



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Sousaphone player Patrick Rosa finds passion, scholarship through hockey

By Chip Alexander

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For Patrick Rosa, playing the sousaphone and playing hockey have become twin passions.

Rosa excels in the first for the Middle Creek High marching band. As for hockey, his commitment to the sport, his drive to succeed and lead with the Capital City Crew, is providing a path to a college education.

Rosa, a senior at Middle Creek, has been named one of four national recipients of the NHL/Thurgood Marshall College Fund Scholarship. His plans are to attend N.C. Central, majoring in business management, with the goal of one day starting a business of his own.

ADVERTISING

"He will be the first in our family to graduate from college," said Vernalette Rosa, Patrick's mom. "It's a blessing."

It's not what Vernalette Rosa expected when she convinced her son – and later his younger brother, Aaron – to join the Capital City Crew in its infancy in 2009. The hockey program for kids 8 to 14 is part of the NHL's "Hockey is for Everyone" initiative, and is partnered with the Wake County Boys and Girls Clubs, Raleigh Youth Hockey Association and the Carolina Hurricanes.

Patrick Rosa was hesitant to join at first. Hockey? A sousaphone player turned hockey player?

"It is a strange combination," Vernalette Rosa said.

So why try hockey?

"I think at first the boys liked the fights," she said.

But once in the Crew program, Patrick Rosa thrived.

"I loved it," he said. "The people in the program, the staff and players, it was like a big family that took us in. Everyone was supportive, on and off the ice."

John Scott, director of the Capital City Crew, said his program isn't a hockey development vehicle designed to help young players advance to travel teams or major junior teams. It's designed more to teach hockey fundamentals but also life skills, to help young players mature.

"Are they accountable, are they responsible, are they leaders, are they honest?" Scott said. "It's learning to care about others and work side by side with them. Take

something as simple as passing the puck. It teaches you to share, to not be selfish."

Scott said the kids in the program quickly began to look up to Patrick Rosa. It wasn't because he was the fastest skater or had the hardest shot, Scott said, but more about his positive, can-do attitude.

"Patrick has really been committed to the program," said Durell Petway, director of the Wake County Boys and Girls Clubs. "He stuck with it. He became a peer leader. He's the kind of person if he starts something, he sticks with it. If he signs up, he shows up."

Scott said the Capital City Crew began with 28 kids, 10 on-ice sessions and eight life-skills sessions in its first year. It is funded in part, he said, by the Hurricanes' Kids 'N Community Foundation, the NHL and USA Hockey, allowing underprivileged and disadvantaged kids to experience hockey at no cost and be a part of the life-skills workshops.

Scott said there were 60 participants this past season, with a goal of having 120 kids in the program by 2020.

Patrick Rosa, 18, has been a star pupil. He has been a player, captain, junior coach and leadership award recipient. He was selected to attend the Willie O'Ree Skills Weekend in Buffalo, N.Y., making for another life experience – his first plane flight and a chance to see Niagara Falls.

Now Rosa, who also plays tuba in Middle Creek's concert band, has been selected to receive the scholarship from the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, named for the first African-American U.S. Supreme Court justice.

"It's the culmination of everything he has accomplished," Scott said. "But this is another step. This is just the start for him, just the beginning of Patrick's story."

The NHL/Thurgood Marshall scholarship was developed under the direction of NHL commissioner Gary Bettman. Those selected must have a 2.5 grade-point average or higher as a high school senior and receive a four-year merit scholarship that helps cover the cost of tuition, fees, room and board and textbooks.

"I'm really proud of Patrick earning this scholarship," Vernalette Rosa said. "He's too young to know the sacrifices Justice Marshall made, but this means a lot to me as an African-American. I love that my son has received this honor."



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Darling eager to capitalize on chance to start for Carolina

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — So much has changed for Scott Darling in the past few weeks — a new team, a new contract and a new role as the Carolina Hurricanes' presumptive starting goalie.

There's still four long months until preseason camp begins, but he's ready to get started and take advantage of this chance.

"There's always pressure — you're in the NHL, it's your job to play well and perform," Darling said Wednesday. "Especially at goalie, you feel a little bit more pressure because you're kind of in the limelight there. I'm excited for the challenge. It's kind of what I've been hoping for my whole career, to have this opportunity, and I can't wait to get started."

It's been a blur of a spring for Darling, who spent three seasons backing up two-time Stanley Cup winner Corey Crawford in Chicago before he was [traded to Carolina on April 28](#) in exchange for a draft pick.

The deal represented a bit of a gamble on Carolina's part because Darling was still eligible for unrestricted free agency on July 1. Both sides avoided that last week when he and the team [agreed to terms on a four-year contract](#) worth \$16.6 million.

"It's a two-way street — they committed to me and they said they wanted me, and ... somebody wants you to play for them, it means a lot to me because I've always kind of been chasing this position," Darling said. "You could have waited,

you could have played hardball but everything came into place perfectly, and I'm thrilled to be here."

The acquisition of Darling, 28, could make for some crowded nets in Carolina, with both Cam Ward (\$3.1 million) and Eddie Lack (\$3 million) also under contract for next season.

And while Darling made the point that "nothing's given to you in this league," it's pretty clear that the Hurricanes didn't make him their most expensive goalie — at an average of \$4.15 million per year — to be a backup.

They need him to help solidify a sometimes shaky situation in goal that contributed to the team missing the playoffs for an eighth consecutive season — the longest active postseason drought in the NHL.

Carolina ranked 18th in the league, allowing 2.8 goals per game, while facing the fifth-fewest shots on goal.

Darling had career bests of 18 wins and 27 starts in his third year backing up Crawford, and had a 2.38 goals-against average in 32 games while helping the Blackhawks post the best record in the Western Conference. His .924 save percentage tied for fourth among goalies with more than 25 starts.

"I feel that I've grown a lot the last three years, and I've had a couple of opportunities with Corey being sick or going down that they've kind of given me the reins and I've shown that I can carry a heavy workload and be consistent," Darling said. "I'm excited for the chance to do it again."



Ducks rally to win Game 2 against Predators, tie series

[Overcome poor start by scoring three goals in second period](#)

by Dan Arritt / NHL.com Correspondent

1:24 AM

ANAHEIM -- The Anaheim Ducks continued their comeback ways by scoring three goals in the second period of a 5-3 win against the Nashville Predators in Game 2 of the Western Conference Final at Honda Center on Sunday.

The best-of-7 series is tied 1-1 with Game 3 at Nashville on Tuesday.

"Everybody says we go about it the hard way," said Ducks goaltender [John Gibson](#), who made 26 saves on 27 shots after allowing two goals on the first six he faced. "As long as we get the job done, that's all we're worried about."

Nashville led 2-0 8:32 into the game on goals by [Ryan Johansen](#) and [James Neal](#). Anaheim defenseman [Sami](#)



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[Vatanen](#) scored on the power play to make it 2-1 with one minute left in the first period.

Vatanen's first goal of the 2017 Stanley Cup Playoffs ended an 0-for-21 stretch with the power play for the Ducks.

[Jakob Silfverberg](#), Ondrej Kase and [Nick Ritchie](#) scored in the second period for Anaheim, and [Ryan Getzlaf](#) had three assists.

Ritchie put the Ducks ahead 4-3 at 17:07 of the second period when his wrist shot from the left faceoff circle went in off Predators goalie [Pekka Rinne](#)'s mask. It was his second winning goal in the past three games.

"I got lucky and got the puck up there," Ritchie said.

[Antoine Vermette](#) scored into an empty net to make it 5-3 with 46 seconds remaining.

Four of Anaheim's nine wins in the postseason have come after they trailed by two or more goals.

Johansen scored on a breakaway at 4:18 of the first period to make it 1-0, and Neal put the Predators ahead 2-0 with a power-play goal at 8:32. It was the first time in the playoffs that Nashville scored twice in the first.

Anaheim went on its first power play after defenseman [Matt Irwin](#) was called for tripping Kase in front of the Nashville net with 1:32 left in the first. Vatanen brought the puck into the Predators zone with room and beat Rinne high to the stick side from the right circle.

