



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

The Charlotte Observer

Suspension only fuels tensions between Checkers, Wolves in AHL finals

By Steve Lyttle

The Charlotte Checkers and Chicago Wolves have played 120 minutes of tight, tough hockey, but one second of Game 2 is overshadowing the Calder Cup Finals as the series resumes Wednesday night.

A fight that broke out with 0.8 seconds left in the Checkers' 5-3 victory Sunday has resulted in a one-game suspension for Curtis McKenzie, the Wolves' leading playoff goal-scorer.

McKenzie won't be in the lineup for Game 3, set for 8 p.m. Wednesday at Allstate Arena in suburban Chicago. The best-of-7 series is tied after two games.

That last-second fight also appears to have created some tension between head coaches Mike Vellucci of Charlotte and Rocky Thompson of Chicago.

Vellucci expressed frustration after Sunday's game with the actions of McKenzie, a 28-year-old winger who has played 100 games in the NHL and several seasons in the American Hockey League.

McKenzie received 27 minutes in penalties – including two misconducts – after punching Checkers center Steven Lorentz.

The Wolves said Charlotte's Patrick Brown skated into one of their players and cross-checked him and that McKenzie was retaliating. The Checkers argued that McKenzie went after Lorentz, who had fallen onto the ice in the pushing and shoving and was defenseless.

"I used to have respect for somebody that played 100 games in the NHL, but that was bush league," Vellucci said Sunday night.

On Tuesday, according to media reports from Chicago, Thompson took exception with Vellucci's comments.

"I am really upset with the coach's comments," Thompson said, according to tweets from Megan Mawicke of WBBM-TV and John Dietz of the (Arlington Heights) Daily Herald. "He went after our player. I don't go after his players. I have an issue with that."

Vellucci downplayed the incident Tuesday, saying, "Everyone wants to focus on those last 10 seconds. Those were two really good hockey games between two really good hockey teams that want to win."

Vellucci declined comment on the suspension for McKenzie, who has scored eight goals in the playoffs.

Otherwise, the Checkers conducted a morning drill Tuesday at the arena in Rosemont, saying they are looking forward to the next three games in Chicago.

"Against Toronto, we were very solid on the road," defenseman Roland McKeown said. "We've done well this season away from home."

Vellucci noted that playing at home carries distractions, such as taking care of friends and family members visiting from out-of-town to see the games.

"Now it's just hockey," he said. "Sometimes that's beneficial."

Vellucci said Lorentz, who suffered some facial injuries in the incident with McKenzie, skated Tuesday and could play Wednesday night. Defenseman Josiah Didier, injured in Game 1, is questionable for Game 3.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

THE ATHLETIC

Down Goes Brown: Ranking all 50 Stanley Cup finals of the expansion era

By Sean McIndoe

Through four games, the 2019 Stanley Cup final has been ... well, pretty great, actually. It's featured some big hits, highlight-reel goals, interesting storylines and at least a little bit of bad blood (along with some real blood). Three of the four games weren't decided until the final moments, including an overtime, the first in the final since 2016. We've also seen a lopsided blowout and a few ugly moments, so it hasn't exactly reached instant classic status yet. But we're only four games in with at least two more to go and if we get two or three more good games then the 2019 final has a chance to be remembered as one of the better ones in recent memory.

But while we wait to see how this series turns out, let's spend some time looking back on the ones that came before. There have been exactly 50 Stanley Cup finals in the NHL's post-expansion history, dating back to 1968. And today, we're going to rank them all, from worst to best.

Now clearly, this is a subjective exercise. Your view of what makes a series great may not match mine, and it goes without saying that the "best" final will be whichever one your favorite team won. But I think there are certain things that fans tend to look for in a great Cup final. You want fun teams and plenty of stars, with at least a few interesting subplots. Longer series are generally better, and ones that go seven are the best of all, especially if there are a few overtimes along the way. And there should be some sort of signature moment that still resonates, even for fans who weren't around to see the series play out at the time.

Can we come up with a list everyone will agree on? No, of course not, but that's half the fun. And at the very least, today's post will force an answer to the age-old question: Is Sean actually capable of writing an entire post that doesn't include at least a few sections about the Maple Leafs?

We've got 51 years and 50 finals to work through, so let's start from the bottom. In our case, that means going way back...

#50 – Canadiens over Blues (1969)

#49 – Canadiens over Blues (1968)

The Canadiens were the league's best team. The Blues were the only one of the six expansion teams that could tie their skates properly. If that strikes you as a recipe for an anticlimactic series, well, you have more foresight than the NHL did. The league's poorly thought-out playoff format ensured the final would be a massive mismatch, and the Canadiens rolled to a sweep both times. The 1968 series at least included a couple of overtime games, so we'll nudge it ahead of 1969 in the race for last place.

#48 – Avalanche over Panthers (1996)

This one could have been so good. It looked like we'd get the Avs and the Penguins in a final that would have been stacked with Hall of Famers and high-flying offenses. Instead, the Panthers pulled off an Eastern Conference final upset, then got swept by the Avalanche.

To make matters worse, it was a matchup between a recent expansion team that was so boring you couldn't even get behind them as a fun underdog and a Colorado team everyone hated at the moment because of Claude Lemieux. One of the games was 8-1, and the series ended on a triple-overtime 1-0 game that set the perfect tone for the Dead Puck era to come.

#47 – Red Wings over Capitals (1998)

#46 – Devils over Red Wings (1995)

That Panthers/Avs series was one of four straight 1990s finals that ended in a sweep, and only one of them was especially interesting. I'm not sure I remember anything at all from the 1998 final apart from the emotional Cup handoff to Vladimir Konstantinov. And the most memorable moment of the 1995 series was probably furious New Jersey fans absolutely ethering Gary Bettman on live TV.

#45 – Oilers over Bruins (1988)

#44 – Islanders over Canucks (1982)

#43 – Canadiens over Rangers (1979)

#42 – Islanders over North Stars (1981)

#41 – Oilers over Flyers (1985)

Is the NHL age of parity a good thing? It's been a topic of debate in recent years. The NHL thinks it's great; others (including me) aren't so sure. Isn't there something to be said for a good-old-fashioned dynasty?

Sure there is. But as these series remind us, often the thing to be said is "don't bother watching the final, because the powerhouse team is just going to roll to an easy win." Watching a heavy favorite cruise to a four- or five-game rout isn't all that entertaining, which is why all five of these series end up in our bottom-10. The 1988 series deserves a special mention, as it featured an embarrassing power failure that caused one of the games to be wiped out and made the Oilers the only team to ever sweep a five-game final.

#40 – Kings over Devils (2012)

This is the longest series to show up on our list so far, having gone six games. But it was over well before that, with the Kings jumping out to a 3-0 series lead and then taking their sweet time in wrapping things up when everyone just wanted it to be over. Their 6-1 blowout win to mercifully end the series brought the franchise their first ever Cup, which was cool, and the main reason I've moved this final up a few spots over the years. It would have been cooler if they'd just finished it off in four.

#39 – Ducks over Senators (2007)

#38 – Red Wings over Hurricanes (2002)

#37 – Capitals over Golden Knights (2018)

Sometimes, a matchup that doesn't carry much history can end up being all sorts of fun. Other times, not so much. Last



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

year's Caps/Knights matchup should have been great, but just didn't deliver (although the post-Cup celebrations sure did). The Wings and Hurricanes gave us one memorable OT marathon, but that's about it. And Sens/Ducks is mostly remembered for Chris Pronger getting suspended, Chris Phillips scoring into his own net, and Daniel Alfredsson shooting the puck at Scott Niedermayer.

#36 – Red Wings over Flyers (1997)

Here's the last of those 1990s sweep, and like with the 2012 Kings, I'm nudging it up a few spots because it features the dramatic end of a Cup drought. It also had plenty of star power, with Steve Yzerman and the stacked Wings facing Eric Lindros and his Legion of Doom. On paper, it had everything you'd want. In reality, we got four so-so games. Darren McCarty's goal was pretty great, though.

#35 – Bruins over Blues (1970)

Look, I moved this one up as high as I could, partly out of pity for Blues fans who saw their other appearances take up the bottom two slots. And yes, the Bobby Orr goal still stands as perhaps the most famous in NHL history, which on its own makes this final worth remembering. But other than that, it was yet another sweep that was all but guaranteed by the NHL's weird format.

#34 – Canadiens over Bruins (1977)

#33 – Oilers over Bruins (1990)

#32 – Penguins over Blackhawks (1992)

Let's file these under matchups that should have been great but didn't quite deliver. The Habs and Bruins was a great rivalry matchup that ended in a dull sweep; the two teams would have a better rematch a year later, although their classic series actually came in the 1979 semifinal. Boston's meeting with Edmonton in 1990 featured a head-to-head matchup between the year's two MVP candidates in Mark Messier and Ray Bourque and felt like Boston's best chance to finally knock off the Gretzky-less Oilers, but they went out meekly in five. And the Hawks and Pens was packed with star power and produced Jaromir Jagr's legendary goal, but only lasted four games. At least we'll always have the NHLPA '93 intro screen.

#31 – Canadiens over Flyers (1976)

This one could also fit into the "dynasties winning easily" category from up above. But it's worth moving up a few slots, if only because a) we didn't know the Habs were a dynasty yet, and b) the Flyers were the defending two-time champs. In hindsight, it was a transition between eras. But it still ended in four straight.

#30 – Bruins over Rangers (1972)

#29 – Penguins over Predators (2017)

#28 – Canadiens over Black Hawks (1973)

#27 – Penguins over Sharks (2016)

#26 – Canadiens over Bruins (1978)

#25 – Flyers over Sabres (1975)

We hit the halfway mark on our list with a six-pack of six-game finals, each perfectly fine and featuring a handful of memorable moments. Only one on-ice animal murder, though.

#24 – Kings over Rangers (2014)

This one ranks significantly higher if you're a TV executive, as it pitted the two biggest U.S. markets against each other. The series only ended up going five games, but three of those went to overtime, including the big finale.

#23 – Stars over Sabres (1999)

Eesh. This is a tough one. It was a tight, low-scoring series pitting the Presidents' Trophy-winning Stars against Dominik Hasek and ... well, mostly just Hasek. It was almost enough to earn the Sabres their first title, and maybe it should have been, but it ended with what might still stand as the most controversial moment in NHL history. Does that make the series better? Worse? I'm not sure, but it was definitely memorable.

#22 – Canadiens over Flames (1986)

#21 – Flames over Canadiens (1989)

While the 1986 series only lasted five games, it delivered a record-setting overtime, the unusual sight of the Habs playing the role of scrappy playoff underdogs, and the arrival of Patrick Roy as a legitimate star. The 1989 rematch was even better, with six close games and the Flames finally claiming the Cup with help from one of the great OGWAC stories ever.

#20 – Blackhawks over Lightning (2015)

#19 – Blackhawks over Bruins (2013)

We'll pair up two of the three Hawks' Cups, both of which came in very good six-game series against worthy opponents. The Bruins had already won a Cup two years earlier, while we all assumed the Lightning were only another year or two away from a few of their own. We'll give the edge to the Boston series based on a better ending, with two goals in 17 seconds narrowly edging out tornado warnings and a missing Stanley Cup.

#18 – Islanders over Flyers (1980)

#17 – Flyers over Bruins (1974)

#16 – Blackhawks over Flyers (2010)

This might be cheating a little bit, but some finals end up feeling more important in hindsight. In this case, two mini-dynasties and one full-blown one all get their starts in six-game finals that feature the Flyers. The first Hawks' Cup in 49 years still stands as the best memory for a generation of Chicago fans, even though it remains funny that nobody saw Patrick Kane's winner in 2010. Then again, as Flyers fans will remind us, sometimes important plays get missed.

#15 – Canadiens over Kings (1993)

This one should have been a slam dunk for the top 10. Patrick Roy and the impossible overtime magic of the storied Habs facing Wayne Gretzky and the new-school Kings trying to take out their fourth straight Canadian team? It couldn't fail. And then it kind of did, lasting only five games. The best season in



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

NHL history didn't produce the best finale, but it packed a hell of a lot of fun into just five games, including an illegal stick, an immortal wink, three overtimes and one of Bob Cole's greatest calls.

#14 – Devils over Stars (2000)

You can't ask for a much better matchup than two recent champs squaring off, especially when both features a Hall of Fame goalie in his prime. They treated us to a 7-3 opener before settling in to exactly what you'd expect from these teams in this era: low-scoring, heavy hitting, absolutely no room for anyone and five overtime periods in the last two games. And sudden death Cup-winners are always cool.

#13 – Penguins over North Stars (1991)

#12 – Devils over Mighty Ducks (2003)

Can a David vs. Goliath story still be great if David loses? I'd argue that it can, especially if Goliath has to sweat a little along the way. The 2003 Ducks remain the last team to have a player win the Conn Smythe in a losing cause, and the 1991 Stars might be the best near-miss Cinderella story in playoff history. The 2003 series gets nudged ahead because it went seven games, but the 1991 edition gave us the greatest moment.

#11 – Bruins over Canucks (2011)

A great Cup final always leaves you feeling like they should make a movie out of it. Normally, that film would be a feel-good pick-me-up. This one would be more of an apocalyptic doomsday tale, one featuring two of the most easy-to-hate finalists in memory.

