



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 6, 2017



Hurricanes looking to trade picks for players

Carolina has 10 selections in 2017 Draft, would like to acquire roster players

NHL.com [@NHL](#)

June 5th, 2017

The Carolina Hurricanes would like to trade picks for players prior to the [2017 NHL Draft](#) at United Center in Chicago on June 23-24, general manager Ron Francis said.

The Hurricanes have 10 picks in the 2017 draft, including six in the first three rounds. They have the No. 12 pick in the first round, three picks in second round and two in the third.

"I'm hoping we don't use all 10 picks when it comes to the draft, and I've had contact with other teams telling them we are willing to give up some picks to get players so I wanted to let you know that up front," Francis told his scouting team in a video posted on the Hurricanes website Monday.

Francis acquired goalie [Scott Darling](#) from the Chicago Blackhawks in a trade for a third-round pick in the 2017 draft on April 29, and signed him to a four-year, \$16.6 million contract on May 5.

"Most importantly, if we take all 10 picks, we have six in the top 73 of this draft," Francis said. "Whether we use them all or not, we have to make sure we're using the picks right."

The Hurricanes finished 36-31-15, eight points behind the Toronto Maple Leafs for the second wild card into the Stanley Cup Playoffs from the Eastern Conference. It was the eighth straight season they failed to qualify for the postseason.

Francis could wait to trade picks until after the NHL Expansion Draft (June 17-21) when the Hurricanes will lose one player from their roster to the Vegas Golden Knights.

The 30 other NHL teams must submit their list of protected players by 5 p.m. ET June 17. Vegas will be given the lists at 10 a.m. on June 18 and will have until 10 a.m. on June 21 to submit its selections.

Teams must protect seven forwards, three defensemen and one goaltender; or eight skaters (forwards/defensemen) and one goaltender.

Any player with a no-movement clause in his contract at the time of the expansion draft must be protected unless he waives it. All first- and second-year professional players, and unsigned draft choices, are exempt from selection by Vegas and do not have to be protected.

Vegas must select one player from each team to fill a roster of at least 14 forwards, nine defensemen and three goalies, with a minimum of 20 players under contract for the 2017-18 season. The value of the salaries must be at least 60 percent of this season's NHL salary cap (about \$43.8 million).

Vegas also can sign any restricted or unrestricted free agent left unprotected by his team from June 18-21. These free agents would not otherwise be allowed to sign with a team different than the one they played for this season until July 1.

Predators top Penguins in Game 4 to tie Stanley Cup Final

Pekka Rinne makes 23 saves to help Nashville to second straight win

by Robby Stanley / NHL.com Correspondent

NASHVILLE -- [Pekka Rinne](#) showed he's back on top of his game by making 23 saves for the Nashville Predators in a 4-1 win against the Pittsburgh Penguins in Game 4 of the Stanley Cup Final at Bridgestone Arena on Monday.

"You always have ups and downs, you try to stay even keeled," Rinne said. "I don't want to really look back yet. I mean we have work to be done, but I'm sure at the end of the day when you look back, it's a roller coaster and it's an emotional ride. It's no different, these finals. In the first two games, we did a lot of good things. Personally, wasn't really happy with mine, but obviously these two games have been huge for us and personally too."

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

The Predators and Rinne improved to 9-1 at home during the 2017 Stanley Cup Playoffs.

[Frederick Gaudreau](#) scored his third goal of the Stanley Cup Final and second consecutive game-winning goal.

Gaudreau gave the Predators a 2-1 lead at 3:45 of the second period on a wraparound attempt. The goal was confirmed when play was stopped at 4:20 of the period for a video review.



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"I kind of saw it was maybe in, and then I came back to the bench and I heard someone saying that with the video replay that it was in," Gaudreau said.

With the goal, Gaudreau became the second player to score his first three NHL goals in the Stanley Cup Final. The other was John Harms of the Chicago Black Hawks in 1944.

"He's been unbelievable for us, the way he's come in," Predators captain Mike Fisher said. "He's been so good, timely goals and composed. He definitely belongs, and he's been a huge part of our success and it's good to see for sure."

Viktor Arvidsson gave the Predators a 3-1 lead at 13:08. It was Arvidsson's third goal of the postseason and first since Game 4 of the Western Conference First Round against the Blackhawks.

Filip Forsberg scored an empty-net goal to make it 4-1 at 16:37 of the third period, his first point of the series.

Calle Jarnkrok gave the Predators a 1-0 lead at 14:51 of the first on a rebound. Craig Smith deflected a shot by Austin Watson, and Jarnkrok beat Matt Murray on the rebound for his second goal of the playoffs.

The Penguins challenged for goaltender interference but the goal was upheld after video review.

Sidney Crosby tied it 1-1 at 15:57 on a breakaway. He got behind the Predators defense and beat Rinne on a forehand-to-backhand move for his eighth goal. It was Crosby's first goal in a Cup Final since June 4, 2009, in Game 4 against the Detroit Red Wings.

"Tonight we generated some really good chances, played on our toes a lot more," Crosby said. "I think if we continue to do that it's going to give us a really good chance to win games. It's a game of mistakes, and we made a couple and they ended up in our net. On the other side, we couldn't take advantage of theirs."

Goal of the game

Arvidsson's goal came on a breakaway after he got behind the Penguins defense and received a pass from Fisher. He beat Murray on the glove side.

Save of the game

Rinne made a save on a breakaway by Chris Kunitz at 3:28 of the second period to keep the game 1-1. Gaudreau scored the game-winning goal 17 seconds later.

Unsung performance of the game

James Neal made a chip pass to Fisher from along the wall that led to Arvidsson's goal. He chipped the puck past Evgeni Malkin to Fisher, and Arvidsson finished the play.

Highlight of the game

Rinne made a series of saves on a scramble play after he stopped Crosby on a breakaway in the second period. Bryan Rust followed up around the crease, and Rinne made a diving stop on Jake Guentzel to keep the game 2-1.

They said it

"We just try to do all of the right things, the little things that help you win. Getting pucks in, blocking shots, supporting, coming out of the zone as a five-man unit, nobody blowing the zone. All of those things matter when you're up a goal or even down a goal or the game is tied. You've got to do those things consistently." -- *Predators defenseman P.K. Subban*

"The only thing I would say is I thought a couple of the goals tonight, a couple of goals in the prior game, there were things that we could have done that were preventable. Let's put it that way. They were preventable. The breakaway goal to me is an example. We have to have a bit of awareness away from the puck. If we do that, it's a nothing play." - *Penguins coach Mike Sullivan*

Need to know

Penguins forward Nick Bonino came out for warmups but did not play. He has missed the past two games because of a lower-body injury. Forward Josh Archibald replaced Scott Wilson for the Penguins. ... Subban blocked a shot by Malkin with his leg with 7:08 left in the third period. He returned to finish the game.

What's next

Game 5 of Stanley Cup Final at PPG Paints Arena on Thursday (8 p.m. ET; NBC, CBC, SN, TVA Sports)



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SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY

The Evolution of the Fourth Line

The role of the fourth line in the NHL has changed over the past several years, but not quite as much as it probably should.

by Kyle Morton@k_morton9 Jun 2, 2017, 1:00pm EDT

In 2011, the **Boston Bruins** defeated the **Vancouver Canucks** to win the **Stanley Cup**. That was a strong team, led by **Patrice Bergeron**, **Zdeno Chara**, and absolutely stunning goaltending from **Tim Thomas**.

They also featured players like **Milan Lucic**, **David Krejci**, and **Johnny Boychuk** in supporting roles. Future stars like **Brad Marchand** and **Tyler Seguin** offered young energy and occasional production.

But beyond Chara and Thomas, the aspect of that Bruins team that received the most credit for their success was their fourth line. Boston's fourth line that season was made up of Dan Paille, **Gregory Campbell**, and **Shawn Thornton**.

Six years later, those three players combined to play zero NHL games over a full season. Only Thornton is of an age where retirement is the reason he's out of the league.

But man, at the time, the hockey world *loved* that line. A **NESN article from that summer** hailed them as the best fourth line in the league. **Here's an article** wishing that the Bruins 2015-2016 fourth line would be comparable to the 2011 edition.

The thing about that line, though, is that they weren't good at all. Among forwards with at least 30 games played with the Bruins that year, Paille, Thornton, and Campbell were the three worst in terms of corsi share.

That's not a particularly shocking fact or anything, but assuming that they were primarily facing other teams' fourth lines, to come out that badly is not reflective of a line that is supposedly the best of its kind in the league.

The Recent Past and Present

This isn't something that's really faded that much with time, either. Before Matt Martin's departure to Toronto, it was the **New York Islanders** who were **lauded as having the league's best fourth unit**, comprised of Martin, **Casey Cizikas**, and **Cal Clutterbuck**.

Those three were a possession disaster in 2013-2014 before turning in a solid season in 2014-2015. They then reverted back to getting hemmed in most of the time in 2015-2016.

The underlying elephant in the room here is that the model of the fourth liner that has dominated NHL rosters for the past several decades is probably not a very good hockey player.

It's even very arguable that the fourth lines of old were not even particularly effective in the first place.

As fighting has been phased out of the game in recent years, fewer and fewer teams have given one of their fourth line spots to a token enforcer-type player. However, there is still a spot on pretty much every roster for a big, bruising winger who does supposedly important things like "set tones" and

"protect stars" while his team is routinely out-possessed and outscored with him on the ice.

