



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 11, 2018



SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY

Hurricanes Sign Andrew Poturalski to One-Year Extension

The 24-year-old forward netted a career-high in goals in his second AHL season.

By [Brett Finger@brettfinger](mailto:Brett.Finger@brettfinger) Jun 8, 2018, 4:56pm EDT

The [Carolina Hurricanes](#) made their first transaction of what is expected to be many over the next two weeks on Friday, signing restricted free agent forward [Andrew Poturalski](#) to a one-year, two-way contract extension.

An undrafted free agent signing out of the University of New Hampshire in 2016, Poturalski has skated in two full seasons with the AHL's Charlotte Checkers. This past season, he finished with 49 points and set a career-high with 22 goals in the American League. In eight postseason games, he had one goal and four assists.

During his rookie season in 2016-17, he skated in two games for the Hurricanes without tallying any points.

Moving forward, Poturalski should continue to be a steady offensive leader for the Checkers, and the Hurricanes will hope that he continues to develop as a late-bloomer and possibly challenge for a roster spot on the big club. Though, given the organization's youth and talent, that seems unlikely for this upcoming season, barring injuries.

The team's official press release can be found [here](#) and is as follows:

RALEIGH, NC - Don Waddell, President and General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today announced that the team has signed forward Andrew Poturalski to a one-year, two-way contract. The deal will pay Poturalski \$700,000 on the NHL level or \$70,000 on the American Hockey League (AHL) level during the 2018-19 season.

"Andrew has shown skill and durability during his time in Charlotte," said Waddell. ***"He has continued to improve his game each season and we hope he can take another step forward next year."***

Poturalski, 24, registered 49 points (22g, 27a) in 76 games with the Charlotte Checkers (AHL) in 2017-18, becoming one of nine players in Charlotte franchise history to play in every game during a season. The 5'10", 180-pound forward ranked tied for third in the AHL in game-winning goals (7) last season and set career highs in games played and goals. In addition, Poturalski ranked fourth among Checkers skaters in goals and points in 2017-18 and added five points (1g, 4a) in eight Calder Cup playoff games. The Williamsville, NY, native has earned 106 points (43g, 63a) in 166 career AHL games with Charlotte. Poturalski, who originally signed with Carolina as a free agent on March 8, 2016, following his two-year career at the University of New Hampshire, has appeared in two NHL games with the Hurricanes.



Hurricanes Re-Sign Andrew Poturalski

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

Published: June 08, 2018

The Hurricanes have brought back another piece from last year's Checkers team by re-signing Andrew Poturalski to a one-year, two-way contract.

Poturalski set a career high with 22 goals last season,

ranking fourth on the team in both goals and points. The 24-year-old also became one of nine players in franchise history to appear in every game during a season by logging 76 games played this past season.

Additionally, the forward picked up five points in eight games during the Checkers' 2018 Calder Cup playoff run.

"Andrew has shown skill and durability during his time in Charlotte," said Hurricanes GM Don Waddell. "He has



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continued to improve his game each season and we hope he can take another step forward next year."



31 Thoughts: Is Vegas thinking about re-visiting Erik Karlsson deal?

[Elliote Friedman](#) June 10, 2018, 2:02 PM

I don't have much of a rooting interest for one team over another, but, watching the hilarious videos of the Capitals storming through Washington serves as a vivid reminder of something I wish to witness — a Canadian Stanley Cup victory.

Never covered one, so I don't care which team it is. Just want to see the celebration, and how it compares to this.

The ringleader is [Alex Ovechkin](#), the captain and Conn Smythe Trophy winner.

Prior to this victory, with all of the debate about his legacy, it was easy to forget Ovechkin's popularity at the beginning of his career. He was Washington's leading scorer by almost 50 points, he beat out Sidney Crosby for the Calder Trophy and, even though English was not his first language, he threw himself into interviews as best he could. He was not afraid, on the ice or off.

It took one informal skate for Olaf Kolzig to proclaim Ovechkin the real deal. Kolzig was notoriously careful with praise for young players, but this was something special.

"We didn't have a lot of big names," said Jeff Halpern, the captain in that 2005-06 season. "We were journeymen ... good players, but nothing at his level. We were basically eliminated from the playoffs in October, but he gave us a little bit of hope, a belief the team would move in the right direction."

Halpern was injured, but on the trip when Ovechkin scored the signature goal of his rookie season — a twisting, falling, blind backhand past Arizona's Brian Boucher.

"We were in Anaheim the game before, and he had a hat trick to beat the Ducks," the 976-game NHLer recalled with a laugh. "We had a couple days off, so we asked the coaches for a bit of a longer rope. We were going to have our rookie dinner. That year, Brendan Witt was at the end of his contract. The whole night, whenever he tried to talk, we drowned him out with 'one more year.' He couldn't even speak."

"When Ovie scored that goal, Witt was on the ice. When they huddled up, I heard Ovie yelled 'one more year' at him. That was [Ovechkin]. He just wanted to fit in and be part of the group."

After the season, worried their star wouldn't say no to any request, the organization dialled it back. When a young

player gets that much attention, there can be jealousy, but that first year, it wasn't a problem.

"Michael Farber [from *Sports Illustrated*] came to do a story on him, and interviewed Halpern for awhile," said Nate Ewell, who handled day-to-day media relations from 2005-2011. "After it was over, I asked Jeff, 'Is it too much?' He replied, 'Absolutely not. He's way better than anyone and he deserves it.'"

Everybody's got an opinion on when it started to change. Was it the 2009 loss to Pittsburgh? The 2010 Olympic crushing in Canada? Sochi 2014? Pittsburgh 2017? The fire stick? You name it, someone's got a theory. When you're the star, and you make the most money, you get the credit. But you also take the heat.

We didn't know it at the time, but the low moment might have been April 2, 2014.

The night before, down 3-0 at home to Dallas, Ovechkin gave up on a backcheck, allowing Ray Whitney to set up Dustin Jeffrey for a score — Future Cup teammate Alex Chiasson was on the ice at the time, too.

At a team meeting the next morning, a few teammates blasted Ovechkin. I heard rumours a few weeks later, and asked Barry Trotz about it when he became coach. He wouldn't discuss it, although it was clear he knew it happened, and neither would any players.

It was a nasty, painful tongue-lashing — and Ovechkin didn't defend himself.

(The story I've heard is that he didn't say anything because he was so upset that he "forgot his English.")

In the aftermath of that incident, the organization decided two things: It would demand more of its captain, while surrounding him with accountable but encouraging players.

That was the summer [Matt Niskanen](#) and [Brooks Orpik](#) were signed, with Orpik, in particular, becoming a major, behind-the-scenes positive force. [T.J. Oshie](#) and Justin Williams followed.

"Whether you want to admit it or not, Ovie evolved" one former teammate said. "Look at all the other things he does so well now."

It should not go unnoticed that, four years after that internal meltdown, Ovechkin may have saved Game 5 with a brilliant backcheck on a [Pierre-Edouard Bellemare](#)'s shorthanded



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breakaway. Ovechkin cleanly picked his pocket from behind, not even allowing a shot.

Hall-of-Famer Mike Bossy, working the series for French-language TVA, said, "Hard work beats skill, but when elite skill works hard, you can't beat that."

Still, there was the painful Pittsburgh defeat of last May.

When the Capitals won last week, I thought of Ewell. His time with Ovechkin coincided with my time as a Hockey Night in Canada sideline reporter. I would interview the Great Eight, and he'd be there. Friend and protector, as Sergey Kocharov is now.

"It was real emotional, seeing him win," Ewell said. "It was something I always thought would happen, but probably last summer started to think it might happen somewhere else."

A trade?

"Not now," he answered, "But maybe at the end of his contract, that's when he goes and wins the Cup like Ray Bourque. I never had any doubt it would happen, he's that good and that driven. I didn't buy for a second that he was washed up. That's the thing people never got ... how much he wanted to win. ..."

"I lost it when Ovechkin lifted the Cup. And it was worse when he lifted it with [Nicklas] Backstrom."

Ewell compared the Capitals beating Pittsburgh to the Boston Red Sox beating the New York Yankees in 2004.

Two weeks after that monumental comeback from a 3-0 deficit in the American League Championship Series, the Sox ended an 84-year World Series drought with a sweep of the St. Louis Cardinals.

It wasn't that simple for Washington, but it makes a lot of sense. Both teams breathed much easier after eliminating a rival that tormented them mercilessly.

"I figured Ovie would score 60 next year with the weight off him," Ewell laughed. "He would play with joy again. But watching those videos, he might be too hungover."

And the party hasn't even reached Russia yet.

31 THOUGHTS

1. Let's empty the Stanley Cup notebook before we go around the league, starting with Niskanen on Trotz: "It was February or March, I can't remember exactly when. But he told us the reason we always lose to Pittsburgh is because we let little guys like Conor Sheary and Bryan Rust win battles against us. I don't know if that stayed with anyone else, but it sure stuck with me."

2. Trotz reportedly made \$1.5M last season. Coach salaries aren't public, but, from what I understand, that is lower than anyone currently under contract who has won a Stanley Cup.

Anaheim's Randy Carlyle is believed to be around \$2 million. Peter Laviolette and John Tortorella are believed to be in the mid-tuos. Dan Bylsma (still under contract to Buffalo) and Mike Sullivan are three-ish. Darryl Sutter's last deal was \$3.5 million. Claude Julien's contract has been publicly reported

at five, while Mike Babcock and Joe Quenneville are over six.