The two teams served up a nonstop parade of cheap shots and sucker punches, along with multiple biting incidents and the longest suspension in Cup final history. They also gave us four shutouts, including a pair of 1-0 finals, to go along with an 8-1 laugh. The last of those shutouts came in Game 7 in front of a Vancouver crowd that went from joyous to stunned to nauseous to outright furious, culminating in a downtown riot.

Was any of it pretty? Nope. But it was memorable, and fascinating in its own way.

#10 – Islanders over Oilers (1983)

#9 – Oilers over Islanders (1984)

On paper, you couldn't ask for two better matchups, as the last two true NHL dynasties went head-to-head in what turned out to be a passing of the torch. Both sides were stacked with Hall of Famers, both believed that the Cup was their destiny, and both would come to symbolize everything fans loved (and sometimes hated) about the high-flying 1980s.

Unfortunately, neither series was all that good. The Islanders swept the 1983 meeting, and the Oilers won in five in 1984. So in that sense, both finals were disappointing, and maybe even overrated. But in the bigger picture, they were two of the most important series in NHL history, and seeing two dynasties overlap so perfectly was almost too good to be true.

#8 – Lightning over Flames (2004)

This seven-game classic was low-scoring and occasionally ugly, but it was a fitting end to the pre-cap era. The first three

games were so-so, but from there we got four straight one-goal games, including two overtimes. And of course, there was the most controversial no-goal in NHL history, courtesy of Martin Gelinis in Game 6. Flames fans still swear it was in, and that they were robbed of a Cup. They might be right.

#7 – Oilers over Flyers (1987)

The Gretzky-era Oilers went to four finals and only lost five games. Three of them came in this series, as the underdog Flyers nearly rode rookie goalie Ron Hextall to the upset. At the time, it was thrilling to see the Oilers up against the ropes and in danger of being KO'd on the league's biggest stage. The fact that they managed to hold on in a dramatic seventh game just reminded us of how good they were.

#6 – Canadiens over Black Hawks (1971)

Remember that dumb playoff format that forced an established franchise to play an expansion team in the final? The NHL finally got rid of it in time for the 1971 playoffs, and the hockey gods rewarded fans with the only seven-game final between 1966 and 1986.

The end result was fun ... and also weird. The series featured legends like Jean Beliveau, Bobby Hull, Stan Mikita, Frank Mahovlich, Henri Richard, Ken Dryden and Tony Esposito. The two teams went back and forth in a tight series, with the home team winning every game until the deciding seventh, in which the visiting Habs came back from down 2-0 to earn a 3-2 win; it was only the second Game 7 road win in Cup final history.

When it was all over, the victorious Canadiens celebrated by firing their coach.

#5 – Hurricanes over Oilers (2006)

You know when you get a matchup that just feels like it was destined to happen, because the two teams just have so much history and interlocking storylines that it can't be any other way? This matchup was the exact opposite of that.

But that was part of the appeal. In 2006, the NHL was back after a year-long lockout, and everything felt fresh and new, and maybe even a little bit random. The small-market Oilers and Hurricanes in the Stanley Cup final? Why not? TV executives hated it, but the two teams delivered a highly entertaining series filled with highlights and plot twists and one very big injury. Oh, and it ended with the most awkward Cup handoff ever. It was a lot of things, but never boring.

It all added up to a hell of a series. Is it overrated because we were all so starved for big league hockey to come back? Maybe, but after a year of watching poker and spelling bees, we'll allow it.

#4 – Red Wings over Penguins (2008)

#3 – Penguins over Red Wings (2009)

It's not the only Stanley Cup final rematch in NHL history, but it is the best. And it was a near-perfect storyline, with a Red Wings' dynasty that had spanned two eras facing the next generation in Sidney Crosby and the Penguins. The veteran Wings held off the kids in a six-game win in 2008, but the future was served in 2009. And it all culminated with just about the most ridiculous finish to a final we've ever seen, featuring



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

a literal last-second showdown between two future Hall of Famers.

#2 – Avalanche over Devils (2001)

We all remember this one for how it ended – with Joe Sakic taking the Stanley Cup from Gary Bettman and handing it directly to Ray Bourque, giving the legendary defenseman his first skate with the Cup in the very last game of a 22-year career.

And yes, that was a great moment, one that would make this final worthy of a top-10 spot all on its own. But that makes it easy to forget how great the rest of the series was. It featured Patrick Roy and Martin Brodeur, two of the three greatest goaltenders of their era (and maybe ever) going head-to-head for the only time. In addition to Bourque and the goalies, the series included five other Hall of Famers, all in their prime. It was two teams that would combine to win five of nine Cups between 1995 and 2003. And it saw the Avs rally back from a 3-2 deficit to win in seven.

And then, that perfect ending. As a fan, you can't ask for much more.

#1 – Rangers over Canucks (1994)

Here's the dirty secret of the 1994 final: It was supposed to be a coronation. Mark Messier and the Rangers had just won their second Presidents' Trophy in three years. They'd loaded up with one of the most aggressive trade deadlines in history. They'd rolled through the first two rounds without breaking a sweat, then survived the obligatory near-miss by overcoming

the Devils thanks to The Guarantee and Matteau Matteau Matteau.

In an NHL that was clearly shifting its attention to the United States, here was the biggest market ready to win the biggest prize on the biggest stage, snapping a 54-year drought in the process. It was perfect. And the hockey gods even served up a cupcake matchup in the form of the Western Conference's seventh-best team. A mere formality, really.

And then the series started. The Canucks stole Game 1 in overtime, signaling that they may not be following the script. New York roared back with three straight wins, punctuated by Mike Richter stopping the unstoppable Pavel Bure on a penalty shot. That set up the Rangers to break the drought and claim the Cup on home ice. Instead, the Canucks won the game on the strength of the wildest third period you'll ever see, then took Game 6 on home ice. Even a quarter-century later, the shot of an exhausted Trevor Linden and Kirk McLean after that win remains iconic.

It all set up a dramatic seventh game that lived up to the hype, with the Rangers taking an early lead before the Canucks battled back to get within one. Nathan LaFayette came an inch from tying it late in the third, and the Rangers would hold on for the win, if only barely.

The waiting was over. But the Rangers had had to wait just a little longer than anyone expected, thanks to one of the most compelling underdog stories in recent memory. It was a series that had everything. Including the No. 1 spot on our list.



June Hockey Thriving in North Carolina

Electric atmosphere at Bojangles' Coliseum in Calder Cup Finals

by Michael Smith

CHARLOTTE - Cowbells clanked in the parking lot long before the doors to Bojangles' Coliseum opened on a balmy, sunny June afternoon.

Grills dotted jubilant parking lot tailgates, the smells of freshly seared hamburgers and hot dogs wafting through the springtime air.

Once inside the Coliseum, a line for Charlotte Checkers merchandise snaked around the concourse. Hamilton the Pig's wagon journey to his rinkside home was a stop-and-go affair, as fans posed for pictures with the good-luck swine.

Settling into their seats, fans who had dressed for the warmer temperatures out on the blacktop donned the traditional hockey garb of a sweater, much more appropriate for the cooler indoor climate of the rink. Greazy Keyz serenaded the early arrivers with an eclectic collection of tunes played on a

vintage Hammond C3 organ. You might have also spotted the Checkers' organist rocking out with a keytar during a stoppage in play.

The cowbell clanking only intensified, as 17,023 total fans - including a Coliseum record of 8,465 in Game 1 - packed the historic building for the opening weekend of the Calder Cup Finals.

Ahh, hockey in June in North Carolina.

"The crowd in Charlotte have been outstanding," head coach Mike Vellucci said. "The enthusiasm before the games and in warm-ups is great. The coolest thing to me is this old-school [building] with great acoustics, it's very, very loud."

Situated in a crow's nest above the last handful of rows in section 109 sits (or stands, when game action is happening) Checkers radio play-by-play voice Jason Shaya, typically a one-man show - quite literally, as he calls the game, operates the sound board and plays the commercials. Yes, he's cueing



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

those up, as well. A folder of commercials sits on the desktop of his laptop. Shaya keeps a close eye on the blue timeline indicator of Windows Media Player. As a commercial nears completion, he readies the next file. And, play. In a flash, he's back on the air.

It's a similar routine for Shaya's pregame and intermission shows: press play on a playlist he's put together prior to the game, tightly edited to fit in the allotted air time.

Recently, that one-man show grew by a body, as Shaya is joined by Checkers forward Zack Stortini, who offers color commentary.

"I have a lot of fun up here," Stortini smiled. "The research that he does, the work that he puts into his job, his ability to announce players' names - I have a hard time saying some of these guys' names that are on my own team. He's an incredible guy to learn from and work with. I'm so lucky to have the opportunity for him to ask me to come up here and call the game with him. It's been a lot of fun and a great ride so far."

As it appeared the Checkers might connect on a rebound chance in Game 2, Stortini tensed up in anticipation. The game plays differently from high above where you can see plays develop before you might in the rush of the game at ice level.

"You always learn. You're always a student of the game," Stortini said. "Whether you are talking about it, sitting there taking notes or just watching, you're always looking for ways to get better and improve as a player or a person in hockey."

In a particularly long stretch of whistle-less, commercial-less action, Shaya motioned to Stortini while he reached over to grab a quick swig of water.

"The amount of work that goes into putting together a broadcast like he does. You know it's not easy," Stortini said. "Listening to his show, you would never know the amount of work that goes into producing it. He's a master at it. It's been a lot of fun."

"I've got a fever! And the only prescription is more cowbell." The classic Saturday Night Live sketch clip featuring the classic cadence of Christopher Walken is a staple at Checkers games. The crowd abided with more cowbell as the opening riffs of The Darkness' "One Way Ticket" blared over the sound system.

Twitter Ads info and privacy

"He shoots!" public address voice Brian Stickley shouted, in preparation to announce the latest Checkers' goal. "He scores!" the sold-out crowd responded in unison.

This boisterous, interactive fan support is nothing new in Charlotte, but it's only blossomed as the Checkers and Carolina Hurricanes have made deep playoff runs.

"I don't think you have enough room on that tape recorder for me to explain that one. It's been incredible here. The fans here in Charlotte are awesome, just awesome. We get so much great support from them each and every night," Stortini said. "The building is full tonight, and I feel like I've been yelling all this time just to try to get over that crowd noise. The atmosphere here is incredible."

"Incredible. It's been crazy loud," Patrick Brown said, noting the energy in the building after the team's double overtime victory over Toronto in Game 6 of the Eastern Conference Finals. "That's the loudest I think I've ever heard it in this building. It was pretty fun."

The atmosphere during the first two games of the Calder Cup Finals didn't disappoint, either.

"I couldn't be more proud of Charlotte and our fans. They really came to support. They were loud," Vellucci said after Game 2. "It was awesome. I'm very proud to be able to coach a team in Charlotte."

As fans filed out of Bojangles' Coliseum following a 5-3 Checkers win in Game 2, a din of wooing echoed through the concourse.

There were cowbells, too, and perhaps the hope that they'd get to do it all over again in a couple of weeks.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019



About Last Season: Sebastian Aho Performance Review and Grade

The young gun has grown into the top line center and franchise centerpiece that Carolina has needed for years. He pieced together an exceptional season, but he's capable of even more.

By Andrew Ahr

Sebastian Aho: 2018-2019 By The Numbers

- Age: 21
- NHL Seasons: 3
- Games Played: 82
- Scoring: 30 goals, 53 assists, 83 points
- Ice Time: 20:09 all situations, 16:02 ES, 3:00 PP, 1:07 PK
- 5 on 5 Stats: 56.45% CF, 62.38% GF
- Contract: Restricted Free Agent

Making the Grade

Competitive NHL teams are built on high end forwards, and Sebastian Aho's play this year shows that he's a cornerstone. He has become the Hurricanes' most impactful forward and will be for the foreseeable future barring a major change to the group. The 21-year-old continues to outperform expectations — this year he did so by making a seamless transition from an elite winger to a bonafide top line center.

Likely concerned about his two-way game and offensive production, Rod Brind'Amour was initially hesitant in moving Aho to the center of the ice. An odd Victor Rask injury forced the new head coach to address a lack of depth up the middle. A full season later, we now have very little doubt about Aho's ability to be a top line center.

And he was treated as such. Coming off of a 2017-18 campaign in which he averaged 17:11 time on ice per game played, Aho jumped to 20:11 TOI/GP, which led the forward group in Carolina and checked in at 23rd highest among NHL forwards. His offensive game wasn't impacted by the elevated responsibility of the Center position. He led the team in power play time on ice and was even relied on to kill penalties with his linemate Teuvo Teravainen.

Aho finished the season with 83 points (30g, 53a), reaching the 30 goal mark for the first time in his three year career. That's an incredible way to finish out your entry-level contract campaign. Aho and his representation will be in conversation with the franchise this summer as they try to iron out the details of his first significant contract. The team will be looking for term, Aho will be looking for both term and a high dollar figure.

He didn't miss a single game this season, and he's only missed four games in his entire NHL career (they all came after taking a big hit from Mark Giordano last season and sustaining a concussion). He's an incredibly resilient forward — that much was on display down the stretch this season and into the playoffs when he was seemingly playing through some kind of injury.