As the dominant mode of hockey analysis has shifted from eye-based to data-driven, somewhat of a shift has occurred wherein producing good results (scoring production, driving play) has become more important than a player *looking* like they're working their behind off while in the midst of a minute-long shift spent entirely in the defensive zone.

If you asked most NHL front office executives about this, I would guess that they would grasp the concept fairly well. However, the shift from holding these general views to letting them influence roster-building decisions has been a much slower one than the one that saw public opinion on what makes a good fourth liner change.

As evidence, you don't really need to look any further than this season's playoffs. Anaheim used one of their 12 forward spots on **Jared Boll** in eight of their playoff games this year. He didn't record a point.

Ottawa and New York had a weird dance in their series where Tanner Glass's presence in the **Rangers'** lineup seemed to justify and even command Chris Neil's presence in that of the **Senators**. Neil's two appearances were hilarious debacles, and while Glass actually resembled somewhat of an effective player this postseason, he still took away a roster spot from **Pavel Buchnevich**, who is inarguably a superior player.

Cody McLeod has played 13 games for the **Predators** during their run, with just one point to show for.

The only team that has gone far in the playoffs without giving regular minutes to this sort of player is the **Penguins**, who have a 2-0 series lead in the Final. It would be dishonest of me to say that this is *why* they're as good as they are, but it certainly plays a role.

The Present and Future

It isn't all bad with the present-day fourth line, though. In fact, I would argue that having an excellent fourth line can make a mediocre team look much better than they really are.

Take Columbus, for example. For much of this season, they iced **Scott Hartnell**, **Sam Gagner**, and **Lukas Sedlak** as their fourth line. The three players had 50, 37, and 13 points on the year respectively. With a Wennberg line, an Atkinson line, and a Karlsson line drawing the toughest matchups, the Gagner line feasted against what was left on opposing teams.

Columbus didn't have anyone put up more than 62 points, and they were a mediocre possession team for most of the year. What propelled them to such a successful regular



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season was, of course, the terrific play of **Sergei Bobrovsky**, but right behind his contributions comes their ability to get such strong production from the bottom of their forward ranks.

The approach that Columbus used should convince every single team to go out and fill their fourth line with as much scoring ability as possible.

For a team like Carolina, who gets below average contributions from its best forwards, why punt away the offensive potential of your fourth line by having it centered by a player like **Jay McClement**?

The **Hurricanes** had seven forwards compile over 40 points, which was a huge step forward, but outside of those seven, only **Derek Ryan** had more than 16 points. That huge production gap between the top of the Canes' forward group and the bottom is easily the chief reason for why they were doomed to another below-average offensive season.

The direction that Carolina's fourth line, and really anybody's fourth line, should be heading in is the usage of younger forwards with skill who aren't total defensive liabilities.

In many cases, the players who are typically thought of as not being "NHL ready" because they can't handle top six minutes yet really *are* ready to successfully fill a role in the

NHL. Just because they aren't high-end NHL players by the age of 21 or 22 doesn't mean that spots at the bottom of the roster should be taken away from them and given to veterans who are well past their prime years which were nothing to write home about in the first place.

For the 'Canes, this would look like letting McClement walk in free agency, resisting the temptation to bring in a veteran in the mold of **Viktor Stalberg** (just as an example, as he was a fine add) and going into camp with players like **Joakim Nordstrom**, Phil di Giuseppe, **Lucas Wallmark**, and **Valentin Zykov** competing for those three fourth line spots.

I see little reason that some combination of those five players wouldn't make the best fourth line that the Hurricanes have had in recent history. Players like McClement and **Manny Malhotra** have been good at face-offs and solid on the penalty kill, but they left a lot to be desired at even-strength, as the Hurricanes' fourth line has been a relative possession black-hole for quite some time now.

If the Hurricanes are serious about being at the cutting edge in terms of implementing analytics-driven principles and allowing them to influence roster and line-up decisions, then this is the type of step that they need to take.

TODAY'S LINKS

- <https://www.nhl.com/news/carolina-wants-to-trade-picks-in-2017-nhl-draft/c-289787478>
- <https://www.nhl.com/news/pittsburgh-penguins-nashville-predators-stanley-cup-game-4-recap/c-289798404>
- <http://www.canescountry.com/2017/6/2/15719020/nhl-the-evolution-of-the-fourth-line-carolina-hurricanes>

SportScan

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

1066480 Websites

FOXSports.com / Justin Bieber finally addresses claims that he's a bandwagon sports fan

Pete Blackburn

Jun 5, 2017 at 8:53p ET

Among the many things Justin Bieber has been criticized for over the years is his tendency to show an allegiance to a wide variety of sports teams. Bieber has been spotted at sporting events wearing the jersey of a usually good team, leading many to call him a bandwagoner or frontrunner.

Most recently, the Biebs posted a picture of himself sporting a Pittsburgh Penguins jersey. Not coincidentally, the Penguins are currently playing for the Stanley Cup.

A post shared by Justin Bieber (@justinbieber) on May 31, 2017 at 8:22am PDT

But it appears that Bieber wanted to set the record straight on his sports fandom Monday night. In a string of tweets, he pledged allegiance to his hometown Toronto Maple Leafs, but also defended the wide variety of teams he has supported in the past.

I support all sports I'll put ANY jersey from ANY pro team if I'm whack for wearing jerseys they give me out of love then I'm Whack

— Justin Bieber (@justinbieber) June 5, 2017

Leafs above all but other than that u give me ANY JERSEY THAT LOOKS COOL ILL THROW IT ON

— Justin Bieber (@justinbieber) June 5, 2017

I also don't know enough about sports to Really have valid opinion but I do enjoy sports!! And enjoy any high level sports game. Any team

— Justin Bieber (@justinbieber) June 5, 2017

You know what? I'd like to give some points to Bieber for honesty here. It's easy to hate on someone for bouncing around from team to team, but not every sports fan is a diehard faithful to a specific team. And let's be honest, most people would gladly take a free jersey and happily wear it if it were a gift from the host team. It's hard to fault Bieber for taking advantage of that.

Bieber likes sports and he's just along for the ride, trying to look cool and have fun. I have no issue with that.

Also, I too don't know enough about sports to really have valid opinion, but thank you for reading.

FOXSports.com LOADED: 06.06.2017

1066481 Websites

FOXSports.com / Predators center Ryan Johansen named honorary mayor of Nashville prior to Game 4

Pete Blackburn

Jun 5, 2017 at 2:50p ET



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Injured Nashville Predators center Ryan Johansen may not be able to take a starring role on the ice during this year's Stanley Cup Final, but he's found a suitable consolation prize. Johansen is keeping himself busy with a starring role in the Nashville community.

On Monday, the 24-year-old Johansen was named Honorary Mayor of Nashville for the day. Nashville's regular mayor, Megan Barry, presented him with the honors hours before Game 4 between the Preds and Penguins at Bridgestone Arena.

Please welcome Predators center @RyanJohansen19, our Honorary Mayor for today! #PredsPride pic.twitter.com/p5e2BnZ3TZ

— Megan Barry (@MayorMeganBarry) June 5, 2017

Johansen received the honor not only thanks to his role as one of the Preds' top offensive pieces this season, but also due to his contributions off the ice.

"It is fitting and proper that this outstanding young man's contributions – both on and off the ice, having raised money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation during his off-season last year – deserve the full recognition of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County," Barry wrote in a statement.

"The City of Nashville, and I would like to invite all of my fellow citizens and Predators fans to join me in celebrating Ryan Johansen's magical season with the Preds as we head into Game Four of the Stanley Cup Final."

This was probably a nice pick-me-up for Johansen, who is undoubtedly disappointed he's not able to play in the Cup Final due to a lower body injury. The countermander's postseason was ended prematurely after being diagnosed with acute compartment syndrome and undergoing emergency surgery on his left thigh during the third round.

Johansen had 14 goals and 61 points while centering Nashville's top line this season, adding 13 points in 14 playoff games prior to his injury.

FOXSports.com LOADED: 06.06.2017

1066482 Websites

NBCSports.com / Oilers of '84-85 voted the NHL's greatest ever

By Jason BroughJun 5, 2017, 7:04 PM EDT

The 1948-85 Edmonton Oilers have been voted the NHL's greatest team of all time by more than 3.6 million voters.

From the NHL:

Captained by Wayne Gretzky, the 1984-85 Edmonton Oilers defeated the Philadelphia Flyers in the Stanley Cup Final to win their second straight championship. The team's playoff run started with sweeps of the Los Angeles Kings (3-0) in the Division Semifinals and the Winnipeg Jets (4-0) in the Division Finals, and continued with defeating the Chicago Blackhawks in six games in the Conference Finals. Gretzky set records for assists (30) and points (47) in one playoff year. He also tied the modern record shared by Jean Beliveau (1956) and Mike Bossy (1982) for most goals in the Stanley Cup Final, with seven in five games.

Gretzky was on hand today in Nashville, where he said he would've voted for the 1986-87 Oilers, who also won the Stanley Cup.

The Oilers won five titles from 1984 to 1990. Only their fifth was without The Great One.

The '84-85 Oilers went 15-3 in the playoffs, averaging 5.4 goals per game against just 3.2 against. The 98 goals they scored during their run are still the most in a single postseason, and they only played 18 games.