The even-better news for Trotz is that the numbers go up the more recently you win. During the Final, GM Brian MacLellan said there was plenty of time to sort this out before the coach's contract ends July 1, and both said all the right things during the celebration. Sometime after the parade, we will truly see where we are.

It's rumoured that, after ugly losses in Nashville and Colorado on Nov. 14-16, he was facing the coaching guillotine with a home defeat Nov. 18 against Minnesota, but the Capitals won 3-1, taking 11 of the next 14.

He, along with several of his players, marvelled at how their luck changed from playoffs past, starting with Game 3 in Columbus. Cam Atkinson hit the crossbar, inches away from putting the Blue Jackets up 3-0. Later, the puck pinballs off [Lars Eller](#) for the double-overtime winner.

"If neither of those things happens," one Capital said, "we aren't here right now."

If you are looking for more insight into Trotz, when he did some studio work for *Hockey Night in Canada* several years ago, he presented us with a copy of *Fearless*, by Eric Blehm. Trotz said it resonated with him for two reasons: Faith, which is important to him and his family, and the idea that people have layers to them.

"What you see at the beginning is not often the full picture."

3. It's well known that Orpik pressed for Oshie to be re-signed last summer. MacLellan agreed, saying the winger's positive attitude was essential.

Asked about it, Oshie said, "I just don't understand negativity."

What makes you angry? Oshie thought about it a little.

"People who don't treat the trainers well. People who get out of the way instead of blocking shots. Selfish things like that."

4. Prior to joining Washington, Oshie was in St. Louis, another historically strong organization that hasn't climbed the mountain.

Asked if he saw any similarities between the Blues and Capitals, he replied, "I thought we had a great team in 2015. Just as good as this one. The difference between then and now is we couldn't score when it mattered and we are getting the saves."

That St. Louis club finished fourth overall with 109 points and lost 4-2 to Minnesota in the first round of the playoffs.

5. Two years ago, coming off a post-season where he scored two points in 12 games, [Evgeny Kuznetsov](#) sat in the interview room before the World Cup of Hockey. He pointed to his head and said, "What I have to fix is in here."

The day before the Capitals clinched, two of his veteran teammates said they were very surprised.

"I have never, ever seen that to be a problem," [Jay Beagle](#) said.



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"I'm not sure about that," Orpik added. "To me, it's all about how hard he comes back. You come back with speed, you turn up ice with speed. Look at the series-winning goal against Pittsburgh. Perfect example."

Whatever the case, Kuznetsov was spectacular.

One habit: he never looks at his shifts.

Even when you play this well?

"No," he smiled. "Because I'm always thinking, 'You could have done this, or I could have tried it this way.' I know when I'm good ... or when I'm not good. I'm better at forgetting now when I'm not good."

6. Beagle is an unrestricted free agent, and centres are hard to find.

He stayed three years ago, but it was tight.

Make no mistake, his teammates love the guy. After he blocked a shot and hurt his foot, he explained that he never removes his skate until the game is over.

"I learned that the hard way in 2012. I took the skate off, and couldn't get it back on."

That was on an Anton Stralman shot, forcing Beagle to miss Games 6 and 7 of a second-round loss to the Rangers.

"So, if there's any doubt, I never remove it in the intermission."

7. One Capital skated in the optional between Games 3 and 4 — [Jakub Vrana](#). Asked why, he replied, "I hope it's good luck."

It took an extra few days, but he was rewarded with a beautiful goal in Game 5.

8. Speaking of lucky (or unlucky) bounces, the NHL has tracked posts hit since 2010. The [Vegas Golden Knights](#) pinged three in both Games 3 and 4. That ties the most in any Cup Final game.

9. What comes next in Vegas will be fascinating. They've got a ton of cap room, a boatload of flexibility and players from all over the league asking their agents about going there. It's a destination.

Gerard Gallant's reputation for being a players' coach is growing, too, with Reilly Smith saying he's never had someone "with a shorter memory."

Beagle praised them as "a team built on hard work." Can that happen again? Or will the business of the sport seep in now that some will be paid and some won't be?

A [Marc-Andre Fleury](#) extension seems certain. After him? Well, the biggest contract they've given out so far is [Jonathan Marchessault](#)'s \$5 million. That puts him right in line with Smith (although that deal was done by Florida) and just under [Tomas Tatar](#)'s \$5.3 million (signed in Detroit).

If UFAs [James Neal](#) and [David Perron](#) want to stay, you have to assume the club wants them in that area. Same for [William Karlsson](#). He's arbitration eligible, but two years from unrestricted free agency. Even with the Game 4 healthy scratch, Perron may be kept on a shorter-term deal.

10. The Golden Knights came close to acquiring [Erik Karlsson](#) at the deadline. After seeing how the Capitals locked down the neutral zone and point men in the final, you can see how they might revisit something like this.

Word is one of the biggest hang-ups at the end was Cody Glass, drafted sixth overall last June. Vegas didn't want to include him.

The Knights have just one pick in the top three rounds (a second), and since they're still creating a prospect pool, a Karlsson deal could be very tricky. It's why they're being linked to [John Carlson](#), because he only costs you money.

11. For those of you praying for the chaos and carnage of offer sheets, here are this year's thresholds, along with the draft picks that must be surrendered as compensation if the original team doesn't match.

Remember: you must use your own original picks, not those acquired from somewhere else.

Offer Sheet (AAV)	Compensation
\$1,339,575 or below	None
Over \$1,339,575 to \$2,029,59	3rd
Over \$2,029,59 to \$4,059,322	2nd
Over \$4,059,322 to \$6,088,980	1st, 3rd
Over \$6,088,980 to \$8,118,641	1st, 2nd, 3rd
Over \$8,118,641 to \$10,148,302	(2) 1st, 2nd, 3rd
Over \$10,148,302	(4) 1st

Personally, I believe we are getting closer to the day it happens, but my prime pick for 2018, [Mark Stone](#), seems less likely because Ottawa has a ton of cap room. The league average salary for 2017-18 was \$3,115,115 — up 3.4 per cent from last season. And, NHL teams have the option to walk away from a salary arbitration award at \$4,222,941 or more.

12. The NHLPA hopes to let the league know by June 18 how much it will raise the salary cap for 2018-19.

The league indicated the limit will be between \$78-\$82 million, with the players having the option to raise the ceiling by up to five per cent.

It has done the max every year but two. The first was 2006, because the cap went up 13 per cent. The second was last summer, because of high escrow. Last year's percentage was 1.35, which bumped the number \$2 million.

13. Twenty-three years ago, as I prepared to cover my first NBA draft, inaugural Raptors GM Isiah Thomas warned: "Around the draft, everybody lies. Remember that."



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We're still a couple of weeks away from most teams getting serious about their offers to move around in the draft.

Buffalo isn't moving. Carolina GM Don Waddell indicated the Hurricanes will likely stay put, and they probably will, but this is a new regime and we are still learning its true approach. We know owner Tom Dundon is unafraid to think differently – I'm curious to see if we get a surprise.

If Carolina decides to stay put, the draft starts with Montreal. GM Marc Bergevin is looking for centres and defencemen, telling anyone who will ask that the players they need are only available here.

We've all heard the rumours about his interest in Finnish centre Jesperi Kotkaniemi, but there are teams who believe he's really interested in one of the top blue-liners. So he's got everyone guessing, which is the idea. If Bergevin wishes, he can trade down a little and still get what he wants.

I'm not sure about Ottawa and Arizona, although, at some point, I imagine Senators GM Pierre Dorion will ask Colorado if there's something he can do to erase the stipulation that he must give one of his next two first-rounders to the Avalanche. You have to assume the price would be high.

I don't think Detroit is moving, barring an offer that gives them great assets for their rebuild. After that sixth pick, teams willing to move are Vancouver (at seven), Edmonton (at 10) and possibly the Islanders (11 and/or 12).

(Addendum to the Thomas warning: One year later, he me told six weeks before the draft he was going to pick Marcus Camby. Gave me the scoop. I didn't believe him. He took Camby. I said, "I thought everyone lies." He gave that million-dollar smile and said, "That time, I told the truth." I could only laugh.)

14. I do think Montreal is a stealth destination for unrestricted free-agent-to-be Jack Johnson.

15. There were reports Montreal began some preliminary discussions with [Max Pacioretty](#), who is one season away from unrestricted free agency. There's a serious sense that those brief discussions are being prompted by other teams curious to hear what the winger is looking for on an extension.

A sign-and-trade makes a lot of sense for the Canadiens, too, as cost certainty makes him more valuable. Technically, he can't sign a new contract until July 1, but there can be a "nudge, nudge, wink, wink" verbal agreement.

Somehow, Los Angeles is going to add scoring, and I can see the Kings being one of the clubs involved. [Evander Kane's](#) seven-year, \$49-million extension is good news for Penguins and [Phil Kessel](#) – you can certainly see a team considering the four years and \$6.8-million AAV remaining for Kessel rather than something like Kane's commitment, and the Penguins might be willing to eat money, too.

16. The Kings have been linked to [Jeff Skinner](#). Enter Florida in that market. The Panthers, who narrowly missed the playoffs after a late-season charge, are looking to add.