Sebastian Aho is an elite NHL forward, and he's coming off of a point per game season at the age of 21. But he's capable of even more. That was made clear by the head coach at this season's breakdown day.

"He's got to be able to play against the other team's best," Brind'Amour said. "He has to be able to play against Bergeron. Be mentally tougher and harder to play against."

Aho had an incredible breakout season as a top line center. He's going to get paid this summer — probably north of \$8 million AAV. He's worth every penny. But there's always room for improvement, and Sebastian Aho has given every indication that his best days are ahead of him.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

About Last Season: Brett Pesce Performance Review and Grade

Is Brett Pesce lucky or good? Maybe he's both.

By Jake Lerch

Brett Pesce: 2018-19 By The Numbers

- Age: 24
- NHL seasons: 4
- Games Played: 73
- Scoring: 7 goals, 22 assists, 29 points
- Ice Time: 20:29 all situations, 0:08 PP, 2:30 PK
- 5 on 5 stats: 52.76% CF, 59.79 GF%
- Contract: Signed through 2023-24 season with cap hit of \$4.025m.

Making the Grade

On a team loaded with back-end talent, Brett Pesce was often overshadowed by his fellow blueliners. That being said, his 2018-2019 season must be viewed as a success. The Hurricanes' 3rd round pick from the 2013 NHL draft turned in career highs in goals (7), assists (22), and points (29). The Tarrytown, NY native registered a plus/minus rating of plus 35, which trailed only Mark Giordano (+39) and Ryan McDonagh (+38) in the entire NHL. Indeed, the numbers paint a picture of a player who has improved year after year and is a bargain at \$4.025m AAV.

Pesce's PDO (team combined Save % plus Shooting % while on ice at 5v5) was 103.2. This trailed only Teuvo Teravainen's 103.4 during the regular season. PDO is widely viewed as a statistical measure of "luck", which - it's argued - should be assumed to revert to 100 over time. However, this view

assumes no causality, or at least a very limited one, between performance and results. Perhaps something that Pesce was doing while on the ice caused the team's good fortune.

Adding some weight to this theory was his PDO in the playoffs - which actually increased slightly to 103.3. He was third on the team behind Warren Foegele (107.5) and Jordan Staal (105.4).

The above performance is made all the more impressive when considering this intangible: Pesce played much of the season as a left-side defenseman even though he is a right-hand shot. This is not nearly as easy as it might sound. Holding pucks in at the offensive blue line is far more difficult on your backhand. Misplays often result in odd-man breaks or outright breakaways. It requires chemistry with your teammates and quick decision making to keep from looking foolish.

Pesce's durability was also on display this season. He played a total of 73 regular season games, missing most of November with a lower-body injury. That total was right on his average of 72.25 games per season through his first four years in the NHL. He skated in all 15 playoff games, one of 12 Canes to do so.

Looking ahead, Pesce is poised to continue as a key part of the Canes' defense. With his strength on the penalty kill and the ability to play his off side, he provides the coaching staff with options on pairings and ice time. It appears the only two things that could keep him from the lineup next year are either an injury or a trade. The former is a concern for every player. The latter is something borne of the Canes' defensive depth and management's desire to acquire additional scoring up front. However, when you consider that Pesce is under contract for the next 5 seasons, any offer for Pesce would need to come with a serious return for the Canes.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019



Checkers take the ice in Chicago before Game 3

by Nicholas Niedzielski

The Checkers' playoff run continues even further into the month of June as the deadlocked Calder Cup Finals shifts over to Chicago for Games 3, 4 and 5.

The visitors took the ice at Allstate Arena Tuesday afternoon for a quick practice as they wait for the series to resume.

"We had a little travel day yesterday so today was really just trying to get out of the hotel and get our legs going and prepare for tomorrow," said head coach Mike Vellucci of Tuesday's skate.

"It was nice to get accustomed to the building," said Roland McKeown. "Not much was said, we know the job we have to do here. We're coming into a loud rink and they're a heavy team so we'll have to have our road game at its best."

The Checkers find themselves in an identical situation to their Eastern Conference Finals series, in which they dropped Game 1 but took Game 2 at home before heading out to Toronto for three games. Charlotte would go on to take two of three on the road in that series before wrapping it up in Game 6, and they'll be looking to replicate that success in Chicago.

"I thought in Toronto we were really solid on the road," said McKeown. "We played a 200-foot game and came out of our zone clean. We're looking to carry that over and do our thing."

The team isn't getting ahead of itself, however.

"We're just playing it game by game," said Vellucci. "Every series is different. This is Game 3 and we're away from our building but I want to just treat it like any other game. Get better from the last game and work on the things we need to improve on."

The road has treated the Checkers well lately, both in the regular season and the playoffs, including wins in three of their last four contests away from home.

"There's different things at home, especially in the Finals," said Vellucci. "Everyone wants tickets, family is coming in, things like that. Now it's just hockey. Sometimes that's beneficial."

"We're a high-skill team and we like to play without the nerves," said McKeown. "You just get a little looser on the road and that builds right into our game."

The Checkers are facing a Chicago team that they never saw during the regular season, but with two tilts between them now the Checkers have a better grasp on what their opponent brings to the table.

"I think Chicago is a much heavier team than Toronto but we got accustomed to that very quickly," said McKeown. "They were close games both games. We have to be smart when we get those 3-1 leads, that's two games in a row we've given those up. But we want to build confidence from that win and look forward to building it here."

Charlotte's Game 2 win ended with some fireworks, as tempers flared to the tune of a total of 59 penalty minutes. 27 of those were assessed to Curtis McKenzie, who has since been suspended for Game 3 by the AHL.

"Everybody wants to focus on that last 10 seconds but those were two really good hockey games between two really good hockey teams that are battling and want to win," said Vellucci. "I expect the exact same thing on the road. We're going to do all the little things that will win the game."

The incident with McKenzie resulted in Steven Lorentz heading off the ice with the trainer, but the good news is that the young forward is on the trip to Chicago.

"He skated today," said Vellucci. "We'll see tomorrow if he's any better."

Julien Gauthier also participated in Tuesday's skate, though his outlook is just as unclear.

"He looks good but I'm not sure if he's going to play," said Vellucci.

TODAY'S LINKS

<https://www.charlotteobserver.com/sports/nhl/article231182228.html>
<https://theathletic.com/1010567/2019/06/05/down-goes-brown-ranking-all-50-stanley-cup-finals-of-the-expansion-era/>
<https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/june-hockey-thriving-in-north-carolina/c-307704764>
<https://www.canescountry.com/2019/6/4/18652146/carolina-hurricanes-season-in-review-sebastian-aho-performance-review-and-grade>
<https://www.canescountry.com/2019/6/4/18649539/carolina-hurricanes-season-in-review-brett-pesce-performance-review-and-grade>
<http://gocheckers.com/articles/features/checkers-take-the-ice-in-chicago-before-game-3>



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

SportScan

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

1106668 Websites

The Athletic / What to expect by drafting defenseman Philip Broberg

By Corey Pronman

Jun 4, 2019 47

Philip Broberg excited scouts early and late in the season. He blew folks away in the summer with his elite combination of skating and size. He remains a top prospect and the second best defenseman in the draft. But his play was not consistent throughout the season and we'll delve into why.

Skating

There are a lot of things that make Broberg a top prospect, but far and away why he will be drafted high is his skating. He's right up there with Jack Hughes as the best pure skater in this draft class. He's a one-man breakout and zone entry artist due to how quickly he gains speed and how dangerous his top gear is. He has powerful legs, a deep knee-bend and the ability to turn defense into offense in a split second.

There were so many times throughout the season where Broberg would make a stop, and within a second he was up the ice attacking the net. This play here is one of my favorites from the season, as he maintains momentum after stripping a puck and continues with that speed into a potential chance.

He has a very good first few steps. Note in this next play how well he changes speeds to get past a defender. I like the little skill play at the end to try and maintain possession, too.

And Broberg has the ability to break open a game with his skating, as he showed multiple times early on in the season at the Hlinka Gretzky tournament.

For 6-foot-3, Broberg is a truly special skater and it's why he has a lot of NHL teams excited about his potential.

Defensive Play

Broberg's skating allows him to break up so many plays defensively. Often throughout the season I saw him easily step into a passing lane to disrupt a team's attack. Here are two examples of how he did that at the Allsvenskan level and turned an opponent's breakout into an attack for his team.

He's so tough to beat wide. He's got such a great reach and with his skating you have to catch him off guard if you hope to get around him.

He relieves pressure so well. If teams try to chip pucks in behind him, he's able to win a footrace and generate a clean exit easily.

Broberg is able to kill penalties, and at even strength, he's fine in his own zone. He understands the positional play of a defenseman. His defensive reads are not at a very high level and some NHL scouts criticize that aspect of his game, but he's able to make stops, like in this sequence.

Vision and Decision-Making

The biggest criticism I have of Broberg's defensive zone play is sometimes he doesn't sense pressure very well. There were times throughout the season where he made some Grade-A turnovers in his half of the ice.

He's not a high-end puck-mover and won't be a true first power play guy in the NHL by any means. However, I gave his hockey sense an above-average grade because I think he has sneaky good instincts.

This play at the world juniors shows his ability to identify seams in the offensive zone.

He did not make this type of play that often this season, but this is a high-end play, so it is in him somewhere, even if he doesn't show it that often.

Despite his occasional D-zone mistake on breakouts, there was also the occasional high-level breakout that didn't require his feet. This play is an example.

The ability to identify his option, know he has to perfectly feather the pass off the boards and execute it onto the tape of his teammate is a very difficult play and a testament to his vision.

On this next play, while the chance isn't completed, I like how Broberg took a look over his shoulder, saw there was a play at the net and found his teammate even if he doesn't get his stick.

You are not getting a premier passer in Broberg and you will have to live with some risk in his game, but he can make offensive plays and at times very good one.

Puck Skills

Broberg is not going to be on highlight reels for his 1-on-1 play like Quinn Hughes or Adam Boqvist, but Broberg has good hands and, with how fast he skates, can sneak by defenders.

Here is an example where he dekes out two players, the first behind his own net to start the rush and the second once he's gained the offensive zone.

His rush is ultimately broken up by the third defender, but the skill he showed there was impressive.

He's got enough skill that, combined with his skating, allows him to create a chance or goal out of nothing. This goal versus Slovakia in the summer was one of his best moments of the season.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

Those handles are not elite but his ability to move around that defender and beat the goalie will be just what he needs to make the most of his speed.

This next play is more of an example of his hands creating a chance, as he executes an inside-out play off this rush that creates a chance on goal.

Production and Illness

Trying to analyze Broberg's production is tricky because there are a few variables at play. First, very few U18 defensemen played a full season of Allsvenskan. We've seen Oliver Ekman-Larsson and Rasmus Andersson in recent years, as well as Hampus Lindholm and Oliver Kyllington, who played partial seasons.

It's fair to say Broberg's numbers won't blow anyone away. His offense was behind three-quarters of those players, looking closer to Hampus Lindholm's production.

However, Broberg was a young 2001 birth date (June). AIK was also a top team in the Allsvenskan by a decent margin in the regular season, making it a tough team to get ice time on particularly after they added in the second half. Broberg played a fair amount early on, including on the power play, but saw his play and ice dip midseason. He was sent down to the Swedish junior league where he scored a point per game and logged heavy minutes. He was then called up and played better in the last few weeks.

AIK manager Anders Gozzi attributes this midseason dip to illness saying, "Some of the matches in the autumn, (Broberg) was the best defender on the ice. When he came home after the world juniors, he was sick and in poor shape. Therefore, it was difficult to get him to the same level he showed up in the autumn and he had to play with AIK's juniors to find his game again. Slowly but surely he has come back to his game, so it was fun to see him finish the season as he started it."

Some NHL scouts did express concern around February that his play was declining. There was a bug, though, that went around the world juniors, several prominent prospects like Vitali Kravtsov and K'Andre Miller caught it, as well as several Swedish players.

Sweden's U20 coach Tomas Montén said Broberg was hit hard by that stomach bug. "He could only drink for 36 hours and then stepped on the ice to play in the quarterfinal for us."

Hockey World's Impression

An NHL scout said: "I love the skating and size. I like the shot. I think he has offense, he can rush the puck 5-on-5 because of his skating and can create as a second-layer guy. He can defend size and speed. There's potential he's a total home run."

An NHL executive said: "He doesn't skate. He gallops."

AIK manager Anders Gozzi said: "Broberg has enormous potential and will play in the NHL in the near future. He is one of the best defenders we have gotten in AIK throughout the years due to his skating and skill level."

Sweden's U20 coach Tomas Montén said: "Broberg is a mature young man that wants to get better. He is not shy from telling other players when they don't work. He's a big D who is a great skater. He can carry the puck well and, as long as he doesn't try to force plays, he's a great D. He will be able to defend well because of his size, reach and skating."

Projection

Broberg is a dynamic defenseman because of his frame and elite skating. He has offense in his game and will be a solid defender.

There are ways to pick apart his game and season. He's not a high-end skill type. He didn't produce a ton, and there is some risk in his game. However, he impressed consistently versus his peer group at the Hlinka Gretzky, the November U18 5 Nations and at the IIHF U18s. He was also quite ill around the time his league performance dipped.