Here are the top 10 teams of all time, as voted by the fans:

1. 1984-85 Edmonton Oilers
2. 1991-92 Pittsburgh Penguins
3. 1976-77 Montreal Canadiens
4. 1987-88 Edmonton Oilers
5. 1986-87 Edmonton Oilers
6. 1997-98 Detroit Red Wings
7. 1982-83 New York Islanders

8. 1977-78 Montreal Canadiens

9. 1983-84 Edmonton Oilers

10. 2001-02 Detroit Red Wings

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 06.06.2017

1066483 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Predators very much alive after Rinne stymies Penguins in Game 4

Chris Johnston

June 5, 2017, 11:23 PM

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Four days ago, Pekka Rinne looked at a group of reporters and asked them why they were all acting "like somebody died."

Today the Nashville Predators are very much alive in their quest for a Stanley Cup in large part due to the popular Finnish goaltender.

"It's a rollercoaster," Rinne said after Monday's 4-1 victory. "It's an emotional ride."

After some twists and turns we are back where we started: With the Predators and Pittsburgh Penguins all square in the championship series, a best-of-three to decide who gets their name carved into the Cup.

It may well be Rinne if he can keep this up. He was riding a low after the opening two games in Pittsburgh – the victim of some bad bounces and poor play while allowing eight goals on 36 shots – and rebounded by stopping 50 of 52 here to even the series.

The Penguins brought their best game of the final in Game 4 and only put one puck behind him. It came on a clear breakaway from the best player in the world and Sidney Crosby made no mistake with a backhand deke reminiscent of the one he used to score in the gold-medal game at the Sochi Olympics.

Otherwise, Rinne was a wall. A diving, sprawling, acrobatic wall.

"The first two games, we did a lot of good things," said Rinne. "Personally wasn't really happy with my game. But these two games, they've been huge for us. Personally, too, I mean it's a game of confidence being a goalie."

He helped the Predators seize an opportunity unlike any other. This bordered on a spectacle, really, the biggest games ever played in a city that has fallen head over heels for its hockey team. And they've guaranteed themselves one more home date.

Rinne is considered a local at this point.

He came here from the rural town of Kempele in the northern part of Finland more than a decade ago and signed a seven-year contract extension in 2011 – an act of faith at a time others were leaving the organization.

This is the reward for that. The chance to live out a childhood dream in a place where you're beloved.

"Oh they love him," said defenceman Roman Josi. "Every time in the starting lineup when his name gets called up, it's probably the loudest of the whole game. Yeah, they love him. How can you not love him?"

"I mean he's the best guy you'll ever meet."

On the ice, Rinne is basically the opposite of Penguins counterpart Matt Murray. He never received structured goalie coaching as a kid and routinely battles for saves by sliding all over the crease. Murray plays like a man without a pulse.

Whatever works.

The craziest sequence of Game 4 came with Nashville ahead 2-1 and Crosby on his second breakaway of the game. He got off two shots with his backhand before the puck found its way into the crease of a wide open net when Rinne dove back to deny Jake Guentzel's chance with his right arm.

"Coming back, I just tried to keep (Crosby) on his backhand," said defenceman Ryan Ellis, who was in the middle of the chaos. "Pek's did a



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phenomenal job on the first save, the second, the third, the fourth. I mean I don't know how many there was.

"Pek's was one post to the other, on his belly and everywhere. I mean that's what we needed to get it done."

Now the Penguins will be getting some tough questions. Mike Sullivan was asked post-game if he would consider replacing Murray with Marc-Andre Fleury. The power play saw another game go by without connecting and their battered blue-line is struggling to clear the defensive zone.

"They're not perfect by any stretch," Sullivan said of his defencemen. "But these guys are competing."

Even still, the Penguins were just a couple glorious chances away from a better result.

Crosby was a menace and scored his first goal in the Stanley Cup final since June 4, 2009. Guentzel had several looks from in close but couldn't find his 14th goal of these playoffs. Chris Kunitz was stopped on a breakaway.

It was a long way from the start of the series, when Rinne heard a debate about whether Juuse Saros should be in the crease instead. That talk looks foolish now.

"There was at least two times at the net where he had to make the save, then maybe one, two or three more saves after that," said Predators coach Peter Laviolette. "Even when the game was over in the last minute and a half there, he held his left leg out there forever to stop three or four attempts to still try to push it in the net."

Murray couldn't really be faulted for the goals against at his end: Calle Jarnkrok scored on a rebound after Olli Maatta and Conor Sheary turned the puck over on a breakout; Frederick Gaudreau got his third of the series – rather incredibly, given that he doesn't yet have a permanent stall in the Nashville dressing room – on a wraparound that barely crossed the goal-line after some shaky defensive coverage; and Viktor Arvidsson beat him low glove on a breakaway.

Filip Forsberg scored into an empty net from 180 feet away to ice it.

That had Bridgestone Arena bouncing and left a city bracing for the weekend. The Stanley Cup will be in the building for Game 6 here on Sunday night and Rinne's Predators may have a chance to win it.

Imagine that.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.06.2017

1066484 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Ryan Johansen named honorary Mayor of Nashville

Staff

June 5, 2017, 2:06 PM

Injured Predators star Ryan Johansen was named honorary Mayor of Nashville on Monday.

Johansen hasn't been able to play in his team's first-ever Stanley Cup Final appearance after being diagnosed with acute compartment syndrome and undergoing emergency surgery on his left thigh.

A declaration written by Nashville mayor Megan Barry writes that "it is fitting and proper that this outstanding young man's contributions – both on and off the ice, having raised money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation during his off-season last year – deserve the full recognition of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County..."

"The City of Nashville, and I would like to invite all of my fellow citizens and Predators fans to join me in celebrating Ryan Johansen's magical season with the Preds as we head into Game Four of the Stanley Cup Final."

The Predators acquired Johansen in a trade with Columbus on Jan. 6, 2016.

He has 22 goals and 95 points in 124 games with Nashville.

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1066485 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Charles Barkley upstages Gretzky to laud Stanley Cup Playoffs

Chris Johnston

June 5, 2017, 8:46 PM

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – It takes something big to upstage a Wayne Gretzky press conference at the Stanley Cup Final.

Charles Barkley was just the man for the job.

Sir Charles, the basketball great and a noted hockey fan, flew into Nashville for Game 4 of the Stanley Cup Final at the urging of Jeremy Roenick and crashed a press conference featuring Gretzky and Paul Coffey to announce the 1984-85 Edmonton Oilers as the NHL's top all-time team.

Once he got the microphone and took a place on stage, Barkley made it clear that he preferred the NHL's post-season to the NBA one he's been covering as an analyst for TNT.

"The playoffs in hockey have been amazing," said Barkley. "Obviously, I'm not breaking Earth-shattering news but our NBA playoffs have not been very good. The best thing about my job, when I'm at work for two straight months is ... I'm in a room with 20 televisions and I watch pretty much every single hockey game."

"It has not been a lot of fun broadcasting (NBA) games this year."

Barkley attended Monday's game at Bridgestone Arena as a guest of NHL commissioner Gary Bettman. Before the invitation arrived from the league, he had already been thinking about making the trip to Tennessee.

"I'm talking to JR, who I talk to quite a bit. He's my neighbour in Arizona. He's like, 'Man, you've got to come to Nashville for a game,'" said Barkley. "He says, 'It's the craziest thing I've ever seen.'"

"So I'm really looking forward to tonight. They say it's crazy."

Barkley first became aware of hockey while growing up in Birmingham, Ala., because of the Bulls – a World Hockey Association team based in the city. After being drafted by the Philadelphia 76ers, he became a Flyers fan.

"My favourite hockey player of all-time was Ron Hextall because I want to know if my guy really cares," said Barkley. "You watch Ron Hextall play, you know he really wanted to play. So he's my favourite hockey player."

"There is nothing more nerve-racking than Stanley Cup overtime hockey. It's the craziest thing you're ever going to see. That's one of the reasons I just love the sport."

Before leaving the stage, Barkley delivered a soliloquy on what makes a team great.

It was particularly relevant with the Pittsburgh Penguins attempting to become the first repeat Stanley Cup champions since the 1997-98 Detroit Red Wings.

"The teams that win a lot, they're the great teams because I think the one thing you guys don't understand: 'Man, winning is hard. Winning is hard. Like we all want to win. We all want to win,'" said Barkley. "When you talk about great teams, teams that win multiple championships, I always put them on a pedestal because these teams that win one time but never win again, that's cool."

"But to win all the time is a big deal."

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Sportsnet.ca / Charles Barkley upstages Gretzky to laud Stanley Cup Playoffs

Chris Johnston

June 5, 2017, 8:46 PM

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NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 6, 2017

Sir Charles, the basketball great and a noted hockey fan, flew into Nashville for Game 4 of the Stanley Cup Final at the urging of Jeremy Roenick and crashed a press conference featuring Gretzky and Paul Coffey to announce the 1984-85 Edmonton Oilers as the NHL's top all-time team.

Once he got the microphone and took a place on stage, Barkley made it clear that he preferred the NHL's post-season to the NBA one he's been covering as an analyst for TNT.

"The playoffs in hockey have been amazing," said Barkley. "Obviously, I'm not breaking Earth-shattering news but our NBA playoffs have not been very good. The best thing about my job, when I'm at work for two straight months is ... I'm in a room with 20 televisions and I watch pretty much every single hockey game.

"It has not been a lot of fun broadcasting (NBA) games this year."

Barkley attended Monday's game at Bridgestone Arena as a guest of NHL commissioner Gary Bettman. Before the invitation arrived from the league, he had already been thinking about making the trip to Tennessee.