17. I have a theory on Dundon: when he said everyone was available (except [Sebastian Aho](#) and [Martin Necas](#)), his real goal was to learn the trade value of all the players.

Carolina's going to make some moves, but isn't trading 18 guys. Dundon's new. He wants to know how everyone else thinks and how the league works.

18. Trade that might only make sense to me: [Scott Darling](#) for [Marian Hossa](#), with the Hurricanes keeping money on the goalie.

Blackhawks clear cap room and gain security if Corey Crawford is unavailable. Carolina can go elsewhere in net and save actual dollars.

I have been told that the league isn't thrilled with the idea of Hossa being used as a trade chip, but the Blackhawks need the room.

19. There's a chance the changes in Carolina may mean the end of Glen Wesley's time there, too.

The defenceman, who played 1,457 NHL games, joined the old Hartford Whalers in 1994, and has been with them ever since, minus a seven-game stint in Toronto.

After retiring in 2008, he moved into player development and has been there since. However, another former Hurricane may be returning, as Jeff Daniels is under consideration to join the coaching staff.

Daniels joined the organization in 1995, staying until 2015 as a player, NHL assistant and AHL bench boss and has been on the scouting staff since then.

20. After his Game 5 scratch versus Nashville, [Tobias Enstrom](#) let Winnipeg know he won't be returning. The Jets/Thrashers are the only franchise he's known during his NHL career, but it's time for a change.

There have been some talks between the team and [Paul Stastny](#), but it doesn't sound too in-depth. As Winnipeg prepares to pay the price for good drafting/development plus success, I wonder about someone like [Mathieu Perreault](#). He might be at a number the Jets can't afford. You have to think there'd be interest.

21. [Mike Hoffman](#) is very much in play for Ottawa. The ask is high.

I also wouldn't be surprised if the Senators tried to recoup some draft picks. They have two firsts, but no second- or third-rounder.

22. We're dealing with some verbal semantics when it comes to [Milan Lucic](#) in Edmonton.

I'd heard rumours he'd asked for a trade, but that was denied. However, it's clear he and the Oilers are working together to gauge interest. It doesn't look like an easy trade to make without taking back a big contract, but the team seems confident there will be a fit.

23. Pittsburgh has shown legit interest in [Max Domi](#) – there's a long history between Tie Domi and Mario Lemieux.

Toronto is looking for a third-line centre, Tampa Bay a right-shot defenceman.



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I'm curious to see what the Rangers do with [Vladislav Namestnikov](#). He's arbitration eligible, and the numbers are very good.

24. Another very interesting arbitration case: [Devante Smith-Pelly](#). Seven goals in the regular season, seven big ones in the playoffs.

Two years ago, the Capitals signed Brett Connolly to an \$850,000 contract. He scored 15 goals, and was rewarded at two years and \$3 million total. Smith-Pelly is one year from unrestricted free agency, and those numbers are too low for him.

I wasn't surprised to hear he had to give up soccer to concentrate on hockey, with the great plays made by his feet to create his goals.

25. Oshie signed his eight-year extension last summer at age 30 and rewarded the Capitals with an impactful season.

He was a physical force in the final, with his Forsberg-esque reverse hits taking a toll on [Colin Miller](#) in particular.

Seeing that makes you wonder the impact it will have on [Wayne Simmonds'](#) future. The powerful winger played hurt, still scored 24 goals and turns 30 in August. He's also one year away from free agency.

Simmonds is a great teammate – the only complaint I've ever heard about him is that he can't put on weight, a problem I'd love to have.

In a sporting world that's becoming more and more ageist, Oshie's performance is good news for comparables like Simmonds.

26. The market for [Philipp Grubauer](#) starts with Carolina and the Islanders. We'll see if it grows from there.

27. Others believed to be out there: [Anthony Duclair](#) and [Tomas Jurco](#) from Chicago; Minnesota's [Tyler Ennis](#).

28. Coaching stuff: It's expected Lindy Ruff will stay with David Quinn in New York.

There are rumblings Dan Bylsma may return somewhere as an assistant coach if he's not on the Islanders' radar. A logical spot would be Detroit, since he and Jeff Blashill just worked together at the World Championships.

We're all wondering about Trotz and the Islanders. Lou Lamoriello is a DJ Smith fan, too.

There's little doubt Jacques Lemaire will join Lamoriello in New York, and I'm wondering if he suggests Michel Therrien for some kind of role. His teams tend to start well when he arrives.

29. It's believed assistant GM Mike Futa — linked to almost every job opening in existence — signed an extension with Los Angeles.

Mark Hunter, involved in almost as many rumours, has been linked to Detroit, Montreal and the Islanders. We'll see. He's (officially) unavailable until July 15.

30. Word at the combine was Netflix is out, Fortnite is in. This is all Jeff Marek's fault.

31. Years from now, when we're all gossiping over Mahjong at the retirement homes, I hope we look back at the last 12 months as a time hockey changed for the better.

I'm not talking as much about the play, but the presentation.

When the puck drops, it's about the game, and it always should be about the game, but the celebrations around it are going to a new level, and it needs to happen even if future sites don't include Nashville and Las Vegas.

Some things might not work, but we shouldn't be afraid to try — I'm told Hockey Operations wouldn't allow fire on the ice, which is probably a good call. (For example, if Toronto ever gets in, I want to see Drake sitting on the CN Tower — for real.)

As a reporter, the last two Cup finals have been among the best things I've covered because they were fun and different. I think the fans and players liked it, too.

Sometimes, we confuse personality for selfishness. That's wrong. Yes, the lines can blur on a person-to-person basis, but it's time hockey allowed its players to show themselves on social media, to wear something stylish but different to the rink, to step out from its conservative nature.

If you really want to sell and grow the game, that matters to the "reality generation." And, I'd bet that the vast majority of players who took advantage would still be serious and competitive when it mattered.

TODAY'S LINKS

<https://www.canescountry.com/2018/6/8/17443098/carolina-hurricanes-sign-andrew-poturski-to-one-year-extension-contract-nhl-charlotte-checkers>

<http://gocheckers.com/articles/transactions/hurricanes-re-sign-andrew-poturski>

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/hockey/nhl/31-thoughts-vegas-thinking-re-visiting-erik-karlsson-deal/>



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SportScan

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

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Sportsnet.ca / 31 Thoughts: Is Vegas thinking about re-visiting Erik Karlsson deal?

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The ringleader is Alex Ovechkin, the captain and Conn Smythe Trophy winner.

Prior to this victory, with all of the debate about his legacy, it was easy to forget Ovechkin's popularity at the beginning of his career. He was Washington's leading scorer by almost 50 points, he beat out Sidney Crosby for the Calder Trophy and, even though English was not his first language, he threw himself into interviews as best he could. He was not afraid, on the ice or off.

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Halpern was injured, but on the trip when Ovechkin scored the signature goal of his rookie season — a twisting, falling, blind backhand past Arizona's Brian Boucher.

"We were in Anaheim the game before, and he had a hat trick to beat the Ducks," the 976-game NHLer recalled with a laugh. "We had a couple days off, so we asked the coaches for a bit of a longer rope. We were going to have our rookie dinner. That year, Brendan Witt was at the end of his contract. The whole night, whenever he tried to talk, we drowned him out with 'one more year.' He couldn't even speak."

"When Ovie scored that goal, Witt was on the ice. When they huddled up, I heard Ovie yelled 'one more year' at him. That was [Ovechkin]. He just wanted to fit in and be part of the group."

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much?' He replied, 'Absolutely not. He's way better than anyone and he deserves it.'"

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We didn't know it at the time, but the low moment might have been April 2, 2014.

The night before, down 3-0 at home to Dallas, Ovechkin gave up on a backcheck, allowing Ray Whitney to set up Dustin Jeffrey for a score — Future Cup teammate Alex Chiasson was on the ice at the time, too.

At a team meeting the next morning, a few teammates blasted Ovechkin. I heard rumours a few weeks later, and asked Barry Trotz about it when he became coach. He wouldn't discuss it, although it was clear he knew it happened, and neither would any players.

It was a nasty, painful tongue-lashing — and Ovechkin didn't defend himself.

(The story I've heard is that he didn't say anything because he was so upset that he "forgot his English.")

In the aftermath of that incident, the organization decided two things: It would demand more of its captain, while surrounding him with accountable but encouraging players.

That was the summer Matt Niskanen and Brooks Orpik were signed, with Orpik, in particular, becoming a major, behind-the-scenes positive force. T.J. Oshie and Justin Williams followed.

"Whether you want to admit it or not, Ovie evolved" one former teammate said. "Look at all the other things he does so well now."

It should not go unnoticed that, four years after that internal meltdown, Ovechkin may have saved Game 5 with a brilliant backcheck on a Pierre-Edouard Bellemare's shorthanded breakaway. Ovechkin clearly picked his pocket from behind, not even allowing a shot.

Hall-of-Famer Mike Bossy, working the series for French-language TVA, said, "Hard work beats skill, but when elite skill works hard, you can't beat that."

Still, there was the painful Pittsburgh defeat of last May.

When the Capitals won last week, I thought of Ewell. His time with Ovechkin coincided with my time as a Hockey Night in Canada sideline reporter. I would interview the Great Eight, and he'd be there. Friend and protector, as Sergey Kocharov is now.

"It was real emotional, seeing him win," Ewell said. "It was something I always thought would happen, but probably last summer started to think it might happen somewhere else."

A trade?