I project Broberg to be a top pairing defenseman in the NHL. He won't be a top power play guy by any means, but he will be a second unit type who can play tough minutes and drive play while playing against opponents best players.

The Athletic LOADED: 06.05.2019

1106669 Websites

The Athletic / Down Goes Brown: Want the NHL to just call the rulebook exactly as written? Be careful what you wish for

By Sean McIndoe

Jun 4, 2019

I kind of love the NHL rulebook.

I don't love everything in it, and I certainly don't always love the way it's called, especially when my team is playing. But I've always been fascinated by this document that's existed for a century while being subject to constant tinkering, with brand-new rules living alongside ones that have sat untouched for decades.

Unless you're an NHL official, you've probably never bothered to read through the thing. But you should, because it's packed with oddities and loopholes and sub-loopholes. I get into some of them in my book, like the rule that can force the players to officiate their own game, and I've written over the years about some of the weird exceptions most fans don't know, like how a goalie can still play the puck outside of the trapezoid if he keeps one foot in the crease.

But these days, everyone seems to be mad at the rulebook. It's too complicated or not complicated enough, and we're either using way too much replay review or nowhere near enough, depending on how your favorite team's most recent game just turned out.

There are really two ways you can approach a sports rulebook. You can view it as a guideline, a sort of starting point that lays out the basics of how the game should work and then leaves it to the officials to figure out what they're actually going to call. Or you can view the rulebook as the law of the land, to be followed to the letter.

I've always been a fan of the first option. But I'm increasingly getting the sense that I'm in a small minority and that most fans are solidly in the second camp. And I have to admit that approach holds a certain appeal, especially given how this postseason has gone. Why not get rid of the interpretations and gray areas and selective enforcement and just call the rules as they're written? I hear it all the time from other fans, media and even the occasional coach and player: Stop "managing the game" — whatever that means on a given night — and just call the damn rules.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

It's a convincing argument. So convincing, in fact, that I think they're winning me over. I'm ready to switch sides. I'm going to become a rulebook absolutist.

After all, as I'm often told, rules are rules, and we have to get it right. So just call the rulebook exactly as written. The whole thing. Every word of it.

Man, it feels good to say that out loud. So now that we're all on the same side here, let's reacquaint ourselves with seven rules from the actual NHL rulebook that we'll now be calling each and every time, exactly as written.

Rule 67.3: Goalies freezing the puck after a glove save

How it's typically called: If a goalie snags a shot with his glove, the whistle blows pretty much immediately. Every once in a great while, you'll see a goaltender glove a long shoot-in, and the referee will wait to see if he wants to play it. But unless he makes a move to put the puck back in play, the whistle blows and we get a faceoff in the zone.

But the rulebook actually says: "A goalkeeper who holds the puck with his hands for longer than three seconds shall be given a minor penalty unless he is actually being checked by an opponent."

In other words, unless an opponent is right there and actively trying to get the puck, the goaltender isn't allowed to just freeze it to end the play. If a goalie snags a shot and has a reasonable opportunity to play it, he has to do so. The rulebook is actually pretty explicit on that, going on to explain that "the object of this entire rule is to keep the puck in play continuously, and any action taken by the goalkeeper which causes an unnecessary stoppage must be penalized without warning."

The weirdest part of the rule is the three-second limit. When was the last time you saw a referee wait three seconds before blowing his whistle when the goalie gloves a puck? I'm not sure it's ever happened.

What that would look like: Remember in "NHL '94" when you'd always try to keep the play going even though that meant accidentally passing it to your opponent for an empty-net goal at least once a period? Apparently that's what the rulebook wants.

How we'll enforce it: Any time a goalie gloves a shot and holds on for a whistle, we'll have to let coaches challenge to see if any player was checking him at the time. If not, it's an automatic minor penalty, because rules are rules, and we have to get it right.

Rule 14.1: Adjustments to goaltender equipment

How it's typically called: If a goaltender has a problem with his equipment — let's say his helmet, glove or a skate blade — he lets the ref know and heads over to the bench, and we all wait patiently for a few minutes until it gets sorted out.

But the rulebook actually says: "No delay shall be permitted for the repair or adjustment of goalkeeper's equipment. If adjustments are required, the goalkeeper shall leave the ice and his place shall be taken by the substitute goalkeeper immediately."

Huh. Apparently, every one of those goalie/trainer powwows we've seen over the years was technically illegal. The rule is pretty clear: Any equipment problem has to be taken care of off the ice, with the backup goalie taking over in the meantime. By the way, this one is so important, it actually appears in the rulebook three separate times, also showing up in 63.2 and then again in 65.2.

And what if the goalie tries to sneak in a quick adjustment? It's a penalty. No, really: "For an infraction of this rule by a goalkeeper, a

minor penalty shall be imposed." And note that the rule doesn't even mention the trainer — it applies to any adjustment at all, even one the goalie does on his own.

What that would look like: Lots of backup goalies coming in cold because a mask got dented or a strap on a glove or pad came loose.

How we'll enforce it: Any coach who sees a goaltender even looking at his equipment can demand that he immediately be removed from the game, because rules are rules, and we have to get it right.

Rule 70.3: Players coming onto the ice during a break to warm up or test out an injury

How it's typically called: Occasionally, a player who's been banged up will hop over the boards during a break to go for a quick spin. It's fine — he's clearly not hurting anybody — and can even provide a fun bit of drama. Did he look OK? Did he wince? Did he head back to the bench or straight for the room?

But the rulebook actually says: "Except at the end of each period or for entering the game legally, no player may, at any time, leave the players' bench."

OK, but surely we can allow a quick warmup, right? Nope: "Players shall not be permitted to come on the ice during a stoppage of play or at the end of the first and second periods for the purpose of warming up." That's pretty specific and covers the exact situation we often see.

And here's my favorite part: Guess what the consequences are for violating this rule? It's not a minor penalty or even a misconduct. No, it's that the ref "will report any violation of this rule to the Commissioner for disciplinary action."

What that would look like: I kind of want to know. Like, if somebody decides to test out a bad ankle during a commercial break, does the referee have to call Gary Bettman immediately? Can he wait until after the game? Can he text? Since this rule was clearly written in 1923, does he have to write a letter with pen and quill?

How we'll enforce it: I really think you'd have to have Bettman available at all times via Skype so the referee can rush over and tattle on someone for testing a bad hammy, because rules are rules, and we have to get it right.

Rule 75.4(iii): Trying to get the other team to commit a penalty

How it's typically called: Brad Marchand exists. So do the Tkachuk brothers. And Nazem Kadri, Brendan Gallagher, Leo Komarov and any number of pests and instigators who are experts at getting under an opponent's skin and suckering them into a penalty. And good for them — that's just how hockey's played, right?

But the rulebook actually says: "Misconduct penalties shall be assessed under this rule for the following infractions ... (iii) Any player who persists in any course of conduct (including threatening or abusive language or gestures or similar actions) designed to incite an opponent into incurring a penalty."

Yeah, apparently you can't do anything that's meant to try to draw a penalty, including directing abusive language at an opponent. Trash talk, face washes or even a garden-variety smirk? The rule does say "persists," so maybe the first one is free, but after that, it's supposed to be 10 minutes.

What that would look like: Sean Avery would have shattered Tiger Williams' all-time penalty record roughly three weeks into his career.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

How we'll enforce it: Oh, this would be fun. Did your team just receive a penalty? Coaches should be able to challenge under what would basically be the "he had it coming" rule; they wouldn't necessarily take the minor off the board, but refs would have to assess a 10-minute penalty to anyone who had persisted in any effort to egg on their opponent.

And by the way, note that there isn't even anything in the rule about the attempt having been successful. Honestly, we could probably have challenges from both sides after every post-whistle scrum, at which point we could go to the video to see if anyone did anything at all to try to incite an opponent. It would take forever, but it would be the right thing to do, because rules are rules, and we have to get it right.

Rule 75.2(i): Swearing

How it's typically called: Players swear. Kind of a lot. As long as they don't obviously direct it at the referee or use any slurs, it's just part of the game. Don't read lips, kids.

But the rulebook actually says: A minor penalty shall be assessed to "any identifiable player who uses obscene, profane or abusive language or gestures directed at any person."

That's it. You swear, it's two minutes. And not just at the referee. The rule is clear that it applies to naughty words directed at "any person." I guess you're still allowed to swear at inanimate objects, but opponents? Nope. That's an automatic minor.

And it is a minor, by the way, not a misconduct. Rule 75.4 makes the order of operations clear, outlining that a misconduct is only called on a player who continues to swear "after being assessed a minor." According to the rulebook, the minor has to come first.

What that would look like: Pretty f###ing dumb.

How we'll enforce it: Coaches can't typically hear what's happening on the ice, so they'd need to be alerted by the players. Imagine every scrum being interrupted by a player suddenly turning away, eyes wide with horror, and pointing at an opponent while yelling, "He just said a swear word!" like a frightened kindergarten kid. Maybe it would be like puck-over-glass and the whole team would start furiously pointing at the same time.

Of course, video review doesn't really work here. So we'd need something new: audio review. Officials would have to throw on some headphones and go back over the footage to see if they could hear any bad words. It's possible we might need to make each player wear a mic so we can get a clear feed and identify who said what. We don't have that technology right now, but it should go without saying that we need to develop and implement it immediately, because rules are rules, and we have to get it right.

Rule 39.2 and 39.3: Arguing with the referee

How it's typically called: Players (and coaches) argue with the referee all the time. Just about every player who gets a penalty will have a few words for the official on the way to the box, and often more than a few. If they think a call is missed, they'll make that known, sometimes even as the play is still going on.

Every once in a while, a player will go too far, drop a very obvious F-bomb and get a misconduct for their trouble. Even more rarely, a referee will occasionally hand out a two-minute minor for unsportsmanlike conduct. But in the overwhelming majority of the cases, they let the player have their say and we all move on with our lives.

But the rulebook actually says: Questioning the referee in any way is an automatic minor penalty.

No, really ... it is. Rule 39.2(i) calls for a minor penalty to "any player who challenges or disputes the ruling of an official." No qualifiers or exceptions — you dispute an official's call, it's an automatic two minutes.

And in case you're wondering, coaches get their own rule. That's 39.3, which covers automatic bench minors. Coaches are apparently allowed to at least question officials, but they can't bang the boards or swear. And my favorite part comes in 39.3(ii), which prescribes a minor penalty for any coach who "uses the name of any official coupled with any vociferous remarks." No being vociferous!

What that would look like: Ever seen a penalty box crowded with 20 players and an entire coaching staff? You will, roughly three minutes into every game.

How we'll enforce it: Simple. Any time the opposing team seems to be challenging or disputing a ruling by the official, we'd expect to see an immediate penalty. If for some reason the referee doesn't make the call, the other coach could demand a replay review of the footage.

Of course, demanding a review is also technically challenging or disputing a ruling by the official. So it would have to carry an automatic penalty of its own. And if the referee forgot to apply that, then the other team would have to ask for a review, which would also be challenging a call and therefore would also have to result in a penalty. We'd end up in coaches' challenge inception, where the only way to enforce the rules would be to break the rules, and the whole thing would be completely ridiculous, and anyone with any common sense at all would hate it forever. But we need to do it anyway, because rules are rules, and we have to get it right.

Rule 76.6: Pretty much anything that happens before a faceoff

How it's typically called: Most NHL faceoffs play out the same way. The centers lean in and probably make a little contact, just to stake out their territory. Opposing wingers jostle each other, often standing elbow-to-elbow or at least swatting each other's sticks out of the way. Some sort of weird hockey gravity kicks in, pulling everyone into the faceoff circle in the moments before the puck is dropped.

As a viewer at home, you probably don't notice any of it. In fact, you might not even see it, because broadcasts often don't even cut to the faceoff until the puck has just been dropped. Because who even cares, right?

But the rulebook actually says: All of those things are faceoff violations that should stop play.

Rule 76.6 is one of the longest in the rulebook, and it spells out all the different ways a faceoff can be done wrong. That includes "any physical contact with an opponent prior to the puck being dropped," like those wingers jostling for position before every draw. And of course, everyone's skates have to be in the exact right place or else they've committed a violation.

A faceoff violation isn't necessarily a penalty, although two on the same draw is an automatic minor. But the rulebook is clear that if any of the long list of infractions in 76.6 take place, the whistle has to be blown and the faceoff has to be done again. And again. And again and again, until everything is perfect.

What that would look like: Remember when the league briefly cracked down on certain faceoff violations a few years ago and it felt like every draw took forever? It would be like that, only way worse.

How we'll enforce it: This one's actually pretty straightforward. After any goal, the coach should be able to challenge for a faceoff



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

violation on the draw that preceded it. Go back, look at the footage and if anyone's toe was in the wrong place, it's no goal.

Go back to the Bruins' first goal on Saturday. See how there are anywhere from four to eight(!) players who are technically in violation of where they're supposed to be, including Jake DeBrusk being pretty much entirely inside the circle when the puck is dropped? Sorry, Boston, that's no goal now. Sure, none of it has anything to do with the actual goal. But neither do many offside reviews, and we've all agreed we still need to pick them apart with freeze-frame analysis, all in the name of accuracy.