"We haven't scored many goals on the power play so far, but let's hope the ketchup bottle is open now and we can keep scoring," Vatanen said.

Nashville coach Peter Laviolette said Vatanen's goal was the key moment in the game.

"Changed the game, changed the momentum," he said.

Silfverberg tied it 2-2 39 seconds into the second period. It was his ninth goal of the playoffs, tied with [Jake Guentzel](#) of the Pittsburgh Penguins for the NHL lead.

[Filip Forsberg](#) put Nashville ahead 3-2 at 7:59, but Kase scored his first NHL playoff goal at 10:41 to tie it 3-3.

Rinne allowed four goals on 26 shots. He had not allowed more than three goals in 11 playoff games.

Goal of the game

Getzlaf one-touched a pass from defenseman [Brandon Montour](#) in the neutral zone into the left circle in the Predators zone for Ritchie, who skated past defenseman [Ryan Ellis](#) and beat Rinne with a high shot.

Save of the game

With the Ducks leading 4-3, Gibson got in front of Forsberg's redirection of defenseman [Mattias Ekholm](#)'s shot from the left point at 6:08 of the third period.

Highlight of the game

The Ducks survived a 10-second span in the third period with Gibson sprawled in the crease. Gibson made a save on a [Mike Fisher](#) redirection at 14:11 and another on [Austin Watson](#) at 14:18. In between, [Ryan Kesler](#) and [Josh Manson](#) each blocked a shot before Gibson covered the puck at 14:19.

Unsung performance of the game

Kesler, who had the secondary assist on Vatanen's goal, provided the screen that caused Rinne to lose sight of the puck on Silfverberg's goal and went 14-for-22 (64 percent) on faceoffs.

They said it

"Tonight's response after getting down 2-0 is a character-builder for our group. We believe we can go into any building and play with the teams we're up against and give ourselves a chance for success." -- *Ducks coach Randy Carlyle*

"I thought from a defensive standpoint we could have been a little bit tighter, a little bit quicker to what we were doing, a little bit more mindful of what we were doing." -- *Predators coach Peter Laviolette*

Need to know

With one more win after trailing by two or more goals, the Ducks would tie the 1987 Philadelphia Flyers for most in a single postseason in NHL history. Their four are tied for second-most with the 1973 and 1979 Montreal Canadiens, the 1986 St. Louis Blues, and the 2014 Los Angeles Kings. ... Before Vatanen's goal, the Ducks had not scored on the power play since April 28, in Game 2 of the second round against the Edmonton Oilers. ... Ritchie scored the winner in a 2-1 victory against the Oilers in Game 7. He had three winning goals in 77 regular-season games. ... Getzlaf, who had been kept off the score sheet in three straight games, is second in the NHL with 18 points (eight goals, 10 assists), trailing [Evgeni Malkin](#) of the Penguins (19). ... Johansen has 13 points (three goals, 10 assists), tying him with [Joel Ward](#) (2011) and [Colin Wilson](#) (2016) for most in a single postseason in Predators history. ... Neal has four goals in the past five games.

What's next

Game 3 of Western Conference Final at Bridgestone Arena on Tuesday (8 p.m. ET; NBCSN, CBC, SN, TVA Sports)

Henrik Lundqvist of Rangers wins debut at World Championship

Goalie makes 19 saves to help Sweden defeat Denmark

by Aaron Vickers / NHL.com Correspondent

May 14th, 2017

COLOGNE, Germany -- Jetlag didn't hamper New York Rangers goaltender [Henrik Lundqvist](#) in his debut for Sweden at the 2017 IIHF World Championship on Sunday.

Lundqvist made 19 saves to help Sweden to a 4-2 win against Denmark in his return to international ice.

Lundqvist and the Rangers were eliminated from the 2017 Stanley Cup Playoffs with a 4-2 loss to the Ottawa Senators in Game 6 of the Eastern Conference Second Round at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday.



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"It felt alright," Lundqvist said. "Not great. It's a big rink. Timing is a little off. You need a few days and a couple practices. As the game moved on, I felt a bit better. I've got a sense of what we do out there because a lot of it is how we work together. I got to see a lot of that. It was a good win for us. We needed this. It got a little close in the end, but we put it away."

Lundqvist hadn't played for Sweden at the World Championship since 2008. He won a gold medal at the 2006 Turin Olympics, and also represented Sweden at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, the 2014 Sochi Olympics and the World Cup of Hockey 2016.

At age 35, he isn't sure how many more opportunities he'll get to represent his country in international play.

It factored into his decision to join this year. His brother, Joel Lundqvist, is Sweden captain.

"Over my last 12 years playing in New York, I've only had the opportunity to go once ... a couple times I had opportunities, but I was hurt or [the Rangers] were playing," he said. "The timing has to be right. We're not going to the Olympics [in 2018], as it looks right now. I don't know how many chances I get to play for Team Sweden. I wanted to grab this opportunity. I felt I had more energy after I had a couple days to reflect on the playoffs.

"It's an opportunity to win."

That opportunity didn't come with the Rangers this season; Lundqvist joined Sweden two days after being eliminated by the Senators.

"He's a competitor," said Tampa Bay Lightning defenseman [Victor Hedman](#), who is also representing Sweden. "He wants to win. It's the same for him getting knocked out of the second round. Missing the playoffs or getting knocked out in the first or second round, you want that feeling when you go into the summer. Hopefully we can pull something great off together. It's great to have him here."

Sweden is third in Group A with 13 points through six preliminary round games. The United States leads with 15 points, and Russia is second with 14 points through five games.

A gold medal, Lundqvist suggested, would go a long way to helping ease the disappointment of being eliminated from the playoffs.

"Absolutely. Absolutely," he said.

"It still stings. Someone was watching highlights this morning of the Pittsburgh [Penguins]-Ottawa [Senators] game [from Saturday], and it bothers me still. It'll bother me for a while. You have to be. I'm sure when it's over here, you'll go back to reflecting on what happened in New York. I always do that.

"At the same time, you're very focused on this now."

Other results from Sunday:

United States 6, Slovakia 1: [Johnny Gaudreau](#) (Calgary Flames) had two goals and an assist to help the U.S. win its fifth straight Group A preliminary round game at Laxness Arena in Cologne. Gaudreau leads the U.S. with six goals in six games. [Anders Lee](#) (New York Islanders) had a goal and an assist, and [Jimmy Howard](#) (Detroit Red Wings) made 19 saves. The U.S. plays its final preliminary round game against Russia on Tuesday and can finish first with a regulation win.

Czech Republic 5, France 2: [David Pastrnak](#) (Boston Bruins) had a first-period goal to help the Czech Republic win its fifth straight Group B game at AccorHotels Arena in Paris.

Finland 3, Switzerland 2 (OT): [Valtteri Filppula](#) (Philadelphia Flyers) scored at 2:24 of overtime to cap Finland's comeback after it trailed by two goals early in a Group B game in Paris.



Patrick Dwyer Still Having Fun After First AHL Season In Seven Years

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

Published: May 10, 2017

It had been a while since Patrick Dwyer last suited up in the American Hockey League. Seven years, to be exact.

That was the 2009-10 campaign, one that saw Dwyer split his season between the Carolina Hurricanes and their former affiliate Albany River Rats. From that point on the forward would make the jump full time, spending the next several years establishing himself as a fan favorite grinder for the

Hurricanes.

A lot can change in seven years.

"The kids these days are so good," said the 33-year-old after wrapping up his first season with the Charlotte Checkers.

"They're so fast and skilled. It's different from when I was here before and every team had a fourth line that had some fighters on it, that stuff is gone from the game. You look at the teams that aren't even making the playoffs have four good lines of players and the kids are fascinating."



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After the Hurricanes let Dwyer walk in free agency after the 2014-15 season, the veteran spent last year in Sweden before getting the call this summer to come aboard the Checkers via the first AHL contract of his career.

"When I signed I knew they wanted an older guy to come in for leadership and stuff like that," said Dwyer. "You don't know what you're going to get with playing time, there were no promises or anything like that. So you just come in and see how things go."

