



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 11, 2019

## THE ATHLETIC

### Pronman: Top 31 prospects of the past five years, 2019 edition

By Corey Pronman

There is so much written about the top prospects each year, but you can still be left wondering: “Just how good is Jack Hughes? Is he Connor McDavid good?”

To put the top of the 2019 class into perspective, I ranked the very best NHL Draft prospects of the past five years, using the perspective of evaluations from when these players were draft-eligible, ignoring what has transpired since then.

What’s important to emphasize is these are my evaluations at the time of the draft, not now. So jumping to a conclusion like “how in the world do you think Jesse Puljujarvi is better than Mitch Marner” is incorrect, unless discussing them in past tenses.

Obviously there will be egg on my face in several instances, particularly the 2017 draft where I wasn’t super high on Cale Makar or Elias Pettersson heading in, and my rankings of nearly every one of these draft classes would be substantially different as we’ve gotten new information on these players.

While I try my absolute best to view these prospects through the perspective of where they were as draft prospects, it is obviously hard to battle hindsight, but I do my best to be consistent.

In terms of tiers, I view McDavid on his own tier, while Patrik Laine through Rasmus Dahlin is a tier, and Kaapo Kakko through Andrei Svechnikov is a minor tier difference before the next group.

Breakdown by draft:

2015: six players

2016: six players

2017: five players

2018: seven players

2019: seven players

Check out Corey Pronman’s complete preview of the 2019 NHL Draft.

1. Connor McDavid, 2015 draft (first overall, Edmonton): McDavid was one of the best prospects in the history of the game. In 2015, he wasn’t in a different galaxy from Jack Eichel, or some of the top names in recent years, but there was some noticeable separation. McDavid distinguished himself at every level and tournament he ever took part in, and he has continued to do so since joining the Oilers, becoming the best player in the NHL over the past three seasons.
2. Patrik Laine, 2016 draft (second overall, Winnipeg): I’m going to eat crow on this one. Laine was one of the most dominant non-McDavid/Sidney Crosby 17-year-olds I’ve ever seen. He was a big, strong winger with an elite combination of offensive

tools between his hands, sense and shot, but his speed wasn’t amazing. I thought he’d turn into a rock star. As an NHLer, he has scored a lot, with a 44 goal season in 2017-18, but his 2018-19 was bumpy. This one may be a bit of a learning experience.

3. Auston Matthews, 2016 draft (first overall, Toronto): I’ve followed Matthews closely for many years and continue to be amazed by the skill level and goal-scoring ability he brings to the table. He has one of the most exciting toolkits I’ve had the pleasure of scouting. He has been one of the best centers in the NHL and, as long as he stays healthy, he should put up huge numbers.
4. Jack Hughes. 2019 draft: Hughes had a dominant season, looking like he was toying with opponents at times at the junior level and setting many records at the USNTDP. I think he’s going to be an elite NHL player and a player the team that drafts him (New Jersey) can build around.
5. Jack Eichel, 2015 draft (second overall, Buffalo): Eichel had massive draft hype in 2015 because of his time with the USNTDP and particularly his dominant play in college. The hype was warranted as he’s turned into one of the best centers in the league and a true elite driver of offense.
6. Rasmus Dahlin, 2018 draft (first overall, Buffalo): Dahlin was one of the best defense prospects to come along in the past few decades, right up there with Drew Doughty, Aaron Ekblad and Victor Hedman – if not above all three. In his first NHL season, Dahlin was remarkably good for a U19 defenseman. He’s tracking to become a star defenseman in the league as projected.
7. Kaapo Kakko, 2019 draft: Kakko had a fantastic season in Finland between Liiga and the World Championship. Some scouts think his season was more impressive than Aleksander Barkov’s at the same age. Kakko’s right on track to step into the league next season and be a cornerstone player for an NHL club’s (New York Rangers) rebuild.
8. Jesse Puljujarvi, 2016 draft (fourth overall, Edmonton): Puljujarvi was the MVP of the 2016 World Junior Championship and one of the most impressive prospects to ever come out of Finland. He has a lot going for him in terms of his skating, skill, shot and frame. His hockey sense has proved to be a bigger issue than I thought it would be at the time of the draft, leading to his draft and overall evaluation becoming a huge point of debate in the scouting community as he’s struggled to get it going in the NHL.