Offside and faceoff violations are basically the same category of infraction: common plays involving black-and-white rules around player positioning that don't call for penalties but are supposed to result in plays being blown dead. There's really no logical reason to treat them differently. If you're going to allow for challenges on one, you have to be in favor of challenges for the other. After all, rules are rules, and we have to get it right.

Or ... and just hear me out here ... maybe we don't.

Maybe we can remember that the rulebook is there to serve the game, not the other way around. Maybe we can accept that just because something is technically against the strict letter of the law, it doesn't have to be called that way every time, and certainly not subject to frame-by-frame review after the fact. And maybe we can acknowledge that just getting it right every time actually shouldn't be the goal, at least as long as "it" is some nitpicky moment that ultimately had nothing to do with the result of the play.

That's the other option. But until we can agree on that, then sure, let's call the rulebook as written. And that means exactly as written. With penalties for swearing, equipment adjustment and routine saves.

If we work really hard, we can probably use the rulebook to get to a point where no goal ever counts and no player makes it through a game without serving time for something.

The games will be unwatchable, but at least we'll know we're getting it right. And isn't that what really matters?

The Athletic LOADED: 06.05.2019

1106670 Websites

The Athletic / 'He's 18 going on 30': 2019 NHL draft prospect Alex Newhook matches skill with maturity

By Scott Wheeler

Jun 4, 2019

BUFFALO — Skating coach Mena Westhaver has been working with the Victoria Grizzlies for almost 30 years and she has never met anyone quite like Alex Newhook. Kevin Craig, the team's assistant coach for the last four seasons, hasn't either.

They knew he was different, that he was special, based on the way he treated their children. Westhaver's son Jake and Craig's son Adam work together as the team's stick boys and the latter took

such a shining to the Grizzlies star that he changed his hockey number to No. 18 to take after him.

"He'll go out of his way just to make those guys feel good and they're 10 and 11 years old. He wants everybody to be happy. If they have a question, he won't just brush them off. He'll ask them, he'll be there. It's really good to see. You don't see that a lot," Craig said.

"It's just a different aura around him."

And it has followed Newhook on his hockey journey across Canada.

Newhook transported his life as a young teenager from St. John's, N.L., to Aurora, Ont., to play for the Triple-A York Simcoe Express. There he won the OMHA's player of the year award and had 43 goals and 74 points in 33 games to lead the ETAMMHL in scoring by seven points. (In the history of the ETAMMHL, only two players had ever bested Newhook's 2.24 points per game before that season: Steven Stamkos and Taylor Hall.)

He was taken 41st overall by the Halifax Mooseheads in the QMJHL Draft and 23rd overall by the Lincoln Stars in the USHL Draft, despite both teams knowing he was unlikely to report.

He wanted to go the NCAA route in order to get an education and was so talented that Boston College recruited him out of minor hockey.

To maintain his eligibility, he chose the Victoria Grizzlies and the second-tier BCHL, but never acted like he was bigger than it.

This season, whenever the Grizzlies would offer the players an optional skate, Newhook would speak up while others requested the day off, insistent that everyone practise.

"He's 18 going on 30," explained goaltender coach Jason Reimer. "He's a pro. He's so mature. He wants to be on the ice all the time. He just loves hockey. He wants to get better. He always has a high work ethic and he's unreal in the room. Guys respect him and he knows how to respect guys as well. He's a pretty unique kid."

When a diehard young Grizzlies fan named Elise was in isolation during a Game 7 in the playoffs due to a combination of disabilities, it was Newhook who reached out to Westhaver to set up a visit to the hospital so that he could bring her a signed stick and some team apparel.

"Elise is a special girl. And when you have guys like (Adam and Jake) helping out every day and they're around the rink, I remember myself being in that position and being a younger guy and looking up to guys playing junior hockey. I just tried to make it fun for them and develop a bit of a relationship there," Newhook said of his biggest fans.

Westhaver, whose son Marty also played on the Grizzlies this season, often had Newhook over to her house for dinners, and described him as being "the full, real deal."

"Those kids in treatment, those connections are the best medicine possible. He's an excellent individual. He's personable, he's attentive to detail, he's respectful to everybody," Westhaver said.

When Grizzlies head coach Craig Didmon had to select a team captain last fall, Newhook was a "no-brainer." And he didn't disappoint, right down to his very last game in the BCHL, a two-goal effort in a 3-2 loss in the third round.

"He's an incredible player. I learned a lot from him on and off the ice and he definitely helped me get here," said linemate Alexander Campbell of his surprise invite to the NHL scouting combine and the role Newhook played in drawing attention to his Victoria teammates.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

"He's a great guy, super nice, very respectful to everyone, super humble kid. He's a top prospect and he's down to earth. A great leader off the ice too, he showed me the ropes."

In the team's year-end exit interviews, Didmon received more praise about the team's leadership than ever before.

"He's a natural born leader. You can critique him, you can challenge him, and there's never an excuse. He'll lock horns with another team over the course of a game because he's a marked man and he'll just find another layer. He's just extremely durable and his level of compete is exceptional. He's very resilient. He gets knocked down, which rarely happens anyways, and it's just like you poked the bear," Didmon said.

"Plus he's constantly getting better because of his commitment. For a kid who is just so focused and committed, you know the whole team is just going to follow suit. He's outspoken and not afraid to step up and say what needs to be said but at the same time his leadership by example is exceptional."

All of those off-ice attributes translated to on-ice success.

By the end of his draft year, Newhook had followed up a rookie of the year campaign by becoming the BCHL's leading scorer with 102 points (a remarkable 35 more than his nearest teammate and 18 more than anyone else in the league) in 53 games, plus 24 points in 15 playoff games.

He worked particularly closely with Westhaver on his skating, tweaking everything from his acceleration to his transitions out of circles, his energy transfer, changing directions without delays and getting low to his centre of gravity.

"It was nice to be able to send him a text after a game and say 'Hey, great transitions, great recovery, great acceleration' and he would know exactly what plays in the game I was referring to and he would go 'Oh yeah, I remember.' So it's nice to see him apply his hard work and put it into action when needed," Westhaver said.

"Alex is one of those players where if I pull him aside and we're working on something and it's not quite happening, he understands the finer details and pieces of it and he doesn't let go. He's a very diligent individual and he takes that care in all aspects of his life and on the ice you really see it. He wants to be better than just his best and like a dog on a bone he's not quitting until he gets there."

Newhook credited Westhaver for the progress made.

"She's a great skating coach. Having access to her every week it's something that's very important and something I try to prioritize in my game, is keep that skating edge all the time. She has helped me a lot with that," he said.

But everyone else credited him. Westhaver called Newhook one of those rare players who can "turn it on when he needs to and beat anybody," a skill she said was "not just physical but mental."

Today, Newhook is one of the best skaters in the 2019 draft.

"The first couple of steps is just insane. He has an extra couple of gears. He's relentless on the puck and when he does get the puck he never gives it up. He doesn't want to let it go. It just stays with him. He goes around guys and the puck stays on him like it's glued to his stick. It's really something to watch," Craig said.

"As a coaching staff, when he gets the puck and he's going to drive the net we all sit there in awe like 'How is he going to do it this time?'"

Newhook didn't just work on his skating, either. All of his coaches point to the progression of his shot, which allowed Newhook to score 54 goals in a combined 81 games split between the BCHL, the World Jr. A Challenge and the world under-18 championships (where he was named one of Team Canada's top three players) this season.

Whenever Reimer was forced to play goalie in practice, Newhook was the one player he could never stop in their breakaway game.

"Oh man," Reimer said, "he's the one guy that if he wants to score, he can score."

From a goaltender's standpoint, Reimer called Newhook's release "unbelievable."

"He's got a way about him that he'll have the puck in front of him and he'll just be stickhandling and then he can just release it basically without moving the puck. It's almost like his blade just opens up and he just shoots. He's deking and then it's just boom, shot," Reimer said.

"He also does this thing on players and goalies alike where he does a lot of shoulder movements so you never really know which way he's going to go because it seems like his body weight is shifting all the time. It's pretty interesting. He does it on D a lot too. He blows by everyone just by doing skulls, he's not even skating. It's unbelievable. And then he can shoot it wherever he wants."

Those skills may even propel Newhook into the draft's top 10.

"He still has a few parts to become a world-class shooter. He gets so fast down the ice sometimes it's just being able to drive the net or make plays," Didmon said.

"But NHL scouts tell me his skating is a 5/5, his IQ is a 5/5 and I know his character is a 5/5 so he's got the parts."

Those NHL scouts came in droves to Victoria this season. And unlike in the CHL or the USHL, where they were there to see several players, everyone acknowledged the added pressure Newhook faced knowing all of the scouts were focused on him.

At Victoria's September showcase tournament, there were as many as 30 scouts in the rink to see Newhook.

"He was under a heavy spotlight for the whole season. It's interviews before the game, after the game, on the day off, questionnaires. It was really busy for him but he never complained and it never seemed to bother him. If it did, it was the first 10 games and like everything else he just figured it out," Didmon said.

Craig grouped Newhook with the most talented players he's seen come through British Columbia, including Jost and Dallas Stars captain Jamie Benn.

"He practises like he plays. Everything is always 100 percent, he's not happy when he makes a mistake, even if it's in practice, and that's the way he wants everybody to go with it so he just pushes people's levels up because of it," Craig said.

"You can't really say anything bad about him. He has just been such a good guy with everything. It's like 'I'm going to play hockey' and you don't see that too often with kids. For an 18-year-old, with guys around the rink all the time, you wouldn't know. He holds it really well if it is bothering him, let's put it that way."

The Grizzlies will miss the person as much as his talent, his elementary school visits as much as his big goals.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

"He has been an outstanding individual. The on-ice speaks for itself but off-ice he has been such a leader with us, he has just gone above and beyond," Craig said.

"He keeps everybody going, he's just like a fireplug. Everybody feeds off of him, whether we're down in a game and he just has say a couple of words and the guys just rally behind him and away we go."

The staff at Boston College is excited to rally behind him too. Head coach Jerry York hopes that Newhook and Matthew Boldy, another potential top-10 pick in this year's draft, will be his new dynamic duo next season.

When York's assistant coaches returned from trips to watch Newhook play in Victoria this season, they always came away more impressed with his progress than they expected. NHL general managers have been calling York for intel on his recruit all season as well.

York, too, has already grown to like Newhook, the person as much as Newhook, the player. He talks glowingly of Newhook's family and of his Newfoundland background.

When they recruited Newhook, Boston College staff weren't sure how strong he would get (he's only 5-foot-10.5) but when Newhook visited the school in the winter, York was impressed by his strength. Newhook performed very well at the scouting combine, too, finishing first in the agility testing.

"He's an outstanding young guy. He really is. We like him a lot. He's strong, he's very smart with the puck, his compete level is outstanding, I really think he's going to make a huge impact on our team next year," York said.

"He has taken a major step forward. He goes to holes too. We always talk about hockey sense and how do you get it and well I've never quite been sure how you get it but he has it. He uses other players very well and he wants to be the very best he can be. We're really excited by him, plus he's such a good young person too so he's going to fit in really well and be a real leader for us."

Boldy, who will be roommates with Newhook, is looking forward to playing with him after competing against him at the U18 Worlds.

"I'm super excited to play with him. He was really good. He's super skilled and the type of player I like to play with. I think we're going to fit really well together," Boldy said.

After the combine concluded in Buffalo, Newhook went home to Newfoundland for the first time since Christmas. Later this month, he will bring many of his family to Vancouver to complete his coast-to-coast journey.

He knows he has come a long way — and that he took an unconventional route to get there. Shortly after wrapping up his testing at the combine, though, he promised that his journey is only just beginning.

"(The combine) is something you work towards. You have to be yourself and the testing shows your level of commitment during the offseason. It's important to me. I think I'm an honest person, a pretty respectful guy, and I work hard in everything that I do. I hope they see that," he said.

"I'm happy with where I am today and I'm happy with the path that I've chosen. Pretty much every interview I go into it's 'Hey, tell me about your coast-to-coast story'. I've been on a pretty cool journey so far."

The Athletic LOADED: 06.05.2019

1106671 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Chara's injury could spell conditioning struggles for Bruins captain

Chris Johnston | @reporterchris

June 4, 2019, 10:10 PM

BOSTON — The morning after Derek Stepan's jaw was fractured into pieces late in the 2014 playoffs, the oral surgeon was optimistic he'd be able to get him back on the ice in time to resume his pursuit of the Stanley Cup.

But it was no slam dunk, not even when the surgery started.

"I went in believing I was going to play more games that year, but I had the potential of waking up with my mouth wired shut and being done," Stepan said Tuesday from his off-season home in Minnesota.

"He was able to get in there and put a plate in and obviously, I was on a soft diet. I would probably say in most cases he'd want to get it just wired shut, but obviously, it was a little bit unique and he was able to piece it together without having to do that.

"Went from there."

It's the same no-man's land of recovery where Boston Bruins captain Zdeno Chara finds himself today, having suffered what is believed to be a broken jaw when a puck rode up his stick and struck him on the right side of the face during Game 4 of the Stanley Cup Final.