Dwyer ended up doing just that, filling a much-needed role on a young team that went through more than its fair share of ups and downs.

"I just tried to be a good guy in the room and work for my playing time and that's exactly what happened," said Dwyer. "It was everything I expected coming in, to fit in and help these kids along the way with whatever I could and be a guy that led in the down times."

While it was a huge plus to have a player with Dwyer's experience to act as the glue in your locker room, that was by no means the end of the forward's contributions.

It took some time to get things rolling – he recorded just three points through his first 24 games – but once his game clicked Dwyer became a key piece of the Checkers' all-around attack, racking up 12 goals and 23 points in the last 34 games to wind up fifth on the team in goals.

"I think I got more comfortable with the situation," said Dwyer of what clicked for him. "Stuff had happened within the lineup where I moved up and was playing with skill guys on the top two lines and that always helps. You can put up points on the fourth line but it's tough. This is a power-play league, so when you get an opportunity to play on the power play you're

going to put up more points. That contributed to it. And when the team plays better, the players play better. The second half of the season the team started playing better so naturally guys are going to put up more points."

Dwyer admittedly plays a different role in this league as opposed to the NHL, but regardless, the forward was able to put up some of his best offensive numbers in years with the Checkers this season, proving that he remains a viable weapon in the AHL even as he racks up the mileage.

Two questions then remain – will Dwyer play next season and where? The first answer was an easy one, while the second is much more uncertain. "I'm definitely going to play again, that's for sure," said Dwyer.

"Whether it's over here or in Europe will be determined by where there is opportunity. I would definitely come back and play in this league for sure and I'd definitely come back to Charlotte 100 percent if things worked out that way. We'll see where it goes."

So goes the offseason of veteran players, something Dwyer is coming to terms with.

"That's the situation now with guys at this point," he said. "You don't know what tomorrow brings but we'll play it by ear and see. At my age and with the number of kids that are coming out I think an NHL deal is probably not likely in the cards, which is fine. I had my time when I was young."

But regardless of where he laces up his skates next season, there's one bottom line that will keep Dwyer coming back to hockey.

"It's still fun to me," said Dwyer. "I still enjoy it and I can still make an impact. I definitely want to keep playing."

TODAY'S LINKS

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

1064380 Websites

CNN/Sports Illustrated / Ducks rally to even series with Predators in Game 2 of Western Conference Final

KYLE PHILLIPPI

Monday May 15th, 2017

The beginning couldn't have gone any better for the Nashville Predators. Unfortunately for them, they didn't carry that over into the middle or the end of the story that was Game 2. The Anaheim Ducks pulled off a rally to tie the series with a 5-3 win on Sunday.

The visitors jumped out of the gate with a pair of goals in the eight and a half minutes. Up 2-0, the Predators had all the momentum as they were in the driver's seat for a 2-0 series lead heading back to Nashville.

The Ducks had other plans as Sami Vatanen made a late push on the power play to cut the deficit in half with one minute to go in the first period. Thirty-nine seconds into the second, Jakob Silfverberg potted his ninth goal of the postseason, tying Pittsburgh's Jake Guentzel for the most in the playoffs.

"The penalty at the end of the first changed the game, changed the momentum," Nashville coach Peter Laviolette said.

Filip Forsberg put Nashville back up seven minutes later, but as they did before, the Ducks rallied again, this time with back-to-back goals from two 21-year-olds whom head coach Randy Carlyle moved up in the lineup after the poor start. Ondrej Kase netted his first career postseason goal then saw Nick Ritchie put the Ducks ahead for good at 4-3.

That would be Ritchie's second game-winning goal in the playoffs.

"Nick Ritchie is a guy that has scored a lot of goals similar to what he scored tonight," said Carlyle. "That's what our project is, to continue to develop him into a power forward and to have that release and weapon he has become more evident to the hockey world."

For good measure, Antoine Vermette added an empty-net goal with 44 seconds to play. Ryan Getzlaf, who assisted on that score, finished with three points on the evening and now sits one point behind Penguins forward Evgeni Malkin (19) for the playoff scoring lead.

After some struggles early, John Gibson settled in, stopping 30 of the 33 shots he saw. Through the first two games of the series, Gibson has seen Nashville fire off 79 shots on goal, the most he's seen in consecutive games all postseason.

Rinne's tough night

For the first time in the 2017 NHL playoffs, it just wasn't Pekka Rinne's night.

The Nashville netminder had a rough outing in Game 2, surrendering four goals on Anaheim's first 16 shots through two periods. Prior to Sunday, Rinne had never allowed more than three goals in any game this postseason and had only allowed 16 goals in his first 11 games.

Rinne looked particularly out of sorts on Ritchie's goal that gave the Ducks a 4-3 lead. Ritchie received an entry feed from Getzlaf and threw a wristed from a ridiculous angle that snuck above Rinne's blocker.

In the third period, Rinne made a few key saves to keep it a one-goal game before Anaheim tacked on the empty-netter. On the whole, though, this is one he'll like to forget. He'll have the crowd on his side in the next two games, which is bad news for the Ducks: Rinne is 5-0 at Bridgestone Arena this postseason.

Ducks finally break through

It's not easy winning games when your power play isn't manufacturing points or even pressure. The Ducks learned this the hard way, going 0 for 4 on the man advantage in Game 1.

Vatanen finally converted for Anaheim, doing so in the first period after the Predators jumped out to an early 2-0 lead. The score put an end to a dreadful 0-for-21 drought on the power play.

In that span—which lasted six full games—the Ducks finished 0 for 4 in four of those contests.

"It's good to get that one. Hopefully it opens up the ketchup bottle and we can get a few more," Vatanen said.

Kesler, Johansen do battle

Ryan Kesler likes to get under the skin of the opposition, that's no secret.

So maybe it wasn't a surprise to see him and Predators top-line center Ryan Johansen going head-to-head from the opening draw of Game 2. After the game, Kesler said it's about being "better than the guy across from you."

and so it starts... pic.twitter.com/bBPBhoeD7H

— Blinn Manuel Miranda (@NHLBlinn) May 14, 2017

The two both played big roles on Sunday. Johansen started the scoring off in the first period and later added an assist. Meanwhile, Kesler, too, picked up a helper and won 64% of the faceoffs he took, including 10 of 15 against Johansen.

There were a few separate incidents between the pair, including Kesler appearing to throw an elbow up high on Johansen near the benches and a scene in which the two centers jostled each other with head-butts. "I don't know how you can cheer for a player like that," the Nashville pivot said of his counterpart.

This is certainly going to be the battle within the war to pay the most attention to. Will Peter Laviolette use the home-ice advantage to keep Johansen away from Kesler in Games 3 and 4? There's a real good chance he does so, but it won't be because Johansen isn't willing to go up against Kesler.

CNN/Sports Illustrated LOADED: 05.15.2017

1064381 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Ducks take advantage of Rinne's rare off-night in Game 2 win

Mark Spector

May 15, 2017, 12:25 AM

ANAHEIM — They don't ask how, they just ask how many.

It's one of hockey's Original Six clichés for goal-scorers, who get as much credit for the pucks that go in off the back of their pants as the ones they snipe top shelf.

When you're a goalie however, both questions apply. They ask how and they ask how many.

The "how many" hurt Nashville's usually impenetrable Pekka Rinne in a 5-3, Game 2 loss Sunday at Anaheim.



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But the how? That really stung. Particularly on the game-winner by Nick Ritchie, a goal Rinne simply has to stop.

At the other end, John Gibson surrendered a breakaway goal to Ryan Johansen just 4:18 into the game, then inexplicably pulled off his post at the moment James Neal took a pass along the goal-line, making for one of the easier tucks of Neal's playoff career.

"I just lost sight of it for a second," said Gibson, who says little when he plays well, and even less the rest of the time.

At the other end, Rinne had come into the game with a league-leading .950 save percentage. Once ahead 2-0, there was a genuine feeling that asking the Ducks to score three on Rinne every night was the recipe for a very short series.