"I'm talking to JR, who I talk to quite a bit. He's my neighbour in Arizona. He's like, 'Man, you've got to come to Nashville for a game,'" said Barkley. "He says, 'It's the craziest thing I've ever seen.'

"So I'm really looking forward to tonight. They say it's crazy."

Barkley first became aware of hockey while growing up in Birmingham, Ala., because of the Bulls – a World Hockey Association team based in the city. After being drafted by the Philadelphia 76ers, he became a Flyers fan.

"My favourite hockey player of all-time was Ron Hextall because I want to know if my guy really cares," said Barkley. "You watch Ron Hextall play, you know he really wanted to play. So he's my favourite hockey player.

"There is nothing more nerve-racking than Stanley Cup overtime hockey. It's the craziest thing you're ever going to see. That's one of the reasons I just love the sport."

Before leaving the stage, Barkley delivered a soliloquy on what makes a team great.

It was particularly relevant with the Pittsburgh Penguins attempting to become the first repeat Stanley Cup champions since the 1997-98 Detroit Red Wings.

"The teams that win a lot, they're the great teams because I think the one thing you guys don't understand: 'Man, winning is hard. Winning is hard. Like we all want to win. We all want to win,'" said Barkley. "When you talk about great teams, teams that win multiple championships, I always put them on a pedestal because these teams that win one time but never win again, that's cool.

"But to win all the time is a big deal."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.06.2017

1066487 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Golden Knights assistant GM describes the ideal expansion draft pick

Rory Boylen

June 5, 2017, 7:53 PM

Pull up an expansion draft simulator on capfriendly.com, pick your team and then get your friends to do the same. When you compare the teams everyone came up with, you'll quickly realize the wide range of options the Vegas Golden Knights will be faced with when it comes time for them to officially make their team later this month.

Will the Golden Knights really take seven goalies, a scenario that's been contemplated in some corners. Will they be a defence-first club who has to get by on a shut down (dare we say 1-3-1) system? How many trades will they make with other teams to not take a certain player in exchange for a future asset?

Will this be a team that builds through the draft first, or will Vegas use the summer to put themselves in a decent position to perhaps make a run at a playoff spot right away?

Golden Knights assistant GM Kelly McCrimmon joined Bob McCown and Damien Cox on Sportsnet 590 The FAN's Prime Time Sports Monday to discuss what the ideal player is for the expansion squad.

"If there's a young player that can grow up with our organization and be part of our team when we believe we can be a contending team, a playoff team...that's an ideal pick," McCrimmon said.

"I think when you get right down to making your selections, though, what probably will carry the day is what gives us the most value. So if that means an older player from a team that might be traded and turned into a younger player, draft picks or other prospects, then we're going to look at it that way. If it's a guy that does meet our needs exactly then we'll take that player and he'll be part of our organization as we move ahead."

McCrimmon also noted that he expects the team to be busy talking with agents in the exclusive 72-hour window they have to negotiate with pending unrestricted free agents, and restricted free agents not protected by their teams. One thing to consider, though, is that at the NHL Scouting Combine in Buffalo this past weekend, Vegas GM George McPhee downplayed the idea the team might chase Ilya Kovalchuk or Alex Ovechkin via trade, saying he didn't think the team needed a "face of the franchise."

There has been some speculation of how much of a challenge it's going to be for Vegas to reach the salary cap floor after the expansion draft and a summer of transactions. Starting with a blank slate, it's not in the Golden Knights' interest to take on bad contracts. Since they've expressed more of an interest in younger players who will be with them for the long-run, is the team at all concerned as to how it will get to the cap floor?

"That hasn't been an issue in any of the mock drafts we've done with our staff," McCrimmon said. "Every time we've done it we're easily getting to the floor. I don't think there's going to be any real challenge that way at all in terms of having to meet that criteria of just selecting the players we feel are going to bring the most to our organization."

In the end, McCrimmon and the Golden Knights believe Vegas will be a destination where players will want to play.

"Our experience is going to be really special," McCrimmon said. "So are we going to win the Stanley Cup next year? That's definitely long odds. Are we going to be an organization that guys really like playing for based on our facilities, based on the city where we're located, based on just the opportunity to be part of an expansion franchise? I think there's going to be a lot of interest from players in playing in Las Vegas."

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Sportsnet.ca / CWHL unveils Chinese expansion franchise for 2017-18

Sportsnet Staff

June 5, 2017, 6:50 PM

The Canadian Women's Hockey League has reached the Far East.

The league announced on Monday that it has reached a five-year deal to expand into China, with the formation of the Kunlun Red Star (KRS), which will begin play in the 2017-18 season.

"This is a historic moment in time for women's hockey to grow on a global stage, creating a template for many winter sports to follow heading into the 2022 Olympics to be held in China," CWHL commissioner Brenda Anders said in a press release. "This is not just about hockey it is about the opportunity for the growth of women in all sports and creating career opportunities."

As a result, the CWHL schedule will see a 24 to 30 game increase with the five North American teams travelling to play a three-game series with Kunlun.

KRS will be located in Shenzhen, China, as the country looks to encourage a growing interest in hockey as China prepares to host the 2022 Winter Olympics.

"We're extremely excited to announce this exciting partnership with the Canadian Women's Hockey league," said Alex Zhao, chairman of the board of KRS in a press release. "As part of the CWHL, the premier professional women's league, our mission is to develop a top-tier professional team in order to develop a strong base of female players for



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our national programs, and new audiences for the sport in China, in the lead-up to hosting the Beijing Winter Olympics in 2022."

The newest franchise has already reportedly signed top Finnish netminder Noora Raty as well as American forward Kelli Stack.

The addition leaves the CWHL with teams in six cities: Shenzhen, Calgary, Brampton, Toronto, Montreal, and Boston.

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Sportsnet.ca / Justin Bieber defends his right to cheer for any and all teams

Sportsnet Staff

June 5, 2017, 9:25 PM

"Mark My Words." Justin Bieber will cheer for any sports team he wants to.

After a recent photo of him wearing a Pittsburgh Penguins jersey drew controversy, which team Bieber cheers for came into question.

"What Do You Mean?"

Some fans were appalled that Bieber, a noted-Toronto Maple Leafs fan, would wear the jersey of another team. On Monday, the pop-superstar took to Twitter to clarify where his sports fandom truly lies.

Leafs above all but other than that u give me ANY JERSEY THAT LOOKS COOL ILL THROW IT ON

— Justin Bieber (@justinbieber) June 5, 2017

Bieber added that he just loves to watch sports and doesn't care who's playing. According to him, being a sports fan is about cheering for anyone and everyone.

I support all sports I'll put ANY jersey from ANY pro team if I'm whack for wearing jerseys they give me out of love then I'm Whack

— Justin Bieber (@justinbieber) June 5, 2017

I also don't know enough about sports to Really have valid opinion but I do enjoy sports!! And enjoy any high level sports game. Any team

— Justin Bieber (@justinbieber) June 5, 2017

To sum it up, Bieber says that no matter who you cheer for, if you just learn to "Love Yourself" "Life is Worth Living."

"Get Used to It."

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Sportsnet.ca / Report: Blue Jackets inquired about Ilya Kovalchuk

Sportsnet Staff

June 5, 2017, 6:08 PM

With Ilya Kovalchuk still interested in returning to the NHL next season, amid some suggestions to the contrary, the New York Post is reporting one team that has inquired about his services.

According to Larry Brooks, the Columbus Blue Jackets have reached out to the Kovalchuk camp about his interest in joining their team.

How much has Tortorella changed? Enough so that Jackets have inquired about Kovalchuk's interest in coming to Columbus, Post has learned.

— Larry Brooks (@NYP_Brooksie) June 5, 2017

Kovalchuk's rights are still owned by the New Jersey Devils, who signed him to a 15-year contract in 2010 that he walked away from via retirement to play in the KHL. For a team to get Kovalchuk, he first needs to be traded there by the Devils.

"There were reports this week that Ilya Kovalchuk would stay in the KHL and not come back to North America. Word out of the Scouting Combine is that is not the case, that Kovalchuk is still very much interested in playing in the NHL next season," Elliotte Friedman reported on Saturday.

"I won't be surprised if some of the interest comes from people who know him—maybe like a Peter DeBoer of San Jose, Martin Brodeur in St. Louis, possibly even a Lou Lamoriello in Toronto."

Devils GM Ray Shero also spoke about Kovalchuk's potential return on Thursday, saying he's just waiting word from the Russian's camp before proceeding.

"I can't go out calling teams because that's a waste of my time," Shero said. "He's going to tell [us] where he wants to play, and in the end, if that does work out and it's not the Devils, then I've got to see if that makes sense for us to do that."

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Sportsnet.ca / Oake family fundraising to build addiction centre in honour of Bruce

Sportsnet Staff

June 5, 2017, 5:11 PM

When Bruce Oake's family was writing his obituary, they made the decision not to shy away from telling the world what had happened to the 25-year-old.

"We decided that we would put in the obit exactly what claimed his life," said Bruce's father, Hockey Night in Canada's Scott Oake, in a CBC News piece. "Because we weren't going to hide behind it."

Bruce, who struggled with addiction for years, died of a heroin overdose on March 28, 2011. Now, his parents Scott and Anne, along with his younger brother, Darcy, are hoping to turn their grief into something positive — a way to help others and honour Bruce's memory at the same time.

The family is raising funds to build a long-term treatment centre for addicts in Winnipeg. The \$14-million, 50-bed facility will be free of charge for addicts.