"Not now," he answered, "But maybe at the end of his contract, that's when he goes and wins the Cup like Ray Bourque. I never had any doubt it would happen, he's that good and that driven. I didn't buy for a second



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that he was washed up. That's the thing people never got ... how much he wanted to win. ...

"I lost it when Ovechkin lifted the Cup. And it was worse when he lifted it with [Nicklas] Backstrom."

Ewell compared the Capitals beating Pittsburgh to the Boston Red Sox beating the New York Yankees in 2004.

Two weeks after that monumental comeback from a 3-0 deficit in the American League Championship Series, the Sox ended an 84-year World Series drought with a sweep of the St. Louis Cardinals.

It wasn't that simple for Washington, but it makes a lot of sense. Both teams breathed much easier after eliminating a rival that tormented them mercilessly.

"I figured Ovie would score 60 next year with the weight off him," Ewell laughed. "He would play with joy again. But watching those videos, he might be too hungover."

And the party hasn't even reached Russia yet.

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31 THOUGHTS

1. Let's empty the Stanley Cup notebook before we go around the league, starting with Niskanen on Trotz: "It was February or March, I can't remember exactly when. But he told us the reason we always lose to Pittsburgh is because we let little guys like Conor Sheary and Bryan Rust win battles against us. I don't know if that stayed with anyone else, but it sure stuck with me."

2. Trotz reportedly made \$1.5M last season. Coach salaries aren't public, but, from what I understand, that is lower than anyone currently under contract who has won a Stanley Cup.

Anaheim's Randy Carlyle is believed to be around \$2 million. Peter Laviolette and John Tortorella are believed to be in the mid-twos. Dan Bylsma (still under contract to Buffalo) and Mike Sullivan are three-ish. Darryl Sutter's last deal was \$3.5 million. Claude Julien's contract has been publicly reported at five, while Mike Babcock and Joe Quenneville are over six.

The even-better news for Trotz is that the numbers go up the more recently you win. During the Final, GM Brian MacLellan said there was plenty of time to sort this out before the coach's contract ends July 1, and both said all the right things during the celebration. Sometime after the parade, we will truly see where we are.

It's rumoured that, after ugly losses in Nashville and Colorado on Nov. 14-16, he was facing the coaching guillotine with a home defeat Nov. 18 against Minnesota, but the Capitals won 3-1, taking 11 of the next 14.

He, along with several of his players, marvelled at how their luck changed from playoffs past, starting with Game 3 in Columbus. Cam Atkinson hit the crossbar, inches away from putting the Blue Jackets up 3-0. Later, the puck pinballs off Lars Eller for the double-overtime winner.

"If neither of those things happens," one Capital said, "we aren't here right now."

If you are looking for more insight into Trotz, when he did some studio work for Hockey Night in Canada several years ago, he presented us with a copy of Fearless, by Eric Blehm. Trotz said it resonated with him for two reasons: Faith, which is important to him and his family, and the idea that people have layers to them.

"What you see at the beginning is not often the full picture."

3. It's well known that Orpik pressed for Oshie to be re-signed last summer. MacLellan agreed, saying the winger's positive attitude was essential.

Asked about it, Oshie said, "I just don't understand negativity."

What makes you angry? Oshie thought about it a little.

"People who don't treat the trainers well. People who get out of the way instead of blocking shots. Selfish things like that."

4. Prior to joining Washington, Oshie was in St. Louis, another historically strong organization that hasn't climbed the mountain.

Asked if he saw any similarities between the Blues and Capitals, he replied, "I thought we had a great team in 2015. Just as good as this one. The difference between then and now is we couldn't score when it mattered and we are getting the saves."

That St. Louis club finished fourth overall with 109 points and lost 4-2 to Minnesota in the first round of the playoffs.

5. Two years ago, coming off a post-season where he scored two points in 12 games, Evgeny Kuznetsov sat in the interview room before the World Cup of Hockey. He pointed to his head and said, "What I have to fix is in here."

The day before the Capitals clinched, two of his veteran teammates said they were very surprised.

"I have never, ever seen that to be a problem," Jay Beagle said.

"I'm not sure about that," Orpik added. "To me, it's all about how hard he comes back. You come back with speed, you turn up ice with speed. Look at the series-winning goal against Pittsburgh. Perfect example."

Whatever the case, Kuznetsov was spectacular.

One habit: he never looks at his shifts.

Even when you play this well?

"No," he smiled. "Because I'm always thinking, 'You could have done this, or I could have tried it this way.' I know when I'm good ... or when I'm not good. I'm better at forgetting now when I'm not good."

6. Beagle is an unrestricted free agent, and centres are hard to find.

He stayed three years ago, but it was tight.

Make no mistake, his teammates love the guy. After he blocked a shot and hurt his foot, he explained that he never removes his skate until the game is over.

"I learned that the hard way in 2012. I took the skate off, and couldn't get it back on."

That was on an Anton Stralman shot, forcing Beagle to miss Games 6 and 7 of a second-round loss to the Rangers.

"So, if there's any doubt, I never remove it in the intermission."

7. One Capital skated in the optional between Games 3 and 4 — Jakub Vrana. Asked why, he replied, "I hope it's good luck."

It took an extra few days, but he was rewarded with a beautiful goal in Game 5.

8. Speaking of lucky (or unlucky) bounces, the NHL has tracked posts hit since 2010. The Vegas Golden Knights pinged three in both Games 3 and 4. That ties the most in any Cup Final game.

9. What comes next in Vegas will be fascinating. They've got a ton of cap room, a boatload of flexibility and players from all over the league asking their agents about going there. It's a destination.

Gerard Gallant's reputation for being a players' coach is growing, too, with Reilly Smith saying he's never had someone "with a shorter memory."

Beagle praised them as "a team built on hard work." Can that happen again? Or will the business of the sport seep in now that some will be paid and some won't be?



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A Marc-Andre Fleury extension seems certain. After him? Well, the biggest contract they've given out so far is Jonathan Marchessault's \$5 million. That puts him right in line with Smith (although that deal was done by Florida) and just under Tomas Tatar's \$5.3 million (signed in Detroit).

If UFAs James Neal and David Perron want to stay, you have to assume the club wants them in that area. Same for William Karlsson. He's arbitration eligible, but two years from unrestricted free agency. Even with the Game 4 healthy scratch, Perron may be kept on a shorter-term deal.

10. The Golden Knights came close to acquiring Erik Karlsson at the deadline. After seeing how the Capitals locked down the neutral zone and point men in the final, you can see how they might revisit something like this.

Word is one of the biggest hang-ups at the end was Cody Glass, drafted sixth overall last June. Vegas didn't want to include him.

The Knights have just one pick in the top three rounds (a second), and since they're still creating a prospect pool, a Karlsson deal could be very tricky. It's why they're being linked to John Carlson, because he only costs you money.

11. For those of you praying for the chaos and carnage of offer sheets, here are this year's thresholds, along with the draft picks that must be surrendered as compensation if the original team doesn't match.

Remember: you must use your own original picks, not those acquired from somewhere else.

Offer Sheet (AAV) Compensation

\$1,339,575 or below None

Over \$1,339,575 to \$2,029,59 3rd

Over \$2,029,59 to \$4,059,322 2nd

Over \$4,059,322 to \$6,088,980 1st, 3rd

Over \$6,088,980 to \$8,118,641 1st, 2nd, 3rd

Over \$8,118,641 to \$10,148,302 (2) 1st, 2nd, 3rd

Over \$10,148,302 (4) 1st

Personally, I believe we are getting closer to the day it happens, but my prime pick for 2018, Mark Stone, seems less likely because Ottawa has a ton of cap room. The league average salary for 2017-18 was \$3,115,115 — up 3.4 per cent from last season. And, NHL teams have the option to walk away from a salary arbitration award at \$4,222,941 or more.

12. The NHLPA hopes to let the league know by June 18 how much it will raise the salary cap for 2018-19.

The league indicated the limit will be between \$78-\$82 million, with the players having the option to raise the ceiling by up to five per cent.

It has done the max every year but two. The first was 2006, because the cap went up 13 per cent. The second was last summer, because of high escrow. Last year's percentage was 1.35, which bumped the number \$2 million.

13. Twenty-three years ago, as I prepared to cover my first NBA draft, inaugural Raptors GM Isiah Thomas warned: "Around the draft, everybody lies. Remember that."

We're still a couple of weeks away from most teams getting serious about their offers to move around in the draft.

Buffalo isn't moving. Carolina GM Don Waddell indicated the Hurricanes will likely stay put, and they probably will, but this is a new regime and we are still learning its true approach. We know owner Tom Dundon is unafraid to think differently — I'm curious to see if we get a surprise.

If Carolina decides to stay put, the draft starts with Montreal. GM Marc Bergevin is looking for centres and defencemen, telling anyone who will ask that the players they need are only available here.

We've all heard the rumours about his interest in Finnish centre Jesperi Kotkaniemi, but there are teams who believe he's really interested in one of the top blue-liners. So he's got everyone guessing, which is the idea. If Bergevin wishes, he can trade down a little and still get what he wants.

I'm not sure about Ottawa and Arizona, although, at some point, I imagine Senators GM Pierre Dorion will ask Colorado if there's something he can do to erase the stipulation that he must give one of his next two first-rounders to the Avalanche. You have to assume the price would be high.