Until, that is, Finnish defenceman Sami Vatanen wired a slapper far side on Rinne, breathing life into the Ducks with exactly one minute left in what had been a moribund first period for Anaheim.

It was a hell of a shot by Vatanen that required a hell of a save by Rinne. Usually he delivers.

"The first one was a laser. A cannon," said Nashville head coach Peter Laviolette. "It was hard, it was quick, and he got everything into it. And he put in about the only spot he could."

Vatanen was not quite so complimentary of his snipe: "I saw he was standing a little bit off the net, and I had a shot there, off the blocker side," said the product of the central Finnish town of Jyväskylä. "I closed my eyes, shot it as hard as I could, and it went in."

The winner would come off the stick of Ritchie, another shot from a distance that needed to be stopped. It burned past Rinne's ear, and even though most observers cringed as Rinne swept the puck out of his goal, you couldn't find a teammate or coach who would take the first step down that "Bad Pekka" road.

And rightfully so.

"He's the best goalie in the league," said Filip Forsberg. "He's the reason that we are where we are. I think he's playing well today, too."

Allowing four goals and an empty-netter shouldn't be that big a deal. In fact, we should all celebrate when we get 5-3 instead of 3-2. And with the speed of the game in 2017, perhaps the trend is towards more scoring. We can only hope.

"The deeper you go into the playoffs, the more games you play, you're going to see inconsistencies," said Ducks coach Randy Carlyle. "Every goaltender can't have a save percentage of .950 and above for extended series. The players are too good. There are too many variables."

Here's what's not a variable: Ryan Kesler getting under the skin of his opponent's first-line centre. This round, that player is Johansen, who has already had his fill of the tenacious checker only two games into this 1-1 series.

"He just blows my mind, watching what's going through his head out there," began Johansen. "His family and friends watching him play — I don't know how you cheer for a guy like that."

We watched Connor McDavid wear Kesler like a beaver skin throughout Round 2, with the constant whacks and hacks that simply overwhelm a referee's ability to properly officiate the relationship. Now it's Johansen's turn, and it appears he's never taken a room in Chez Kesler before.

"I'm just trying to go out there and play hockey and it sucks when you've got to pull a stick out of your groin every shift," said Johansen, who has never met a checker who is quite so, er, handsy. "Oh no. Not at all. He doesn't do anything that makes sense. He's just ... he thinks he's getting under guys' skin but he's just ... I don't know what he's doing."

"Really, I can't even put a finger on it."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 05.15.2017

1064382 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Ducks win Game 2 to even series with Predators

Associated Press

May 14, 2017, 10:20 PM

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The Anaheim Ducks were down a game in the Western Conference finals and down 2-0 in Game 2 against Pekka Rinne, the most dominant goalie in these Stanley Cup playoffs.

That's when Sami Vatanen got the puck and thought he saw a sliver of room over Rinne's shoulder.

"So I just closed my eyes and shot it in there," Vatanen said with his usual Finnish deadpan delivery.

After every slow start and tight game over their past month, not much can ruffle these Ducks. Once they coolly opened a crack in Rinne and the Nashville Predators, they started a deluge that evened the series.

Nick Ritchie broke a tie late in the second period, and Anaheim roared back from that early two-goal deficit for a 5-3 victory Sunday night.

Just when the Ducks appeared to be in serious danger of losing two straight home games to start their second straight series, they made a thrilling surge of four goals in less than 19 minutes.

"Everybody says we go about it the hard way, but as long as we get the job done," shrugged John Gibson, who stopped 30 shots.

Vatanen, Jakob Silfverberg and Ondrej Kase also scored for the Ducks before Antoine Vermette added an empty-netter. The Predators hadn't allowed four goals in any game during their excellent Stanley Cup playoff run before Anaheim got five in front of its sellout crowd.

"I wish we didn't get down in the first place, but I think we have three or four lines that get going and just keep punching through," Ducks forward Rickard Rakell said. "It's almost like we feel, 'Oh, we've got nothing to lose now.' It's almost like that's when we play our best game. Maybe sometimes we shouldn't wait for that to get going."

Game 3 is Tuesday night in Nashville.

Rinne made 22 saves and Ryan Johansen, James Neal and Filip Forsberg scored for the Predators. They faced relatively little adversity while steamrolling Chicago and St. Louis in the first two rounds on the way to the first conference finals in franchise history.

Nashville has a serious challenge now, and adversity has arrived in the form of Ryan Kesler, the Ducks' defence-minded centre. Johansen had a goal and an assist, but Kesler's well-known style of physical play already has burrowed under his skin.

"I mean, it just blows my mind watching," Johansen said. "I don't know what's going through his head over there. Like his family and his friends watching him play, I don't know how you cheer for a guy like that. It just doesn't make sense how he plays the game. I'm just trying to go out there and play hockey, and it sucks when you've got to pull a stick out of your groin every shift."

Two days after Nashville's 3-2 overtime victory at Honda Center in the series opener, Johansen and Neal scored in the opening 8:32 of Game 2.

The Ducks eventually got around to replying with high-octane hockey -- and a few fortunate bounces -- that was too much even for Rinne, who hadn't given up four goals in a game since March 13.

"The second (period), they got to control the tempo of the game and had the puck a little bit more, and obviously that plays into their hands," Rinne said. "But we still battled back. Obviously, disappointed personally in that second period."

Ritchie, the power forward making his first career playoff run, scored the winning goal in Game 7 against Edmonton. Four days later, he got his next major goal on an exceptional high shot that appeared to glance off Rinne's mask on the way in.

Anaheim hung on through a frenetic third period, surviving a few mad scrambles before captain Ryan Getzlaf got his third assist of the night on Vermette's empty-netter.

Although Honda Center was much fuller and louder than it was for the traffic-affected series opener, Johansen scored on a breakaway just 4:18 in. Neal doubled the lead on a power play with one of the easiest goals in



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recent NHL history, escorting the puck unimpeded into the net when Gibson completely lost sight of the play.

After Vatanen ended Anaheim's 0-for-20 slump on the power play, Silfverberg evened it in the opening minute of the second period, cashing in Rakell's pass for his ninth goal.

The Predators took another lead when Forsberg converted a rebound of a breakaway by speedy Viktor Arvidsson, who had two assists.

But the Ducks pulled even again on the first career playoff goal for Kase, the aggressive Czech rookie, who slipped a puck through traffic.

NOTES: The Ducks kept veteran Jared Boll in their lineup over several young prospects to replace injured F Patrick Eaves, who missed his sixth straight game. Boll, who is scoreless in four post-season games, had no goals and three assists in 51 regular-season games. ... Getzlaf has 18 points in the post-season, trailing only Pittsburgh's Evgeni Malkin (19). ... Mike Trout crossed Katella Avenue to support the Ducks for the second time in three playoff games. The two-time AL MVP homered and stole two bases to help the Angels beat Detroit 4-1 earlier Sunday.

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Sportsnet.ca / Predators' Ryan Johansen calls out Ryan Kesler after Game 2

Daniel Goffenberg

May 14, 2017, 11:23 PM

It took just two games for Ryan Johansen to be fed up with Ryan Kesler.

The Nashville Predators centre was matched up against Anaheim's pest for much of the Ducks' Game 2 win, and Johansen didn't shy away in his post-game comments.

"He just blows my mind, I don't know what's going through his head out there," said Johansen, who had a goal and an assist in the loss. "His family and friends watching him play, I don't know how you cheer for a guy like that.

"It just doesn't make sense how he plays the game. I'm just trying to go out there and play hockey, and it sucks when you have to pull a stick out of your groin after every shift."

Kesler and Johansen went at it several times in what was a physical contest, literally bumping heads before a faceoff at one point.

When Sportsnet's Christine Simpson asked Kesler about his battles with Johansen, the Ducks veteran simply responded: "I play the game hard, and obviously he doesn't like that."

The 32-year-old Kesler has never quite cared what his opponents think of him, and it's doubtful Ducks coach Randy Carlyle does either. Anaheim came back from a 2-0 deficit to take Game 2 and avoid dropping the opening two games of the Western Conference Final at home.