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9. Andrei Svechnikov, 2018 draft (second overall, Carolina): Svechnikov was highly touted for years going into his draft and as a rookie delivered on that promise for Carolina. He scored 20 goals, drove play when he was on the ice and showed a hard power game around the net. He's a very well-rounded player who could develop into a star for the Hurricanes.
10. Mitch Marner, 2015 draft (fourth overall, Toronto): In his draft season, Marner was be a two points per game player for London in the OHL. Since then, he's continued to show offensive dominance wherever he's gone, including the NHL. He is one of the most imaginative offensive players I've ever scouted as an amateur, and with his hands, IQ and skating, he is one of the best offensive players in the NHL.
11. Filip Zadina, 2018 draft (sixth overall, Detroit): Zadina looked very impressive last season, showing elite skills and finishing ability to be a top scorer in the NHL. His first season following his draft had a few more bumps than I anticipated, but I still think very highly of his talent.
12. Dylan Strome, 2015 draft (third overall, Arizona): After being a much-hyped third-overall pick by the Coyotes in 2015, Strome's star faded a bit, but he had a heck of a rebound following his trade to Chicago. He may never be the fastest or a legit No. 1 center like once projected, but with his size, IQ, hands and shot, he's going to be a very good player for a while.
13. Alex Turcotte, 2019 draft: Turcotte wasn't fully healthy this season but when he was healthy, he was fantastic. He's a very well-rounded center who projects as an impact No. 1 who can make a difference with his speed, skill and physicality.
14. Jesperi Kotkaniemi, 2018 draft (third overall, Montreal): Kotkaniemi was very good in Liiga and internationally in his draft year. In the NHL he was impressive for an 18-year-old, showing his high-end skill and vision with regularity. He's still 18 so still quite young despite having a full year of NHL experience, and with continued improvements to his quickness he'll become a true No. 1 center.
15. Noah Hanifin, 2015 draft (fifth overall, Carolina): Hanifin was incredibly good in a tough conference for a draft-eligible player in 2015. He joined the college ranks extremely early after blowing away the competition at the USNTDP the season before. As a prospect, Hanifin was a dynamic skating defender with good but not dynamic skill and solid two-way play. He has not evolved into a star, but he's a quality top-four defenseman for Calgary.
16. Clayton Keller, 2016 draft (seventh overall, Arizona): Keller was one of the most accomplished players in the history of the USNTDP statistically as a draft prospect. He's an elite playmaker with very good speed and, despite a small frame, he'll engage physically. After a Calder-finalist season, he didn't take a big step forward, but I still believe in the player a lot and think he'll be a top player in the league in due time.
17. Bowen Byram, 2019 draft: Byram had a fantastic season as one of the best defensemen in the WHL and a critical component to a long playoff run for his team. He's a very well-rounded defender who projects to step into the league next season and down the line become a No. 1 defenseman. He is one of the very best defensive prospects of the past few years.
18. Mathew Barzal, 2015 draft (16th overall, N.Y. Islanders): Barzal missed a big chunk of his draft season with an injury, but when he was healthy, he impressed a lot with his dynamic elements. Watching him as an amateur, you were entertained and stopped scouting just to watch him for fun. Barzal continued to be a dynamic playmaker in the NHL even if his production took a mild slide this season.
19. Nico Hischier, 2017 draft (first overall, New Jersey): Hischier as a draft prospect was very good between league and international play. I saw a highly talented skater and playmaker who would be a very good NHL player. It's probably odd to some to see a first-overall pick this low in the rankings, but I really did not like the 2017 draft class at all. In hindsight with higher evaluations of Makar, Miro Heiskanen and Petterson, things would change a bit, but I still think it was a soft class. Hischier is still a pretty good player, but this year the Devils got a real winning lottery ticket.
20. Cole Caufield, 2019 draft: Caufield only scored 72 goals last season and projects to be a star goal-scoring winger in the NHL. He's right up there with some of the very best names of the past few years because of his special scoring ability, his elite hands and his high-end hockey IQ.
21. Quinn Hughes, 2018 draft (seventh overall, Vancouver): Hughes was No. 5 on my draft board last summer and my No. 1 NHL prospect at the midseason point. We will see what he ends up doing in the NHL but all the tools are there to be an impact guy – other than his size. He has elite feet, skill and hockey sense. I think he will find a ton of NHL success in short order next season.
22. Pierre-Luc Dubois, 2016 draft (third overall, Columbus): Dubois was a controversial (at the time) No. 3 overall pick, but I still liked him a lot, even if not at that slot. I saw a very well-rounded player who would become a good first-line forward but not a star. That might end up being what actually happens, but what he's been so far is still a very good NHL player.
23. Nolan Patrick, 2017 draft (second overall, Philadelphia): Patrick was when I did my draft rank and remains still a tough projection. He has ability, but it's debatable whether it's elite ability. There's no denying he is skilled and makes plays, but I had concerns at the time about whether he was truly a game breaker. Those concerns have proven