"We are in a lot of ways right now leaving a generation of addicts out there to die," said Scott, who added that Winnipeg especially has a dire need for a drug treatment facility that doesn't turn away addicts because they cannot afford to pay. The Oake family spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on rehabilitation in an effort to help Bruce overcome his addiction.

Donations to the Bruce Oake Memorial Fund can be made to bruceoakerecoverycentre.ca.

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Sportsnet.ca / Down Goes Brown: 11 matched NHL offer sheets with lasting impact

Sean McIndoe

June 5, 2017, 11:31 AM

Could this be the year we finally see an NHL team shake up the RFA market with an offer sheet?

There's been some debate over the weekend, spurred on by a post at The Athletic that argued that the Maple Leafs could take a run at someone like St. Louis defenceman Colton Parayko. In the piece, Tyler Dellow lays out the case for the Leafs to target a capped-out Blues team.

On the one hand, the idea seems crazy. Even putting aside whether the Leafs should be trying to fast-track their rebuild, offer sheets almost never work — there's only been one successful attempt since 1997. But Dellow lays out a convincing argument that this year's Leafs are a rare case of a team that could pull it off, because they have lots of short-term cap room, an obvious hole in the roster, and draft picks that are unlikely to fall at the top of the draft.

The entire discussion may be more of a theoretical exercise than anything, since Doug Armstrong claims the Blues would automatically match any offer sheet on one of their players. If so, he'd be falling in line with most of his colleagues through NHL history. The list of players who've signed offer sheets at some point in their career is longer than



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you might think, and some of the names are big ones. But the offer sheets are almost always matched.

So today, let's break out some alternate history as we look back at some of the bigger offer sheets over the years and ask: What might have happened if the team hadn't matched?

Michel Goulet, 1991

The offer sheet was still a relatively new weapon in 1991, having been in play for just five years, and at that point one had never actually been matched by the player's original team. The Blues had pulled off what still stands as the most successful offer sheet ever in 1990, when they'd tried Scott Stevens away from the Capitals. A year later, they decided to try again.

Their first target was Goulet, a veteran sniper coming off his first full season in Chicago. Going after Goulet served a dual purpose for the Blues, who could land a decent scorer while hurting their arch-rivals in the process. The Blues and Hawks had battled it out for the Presidents' Trophy in 1990-91, and Goulet's offer sheet continued the rivalry. St. Louis offered the veteran a four-year deal worth nearly \$3 million, but Chicago matched, and the Blues had to turn elsewhere.

What if?: Goulet would play three more years and score 61 goals; decent numbers, but not enough to really change the course of history for either team. (Although he did help the Blackhawks make the final in 1992.)

But there may have been a crucial side effect of the Goulet deal. Having missed on one winger, the Blues turned their attention to a bigger offer-sheet prize: New Jersey's Brendan Shanahan. The good news is that they got him. The bad news is that it cost them far more than they imagined, when the Devils demanded Stevens as compensation. An arbitrator agreed, Stevens became a Devil (after a brief holdout) and the rest was history.

If the Blackhawks had let Goulet go to St. Louis, there's at least a decent change that the Blues never target Shanahan. And that means Stevens doesn't end up anchoring the Devils' blue line for the next dozen years.

Kevin Stevens, 1991

The Bruins and Penguins waged one of the better feuds of the early '90s, spurred on by Cam Neely and Ulf Samuelsson. After the Pens knocked off the Bruins in the 1991 conference final, Boston decided to take the rivalry off the ice during the off-season by targeting one of the Penguins' best young players with an offer sheet.

Bruins' GM Mike Milbury gave the power winger a five-year deal reportedly worth over \$1 million per season. The idea of Stevens, a local boy, playing on a line with Neely seemed irresistible. But after several days of suspense, the Penguins matched the offer.

What if?: Stevens scored 109 goals over the next two seasons and was a first-team all-star in 1992. The Penguins beat the Bruins in the conference final yet again that year, including a game in which Stevens scored four goals against his would-be team. Would the series have turned out differently if Stevens had been on the other side? It's unlikely — it was a four-game sweep — but we'll never know for sure.

Teemu Selanne, 1992

Here's a trivia question that would stump most fans: Who did Teemu Selanne sign his first NHL contract with?

The answer: the Calgary Flames.

Yes, despite being drafted by the Jets in 1988 and making his NHL debut in Winnipeg four years later, Selanne actually signed his first deal with Calgary, in the form of an offer sheet. The Flames gave the Finnish rookie a three-year deal worth \$2.7 million, nearly double what the cash-strapped Jets were hoping to pay.

It was worth a shot, but Jets GM Mike Smith quickly matched. Any lingering bad feelings were quickly forgotten when Selanne took the league by storm with a 76-goal rookie season.

What if?: One can only imagine when Selanne could have done playing alongside Theo Fleury, Gary Roberts and Joe Nieuwendyk. At the very least, you'd have to assume the Flames wouldn't have gone a dozen years without winning a playoff round.

Scott Stevens, 1994

No player was more linked with offer sheets than Stevens. He went from the Capitals to the Blues after signing one, and from the Blues to the Devils after Shanahan did. Most fans know about those two transactions. But not everyone remembers a third offer sheet run-in for Stevens — the time he tried to escape New Jersey by rejoining the Blues during the 1994 off-season.

The deal backfired badly on St. Louis when the Devils quickly matched, then accused the Blues of tampering. The case wasn't settled until 1999, when the league found the Blues guilty and ordered them to compensate the Devils with draft picks and cash.

What if?: It's hard to imagine the Devils winning three of the next eight Stanley Cups without Stevens; it's possible they don't win any. With all due respect to Martin Brodeur and Scott Niedermayer, Stevens may have been the most important player on those championship teams.

Here's an extra layer: If Stevens winds up back in St. Louis in 1994, do the Blues still deal for Chris Pronger a year later? And if not, where does he wind up after wearing out his welcome in Hartford?

Keith Tkachuk, 1995

One of the key aspects of any offer-sheet attempt is to target a vulnerable team. And they don't come much more vulnerable than the 1995 Winnipeg Jets, a team that was on the verge of moving, had new owners, and already needed to spend a big chunk of its meagre budget on resigning Selanne.

So it made sense for the Blackhawks to pounce with a five-year, \$17-million offer to Tkachuk that would make him the league's third-highest-paid player. Tkachuk playing alongside Chicago star Jeremy Roenick seemed like an unstoppable combination.

It was worth a shot, but the Jets matched the offer and Tkachuk remained in Winnipeg. Briefly.

What if?: Within a year, the Jets were on their way to Arizona. Ironically, Roenick would join them there after a trade, and he'd help Tkachuk lead the league with 52 goals in 1996-97. Meanwhile, the Blackhawks would win just one playoff round over the next 14 years.

Joe Sakic, 1997

We throw the term "franchise player" around a lot, but there's no doubt it applies to Sakic and the Avalanche (and Nordiques). He spent his entire 20-year career with the team, and remains there to this day in the front office.

That makes it a little awkward to mention the time he signed with the New York Rangers.

But it did happen. Back in 1997, the Rangers were reeling after the departure of captain Mark Messier to Vancouver. So they looked to Sakic, signing the star centre to a three-year deal worth \$21 million. To make things even tougher on the Avalanche, the Rangers front-loaded the contract with a \$15-million signing bonus.

Colorado GM Pierre Lacroix raised a few eyebrows by taking the full week to make up his mind, but with a new arena on the way, he ultimately decided to keep his captain.

What if?: The Avalanche would continue to be one of the league's best teams for years, including four trips to the conference finals and a Stanley Cup in 2001. Do they get that Cup without Sakic in the lineup? We'll never know, but it sure seems unlikely.

As for the Rangers, they moved on to Plan B a few weeks later by trading for Pat LaFontaine. He'd only last one season in New York before injuries ended his career.

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1066493 Websites

TSN.CA / Gaudreau, Fisher lead Preds over Pens to tie series

By Frank Seravalli

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Walk inside the Predators' dressing room and if you avoid tripping over Frederick Gaudreau's makeshift stall, it's hard not to notice a cartoonish blue dog plastered on two walls, one door, almost everywhere you look.

This dog's name is "Stanley."



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A bone is broken off in Stanley's mouth, with "speed" written on one half of the bone and "attitude" on the other. He's wearing tattoos of "56" and "92" on one leg to honour injured teammates Ryan Johansen and Kevin Fiala.

Stanley is the motivational brainchild of coach Peter Laviolette, symbolizing the "dog on a bone" mentality he wants the Predators to embody - the reason why their player-of-the-game memento is a Flava Flav-sized padlock and chain.

Pekka Rinne handed that chain to Gaudreau on Monday night, but an equally deserving candidate was captain Mike Fisher.

Fisher would not let the Predators return to Pittsburgh anything but all square in the Stanley Cup Final.

After a whack from Evgeni Malkin sent him sprawling on all fours and nearly squandered an opportunity, Fisher turned his blade to the backhand and swatted a dribbling puck over the outstretched sticks of Justin Schultz and Patric Hornqvist to hit a fleeting Viktor Arvidsson in stride.

"I just tried all I could do to just whack it ahead," Fisher explained. "I knew he was gone."

The Swede with plenty of Finnish blew the Predators' third goal by Matt Murray's glove and saluted the Bridgestone Arena crowd as Nashville slipped into pure pandemonium.

It was all possible with Fisher's pass, the perfect combination of skill and will, one of the best you will see under hockey's brightest lights.

"Pure desperation," Predators winger Harry Zolnierczyk said, "that last little bit of effort to make sure that puck doesn't go back the other way."