With the series tied 1-1 heading into Nashville for Game 3 on Tuesday, you can bet a steady stream of boos awaits No. 17 for the Ducks.

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Sportsnet.ca / Craig Anderson's family happy to be together during Mother's Day

Chris Johnston

May 14, 2017, 6:07 PM

PITTSBURGH – The game was long over, but a small crowd remained.

Craig Anderson had a hug for everyone as he made his way through the stands at PPG Paints Arena late Saturday night, greeting the family and friends who had just watched him stop 27 shots while helping the Ottawa Senators win Game 1 of the Eastern Conference Final.

Among the group were his wife, Nicholle, and boys, Jake and Levi, who had made the trip in as well.

The family, finally, was back together in one place again.

"It was exciting," Anderson said Sunday. "I think they're bringing definitely an X-factor to the game for me. It's an exciting time. I hadn't seen the kids in awhile, they hadn't seen me play in awhile. They always see me on TV, but to be there live again was great for them.

"Just exciting."

The hockey world is familiar with the family's story by now, but many probably don't realize that Nicholle's cancer battle has kept them apart. She recently completed a second round of chemotherapy in Florida, according to her blog, after doing the first round in New Jersey while Craig was on personal leave from the Senators.

He returned to the team in early February and has remained with it ever since, helping Ottawa reach the conference final for the first time in a decade.

The couple have relied on frequent FaceTime conversations to bridge the distance during that stretch and Nicholle travelled to Boston for Game 6 when the Senators eliminated the Bruins earlier in the playoffs.

With this third-round series opening in Pittsburgh – across the state from where she was raised – and Mother's Day falling on the off-day between



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Games 1 and 2, it was the perfect time to be able to bring everyone back together.

"Mother's Day is always special," said Craig Anderson. "We wouldn't be here if not for our mothers and I know my kids wouldn't be the same without their mother."

That he played so well in Saturday's opener against the Penguins had to come with a little extra measure of satisfaction.

It's not unlike how teammate Bobby Ryan saw something symbolic in scoring the overtime winner on the eve of a Mother's Day full of mixed emotions for him – the first since the death of his mom, Melody Stevenson, last summer and the first since his wife Danielle gave birth to daughter Riley.

"It's almost poetic," said Ryan. "It's my first without being able to text my mom, but I woke up this morning and was able to text my wife because it was hers. You take the good with the bad on days like today."

It has been a heavy year around the Senators. A heavy couple years, really, when you consider former general manager Bryan Murray's colon cancer diagnosis and owner Eugene Melnyk's liver transplant and the death of assistant coach Mark Reeds in April 2015.

Craig Anderson first left the team in training camp after Nicholle miscarried a baby girl at 16 weeks. Not too long after that, she was experiencing congestion and had a biopsy which revealed nasopharyngeal carcinoma – a rare form of neck and head cancer.

He took a leave of absence that lasted two months.

The 35-year-old goaltender has largely avoided discussing the situation with reporters, but touched on it in March after being nominated as a finalist for the Bill Masterton Memorial Trophy, which is awarded "to the player who best exemplifies the qualities of perseverance, sportsmanship and dedication to hockey."

Despite what his family has dealt with and continues to deal with, he's somehow managed to have arguably his finest NHL season. He's never played this deep into the playoffs.

"It's always on the mind," Anderson said of Nicholle's cancer battle in March. "I feel that the three hours we get at the rink is definitely a time to kind of put things aside and exert your energy and frustration out that you may have."

"You just go out there and give everything you can then when you take off the equipment then you can address real-world problems right after that."

During that interview, Anderson also credited Nicholle's fortitude.

"It's definitely been hard on her and our family," he said. "It's one of those things where when times get tough you find strength – inner strength – that you maybe didn't believe you had."

Even as the Senators continue pushing for a Stanley Cup berth, his mind is bound to be in two places at times. Nicholle wrote in her most recent blog entry that she is scheduled to have a PET scan later this month to determine if the cancer remains.

In the meantime, in the moment, the family is back together.

On this Mother's Day that may be the best of news of all.

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Sportsnet.ca / On The Prowl

Ryan Dixon

Nashville general manager David Poile has never been afraid to take a chance when the opportunity presented itself. And now his Predators have their best ever shot at the Stanley Cup.

By the third bomb, P.K. Subban couldn't contain himself.

Facing the St. Louis Blues in Game 1 of the second round, Subban delivered in just the kind of high-stakes contest he was acquired for. His first power-play blast was tipped by Colin Wilson on the lip of the crease, but most of the rink likely figured the goal was Subban's when No. 76 slowly dropped to one knee and delivered a few deliberate fist pumps. The second tally was unmistakably his — another cannon from the point that cleanly beat Blues goalie Jake Allen. This time, Subban went with his signature move, pulling a pretend arrow from the quiver as he lazily glided through centre ice. While both celebrations met P.K.'s ornate standards, a certain spontaneity was lacking. That changed when Subban fired yet another rocket, this one caroming off Allen, then Preds forward Filip Forsberg before finding the net. All pre-packaged material was tossed as Subban snatched out his mouth guard, tilted his head back and let out a primal howl.

That three-point performance kicked off a six-game series win for the Preds, cementing the franchise's first-ever trip to the Western Conference final. But even in the moments immediately after the berth was secured, there wasn't a whiff of outward exuberance in the press box from David Poile, the only GM in the team's history.

While the composed non-reaction is in line with Poile's famously measured nature, he shares more genetic coding with Subban than most realize. The player's go-for-broke mentality is central to Subban's identity, but the fact the GM is fully capable of pushing in his chips as well often gets overlooked. A hockey lifer of the highest order, Poile has relied on a trusted network to build this trailblazing Predators squad. The man, like the team he runs, has absorbed his share of blows, with 2017 representing just his second conference final trip in 35 years as a general manager. No less staggering, however, is the fact that in all that time, through countless negotiations and excruciating decisions, Poile has seemingly failed to make a single enemy. That's why, beyond the all-in citizens of a suddenly hip and exploding city, there are folks far and wide in the hockey world ready to high-five Poile and his Predators.

One of the many people to send Poile a congratulatory message after Nashville beat St. Louis was Calgary Flames president of hockey operations Brian Burke. If everyone who wears a suit and works in hockey was placed on a spectrum according to their natural disposition, Poile and Burke would land on the two opposing poles. "He's cautious by nature," says Burke, who often casts his own impatience as a virtue. "I joke with him that I'd hate to watch him get dressed in the morning."

Whatever clothes Poile eventually settles on these days, he wears them to an office in Bridgestone Arena where the walls are peppered with framed photos. The volume is what you'd expect to see in the room of a 14-year-old who just discovered the band that sings directly to her. The images document an expansive career that, despite 23 post-season appearances as a GM prior to this spring, has yet to feature a single trip to the Stanley Cup Final. It would be impossible for anyone with that odds-defying resumé not to play the "what if?" game and Poile doesn't hide from the anguish. "It's bothering me, that's for sure," he says.

THE MASTERMIND

Poile was 32 when he got his first job as a general manager and pulled off a franchise-altering trade. Thirty-five years later, he's still doing both.

Poile's passion for what he does is obvious, but helming the Preds — or Washington Capitals for 15 years before that — isn't the best gig he's ever had. That distinction, Poile says somewhat tongue in cheek, is reserved for the job that allowed his supposedly non-existent impulsive side to run wild: assistant general manager. When Poile held that post with the Atlanta (and, eventually, Calgary) Flames in the late 1970s and early '80s, he would barge in on GM Cliff Fletcher and spew solutions for whatever ailed the team. "I would come into his office every day and say, 'Trade this guy, trade that guy,'" Poile remembers.

While Fletcher was usually gracious with his understudy, that leeway could be tougher to come by after a loss. One day, when Fletcher was on edge, he slammed his hand on the desk, extended an admonishing finger and put an end to the conversation. It's an exchange Poile can still recite: "If you are ever so lucky as to become a general manager in the National Hockey League, you'll know the feeling [of] making a trade and how difficult it is," Poile says, quoting Fletcher. "I kinda walked out with my tail between my legs."