Chara met with doctors upon the team's return to Boston on Tuesday, but the exact nature of his injury remains unknown. We may not find out until after this series is over. However, you can be sure that he and the medical staff are doing everything possible to try and get him ready for Thursday's Game 5, or at worst Sunday's Game 6.

Stepan's broken jaw cost him one game in the 2014 Eastern Conference Final and included a four-day layoff. The biggest challenge he faced after surgery was getting enough fuel into his body to withstand the rigours of playoff hockey.

"If you are eating anything, it's very small pieces of chicken grinded up to nothing," said Stepan. "It takes a long time to eat. You're not able to get as much in as you'd like, and the energy levels [suffer].

"You're just playing so much, you're practising every day, so the difficult thing is getting food into your system and there's not a whole lot of options for you because you're not really chewing anything."

Still, the then-New York Rangers centre was able to grind through the final seven games of the season after missing one following a late, high check from Montreal Canadiens forward Brandon Prust in the East Final.

Chara sat out the final 37 minutes of Monday's game in St. Louis after leaving a trail of blood on the ice when Brayden Schenn's shot struck him. He watched the third period from the Bruins' bench wearing a full face shield and teammates believe he would have tried to play had doctors not prevented it from happening.

"He's an absolute warrior," said Brad Marchand.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

On Tuesday, Bruins coach Bruce Cassidy mused about the possibility of forging on without Chara in a 2-2 series with the Blues. That might force him to dress seven defencemen — Steven Kampfer and Urho Vaakanainen are the most likely candidates, assuming Matt Grzleczyk isn't ready to return from a concussion — which would represent an anxiety-inducing downgrade at a critical moment.

"You just hate to lose a key player, your captain, one of your leaders," said Cassidy. "You lose some intangibles, as well."

Of course, it's going to have to take something significant to keep the 42-year-old Chara from stepping away from the chance to burnish his legacy with another Cup.

You can count Stepan and former NHLer Jeremy Roenick, who twice broke his jaw during his playing days, among those who wouldn't be surprised to see him get it out.

Roenick missed 20 days with a broken jaw in 1999 after taking a vicious hit from Derian Hatcher and believes Chara's biggest obstacle will be controlling his breathing if he plays with that injury.

"Especially, if they have to put a bunch of wires in there," he said.

Stepan's return was made a little more comfortable because he was outfitted with a modified helmet that looked more like something a football player might wear. It included a visor to protect his eyes and a separate padded protector that hung loosely around his jawline.

"They said as long as you don't take another blunt injury directly to the jaw, it's not going to be too big of an issue," said Stepan. "There wasn't too much pain for me, for the most part. I had that protective makeshift helmet — not the ones with the full jaw because they didn't want that cage to come in and push my jaw in. They kind of made one up.

"They just didn't want me to get hit again."

Stepan scored twice in his return from the injury at Bell Centre and skated in his usual spot on the top line against Los Angeles throughout the Stanley Cup, logging more than 31 minutes the night the Kings won the series in double overtime.

When it was all over, Stepan weighed in at 165 pounds during the Rangers end-of-season medical testing — about 20 pounds less than he typically plays at.

"It was that time of the year, you just find a way to get it done," said Stepan. "You put your skates on and you do everything you can to help.

"I think [Chara] will be just fine. He's a pretty tough dude. He's a lot tougher than me, so if I can do it, he'll probably do it with ease."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.05.2019

1106672 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Ship has sailed on potential Erik Karlsson return to Senators

Wayne Scanlan

June 4, 2019, 8:11 PM

There are human years, dog years, and then there are years spent following sport.

For a diehard fan or a monitoring journalist, it can feel as though a lifetime's worth of emotions are experienced in a single season invested in the home team.

Have the Toronto Raptors' playoffs not been raging for six months now? So it seems, as a nation lives and dies with each game in this agonizingly long NBA Finals.

In a similar vein, when sports talk radio was buzzing this week over a report Erik Karlsson and his wife, Melinda, wanted to be closer to her Ottawa home with Erik's next contract, the thought came to mind: How long has Karlsson been gone from Ottawa, two years, three?

That he left just nine months ago in a trade with the San Jose Sharks seems impossible. Now, picture the days when he roamed the same Ottawa ice surface as his mentor and hero, Daniel Alfredsson. Feels like the Mesozoic Era in the Ottawa Valley.

Fans have long since reconciled with Karlsson's departure, the first clear signal that the Senators were going deep into a rebuild (though cynics in town still call it cost-cutting). Thereafter, the Sens got rid of Matt Duchene, Ryan Dzingel and Mark Stone, while acquiring a raft of draft picks and prospects, including a 19-year-old Swedish defenceman thought capable of being Karlsson's replacement — Erik Brannstrom.

That is, if Ottawa doesn't already have the next Karlsson in Thomas Chabot, the 18th overall draft choice from 2015. In Karlsson's absence, Chabot thrived this past season, eating minutes and leading the team in assists (41) and points (55). Unlike Karlsson, both Chabot and Brannstrom shoot left.

Add in Karlsson's recent injury record — foot and then groin issues, both debilitating at times — plus the fact the Senators are unlikely to offer Karlsson at 29 years old the contract he would want, and it would seem Montreal would be the better fit. The Canadiens are desperate for a power play quarterback and are further along in their rebuild.

It wouldn't be hard to imagine a career in Montreal with a permanent home in Ottawa, two hours away. Melinda can be close to her family and she and Erik can re-connect with the community they came to love here.

As for the fans in Ottawa, they either didn't take the idea seriously, or have moved on from Karlsson, or both. Months gone since the Karlsson reign feel like years. Little more than eight months ago the mere thought of Karlsson leaving the Senators felt like the end of the world.

A short time later, the loss of Stone — younger, healthier, soon to be thriving with the Vegas Golden Knights and Team Canada — seemed the bigger blow, another indication of how quickly sentiment can shift in a fan base. Trading Stone was a last straw, the proof that the organization was willing to let go of their final veteran cornerstone. And a fan darling.

There was a time in Ottawa when Stone barely seemed suitable to carry No. 65's skates. And yet No. 61 emerged as the unlikeliest of NHL superstars — the methodical puck hawk, with a knack for clutch goals; stone-faced, until he scores a goal and explodes with an emotional celly. Stone is missed, dearly.

Incredibly, the early Tuesday results of a poll on an Ottawa's sports station had a slight majority opposed to the Senators signing Karlsson as a free agent on July 1. By late afternoon, the tide had



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

shifted, with 65 per cent in favour of bringing back the former captain, at least from those who went through the motions to vote. At that, a rather modest majority considering Karlsson is the most talented player the Senators have known.

Had such a poll existed the day before he was traded, more than 90 per cent would have lobbied on Karlsson's behalf, voting after beating down the Senators office doors to reinforce their message. Some of those who remain in favour of a Karlsson reboot dream of a day when Eugene Melnyk moves on as owner and the new ownership brings back Alfredsson as team president and Karlsson as a player.

This was the same dream that imagined new ownership saving the bid to build a new downtown arena for the Senators on LeBreton Flats. "Missed it by that much," to quote the great Maxwell Smart, with the Senators remaining at their facility in Kanata.

Until a time when the bigger dreams come true, the Senators fan base is choosing not to torture itself with such unlikely scenarios as Karlsson returning, physically healed, and willing to play for a long term contract so reasonable even the Senators would be obliging.

The ship has sailed on Karlsson being a Senator for life. It was enough to have him while he was in his prime, carrying the team on his back during a crazy playoff run to the Eastern Conference Final in 2017. But a page has been turned. The Senators belong to young Brady Tkachuk now, and Chabot. Under Karlsson, the culture was very different. Who wants to turn back?

Players and fans alike have made their goodbyes. Karlsson was saluted with a standing ovation in his return to Ottawa with the Sharks on Dec. 1, properly thanked for the memories.

What NHL sweater will Karlsson be wearing on his next visit?

Few in Ottawa are wasting precious energy on the slim-to-none probability the jersey will have a Senators logo.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.05.2019

1106673 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Why going all-in on Erik Karlsson is worth it to speed up Canadiens' rebuild

Eric Engels

June 4, 2019, 3:44 PM

MONTREAL—This is not an opportunity the Montreal Canadiens can turn away from, if it is in fact an opportunity being presented to them.

Assuming Don Brennan's story in the Ottawa Sun checks out—that impending unrestricted free agent Erik Karlsson is hoping for competitive offers from the Ottawa Senators and Canadiens so his wife, Melinda, can be closer to the family she misses so dearly—the Canadiens must do everything possible to come out on the winning side of that battle.

Maybe on the surface that opinion flies in the face of a sound, long-term strategy Canadiens general manager Marc Bergevin set in motion just a summer ago. Heck, we know it definitely belies the

idea that Karlsson's best days are behind him, that after having half his ankle bone removed in a 2017 surgery or after a groin injury forced him to miss time in San Jose, he just hasn't been the same player.

But we're of the opinion that Karlsson, the 29-year-old Swede who has scored more points than any National Hockey League defenceman other than Brent Burns since the 2012 lockout, is still a superstar, will be a superstar for the foreseeable future, and that the Canadiens are still in desperate need of superstars.

So, if it means giving Karlsson a maximum-term contract of seven years and an \$11-million annual salary so that he is paid fair value in comparison to his peers (see Doughty, Drew of the Los Angeles Kings), so be it. It might not end up costing that much, but even if it does the Canadiens should roll out the red carpet, land this superstar and then adjust elsewhere.

It doesn't matter that the Canadiens already have Shea Weber and Jeff Petry slotted into top roles on the right side of their defence. It doesn't matter that Noah Juulsen, Josh Brook and Cale Fleury are right-handed defencemen and promising prospects who are all on their way up. It doesn't matter that the team has needs on the left side of its defence, either. Acquiring Karlsson, who is still among the best skaters in the world, arguably the best puck-moving defenceman in the world, and who can play upwards of 30 minutes a night in all situations, is the type of move that could allow the Canadiens to contend much sooner than expected — and that's not an opportunity they can ignore.

Making such a move doesn't really force Bergevin back to the drawing board, anyway. His plan to infuse the roster with youth and speed can remain intact with the Canadiens owning considerable flexibility under a salary cap that's rising to around \$83 million for the 2019-20 season. In fact, there's very little Bergevin would need to do ahead of this season to fit Karlsson in.

As it stands, Montreal has just over \$71 million committed to 14 forwards, seven defencemen and two goaltenders. In other words, a full team, plus remaining restricted free agents Charles Hudon, Artturi Lehkonen and Joel Armia aren't going to break the bank in contract negotiations.

Even if the latter two are in for considerable raises, fitting Karlsson under next season's cap could boil down to a single minor move. Maybe it means trading 27-year-old Andrew Shaw, who just had a career season (19 goals and 47 points in 63 games) and is under contract for three more years at \$3.9 million per. Maybe 30-year-old Paul Byron, who had 15 goals in 56 games after scoring at least 20 in both of the previous two seasons, proves more attractive to other teams as he embarks on a new four-year, \$13.6-million deal signed last September. Or maybe Petry, who's got two years left at \$5.5 million per, is the ideal trade candidate—even if he has a no-movement clause in his deal that allows him to select 15 teams he wouldn't go to.

Ryan Dixon and Rory Boylen go deep on pucks with a mix of facts and fun, leaning on a varied group of hockey voices to give their take on the country's most beloved game.

As much as all three of those players are embedded in the fabric of the current roster, you have to think their long-term futures in Montreal were already being weighed against the opportunity to add more young assets to the Canadiens via trade over the next couple of years. It could be that Shaw and Byron were pieces the Canadiens might dangle to get some help on the left side of the defence, or that Petry would net an A-level prospect or a first-round draft pick as a rental in a year's time.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

If acquiring Karlsson forces Bergevin to move quicker on those decisions, we're sure he'd agree it'd be a good problem to have.

Another couple: Max Domi's going to need a new contract next summer and if he's every bit as good as he was in 2018-19 (he scored 28 goals and led the Canadiens with 72 points in 82 games) it's going to cost a pretty penny. Two-time 30-goal scorer Brendan Gallagher will be due a major raise in the summer of 2021. And Tomas Tatar only has two more seasons left under contract. Those will all be tough situations for Bergevin to figure out if he commits big money and term to Karlsson.

But he'd have Erik Karlsson.

He'd have Karlsson, superstar goaltender Carey Price, Weber, Jonathan Drouin, likely Domi and some of the best up-and-coming players in the world in Jesperi Kotkaniemi, Ryan Poehling, Nick Suzuki, Alex Romanov, Brook and Fleury among others already in the Canadiens' system.

The Atlantic Division is brimming with talent: Auston Matthews, Mitch Marner and John Tavares in Toronto; Nikita Kucherov, Steven Stamkos, Brayden Point and Victor Hedman in Tampa Bay; Patrice Bergeron, Brad Marchand and Charlie McAvoy in Boston; Jack Eichel, Casey Mittelstadt and Rasmus Dahlin in Buffalo; Aleksander Barkov and Jonathan Huberdeau are potentially being joined by Artemi Panarin and Sergei Bobrovsky in Florida; Thomas Chabot, Brady Tkachuk and Erik Brannstrom are on the rise in Ottawa; and Dylan Larkin, Andreas Athanasiou and Filip Zadina anchor a young, talented core in Detroit.