It was no shock, then, that it was Fisher who helped close out a resounding 4-1 victory in Game 4, going head-to-head with Penguins captain Sidney Crosby in a fierce third period battle. Fisher won nine of 13 face-offs against Crosby (69 per cent), including four of seven in the defensive zone, on a night that No. 87 looked to be at full-tilt.

It was the type of third period that if the Predators somehow find a way to bring the Stanley Cup to Nashville will go down in team lore. Not bad for the only NHL player who isn't even the most famous person in his own house.

"Tremendous will, tremendous heart, tremendous character. He's the heartbeat of our team," Laviolette said of Fisher. "I think that poke to move the puck forward is just typical of him."

There is another slogan in the Predators' room that reads: "We are what we believe we are."

Well, Nashville - the team and the city - made a strong statement hosting the Stanley Cup Final for the first time: They believe. They want to hoist, not just host the Stanley Cup. The Predators came home and danced dangerously close to facing a sweep on Monday night. Now Lord Stanley will not be decided in fewer than six games for the ninth time in 10 years.

Fisher and his wife, country music star Carrie Underwood, are the first couple of the Music City. Underwood was among the throng of celebrities, from Dierks Bentley to Nicole Kidman to Charles Barkley, to take in Game 4.

The Stanley Cup Final is down to a best-of-three now, starting with Game 5 on Thursday night in Pittsburgh where the Predators lost the first two games of this best-of-seven series.

They watched Gaudreau net his second game-winner in as many nights to become the first player since 1944 to score his first three NHL goals in the Stanley Cup Final. They witnessed Rinne prove his bounce back was no one-game mirage, making 23 of 24 saves to outduel Matt Murray and hand him the first back-to-back playoff losses (7-1) of his young career.

James Neal said the Predators forgot to sing to Fisher, but it's safe to say he celebrated his 37th birthday on Monday in style.

"That's all I wanted for my birthday," Fisher said. "Best gift I could get today for sure. The guys played unbelievable."

Fisher entered the series as Nashville's only player with Stanley Cup Final experience from his 2007 trip with the Ottawa Senators - and he's played like it.

After not registering a single point in his first 14 games of the playoffs, Fisher has broken through at the biggest moment with four assists in four games. He became the face of the playoffs when he accepted the Clarence Campbell bowl as Western Conference champions in street clothes after missing the last two games of the West Final with a suspected concussion.

His movie star mug was battered, one eye black and blue, his line of stitches partially hidden by his celebratory championship hat.

"He's just a warrior out there," Neal said.

"One of the most genuine, most respected players I've ever played with," Zolnierczyk said. "He's an honest player. He plays the right way, plays it hard. One of the heaviest, hardest players I've seen play the game."

Zolnierczyk called Fisher "an animal," but perhaps more appropriately, he should have said a dog on a bone - whose bite held the Predators together like glue in a rollercoaster season.

"I've taken questions on Mike, people [said] it's time to produce. He's been unbelievable," Laviolette said. "He's an unbelievable captain. He lives his life and lives his hockey life every day in a manner that you would want to follow."

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1066494 Websites

TSN.CA / No stall, no problem for Predators rookie Gaudreau

By Frank Seravalli

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — It looks like a cross between a nightstand and a cubby for a kindergartener, smack dab in the middle of the Nashville Predators' dressing room, but it's where Frederick Gaudreau hangs his helmet.

What does the Predators' leading goal scorer in the Stanley Cup final have to do to get his own stall?

Spend more time in the NHL, apparently.

With Nashville's dressing room beyond capacity, "Freddy Hockey" gets dressed in the makeshift stall for morning skates and practices because he only has nine regular-season games under his belt, even though teammate Brad Hunt isn't playing.

For the soft-spoken Québécois, it's no stall, no problem. Gaudreau is soaking up the fact that he is in the Stanley Cup final. He swaps stalls with one of the scratches before the game and he isn't superstitious about where he sits.

"I could be sitting on the floor and I would take it any time," Gaudreau said, smiling.

Two goals in the #StanleyCup Final and Frederick #Gaudreau still doesn't have a stall in the #Preds' locker room. . . (□
Twitter/Frank_Seravalli)

A post shared by TSN (@tsn_official) on Jun 4, 2017 at 11:55am PDT

With two goals, Gaudreau is Nashville's only multi-goal scorer in the final.

Gaudreau, 24, saved his first career NHL goal for hockey's biggest stage in Game 1. The undrafted centre didn't score in his first nine career appearances this regular season. Gaudreau then became the 11th different Predator to score a game-winner in Nashville's 13 playoff wins in Game 3 on Saturday night.

"I mean, it is a little crazy when you think about it," Gaudreau said. "Honestly, every day I'm here, I'm just trying to do my job. Whatever is happening is happening. I just focus on what I can do next."

Gaudreau's parents - father Jean-Pierre and mother France Desrosiers - have been there to see it all. They took time off from the family accounting business, to drive from their Bromont, Que., home to Pittsburgh for Games 1 and 2, and then kept on driving all the way to Tennessee.

"There was no way for them to not come," Gaudreau said. "They'd do anything."

It really is a rags-to-riches story for Gaudreau, who is playing for his job next season as a restricted free agent. He started with the Nashville



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organization in 2014 on a minor-league contract, beginning his career in ECHL Cincinnati.

After making his way to AHL Milwaukee, he earned a two-year, two-way NHL deal, which has paid him an approximate total of \$215,000 over these last two seasons – or about four days' worth of work for P.K. Subban.

Suddenly, Gaudreau is the Stanley Cup final, where he is part of a centre corps trying to hang on against two of the NHL's best in the absence of Ryan Johansen.

Nashville's four centres – Colton Sissons, Mike Fisher, Calle Jarnkrok and Gaudreau – have combined for a grand total of 23 points in these playoffs. That's three less what Evgeni Malkin has on his own (26) and the same number Sidney Crosby has produced.

Even Pittsburgh's fourth-line centre, Matt Cullen, would be second only to Sissons (12) with his nine points.

"It's happening at a good time," Gaudreau said of his outburst. "I've just kept improving year after year. That's where my focus has been, just trying to improve."

Maybe one day he'll even get a locker.

TSN.CA LOADED: 06.06.2017

1066495 Websites

TSN.CA / Rangers' core bracing for offseason overhaul

TSN.ca Staff

The New York Rangers have made the playoffs in seven consecutive seasons but after coming short of a Stanley Cup once again, the team knows changes are likely coming.

The Rangers were eliminated in Game 6 of their second round series against the Ottawa Senators on Tuesday night. It was an improvement on their first round exit last season, but a disappointment for a team that was two years removed from the Eastern Final and three from a Stanley Cup Final.

Veteran Rick Nash, who's under contract through next season and coming off a 23-goal campaign, was asked how different he expects the team to look in September and responded, "I hope I'm here to see it." Nash added he loves being a Ranger but his future with the team remains in the hands of the team's management.

Captain Ryan McDonagh said Thursday during the team's locker room cleanout that without a title, the team has left themselves open to the front office making changes.

"We have been together for a handful of years and have come close, but this is a results-oriented business," McDonagh said, per the New York Post. "You've got to get results. You want to get that ultimate prize. You know that [front office] is going to do whatever it can to put a team on the ice they think can win. There's no question it's something you think about. But it's out of my control. Over the course of the summer, we'll see what happens."

McDonagh was named captain of the team in 2014 after Ryan Callahan was traded to the Tampa Bay Lightning the previous season. He's among a core group of players who were the team which reached the Stanley Cup Final earlier in 2014. That group includes Derek Stepan, Chris Kreider, Mats Zuccarello, Nash, Dan Girardi, Marc Staal and Henrik Lundqvist, among others.

"We've been here a long time, the core of us," Stepan said Thursday. "We understand this world is about winning. As a group, we haven't been able to do it. We've been real good and real close, but that doesn't do us any good."

"It's our lives. It's part of the business, it's part of the job. It's all these things that are out of our control. So you think about it, but at the same time, why stress yourself about something you can't control?"

Head coach Alan Vigneault said Thursday he was 'still shocked' the Rangers had been eliminated and was asked whether the team's core was strong enough for the Rangers to keep it together.

"That's a good question, it's a valid question," Vigneault said. "It's something that I don't think I have an answer for you today. But I do think it's something we're going to look at."

This season marked the third straight year the Rangers topped 100 points in the regular season.

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TSN.CA / How Laviolette won the matchup battle in Game 3

By Travis Yost

One of the things I like to measure after any Game 3 in a playoff series is how the matchups evolve due to last change.

The Pittsburgh-Nashville Stanley Cup final is as interesting a competition as any when it comes to coaching strategy and player deployment. I think part of it is because each team has obvious core strengths (the centres in Pittsburgh, the blue line in Nashville) and obvious core weaknesses.

Through the first two games, we were able to see how Penguins head coach Mike Sullivan viewed his optimal matchups. Sullivan is in a really interesting spot in that his team is quite a bit different than the one that won the Stanley Cup a season ago. He's already down his elite first defensive pairing because of Kris Letang's injury, and his memorable 'HBK' line from a year ago is essentially defunct.

The Penguins have become a top-heavy team that relies on its stars to perform. Ultimately, the game for Sullivan is to optimize their minutes against various Predators groups.