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somewhat valid to date even though he's still a good NHL player.

24. Gabriel Vilardi, 2017 draft (11th overall, Los Angeles): During his draft season, I was interested because of Vilardi's high-end size/skill/IQ combination. He could make some unique plays. He had some skating concerns and was hurt a bit during his draft season, but I thought a lot of the package was very appealing. Since then the injury issues have only gotten worse, and he missed the entire past season.
25. Oliver Wahlstrom, 2018 draft (11th overall, N.Y. Islanders): Wahlstrom was one of the most productive players in the USNTDP's history and one of the top goal-scoring talents on this list. He has an elite shot to couple with very good hands. He had a tough season after being drafted and looks a little bad at this slot, but I still like the player.
26. Matthew Tkachuk, 2016 draft (sixth overall, Calgary): Tkachuk has done nothing but produce big numbers for years at every level and tournament. He's a highly skilled and intelligent forward who has made as many fans in Calgary as enemies with other fanbases. Since hitting the NHL ranks, he's continued his success from his amateur days and will be one of Calgary's more important players for years to come. I had concerns over his skating as an amateur to get him to the highest echelons as a prospect, but he's proven it is not an issue.
27. Cody Glass, 2017 draft (sixth overall, Vegas): Glass wasn't on my top 30 in 2017 to start the season, but he erupted at the start of the season and maintained his play throughout the campaign to become a top prospect. He's a dynamic playmaker who has the

skill, size and IQ to be a significant scorer in the NHL, and has dominated junior hockey. It remains to be seen what he does in the NHL, but he did quite well in the AHL playoffs.

28. Trevor Zegras, 2019 draft: Zegras is one of the most skilled players on this very talented list of players. He's an absurdly good playmaker. He's not the biggest or fastest, but he has all the ability to become a top NHL player because of how special his brain is.
29. Nick Suzuki, 2017 draft (13th overall, Vegas): Suzuki was one of the top players in the OHL in his draft season and through his career, including leading Guelph to a title this past spring. He's a dynamic playmaker who can also score. He's not the biggest, but he's gotten a little quicker. I've bounced around on him a lot as a prospect but lately the direction of his game is pointing up and he may fulfill on the promise I saw on him at 17.
30. Dylan Cozens, 2019 draft: Around this point of the list you could really suggest 10-15 names and they'd be reasonable. I think Cozens deserves to be in the mix, though. He's not a flashy player, but he's very well-rounded and has had a very successful junior career. He brings a ton of speed, physicality and scoring to games. I think he'll be a top player for whichever team picks him.
31. Adam Boqvist, 2018 draft (eighth overall, Chicago): I was very high on Boqvist in his draft year because of his fantastic skill level and vision, despite not being the biggest or quickest. This season he had his bumps adjusting to the pace of the OHL. I still like the player I just probably would have him a few spots lower.