That scolding stung, but it was never going to deter Poile from his goal of running a hockey club. His father, Bud, played 311 career games for five different Original Six teams and won the Cup in 1947 with the Leafs. After his playing days, Bud ran the Detroit Red Wings' top affiliate in Edmonton — where David lived from age three to 13 — and fully



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expected to take over as GM of the big club from his mentor, Jack Adams, in the early 1960s. Instead, the position went to Sid Abel and the Poile family was suddenly on the move to Northern California so Bud could guide another minor-league outfit, the San Francisco Seals.

Years later, Bud was operating the Vancouver Canucks when a hotshot college scorer and former captain at Northeastern University came to training camp. Despite his offensive chops, Poile was cut by his dad's club and a couple more at lower levels, prompting his decision to look for employment that didn't involve wearing skates. He was working in BC Tel's executive training program when Fletcher, whom David had met while tagging along with Bud to NHL events, told the junior Poile the newly formed Atlanta franchise needed people on the ground to get things up and running. Poile's first job there, working in a trailer just off Peachtree Street in downtown Atlanta, was running the contest to name the team. Soon enough, he was negotiating half the Flames' contracts and running the farm team. "One of the first things that really impressed me was his attention to detail," Fletcher says.

The opportunity to run the team in Washington arose when the Capitals, nearly 10 years into their existence and without a single playoff berth to show for it, seemed as though they might dissolve completely. After a months-long gap between his first interview and being told to come back for a second, Poile packed two huge suitcases and told his wife, Elizabeth, if he was hired, he was just going to stay in town. Only a matter of days after he was granted the job, Poile, just 32 years old, was at a hot-and-stuffy Royal York Hotel in downtown Toronto for a board of governors meeting. "I got in the room, totally intimidated," he recalls.

"The riverboat gambler side to David is still very much alive and well. He just might spend more time weighing the risk."

That being the case, the decision to speak with Irving Grundman, who was seated beside him, may have been as much about calming nerves as anything else. Regardless, by the end of the meeting, the two had worked out a six-player trade that, most notably, sent defenceman Rod Langway to Washington and Capitals captain Ryan Walter to Montreal. Poile then had to call owner Abe Pollin to explain that, less than two weeks into the job, he'd traded the only player on the team Pollin could name. "He says, 'You better know what you're doing' and hung up," Poile recalls.

Langway won the Norris Trophy in each of his first two years in Washington. The Caps made the playoffs during Poile's first campaign overseeing the squad and didn't miss them again until his last, 1996-97. But even now, as a seen-it-all 67-year-old grandfather whose decisions have been vindicated time and again, the words of his old boss stick. "Every time I make a trade, I think the same thing: 'You better know what you're doing,'" Poile says. "It's always a big gulp."

It stands to reason, then, that the struggle to swallow was never greater than when Poile made the watershed decision to trade Shea Weber for Subban almost one year ago. While the potential merits of the move were easy to spot — Subban is four years younger than Weber and distinctly quicker — the symbolic importance of trading a franchise face cannot be underestimated. Weber isn't just the centerpiece of Nashville's Mount Rushmore, his hard-rock game legitimized the entire 'Smashville' mythology to begin with. "There's no doubt that's the kind of trade that could have serious impact on your franchise, both good and bad," says Poile, acknowledging it was a difficult move to make both personally and professionally.

PARADIGM SHIFT

James Neal (No. 18), Filip Forsberg (second from left), Roman Josi and Ryan Ellis have helped fuel Nashville's move to a more offensive game plan.

Really, the Langway move and the Subban deal are just two examples of Poile's willingness to take a swing. A decade ago, he brought Paul Kariya to Nashville and traded a bundle of futures for banged-up Peter Forsberg in an attempt to move the franchise forward. Five years back, he allowed Alexander Radulov to return to the Predators team he'd previously spurned by leaving for the KHL. The moves didn't pan out, but nobody could accuse him of sitting on his hands.

Still, it's not hard to understand why Poile's conservative reputation persists. In an era where the term has become a not-so-backhanded compliment, Poile might be the original hockey nerd. And while he cuts an impressive figure for a man who'll soon be 70, there's no real trace of swagger in his gait. When he mentions in passing that his parents were very gregarious, Poile expresses mock outrage that the term isn't likely to

spring to mind when describing him. The same playful sentiment is on display when his slow-and-steady reputation is brought up, with Poile throwing his arms up in sort of faux exasperation: "I've made more trades than any GM in league history!" The declaration has the feel of a dad putting on a backwards hat and asking his kids, "Who says I'm not cool?"

Poile's need to meditate on things is legendary. Former Atlanta Thrashers GM Don Waddell, who worked with both Burke and Poile building U.S. Olympic teams, says Poile always returns a call promptly, but won't necessarily have an immediate answer for you. "If I told him, back in the heyday, that I was going to trade him [a player as good as] Marian Hossa for a seventh-round draft pick, he would tell me, 'Let me think about it and get back to you,'" Waddell chuckles.

During the 2004-05 lockout, Waddell and Poile often got together with other GMs to golf under the guise of productive meetings. The men teeing off with Poile knew they could tuck on about half an hour to their expected playing time. "Everything took longer," says Waddell, now an executive with the Carolina Hurricanes. "Getting in and out of the cart took longer."

Burke says Poile is one of the first people he'll call for a dinner date and the last one he'll seek out for a night on the town. But in a field characterized by forceful personalities and captain-of-industry types, there's universal praise and respect for the way Poile carries himself. "This guy is fearless," says Burke. "He's made some huge trades. Meticulous and cautious should not be confused with timid, because this guy's made blockbuster deals. To this day, the riverboat gambler side to David is still very much alive and well. He just might spend more time weighing the risk than some of the other guys."

"Every time I make a trade, I think the same thing: 'You better know what you're doing.' It's always a big gulp."

Recently, there's been an unmistakable trend to Poile's acquisitions. About six months before acquiring Subban, Poile sent heralded young blue-liner Seth Jones to the Columbus Blue Jackets for big, playmaking centre Ryan Johansen. Left winger James Neal has been in Tennessee for three years after being swapped for the more rounded — but less overtly skilled — Patric Hornqvist. Young Swedes Forsberg — heisted by Poile from his old team, the Caps — and Viktor Arvidsson have been given every opportunity to shine. It all traces back to a desire for more offence, which became a franchise-wide mandate when longtime coach Barry Trotz was let go in the summer of 2014 in favour of Peter Laviolette. "Barry was fabulous with us and for us for 15 years, but Peter Laviolette [wanted] to play the game a little bit differently," says Poile, adding he, too, was ready to modernize the organizational philosophy.

For all the turnover, there are still many constants. The backbone of the team remains largely homegrown, including crease-mainstay Pekka Rinne, top-end defencemen Roman Josi and Ryan Ellis, as well as Arvidsson, who broke out for 31 goals this season. Poile deflects much of the praise for those finds onto his staff, where continuity is king. Assistant GM Paul Fenton has been there pretty much since Day 1; chief amateur scout Jeff Kealty was a defenceman playing for Nashville's AHL affiliate before swapping his stick for a tie 15 years ago; Brian Poile, David's son, is the director of hockey operations and cut his teeth in the Dallas Stars organization before joining his father's staff in 2010.

"He empowers you to do your job and grow and make mistakes," says New Jersey Devils GM Ray Shero, who worked as Poile's assistant GM in Nashville from 1998 to 2006 and quickly realized there was also an expectation errors would be learned from, not repeated.

BIG SWINGS

By acquiring Johansen in January 2016, Poile made the type of hockey trade many lament not seeing enough of. A little more than six months later, he swapped Subban for Weber, the biggest NHL blockbuster in years.

Many of the men still in the Nashville fold have seen the franchise go through two ownership changes and lived the moments when it seemed the entire team could be swept away. Today, with a stable ownership group comprised largely of locals, it's easier to focus on the good things. The Predators had a huge hand in revitalizing the now-jumping block of bars along the Broadway strip Nashville has become famous for. Passion for the team spills out well beyond the arena's immediate vicinity, with flags pinned up in shops and yellow Preds hats dotting the town like moving egg yolks. You can enjoy a 'Smashville IPA' at Rock Bottom Restaurant and Brewery, and when the local weatherman talks of rain



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staying away from the area, a picture of Rinne flashes on screen, the rationale being that the big Finn can stop anything.