I don't think Detroit is moving, barring an offer that gives them great assets for their rebuild. After that sixth pick, teams willing to move are Vancouver (at seven), Edmonton (at 10) and possibly the Islanders (11 and/or 12).

(Addendum to the Thomas warning: One year later, he me told six weeks before the draft he was going to pick Marcus Camby. Gave me the scoop. I didn't believe him. He took Camby. I said, "I thought everyone lies." He gave that million-dollar smile and said, "That time, I told the truth." I could only laugh.)

14. I do think Montreal is a stealth destination for unrestricted free-agent-to-be Jack Johnson.

15. There were reports Montreal began some preliminary discussions with Max Pacioretty, who is one season away from unrestricted free agency. There's a serious sense that those brief discussions are being prompted by other teams curious to hear what the winger is looking for on an extension.

A sign-and-trade makes a lot of sense for the Canadiens, too, as cost certainty makes him more valuable. Technically, he can't sign a new contract until July 1, but there can be a "nudge, nudge, wink, wink" verbal agreement.

Somehow, Los Angeles is going to add scoring, and I can see the Kings being one of the clubs involved. Evander Kane's seven-year, \$49-million extension is good news for James van Riemsdyk, Pacioretty and maybe even the Penguins and Phil Kessel — you can certainly see a team considering the four years and \$6.8-million AAV remaining for Kessel rather than something like Kane's commitment, and the Penguins might be willing to eat money, too.

16. The Kings have been linked to Jeff Skinner. Enter Florida in that market. The Panthers, who narrowly missed the playoffs after a late-season charge, are looking to add.

17. I have a theory on Dundon: when he said everyone was available (except Sebastian Aho and Martin Necas), his real goal was to learn the trade value of all the players.

Carolina's going to make some moves, but isn't trading 18 guys. Dundon's new. He wants to know how everyone else thinks and how the league works.

18. Trade that might only make sense to me: Scott Darling for Marian Hossa, with the Hurricanes keeping money on the goalie.

Blackhawks clear cap room and gain security if Corey Crawford is unavailable. Carolina can go elsewhere in net and save actual dollars.

I have been told that the league isn't thrilled with the idea of Hossa being used as a trade chip, but the Blackhawks need the room.

19. There's a chance the changes in Carolina may mean the end of Glen Wesley's time there, too.

The defenceman, who played 1,457 NHL games, joined the old Hartford Whalers in 1994, and has been with them ever since, minus a seven-game stint in Toronto.



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After retiring in 2008, he moved into player development and has been there since. However, another former Hurricane may be returning, as Jeff Daniels is under consideration to join the coaching staff.

Daniels joined the organization in 1995, staying until 2015 as a player, NHL assistant and AHL bench boss and has been on the scouting staff since then.

20. After his Game 5 scratch versus Nashville, Tobias Enstrom let Winnipeg know he won't be returning. The Jets/Thrashers are the only franchise he's known during his NHL career, but it's time for a change.

There have been some talks between the team and Paul Stastny, but it doesn't sound too in-depth. As Winnipeg prepares to pay the price for good drafting/development plus success, I wonder about someone like Mathieu Perreault. He might be at a number the Jets can't afford. You have to think there'd be interest.

21. Mike Hoffman is very much in play for Ottawa. The ask is high.

I also wouldn't be surprised if the Senators tried to recoup some draft picks. They have two firsts, but no second- or third-rounder.

22. We're dealing with some verbal semantics when it comes to Milan Lucic in Edmonton.

I'd heard rumours he'd asked for a trade, but that was denied. However, it's clear he and the Oilers are working together to gauge interest. It doesn't look like an easy trade to make without taking back a big contract, but the team seems confident there will be a fit.

23. Pittsburgh has shown legit interest in Max Domi – there's a long history between Tie Domi and Mario Lemieux.

Toronto is looking for a third-line centre, Tampa Bay a right-shot defenceman.

I'm curious to see what the Rangers do with Vladislav Namestnikov. He's arbitration eligible, and the numbers are very good.

24. Another very interesting arbitration case: Devante Smith-Pelly. Seven goals in the regular season, seven big ones in the playoffs.

Two years ago, the Capitals signed Brett Connolly to an \$850,000 contract. He scored 15 goals, and was rewarded at two years and \$3 million total. Smith-Pelly is one year from unrestricted free agency, and those numbers are too low for him.

I wasn't surprised to hear he had to give up soccer to concentrate on hockey, with the great plays made by his feet to create his goals.

25. Oshie signed his eight-year extension last summer at age 30 and rewarded the Capitals with an impactful season.

He was a physical force in the final, with his Forsberg-esque reverse hits taking a toll on Colin Miller in particular.

Seeing that makes you wonder the impact it will have on Wayne Simmonds' future. The powerful winger played hurt, still scored 24 goals and turns 30 in August. He's also one year away from free agency.

Simmonds is a great teammate – the only complaint I've ever heard about him is that he can't put on weight, a problem I'd love to have.

In a sporting world that's becoming more and more ageist, Oshie's performance is good news for comparables like Simmonds.

26. The market for Philipp Grubauer starts with Carolina and the Islanders. We'll see if it grows from there.

27. Others believed to be out there: Anthony Duclair and Tomas Jurco from Chicago; Minnesota's Tyler Ennis.

28. Coaching stuff: It's expected Lindy Ruff will stay with David Quinn in New York.

There are rumblings Dan Bylsma may return somewhere as an assistant coach if he's not on the Islanders' radar. A logical spot would be Detroit,

since he and Jeff Blashill just worked together at the World Championships.

We're all wondering about Trotz and the Islanders. Lou Lamoriello is a DJ Smith fan, too.

There's little doubt Jacques Lemaire will join Lamoriello in New York, and I'm wondering if he suggests Michel Therrien for some kind of role. His teams tend to start well when he arrives.

29. It's believed assistant GM Mike Futa — linked to almost every job opening in existence — signed an extension with Los Angeles.

Mark Hunter, involved in almost as many rumours, has been linked to Detroit, Montreal and the Islanders. We'll see. He's (officially) unavailable until July 15.

30. Word at the combine was Netflix is out, Fortnite is in. This is all Jeff Marek's fault.

31. Years from now, when we're all gossiping over Mahjong at the retirement homes, I hope we look back at the last 12 months as a time hockey changed for the better.

I'm not talking as much about the play, but the presentation.

When the puck drops, it's about the game, and it always should be about the game, but the celebrations around it are going to a new level, and it needs to happen even if future sites don't include Nashville and Las Vegas.

Some things might not work, but we shouldn't be afraid to try – I'm told Hockey Operations wouldn't allow fire on the ice, which is probably a good call. (For example, if Toronto ever gets in, I want to see Drake sitting on the CN Tower – for real.)

As a reporter, the last two Cup finals have been among the best things I've covered because they were fun and different. I think the fans and players liked it, too.

Sometimes, we confuse personality for selfishness. That's wrong. Yes, the lines can blur on a person-to-person basis, but it's time hockey allowed its players to show themselves on social media, to wear something stylish but different to the rink, to step out from its conservative nature.

If you really want to sell and grow the game, that matters to the "reality generation." And, I'd bet that the vast majority of players who took advantage would still be serious and competitive when it mattered.

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Sportsnet.ca / Karlsson, Kessel among 10 NHL stars who could get traded

Sean McIndoe | @DownGoesBrown June 9, 2018, 9:14 AM

We're on to the NHL off-season, which means it's time to start wildly speculating about which big-name players are about to be traded.

That's been an annual tradition for hockey fans over the years, even if deep down we always knew that almost all of those blockbuster trades would never happen. But ever since the NHL off-season went haywire on a June afternoon in 2016, this time of year has felt just a little bit more exciting. If Shea Weber, Taylor Hall and P.K. Subban could all be traded



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within a few minutes, who's to say that any big name is really off the table?

So today, let's run down 10 of the biggest names that could be moved over the next few weeks. Will any of these players actually end up being traded? There's a chance that at least one or two could be. Will most of them stay with their current teams, at least through opening night? Undoubtedly. Will at least a few these seem so ridiculous in hindsight that the author will feel embarrassed to have even mentioned them? Not if we remember to come back and delete this post, no.

Either way, let's get to the trade bait. We'll start with the most likely big name to be moved, and work our way further out from reality as we go.

1) Erik Karlsson, Senators

Why a trade could happen: We'll start with a player who may be the biggest star on this list, yet also seems like the most likely to move. The Karlsson trade saga was one of the biggest stories of the regular season, springing to life after some eyebrow-raising comments from the Senators' captain about his impending free agency, blossoming into a full-blown bidding war by the deadline, and then ending without a deal being struck.

That last part sure feels temporary, as we head into an off-season that figures to see plenty of teams finding enough cap space to take a serious run at one of the best defencemen in the league.

Why we shouldn't assume that it has to: The Senators don't have to trade their star, and in a perfect world they'd sign him to a reasonable extension and get on with the work of building a contender around him. Back in February, it felt like there was just way too much smoke for there not to be a fire here — remember, Bobby Ryan told reporters that he and Karlsson actually thought a deal was done. But a lot can change in four months, and even if Karlsson doesn't want to re-sign, the Senators could hold onto him through the summer in hopes of finding a better deal during the season.

And yet...: Players don't normally make a point of collecting souvenir pucks when they think they're sticking around. Karlsson seems like a guy who's made up his mind to be elsewhere by 2019. And if so, it would be in the Senators' best interest to get a deal done soon rather than let this situation hang over everything the team does for most of the next year.

