timely rebirth. There was a point in his career, when he was young and raw, where he looked like he might have long-term Norris Trophy potential, because of his shot and two-way game. That's not how things panned out, but the Hurricanes also knew he was better than he had shown the previous few years.

It was just a matter of getting back to that level, if he could.

"He had a couple years where I felt like he wasn't Justin Faulk," Brind'Amour said. "This year, for whatever reason, he's been the player we all saw early when he was with us. For whatever reason, he's turned the corner this year, and he's continued on into the playoffs."

With a logjam of right-shot defensemen after the Dougie Hamilton trade, Faulk appeared ticketed to join the offseason exodus. It worked out for both Faulk and the Hurricanes that there was never really an offer that made sense.

With everything else that went on around him, he ended up playing for another team without changing his jersey. He got the change of scenery he needed by staying in place.



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## "Petr!! Petr!! Petr!!" Mrazek makes the Canes contenders

By Jared Fialko

Ten days rest on one bench, 43 hours on the other. The New York Islanders absolutely had the advantage in terms of preparation and look ready to strike early in game one of their Stanley Cup Playoff series with the Canes. Fourteen minutes in, a bad giveaway by Justin Williams set up Josh Bailey for a breakaway opportunity, one-on-one with the keeper. Bailey's backhander was no match for Petr Mrazek's glove.

"Especially to start that game he bailed us out on a few," said Hurricanes center Jordan Staal. "They came out with a couple of good chances on a couple of not-so-smart plays, and that's what your goaltender's for."

"We had a couple of turnovers that lead to some Grade A chances for them, it could've been the game right there," Hurricanes head coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "He held us in there and gave us a chance, which is what you want."

It may've been the most impressive of his 31 saves on Friday. Carolina needed every single one of them as the Canes would find themselves in the midst of the first scoreless overtime playoff game in franchise history.

"Those are the games where one bad bounce could change everything," said Hurricanes goalie Petr Mrazek. "You just have to be beyond focused in those games."

Mrazek stood on his head in net at a time when the Canes needed him the most. The 1-0 result wasn't his first shutout of this playoff run, but the importance of Friday's paled to that of the game three outing against the Capitals. In that first round meeting the Canes' offense exploded for five goals and outshot Washington at a nearly three-to-one clip. Mrazek put the Canes on his back. The difference between being down 1-0 in this series and up a game given the fatigue the Canes are pushing through at the moment is massive.

"He's a gamer, he always seems to make those big saves at the right time, and that's what you want in a goaltender," said Staal.

The guy between the pipes has become the subject of PNC Arena's new favorite chant, "PETR!! PETR!! PETR!!" He's performing like a marquee netminder. A guy making the absolute most of his one-year, \$1.5 million dollar "prove it" contract.

"While Petr's really elevated his game, Mac had been good all year too."

Yes, let us not forget that up until a few weeks ago, Petr Mrazek and Curtis McElhinney shared the goaltending duties. 1A and 1B. The platoon approach or goalie-by-committee worked out very well, simply stated, the Hurricanes would not be in the postseason without the wonderful job that the journeyman McElhinney's done this season. His numbers make his case: a 20-11 record, .912 save percentage, and a 2.58 goals allowed average. Very comparable to Mrazek's 23-14, .914, and 2.39.

"To be quite honest with you, right up into the end of the season I was happy to keep doing it that way, going back and forth," said Brind'Amour. "There was no way to sit there and go, one guy's not playing well."

Many expected the rotation to continue into the postseason, but goaltender coach Mike Bales decided to roll with the hot hand of Mrazek.

"I leave a lot of these decisions, all the goalie decisions up to our goalie coach. I say, 'Mike where are we going?'" Brind'Amour said. "That's what he does for a living, he works with these guys. He told me, 'go with this guy,' and that's what we've done. Again, it was an easy decision, if he would've said we're going to keep rotating them, I would've been happy too."

His start to the postseason didn't go so swimmingly, three first period goals in D.C., but since then Mrazek's been stellar (excluding the game five walloping in Washington, where bricks and mortar probably couldn't have saved the Canes that night). He showed on Friday that he's capable of carrying a team when they're not at their best, and if he can keep up the pace, he can potentially carry the Canes through to the Eastern Conference Finals, if not further.

## Canes fans wonder, can they win the Stanley Cup?

By Adam Owens

RALEIGH, N.C. — It's Hurricane season in Raleigh.

It's a storm many fans admit they didn't see coming as the Carolina Hurricanes made it through the first round of the National Hockey League playoffs and won their first game against the New York Islanders on Friday.

"We were the underdogs, of course," Monte Montague said. "You have all these new teams in other areas, and this year they counted us out. They should not have done that."

At the Brewgaloo Beer Festival downtown, people lined up to get close to the Stanley Cup.

The talk around here: Can the team really bring the trophy to Raleigh?

Phillip Stevens was in PNC Arena for a playoff game against the Washington Capitals, who won the cup last year.

"It was so loud," Stevens said. "And it was packed out, too."

He said he thinks the energy is there to go all the way.



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"Is it possible they have a chance to win the whole thing, you think?" he said. "I think they have a chance now. They knocked out the best team."

He didn't think that would happen, he said.

At the office of 99.9 The Fan sports talk radio, a yellowed newspaper on the wall shows how long it's been since the last Stanley Cup win: 13 years.

The Canes took down the Edmonton Oilers in 2006 to win the finals.



## Game 2 Preview: Hurricanes at Islanders

Canes look to take 2-0 series lead in Brooklyn

by Michael Smith

NEW YORK - After capturing a 1-0 Second Round series lead on the New York Islanders with a 1-0 overtime win in Game 1, the Carolina Hurricanes have an opportunity to take a commanding advantage in the best-of-seven series before it shifts to Raleigh.

With the victory in Game 1, the Hurricanes have already achieved the desired road split, at least, to begin the series, giving them an early upper-hand in the race to win four games.

"We came here to steal one, and now we can get a little greedy and try to get another one," Justin Williams said after Game 1."

Lessons from Game 1

As Calvin de Haan said, the Hurricanes played "probably the whole game" on pure adrenaline.

They had to. Just 43 hours earlier, Brock McGinn's double overtime heroics sent the team to the Second Round in a dramatic Game 7 finish. There wasn't much time to rest or prepare. It was about riding that wave of momentum right into a new city and a new building against a new opponent in a new series.

"It was an interesting game for us because we didn't have a lot of time to prepare ourselves to play the Isles. It was a quick turnaround," Nino Niederreiter said on Saturday. "We had a lot of energy still left from winning that Game 7 in Washington. Everyone was super excited to just get things going right away."

Physically, there didn't seem to be much holding the Hurricanes back. There was a bit of mental fatigue, but nothing that Petr Mrazek couldn't bail the team out of. Mrazek put together a sparkling performance and made 31 saves in his fifth career playoff shutout. Robin Lehner was brilliant at the other end of the ice, as well, but the Canes got the bounce they were looking for.

A Niederreiter shot off the end boards - not a pass, a "missed shot," as he admitted - bounced right to Jordan Staal on the other side of the net, and he popped it in off Lehner's left skate blade for the game-winner 4:04 into overtime.

"It wasn't pretty. I think both teams will say they didn't play very well," Williams said. "It wasn't a pretty game, but it was pretty in the end."

Staal Takes Over

A concussion forced Staal out of the lineup for an extended period of time this season, and while all he could do was watch, the Canes kept winning.

"He just didn't know when he was coming back, and to be honest, he even didn't know if he was coming back," Brind'Amour said. "He just cares so much about our group. I think he actually felt like he was going to disrupt what we were doing when all I kept telling him was, man, imagine if you do come back what a team we could be."

"When you're not playing for a while and the team is doing well without you, it's easy for those thoughts to creep into your mind," Williams said. "I know he's really proud of what we did when he was out of the lineup to give him an opportunity to come back, shine, be healthy and be what he is to this team. I can't say enough good things about him."

When Staal returned to the lineup, he was a force. He was nearly a point-per-game player down the stretch with 17 points (6g, 11a) in his last 21 games.

Now, he's back in the dance for the first time since 2012, and he's thriving.

Staal ranks second on the team in playoff points (7), and he's tied for the team lead in playoff goals (4). He's scored goals in three straight games, and they've all been critical. In Game 6 of the First Round, he broke a 2-2 tie in the third period with what would be the game-winning goal. In Game 7, he scored a goal in the third period to tie the game at three and force extra hockey. And, in Game 1 of the Second Round, he scored the lone goal of the game, another game-winner, this time in overtime.

"He expects to be great," Brind'Amour said. "He's got confidence now. Look out."

"He just does so many good things for us. I'm glad he's got a few goals here lately and is getting some recognition for it," Williams said. "At the end of the day, we know how good he is. We know what he brings to the game. He's getting more confident as he scores goals, and that's a scary thing for other teams."



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## Game-Time Decisions

Jordan Martinook was held out of Game 1 with a persistent lower-body concern that he gutted out in Games 6 and 7 of the First Round. He remains a game-time decision for Game 2.

"Nothing different on that front," Brind'Amour said. "It's day-to-day with all these guys."

## Canes Earn Mental, Physical Rest Day

After Game 1 OT win, Canes take a breath to reset

by Michael Smith

NEW YORK - At 11:31 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on Wednesday, April 24, Brock McGinn got his stick on a pass from Justin Williams to deflect the puck in past Braden Holtby, the euphoric, double overtime conclusion to a grueling seven-game First Round series against the Washington Capitals.

A little more than 12 hours later, the Carolina Hurricanes boarded a flight bound for Newark and, that afternoon, checked into their Manhattan hotel.

At 7:10 p.m. EDT on Friday, April 26, the puck dropped on Game 1 of the Second Round against the New York Islanders, a turnaround time of less than 44 hours between playoff games.

There wasn't much time to rest. There wasn't much time to think. There wasn't much time to prepare. The Hurricanes had to go out and simply play.

"We wanted to roll into this game on a high and try to keep riding that wave," said Jordan Staal, the overtime hero in a 1-0 Game 1 victory. "We came into this game feeling good about ourselves. Knowing our game is good enough, we keep at it and stay with it."

"We felt great. 100 percent, the whole time," captain Justin Williams grinned afterward.

The effects of having played 91:05 of emotional hockey just two nights prior were plainly evident.

"Oh, yeah," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said, his eyes wide. "That's the thing I give our group the biggest credit for tonight is somehow figuring out how to match the intensity right away."

Mercifully, Staal potted the lone goal of the game just 4:04 into overtime to give the jubilant - and, probably tired - Hurricanes a 1-0 series lead.

"You just didn't want this to drag on again because that's really going to have effects later on," Brind'Amour said. "Happy with the win, and happy that it really didn't drag on."

The Hurricanes then, of course, opted to spend Saturday away from the rink. Rest is a weapon, and the team hasn't had much of it lately.

"This time of year, it's more mental fatigue, for me, than physical," Brind'Amour said at the team's hotel on Saturday. "Obviously you get nicked up and banged up, but there is less travel and we have days off in between games, so physically

That includes Andrei Svechnikov, who has been in the concussion protocol since Game 3 of the First Round.

"He's getting close. I think he's passed everything," Brind'Amour said on Friday night. "We haven't had the right practice time for him to feel real comfortable, and we're not going to put him in if he's not comfortable."

it's not as demanding as the mental grind. It's as important to rest the mind as it is the body."

And physically, the Hurricanes have fared well so far, all things, including injuries, considered.

The Canes might say they didn't have anything left in the tank in double overtime of Game 7, but the Capitals' wheels had fallen off long before. They were gassed, and it was only a matter of time before the Canes capitalized.

A chorus of boos would typically surround Brind'Amour ending his postgame win speeches with, "You've got Billy!" but the team is now seeing the long-term payoffs of those dreaded workouts.

"Bill Burniston, our strength coach, has been phenomenal all year, driving home the little things to be able to play at this time of year," Brind'Amour said.

Physically, the Hurricanes handled Game 1 as well as they could have hoped. There were some mental miscues that resulted in turnovers and quality scoring chances for the opposition, but Petr Mrazek was there to bail his team out, especially in the first period.

"There were some parts to the game last night that weren't our best, for sure. Probably some mental mistakes, if anything. You could contribute that to whatever - not much rest or getting into a new series, trying to feel each other out," Justin Faulk said. "We definitely made some mistakes that need to be cleaned up. We know that. We have better to give, and if we do that, we can continue to make it hard on them."

Saturday, then, is just as much a mental rest day as it is a physical rest day for the Hurricanes.

"Rest at this time of year is big," Calvin de Haan said after the game. "You've got 16 minutes before a hockey game to get going, so it's all good."

"When you get tired, you're prone to mistakes," Williams said. "When you can stay sharp mentally because you're in shape physically, it gives you a little advantage. In playoffs, you just need tiny, little advantages."

One advantage the Hurricanes have is a 1-0 series lead in the Second Round. They've achieved at least the split they were seeking on the road with now the opportunity to "get a little greedy," as Williams said, and steal another before heading back to Raleigh for Games 3 and 4.

"We're young - well some of us are - in shape and hungry," Williams said. "That's a good combination."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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## 5 Keys: Hurricanes at Islanders, Game 2

Rested Carolina seeks to tighten defense; New York must start quickly, improve power play

by Brian Compton

HURRICANES at ISLANDERS

3 p.m. ET; NBC, CBC, SN, TVAS

Carolina leads best-of-7 series 1-0

The Carolina Hurricanes will try to take a 2-0 series lead when they face the New York Islanders in Game 2 of the Eastern Conference Second Round at Barclays Center on Sunday.

Goalie Petr Mrazek made 31 saves, and center Jordan Staal scored the only goal 4:04 into overtime for a 1-0 win in the series opener on Friday.

Here are 5 keys for Game 2:

### 1. Get one early

With the way Mrazek played Friday, expect the Islanders to shoot early and often with the hopes of swaying the momentum in their favor.

"Personally, I don't really worry about the other goalie too much," center Mathew Barzal said. "You get Grade As after Grade As [chances], something's going to go in. But he's definitely a good goalie when he's seeing the puck, definitely athletic and moving around and closing off those second and third chances. We've just got to bear down and pick the corner."

### 2. Rest stop

Carolina has barely had time to breathe since its 4-3 double-overtime win against the Washington Capitals in Game 7 of the first round on Wednesday. The Hurricanes have not practiced since and tried to take advantage of getting rest Saturday with an early start for Game 2.

Coach Rod Brind'Amour cited a lack of healthy players -- forwards Andrei Svechnikov, Jordan Martinook and Micheal Ferland each have missed time with injuries -- but he's also trying to make Carolina is mentally sharp when the puck drops.

"This time of year, it is more mental fatigue than physical," Brind'Amour said. "It's as important to rest the mind as the body."

### 3. Islanders must power up

New York's inability to capitalize with the man-advantage has been somewhat of an Achilles heel all season, and it was again in Game 1 when it went 0-for-4, including a chance with 6:09 remaining in the third period. If it's going to be a low-

scoring series throughout, the Islanders know their power play needs to improve.

"Obviously, we had plenty of opportunities," forward and captain Anders Lee said. "We need to be better as a group. We knew coming in they were going to be a high-pressure type of penalty kill. It's on us to go back and make adjustments."

### 4. Clean up defensively

The Hurricanes played admirably in Game 1 despite the quick turnaround, but they know they need to play better in their own end and not rely as much on Mrazek if they hope to go home with a 2-0 series lead.

"We have to clean up a little bit," defenseman Justin Faulk said. "There were parts of our game last night that weren't our best for sure. You can say 'not much rest' or 'just trying to feel out each other in a new series' to contribute to that, but there are things that need to be cleaned up and we have better to give."