Subban, like so many others who've poured into the city in recent years, has adjusted well to his new home, largely because of the workplace Poile has created. "The one thing I think David has done an extremely good job [of], and I can speak to, is the people he's put in that locker room," Subban says. "The hockey players, that's one thing, there are great hockey players on this team, there's great hockey players on any team. But it's the people that have really blown me away, it's a great group that [you're] happy to work with every day and [that you] respect ... and that goes a long way, those are the guys you want to go to war with."

With the battle coming down to the wire, support is swelling for Nashville and its chief architect. "There are a lot of people that are pulling for David," says Waddell. "And the franchise, they've done a good job there."

Poile was in Montreal with his son on the night in 1989 when Fletcher saw the vision they once shared for the Flames come to fruition in the form of a Cup win over the Canadiens. Nearly 30 years on, the latter is hoping for some symmetry. "[I'm] looking forward to being at the deciding game of the Stanley Cup when Nashville is playing — and I certainly hope it's this year," Fletcher says.

If it is and things go his way, Poile can stop bothering with plaques and pictures and finally hang that elusive banner.

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TSN.CA / Statistically Speaking: Kase pulls Ducks even

By Scott Cullen

Unheralded rookie Ondrej Kase contributes; Getzlaf piles on more points, Johansen, Vatanen and more in Scott Cullen's Statistically Speaking.

HEROES

Ondrej Kase - The rookie Ducks winger scored his first career playoff goal and had strong possession stats (19 for, 12 against, 61.3 CF%) in Anaheim's Game Two victory. It was Kase's first playoff point in his fifth career playoff game.

A seventh-round pick in 2014, 21-year-old Kase has 26 points (14 G, 12 A) in 39 AHL games over the past couple of seasons, and he had 15 points (5 G, 10 A) in 53 regular-season games for the Ducks.

Ryan Getzlaf - Anaheim's playmaking pivot put up three assists in a 5-3 Game Two win against Nashville. He had gone three games without a point, but now has 18 points (8 G, 10 A) in 13 playoff games.

ZEROES

Pekka Rinne - He was due for one of these, having stopped 95% of the shots sent his way so far in the playoffs, but the Predators goaltender did not look especially sharp in allowing four goals on 26 shots in a 5-3 Game Two loss at Anaheim. Hold off on the pitchforks, though, because Rinne still has a .942 save percentage in the playoffs.

Corey Perry - The Ducks right winger failed to generate a shot attempt in 14:25 of ice time in Game Two. He had six points (1 G, 5 A) in his previous five games.

Colin Wilson and Mike Fisher - Despite having team-best possession stats (21 for, 9 against, 70.0 CF%) the Predators forwards, along with Pontus Aberg, who was their most common linemate, were on for a pair of goals against in a 5-3 Game Two loss at Anaheim.

STANLEY CUP HALF FULL/HALF EMPTY

Ryan Johansen - Nashville's first-line centre opened the scoring and added an assist, putting up solid possession stats (13 for, 9 against, 59.1 CF%), but he was also victimized on Anaheim's second goal - with his stick out of the passing lane for just a moment. Johansen failed to prevent a pass from Rickard Rakell to Jakob Silfverberg, who was open at the back post.

Sami Vatanen - The Anaheim blueliner scored a crucial goal late in the first period, to get the Ducks back in the game, but he struggled possession-wise (6 for, 19 against, 24.0 CF%, 2-7 scoring chances).

SHORT SHIFTS

Predators RW Viktor Arvidsson contributed two assists in Game Two; he had one assist in his previous seven games...Predators RW James Neal scored a goal in Game Two, his fourth goal in the past five games...Ducks D Cam Fowler had a pair of assists in a 5-3 Game Two win over Nashville. He has seven points (1 G, 6 A) in nine playoff games...Ducks veteran C Antoine Vermette scored into the empty net to end Game Two, and he joined Vatanen and Kase as Ducks scoring their first goals in this year's playoffs.

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TSN.CA / Senators channeling '93 Canadiens with overtime magic

By Frank Seravalli

PITTSBURGH — When the clock hits zero in regulation, the Ottawa Senators go to work.

The Senators improved to 6-1 in the Stanley Cup playoffs in overtime when Bobby Ryan cashed in five minutes into the extra session on Saturday night. Put another way, the Sens are inching toward halfway to Lord Stanley based on overtime play alone.

Part of the playoffs is about being comfortable in uncomfortable situations, and the Senators have somehow managed to play like it's any other period. All but one of Ottawa's nine wins these playoffs have been by one goal, and that one was by virtue of an empty-netter to clinch a second-round series win over the Rangers.

Zack Smith said Sunday that Ottawa has gained momentum since winning their first overtime game of the postseason in Game 2 against Boston.

They've rolled since then, channeling the 1993 Montreal Canadiens, who won a still-standing NHL record 10 consecutive games in overtime (10-1), on their way to Canada's last Stanley Cup.

"We've kind of had that feeling from the start, I think, that we have nothing to lose," Smith said. "Don't go out there being afraid to make mistakes. That is something we have learned throughout the season. It's nice to go out there, and everyone knows they just need one chance to score."

For Ottawa, the story has been that it's been just about a different player every night.

Ryan became the first Senator in team history to score multiple playoff overtime goals in one postseason on Saturday night. So far, Dion Phaneuf, Kyle Turris, Clarke MacArthur and Jean-Gabriel Pageau have also etched their name in Sens lore as overtime heroes.

The common thread is that defenceman Erik Karlsson has been on the ice for all nine game-winning goals for Ottawa, generating the goal or assist in six of them.

In 1993, the Canadiens received an overtime boost from seven different players, with multiple goals from Guy Charbonneau, Kirk Muller and John LeClair — but contributions also from the expected in players such as Stephan Lebeau.

The Sens had plenty of practice in overtime during the regular season. Nearly a quarter of their schedule (20 games) went past regulation, including seven of their final 17 games. They compiled a 10-10 mark in overtime and shootouts during the season.

"I don't know what it is," defenceman Cody Ceci said, trying to explain Ottawa's overtime magic. "I don't think there's anything in particular. It's just the way things are going. We've been sticking to our system right through overtime."



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That is what head coach Guy Boucher is seeing. Boucher said he doesn't think the Sens' attitude changes when it gets to crunch time, noting they don't try to do "extraordinary things" but they just do "the ordinary things well."

Overtime has been one more rallying cry for a team full of them this season, from the passing of Ryan's mother last July, to Craig Anderson's wife Nicholle battling cancer, to MacArthur's stirring return to the lineup in March after multiple concussions.

That mental fortitude and mojo has been on display for all to see in overtime.

"Like I always say, the intangibles matter more than anything else," Boucher said. "And we've had a lot of those in the course of the year and a lot of positive stuff, a lot of really positive stuff that helped us grow up to now."

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USA TODAY / Five keys to Senators' surprise run in NHL playoffs

Kevin Allen , USA TODAY Sports Published 3:55 p.m. ET May 14, 2017 | Updated 11 hours ago

The Ottawa Senators, with 98 points, were the NHL's 12th best team in the regular season. They ranked 22nd in goals-per-game (2.51), and their special teams finished in the bottom third.

When the playoffs began, the Senators were listed as a 28-1 shot to win the Stanley Cup. Only the St. Louis Blues had worse odds.

It's fair to say today's Senators, holding a 1-0 lead over the Pittsburgh Penguins in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference final, are a major surprise. So who are the Senators, and why have they been so successful?

1. Think mid-1990s New Jersey Devils: That's the comparison that works because the Senators can frustrate the opposition by using a 1-3-1 forechecking formation that tends to clog up the neutral zone.

Those Devils became one of the NHL's best teams by using that strategy.

"We are a hard team to play against," Senators center Zack Smith said. "With the system we play, it's no secret we don't give up a lot of chances."