2) Ryan O'Reilly, Sabres

Why a trade could happen: Few players should be untouchable after a last-place season. And that's especially true when that player ends the season by suggesting the team has "been OK with losing" and that it's cost him his love of the game. That's not really what you want to hear from one of your leaders.

GM Jason Botterill came over last spring and played his let's-wait-and-see card. That approach works for one year, but after watching his team finish dead last, it's time for action. Finding a new home for O'Reilly would be the kind of shakeup move that teams occasionally need, if only as a reminder that the status quo isn't good enough.

Why it doesn't have to: After what we've seen recently in Toronto, New Jersey, Colorado and Vegas, anybody who suggests that a team as bad as the Sabres must be years away from a playoff run hasn't been paying attention. Turnarounds can happen quickly these days, and O'Reilly is a good-enough player to be a key part of one in Buffalo. Besides, with a \$7.5-million cap hit for five more years, it may be tough to get top value for him.

And yet...: After those end-of-season comments, bringing O'Reilly back for another year would almost seem cruel.

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3) Phil Kessel, Penguins

Why a trade could happen: He's been in Pittsburgh for three years now, which is about the maximum length of time Kessel can last anywhere before the trade talk kicks in.

Why there's a chance it might not: You may recall that the Penguins did pretty well in two of those three years, and Kessel had a lot to do with that. Given his production, his cap hit (which the Leafs are already paying a chunk of) is fairly reasonable. In a league where every team could use at least a little more speed, skill and scoring depth, you'd think a team might want to hold onto a guy who brings as much of all three as Kessel.

And yet...: Those are all good reasons to trade for a guy, too, which means Jim Rutherford should be able to extract a decent return on a deal. Whether the Penguins are tired of Kessel behind the scenes or just see him as an asset that could provide a nice return, Rutherford has never been shy about making big moves.

4) Max Pacioretty, Canadiens

Why a trade could happen: Much like Karlsson, Pacioretty was a big name who seemed to be on his way out at the deadline. The deal never happened, but with one year left on his bargain-basement contract and the Canadiens looking to get younger and fill holes elsewhere in the lineup, a trade to a contender still makes all sort of sense.

Why it seems less likely than it once did: Unlike Karlsson, Pacioretty has made a point of sounding like a guy who really does want to stick around. That doesn't mean he'll get his way, and his contract reportedly doesn't include any kind of no-trade protection. But even a rebuild doesn't necessarily mean you say goodbye to all of your stars, and keeping the captain on board might offer some stability as this team transitions into whatever comes next.

And yet...: The Canadiens already have two veterans who are unlikely to be traded in Weber and Carey Price. That leaves Pacioretty and perhaps Alex Galchenyuk as the best trade chips they have. It would be nice to keep everyone and still make the team better, but at some point you have to give something to get something.

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5) Dougie Hamilton, Flames

Why a trade could happen: The possibility sure seems to be coming up a lot. And given the Flames' strength on the blue line and holes up front, it could actually even make some sense.

Why there's no reason to assume it will: The Flames gave up three high picks to acquire Hamilton just three years ago (and managed to get him signed to what seems like a reasonable long-term deal), so you'd assume they'd want at least that much back in return if they decided to move on. That's fair, but teams tend to shy away from big asking prices, even when the player involved might be well worth it.

And yet...: The Flames don't have a pick in this year's draft until the fourth round, which isn't ideal when you've just missed the playoffs. If a team could offer a good young winger and a high pick, you figure Brad Treliving would at least have to think about it.

6) Oliver Ekman-Larsson

Why a trade could happen: Ekman-Larsson is another star defenceman heading into the final year of his deal. He'll turn 27 next month, and has had only one playoff run in his eight years in Arizona. After finishing dead last in the Western Conference, you wonder if it wouldn't make more sense for both him and the cash-strapped Coyotes to pursue a trade to a contender this summer.

Why history suggests that it won't: Every time this subject comes up, the message out of Arizona is the same: We're not trading this guy. We heard it again from John Chayka just last week. And it's worth remembering that this is the same franchise that publicly ridiculed the



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idea of even considering moving Ekman-Larsson to land local boy Auston Matthews just a few years ago. That seems silly in hindsight, but it reinforces the notion that the Coyotes just have no interest in making any sort of move here.

And yet...: We just laid out why the Coyotes don't seem to want to move him, but that's only half the equation. Does Ekman-Larsson want to come back? If not, or if he insists on being paid in the Karlsson ballpark even though he's never finished higher than seventh in Norris voting, the team may not have a choice but to move on.

7) P.K. Subban, Predators

Why a trade could happen: Despite another strong season that saw Subban named a Norris finalist, the Predators are deep enough on back end that they could afford to trade him for help up front and still have one of the better bluelines in the league. There's been plenty of talk that the team could do exactly that in the off-season.

Why we know that it almost definitely won't: This is one of those rumours where most of the talk just seems to be people shooting down the idea. The Predators are coming off two of the best seasons in franchise history, so pulling the trigger on a blockbuster to shake up the team would seem like an odd choice.

And yet...: We've been here before, right? Two years ago, the Canadiens swore they weren't looking to move Subban, then they stunned everyone by making a monster deal. Remember, that trade meant that the NMC Subban had negotiated with Montreal didn't follow him to Nashville, so the team is free to move him anywhere they want. Would it make sense for a team to give up a bounty to get Subban when Karlsson and friends could all hit free agency next year? If someone wanted to get ahead of the market, it might.

8) Corey Perry, Ducks

Why a trade could happen: Perry is a former Hart Trophy and Rocket Richard winner, and was a first-team all-star as recently as 2014. But his numbers have been declining since then, and he hasn't even cracked 20 goals in either of the last two seasons despite carrying a hefty \$8.65-million cap hit for each of the next three seasons.

Why we just told you why it can't: Go back and read that last sentence again. Did we mention that he's also 33 years old and has full no-movement protection? I'm sure Bob Murray's phone is ringing off the hook.

And yet...: Perry wouldn't bring much in return for the Ducks, and there's a case to be made that they should just hold onto him and hope he can return to form rather than selling low. But there are ways to make a deal like this work if Murray were motivated to do it, including retained salary or another bad contract coming back the other way. It's not impossible to imagine somebody out there deciding that the right price could make it worth the gamble. Hard, but not impossible.

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.

9) Henrik Lundqvist, Rangers

Why a trade could happen: The Rangers are at least kind of rebuilding, having moved Ryan McDonagh and others at the trade deadline. They don't seem to be doing the full tear-down, but Jeff Gorton's recent moves suggest that the team is looking at least a year or two down the line. If so, does it really make sense to have a 36-year-old goaltender who carries the position's second-highest cap hit and is still signed for three more seasons? Lundqvist has done everything a goalie can do in this league except win the Stanley Cup; giving him a chance to do that somewhere else while adding some assets for the future makes almost too much sense.

Why Rangers fans will slap you for even suggesting it: Lundqvist has full no-movement protection, so he's not going anywhere if he doesn't want

to. When asked about the subject last season, he said he didn't want to. Case closed, right?

And yet...: You can understand why Lundqvist wouldn't want to leave New York, a city he seems to have been made for. But there's at least a small difference between saying no to the general concept of a mid-season deal and turning down an off-season move to a specific contender. If that sort of scenario did materialize, and he had more than a few days to consider his options, it doesn't seem impossible to imagine him being open to a move. But it still feels very unlikely.

10) Drew Doughty, Kings

Why a trade could happen: Along with Karlsson and Ekman-Larsson, Doughty is the third all-star defenceman who's scheduled to hit the free agent market in 2019. And while most star players deal with pending free agency by mumbling about the importance of loyalty and letting their agents handle the details, Doughty was crystal clear about his intentions back in November: He's going to get paid somewhere.

It's certainly still possible that that could be in L.A.; the Kings could offer an extra year and have plenty of time to get an extension done. But does that kind of commitment make sense for either side, given that this team has won only one playoff game in four years? It might make more sense for Doughty to orchestrate a move to a young team that owned plenty of cap space, had a coach Doughty likes playing for, and was one right-handed defenceman away from being a Cup contender.

Why this is all a transparent attempt by a Leafs fan to create a Doughty-to-Toronto scenario: Was it that obvious?

OK, yes, we can all see where this is going, as any kind of delay in signing an extension would lead to Doughty becoming the latest big star to be breathlessly linked with the Maple Leafs. That would make for a nice local-boy-comes-home storyline, but the reality is that it's extremely unlikely. Lately, Doughty sounds like a guy who wants to stay right where he is. History tells us that he probably will.

And yet...: The Leafs have retired most of their low numbers, but No. 8 is somehow still available and we're pretty sure Connor Carrick could be talked into give it up. Just saying.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.11.2018

1098708 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / How an unlikely, unrepeatable streak clinched Canada's last Stanley Cup

Scott Morrison | @morrisonnet June 10, 2018, 9:06 AM

Twenty-five years ago, in his first meeting with his new team, Jacques Demers told his Montreal Canadiens players that they were going to shock the hockey world that season.

"I mean, the first day he's telling us we're going to win the Stanley Cup," said defenceman Patrice Brisebois, "that we're going to shock the hockey world."

A few players were left shaking their heads, but before long they would become believers, though there would be moments of doubt.