So just having a chance to obtain one of the best players in the world is something the Canadiens would have to consider a blessing.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.05.2019

1106674 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Top Canadian prospect Bowen Byram aims to be next Morgan Rielly

Luke Fox | @lukefoxjokebox

June 4, 2019, 5:37 PM

We submit yet another piece of evidence that the blueprint for the ideal NHL defenceman today and beyond has changed for the smaller, the quicker, and the more offensive-minded.

As Boston's 5-foot-9 Torey Krug explodes for four-point games and St. Louis's six-foot Vince Dunn provides the jolt among Blues giants in the sport's championship showcase, the top defensive prospect in this month's NHL Draft explains how he's trying to model his game after that of 6-foot-1 Morgan Rielly.

"I like watching him. He plays on a really good team. Good on both sides of the puck. Kills penalties. Plays the power play. That's where I want to be, hopefully," Bowen Byram said Monday in St. Louis, where the top five North American prospects were invited to view Game 4 of the Stanley Cup Final.

A native of Cranbrook, B.C. — a day's drive from Rielly's home in Vancouver — Byram was raised a Canucks fan, naturally, but found himself tuning into Toronto Maple Leafs broadcasts to study Rielly's positioning and decision-making.

"Definitely when he's on the ice, I like watching him, but I usually get watching some of the other guys, too. But I try to watch him," Byram said. "A multi-tool player. Hopefully something I can grow into."

A surprise Brian Burke selection at No. 5 overall in the 2012 class, and another Western League star in his youth, Rielly's development curve — fleet-of-foot offensive D-man learns first to defend pros, then steadily rises to become both an offensive and shutdown threat — has become a prototype for those younger.

Just last summer, Montreal lefty D-man Victor Mete, 20, told us how he, too, used Rielly as his template, and they play for heated rivals.

The six-foot, left-shot Byram, who will celebrate his 18th birthday next week, is both the top-rated Canadian and top-rated defenceman heading into Vancouver on June 21.

He could be drafted as high as third overall, the slot where the Chicago Blackhawks pick, but there's a chance he could slip a spot or two if GM Stan Bowman opts for a centre.

"I wouldn't be surprised if the Hawks grab [Island Lake, Illinois, native Alex Turcotte] at three," said projected No. 1 pick Jack Hughes, a close friend of Turcotte's. "Hometown kid. Unbelievable player, great year, and I'm really excited to see where he could go."

Byram, much like Rielly, is coming off the best season of his life, exploding for 71 points in 67 games the WHL powerhouse Vancouver Giants. His 26 goals from the back end, like Rielly's 20 for the Leafs, led all defencemen in his league.

"Pretty cool. I don't think it could've worked out more perfect for me. Obviously, I would've liked to win the Western League championship, but someone's gotta lose," said Byram, still eligible for juniors in 2019-20. "We'll be back next year."

The teenaged son of early-'90s cup-of-coffee NHLer Shawn Byram, Bowen also helped Team Canada secure a gold medal at the 2018 Hlinka Gretzky Cup.

The feisty Alex Burrows and the Sedin twins were Byram's boyhood heroes, his favourite moment arriving when Burrows scored the Game 7 overtime winner versus Chicago in the 2011 Western Conference quarterfinal, en route to Vancouver reaching the Stanley Cup Final.

The Canucks, who hold the 10th pick, were one of 11 clubs Byram met with at last week's combine in Buffalo. (Montreal, way back at No. 15, didn't bother.)

Byram chuckled at the idea of Jim Benning and the group of scouts he chatted with in Buffalo being tempted to trade up and get him.

"It was really good. There were lots of great guys in that room, lots of cool people to meet. It was a good conversation," said Byram, who will be in the Rogers Arena stands with a healthy show of support from friends and family making the short trek. "They were my favourite team growing up, so for it to be held in that rink will be pretty special."

The L.A. Kings, at Pick No. 5, flew both president Luc Robitaille and GM Rob Blake to meet with their potential selection. Byram slots as Los Angeles's pick on many a mock draft, and considering Rielly also went fifth overall, there might be some kismet at play here.

"It doesn't matter to me," Byram said.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

"I've done all I can. I've had my meetings, I played all year, so now it's just sitting back and enjoying the experience."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.05.2019

1106675 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Four UFA bargains to target this summer for specific reasons

Andrew Berkshire

June 4, 2019, 2:36 PM

Over the past decade or so as the general public started to understand new metrics such as Corsi, you could go through the list of free agents and pick out a few players who were undervalued by NHL teams. That could be because their point production wasn't great or they had a down season defensively, but because we can see strong underlying numbers, we recognize them as having more value than traditional numbers would indicate.

Routinely, those players would sign bargain deals they'd go on to outperform, which surprised anyone who wasn't aware of the underlying stats. While there's still some room for that, possession numbers like Corsi are more or less accepted in NHL circles now, and while players are paid for far more than shot attempts, it's a factor that isn't overlooked nearly as often anymore.

Nowadays, when I'm trying to find players who could be a bargain off the list of unrestricted free agents, I'm looking at specific utility that specific teams could use. One player for the same salary could be just okay on one team and a key player who changes everything on another. It all depends on where their strengths lie.

So with that in mind, I think this year it would be more interesting to take a look at some players who have specific strengths that could lead to them vastly outperforming their new contracts, depending on who signs them.

Ryan Dixon and Rory Boylen go deep on pucks with a mix of facts and fun, leaning on a varied group of hockey voices to give their take on the country's most beloved game.

For any team that had trouble generating chances off the rush last season, and may need some help down the middle, there's a free agent out there who can solve a lot of your problems without costing a ton of money.

In an ideal world for the Winnipeg Jets, they would have brought Hayes back into the fold next season, but their salary cap situation is about to get extremely difficult to navigate with a series of high profile restricted free agents. So that was a pipe dream even if Hayes did want to stay. In order to recoup some value, the Jets managed to trade Hayes' rights to Philadelphia for a fifth-round pick on Monday.

That puts Hayes on the market, and while his profile was raised significantly last season with a career-high 55 points, it seems a lot of people around the NHL still aren't sure if he's a second- or third line-centre. That should make him a little more affordable than a productive centre usually is around this time of year.

Hayes has many positive attributes, but his biggest stand out impact is an ability to attack off the rush. The NHL game is getting faster and Hayes is among the NHL's best rush attackers.

He ranks within the top-30 in the NHL in scoring chances off the rush as an individual, top-50 in completed passes off the rush, top-30 in controlled entries, and top-20 in entries that result in his team getting a scoring chance.

The Jets ended up losing their first-round matchup against the Blues, but with how Winnipeg played this season that shouldn't have been a surprise. What wasn't expected was that the Jets played their best six-game stretch of 2019 in that series, and a big reason for that was Hayes giving them the capability to attack off the rush with multiple lines, which was an area of weakness for the Jets and a vulnerability for the Blues.

Hayes isn't a cure-all for a team that can't generate anything off the rush, but he would be an excellent addition for any team looking to augment that area.

For a long time the net front king of the NHL was Wayne Simmonds, but age and injuries have slowed him down enough that he's a bit of a liability and only really moves the needle on the power play. Simmonds could still help someone, even though he was a bit of a bust in Nashville, but teams looking to score more goals from in tight should look in another direction first.

When John Tavares left for Toronto, I wondered if Lee could maintain the torrid scoring pace that he managed the previous two seasons. He couldn't quite hit 30 for a third straight season, but he scored 28 despite a dip in shooting percentage.

Lee dominates the area right outside the crease, especially on the power play. He's a top-30 forward in high danger scoring chances and deflected shots at 5-on-5, but on the power play he flexes his muscles to an absurd degree.

Lee produces the second-most goals from the inner slot area on the power play in the NHL, the second-most shots, and the second-most deflected shots. He's a monster who makes a power play far more effective and consistently cashes in.

The only NHL player who produced more from the front of the net last year than Lee? John Tavares.

Any team that needs a bit of punch on the power play or needs help generating more shots from in tight overall should be hotly pursuing Lee. He probably won't score 40 ever again, but even 25 from an area your team struggles to score from is going to make a huge difference.

For teams that need help getting the puck going in the right direction, there are a few great options out there in free agency. For example, the best transition player in the NHL is available in Artemi Panarin, but if your team isn't ocean-adjacent and doesn't have seven digits in cap space to burn, you'll have to look at options for the middle of your lineup.

Currently helping the Boston Bruins in the Stanley Cup Final, Marcus Johansson is finally healthy for what seems like the first time in ages, and he's been excellent as a complementary player.

On the outside edge of his prime years after loads of injuries, you probably can't expect 20 or more goals and 50 points from Johansson anymore, but middle-six production in the range of 30-40 points looks very feasible for him. Along with the strong power play work he does, he's a facilitator for linemates to create offence by moving the puck up the ice.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

Johansson is a top line forward in carry outs from the defensive zone, and when he isn't controlling the puck he's an excellent outlet option for his teammates. Combine his frequency of moving the puck out of the zone with his low turnover rate in the defensive zone, and you have a safe and effective transition player who produces offence at a pretty good clip.

There's almost no team in the NHL that couldn't benefit from his plays.

Looking to find some playmaking ability low in the lineup for cheap? Perhaps from a player known for his defensive prowess? Look no further.

When the Islanders signed Valtteri Filppula last summer, you can count me among the people who were highly suspect of the move. Filppula had been injury prone and bad for several seasons, struggling for the most part since leaving the Red Wings, but he had a revelation of a season with the Islanders.

Healthy for once, and playing a role that suited him, Filppula was a strong third line centre for the Islanders. He didn't produce many points (31), but his underlying numbers were solid.

At 35 years old Filppula is older and slower than almost all of the big names on the market this summer, so he likely won't be commanding much in terms of salary or term.

A team that wants to add a bit of playmaking punch to the bottom of their lineup for the short term as young prospects develop could do a lot worse than Filppula, who might be in for an above average playmaking season in 2019-20 so long as he can stay healthy again.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.05.2019

1106676 Websites

TSN.CA / Would a Karlsson return make sense for rebuilding Sens?

Ian Mendes

Ottawa residents awoke Tuesday morning to the coldest June 4 in the history of the city, with the temperature sitting at just 3.5 C at 6 a.m.

But things certainly heated up around the nation's capital in a hurry, as the front page of Tuesday's Ottawa Sun suggested that Erik Karlsson could be open to returning to the Senators as a free agent.

The tabloid publication had a large-font headline that screamed, "RETURN OF THE KING?" with a picture of Karlsson wearing a superimposed crown upon his head.

Karlsson is still treated as royalty by many in these parts, considered by a large segment of the fan base as the greatest player in franchise history. The mere suggestion that he could be open to returning has resuscitated dormant feelings from fans who vowed to disconnect from the franchise once it let the captain walk out the door.

If the Senators alienated a portion of their fan base by trading Karlsson to San Jose last September, it stands to reason they could win a majority of them over by bringing him back into the fold.

The Senators have never had another superstar in Karlsson's stratosphere. He's a game-changing defenceman who was in the conversation as the best player in the world just two years ago. His dynamic personality – both on and off the ice – allowed him to seamlessly connect with the fan base.

On the surface, this would seem to be a slam-dunk decision for the Senators. A former superstar – who is still only 29 – wants to come back and play for your team. Considering the Senators have had a major issue keeping their own superstars, let alone attracting top-tier free agents, this move alone would be seen as a massive PR coup.

By re-signing Karlsson, the Senators could singlehandedly extinguish the notion that their franchise is a laughingstock and that no superstar wants to play in this market. Karlsson has an intimate knowledge of the situation in Ottawa and if he were willing to sign up for several years, it might be the biggest endorsement of the path taken by general manager Pierre Dorion.

Postmedia's Don Brennan on Erik Karlsson looking to get closer to home, he's time in San Jose, Canadiens as a viable option, smoothing things over with the Senators and the injury to Zdeno Chara.

But the question is: Does Karlsson fit into the Senators' rebuilding plan?

When the Senators traded Karlsson to San Jose last fall, it was the official start of a massive rebuilding effort. In some ways, it was the first match lit in a scorched-earth approach that saw stars like Mark Stone, Matt Duchene and Ryan Dzingel get shipped to other destinations.

The Senators have embraced the youth movement in the months that have followed, fully committing themselves to the likes of Brady Tkachuk, Thomas Chabot and Erik Brannstrom.

Bringing Karlsson back might seem like an abrupt change of course for a franchise that has been accused of making too many sharp turns in the past. This is the franchise that traded for Duchene in November of 2017 and then sharply changed direction by announcing the start of a rebuild just 10 weeks later.

If the club is genuinely committed to a youth movement, it could seem like an unnecessary and impulsive move to bring back their 29-year-old former captain. There will be some who believe the Senators should stay committed to the full rebuild, even if Karlsson comes back knocking on the door of Canadian Tire Centre.

The club believes they will be ready to be a Stanley Cup contender at some point around the 2021-2022 season – when Karlsson will be 32 years old. Given his injury history over the past two seasons, it's a fair question to ask what his physical condition might look like down the road. Would a 32-year-old Karlsson be the engine of a Stanley Cup contender, an accessory part or something in between?

The Senators also have a plethora of offensively minded and skilled defencemen in the system with the likes of Chabot, Brannstrom and Christian Wolanin. Would there be enough minutes to go around – especially on the power play – for so many skilled defencemen on the same team?