### 5. Eberle looks to recapture touch

Islanders forward Jordan Eberle scored in each of their four games against the Penguins in the first round after scoring in five of their final seven regular-season games. Playing for the first time in 10 days, Eberle was held to one shot on goal in Game 1 against the Hurricanes.

"Little rusty in the first [period], I would say," Eberle said. "Just getting not so much your legs under you, but your head, catching up. Your legs are moving fast, you have a lot of energy, but just mentally trying to get timing right and thinking the game. But as the game went on, I felt better and better. I think the longer we go, the better we'll feel."

Hurricanes projected lineup

Nino Niederreiter -- Sebastian Aho -- Teuvo Teravainen

Brock McGinn -- Jordan Staal -- Justin Williams

Warren Foegele -- Lucas Wallmark -- Patrick Brown

Saku Maenalanen -- Greg McKegg -- Clark Bishop

Jacob Slavin -- Dougie Hamilton

Brett Pesce -- Justin Faulk

Calvin de Haan -- Trevor van Riemsdyk

Petr Mrazek

Curtis McElhinney

Scratched: Haydn Fleury



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Injured: Andrei Svechnikov (concussion), Micheal Ferland (upper body), Jordan Martinook (lower body)

Islanders projected lineup

Anders Lee -- Mathew Barzal -- Jordan Eberle

Josh Bailey -- Brock Nelson -- Tom Kuhnhackl

Anthony Beauvillier -- Valtteri Filppula -- Leo Komarov

Matt Martin -- Casey Cizikas -- Cal Clutterbuck

Nick Leddy -- Thomas Hickey

Adam Pelech -- Ryan Pulock

Devon Toews -- Scott Mayfield

Robin Lehner

Thomas Greiss

Scratched: Luca Sbisa, Dennis Seidenberg, Michael Dal Colle, Ross Johnston

Injured: Johnny Boychuk (lower body), Tanner Fritz (hand), Andrew Ladd (torn ACL)

Status report

Svechnikov, who has not played since Game 3 against the Capitals, skated on his own again Saturday and will be a game-time decision. ... Martinook is also expected to be a game-time decision. ... Komarov and Mayfield each had a maintenance day Saturday; each is expected to play.

## Svechnikov game-time decision for Hurricanes in Game 2

Forward could face Islanders, has been out with concussion

by Shawn P. Roarke

Andrei Svechnikov remains a game-time decision for the Carolina Hurricanes against the New York Islanders in Game 2 of the Eastern Conference Second Round at Barclays Center on Sunday (3 p.m. ET; NBC, CBC, SN, TVAS).

The 19-year-old rookie forward skated on his own Saturday at Barclays Center. The Hurricanes did not practice following their 1-0 overtime victory in Game 1 of the best-of-7 series on Friday.

Svechnikov is getting closer to returning, Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said.

"He's passed everything, and this is where practice would have been great," Brind'Amour said. "We haven't had practice time for him to get real comfortable and we are not going to put him in if he is not comfortable."

With an afternoon game Sunday, there will be no morning skate. Carolina may practice on Monday or Tuesday; Game 3 is at PNC Arena on Wednesday.

Svechnikov has missed the past five games; the Hurricanes have won four of those games.

He missed the final four games of Carolina's seven-game, first-round victory against the defending Stanley Cup champion Washington Capitals after sustaining a concussion during a fight with Capitals forward Alex Ovechkin in Game 3.

The No. 2 pick in the 2018 NHL Draft, Svechnikov has three points (two goals, one assist) in three playoff games and had 37 points (20 goals, 17 assists) in 82 regular-season games.

Forward Jordan Martinook, who didn't play after regulation in the Hurricanes' 4-3 double-overtime win in Game 7 against the Capitals, missed Game 1 against the Islanders; he sat out Game 5 against Washington with a lower-body injury; he played less than 15 minutes each in Game 6 and Game 7. Martinook finished the first round with two assists in six games.

Forward Micheal Ferland has missed the past five games because of an upper-body injury.

## Hurricanes downplay obstacles before Game 2 against Islanders

Lead playoff series despite fatigue, injuries

by Shawn P. Roarke

NEW YORK -- The Carolina Hurricanes have had little time to think about what they have accomplished so far in the 2019 Stanley Cup Playoffs.

But that doesn't mean they can't savor where they are after winning Game 1 of the Eastern Conference Second Round with a 1-0 overtime victory against the New York Islanders at Barclays Center on Friday.

In their first postseason appearance in a decade, the Hurricanes have already eliminated the Washington Capitals, the defending Stanley Cup champion, in a stunning seven-game series. Now, they have stolen the home-ice advantage against the favored Islanders, leading 1-0 in the best-of-7 series.

Game 2 is at Barclays Center on Sunday (3 p.m. ET; NBC, CBC, SN, TVAS), less than 40 hours after their second straight overtime victory. Carolina sent the Capitals crashing out of the playoffs with a come-from-behind double-overtime road victory on Wednesday.

The grind has been dizzying at times, even for the few playoff-hardened players on the Hurricanes. Not that any of them are complaining.

"It's been hockey, sleep and eating and hockey, sleep and eating," said center Jordan Staal, who scored the winner Friday at 4:04 of overtime and has a goal in each of the past three games. "Playoffs is why you want to play, and everyone here has obviously been loving every minute and wants to keep it going."

A toll is being taken on the Hurricanes, though.

"It's the second round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs and it's not hard to find that extra gear right now," said Carolina



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forward Greg McKeeg said Friday. "Everyone is pretty motivated, it's an exciting time. We just have to put our best foot forward and find the energy, like we did tonight."

The energy will be harder to find if the Hurricanes continue to play at this dizzying pace. After Game 1, Brind'Amour joked that he didn't care as much about the result as he did that the overtime ended early, admitting that the effort his players have expended could catch up to them later in the series.

Captain Justin Williams tried to downplay the wear-and-tear angle after a good night's sleep.

"We're young - well, some of us are," the 37-year-old said Saturday. "We're in shape and we're hungry. That's a pretty good combination."

The early start time Sunday will be the latest challenge for the Hurricanes, throwing off a traditional game-day prep routine.

"This time of year, it is more mental fatigue than physical," Brind'Amour said Saturday. "It's as important to rest the mind as the body."

The Hurricanes haven't had a morning skate or practice since Sunday and may not have either until Tuesday, the second off day before Game 3. The Islanders, on the other hand, went nine days between games after sweeping the Pittsburgh Penguins in the first round and had several practices as well as multiple off days.

"We can't [practice], we don't have enough guys," Brind'Amour said, only half-joking. "We don't have enough guys. We're looking down to Charlotte (Carolina's American Hockey League affiliate) to see who we can get next. This time of year, I don't know what practice is going to do really. Our practices come in the video sessions and trying to touch up here and there.

"It would be nice if we had time to practice, but we didn't take care of business in the first round so we could practice."

Forwards Andrei Svechnikov (concussion), Micheal Ferland (upper-body injury) and Jordan Martinook (lower-body injury) each missed Game 1 of this series.

Svechnikov has not played since Game 3 of the first round, injured in a fight with Washington captain Alex Ovechkin. Svechnikov has been cleared for contact and has skated on his own for several days, including Saturday.

"He's getting close," Brind'Amour said. "He's passed everything, and this is where practice would have been great. We haven't had practice time for him to get real comfortable and we are not going to put him in if he is not comfortable."

Ferland has also missed the past five games. Martinook missed Game 5 in the first round before returning for Games 6 and 7, when he reaggravated his injury.



## Systems Analyst: Another One

An errant Islander pass leads to another Carolina OT winner  
By Ford Hatchett

The Carolina Hurricanes won their second consecutive road playoff game in overtime, outlasting the New York Islanders 1-0 on Saturday backstopped by goaltender Petr Mrazek.

Jordan Staal was the overtime hero, notching his fourth goal of the postseason off of a funny carom behind the Islanders goal. The goal, though, was set up by an Isles mistake.

With New York on a rush, winger Cal Clutterbuck attempts to leave a pass for a late arriving teammate. His pass is off the mark however, and Nino Niederreiter corrals the puck and starts the Canes transition.

Niederreiter opts not to shoot the puck as Devon Toews creeps closer to him. Instead, Niederreiter tries to find Brett Pesce who begins calling for the puck as he approaches the blue line. Pesce's backhand attempt is stopped by Lehner but Teuvo Teravainen is able to shovel the puck to open space, allowing Carolina to maintain possession.

Niederreiter eventually attempts a falling shot that goes wide, but the aggressive positioning of Pesce again allows Carolina to keep possession.

Facing light pressure, Pesce finds Niederreiter in the high slot. Anthony Beauvillier loses track of Niederreiter and the Swiss winger gets a look at the net. His bid goes wide, but Jordan Staal is able to beat Toews to the loose puck and fire it past Robin Lehner.

Through a screen, it appears Lehner loses track of the puck once it goes wide. His head whips around to locate the puck but it's too late.

As a larger goalie, Lehner does not move as quickly as some of his smaller counterparts. It appears that had Lehner tracked the puck initially, he may have had time to push off his post and get all the way over to make a save on Staal. Instead, he reacts late and throws out a pad in desperation. Staal banks the puck off of Lehner's outstretched leg and the Canes win the game and lead the series 1-0.



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## About Last Night: Canes work overtime again to take early series lead

A series-opening win gets the Canes off on the right foot in Brooklyn.

By Andy House

The Carolina Hurricanes continued to dig even deeper into their bag of magic in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference Semifinals, stealing an overtime victory along with home ice from the New York Islanders.

While most expected the series to be filled with tight, defensive games, Friday's 1-0 outcome certainly featured enough chances to be 3-3 headed to overtime instead of 0-0. But with the opening salvo fired by Jordan Staal in the extra session, the Canes assured themselves of returning to their fans in Raleigh at worst with a 1-1 series.

The Great - Petr the Great

It is undeniable that Game 1 belongs squarely to Petr Mrazek in net. His second shutout of the playoffs has the Hurricanes off and running in the second round, and sets the tone for the type of series that many expect to see between two tremendously talented, defensive teams.

Mrazek, as well as Robin Lehner on the other end, managed to put up goose-eggs in regulation. But make no mistake, this was not a game devoid of chances. Mrazek earned his shutout over the 31 shots he faced. His first period snag of a Josh Bailey backhand on a breakaway may have been his best of the day.

The hallmark for Mrazek in the night was his vision and decisiveness in net. His save on Valteri Fillpula on a nifty passing play from the Isles was indicative of how locked-in Mrazek was all evening.

The second period featured an early flurry from the Isles that led to plenty of pressure within the Canes defensive zone. But the most important play of the second period was with just under three minutes remaining in the period. Off an offensive zone faceoff win, the Isles appeared to finally break the ice as Mathew Barzal smacked a rebound off the boards into the back of the net. The officials waved off the goal however, as Anders Lee was sent off for goalie interference, and with that, the biggest bullet of the day was dodged.

There were plenty of saves, but what stood out the most was the aggressiveness from Mrazek. His movement and athleticism continue to be his greatest asset. Going forward, the Canes will need similar efforts in net.

The Rock Solid - Jordan Staal comes up big again

When the Canes went on their first significant run of the season, beginning around Christmas, Jordan Staal was not a part of the turnaround. His extended absence was a

consistent point of disbelief from Rod Brind'Amour in terms of how his team was capable of functioning so well without him. Prior to the injury, Staal had not exhibited the offensive production that his coach believed he possessed. That offensive production has reappeared during this current playoff run, and it has been the life-blood of his team. With the go-ahead goal in Game 6 against Washington, the tying goal in game 7, and now the only goal in the OT win in Game 1, Staal has simply been the most indispensable forward for the Canes.

At times in his Carolina career, Staal's calling card has been that of a shutdown defensive center. But his play down the stretch and in the playoffs have shown that Staal is capable of playing the type of heavy, strong, possession-based game that succeeds in the playoffs. With his size and current hot stick, Staal has become a matchup nightmare for the defensive-minded Isles and Barry Trotz.

The Expected - Time to settle in for a grind

No doubt the Canes were thrilled to get an early jump in this series, knowing how weary they currently are, and the type of series they expect to have ahead of them. The Canes were slightly outhit on Friday (44-38), but the physical game has been the sustained trademark for the Isles in their transformation to become a tough, defensive team.

There were plenty of chances on Friday for a higher-scoring game, but each netminder was up to the challenge (and then some), but as the series moves forward, most expect a significant price will have to be paid to earn every offensive chance. Entering the zone and sustaining possession anywhere near the boards will continue to be a monumental task.

The best chances on Friday were generated in the same way that they will likely occur the rest of the series: Off turnovers. Managing the puck will remain the top priority for both teams as this gritty divisional battle continues. With a matinee upcoming on Sunday, there is still not much rest ahead for the Canes. But with the extra day off between Sunday and the return to Raleigh for Game 3 on Wednesday, Carolina will earn some much needed rest.

Moral of the Story

Thanks to a tired team that found some way to yet again come through in overtime, the Canes now know that they will return home at no worse than even in the series. But now, Game 2 represents a tremendous opportunity for the Canes to take command of the series. Will they have enough juice left in the orange to bring home yet another win from the Big Apple? We will find out on Sunday.



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## Brind'Amour Deserves Jack Adams Nomination

By Mark Shiver

Carolina Hurricanes head coach Rod Brind'Amour should be the leading candidate to win the Jack Adams Award, hands down. When the three finalists for the award were announced Friday, though, Brind'Amour's name was glaringly absent. It is nothing less than a shame that he has been left out of the running.

This is not in any way intended to be a negative blast at the three finalists, St. Louis Blues' Craig Berube, Tampa Bay Lightning's Jon Cooper, and the New York Islanders' Barry Trotz. But Brind'Amour should be in the conversation. That he is not a finalist is ridiculous.

Twitter Ads info and privacy

Brind'Amour's Impact on the Hurricanes

Any fan of the Blues, Lightning, or Islanders can make a case for their coach to be in the running for what is essentially a "Coach of the Year" award. According to the NHL, "The Jack Adams Award is an annual award presented by the National Hockey League Broadcasters' Association to the NHL coach adjudged to have contributed the most to his team's success."

Here's a question: "Is there any team that made a bigger turnaround this season than the Hurricanes?" Answer: "No, not even close." The next thought would be to try to determine why they made such a big turnaround. There's an obvious answer: They have a new coach.

It can be argued that within the season the Blues had a bigger turnaround since their record was slightly better from the beginning of the year than that of the Hurricanes. But, in terms of making a difference in the overall success of a team, Brind'Amour is in the conversation. Period.

Of course, Brind'Amour did not lace up and don a sweater. But, his hiring by Tom Dundon set in motion the events necessary to get the Hurricanes to where they are today, up 1-0 against the New York Islanders in Round 2 of the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

Brind'Amour was the missing piece of a Hurricanes puzzle that had come close to being put together in recent years, but was always missing something. Bill Peters, who coached the Hurricanes for four seasons, could not get this group to the playoffs, even though there were many of the same players on his team that are on Brind'Amour's.

In his defense, Peters had to deal with the enigma that was Alexander Semin, the "please just make a save" Eddie Lack, and the, "I wasn't ready" Scott Darling. But Brind'Amour has had his own set of challenges to overcome this season, and he has done so admirably.

The Hurricanes have had their share of injuries, including Jordan Staal with a concussion, Andrei Svechnikov also with a concussion, Jordan Martinook with a lower-body injury, and

Micheal Ferland with upper-body injuries both early in the season and in Game 3 of the series against the Washington Capitals.

In each instance, Brind'Amour has not wavered but rather kept pressing onward to the goal of making the playoffs and more. He's had to plug in guys who have little or no experience and they have responded with giving their all. How does that taste, Jack Edwards?