In the first two games, Sullivan clearly used Sidney Crosby's line in a more defence-oriented role. Though top-six forwards generally play quite a bit against other top-six forwards, it was interesting to watch the Crosby line sort of follow around the Filip Forsberg line (now with Pontus Aberg and Colton Sissons). And because Nashville coach Peter Laviolette really sheltered his third pairing of Matt Irwin and Yannick Weber, Crosby's line – as well as the Evgeni Malkin line – played a huge chunk of minutes against Nashville's top-four defencemen.

So, what changed in Game 3? Was there any matchup previously hunted by Sullivan that Laviolette was able to get away from?

Here's how the head-to-head ice time looks by positional groups against both Crosby and Malkin through the first three games. Keep the Crosby versus Forsberg note from earlier in mind.

First, Crosby:

So, if you are Laviolette and you know your most dangerous attacker is Forsberg, it makes an awful lot of sense to keep him away from the wizard that is Sidney Crosby. Forsberg saw a drastic reduction in head-to-head minutes with Crosby in Game 3, with Laviolette opting to feed the Viktor Arvidsson-Mike Fisher-James Neal line those tough minutes. This makes some degree of sense knowing how much Laviolette respects Fisher's defensive game – even at the age of 36, he's getting the lion's share of tough minutes.

The other interesting piece is Laviolette also worked to get P.K. Subban and Mattias Ekholm minutes away from Crosby. This also makes sense a fair bit of sense – if you're hunting offensive minutes away from Crosby with Forsberg out there, you might as well put your best offensive pairing on the ice with them. Instead of the 50/50 split we saw in the first two games, Nashville loaded up their second pair with Crosby minutes to free up more of Ekholm and Subban.

Now here's Malkin:

Malkin is probably the Conn Smythe Trophy favourite at this point, but it's clear to me that Nashville thinks he's more vulnerable to be scored upon than Crosby. This makes a fair bit of sense – Crosby's one of the most refined two-way players the NHL has ever seen, and although Malkin is a generational talent in his own right, you have a better chance of getting the scoring chance and goal advantage against him. I suspect this had less to do with hunting Malkin though and more to do with hunting his wingers in the older Chris Kunitz and a not-so-great defender in Phil Kessel.

Thus, the shift in minutes here is apparent and obvious. Forsberg's line sees a big spike in head-to-head minutes with Malkin, and so too does the Subban pairing.

One other note I think could be telling for the rest of the series: Laviolette didn't seem any more comfortable in playing Irwin and Weber in any minutes against Pittsburgh's top six. They continue to be shielded,



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deployed only in situations where the odds are assuredly in Nashville's favour.

This was a subtle strategic change but an important one. Lost in all of the crazy goaltending storylines (Pekka Rinne's implosions in the first two games; Matt Murray's struggles in Game 3 is that the Predators skated reasonably tough in Games 1 and 2 and were, no doubt about it, the better team in Game 3.

It's hard to say how much of Saturday night's victory was driven by the matchup changes, but it's worth noting that the groups that Laviolette hunted matchups for just absolutely crushed. They came out a goal ahead in 5-on-5 play and that was driven by the fact that they owned about 65 to 70 per cent of the play from a shot differential battle, depending on the individual.

Those numbers are jarring. So much so that I expect we'll see a repeat in strategy for Game 4 – another game where Nashville will have the ever-valuable last change.

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TSN.CA / Predators pierce Murray's aura of invincibility

By Frank Seravalli

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - There was an aura of invincibility growing about Matt Murray, the Pittsburgh Penguins' stone-cold killer in net who seemingly does nothing but win.

That aura reached a fever pitch at the first intermission of Game 3 on Saturday night. The Predators had vastly outplayed the Penguins for six of seven periods, yet had just four goals to show for their first 76 shots of the Stanley Cup final.

"Then our shooters started shooting," Predators defenceman Ryan Ellis said.

Nashville punctured that idea of invincibility like a balloon. They made Murray seem human again, beating him five times in a stretch of 15 shots.

Saturday marked the first time Murray allowed more than four goals in a Stanley Cup playoff game.

"He obviously has a lot of confidence, but I think he was starting to find a comfort in net," Predators forward Harry Zolnierczyk said. "That was a big game for us, just to throw a few question marks and not let him feel as comfortable as he possibly looked in Games 1 and 2."

The Predators' five goals from five different scorers came five different ways: a tip in front, a shot off the rush, a breakaway, a bounce from behind the net and a 3-on-2 break.

When asked how many of them he wanted back, Murray didn't flinch.

"Yeah, all of them," he said.

Nashville seemed to target Murray's glove hand, with four of the goals scored on that side.

"I don't know," Murray said sheepishly on Sunday when asked if he noticed that.

After breaking through in a big way, the real test for Nashville will be duplicating the performance. Murray is undefeated in his playoff career in games immediately following a loss (7-0) with a .935 save percentage.

In fact, Murray has lost back-to-back decisions only twice in his NHL career (60 starts in the regular season, 28 in the postseason). Even if his body of work is relatively small compared with Pekka Rinne or Marc-Andre Fleury, it's still an impressive stat.

Murray, 23, didn't seem to put much emphasis on his ability to bounce back.

"Just play the game, man. Just play the game," Murray said. "It's not something I really think about. My approach stays the same no matter what scenario."

His coach, Mike Sullivan, believes there is something to Murray's tendency to rebound, that it's an instinct and not necessarily a learned trait.

"I just think he has the ability to move by adversities," Sullivan said Sunday. "He's a mentally tough kid. He's a real resilient kid. He doesn't let any of the outside noise, or if he thought he should've had one of those goals, he doesn't let that stuff affect him ... or have an impact on his ability to perform. That's a maturity in someone's game that usually takes time to acquire."

Even when the Predators got to Murray, his body language didn't seem to suggest he was flustered or agitated. He remained calm, even in a raucous environment that repeatedly mocked him with chants of "You suck!" and "It's all your fault!"

"It was loud. It was really loud," Murray said. "Passionate fan base, and it's what we expected."

Any frustration felt by the Predators was swept away in the giant party consuming Bridgestone Arena. Nashville was on the right side of that frustration for most of the first three rounds with Rinne behind them, but they have a road map now that didn't exist prior to Game 3.

Zolnierczyk said the Predators "broke through" and created a "belief that it's possible now."

"He's a terrific goalie. To come in and be in two Stanley Cups in two years, it's an amazing feat," Ellis said. "For us, it's a little more puck luck. We got some fortunate bounces. I mean, it's going to go like that now."

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TSN.CA / Crosby has no time for Subban's games

The Canadian Press

NASHVILLE — P.K. Subban says ask the Pittsburgh Penguins if he's getting under their skin. The All-Star defenceman only knows he apparently needs to work on his breath on the ice and loves the challenge of helping shut down Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin.

And he loves gamesmanship.

Crosby isn't in the mood to play if it doesn't involve his stick and a puck. No, the Pittsburgh captain insists he did not complain about Subban's breath in Game 3, saying Subban made that up.

"He likes the attention and things like that so I mean if he wants to make stuff up, ... what can I do?" Crosby said Sunday.

The Stanley Cup Final has some bad blood brewing, and the best-of-seven series for the NHL championship has the makings of becoming a battle royale. The defending champs a chance for a sweep Saturday night when the Predators scored five straight goals in a 5-1 rout of the Pens, winning the first Cup Final game in the state of Tennessee.

Now the Predators want to tie it in Game 4 on Monday night. They are 8-1 at home this post-season, and Subban made it clear he expects Nashville fans to find a way to crank the volume up even higher Monday night.

"I know there'll be a lot more energy if you can imagine that ... which will be pretty awesome," Subban said.

The Penguins have bigger issues than talk of bad breath, and their frustration bubbled over late Saturday night as they racked up 10 penalties for 44 minutes night. That included Chris Kunitz, Patric Hornqvist and Matt Cullen each getting a 10-minute misconduct all in the final five minutes of the loss.

Crosby has yet to score a goal in this series, and both he and Evgeni Malkin were held without a shot Saturday night in the same game for the first time in their star-studded careers.

It's the fifth time Crosby, with 160 career playoff points and 23 points this post-season, had been held without a shot and third this spring. It was the eighth time Malkin, with his NHL-best 26 points this post-season, was held without a shot. Malkin hasn't gone two games without a shot in the

same post-season since his rookie year, while Washington did it to Crosby April 29 and May 1.

"We had chances," Crosby said. "We just got to hit the net. They blocked some. I think it's just a matter of winning those battles too and finding ways to get to the net. You got to hit the net, so let's start there."

Pittsburgh coach Mike Sullivan said Crosby and Malkin simply command a lot of attention, and he doesn't want to interfere with their instincts on when to pass or shoot. Sullivan did see chances for both to throw the puck at the net.

"Their numbers speak for themselves," Sullivan said. "They've produced consistently for this team all year long and throughout the course of these playoffs. There's no doubt that we believe they will continue that."

The Predators have outshot the Penguins in each game so far with Pittsburgh taking a 2-0 series lead with quick scoring bursts.

They've also smothered the NHL's best scoring team even when the Pens have the man advantage, allowing just four shots in 13 penalties killed. Pittsburgh has just one power-play goal and was 0 of 3 with the man advantage in Game 4, and Malkin said he has not had room to work.

"I have puck like one second, they jump to me," Malkin said.

The loss snapped a three-game winning streak for the Penguins, but they are 13-2 in the playoffs coming off a loss under Sullivan. Goalie Matt Murray, who allowed five goals in the span of 15 shots, also has never lost when starting a game either after a Pittsburgh loss (9-0) or a playoff loss of his own (7-0).