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## About Last Season: Justin Faulk Performance Review and Grade

In a complete 180 from last off-season, Justin Faulk went from trade bait to a competitive leader for the Canes.

By Cody Hagan

Justin Faulk: 2018-19 By The Numbers

- Age: 27
- NHL Seasons: 8
- Scoring: 11 goals, 24 assists, 35 points
- Ice Time: 17:46 ES, 2:56 PP, 1:43 PK
- 5 on 5 Stats: 53.8% CF, 53.9% GF
- Contract Status: One year remaining, \$4.83 Million AAV

### Making The Grade

Last off season may have been the hardest to date for Justin Faulk. He has just finished his seventh season as a NHL player for the Carolina Hurricanes and it was by far his worst. Trade speculation ran wild and the fan base was ready to see the Co-Captain out the door. But the Hurricanes brought Faulk back and it couldn't have turned out any better for both parties.

Settling back in to his role as an alternate captain behind newly-appointed captain Justin Williams, Faulk had arguably his best season since 2014-15 when he posted a career high 49 points. His defense was night and day better than it was the year before and he was a key part of the team coming together as one.

For only the second time in his career Faulk was a plus player at plus-nine, which is a career best. He also had a career high



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121 blocked shots which is a true testament to his dedication on the back end.

Where there some areas you would like to see Faulk improve upon? Of course. He was on the first power play unit for almost the entire season, and everyone knows that the power play was less than ideal. He also made his patented Faulk plays here and there that would lead directly to a goal and leave you scratching your head. But those mistakes were much fewer and further between than in years past.

The highlight of his season has to be his goal in the Islanders series where he was able to grab the puck mid-air coming out of the penalty box and walk in for a huge goal.

PNC Arena went absolutely crazy when Faulk scored that goal and it may be his most memorable moment ever in a Hurricanes jersey.

## About Last Season: Lucas Wallmark Performance Review and Grade

The Swedish forward had a strong season in his first full taste of the NHL.

By Justin Lape

Lucas Wallmark: 2018-19 By The Numbers

- Age: 23
- NHL Season: One full, two partial
- Games played: 81
- Scoring: 10 goals, 18 assists, 28 points
- Ice Time: 14:48 all situations
- 5 on 5 stats: 54.1 CF%, 46.7% oZS, 53.3% oDS
- Contract: Restricted free agent after 2019-20 season

Making The Grade

It seemed all but inevitable that Lucas Wallmark would get his shot at the NHL as the 2018-19 season approached. He thrived for the Checkers in two seasons in Charlotte, ranking top-5 in team scoring for back-to-back seasons. After a strong training camp, Wallmark made the team.

Wallmark fit nicely into his bottom-six role in Raleigh despite being relied on as a top-six forward in Charlotte. As a versatile forward, Wallmark was cycled through different linemates to start the season, including a lengthy stint with Jordan Martinook and Andrei Svechnikov. Later in the season, as

Entering the final year of his team-friendly contract, there will again be trade rumors afloat with Faulk. The Hurricanes need scoring and they have a plethora of defensemen (specifically right shots like Faulk) to help make that happen. But unlike a year ago, the feeling isn't that Faulk is on his way. It's that Faulk is a key part of this team once again and he should be a vital piece of next season. That is exactly why it would appear the Canes want to get him re-signed soon.

From trade bait to defining leader, Justin Faulk took a 180 degree turn from a year ago. The longest tenured Hurricane finally got a taste of the playoffs and one should figure that will only make him want it even more next season. The coaching staff needs to figure out Faulk's role in the power play as his current role clearly was not working, but once that is resolved Faulk will continue to be a key part and leader for the Hurricanes moving forward.

Svechnikov moved higher up the lineup and Martinook struggled with injuries, he played alongside Micheal Ferland and Saku Maenalanan to end the postseason. With 28 points, Wallmark was a great source of secondary scoring and routinely drove play alongside his linemates.

Wallmark rarely took a night off, even if sometimes it got the best of him:

In the playoffs, Wallmark had a strong series against the Washington Capitals and finished with 5 points in 15 games. Being reunited with Svechnikov at points helped, including on a beautiful feed in Game 1.