How Does That Taste, Jack Edwards?

The broadcasters voted and Brind'Amour is not a finalist. Was the job he did as a rookie coach with a team riddled with injury adversity and loaded with rookies even considered? Or, was he bypassed because of arcane attitudes like those of Boston Bruins play-by-play announcer Jack Edwards?

It's guys like Edwards who don't even want Carolina to have a team, and who blather on about moving the team to Quebec City, who likely didn't give Brind'Amour the consideration he deserved when filling out their ballot for the Jack Adams Award.

But, after beating the defending Stanley Cup champion Capitals in double overtime in Game 7, and taking Game 1 from the Islanders Friday night, the Hurricanes keep exceeding expectations. If the 'Canes keep on winning, some folks are going to have to eat a lot of crow for not including Brind'Amour as a finalist.

Brind'Amour and Leadership

On May 8, 2018, the Hurricanes named Brind'Amour as their head coach. Newly minted general manager Don Waddell said in the statement announcing the hire

Rod is the greatest leader in the history of this franchise and has earned the opportunity to take charge of our locker room.

Quite a ringing endorsement that has absolutely rung true over the course of the season. That leadership ability was not long in coming forward.

The most obvious thing that Brind'Amour did was to name Justin Williams as the Hurricanes' captain. Why Peters didn't is a mystery often speculated about, with no good answer forthcoming. It was the obvious thing to do, and Brind'Amour did it without hesitation.

Jeff Gravely wrote at WRALsportsfan.com that the combination of Brind'Amour and Williams has definitely worked: "The combination of Williams on the ice and Brind'Amour on the bench has been a formula that worked this year with each playing off of the other as if they were line mates again."

If Williams is Mr. Game 7, it's because he shares the same passion for winning as does Brind'Amour. When the Hurricanes were stinking it up in December, Williams



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convinced them to keep playing and believing they would win. And they did. Brind'Amour believes and so does Williams. And so does the rest of the team.

They keep believing they can win and they keep winning. Martinook summarized the impact that Brind'Amour is having on the Hurricanes. He said after Game 6 against the Capitals,

I would run through hot coals for that guy.

From "I would run through hot coals for that guy": How the Hurricanes forced a Game 7 against the defending champs" – Sara Civian – The Athletic April 23, 2019

Martinook's expression of loyalty to Brind'Amour spreads through the entirety of the Hurricanes roster. It is this loyalty, this commitment to Brind'Amour's belief that they can win if they play hard and believe, that has this "Bunch of Jerks" raising eyebrows all over the league as game after game they do what most think they cannot. Except them, and that is why Brind'Amour should be a Jack Adams Award finalist.



## Checkers to face Hershey Bears in second round

The Charlotte Checkers will face the Hershey Bears in the second round of the Calder Cup Playoffs.

The best-of-seven Atlantic Division Final matchup begins with Games 1 and 2 at Bojangles' Coliseum this Friday, May 3, at 7 p.m. and Saturday, May 4, at 6 p.m., respectively. The series then moves to Hershey for as many as three more games, with Charlotte set to host Games 6 and 7 on Sunday, May 12, and Tuesday, May 14, if necessary.

The regular-season champion Checkers, who advanced to the next round by defeating the Providence Bruins 3-1 in the best-of-five Atlantic Division Semifinal series, now face the No. 3 seed in their division. In the regular season, Charlotte went 1-2-1 in the four-game, regular-season series against

Hershey, which defeated the Bridgeport Sound Tigers in five games in the playoffs' first round.

Tickets for Games 1 and 2 are on sale now via Ticketmaster and the Bojangles' Coliseum box office. The "if necessary" Games 6 and 7 in Charlotte will go on sale this Tuesday, April 30, at 10 a.m.

All second-round home playoff games will feature concession specials including \$2 hot dogs, popcorn and domestic draught beer as well as select craft beer draughts for \$4. Additional promotions will be announced in the coming days.

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## SportScan

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

1143218 Carolina Hurricanes

Canes fans get taste of what could be with Stanley Cup visit to Raleigh

BY ANNA JOHNSON

APRIL 27, 2019 05:28 PM

The Stanley Cup was in downtown Raleigh Saturday afternoon giving Carolina Hurricanes fans a taste of what could be.

It's the hockey team's first time in the Stanley Cup playoffs since 2009. The Canes defeated the defending champion Washington Capitals during the first round of the 2019 playoffs and won their first game in the second round against the New York Islanders Friday night. They play again in New York on Sunday.

Fans lined up for over an hour for their chance to win some Canes gear and take a photo with the iconic trophy during the craft beer festival Brewgaloo. At least one fan brought their own trophy.

In a Canes sweater (or jersey, for you non-hockey fans), 5-year-old Oliver Dedene carried a cardboard and tinfoil trophy almost bigger than him. Scrawled on it were the words "let's go Jerks," a reference to the comment made by hockey commentator Don Cherry earlier this year about the team's post-game celebrations. "Bunch of Jerks" is a moniker the team and fans have embraced in recent months.

Oliver just started playing hockey as goalie and tries to stay awake through most of the late Canes matches, but it depends on school, his dad Kevin said.

Kevin grew up in Detroit and made a similar Stanley Cup when the Red Wings won the championship in the late 1990s. He thought his own son would enjoy the experience of seeing the real cup with the one he made. He's hopeful the cup could be coming back to Raleigh with a Canes championship.

"The way we're playing right now, I think we could win," he said. "I'm surprised by who was knocked out of the first round and I didn't expect them to make it out, but they did."

But it wasn't just Canes fans who stopped for a photo-op. A pair in Pittsburgh Penguin gear got a few taunts from the crowd during their photo.

John Stampf, wearing an Islander jersey, said he got a few comments from folks in line, but it helped that his 8-year-old son Ethan was decked out in Canes gear. Stampf is a life-long Islander fan but said he also roots for the Canes. They always go to the Islander-Canes games and there is a "friendly father-son rivalry," Stampf said.

His wife Jen was wearing a Whalers hat, the name of the Hurricanes hockey team before it moved to North Carolina in 1997. Their other son, Maxwell, 12, was completely neutral in his Superman t-shirt.

"We want to be together as a family and experience these playoffs together," Jen said. "They haven't gone to the playoffs since Ethan has been born. So this has been exciting for him. We actually got to go to one of the games."

Ethan has seen the trophy on television but said he'd never seen it in real-life. His favorite part about hockey? Cheap shots.

The cup is touring the nation during the playoffs with Mike Bolt, the "keeper of the cup" who travels with the trophy. Arriving in Raleigh was a way of treating the Canes fans to something special, he said.

"I am sure the fans here would hope the Stanley Cup spends a little bit more time in North Carolina," he said.

The first person to get their photo taken was former Hurricanes trainer Pete Friesen. His name appears on the trophy from the Canes 2006 win.

After Friesen, N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper took a photo, promising not to touch the cup, a tradition among some fans, and led the crowd in a Canes chant.

News Observer LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143219 Carolina Hurricanes

After long wait, Justin Faulk savoring playoff success

BY LUKE DECOCK

APRIL 27, 2019 04:22 PM

The weight of it was oppressive. Seven years in the league without a playoff appearance, an endless succession of seasons going nowhere, even before Justin Faulk was thrust into a co-captaincy he didn't want. A year ago, Faulk was one of many Carolina Hurricanes players who looked in desperate need of a change of scenery, a fresh start, something – anything – different.

"Especially guys that have been here for a while," Faulk said Saturday, a year and 180 degrees later, "we had some gray, cloudy days."

The Hurricanes defenseman then saw everything around him change in a whirlwind offseason. Bill Peters left, Rod Brind'Amour was promoted to head coach, Justin Williams was elevated to captain. Players came and went. The mix in the room changed.

Faulk, having become uncomfortable in the only home he had known in the NHL, felt at home again.

The game that had become a grind became fun again.

Faulk became the defenseman the Hurricanes once thought he was again.



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And, finally given the chance to play in the postseason after 557 regular-season games, Faulk has been even better than that.

"It's been a long time coming," said Minnesota Wild forward J.T. Brown, who won an NCAA title with Faulk as freshmen at Minnesota Duluth. "I've gotten to see what he can do in pressure games. He hasn't been in those situations lately, but I knew all along that player would show up – and has showed up – in big-time games."

With the exception of a rocky start to Game 2 of the Washington series, when Faulk helped spot the Capitals an early 2-0 lead, he's been a rock on the Carolina blue line in the postseason, playing first with Brett Pesce and more recently with Calvin de Haan after the reshuffle late in the Washington series.

While Jaccob Slavin's offense has gotten a lot of attention, Faulk is right behind him in ice time – Slavin, at 26:39 per game, is second among active players in the postseason, while Faulk is sixth at 25:58 – and has seen as much duty against the opposition's top lines. He played a team-high 24:27 in Friday's Game 1 overtime win over the New York Islanders.

But the roots of Faulk's postseason performance were planted in the fall, when the Brind'Amour-Williams regime took over and the mood in the room changed. On the day Williams was announced as captain, Faulk was visibly elated, the rare player relieved by an ostensible demotion.

Winning helped, to be sure, but the new coach and captain both demonstrated a lighter touch than the dour Peters, who visibly lost the support of the players last January.

"It's been enjoyable to come to the rink," Faulk said. "That goes a long way. You can probably ask some of the guys who have been here for a while, that really does help a lot."

In Faulk's career arc, it's a timely rebirth. There was a point in his career, when he was young and raw, where he looked like he might have long-term Norris Trophy potential, because of his shot and two-way game. That's not how things panned out, but the Hurricanes also knew he was better than he had shown the previous few years.

It was just a matter of getting back to that level, if he could.

"He had a couple years where I felt like he wasn't Justin Faulk," Brind'Amour said. "This year, for whatever reason, he's been the player we all saw early when he was with us. For whatever reason, he's turned the corner this year, and he's continued on into the playoffs."

With a logjam of right-shot defensemen after the Dougie Hamilton trade, Faulk appeared ticketed to join the offseason exodus. It worked out for both Faulk and the Hurricanes that there was never really an offer that made sense.

With everything else that went on around him, he ended up playing for another team without changing his jersey. He got the change of scenery he needed by staying in place.

News Observer LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143220 Carolina Hurricanes

Not just the pig: Hurricanes aware of Hamilton but won't let him hog all the credit

BY LUKE DECOCK

APRIL 27, 2019 03:25 PM

Hamilton the Pig has somehow become an international viral sensation since appearing in the PNC parking lots before Game 3, which is the kind of random bizarre nonsense that happens in the playoffs.

The team has since become aware of its unofficial porcine good-luck charm – "he's made it into the room, not like actually," Justin Faulk said Saturday – and was aware that the ham was hitting the road for Game 7 in Washington, but wasn't aware until Saturday that Hamilton stayed home for Game 1 of the second-round series against the New York Islanders.

Somehow, the Hurricanes were able to win 1-0 in overtime without him.

"I guess it's not just Hamilton the Pig, huh?" Faulk said. "Some of the boys get some credit, too."

Support for the team has been coming from all kinds of unexpected corners. On Friday, the Los Angeles Kings tweeted out a version of their logo tweaked with Hurricanes iconography – and it's unusual to say the least for one NHL team to jump on another team's playoff bandwagon.

The connection, of course, is Hurricanes captain Justin Williams, who was an essential part of two Stanley Cups with the Kings. (Williams was tagged in the Twitter post.)

Felt cute, might delete later idk pic.twitter.com/MLyyqmiTX2

— LA Kings (@LAKings) April 26, 2019

"I did, I actually did see that," Williams said. "That's awesome. I have a lot of friends back there cheering for us. It's great. I love it. But my role in it? I don't know. It wasn't provoked, no, but it's certainly appreciated."

A Kings spokesperson said in an email: "We all have an affinity for Justin Williams and love the storm surge. We needed to pick a team to root for."

THE WAY IT IS For Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour, one of the nice things about having a team this young and playoff-inexperienced is most of the players don't realize that they're not supposed to be this tired at this point. They just assume this is how it is in the playoffs.

"We're young – well, some of us are – in shape and hungry," Williams said. "It's a good combination."

That's not the reality. Six games and four flights in 11 days with 35 minutes of extra hockey in back-to-back games is about as harsh as the grind gets, especially with three key forwards out of the lineup.

"Having such an emotional week, especially with getting that Game 7 win and coming over here, there's not much to think about the next game," Nino Niederreiter said. "You just got to play your game, and that's what we did, and that helps us keep our minds fresh and our legs fresh."

And if that weren't enough, the Hurricanes are going from a double-overtime game to an overtime game to a 3 p.m. start on Sunday, taking another four hours of rest out of the equation.

The Hurricanes took the day off again Saturday, with just the injured players and healthy scratches going to the arena. They have hunkered down at the team hotel, conserving energy, staying quiet.



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"This time of year, it's more mental fatigue for me, than physical," Brind'Amour said. "Obviously, you get nicked up and banged up. But there's less travel and we have days off between games. Physically, it's not as demanding as the mental grind. It's as important to rest the mind as the body."

DAY-TO-DAY-TO-DAY Brind'Amour said after Game 1 that Andrei Svechnikov had cleared the concussion protocol but needs a full team practice before he can return. The earliest that could happen is Tuesday in Raleigh ahead of Wednesday's Game 3

Jordan Martinook remains a game-time decision for Game 2 after sitting out Game 1. Micheal Ferland continues to work toward a return.

"It's day-to-day with all these guys," Brind'Amour said.

News Observer LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143221 Carolina Hurricanes

Staal scoring big goals for Canes. Brind'Amour says: 'Look out'

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

APRIL 27, 2019 03:18 PM

Jordan Staal is the strong, silent, dependable type of player that coaches appreciate and teammates admire.

The Carolina Hurricanes center isn't into fanfare or hyped-up acclaim. He's strictly low maintenance. Put him in the lineup every game, line him other against the other team's best forwards, give him his minutes and watch the 6-foot-4, 220-pounder work.

But Canes captain Justin Williams says he has noticed a difference in Staal this season, and especially in the Stanley Cup playoffs. And, no, it's not just that Staal is scoring big goals -- the biggest Friday in overtime to beat the New York Islanders 1-0 in Game 1 of their second-round Eastern Conference series at Barclays Center.

"You can make a case for Jordan for MVP of this team," Williams said. "He just does everything for us and you just don't doubt that he's going to get it done, ever. He's such an integral part of this team, it's silly.

"He's getting a little bit more vocal, which I'm loving to see but he is more of a quiet leader. I think we've got a pretty good leadership group and he's a huge part of that."

Staal won't be the kind to stand up to give impassioned locker-room speeches during games. That's not his style. Even when he was being chirped by forward Jordan Martinook on a Canes vlog after Friday's game -- "We've got the OT hero right beside me," Martinook said -- Staal just reacted with a smile and a thumbs-up, letting Martinook do all the talking.

So why a little more vocal?

"I don't know," Staal said. "I don't know that there's any more reason for it. I think the guys are a little more confident with seeing me as a leader and believing what I'm saying and how to play.

"I guess I've been in the playoffs before. I know how it works. It's a grind. It's investing every game, all that stuff."

Few players invest more than Staal. He always has the physical presence. When he wants to separate an opposing player from the puck, there's usually a separation. If there's a big faceoff, especially in the defensive zone, he usually takes it and often wins it.

Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour has said that Staal is an underrated player offensively, that he's the kind who seems to get few breaks around the net. The effort is there, just not the reward, as coaches like to say.

But with the Canes trailing the Washington Capitals 3-2 in the third period Wednesday, in Game 7 of their series, Staal delivered. Unleashing a shot from the right circle, he beat goalie Braden Holtby to the far side with a perfectly placed top-shelf shot, Holtby looking back over his shoulder in dismay. The Canes won in double overtime 4-3 on Brock McGinn's goal.