They also might get centre Nick Bonino back. He tested his injured left foot and ankle by skating Sunday but said he remains day to day.

Subban relishes playing against the man he calls the world's best player in Crosby, and he also has plenty of help from fellow defencemen Roman Josi, Ryan Ellis and Mattias Ekholm.

"It's our defence that's going to win us games," Subban said. "We know that, and we're going to have to continue to be strong defensively to have success against this hockey club."

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USA TODAY / With Predators peaking, Penguins left searching for answers in Stanley Cup Final

Kevin Allen , USA TODAY Sports Published 1:17 a.m. ET June 6, 2017 | Updated 4 hours ago

NASHVILLE – Pittsburgh Penguins coach Mike Sullivan said from his perspective the first four games of the Stanley Cup Final were all probably closer than the score indicated.

But if you are the Nashville Predators it likely feels as if your team is performing at a higher level than a 2-2 series would suggest.

"You're at a point in the season, when you have to sink or swim, and you have to step up," Predators coach Peter Laviolette said.

The Predators have stepped up throughout the playoffs, particularly with wins in the past two games. With the Predators' 4-1 win in Game 4, they have evened the best-of-seven series and turned it into a best-of-three. Game 5 is Thursday in Pittsburgh.

The Penguins are still the defending champions, still have home-ice advantage and still have the world's best player in Sidney Crosby.

But it's the Predators who are playing as if they are the team to beat.

"We have to steal one in Pittsburgh," Nashville winger Viktor Arvidsson said.

After looking mediocre in the first two games of the series, goalie Pekka Rinne is again playing like the superhero he was in the first three rounds.

Asked whether the Predators were concerned about Rinne early in the series, Arvidsson said: "No. Never. He's an unbelievable player. He's the key to our team."

The fans' faith never wavered. Rinne was greeted with a sustained ovation when he came out for warmups in Games 3 and 4.



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"I'm sure when you look back (at these playoffs), it's a roller coaster, an emotional ride," Rinne said.

He made 23 saves in Game 4, and eight or nine of them seemed like prime scoring chances. In the second period, he stoned Jake Guentzel on his doorstep and shut down Chris Kunitz on a breakaway just before Frederick Gaudreau scored on a wrap-around to give Nashville a 2-1 lead.

The Penguins are supposed to be the more dangerous offensive team, but the Predators have now outscored the Penguins 13-11 and outshot them 123-91 in the series. They have outscored Pittsburgh 9-2 over the past six periods. Penguins goalie Matt Murray has given up eight goals over the past two games and has posted a sub-.900 save percentage in three of the four games of this series.

Ryan Johansen's injured thigh was supposed to be the Predators' Achilles' heel. Without him for the rest of the playoffs, the Predators were supposed to be at a severe disadvantage at center.

But Predators captain/center Mike Fisher owns four assists in this series — the same number of points as Crosby, who scored in Game 4, and two more than Evgeni Malkin.

"He's the heartbeat of our team," Laviolette said.

Laviolette calls him an unbelievable captain. "He lives his life and he lives his hockey life in a manner in which you would want to follow him," Laviolette said.

It seems to be going Nashville's way lately. Arvidsson, Calle Jarnkrok and Filip Forsberg, all of whom had been struggling to find the net and hadn't scored in the series, notched goals in Game 4.

Meanwhile, Penguins winger Phil Kessel has gone six games without a goal, and is minus-4 over the past two games.

"I thought (in Game 4), of all the games we played, we generated the most chances and the highest quality of chances," Sullivan said. "It didn't go in the net for us. But we had a number of Grade A opportunities, a couple of breakaways."

He isn't worried. He knows his own team was able to grind out a Stanley Cup championship just a year ago.

"I think we've got to stay with it here," Sullivan said. "We believe in the group. They are a resilient bunch. They're a resourceful bunch. They understand how to win."

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USA TODAY / Predators win again at home, take Game 4 to even Stanley Cup Final with Penguins

Kevin Allen , USA TODAY Sports Published 11:06 p.m. ET June 5, 2017 | Updated 4 hours ago

NASHVILLE — The Nashville Predators put on another impressive defensive show to turn the Stanley Cup Final into a best-of-three series.

The Predators, 9-1 at home during the playoffs, benefited from a stingy goaltending effort by Pekka Rinne to down the Pittsburgh Penguins 4-1 and tie the best-of-seven series at 2-2. The Predators have outscored Pittsburgh 9-2 in the last two games.

The home team has now won all four games. Game 5 will be in Pittsburgh on Thursday.

Here is what mattered in Game 4:

Rinne back in the groove: After looking mediocre in the first two games of the series, Rinne has raised his game to where it was at in the first three rounds.

Included in his eight second-period stops were a doorstep save against Jake Guentzel and a breakaway stop against Chris Kunitz. He made 23 saves in total.

Crosby steps up: After being held without a shot in Game 3, Sidney Crosby had a goal on four shots in Game 4.

Replay matters: Referees could not tell whether Frederick Gaudreau's wrap-around shot crossed the goal line at 3:45 of the second

period, but replays showed the puck clearly crossed the goal line to break a 1-1 tie.

That goal came shortly after the Rinne stops on Guentzel and Kunitz. Gaudreau has scored three times in the Cup Final -- his first three goals of his career.

Predators goal scorers: Calle Jarnkrok scored at 14:51 of the first period on a rebound to give Nashville a 1-0 and Crosby scored on a breakaway 1:06 later to tie the game.

Gaudreau and Viktor Arvidsson scored for Nashville in the second period. Arvidsson scored on a breakaway after Fisher poked the puck ahead to him while he was falling to the ice. Filip Forsberg got one via the empty net.

Streak stopped: Before Monday, Matt Murray (22 saves) was 9-0 all-time when he started a playoff game after a Pittsburgh loss.

Murray has given up eight goals in the past two games. He has finished with save percentages below .900 in three of the four games in this series.

Center still out: Nick Bonino skated for a short time in warmups, but couldn't go because of his injured foot.

Power outage: The Penguins were 0-for-1 on the power play, making them 1-for-14 in the series.

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USA TODAY / NHL's important dates to start the offseason

Kevin Allen , USA TODAY Sports Published 6:38 p.m. ET June 5, 2017 | Updated 10 hours ago

The Stanley Cup will be won by June 14, and within 48 hours of the on-ice celebration, both the Nashville Predators and Pittsburgh Penguins will have to start thinking about their offseason moves.

Here are important NHL happenings over the next four weeks:

1. Start of trading season: Usually teams wait until NHL draft week to make trades, but the June 21 Vegas Golden Knights expansion draft has prompted general managers to discuss trades earlier because they will impact their protected player lists. Talks are already ongoing. Vegas general manager George McPhee is busy.

Colorado Avalanche forward Matt Duchene is one of the big names who could move in the next few weeks. Defensemen Sami Vatanen (Anaheim Ducks) and Mathew Dumba (Minnesota) or Jonas Brodin (Minnesota), along with forwards Jonathan Drouin (Tampa Bay Lightning) and Jordan Eberle (Edmonton Oilers) are others featured in trade speculation.

In addition, the player buyout period will open June 15 or 48 hours after the Cup Final.

2. Submission of protected lists: Teams must submit their protected list by June 17 at 5 p.m. ET. Teams can choose to protect seven forwards, three defensemen and a goalie or eight skaters (defensemen and/or forwards), plus one goalie. Players with no-movement clauses have to be protected.

Several teams are in danger of losing key players, notably the Ducks and Wild. That's why players such as Dumba and Brodin have been the subject of trade speculation.

3. Expansion draft: The new Golden Knights franchise must make their selections by June 20. The selections will be announced on June 21.

The Golden Knights also have a 72-hour window to signing pending free agents from June 18-21. They are expected to take advantage of that opportunity.

Each team can only lose one player in the process, including a free agent that signs with Vegas.

McPhee is expected to load up on draft picks and prospects in exchange for not taking certain players.

4. The regular draft: The NHL draft, scheduled for June 23-24, doesn't boast the big name No. 1 pick like we have seen in the past two years with Connor McDavid and Auston Matthews.



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This is considered a below average draft, but projected top two picks Nolan Patrick and Nico Hischier can be impact players.

Patrick, a Canadian, is a 6-3 center, and the Swiss-born Hischier is a center or wing who may be slightly more dynamic.

The New Jersey Devils have the No. 1 pick, and the Philadelphia Flyers are No. 2. The Golden Knights pick No. 6.

5. Free agent signing period: The frenzy begins July 1. Right wings Alexander Radulov and T.J. Oshie and defenseman Kevin Shattenkirk are the biggest names in the unrestricted free agent class.

But there also seems to be considerable interest in defensemen Brendan Smith and Karl Alzner.

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USA TODAY / Penguins center Nick Bonino to be game-time decision for Game 4

Kevin Allen , USA TODAY Sports 1:59 p.m. ET June 5, 2017

NASHVILLE — Pittsburgh Penguins center Nick Bonino, absent from Game 3 because of a foot injury, will be a game-time decision for tonight's Game 4 of the Stanley Cup Final.

Bonino, a key role player, was injured in Game 2 when he blocked Nashville Predators defenseman P.K. Subban's shot from the point.

"When he's in our lineup, he plays in a lot of key situations," Pittsburgh coach Mike Sullivan said. "He's one of our best penalty killers. He's just got a real good solid overall two-way game. He has good offensive instincts. He's on our second power play unit."

Carl Hagelin moved into the Penguins' lineup in Bonino's absence.

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