But in the spring of 1993, the Canadiens did "shock the hockey world," winning the 24th Stanley Cup in franchise history.

And the last for them or any other Canadian team.



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They did it, in part, in a way that had never been done before and has never been done since, with an amazing 10 consecutive overtime victories.

"It's insane when you think about it," said goalie Patrick Roy, himself a big reason why they were so successful in overtime. "I don't think we'll ever see that again."

To put it in the context, that spring the Canadiens actually played 11 overtime games, losing the first in their playoff opener against Quebec, then winning two overtime games in that first-round series. Next round, they swept the Buffalo Sabres, winning each game 4-3, and the final three in overtime.

In the conference final, they beat the New York Islanders in five games — two of those in overtime — and they won three more overtime games to beat the Los Angeles Kings in the Stanley Cup Final.

Like Roy said, it was insane, really.

Ten overtime wins for one team. In this year's playoffs, there were 10 overtime games total!

In many ways, that spring was the perfect storm for the Canadiens, at least once they got their own act together.

The Habs had a pretty good season, finishing with 102 points — third in the Adams Division — although they went through stretches when they were really good, then would stumble for a while, and they struggled down the stretch entering the playoffs.

In the estimation of Roy: the team played great, he didn't.

Indeed, Roy was booed during the skills competition at the all-star weekend in Montreal.

Matters got worse after he signed a promotional deal with a hockey card company, whose "clever" billboard campaign displayed a Roy hockey card with the words, 'Trade Roy!'

Well, during his struggles, a local newspaper asked the question: should the Habs trade Roy? Fifty-seven per cent said they should.

Behind the scenes, Demers assured Roy that wasn't going to happen.

"For some reason, I wasn't playing at a level I should have," said Roy, who said he used the all-star experience "as a wake-up call."

Demers delivered a similar message to his star goalie after the Habs lost the first two games of the playoffs against the rival Nordiques. Fans were again doubting Roy. But not his coach.

"He easily could have said, 'You had your chance' ... instead, he said, 'I'm going to live and die with you,'" recalled Roy. "I didn't want to let him down."

And he didn't.

Both Roy and the Habs found their game, with the Canadiens winning four straight to bounce the Nordiques. Meanwhile, the stars were aligning for them elsewhere. Their next opponent was the Sabres, who had upset the Boston Bruins. It was a better matchup for Montreal.

The biggest break was still to come. While the Habs were beating Buffalo, the Islanders upset the two-time Stanley Cup champion Pittsburgh Penguins, in overtime, in seven games.

Staying at a hotel at the time, the Canadiens spilled into the hallway when the series ended. Let's just say they liked the result.

That's when the Habs really thought they had a chance. Others were starting to think they were a team of destiny as the overtime win streak continued to grow. They went on to eliminate the Isles in five games.

To some of the Habs, they felt they caught another break when the Kings knocked off the Toronto Maple Leafs in seven games in the Western Conference final. Even though it meant playing against Wayne Gretzky, it

also meant avoiding former coach Pat Burns and the circus that would have created. And, overall, they felt like they matched up better.

They might have felt differently after the first game of the final, when Gretzky put on a show, finishing with three assists and a 4-1 win in Montreal. It was beginning to look like the Kings were going to take both games, but with 1:45 left in regulation in Game 2, and the Kings leading 2-1, Demers rolled the dice.

Or did he?

Demers, after consulting with captain Guy Carbonneau, decided to call a measurement of the curve on Marty McSorley's stick. If he's right, the Habs get a power play. If he's wrong, the Kings get one.

McSorley and the Kings were in shock. The Habs were, of course, right. To this day, McSorley and many of the Kings believe they had smuggled their stick rack into a private area to measure the sticks. Back then, players typically used an illegal stick for most of the game and changed late in the third period.

The Habs insist that, while the stick racks of both teams were wheeled out of the hallway between the benches between periods, they didn't measure any sticks, and didn't need to. The eyeball test was good enough.

Whatever the truth, the curve on the stick was illegal. For Montreal, it saved the series.

On the ensuing power play, defenceman Eric Desjardins tied the game, forcing yet another overtime, then scored the winner himself to complete his hat trick.

And Roy continued to shine after turning his game around midway through that first series.

The next two games in L.A. also went to overtime, but Roy assured his teammates, "Take your time, play smart and get the goal. They won't be scoring on me."

You might recall that's when Roy had the famous wink after making a save on Tomas Sandstrom. He hadn't planned it, but...

"You know you're in their head," he said, winking. "You're not scoring here today ... it was important for me, for my teammates to know, 'Okay, we're fine, he's there.'"

Overtime wins nine and 10 followed, with John LeClair the hero in both. The Habs won comfortably at home in Game 5 to capture the Cup.

It was, as we said, their last Stanley Cup win and the last one for any Canadian team.

Twenty-five years is a long time, but for those of a certain vintage, that Montreal Canadiens win is one that won't soon be forgotten.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.11.2018

1098709 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Toronto Maple Leafs Off-Season Report: Dubas must make a splash

Luke Fox | @lukefoxjukebox June 10, 2018, 10:26 AM

It's go time, Toronto.

The mentors — Lou Lamoriello and Mark Hunter — have left the building, the one-round-and-bounce grace period is over, and the final vets



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lingering from two management groups ago (James van Riemsdyk, Tyler Bozak, Leo Komarov... heck, even Joffrey Lupul's LTIR payments) have paved a path for more Marlies graduates and freed up precious cap dollars to spend on defencemen and centres.

As anointed and empowered by the decisive Brendan Shanahan, 32-year-old GM Kyle Dubas — whose Marlies are on the brink of snapping five decades of pro hockey championship futility in Toronto — promoted cap whiz Brendon Pridham and hired ex-Canucks exec Laurence Gilman to help him boost this group from a jog to a sprint.

Turnover should spill beyond the front office this summer as franchise face Auston Matthews is eligible for an eight-year commitment that could hit nine figures, RFA William Nylander needs a juicy raise and a determination of whether he'll transition from wing to centre, and fans are clamouring for a personnel upgrade on the blue line.

The Maple Leafs are young, exciting, and coming off their best regular-season performance in history. Wonderful.

Now is when they must start shaping into a real, complete Stanley Cup contender.

Salary Cap Space: \$22.34 million

UFAs

James van Riemsdyk, left wing, \$4.25 million

Tyler Bozak, centre, \$4.2 million

Leo Komarov, left wing, \$2.95 million

Tomas Plekanec, centre, \$6 million

Dominic Moore, centre, \$1 million

Roman Polak, defence, \$1.1 million

RFAs

William Nylander, \$894,000

Connor Carrick, \$750,000

Andreas Johnsson, \$750,833

Miro Aaltonen, \$925,000

Justin Holl, \$650,000

Calvin Pickard, \$1 million

Martin Marincin, \$1.25 million

Frederik Gauthier, \$863,000

2018 draft picks: 1st, 2nd (SJ), 3rd (SJ), 4th, 5th, 7th (own), 7th (ANA)

A weekly deep dive into the biggest hockey news in the world with hosts Elliotte Friedman and Jeff Marek. New episodes every Thursday.

DEE-FENCE! Clap. Clap. DEE-FENCE!

Chant it like a basketball fan.

The offensively rich Maple Leafs can score with the best of 'em. Starter Frederik Andersen is one of the world's top 10 goaltenders when he's healthy and in the groove (and with three years and \$15 million remaining on his deal, he isn't going anywhere soon). So it's no secret that Toronto's greatest deficiency rests on the blue line — and that's despite rolling out two 52-point D-men in their prime, Morgan Rielly and Jake Gardiner.

The Leafs ranked 12th in goals allowed in 2017-18 (2.8 per game), and that number swelled to an ugly four per outing during their seven-game playoff ouster by the Boston Bruins.

When you consider the Leafs' penalty kill was about average and their 33.9 shots allowed per game ranked them 28th overall, and that no team

giving up more shots even made the post-season, you realize how many mistakes Andersen (and backup Curtis McElhinney) masked.

Ron Hainsey's 37-year-old legs can't sustain all the weight in the defensive zone, and the only right-side defenceman Toronto has under contract for 2018-19 is Nikita Zaitsev, who, thus far, has failed to take the type of progressive stride his \$31.5-million contract extension demands.

Trouble is, most of the minutes-munching, stay-at-home defenders available on the UFA market — Jack Johnson, Dan Hamhuis, John Moore, Nick Holden, Ian Cole, Calvin De Haan, Brandon Manning — are lefties who don't exactly scream "Top pair!"

Dubas would have to cripple his cap for the best right shot out there, John Carlson, if the Washington QB is even interested in a move to Canada.

Thus, we're thinking trade.

Drew Doughty: A Norris champion and obvious game-changer. The Kings should offer Doughty, an Ontario native, a blank cheque to stay in L.A. before he hits free agency in 2019. But does Doughty, a Babcock favourite, look at the sluggish Kings' Round 1 sweep by Vegas as a speed bump or a sign that his club's championship window has shut?

Of course, we're talking blockbuster here, and a proven performer like William Nylander or Kasperii Kapanen (plus more) would have to go.

Chris Tanev: The Toronto native plays a brand of selfless, gutsy defence the Leafs sorely need more of. New Leafs AGM Gillman knows the Vancouver player well. Tanev, 28, still has two years on his cap-friendly deal and holds a modified no-trade clause, but if the rebuilding Canucks are concerned they might ultimately lose Tanev, or that he's becoming too injury-prone, they may be tempted to swap him for a package that includes one or two of the Leafs' many young wing prospects or future picks. Vancouver needs more scorers.