Against the Islanders, Staal was in the right spot to take the right shot in overtime. After Nino Niederreiter was wide with a shot, the hard carom off the end boards came Staal's way and he quickly got off a low shot to the right of the net that beat Robin Lehner at the post for the winner.

It was Staal's fourth goal in the Canes' eight playoff games, to go with his three assists.

"We went through the game again and he was the best player on the ice," Brind'Amour said Saturday.

The Canes did not practice Saturday, again opting for more recovery time. Game 2 is Sunday at 3 p.m.

Staal, 30, is so selfless that when he missed a big chunk of the season following a concussion and then lingering concussion symptoms, he hoped he wouldn't cause any chemistry problems when rejoining the lineup. The Canes, resurgent after New Year's Eve, had played well without him.

"We didn't know when he was coming back and to be honest he didn't even know if he was coming back," Brind'Amour said. "So that's a pretty low point for him.

"He cares so much about our group that he actually felt he was going to disrupt what we were doing. All I kept telling him was, 'Man, imagine if you do come back, what team we can be.'"

It has been a tough go for Staal at times the past seven years. Traded to Carolina by the Pittsburgh Penguins in June 2012, he hoped to join his brother, Eric, in leading the Canes to postseason success. That didn't happen and Eric, long a franchise player and the team captain, was traded. For Jordan, that was a downer.

Last season, Jordan and his wife, Heather, had an infant daughter die because of a terminal birth defect. Jordan kept the situation private, even from teammates, until Hannah's death in February.

The concussion this season wasn't the first of his career. Still, another setback, another challenge.

But the Canes are back in the playoffs for the first time since 2009, coincidentally the year Jordan Staal won the Stanley Cup with the Pens, beating Carolina in the Eastern Conference finals. He feels good, about himself, about his team.

"He's a real caring individual and he's got confidence now," Brind'Amour said. "And that's look out, right?"

News Observer LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143222 Carolina Hurricanes



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Five points for the Hurricanes going into Game 2

BY LUKE DECOCK

APRIL 27, 2019 02:23 PM

1. **CLEAN IT UP** Lost in the shuffle of the overtime drama and Petr Mrazek's performance Friday night was how loose the Hurricanes played in the first two periods, turning the puck over and doing some uncharacteristically sloppy things. Mental fatigue surely played a role, but the Islanders (like the Hurricanes) are built to feast on such mistakes. The Hurricanes need to tighten things up Sunday.

2. **NO-NO NINO** Since the midpoint of the Washington series, only one of the Hurricanes' top forwards has yet to have an impact in the playoffs. Nino Niederreiter is still looking for his first goal and has just two points, although he had two great chances Friday – passing up a shot on two-on-one to try to hit the trailer instead, then missing the net on the overtime rush that led to Jordan Staal's overtime goal. Niederreiter has gotten better as the playoffs have worn on, but he has yet to get back to the clinical finishing he displayed upon his arrival in January. Was Friday a sign that he's close to breaking through?

3. **POWER UP** At some point, Rod Brind'Amour is going to have to shake things up on the power play because the Hurricanes' performance has been abysmal. Friday night was another round of perimeter shooting without screens in front, without any playmaking down low, without any attempt to create a two-on-one anywhere on the ice. The Hurricanes are 3-for-29 in the playoffs. They're winning in spite of their power play. That's a dangerous game to play.

4. **PETR PRINCIPLE** Mrazek's numbers weren't great in the first round, which had a little to do with him and a lot to do with how the games were played and the quality of the opposition. Friday was a goaltending masterpiece, and the kind of scramble game that played to his strengths. (The shutout dropped his goals-against average from 2.53 to 2.22 and his save percentage jumped from a subpar .899 to an palatable .914.) Mrazek is a battler, and the Hurricanes needed that Friday more than they would have Curtis McElhinney's calm resolve. McElhinney may yet get a chance to play – and nearly did in Game 5 in Washington – but Mrazek is at the top of his game right now.

5. **CHARLOTTE'S GOT A LOT** The Hurricanes got good minutes from AHL call-ups Patrick Brown and Clark Bishop on Friday with Andrei Svechnikov and Jordan Martinook still out. Midseason call-ups Greg McKegg and Saku Maenalanen also played well, with McKegg having the Hurricanes' best chance to score in regulation. The Checkers, meanwhile, managed to clinch their first-round playoff series Friday night without Brown and Bishop. It has been a good month for hockey in the Carolinas.

Carolina Hurricanes defenseman Justin Faulk, after a strong regular season, is enjoying his first taste of the Stanley Cup playoffs

News Observer LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143249 New York Islanders

Islanders Give Up Only One Goal to Hurricanes: The Winning One in Overtime

By Ben Shpigel

April 27, 2019

The only shot that eluded Robin Lehner on Friday night, the shot that wrested home-ice advantage from his Islanders, struck his left skate as he slid across the crease and banked into the net.

A bad bounce, Lehner would later call it — though he used spicier language than that — and as the Carolina Hurricanes celebrated their 1-0 overtime victory by the boards, he lurched forward so that his head met the ice, and he stayed there for a good three seconds, legs splayed behind him, unwilling to accept that he, and his team, had lost, like that.

For the fourth consecutive game of these playoffs, Lehner allowed one goal. This was the first he did not win.

"Small margins here in the playoffs," Lehner said.

The Islanders encountered small margins all season. They gave up the fewest goals in the N.H.L. while ranking among the bottom third in scoring. They know close games. They like them. They should also prepare for more of them.

After throttling the Pittsburgh Penguins in the first round, they are likely to have a decidedly more difficult time defeating the Hurricanes, who, in personnel and in spirit, resemble the Islanders.

Though it's dangerous to extract cosmic significance from an opener, it would not be surprising if Game 1 of this Eastern Conference semifinal served as a template for the remainder of the series: low-scoring and bruising, studded with excellent goaltending and bursts of opportunism.

"They're prepared, they're smart, they don't give you anything for free," Hurricanes captain Justin Williams said of the Islanders. "And that's fine. Because neither do we."

Williams offered that prescient assessment about seven hours before face-off — or, roughly 36 hours after the Hurricanes ousted the reigning champion Washington Capitals in double overtime. They did not so much charge into Barclays Center as pant their way in, exhausted after expending so much mental and physical energy across a seven-game series in which Carolina ended up playing nearly twice as many minutes as the Islanders did in their sweep of Pittsburgh.

Carolina's persistence minimized its weariness. As delighted as the Hurricanes were with the result, they were just as glad that Jordan Staal scored when he did, at 4 minutes 4 seconds into overtime. Had the game lasted into a second or third overtime, Coach Rod Brind'Amour said, Carolina's vitality for Game 2 on Sunday, if not beyond, could have been compromised.

"The thing I give our group the biggest credit for tonight is somehow figuring that out, to match the intensity right away," Brind'Amour said.

The Islanders had thought about hockey, practiced hockey, discussed hockey and watched hockey, but they had not actually played hockey in 10 days, since dispatching the Penguins on April 16. Coach Barry Trotz was more curious than concerned about how his team would react after the long layoff, and though he hinted at potential line changes for Sunday, over all, he said, he was pleased.

The Islanders had a goal by Mathew Barzal negated by goaltender interference. They thought they scored in the third period — the horn



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blared, the crowd roared — but Ryan Pulock's one-timer instead lodged in the outside netting. They felt they should have neutralized Carolina goalie Petr Mrazek earlier — Josh Bailey's breakaway, Anders Lee's backhand from in tight — but they didn't, couldn't.

Like a trick candle at a child's birthday party, the Hurricanes cannot be extinguished. After twice staving off elimination, they won despite not leading during regulation for the second time in three days.

Punctuated by Carolina's contribution, the opening round unspooled into chaos, detonated by the exits of all four division champions. The outcomes, in totality, ran so counter to the regular-season standings that it seemed as if it had been decreed that the series would be decided not by the teams themselves but rather by the potency of their mascots: an avalanche should smother flames, so happy trails, Calgary, and welcome to the next round, Colorado.

In advancing, the Islanders and Hurricanes knocked out two of the league's most recognizable and accomplished players, Alex Ovechkin and Sidney Crosby, who have hoisted the last three Stanley Cups. In a field that now lacks a pair of perennial contenders, Pittsburgh and Washington, and the Presidents' Trophy winner for the most points in the regular season, the Tampa Bay Lightning, the Islanders and Carolina sense an opportunity.

"We're not in a position to believe we have a better chance against one team than we do another," winger Cal Clutterbuck said. "We really don't feel like we're entitled to anything. We don't feel like we're owed anything. We really feel that what we've accomplished is because of the entire group doing it a certain way."

The Islanders' renaissance is steeped in their structure, a commitment and discipline instilled by Trotz, who nevertheless lamented how they got "a little cute" at times, looking to make an extra pass instead of shooting. That mistake buried them in overtime, when Clutterbuck, with a clear shooting lane, passed — to no one.

The Hurricanes charged up the ice on a two-on-one that Lehner thwarted, but the puck stayed in the Islanders' zone. It soon found Nino Niederreiter in the slot, who ripped a shot that could have been a pass, off the end boards, at an acute angle, to the waiting stick of Staal.

Lehner had saved 160 of the 167 shots he had faced this postseason, but not this one, hesitating ever so slightly going from post to post. In a matchup of two ostensibly even teams, both deep and ruthless, Lehner offers a clear advantage in net every game. At least, he should. The margins, as he knew before but even more now, are smaller in the playoffs.

New York Times LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143250 New York Islanders

Bad bounce costs Islanders in Brooklyn as Hurricanes grab Game 1 in OT

By EDWARD GLAZAREV

APR 27, 2019 | 12:19 AM

It was only Game 1 but Friday's Eastern Conference semifinal opener between the Islanders and Hurricanes already had the feel of a Game 7.

And the way these two gritty teams battled for every inch of ice, rattled the boards with every check and struggled to get a puck past either goalie, they may find themselves in that position in 10 days.

However, the Islanders will be playing from behind for the first time in these playoffs. Carolina's Jordan Staal shoveled a shot past Robin Lehner to break a scoreless tie 4:04 into overtime for a 1-0 victory to deflate the sea of orange-and-blue clad fans at a soldout Barclays Center.

The Canes, who needed two overtimes Wednesday to eliminate the Capitals in Game 7 of the first round, got a bit of good fortune on the winning goal. Staal, alone at the right side of the net, rattled the shot off Lehner's skate after Nino Niederreiter's blast banked off the boards to the wide-open center.

"It's not the result we wanted," Lehner said. "We knew they'd throw a lot of weird stuff at us and they win on a (crap) bounce."

The Islanders put themselves in jeopardy after Cal Clutterbuck turned the puck over in his own zone to give Carolina a 2-on-1 and the Isles couldn't scramble back in time. It was the team's 25th giveaway of the game, to just 10 for the disciplined Canes.

"We got a little cute and it came back the other way," Isles coach Barry Trotz said. "We had some people tired and on the wrong side. They throw the puck off the end wall and get a bounce and they put it right back in there."

Lehner had made 31 saves up to the point, keeping the Canes at bay after the Islanders -- playing for the first time in 10 days -- got off to a flat start. The Isles didn't get their first shot on goal until nearly six minutes into the opening period.

[More Sports] Islanders need to shake off the rust quickly when Stanley Cup chase resumes against the Hurricanes at Barclays Center »

Canes goalie Petr Mrazek stopped 31 shots, many in spectacular fashion, for his second shutout of this postseason and fifth of his career. In the first period, Mrazek foiled Josh Bailey on a breakaway and stoned Anders Lee all alone in the crease, then made a nice glove save on Clutterbuck's shorthanded effort midway through the third.

"If we had converted on some of our chances early it may have been a different game," said Trotz, who was named as one of the finalists for coach of the year before the game.

The Canes showed few ill-effects from their grueling first-round series, bottling up Isles playmaker Mathew Barzal, who finished with just two shots. He did have a goal waived off in the second period after Anders Lee was called for goalie interference.

[More Sports] Islanders finish off Penguins 3-1 in stunning playoff sweep »

"I felt Lee got pushed in there but those are hard to call," said Trotz, who didn't ask for a review. "We looked at it as a staff and decided we wouldn't go there."

The Islanders' power play also let them down, going 0-for-4 with seven shots on goal.

"It's game 1. They didn't win the series," said Trotz, as he looked ahead to Sunday's rematch. "We lost a game and have to respond right back."



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New York Daily News LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143251 New York Islanders

Robin Lehner confident he can reverse his karma vs. Hurricanes

By Brett Cyrgalis April 28, 2019 | 3:20am

The 0-0 tie after regulation was one indication, as were the smattering of big saves that each goalie had to make to get to that point. But the lesson from the Islanders' 1-0 overtime loss to the Hurricanes in Game 1 of their second-round playoff series on Friday night at Barclays Center was that this is not just going to be a tight series, but an unbelievably tight series.

As the series moves to Game 2 on Atlantic Avenue on Sunday afternoon, that is where goalie Robin Lehner comes in.

Lehner was a huge part in the Islanders' goals-against revival this season, just as he was a huge part in the first-round sweep of the Penguins, outplaying his counterpart Matt Murray. Yet just like it is up and down the lineup this series, the Islanders are matched in nets by a very similar player.

Petr Mrazek has gotten hot at the right time for the Hurricanes and he shined early on in Game 1 to keep his team afloat less than two days after a grueling double-overtime win in Game 7 of Carolina's first-round series against the Capitals.

"It was a 0-0 game, so we knew one goal was going to win the game," Lehner said after the team's short and upbeat practice in Brooklyn on Saturday afternoon. "I think Mrazek made a lot of good saves, I think I made some good saves. Both teams are good at creating from nothing."

When those chances do arise, it's going to be on the goaltenders to make timely saves. Those are the types of moments this season when Lehner has been terrific, the big-time saves that earned him a spot as a finalist for the Vezina Trophy while his own personal and professional revival has made him the more-than-likely winner of the Masterton Trophy. It's also what earned him the role as the postseason starter from first-year head coach Barry Trotz.

"Robin is the biggest goaltender I've had in terms of pure mass," Trotz said of the 6-foot-4, 240-pound Swede. "He's just a big man. He's built like a linebacker. But he works well on his game."

"What I like about him is he's got a really good focus. He's had to do that because of his challenges off the ice. He's had a really good focus this year, all year, in terms of how he plays and how he handles things. That's undeniable."

It was clear Lehner would be the starter entering the playoffs, but when the second-round opponent became the Hurricanes, it was hard to look away from the past. Lehner did not start a game against the Hurricanes all season, and his lifetime record against them entering the series was 0-4-0 with a 4.25 goals-against average and an .885 save percentage.

Meanwhile, Thomas Greiss, who shared the Jennings Trophy with Lehner and who got 39 starts to Lehner's 43, played all four games against Carolina during the regular season. Greiss went 3-1-0 in those contests — the most recent on Jan. 8 — with a 1.76 goals-against average and a .949 save percentage.

Nevertheless, numbers can be misleading. The Hurricanes didn't hit their stride until the second half of the season, and Lehner's previous statistics against Carolina while he was with the Senators and Sabres mean very little at this juncture with a very different team in front of him.

"I know that Carolina I have struggled with. But if you look through players' careers, it's an easy pattern to find for [the media] without really understanding situations," Lehner said. "They're a new team over there. I don't think it has any significance."

What does have significance is that in extremely low-scoring and tight games, just one more save can be the difference between moving on to the conference final and going home for the summer.

"As you mature as a goalie in this league and get older [and] you get some more experience in this league, you start realizing it's not much what they do, it's more about what you do," Lehner said. "It's the same color of the puck. Things don't change. I have to save the puck."