The interesting conundrum for the Senators is that all of their young puck movers are left-handed shots – whereas Karlsson plays the right side. In theory, he could be paired with a Chabot or a Brannstrom to create a pairing of elite, skilled defencemen.

Chabot is emerging into a world-class defenceman in his own right and his next contract – which the Senators can officially start negotiating with him this summer – might end up looking similar to



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

something they would be now willing to offer Karlsson. It's not unrealistic to think that the Senators might be willing to do an eight-year contract with Chabot this summer, with a conservative estimated dollar amount ranging anywhere from \$55 million to \$65 million.

The good news for the Senators is that they have plenty of cap space to play with after jettisoning so many contracts in the past two years. After the 2019-20 season concludes, the Senators are only on the hook for two skaters – Bobby Ryan and Zack Smith.

This gives them a tremendous amount of flexibility to sign players and if they are willing to live up to their promise of spending near the cap when they are a contender in the year 2022, it shouldn't be a major obstacle to bring Karlsson into the fold at this juncture. The Senators should have enough room to bring in Karlsson as a UFA and give healthy raises to pending RFAs such as Chabot, Tkachuk and Colin White as their entry-level deals expire.

The Senators insist they made Karlsson a more than reasonable offer around July 1 last summer – believed to be a maximum eight-year deal in the neighbourhood of \$85 million to \$90 million. But instead of that serving as the catalyst for serious negotiations, the talks simply died on the vine and Karlsson was traded to San Jose on the first day of training camp.

It would be interesting to see what the Senators' offer would be like this to Karlsson this summer, but it seems like a fair statement to suggest that the leverage has now swung in favour of Dorion and the club. If Karlsson is truly willing to re-sign in Ottawa for family reasons, one could assume he would take some type of hometown discount – something he was reluctant to do in the past.

The Senators would be wise to explore the possibility of bringing back Karlsson on their own terms – maybe a smaller dollar figure or potentially a shorter term.

At the very least, there seems to be legitimate chatter about a superstar wanting to play in Ottawa. At this juncture, that has to be seen as a victory for the Senators franchise – no matter how this situation with Karlsson plays out.

TSN.CA LOADED: 06.05.2019

1106677 Websites

TSN.CA / NHL Off-Season WATCH: Could Erik Karlsson return to the Ottawa Senators?

Staff Report

Each day through the NHL Draft on June 21-22 and free agency on July 1, TSN.ca breaks down the latest news and rumours around the NHL.

Homecoming?

Just one year after being traded to the San Jose Sharks, Don Brennan of the Ottawa Sun suggests Erik Karlsson may be willing to return to the Ottawa Senators this summer.

Citing a "well-connected source," Brennan writes Karlsson is hopeful to receive competitive offers from the Senators and Montreal

Canadiens since his wife Melinda, who is from Ottawa, would like to move closer to home. Brennan notes that while Toronto and Buffalo are also close to Ottawa, the Maple Leafs and Sabres are not believed to be on Karlsson's list.

Postmedia's Don Brennan on Erik Karlsson looking to get closer to home, he's time in San Jose, Canadiens as a viable option, smoothing things over with the Senators and the injury to Zdeno Chara.

Brennan adds that the New York Rangers are expected to be line for Karlsson's services ahead of July 1 and are just a short flight from Ottawa, while the Sharks, Tampa Bay Lightning and Colorado Avalanche have also been linked to the defenceman, but may be too far from Ottawa to convince him to sign. Brennan believes the Canadiens aren't a fit for Karlsson since they have right-hand shots Shea Weber and Jeff Petry already under contract.

Karlsson ranks second on TSN Hockey's Top 25 Free Agent list right behind Columbus Blue Jackets winger Artemi Panarin.

The 29-year-old was acquired by the Sharks in September and tallied 45 points (three goals, 42 assists) in 53 games this season, his first with San Jose. He spent the first 10 seasons of his career with the Senators, who selected him 15th overall in the 2008 NHL Draft.

Karlsson, who turned down an eight-year contract extension from the Senators last July, would only be eligible to sign a seven-year deal with any team other than the Sharks this summer.

Ken Wiebe of The Winnipeg Sun chalks up recent speculation that star sniper Patrik Laine could pursue an offer sheet this summer simply as a case of posturing from Laine's camp.

Wiebe believes Laine is likely looking for a long-term contract with roughly a \$10 million average annual value, but adds that it is simply too early to panic over the possibility of negotiations with the Jets going sour. He suggests the Jets would be more comfortable paying Laine \$8 million to \$9 million, but wonders if the team would be wary of reducing the term for a lower cap hit and risk having Laine walk out of his next deal into unrestricted free agency.

The 21-year-old's production dropped off in 2018-19 from his previous two seasons. He scored 30 goals and posted 50 points in 82 games after reaching 44 goals and 70 points in his sophomore season.

Wiebe also writes that the Jets need to find a second-line centre to help Laine reach his maximum potential or commit to playing the Finnish winger with either Mark Scheifele or Blake Wheeler. The Jets, who have \$57 million committed to 14 players for next season, traded pending free agent centre Kevin Hayes to the Philadelphia Flyers on Monday and have \$25 million in cap space (on a projected \$83 million cap) with seven restricted free agents - including Laine and Kyle Connor - to sign.

David Schoen of The Las Vegas Review-Journal suggests that William Karlsson could become an offer sheet target this off-season with the Golden Knights strapped for cap space.

Schoen believes Karlsson will be looking for a \$6.5 million cap hit on his next deal, but wonders if the Carolina Hurricanes or Ottawa Senators could entice him to sign an offer sheet with an offer above \$7 million that the Golden Knights would struggle to match. He points out that both teams have plenty of cap space and the Hurricanes are loaded with draft picks over the next two years. He adds the Minnesota Wild, Detroit Red Wings and Philadelphia Flyers could also be potential fits, but are unlikely to swoop in.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

Karlsson did not match his 43 goals from 2017-18 this past season, but still managed to post 24 goals and 56 points as the Vegas Golden Knights top-line centre.

The Golden Knights are currently over the projected \$83 million cap for next season and are expected to try to clear space this month.

As Schoen points out, Karlsson will be unable to sign an offer sheet if he files for arbitration before the July 5 deadline. The compensation for an offer sheet between \$6.3-\$8.4 million would be a first, second and third-round pick.

As TSN Hockey Insider Pierre LeBrun writes in The Athletic, Marcus Johansson's recent success has led the Boston Bruins to begin internal discussions on re-signing the trade deadline addition.

Johansson, 28, scored one goal and added two assists in 10 regular-season games upon joining the Bruins from New Jersey Devils, who he had 12 goals and 27 points with in 48 games. LeBrun notes his spike in production in the post-season (four goals and 11 points in 19 games) has also peaked the interest of teams around the league.

Johansson's former Washington Capitals teammate Niklas Backstrom told LeBrun he'd love to see the winger return to the team that drafted him.

"That would be great," Backstrom told LeBrun for an article in The Athletic. "Especially if they go all the way now, too. So many things come with winning. That experience you get with going through it. You want to do it again. So every time you get a player of that calibre it's only a good thing for teams. I wouldn't mind if that happens."

Devils general manager Ray Shero, who traded a second- and third-round pick to acquire Johansson from the Capitals in 2017, also kept the door open for a return.

"You never know, right?" Shero told LeBrun. "I'm a big fan. He's a good guy."

Johansson is in the final season of a three-year, \$13.75 million contract and carries a \$4.85 million cap hit. He was acquired by the Bruins in February for a second-round pick this year and a third-round pick in 2020.

TSN.CA LOADED: 06.05.2019

1106678 Websites

USA TODAY / Five helpful hints for would-be NHL traders during the Stanley Cup Final

Kevin Allen, USA TODAY

Published 12:55 p.m. ET June 4, 2019

Even during the Stanley Cup Final, other NHL teams are busy trying to improve for next season.

We hear there's plenty of trade talk in the marketplace. Here are some suggestions we have:

► Send Phil Kessel from Pittsburgh to Arizona: The Coyotes were 28th in scoring last season and Kessel still has a scoring touch. Coach Rick Tocchet and Kessel had a good relationship when Tocchet was an assistant in Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh GM Jim Rutherford doesn't want to dump Kessel for prospects/draft picks, but that's what he might have to accept with the Coyotes. Kessel has a limited no-trade clause and the Coyotes seem to be his preferred destination.

Moving Kessel's salary would free up some cash to go after a free agent to replace him.

► Panthers should trade for Artemi Panarin's rights: Why not send a late-round draft pick to Columbus to get negotiations started early to secure this potential unrestricted free agent?

The Panthers want Panarin, and he the dynamic winger has interest in going there. The lack of a state tax is an attractive perk for a free agent. The New York Rangers are also interested Panarin.

► Sabres should call the Calgary Flames about Travis Hamonic: GM Jason Botterill is busy trying to tie up Jeff Skinner to an eight-year contract extension. According to a person familiar with the negotiations, it will be near \$8.5 million per season. The person requested anonymity because the contract has not been finalized.

But the offseason priority has to be to improve the team's defensive group. A veteran like Hamonic, 28, would fit the Sabres. The Flames are expected to move Hamonic and/or T.J. Brodie this offseason.

► Teams shouldn't count on the Hurricanes trading a defenseman: They are trying to extend Justin Faulk, and their plan, at least for now, is to hang onto all four of their top defensemen.

The Hurricanes hope to build off this year's run to the conference final and not disrupt the team's chemistry.

► Predators may have to eat salary to make a deal: That's not a strategy the Predators have employed in the past, but they might have to do that if they want to move defenseman P.K. Subban and/or center Kyle Turris.

Subban has three seasons at \$9 million per season left on his contract, which makes him difficult to move. But they might be able to move him if they ate \$2 million of his salary.

The Predators want to improve their second line and power play. They may have to make multiple deals to make that work. Defenseman Ryan Ellis (\$6.25 million cap hit) is another player who could be moved to add scoring. He has eight years left on his deal.

The Predators could use a player like Maple Leafs center Nazem Kadri and Toronto needs defense. Maybe an Ellis for Kadri swap makes sense, provided teams can get their salary cap issues squared away.

USA TODAY LOADED: 06.05.2019

1106679 Websites

USA TODAY / Zdeno Chara's status for Game 5 of Stanley Cup Final unclear after taking puck in face

Staff Report



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 5, 2019

The Associated Press

Published 4:50 p.m. ET June 4, 2019 | Updated 6:27 p.m. ET June 4, 2019

BEDFORD, Mass. – The Boston Bruins reached the Stanley Cup Final despite a run of regular-season injuries that prevented anyone on the roster from playing all 82 games.

Now comes the real test.

The Bruins are preparing for Game 5 against the St. Louis Blues without captain and No. 1 defenseman Zdeno Chara, who did not return after he was hit in the face by a deflected puck on Monday night. The St. Louis Blues won 4-2 to even the series at two games apiece.

Bruins coach Bruce Cassidy offered no update on Chara's condition after arriving in Boston on Tuesday except to say the 2009 Norris Trophy winner was on his way to see a doctor. The fact that Chara returned for the third period wearing a full face shield – and never got back on the ice – suggests it is more than the lost tooth or busted lip that usually only keeps a hockey player out long enough to get it stitched up.

"Right now, I've got nothing," Cassidy said. "But we don't play for two more days."

Although the 42-year-old Chara is the team's elder statesman and emotional leader, Cassidy said he is less worried about Chara's leadership than his 6-foot-9 presence on the ice.

"Taking great players out of the lineup, that's the part that hurts the most," Cassidy said. "I'm not worried about our mentality."

The Bruins have made it through the playoffs without defenseman Kevan Miller and also lost Matt Grzelcyk when he took an elbow to the head in Game 2 and needed to be helped off the ice. John Moore filled in for him in the third game, which the Bruins won.

But they were down to five men on the blue line again Monday night when Chara took a deflected shot from Brayden Schenn off the right side of the face. He crumpled to the ice, face-first, and then skated off, with blood dripping from his mouth. He returned at the start of the third wearing the shield but never went back in the game.

"Very uncomfortable, was advised not to return to play," Cassidy said after the game. "Had some stitches, probably some dental work in the near future. He wanted to come out on the bench and be with his teammates."

His teammates knew how difficult it was for him to just sit there.

"He's our leader, and the biggest part of our leadership," forward David Pastrnak said. "Anything that comes out of his mouth ... everybody is listening to him."

A six-time All-Star and the perennial team leader in minutes played, Chara played a career-low (not counting lockout years) 62 games this season because of an unspecified injury that kept him out six weeks in November and December.

Although it's too early to rule him out for Game 5 – or perhaps longer – Cassidy said the most likely replacements would be Steven Kampfer or rookies Urho Vaakanainen, Jeremy Lauzon, and Jakub Zboril. Only Kampfer, with two games of playoff experience, has appeared in a postseason game.

"If both guys (Chara and Grzelcyk) are out, it's not an easy decision," Cassidy said. "It's not one I want to make, but you have to do what you have to do."

But don't rule them out just yet.

"Both of those players, they're warriors," defenseman Charlie McAvoy said. "They'll do whatever it takes to play."

USA TODAY LOADED: 06.05.2019