The Senators' identity is their relentless commitment to their system. "I'm not sure what the word is for it," Smith said. "But stinginess would be part of the way to describe it."

2. Charismatic coach: Guy Boucher is the man responsible for transforming the Senators into the gritty group that doesn't allow many clean looks at their net.

Hired as coach last summer, Boucher took a team that was ranked 26th in goals-against average (2.94) in 2015-16 and converted them into defensive zealots. The Senators ranked 10th in goals against this season, giving up 2.56 per game.

"The word respect has always been a part of our talk with players," Boucher said. "We want to respect the opponent, but it's important that we are ourselves, and we spend 80 percent of our time talking about ourselves and what we need to do, and 20 percent about the opponent."

3. Look to be David, not Goliath: The Senators are rallying around their underdog status. They liked the fact that all of the attention was on the Pittsburgh vs. Washington second-round series while they were taking care of business against the New York Rangers.

"It's not a bad position to be in when you are underestimated," Smith said.

4. Nuclear powered: No team has an offensive weapon quite like defenseman Erik Karlsson. He's the world's most dynamic defenseman and can beat a forecheck on his own with his skating ability.

In Game 1 against the Penguins, he led all players with six shots on net. Much of Ottawa's offense flows from Karlsson.

"I've watched him since he's been 17 and I've been telling people in the NHL and around the world that he was one of the best players in the league," Ottawa general manager Pierre Dorion said.

Boucher has challenged Karlsson to be a more complete defenseman.

"I think this year he has bought into what Guy's tried to tell him to do. I think he's kept his shifts shorter," Dorion said. "When we interviewed Guy we spent a lot of time talking about Erik and he was adamant that he was a very good defender and he felt he was going to use him on the (penalty kill)."

5. Tight-knit fraternity: The Senators have grown closer through unfortunate circumstances. Respected general manager Bryan Murray, who was diagnosed with cancer in 2014, retired in the offseason. Bobby Ryan's mother died over the summer. Goalie Craig Anderson's wife was diagnosed with cancer, and he missed time this season to be with her.

These are players who play for each other. They have pulled together through the hard times, and now they pull together on the ice. Their bond is strong.

"Also the hockey part solidified our group," Boucher said. "It's been a growing process since Day One. Like I always say, the intangibles matter more than anything else."

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USA TODAY / Team USA reignites Gaudreau-Hayes connection in world championships win

Kevin Allen , USA TODAY Sports Published 2:26 p.m. ET May 14, 2017 | Updated 14 hours ago

When Johnny Gaudreau scored 36 goals in 40 games for Boston College in 2013-14, the center who set the table for him most nights was Kevin Hayes.

"We are pretty close friends off the ice and that helps bring chemistry to what we do on the ice," Gaudreau told USA TODAY Sports. "We always found each other on the ice. We found the net together and made plays. He's a great playmaker."

Their bond served them well again Sunday when Hayes (New York Rangers) set up Gaudreau (Calgary Flames) for a pair of goals to spark the USA to a 6-1 win against Slovakia at the IIHF World Championships in Cologne, Germany.

"He set me up for two empty-net tap-ins," Gaudreau said. "It's good to have him back at center."

The Americans have a five-game winning streak at the world championships for the first time since 1990. They are assured of a spot in the quarterfinals, even though they have one remaining preliminary round game against Russia on Tuesday (10:15 p.m. ET, NBC Sports Network).

Gaudreau has been a key performer, scoring six goals in the last six games.

"What I've been most impressed by with Johnny is his compete level," U.S. coach Jeff Blashill (Detroit Red Wings) said. "How hard he tracks back to be on the back-check. How hard he comes to the bench for changes. He's a real example of what it takes to be successful at high levels. Certainly he has lots of skill, but the other things make him a winner."

The Americans are trying to win their third medal in the past five years, after winning just two in the previous 47 years. The Americans haven't



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won the event since 1960 when the Olympic champion was considered the world champion.

Goalie Jimmy Howard (Detroit Red Wings) had 19 saves against Slovakia. Clayton Keller and Christian Dvorak (Arizona Coyotes) also scored for the USA, as did Jacob Trouba (Winnipeg Jets) and Anders Lee (New York Islanders).

"The team is playing well right now," Gaudreau said. "We are excited about the group we have over here."

Hayes and defenseman Brady Skjei played their first game after joining the U.S. team after the Rangers were eliminated by the Ottawa Senators in the playoffs.

"I like our work ethic and how we compete," Blashill said. "But we certainly have to get better. We will have to play better against Russia to have a good chance to win. Puck management will be a big focus."

Blashill said the Americans have to give up fewer chances on the rush. "A lot of those have come from turnovers," Blashill said. "We have to be better with the puck if we want the long-term success we want to have."

USA TODAY LOADED: 05.15.2017

Anaheim Ducks

Patrick Eaves has a lot more time on his hands than he ever wanted. His mother, Beth, sensed that from a distance and sent him something to shake the boredom and keep him busy.

"She's funny," said Eaves, the Ducks winger that is sidelined. "She sent me a Lego set of a real car. Seven hours yesterday, I was sitting there putting it together. I got it done."

"It was obsessive. She knows me pretty well."

Perhaps it isn't a surprise that Eaves is pretty determined off the ice. His work in front of the opposition's net and touch on the power play are ingredients that the Ducks sorely miss in their lineup. A significant right leg injury in the Ducks' second-round series against Edmonton has him sidelined.

It will be for a while. Eaves hasn't played since Game 3 against the Oilers after getting hurt on a play where he got into an awkward entanglement with an opposing player. It wasn't the result of a collision with Patrick Maroon as had been suspected but the injury had him in a boot on his right foot.

Some progress has been made. Eaves is no longer in a boot and has shed the crutches that he hobbled on for a few days, a development that he heartily welcomed. It has allowed him to start doing some off-ice workouts.

"It helped the healing process," Eaves said. "It wasn't fun being on them. As soon as I felt like I was able to move, I got rid of them as soon as possible."

The return of the bearded winger won't be so quick. Ducks general manager Bob Murray sounded a ray of hope when he suggested that Eaves might be back at some point after initially preparing to lose him for the season. Eaves also wouldn't put a timeline but shared that hope.

Ottawa Senators

Guy Boucher could be presented with the option to make changes for Game 2 Monday night in Pittsburgh.

Since the Ottawa Senators decided to cancel their scheduled skate Sunday at the PPG Paints Arena and take a day off to enjoy the fine city of Pittsburgh, it's hard to tell if the club's head coach will make changes to the roster after a 2-1 victory over the Penguins in Game 1 Saturday night here.

Judging by the way Boucher has operated with his roster in the past, he'll be reluctant to make a move even if winger Viktor Stalberg, who missed Game 1 with an undisclosed injury, is ready to return. He skated with the scratches at the rink and a determination will be made at game-time.

"We could have him. We'll see. He's going on the ice (for the first time since suffering the injury last Tuesday). We'll see where that takes us," said Boucher.

Pittsburgh Penguins

Few things might test the adaptability of Ottawa's 1-3-1 forecheck like Carl Hagelin's speed along the left wing.

Whether Hagelin will get the chance to race up and down the ice Monday night in Game 2 of the Eastern Conference final remains unknown.

The winger practiced with the Penguins on Sunday afternoon at UPMC Lemieux Sports Complex in Cranberry but made no promises afterward about his availability. Hagelin did not dress in the series opener, nor did he play in Game 7 of the second-round series with Washington.

"It's a day-to-day thing," Hagelin said. "We'll see what happens."

Winnipeg Jets

Logan Stanley never gave up hope his season wouldn't come to a premature end.

Even after undergoing surgery on his right knee to repair a torn meniscus in late January, he was counting the days to the 2017 Memorial Cup and was motivated to be on the ice with the Windsor Spitfires and not watching from the stands.

Earlier this month, a trip to the doctor brought the news the Winnipeg Jets defence prospect was looking for, as he'd finally been cleared for contact.

With that final hurdle behind him, Stanley is set to suit up in Friday's tournament opener against the Saint John Sea Dogs, the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League champions.

END