New York Post LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143252 New York Islanders

Islanders know not to panic in 0-1 playoff hole to Hurricanes

By Brett Cyrgalis April 28, 2019 | 1:09am

There were a handful of "must-win" clichés thrown around the Islanders locker room Saturday afternoon, looking ahead to Game 2 of their second-round series against the Hurricanes the following day at Barclays Center. But losing a 1-0 overtime contest in Game 1 on Friday night has hardly created any panic.

"From experience, I do remember the team I was part of last year that lost the first two games," coach Barry Trotz said, referring to his Capitals team from a year ago that lost their first two games of the postseason before going on to win the Stanley Cup. "If that were the case, then it'd be the best-of-two. That's not the case. It's a race to four."

Most players described the mood as "fine" and "happy." It was hard to tell this was anything different than a regular season practice, quick and upbeat. But the Islanders know going to Carolina down 2-0 in the best-of-seven series might not be the most ideal situation, and they need to get over their 10-day break following the first round and the change in home venues from the Coliseum to Brooklyn.

"Carolina, they're good man," Mat Barzal said. "Obviously they beat Washington, gave them a lot of problems. [Friday] night, they gave us some problems too. We just have to make a few adjustments and get our intensity up a little bit."

"Shaking off some rust [Friday] night, timing and whatnot. Getting back used to this rink, haven't played here in a while. Just have to come in [Sunday] prepared, playing our game. It's a big game for us, we have to win."

Forward Leo Komarov and defenseman Scott Mayfield missed practice due to "maintenance." Trotz said he expects both to be ready to play on Sunday.

Winger Jordan Eberle started this postseason red-hot, scoring a goal in each game of the four-game sweep of the Penguins in the first



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round. That run ended in Game 1 when the Islanders were shut out, but he wasn't too concerned the long break affected his personal momentum.

"I felt good [Friday] night, still created a little bit, had a couple chances," Eberle said. "I think this series is going to be so much different as far as Pittsburgh [when] we scored quite a few goals. This series is going to be a lot tighter. Everyone knows that. They play defensive, we play defensive. That's how the games are going to go. 0-0, into overtime. That just has to be how the series is one and lost."

New York Post LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143253 New York Islanders

Barry Trotz named a finalist for this prestigious NHL award

By Brett Cyrgalis April 27, 2019 | 4:58am

Barry Trotz doesn't like to talk about himself, so everyone else did the talking for him.

The Islanders coach was announced Friday as one of three finalists for the Jack Adams Award as the league's best coach, along with the Lightning's Jon Cooper and the Blues' Craig Berube, as voted on by the National Hockey League Broadcasters Association at the end of the regular season.

In his first year behind the Islanders' bench following his Stanley Cup victory with the Capitals just a year ago, Trotz has joined with first-year team president Lou Lamoriello to lead a massive organizational turnaround.

The club went from last in the league in goals-against to first, the only team to do that since the original Senators from 100 years ago. They finished with 103 points, the most for the club since 1984, and their fifth-overall finish in the league earned them home-ice advantage in a playoff series for the first time since 1988.

They also happened to win that series, sweeping the Penguins, the franchise's second postseason-series victory since 1993.

Yet before he had the Islanders preparing for their second-round matchup with the Hurricanes, eventually a difficult 1-0 overtime loss in Game 1 on Friday night at Barclays Center, the 56-year-old Trotz was asked about his possible nomination — not yet announced.

The winner of the award in 2015-16 with the Capitals, Trotz balked at the chance to pump his own tires.

"No," he said when it was brought up. "No, no. You're right, I don't like to talk about myself."

Winger Anthony Beauvillier, 21, didn't hesitate to laud his coach.

"He's done an unbelievable job this year, teaching us how to win," Beauvillier said. "His game plan, just the way he's handling situations. He's got a lot of experience, obviously a Stanley Cup winner last year, it's just been big for us. Every little moment, his message has been clear, and I think everyone is listening."

The Islanders' struggling power play went 0-for-4 over 7:43 of man-advantage time Friday, dropping to 2-for-17 this postseason, including 0-for-9 on home ice.

Islanders goalie Robin Lehner didn't play the Hurricanes in any of the four regular-season games and Thomas Greiss excelled while the Islanders went 3-1-0.

In Lehner's career, he has never beaten the Hurricanes, previously 0-4-0 with a 4.25 goals-against average and a .885 save percentage.

It wasn't being totally ruled out that defenseman Johnny Boychuk could return late in this series as he recovers from his lower-body injury suffered blocking a shot in Game 4 against the Penguins on April 16. The projected timeline was three-to-four weeks, and three weeks would be May 7, which is a possible Game 6 in Raleigh.

"I would say probably not, unless it goes the distance maybe," Trotz said of his availability. "But he's making great progress, and hopefully he'll be back on the ice shortly."

New York Post LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143254 New York Islanders

Islanders need to raise their level or the hole only will get deeper

By Larry Brooks April 27, 2019 | 4:24am

The call, which not only wiped out the one and only puck the Islanders were able to put past Petr Mrazek in Friday's second-round opener at Barclays Center, but also sent Anders Lee to the penalty box for goaltender interference at 17:07 of the second period, was a debatable one. And so Barry Trotz and his staff debated whether to challenge it.

"It was tough, you can't challenge the penalty, and at first it looked like [Lee] was shoved into the goalie and then maybe not," the Islanders coach said. "At that point in the game, 0-0, I didn't want to lose the timeout in case something else were to come up later for a challenge, so we didn't."

So Mat Barzal, who popped in the puck from just outside the crease, did not score. He was not alone. Indeed, when the night ended on a put-back of a well-placed carom off the back wall by the Hurricanes' Jordan Staal at 4:04 of overtime, it was 1-0 on the scoreboard and in the series for the Rock Candy Canes.

There were spasms of chances in this game that hardly served as advertisement for what is largely a no-name matchup. There was little in the way of sustained offense from either team, one back on the ice a bit too quickly after a seven-game first-round that ended on Wednesday and the other back on the ice with a bit too much rest following its opening sweep that concluded April 16.

If this was an internal battle of rust versus rest fought by the Islanders, well, they lost. Yes, they hung with Carolina, and no, they didn't get blown out, but boy, this was one that could have been played in December without much notice. Pace came and went. Golden chances were few and far between. Creativity was at a low ebb.

"They play tight, we play tight," said Jordan Eberle, the magic dust that coated his stick blade against Pittsburgh apparently having evaporated during the break. "There's not a lot of room out there. That's the way it's probably going to be."



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Oh, please, no. Mrazek, who has a 121:47 shutout streak, made a nifty glove save on a Josh Bailey breakaway with 6:02 to go in the first period and denied Eberle from the left circle early in the second, but was hardly under siege. Robin Lehner, whose shutout streak of 111:10 ended with Staal's goal, made a handful of noteworthy stops, the most memorable coming with the left pad on a Greg McKeeg backhand breakaway midway through the second.

But this was hardly an old-time playoff goaltending duel. Perhaps it would have been if the netminders had faced a greater degree of difficulty, but no. Mrazek and Lehner were the best players on the ice, but largely by default.

The ice was bad and pucks were bouncing. The Islanders made uncharacteristic blunders with the puck, notably the one by Cal Clutterbuck while his team was on the rush immediately before his poor decision and errant play allowed Carolina to rush the other way for what became the winner.

The Islanders and Canes had never before met in the postseason, not even when the Hurricanes were Whalers in Hartford. The teams share no memories beyond the 64:04 played in Game 1 in Brooklyn. We will go out on a limb and suggest these won't last a lifetime.

No series can be lost in Game 1, unless that is, you're the Lightning and blow an early 3-0 lead. The Islanders are obviously not done. But in order to turn rust into diamonds on a Stanley Cup ring, they must be sharper, crisper and more purposeful. The Islanders weren't exactly bad, but they never truly asserted themselves. They did not elevate from Round 1 to Round 2.

"We can't get hung up on one game," Lee said. "For the most part we played the way we wanted to."

But they didn't play as well as necessary in to in order to take Game 1. They didn't play with enough authority to plant even a seed of doubt into their opponents. Hence, the Islanders face their first bit of adversity, albeit mild, in the tournament. A response is necessary Sunday afternoon in Game 2.

There is no debate about that.

New York Post LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143255 New York Islanders

Islanders' Josh Bailey moves on from failure to score on breakaway

By Colin Stephenson

Updated April 27, 2019 8:04 PM

When you lose a game 1-0, as the Islanders did Friday in overtime in the opener of their second-round playoff series against the Carolina Hurricanes at Barclays Center, it's a reality that any one moment could have changed the game and reversed the result.

One of those key moments came with about six minutes left in the first period when Josh Bailey found himself flying over the blue line on a breakaway against Carolina goalie Petr Mrazek. Bailey went to his backhand and lifted a shot that Mrazek picked out of the air with his glove.

It was an important point in the game because the Islanders, after a sluggish start, were dominating play at the time.

Had Bailey scored to give the Islanders the lead, who knows how the Hurricanes — playing 48 hours after their double-overtime Game 7 win over Washington in the first round — would have responded?

Did he realize that a goal there might have been the game-winner? "Of course," Bailey said after the Islanders' brief practice Saturday at Barclays Center. "It went through my mind after the game. You think back to those chances. But you can't beat yourself up over that stuff.

"I think as I've gotten older and more experienced in the league, it's easier to push those things aside and keep focused and use it more as 'OK, what am I going to do next time?' Not that it's going to work, but maybe it'll give you a little bit more of an edge."

Bailey, who scored in overtime in Game 1 of the first-round series against Pittsburgh, said he had so much time to think on the breakaway that he first thought of doing one thing but changed his mind and did something else.

"As soon as the turnover happened, Kuhnle [Tom Kuhnack] knew I was available. I was calling for it as well," he said. "I just wanted to set my angle and come in and make a decisive move. Your mind can go to what your comfort is on breakaways, and I think, originally, I thought about going five-hole, and then went and made a decent move, I thought, and he hung in there. He's a good goalie. I think with breakaways and shootouts and stuff, I think he's got a good track record."

The 6-1, 190-pound Mrazek faced only six shootout shots during the regular season and did not allow a goal. He was 2-0 in shootouts and is 14-6 in his career, including 10-1 in the last three seasons. In his career, he has allowed 21 goals on 85 shootout attempts (.752 save percentage).

Mrazek, who made 31 saves in earning his second shutout of these playoffs and the fifth of his career, is 5-3 with a 2.22 goals-against average and a .914 save percentage this postseason. That includes allowing six goals on 28 shots in Game 5 of the Hurricanes' first-round series against Washington.

He is 9-9 with a 2.09 GAA and .921 save percentage in the playoffs in his career. In the 2018-19 regular season, he was 23-14-3 with a 2.39 GAA and a .914 save percentage.

"He's athletic," Bailey said. "He's never really out of a play, he's so quick. He's unpredictable at times. Some goalies can be set and you've got to make sure you make a good shot. With him, it's tough to read him sometimes. I think . . . it's like the old saying, you've got to make sure you get bodies to the net and all those things, and just make things tough on him."

Newsday LOADED: LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143256 New York Islanders

Islander goalie Robin Lehner has some points to make

By Andrew Gross

Updated April 27, 2019 6:18 PM

Goalie Robin Lehner clarified — corrected, really — the basis of some of the questions shot his way after the Islanders' practice on Saturday at Barclays Center.



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He is expected to start on Sunday afternoon as the Islanders look to even their second-round series against the Hurricanes in Game 2 in Brooklyn after a 1-0 overtime loss on Friday night.

That dropped Lehner's career record against the Hurricanes to 0-5 in his first start against them as an Islander. But he said the quality of the teams he played behind in Buffalo and Ottawa must be considered.

"If you go through the record between me and teams this year compared to what I had against other teams, the other teams might not have been really good," Lehner said. "(The Hurricanes) are a new team over there so I don't think it has any significance."

He also disputed the notion that he and Thomas Greiss split time this season while sharing the Jennings Trophy for allowing the fewest goals. Lehner was 25-13-5 with a 2.13 goals-against average and a .930 save percentage and has started all five playoff games while Greiss went 23-14-2 with a 2.28 GAA and a .927 save percentage.

"It's lazy work to take out the game sheet and it's even in games," Lehner said. "But there never was splitting. With an exception of one stretch, if I was going good, I was playing and if I lost a game or something, Greiss went in and he was hot."

Back in

Defenseman Thomas Hickey logged 18:16 with one blocked shot while paired with Nick Leddy in Game 1, his first game action since April 4. He was a healthy scratch in seven of the last eight regular-season games but regained his lineup spot with Johnny Boychuk (lower body) out for three to four weeks.

"It's a long layoff for me so to get back in sync and match that intensity, it's tough," Hickey said. "I shook that stuff out. As a player, you know your body and it took a little time as I expected it would."

No worries

Defenseman Scott Mayfield and right wing Leo Komarov were given maintenance days but Trotz said both would be available for Sunday's Game 2.

"I don't have any doubts that those two will be in," Trotz said.

Newsday LOADED: LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143257 New York Islanders

Islanders might have to unleash some offense to beat Hurricanes

Updated April 27, 2019 7:37 PM

By Neil Best

The wider world — well, at least the NHL and NBC — surely would have preferred a second-round series featuring Sidney Crosby and Alex Ovechkin.

Instead, the world has the Islanders and Hurricanes, who ended the seasons of Crosby's Penguins and Ovechkin's Capitals.

Not that there is anything wrong with that. They earned it as two squads that might have limited star power but come armed with devilish defensive schemes and an underdog's mentality.

What now, though? Someone has to win this series, and after practice on Saturday the Islanders made it clear that someone likely will have to do it the way the Hurricanes did in Game 1.

"They play defensive, we play defensive," said Jordan Eberle, who saw his goal-a-game playoff run come to an end with the Hurricanes' 1-0 overtime victory.

"That's how the games will go: 0-0 with an overtime goal. That's just how the games have to be won or lost."

Perhaps, but it says here that for the Islanders to advance they must tap into an offensive reservoir amid their array of talented if not Crosby/Ovechkin-level scorers.

Winning with defense has been their hallmark under Barry Trotz, and they have allowed only one goal in each of the past four games. So a radical makeover would be folly.

But to survive this round and even more so to win the 12 more games required to earn the Stanley Cup, scoring will be required from all available sources.

This is a team whose most dynamic player, Mathew Barzal, is a playmaker more than a goal-scorer, and whose leading regular-season goal scorer, Anders Lee, finished in an 11-way tie for 48th in the NHL with 28.

The first two lines carried the load in the first round, which is normal for most teams. But the much-heralded fourth line of Matt Martin, Casey Cizikas and Cal Clutterbuck has produced no goals and no assists in five games.

They have done their job on defense well, especially against Crosby, but they also have been the Islanders' secret weapon on offense, one that would be a big help right about now.

"Just keep at it, and you would imagine that sooner or later it will go in the net," Martin said. "I'm not going to sit here and tell you it isn't frustrating, because you want pucks to go in the net."

"I think we've played pretty well over five games even though if you look at the stats line it's not so great. It's about staying the course and looking at the big picture."

That picture will remain relatively rosy if the Islanders rebound on Sunday. But six more games like Game 1 will not be good for anyone's nervous system.

(Speaking of a potential Game 7, the NHL still might seek to move it from May 8 to 9 to give the teams a day of rest rather than play back-to-back. The Liberty is to host the Chinese National Team at Barclays Center that night.)

The Islanders face big free agent decisions this offseason, with three of their top four regular-season goal scorers — Lee, Brock Nelson, Eberle — set to be free agents. Even if all three return, the Islanders figure to be in the market for snipers.