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1098710 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Vancouver Canucks off-season report: Defence the big priority

Iain MacIntyre | @imacSportsnet June 10, 2018, 10:22 AM

Last Valentine's Day, the Vancouver Canucks extended general manager Jim Benning's contract. It wasn't so much a show of love by Francesco Aquilini's ownership family, as a display of patience.

It was like: We've suffered for three years; we're willing to suffer for one or two more.

But that's it. That's the longest runway any National Hockey League GM should expect these days to get a franchise flying again.

It's a good thing Benning signed his three-year extension when he did because the Canucks went 3-11-2 over the next five weeks as another season swirled down the toilet while management, headed by president of hockey operations Trevor Linden, struggled to rebuild a team that aged itself over a cliff.

The poignant retirement of Daniel and Henrik Sedin generated a lot of emotion inside and outside the team and spurred the Canucks to a 5-1-1 finish that hurt Vancouver's draft position but allowed it, at least, to finish four points better than it did the previous season.



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The departure of the Sedins has actually generated some excitement and anticipation in Canuck Nation because the future clearly belongs now to young players like Bo Horvat and Brock Boeser, and talented prospects like Elias Pettersson and Thatcher Demko. But there remains immense pressure on Benning and Linden to keep pushing the Canucks' transformation, to reinvigorate the market and build on the development momentum epitomized by Boeser's rookie-of-the-year nomination

PROJECTED SALARY-CAP SPACE: \$22.2 million

UNRESTRICTED FREE AGENTS

Jussi Jokinen, RW \$1.1 million

Nic Dowd, C \$640,000

Darren Archibald, LW \$650,000

RESTRICTED FREE AGENTS

Jake Virtanen, RW \$894,000

Sven Baertschi, LW \$1.85 million

Markus Granlund, C \$900,000

Troy Stecher, D \$925,000

Derrick Pouliot, D \$800,000

2018 DRAFT PICKS

First, second, third, fifth, sixth, seventh.

BIGGEST OFF-SEASON NEED

A good deal of angst exists in the market about how the Canucks will replace the Sedin twins, the future Hall-of-Famers who won't be at training camp for the first time since 1999.

It's funny because many of the people worrying couldn't seem to get rid of the Sedins fast enough in order to make room for younger players. Even at age 37, the Swedes combined for 105 points and that offence will be difficult to replace immediately. But given the evolutionary stage of the Canucks, the last thing the organization needs is a high-priced, 30-something free-agent forward who will demand a long-term deal in exchange for short-term help.

The Canucks' biggest priority remains bolstering their depth and adding more young players, especially on the defence. Benning has done a terrific job building inventory at forward, drafting players like uber-prospects Pettersson and Demko, Adam Gaudette and Kole Lind, and acquiring Jonathan Dahlen and Nikolay Goldobin.

But the prospect cupboard is still sparse on defence.

Fifth-overall pick Olli Juolevi (taken by Benning ahead of Mikhail Sergachev and Charlie McAvoy in 2016) could help the Canucks next season. The team is also expected to nab one of the top defencemen available when it picks seventh at this month's draft in Dallas. But Vancouver needs more on its blue-line at all levels: the NHL, the minors, and in the junior-college pipeline.

POSSIBLE OFF-SEASON TARGETS

John Tavares, C – Why not dream big? The Sedins' retirement created \$14 million in cap space for Canucks and it might take most of that (times seven years) to get Tavares. The best free agent available probably will re-sign with Lou Lamoriello's New York Islanders, and if he doesn't, he is expected to go somewhere where he has a chance to win a Stanley Cup soon. But the Canucks can offer him lots of money, the captaincy and excellent young forwards to help groom. Tavares is an outlier UFA, a 27-year-old still young enough to fit Vancouver's rebuild and be in his prime when the team makes it back to the playoffs.

Thomas Vanek, RW – The 34-year-old was one of the Canucks' success stories until he was rented at the deadline to Columbus, where his bounce-back season continued. In 80 games between the two teams, the

winger had 24 goals and 56 points. He also proved to be a quiet leader, and mentor to Boeser, in the Vancouver dressing room. Vanek loved the city and would seriously consider coming back on a short-term deal with trade protection.

Tyson Barrie, D – A report about alleged interest in Carolina defenceman Noah Hanifin sparked a social-media firestorm in May. But Colorado's Barrie, shopped periodically by the Avalanche, is always on the Canucks' radar. The 26-year-old B.C. boy would cost a tonne. However, if the Avalanche thinks prospect Cale Makar is ready and wants to shed Barrie's \$5.5-million salary, the Canucks will be among the teams lining up to bid.

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1098711 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canucks GM Benning looks back at when he was drafted by Maple Leafs

Iain MacIntyre | @imacSportsnet June 10, 2018, 9:52 AM

VANCOUVER – Jim Benning figures every top prospect in this year's entry draft has been scouted 60 or 70 times by someone from the Vancouver Canucks.

The general manager isn't sure how often each National Hockey League team scouted him as a player 37 years ago when Benning was one of the hottest draft prospects, but it must have been at least once. Because how else would he have gotten dinner invitations in Portland?

"I talked to a few teams," Benning told Sportsnet. "Like, when they came through Portland, they'd take me out to supper. So I met with a few teams that way. Back then, a scouting staff was three or four people. Teams had a chief scout, who'd maybe be based in Ontario, then they'd have a full-time scout for Quebec and one for Western Canada and maybe one for the United States.

"I think the teams still knew what they were getting in the player."

On June 10, 1981, the Toronto Maple Leafs used the sixth-overall pick to draft Benning, an offensive defenceman who had amassed 28 goals and 111 assists the previous season for the Portland Winter Hawks.

It was an outstanding draft class topped by Dale Hawerchuk, who went first to the Winnipeg Jets. Seven players from that draft logged more than 1,000 NHL games and Hawerchuk, Ron Francis, Al MacInnis, Chris Chelios (the 16th defenceman selected) and Grant Fuhr all went into the Hockey Hall of Fame when they were finished.

A weekly deep dive into the biggest hockey news in the world with hosts Elliotte Friedman and Jeff Marek. New episodes every Thursday.

Benning never became the offensive star Toronto had hoped, but did have a solid NHL career, playing 610 games over nine seasons for the Maple Leafs and Vancouver Canucks, who acquired Benning and forward Dan Hodgson in a 1986 trade for Rick Lanz.

"In 1981, I was home in Edmonton for the summertime and I didn't even go to the draft," Benning, whose agent was the notorious Alan Eagleson, said of his draft experience. "Punch Imlach was the GM of Toronto at the time and he called me at home to say the Leafs had drafted me. I don't even know where the draft was that year. [Eagleson] told me I'd been drafted somewhere in the first round and left it at that.

"The kids are way more prepared now than we were 35 years ago. You talk to these kids as 17 year-olds, like we did at the combine last week,



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and they have strength-and-conditioning coaches, dieticians and mental coaches, skills coaches and skating coaches. And they've had them since they were 14. So the preparation that goes into the players now at a young age is way more than back then."

Benning said nobody taught junior players in 1981 how they were supposed to train in the off-season. He worked out on his own that summer in Edmonton, mostly lifting weights and running, then reported to the Maple Leafs free-agent camp that preceded training camp.

"And they invited to this free-agent camp every tough guy that was kicking around. Remember Kim Clackson?" Benning said, referring to the 1970s enforcer who had no goals and 370 penalty minutes in his 106 NHL games. "They had a bunch of guys like that.

"It was a five-day camp, but I got food poisoning and I was in hospital for the last three days. Then I was ready to go to main camp. After the free-agent camp, when I got to the main camp, it seemed pretty civilized."

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.

The Leafs dressing room that Benning walked into as an 18-year-old rookie included Darryl Sittler, Borje Salming, Rick Vaive, Ian Turnbull and Wilf Paiement.

"I think I was too naïve to be intimidated," Benning said. "I worked hard all summer to come in good shape, and you show up and compete and see where you're at.

"But that was still the era when a lot of guys wouldn't have done anything all summer and then just showed up at camp. Camp was to break in new equipment and get in shape. Darryl Sittler, he always came in great shape. And Salming would run 10 miles a day and do stairs and he'd come in great shape. But for a lot of players, training camp was there to get in shape.

"I played for the Leafs as an 18-year-old, it was a big step – know what I mean? As a defenceman, especially, it was a big step to step into the NHL as an 18-year-old and play. But there were other 18-year-olds that year that played."

One of them, Hawerchuk, had 103 points as a rookie and won the 1982 Calder Trophy.

Benning said he has no regrets about his playing career. The son of legendary Montreal Canadiens' scout Elmer Benning, the current Canucks GM launched his NHL management career as a scout. He said the draft is his favourite part of the year.

"I don't feel bad about the way my career was because I knew I did everything in my power to try to be as good as I could be," he said. "I became a reliable two-way player. I wasn't able to contribute offensively like maybe I would have liked to, but you see that all the time. You have to adapt to play and stay in the league, and that's what I did."

Asked if he thinks much about the time he was the sixth player chosen in one of the NHL's great drafts, Benning said: "No, I haven't thought about that in 20 years until you asked me about it. I've moved on."