Back to the present: Can they continue to win the way they have been, or do they need more offense?

The Islanders made their position clear, no matter how many times I asked them annoying questions about it.

"We have some skill here; we can score," Eberle said. "But I think the identity of our team is the way we play defensively. We've won and lost that way."

Said Martin, "We have an identity as a team. It led us to 103 points this year. It led us to a first-round sweep. We're not changing anything now. As long as we stick to our guns, we'll be all right . . .



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We're not worried about scoring the most goals. We're worried about winning the most games."

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1143258 New York Islanders

Islanders confident they can bounce back from first loss of playoffs

By Andrew Gross

Updated April 28, 2019 2:58 AM

The Islanders have lost for the first time in these playoffs. It was going to happen.

"You're not going to go 16-0," right wing Jordan Eberle said of the amount of wins it takes to lift the Stanley Cup. "It's our first little bump, and with the character of our group, we need to respond, and I know we will."

The Islanders will face the Hurricanes in Game 2 of their second-round series on Sunday afternoon at Barclays Center after a 1-0 overtime loss in Friday night's Game 1 in Brooklyn. The Islanders had not played since completing a four-game sweep of the Penguins on April 16. The Hurricanes were coming off Wednesday night's 4-3 double-overtime win over the defending Cup champion Capitals in Game 7 in Washington.

Still, the Islanders have no desire to go to Carolina for Game 3 on Wednesday night trailing 2-0 in the series. Eberle went so far as to call Sunday a "do-or-die" game for the Islanders.

Coach Barry Trotz strongly disagreed. Last season, his Capitals lost the first two games of their first-round series to the Blue Jackets — both in overtime at home — before winning four straight. The Capitals won the first two games of their series against the Hurricanes before bowing out in Game 7.

"If that were the case, it would be the best out of two," Trotz said. "That's not the case. It's a race to four.

"I didn't think we were going to go 16-0," he added. "That's part of the playoffs. There's no team that runs that anymore. The teams are so close."

Neither team was at its best on Friday night as the Islanders tried to regain that competitive edge lost during their long playoff layoff and the Hurricanes played on short rest.

"Physically, we're fine," Trotz said. "We've got to get back to that mental state that [the Hurricanes] are in, and it takes some time. You get to that state where you're fully invested. It's not necessarily physical rust. Sometimes it's mental rust. You double-clutch on a thing. You take a look, that extra second, that you didn't take earlier. Those go away, and I'm confident we'll be better in the series."

Eberle estimated the Islanders lost 65 percent of the 50-50 battles for pucks in Game 1, adding they usually win about 65 percent of those.

Center Mathew Barzal said the Islanders need to do a better job of getting traffic in front of Hurricanes goalie Petr Mrazek. He and the Islanders' Robin Lehner each made 31 saves.

"He's a pretty athletic goalie, but you make the right shot, it's going to go in," said Barzal, who had a second-period goal waved off because Anders Lee was called for goalie interference. "He closes quickly on cross-ice passes. Maybe we've got to get a little more traffic, more pucks to the net and around the net. He's got a lot of confidence now. We've scored in the past, so we've just got to find that first one and roll from there."

"For sure, it's a test, but I think we have all the confidence in the world this group will respond the right way," center Brock Nelson added. "We had good things in the first game. We didn't get the result and there are areas we can be better at and elevate to get ourselves in a better position to win a game."

The Islanders did maintain their defensive consistency from their first-round sweep and have allowed only one goal in each of their last four games.

There were stretches in the Penguins series in which the game became a bit of a track meet, with the teams trading chances and plenty of open ice.

That's not the expectation for this series.

"It's going to be a drawn-out series," defenseman Thomas Hickey said. "You go through the first four games and win them all and life's good. But if you want the ultimate prize, you're going to lose a few along the way. That's a motivation for us to even this thing up right away."

Newsday LOADED: LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143259 New York Islanders

Barry Trotz thinks the Islanders still have room for growth despite their playoff success

Updated April 27, 2019 2:46 PM

By Andrew Gross

There will be organizational-wide benefits to this Islanders' playoff run regardless of how they fare in their second-round series against the Hurricanes.

But nothing that has happened, or will happen, changes coach Barry Trotz's earlier assessment of where the franchise is in its development toward becoming a perennial Stanley Cup contender.

In January, Trotz opined, "We have to get to the final level where we're in the playoffs year in and year out and grow to be a contender down the road. There's still lots of work. We're probably a year or two away."

Asked in a private moment by Newsday this week whether the Islanders' second-place finish in the Metropolitan Division and four-game sweep of the Penguins in the first round has accelerated where he believes the team is in its development, Trotz stuck to his original assessment.

"No, I don't think it has," Trotz said. "I think it's steady progress. The first goal was to make the playoffs this year, just to be a consistent regular-season team, where we had an identity. We had a standard of how we played. We had a structure of how we played and formed an Islanders' identity. You're going to come into our building, you



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know you're going to have to work. You're going to have to work hard to score."

Trotz, in his first season behind the Islanders' bench after leading the Capitals to the Cup last season, transformed his new team from one that allowed an NHL-worst 293 goals last season – the most in the NHL since 2007 – to one that gave up an NHL-low 196 this season.

He said his first job was to identify the Islanders' leadership core.

"When you come in and try to do a change of culture, or create an identity, you're not coaching all 23 guys," Trotz said. "You figure out who the core is and the guys who have influence and the guys that you know are going to be long-term solutions. Those are the guys that you coach. Because, if you coach them correctly, they actually end up coaching the rest because the rest follow.

"When I was young," Trotz added, "I tried to coach all 23 and that's impossible. You learn you only have to coach six or seven really well. If you coach them really well, everything else falls into place."

But there's a transitional component to any NHL team in the salary-cap era.

Captain Anders Lee is an impending unrestricted free agent, though Trotz's words and actions in naming him captain by the end of training camp indicate the Islanders badly want to re-sign him.

Vezina Trophy finalist Robin Lehner is also an impending UFA, as is top-line right wing Jordan Eberle, second-line center Brock Nelson and third-line center Valteri Filppula.

All fall under Trotz's umbrella of team leaders.

So, as much as the Islanders have exceeded outside expectations this season, there are no guarantees for next season, only the knowledge that this season has set a strong foundation for the organization.

"It will be important to every individual that is part of this group, be it players, coaches, trainers, managers. Everybody. Wives, girlfriends. All that," Trotz said. "Because experience, good, bad or indifferent, prepares you for success and if you can avoid some of those landmines or some of those mistakes of the way you were thinking or how you respond, they build character. They build trust in what you believe in. They build confidence and they build a reference file where you can go back to a good place."

Still, the Islanders won't sneak up on any team next season, other teams in the Metropolitan Division figure to improve and offseason changes to the Islanders are inevitable.

So, no, Trotz is not ready to declare the Islanders have accelerated their timetable for being a perennial Cup contender. But he is pleased with the progress that's been made.

From Day 1

Trotz was named a Jack Adams Award finalist on Friday, the honor that goes to the NHL's top coach, and right wing Cal Clutterbuck said the Islanders saw the benefits the new coaching staff could bring right from the start.

"It was a tough training camp," Clutterbuck said. "I think he wanted us to know what it would take to get somewhere. It's hard when you start a season to get it back if things don't go well. We saw that last year. Things were going well and then things started to not go well and I don't think we had the understanding and foundation of detail and work ethic. If it doesn't start from the first day, sometimes it can be hard to get back.

"That first practice and just the way training camp was run really set us up for mentally being able to handle what comes our way," Clutterbuck added.

Trotz worked hard to instill an "even-keel" attitude with his new team, rather than have it ride emotional highs and lows throughout the grueling season.

Clutterbuck said that paid benefits during their first-round sweep.

"It's exhausting to ride that wave, especially in the playoffs," Clutterbuck said. "Through that first series we all really saw what a benefit the even-keel mentality can be for a group. The biggest thing he's brought to this room is that calmness under pressure."

No relief

For sure, the Capitals have more widely-recognized players than the Hurricanes, starting with Alex Ovechkin. But the Hurricanes dispatched the defending Stanley Cup champions with a 4-3 double overtime win in Game 7 at Washington on Wednesday night.

And Ryan Pulock quickly dispelled the notion the Islanders might be relieved to face the Hurricanes rather than the Capitals when the Islanders defenseman was asked that prior to the second round.

"They have some pretty high-end skill and threats," Pulock said. "Maybe they don't have the names like Washington does. Either way, it's a challenge. It's a different challenge every team you play because every team has elite players."

The ex-Islanders

Eight teams remain in the NHL playoffs. Four of them have at least one former Islanders player on their roster. Here's the list:

Bruins (3) – D Zdeno Chara, G Jaroslav Halak, RW Chris Wagner

Hurricanes (2) – D Calvin de Haan, LW Nino Niederreiter

Stars (1) – LW Blake Comeau

Sharks (1) – C Micheal Haley

Newsday LOADED: LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143260 New York Islanders

What went wrong for the Islanders in Game 1, and why they won't let the bad breaks bother them

By Arthur Staple Apr 27, 2019

"Score more goals."

Anders Lee had a pretty good read on the Isles' Game 1 overtime loss Friday night. There was more in response to a rambling question about feeling OK regarding the pace of the game, the amount of chances the Islanders generated and their ability to play through 10 days of inaction.

But that was the crux of it. The Islanders had plenty of chances, put one puck in that was immediately called back and had one most fans thought was in but clearly wasn't. They had the last crack with the man advantage in the third period and didn't generate enough. They had the run of play in overtime before Cal Clutterbuck's ill-advised drop pass sent Carolina away for its first opportunity as the Islanders



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tried to change forwards. The mess that created, plus a perfect carom off the end wall and a ridiculous carom (or “shit bounce,” as Lehner put it) once Jordan Staal put it on net — off the post, off Robin Lehner’s skate and in — ended Game 1.

Easy to be a bit frustrated, but there was no resignation in the Isles’ room.

“We play like that and get the chances we did, we’re going to score some goals, there’s no question about that,” said Tom Kuhnhackl, whose wall work and speed created a couple of those Grade As in the first period. “We had a few turnovers tonight and we know they’re a team that tries to make you speed things up. But I felt like a lot of times when they came at us with speed, we got the puck and got it behind them to create some things for ourselves.”

There were breakdowns from the Islanders, so this wasn’t a command performance that was stolen from them by Petr Mrazek. Carolina is a younger, speedier version of the Isles, a team that tries to hound opponents into mistakes and capitalize on them. Lehner stopped a few odd-man rushes and got desperation help from Nick Leddy in the third and Val Filppula in the second to disrupt what looked like sure Hurricanes goals. Of course, Mrazek stopped three breakaways and got some rugby-scrum help in the second to deny the Isles’ fourth line twice in close.

Ultimately, it wasn’t a bad Game 1 after the layoff. “You don’t know what to expect that first period and I thought our first was pretty good,” Barry Trotz said. “We had some good pace to our game.”

A closer look at a few items from the opener:

— It was, shall we say, mentioned to referee Wes McCauley that Mrazek flopped a couple of times in Carolina’s Game 7 win over the Caps, looking for calls as Washington forwards swung low on the forecheck. He certainly sold it on Anders Lee’s bump that negated an Islander goal and put the Hurricanes on the power play in the second period.

Here’s the clip:

Lee’s feet are outside the blue paint and Lucas Wallmark is clearly directing Lee into the goaltender. Trotz and his coaching staff had time to consider a challenge, but the penalty call made them hesitate. If the goal had simply been waved off that likely would have brought a challenge, but the addition of the penalty made them wonder, correctly, if the situation room in Toronto would go all the way to overturning not only a disallowed goal but take a penalty off the board.

Lee got to the net with relative ease on Friday and Carolina’s only answers around the net were a couple of exaggerated falls to draw penalties. Dougie Hamilton went down easily in the third to draw a Lee penalty as Mathew Barzal circled the net on a rush. That call was far more suspect than the goalie interference one.

— Even with those dubious calls and the third-period officials huddle that produced a double minor to Clutterbuck — the correct call, with a streak of blood running down Trevor van Riemsdyk’s neck — the Islanders were strong on the penalty kill and had their looks on their own four power plays.

In fact, the Isles had at least one golden look on each of them. That should be the norm, but this power play has had difficulty setting up and executing all season long. On their first power play in the opening period, it was clear that the Isles coaches identified a few spots to attack the Carolina PK. With Devon Toews directing traffic from center point, Jordan Eberle and Josh Bailey were able to find seams either through the Canes’ PK box or over the top of it to put Carolina’s skaters in awkward spots.

Brock Nelson whiffed on a one-timer off a seam pass from Eberle in the second. Ryan Pulock’s blast was the one that fluffed the netting on the late-third period power play, but it was never in. The Hurricanes have excellent penalty-kill forwards, Sebastian Aho in particular, and they are aggressive at the top of the zone to look for turnovers and odd-man rush opportunities. The Islanders did give ground a couple times, but they also used that aggressiveness to create seams.

— On the OT winner, the clip below begins once Carolina is set up in the zone and the Isles are chasing. Clutterbuck had come on for Leo Komarov, which was how he ended up as part of a three-on-two rush with Filppula and Nick Leddy — Anthony Beauvillier was the trailer/slash safety valve with Leddy rushing the puck up the middle. That was the worst part of the turnover; Clutterbuck, a smart player who rarely forces things and was having a strong night, looked for a trailer that a) was a forward staying in safe position while a D rushed the puck and b) wasn’t looking to make a play.

So that’s how Beauvillier and Leddy, both gassed from their shift, ended up racing back and being out of position once the Canes got to work. Everything happens for Carolina on this goal because their guys are simply throwing pucks towards the net. Nino Niederreiter’s initial shot goes off the end wall and out the other side, where Toews actually does get a stick on Staal’s shot before it pinballed in.

“We were on the rush, had a fourth guy coming in, but he wasn’t fully committed to getting in,” Trotz said. “We had some people that were tired. You look at their goal (in Game 7) the other night — puck on net. Throw pucks to the net in overtime, good things are going to happen.”

Trotz was as nonplussed as his players about the loss. “They didn’t win the series,” he said, “we lost a game.”

It was bound to happen, even if the Islanders very easily could have won. Game 2 has a bit more pressure on it now, but the Islanders simply need to change the result, not the process.

The Athletic LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143285 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Maple Leafs’ Kyle Dubas faces a Patrick Marleau conundrum

Luke Fox | April 27, 2019, 8:58 AM

TORONTO — The Fountain of Youth?

Patrick Marleau’s coach swore it was just over the next hill, insisted it was tucked around that corner up there, only a little ways down the path.

Then the unwavering, kind, soft-spoken, declining, 39-year-old hockey player could take a long drink, snap a goal or four, and quiet both their critics.

“When you’re 25 and it doesn’t go as good, everyone says, ‘No big deal.’ When you start getting higher, they always say, ‘Oh, the wheels are off, you’re done,’” Babcock said amidst the future Hall of Famer’s fall-off season.

“The wheels ain’t off. He ain’t done.”



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 28, 2019

Keep that gold watch behind the glass. Save all your heartfelt good-byes for Jake Gardiner.

Marleau, who turns 40-years-old before puck drops on 2019-20, still has one more season on his contract with the Toronto Maple Leafs, and he's driven to play this thing out until the axels rust through and the treads are smoothed bare.

The most revered (internally) and most senior member of the Maple Leafs said Thursday, after his 1,848th NHL game (including playoffs) and 19th post-season run that ended in something less than champagne and diamond rings, that he has given no consideration to retirement.

Marleau fully intends to ride out the final year of his cap-crunching contract, the third season that helped Babcock and then-GM Lou Lamoriello lure him away from San Jose when the 15-time 20-goal man hit the open market in July 2017, the deal new GM Kyle Dubas must stickhandle around with delicacy.

"I haven't heard otherwise. It'd be good to be back and continue with this group," Marleau said. "The results weren't what I expected or what I've come accustomed to. That's on me, and I know I can do better.

"So, it's an opportunity to come back next year and prove that I still have it, and I feel confident in my abilities to do that."

We feel confident that should Marleau indeed return, someone else in the top nine, someone on the upswing — Kasperii Kapanen? Andreas Johnsson? William Nylander? — must go as the home-run deals of Marleau's foster sons, Auston Matthews and Mitchell Marner, kick in like thunder.

"That's tough to swallow, being a tight group," said Marleau, realizing the domino effect of his fulfilling no-movement contract he earned fair and square.

"That's going to be something to Kyle. That's his job."

And if Dubas were to approach him with a trade proposal?

"Then we'd have to cross that bridge," Marleau said. "It's tough to speculate."

The paperwork is virtually buyout-proof: Once Marleau collects his \$3-million signing bonus on July 1, he'll only be owed \$1.25 million in salary over the course of the 2019-20 schedule. So while we still believe there's an outside chance Marleau wraps his career back in San Jose, where he still maintains a home, it's ultimately the player's call.

That the Marleau conundrum is one of heart as much as money complicates matters. The battery of Toronto's young future core has, quite seriously, become like family.

"For myself, having him here, I've learned so much from him, and I love having him around on and off the ice," said Matthews, who spent Christmas playing mini sticks with Marleau's birth sons. "He's a true, true leader, and there's no question why he's had the career he's had and played as long as he has.

"He's a big part of this team. He flies. He's so fast. He still gets it done."

As part of a lighthearted question game the Leafs played this season to generate in-house video content (watch below), Marleau asked Marner if he had any advice for him.

"For the rest of your career, another 15 years you're going to play on our team," Marner said, getting a touch sentimental, "realize how

good you are, realize how you can play. Believe in yourself that you can make one-on-one decisions and make guys look stupid."

So, what immeasurable risk does Dubas face pulling his favourite players' favourite player out of the city early for the sake of smart financial business?

"It's incredible what he's doing," defenceman Morgan Rielly says. "The way that he carries himself on and off the ice is something we can all admire. To have him in this room is very important, and we're lucky to have a guy like him."

On the ice, Marleau's slide is tangible. The status quo also presents risk.

His 16:21 average ice time in the regular season ranked sixth among Leafs forwards and signalled a 38-second plummet from Year 1 of his deal. Despite the hype around overuse, Marleau was deployed even less (14:40, eighth) in the Bruins series.

By virtually every measure, year over year, Marleau took a giant step back in 2018-19: goals (27 to 16), shots (203 to 161), shooting percentage (13.3 per cent to 9.9 per cent), plus/minus (+1 to -6), and even-strength points (38 to 27).

Mapping where Marleau scored his goals is compelling. Not once did he score beyond the slot and crease area, a sharp contrast from both his own history and the league-wide pattern:

Marleau's goal map, 2018-19

Marleau's goal map, 2010-19

NHL league-wide goal map, 2018-19

Upon elimination, the errant sniper copped to a rattled confidence.

"This year, I found myself in spots I normally wouldn't go. I think it's a matter of just letting myself play and kinda getting out of my own head and go to the areas where I know I can go and score and be effective," Marleau said. "There's things I'm looking at changing and a different mind-set going into games and things like that."

The Last of the Loveable Luddites, Marleau says this is the summer he hangs up those tattered Reebok 9K Pump skates in favour of brand-new custom CCM Ribcors and finally wraps his farmhands around a one-piece stick.

It's a step towards practicality's victory over romanticism, and it just might be the next best thing to this fictitious Fountain of Youth.

"I think it will, but we'll see," Marleau said. "Still looking for that first Stanley Cup, so..."

3/5 of my favorite boys Go Leafs Go! pic.twitter.com/9Mjbs2fTTW

— Christina Marleau (@c\_marleau) March 23, 2019

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143286 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Sharks' Burns moving past defensive criticism with world-class play

Eric Francis | April 27, 2019, 7:19 PM



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 28, 2019

SAN JOSE – More than a month after Drew Doughty ripped into the defensive abilities of Brent Burns, his comments still resonate in northern California.

Doughty's suggestion Burns "gets beat three times a game" was particularly topical following the Sharks' Game 1 win over Colorado, when the 34-year-old was paired with Marc-Edouard Vlasic with an eye on shutting down Nathan MacKinnon.

Not only did the duo limit MacKinnon to one power-play assist in a 5-2 win, Burns also broke a team playoff record with the first four-point outing by a defenceman. His goal and three assists also made him the franchise's all-time leading scorer amongst defencemen, moving him ahead of Dan Boyle.

"He's a Norris Trophy candidate, so it's not an aberration – he's been great all year," said Sharks coach Peter DeBoer. "And the people that wrote about his defensive play ... I think the last three games of the Vegas series and then MacKinnon (in Game 1), he has been all-world defensively. He has been invaluable for us in doing what he does and doing what we, in our room, know he's capable of doing and playing at a really high level."

Having seen MacKinnon take over the series against Calgary, DeBoer knew it would take a special pair to stop Great Nate. He chose to pair Burns with Vlasic.

It's an assignment Vlasic has specialized in over the years, but one Burns was asked to take on because, well, he's once again a Norris Trophy finalist.

"People like to have something to say about peoples' game, but when you're a skilled player and a smart player you can play any type of situation," said fellow Norris winner, Erik Karlsson.

"He's an example of that. At the end of the day it's all about making reads and being in the right position and for that his hockey IQ is just as high as anybody else. Just because he does great things offensively and gets a lot of credit for that doesn't mean he's not equally as good defensively."

Brenden Dillon concurs.

"I think the biggest thing for Burnsie is his offensive skills are so good his defensive play gets overlooked because you see a guy who is so good, puts up so many points, is so great on the power play, has such an unbelievable shot, they forget how good his stick is, they forget he's 6-foot-5, 240 pounds. Just a big guy and when you go into the corners or in front of the net with him he's not an easy guy to out-battle for a puck."

While in a particularly feisty mood in Calgary last month, Doughty's annual war of words with Matthew Tkachuk suddenly included a run at Burns.

"All you've got to do is watch one San Jose Sharks game and you'll see Brent Burns get beat three times a game, literally, and everybody has him up for the Norris. I just don't get it," Doughty told Sportsnet.

"I would want (Mark) Giordano on my team before I'd want those points guys. Giordano has like 75 points or something and he plays good defense. From me, based on how I know he plays, I think he should be the front-runner."

Given the fact both DeBoer and Karlsson alluded to Doughty's comments unprovoked on Saturday, it's pretty clear Doughty's words stung around here.

"For guys in this room, and I think even for him too, it's kind of water under the bridge and it didn't really affect him much," said Dillon, who admitted it bothered him personally.

"It does a little bit, but at the end of the day there are so many different opinions on everybody. Doughty is a first-class player and he's one of my favourite d-men to watch. I have a lot of respect for him – look at his resume and what he's done.

"Guys get emotional and say those kind of things, but for us in the room we're very fortunate to have a guy like that on this team. I see how much he works on his defensive game every practice. Throughout the years he's a guy out there killing penalties and out there against top lines.

He can get the job done in all situations. I think he's underrated in all the things he can do."

Livestream every game of the Stanley Cup Playoffs, blackout-free. Plus stream the Blue Jays & MLB, Raptors and NBA Playoffs matchups and more.

A forward who was converted to a defenceman long after he joined Minnesota as a first-round draft pick, Burns scored 16 goals and once again finished the season leading all defencemen with 83 points. He also fired 300 shots on goal for the fourth-straight year.

Although he went through the motions following practice Saturday, Burns wasn't particularly interested in talking to the media about anything, including a simple shrug when asked of his latest Norris nomination.

Fact is, his play has done most of his talking, as he played almost 40 minutes in the Game 7 against Vegas. In Game 6 he played 42 minutes.

"The great thing about him is he's taking what they're giving him," said DeBoer.

"In the Vegas series they stood beside him so he checked the offensive side of his game and defended and did a fantastic job against (Mark) Stone's line. If they're going to give him room he's going to create offence."

He did that Friday against Colorado when he made a world-class move at the blue line to create space and take a shot that wound up being collected and fired home by Gustav Nyquist to tie the game 1-1.

Do the knocks on his defensive game drive him?

"Of course it does," said DeBoer.

"That's what people do – they pick holes in peoples' game. I get that's part of the job, but it's hard not to take that personally for sure."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143287 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Takeaways: Young Finns, penalty kill help Stars even series vs. Blues

Mark Spector | April 27, 2019, 6:34 PM



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 28, 2019

The St. Louis Blues haven't been to a Stanley Cup Final since they were part of the Original 12. Back then, they were by far the best of the six expansion franchises, but got swept in three straight finals from 1968-70.

Today, the Blues have become that franchise that gives their fans a pretty good team almost every season — yet never quite gets to the end of the road in the West. Well, that road has never been more wide open, with only a No. 7 seed (Dallas), a No. 8 seed (Colorado) and a No. 2 seed (San Jose) standing between St. Louis and a shot at its first Stanley Cup in franchise history.

They're battling the Stars in an epic Round 2 series, that sits even after two games. We watched Game 2 on Saturday, and here are our takeaways:

## Finnish Line

As Finland begins to assert its Suomi control over the hockey world, winning three of the past six World Junior tournaments and knocking off the Canadian women at the World Championships, the Stars are unveiling two of the top rookies in the 2019 NHL playoffs: defenceman Miro Heiskanen and left winger Roope Hintz.

Hintz was a dominant force in Game 2, closing the game with two goals and an assist, and three shots on goal. He came up from AHL Texas and has 9-13-22 in 58 games with the Stars this year, and at game's end Saturday he had moved past Carolina's Warren Foegele atop the playoff rookie scoring race with 4-3-7. He's 22 and plays an all-around game with a nice mix of skill and physicality.

Then there is Heiskanen, who led all rookies with 23:07 of time on ice per game during the regular season, and has only increased that lead in the post-season, where he was averaging 26:19 heading into Game 2 — nearly five more minutes than second place Erik Cernak (21:39) of Tampa.

On Saturday, Heiskanen took a step back with just 22:14 of ice time, and of course, looked even better for it, with a goal and a plus-3 rating. With the Calder Trophy vote still nearly two months away, Heiskanen's long stride and comfort with the puck had some folks wondering why he couldn't beat out any of Elias Pettersson, Jordan Binnington or Rasmus Dahlen as a Calder finalist.

## Men Advantage

We always look back at the end of a series, in search of a factor that put one team past the other. Early in Dallas-St. Louis, let's talk about the penalty kill, shall we?

The Stars are the best team in the NHL playoffs right now at 94.1 per cent, a number that is otherworldly, especially at this crucial time of year. If you kill penalties at that rate, it can literally tilt a series, and the Stars have given up one goal in 20 shorthanded opportunities.

Late in Game 2, with less than three minutes to play, the Stars killed a minor with the score 3-2 — against a Blues power play that hasn't been so bad. St. Louis is clipping along on the PP, entering the game with the third best unit in the league. The Blues went 0-for-5 in Game 2.

## Next D-man Up

Remember when it went like this: as goes Alex Pietrangelo, so do the St. Louis Blues? Well, those days are almost gone, with Colton Parayko's ascent to being the Blues.

OK, Pietrangelo is still the No. 1 horse on that St. Louis blue line. He's a guy who always seems to find a spot in the bottom half of my Norris Trophy ballot, but like Sergei Zubov — who could never

surpass Nicklas Lidstrom or Ray Bourque — we're not sure that Pietrangelo will ever win the hardware.

At 29, however, Pietrangelo is beginning to give some minutes up to young Parayko, who played the second most minutes on the St. Louis blue line this season. In Game 2, Parayko had a goal and an assist as part of a giant group of Blues defencemen where it seems like everyone is at least 6-foot-3.

The 6-foot-6 Parayko, now in his fourth NHL playoffs (fifth NHL season) has a calm about his game that wasn't there even a year ago. Here's a kid who was passed over completely in the 2011 draft, and did not get taken until the third round in 2012. Anyone could have had him, and a scout named Marshall Davidson — the brother of Columbus Blue Jackets president John — convinced St. Louis GM Doug Armstrong to take a chance on the lanky kid out of St. Albert, Alta, via the Fort McMurray Oil Barons and the University of Alaska-Fairbanks.

Can you imagine that 30 teams passed Parayko over, not in one draft, but in two-plus rounds of the next draft? Parayko is a franchise defencemen, and played like one in Game 2.

LOL!

Stars coach Jim Montgomery wanted a better start, which he got. Heck, he even thought he knew what would happen next.

"Both teams will be better than in Game 1," Montgomery boldly predicted on the off day between Games 1 and 2, "(but) even though the desperation is going to increase, there won't be a lot of scoring chances because they defend really well and we defend really well. It won't lead to end-to-end scoring chances."

Ha! The first period ended with the Stars ahead 3-1, the teams combining to score three goals in a span of 72 seconds. End-to-end action, be the very definition.

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1143288 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Marner contract talks with Maple Leafs expected to move slowly

Mike Johnston | April 28, 2019, 1:01 AM

The Toronto Maple Leafs went through a rough contract negotiation with William Nylander. A couple of months later they had a smooth one with Auston Matthews.

Kyle Dubas is hoping talks with pending restricted free agent Mitch Marner and his representatives resemble the latter.

The Maple Leafs general manager said during a media availability earlier this week that it's imperative a Marner deal gets done by July 1.

"If he really is sincere in trying to get Mitch Marner signed before July 1 he's going to have to come out with a pretty good offer right away and everything we hear is either at par or close to the Auston Matthews contract," Sportsnet's Nick Kypreos said Saturday during the Headlines segment of Hockey Night in Canada. "If that doesn't happen, then I think Mitch Marner owes it to himself to take this to July 1."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 28, 2019

Getting a deal done as early as possible would not only help the team from a salary-cap and off-season-planning perspective, but it would mean avoiding a similar situation to the one involving Nylander, who missed the start of the 2018-19 season while holding out and then struggled to get up to speed for most of the season.

Nylander signed a six-year deal worth slightly less than \$7 million per year. Matthews signed a five-year deal worth an average of \$11.634 million per year, which was a slightly higher cap hit than the \$11 million AAV John Tavares received in free agency.

Marnier set new career highs this past season with 26 goals and a team-high 94 points in 82 regular-season games. His 68 assists ranked fourth in the NHL behind Nikita Kucherov, Connor McDavid and Blake Wheeler and Marnier added four points in his team's seven-game playoff series against the Boston Bruins.

As with any complicated high-profile negotiation involving a restricted free agent, the idea of a team presenting Marnier with an offer sheet has been floated out there.

"I think what the Toronto Maple Leafs are saying by mentioning that July 1 date is that they're not going to let anyone else dictate to them about what Mitch Marnier's salary is going to be," Sportsnet's Elliotte Friedman said.

Trade rumours are never too far off in the distance either and Friedman went on to add that if a deal is not reached by July 1 "anything's in the air."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143289 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Senators permitted to interview Maple Leafs assistant D.J. Smith

Mike Johnston | April 28, 2019, 1:01 AM

Back in March it was reported that Toronto Maple Leafs assistant coach D.J. Smith could draw interest from NHL teams in the market for a new bench boss.

The Ottawa Senators are now confirmed to be one of those teams.

The Sens have permission to talk to Smith about their vacant coaching position, Sportsnet's Elliotte Friedman reported Saturday during the Headlines segment of Hockey Night in Canada.

The Senators finished the 2018-19 campaign with the worst record in the league (29-47-6) and fired head coach Guy Boucher with 18 games remaining in the regular season.

Prior to Ottawa hiring Boucher back in 2016, the club had asked the Maple Leafs for permission to speak with Smith but that request was rejected by Toronto at the time.

Smith spent three years as head coach of the OHL's Oshawa Generals where he won a championship in 2014-15 prior to joining the Maple Leafs ahead of the 2015-16 campaign.

Friedman added that he believes the other candidates the Senators have interviewed at this time include: current interim coach Marc Crawford, former head coach Jacques Martin and Troy Mann, the head coach of Ottawa's AHL affiliate in Belleville.

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1143290 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Coach's Corner: Golden Knights can't blame referees for Game 7 penalty

Mike Johnston | April 27, 2019, 11:09 PM

It'll be quite some time before hockey fans – in particular Vegas Golden Knights supporters – stop talking about how exactly the San Jose Sharks advanced to the second round of the 2019 Stanley Cup Playoffs.

That's because a blown penalty call had a direct impact on the Sharks' incredible Game 7 comeback victory earlier this week. Apparently, though, not all hockey pundits thought it was a blown call as Don Cherry defended the officials.

With Vegas up 3-0 midway through the third period, Golden Knights centre Cody Eakin was assessed a cross-checking major on a fluke play that ended with Sharks captain Joe Pavelski unconscious and bleeding.

Eakin gave Pavelski a light two-handed shove with his stick – a common occurrence during faceoffs – that caused the Sharks forward to lose his balance. Then, Paul Stastny got tangled up with Pavelski as the Vegas forward attempted to skate to the point to cover his man.

Unfortunately for Pavelski he was unable to protect himself while falling and his head hit the ice hard.

"He's laying there, he's bleeding like a stuck pig," Cherry said Saturday during the Coach's Corner segment of Hockey Night in Canada. "There is a cross check and he's going down, but it's not much of a crosscheck. ... Blood's all over the place, so you've got to think of the referee. The two of them, they're standing there, they see the blood, they carry [Pavelski] off and the whole deal. I'm sticking up for the referee. He can't call nothing. He can't call [a two-minute penalty] because the guy's bleeding so he's got to call five."

The Sharks went on to score four goals on the extended power play. Vegas tied the game 4-4 with 47 seconds remaining in the third period to send the game to overtime and Sharks forward Barclay Goodrow scored the OT winner.

Golden Knights head coach Gerrard Gallant said it was "an awful call" after the game and the vast majority of onlookers agreed.

"They said that basically he cross-checked him across the face and we all saw that didn't happen," Gallant told reporters in San Jose after the game. "Last year we're in the Stanley Cup Final and it was tough to lose. Tonight was tougher than that."

"I'm sure you've all seen it on TV, there was no intent. I feel awful Joe got hurt, he's a class player for that team, everybody loves him. There was no intent. There was no high stick that hit him in the face. ... We all saw it. It's too bad we ended up losing because of that."

Cherry said he's a huge fan of Gallant but at the end of the day, "You can't blame the referees on that one."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 28, 2019

Two days after the loss, Golden Knights owner Bill Foley told The Associated Press he received a phone call from a high-ranking NHL executive who apologized for what he described as a "bad call."

Cherry said he didn't like that Foley went public with that information.

"That is bad when you do that because it makes the referees look bad and those referees weren't bad in that game at all," Cherry said. "It wasn't their fault at all."

The two referees that game were veteran officials Dan O'Halloran and Eric Furlatt, however the pair were not assigned to any second-round series. Both Cherry and Ron MacLean disliked learning of that.

"I don't like the league sending them home," MacLean said. "That's unbelievable."

The Sharks moved on to face the Colorado Avalanche. Suffice it to say TV ratings in Nevada for that series might not break any records.

\*turns on TV\*

Channel A: Grass growing

Channel B: Paint drying

Channel C: Lowest rated movie of all time

Channel D: Colorado Avalanche at San Jose Sharks

\*turns off TV, goes to bed\*

— Vegas Golden Knights (@GoldenKnights) April 27, 2019

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143291 Websites

TSN.CA / Double OT winner a long time coming for Duchene

Frank Seravalli

BOSTON — For Matt Duchene, nearly every spring was like Groundhog Day at his cottage in Haliburton, Ont.

He had more than 700 NHL regular season games under his belt, but just eight Stanley Cup playoff contests over 10 seasons. He never even sniffed the second round before arriving in Columbus.

Most years, Duchene would tune out the playoffs on TV, avoid hockey and focus on fishing. Last year, he changed it up.

"I had a lot of years I didn't watch anything, but I watched every single playoff game last year. Every. Single. Game," Duchene said. "I wanted to get as much of a taste for it as I could without being there."

The only constant was the Stanley Cup clincher. No matter what, Duchene said, he would tune in on the night a team had a chance to hoist the Cup.

"I wanted to see the celebration," Duchene said. "I wanted to see it front to back."

Once the Final ended, Duchene would get a photo printed of the winning team's captain with Lord Stanley's chalice over his head -

and post it on the wall in the gym in his cottage. It was a conspicuous reminder of the ultimate goal, incentive for the sweat.

Fast forward to the wee hours of Sunday morning at TD Garden.

The Blue Jackets, the best power play team in the postseason, were on the man-advantage for the second time in overtime. Squander this chance and there's no telling if you'll get another one. Seth Jones made a fantastic keep at the blue line. Then Artemi Panarin's shot bounced off Tuukka Rask's pads directly to Duchene in the slot.

He didn't freeze. The moment wasn't too big for him, not after all of that dreaming.

Duchene calmly kicked the puck to his stick.

"I just tried to stay patient and see what was there," Duchene said. "Rask opened up his five-hole. That was it."

Duchene picked the perfect time to pop in his first career Stanley Cup overtime winner, evening up this Eastern Conference semifinal series at one game apiece with a 3-2 victory for Columbus in Double OT. He has seized the stage, racking up four goals for the Blue Jackets in just six playoff games this spring.

So, how did that compare to what he watched from afar for so long?

Duchene was yelling "yeahhhhhh!" so loud during the celebration that his face was as red as his Columbus Blue Jackets pants.

"This is something that I've dreamt about for a long time," Duchene said. "It's like the most stressful - in the best way possible - thing that I've ever been through. I'm an outgoing guy. I'm a talker. But there's times I can't talk."

Duchene's goal came at a pivotal moment in the series. One shot the other way, one fantastic save that Sergei Bobrovsky didn't make, and the Blue Jackets would need a shovel to dig their way out of a two-nothing hole.

"We needed to win," Brandon Dubinsky said. "It was crucial that we found a way to split the series."

Now, you could make the argument that the Blue Jackets are in the driver's seat. The Bruins have played nine games in 17 nights to open this marathon tournament. They've played 180 more minutes of hockey than Columbus, then were pushed to overtime twice - and Double OT in Game 2 for good measure to start this series.

That has to take its toll at some point.

"Are we probably a little fresher from the break? Yeah, we probably are," Duchene said. "Our mentality in overtime was to keep pushing. We're not going to sit back like a punching bag, play rope-a-dope and wait for them to run out of gas. We wanted to take it to them."

Until Panarin's shot found him in the slot, Duchene said he felt like he "had puck repellent on" because he was "chasing the puck around all night."

In a way, Game 2 has encapsulated Duchene's time in Columbus well. It hasn't always been a seamless fit since the Feb. 22 trade from Ottawa. He and the team struggled after his arrival.

"I'm still fighting it sometimes," Duchene said.

John Tortorella said Duchene has never been "a bad fit," it was just poor timing that conspired, as the team limped to a 5-7-1 run immediately after his arrival. They settled in, won the games they needed to get in, then put it behind them and wiped the slate clean once the playoffs arrived.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 28, 2019

"I think he just puts a tremendous amount of pressure on himself to be the best he can be to help this team win," Tortorella said of Duchene.

The pressure is off now.

"I think he's just having a lot of fun," Blue Jackets captain Nick Foligno said. "He's thriving on the big stage. That's what you want."

For Duchene, it's been everything he's imagined. Six wins down, he wants to have a say in what photo he's posting in his gym this summer.

"We've got a long way to go, but I love playing for this team," Duchene said. "I couldn't be happier to be a Blue Jacket. I'm really excited to be here. This is something I've chased for a long time."

TSN.CA LOADED: 04.28.2019

1143292 Websites

TSN.CA / Coyle, Johansson could make Bruins trade deadline winner

Frank Seravalli

BOSTON — When the panels broke down Deadline Day's winners and losers after TradeCentre two months ago, there was no love for the Boston Bruins.

Praise was heaped on Jarmo Kekalainen swinging for the fences in Columbus, or Mark Stone's arrival in Vegas, or the Winnipeg Jets and Nashville Predators bulking up their lineups.

The Blue Jackets are the only team still standing among that group - in no small part to the addition of Matt Duchene and the suddenly clear headspace of pending free agents Sergei Bobrovsky and Artemi Panarin.

Meanwhile, Columbus' newcomer Ryan Dzingel appears to be a healthy scratch for Game 2, and the Bruins' two most important wins of the season so far have come off the sticks of their two trade deadline acquisitions.

Marcus Johansson scored the game-winner to knock off the Maple Leafs in Game 7, then threaded the needle to find linemate Charlie Coyle for the overtime triumph on Thursday night that gave the Bruins a 1-0 series edge over Columbus.

Who would have imagined that a year ago?

Last year at this time, Harvard product Ryan Donato was a Boston darling. The Bruins traded Donato and a fifth-round pick to Minnesota for fellow Boston native Coyle five days before the trade deadline on Feb. 20.

Meanwhile, Johansson blasted now Bruins teammate Brad Marchand after he missed two months with a concussion after a blatant elbow to the head. Johansson called the hit "stupid" and said it's "sad that there are still guys out there trying to hurt other guys."

Marchand called Johansson to apologize in the first hours after the Bruins acquired him from New Jersey on Deadline Day for a second and fourth-round pick.

Suddenly, the Bruins were armed with two high-skilled players in their prime on their third line who put up 56 and 58 points in 2016-17, but had fallen on hard times either due to injury (Johansson) or opportunity (Coyle).

Neither Coyle nor Johansson made a dent in their regular season introduction, but the Bruins' new guys are brewin' up something special in the Stanley Cup playoffs.

It's been hometown boy Coyle, from Weymouth, Mass., who has been the biggest revelation. Coyle scored just two goals in his first 21 games as a Bruin, but has five in eight playoff games so far, one of the league's postseason lead.

"I just think that if you're going to be a successful team in the playoffs, there's always going to be a story about a guy who kind of rises up. Maybe a guy you deem a secondary scorer. Right now, it's him for us," Bruins coach Bruce Cassidy said. "It's been a good story."

Cassidy said the Bruins discussed internally for months the idea of acquiring a centre who could elevate in the lineup should one of David Krejci or Patrice Bergeron go down. They were ready to do that for Game 2 on Saturday night at TD Garden, since Krejci left Game 1 with injury, but it appears he will play.

Coyle, 27, has nearly as many goals (five) in these playoffs as he did in his previous 44 playoff games combined (seven). He has embraced the moment.

"Playoffs come around and it's a big man's game," Coyle said Saturday. "You want to stand up to the challenge. It's more responsibility, more opportunity. I think as a team we've done a great job responding to that challenge and I just want to do my part."

It's not easy playing at home, where the spotlight is always on.

"His buddies probably expect him to get a hat trick next game, that's the problem," Cassidy said.

The hope is that the rest of the Bruins' scorers can step up and help shoulder the load now. David Pastrnak has been unusually quiet, held without a goal for four straight games. Jake DeBrusk has just one in the playoffs. Brad Marchand does not have a point in two straight games, but had three glorious chances in Game 1.

That's where Coyle and Johansson have come in. Johansson had the primary assist on both of Coyle's goals in Game 1.

It had been a tough go for Johansson in Boston. He was briefly hospitalized on March 5, less than a week after arriving, with a lung contusion after a hard hit from Carolina's Micheal Ferland. Then he missed two games in the first round against Toronto with an illness.

His last three years have been like a player stuck in traffic. Stop. Start. It's been one setback after another. Now two months from free agency, Johansson has an incredible opportunity to reboot his career in the NHL with a strong Stanley Cup playoffs.

"I don't want to dwell too much about it, but being injured and being sick, that bothers me a little bit," Johansson admitted. "But I feel like the last few games have been pretty good and it's going in the right direction. Most of all, it's fun to be part of this group, we have a really good hockey team here so it's fun to be part of."

Johansson and Coyle serve as yet another reminder that the trade deadline can't be won in February. Their clutch contributions could well make GM Don Sweeney the ultimate winner.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • April 28, 2019

"We need it," Cassidy said. "Our guys that have scored all year haven't found that level yet. We're all assuming they will, but until they do, we need that to stay in the mix."

TSN.CA LOADED: 04.28.2019

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USA TODAY / Boston Bruins national anthem singer is also a bartender at arena

Andy Nesbitt, For The Win Published 12:00 a.m. ET April 28, 2019 | Updated 2:52 a.m. ET April 28, 2019

Todd Angilly is in his first year as the national anthem singer at Boston Bruins home games, taking over for the legendary Rene Rancourt, who retired last season after over 40 years on the job.

Angilly has been seen on TV before every playoff game belting out the national anthem (as well as Canada's in the first round when Boston played Toronto) in his traditional black suit and yellow and black striped tie. And man can he sing.

He absolutely nails it every time.

NBC shared a great story about the singer during Saturday night's Game 2 broadcast. Angilly actually tends bar in the arena before and after singing the anthem. He just takes a quick break to throw on his suit and get down to the ice.

Check his story out, it's pretty great.

Todd Angilly: Man of many talents@NHLBruins Anthem Singer ✓

Bartender ✓

Probation Officer ✓ [pic.twitter.com/NBPXQM9DOI](https://pic.twitter.com/NBPXQM9DOI)

— NHL on NBC (@NHLonNBCSports) April 28, 2019

USA TODAY LOADED: 04.28.2019

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USA TODAY / Red-hot Sharks forward Kevin Labanc scores gorgeous Game 1 goal against Avalanche

Mike Brehm, USA TODAY Published 12:27 a.m. ET April 27, 2019 | Updated 10:16 a.m. ET April 27, 2019

No Joe Pavelski. No problem.

Kevin Labanc is having a playoff breakthrough since the San Jose Sharks captain went down with an injury in Game 7 against the Vegas Golden Knights.

He recorded a goal and three assists on a controversial five-minute penalty to Vegas' Cody Eakin as the Sharks rallied from a 3-0 deficit to win 5-4 in overtime.

But he was equally impressive with a beautiful second-period goal against the Colorado Avalanche in Game 1 of the second round of the Western Conference playoffs.

Taking a pass from Brent Burns, he pushed the puck between the legs of Colorado's Mikko Rantanen while somehow skating through a narrow gap between Rantanen and San Jose's Joe Thornton.

Goodness gracious, @Str8ToTheBanc. 🙌  
#StanleyCuppic.twitter.com/Oh8xCRWSTJ

— NHL GIFs (@NHLGIFs) April 27, 2019

He then used Avalanche defenseman Samuel Girard as a screen to wrist a shot past Philipp Grubauer for the winning goal in a 5-2 victory Friday night.

Labanc, who plays on the third line, was hot down the stretch with 26 points in his final 30 games to give him a career-best 56 points.

But he had just one goal and no assists in six playoff games before his Game 7 outburst.

The Thornton line had five points in Game 1 and Burns had four.

The Sharks will need more of that type of offense as Pavelski remains day-to-day.

"We love him so much," Thornton said in an NBCSN interview about Pavelski. "We want to continue this so he can play again."

USA TODAY LOADED: 04.28.2019