Moving forward, Wallmark's role could shift if Martin Necas is brought up to Raleigh and slotted in as a center. It would force Wallmark down to a permanent 4th line role. However, if head coach Rod Brind'Amour is not ready for Necas to center a line - which seems likely given he spent most of the season on the wing with the Checkers - he may slot in on Wallmark's wing on the third line. Wallmark could be a great example to Necas and showing him the ropes on the jump to the NHL, similar to his role with Svechnikov this past season.

Wallmark's contract shouldn't be much of an issue after next season but he will likely get at least a raise of his current salary of \$675K. The Swedish forward is a strong piece of the Hurricanes bottom six and will likely stick around for years to come.



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## About Last Season: Warren Foegele Performance Review and Grade

The rookie made the team out of training camp, then came out of nowhere in the playoffs to become a force to be reckoned with.

By Zeke Lukow

Warren Foegele: 2018-2019 By the Numbers

- Age: 23
- NHL Seasons: 1
- Games Played: 77
- Scoring: 10 goals, 5 assists, 15 total points
- Ice Time: 12:30 all situations, 11:06 EV, 0:06 PP, 1:18 PK
- 5 on 5 Stats: 53.47% CF, 38.46% GF
- Contract: Finished second year of ELC, Restricted Free Agent after next season

### Making the Grade

When you think of Carolina Hurricanes rookies, Andrei Svechnikov likely comes to mind. When digging a little more, other names like Saku Maenalanen and Lucas Wallmark also pop up, but sometimes lost in the mix was Warren Foegele.

Foegele started off strong last year in a cameo NHL debut. He made the team out of training camp in a minor surprise, and also made his presence known in the 2019 Stanley Cup Playoffs.

Foegele scored three points in two games in the 2017-2018 season including two goals which gave him some high hopes heading into this season. In the 2018-2019 season he played a majority of the season on the third line with Lucas Wallmark and Brock McGinn or Micheal Ferland on his opposite wing. This season he had 10 goals and 5 assists in 77 regular season games, but had five goals and four assists in 15 playoff games at he age of 23.

He came on in the second half of the season, which is common with rookies as they gain confidence. In the 2018

portion of the season Foegele had four goals and two assists with a -14 rating. He played 13:57 per game with a 57.19% Corsi. While he struggled with consistent scoring he was able to help with possession, but the -14 rating shows that he struggled with big turnovers and limiting large mistakes.

Later in the season and into 2019 his production picked up with six goals and three assists. His possession numbers dropped down to a 48.87% Corsi but just a -3 rating.

But he really seemed to settle in during the postseason. He proved to be a pest in the first round against the Washington Capitals and had a greater scoring rate in the playoffs than he had in the regular season. He had a 51.25% Corsi with 14:26 average time on ice, the seventh-most minutes for Hurricanes forwards in the playoffs. He also had the third most hits on the team with 31 over 15 games and proved to be a force to be reckoned with.

The Canes need to figure out if Foegele's playoff play is sustainable or just a flash in the pan. Right now he has proven to be more productive than Maenalanen, but seems to be in an overlapping role with Brock McGinn who had 11 more goals and points during the regular season and a plus/minus rating 27 points higher than Foegele. Additionally, McGinn is only two years older than the rookie.

The past few seasons have also been rumors that the Canes will trade a defenseman for a forward. There could be the chance that they bring in another top six type player that could end up jumping Foegele in the depth chart.

Heading into the 2019-2020 season he is set to make \$746k before becoming a restricted free agent. His playoff experience has earned himself a place on the Canes roster for the upcoming season. However, the Carolina brass needs to see him continue to develop this season going into contract negotiations. He is not a player that is going to command a ton of money in his next contract, but with so many young players in the organization and potential players coming in, he could find himself out of a top nine position with the team.

Let's not forget that he also won the Goal of the Year survivor vote that went on all year with the NHL with this goal.

### TODAY'S LINKS

- <https://theathletic.com/1018189/2019/06/11/pronman-top-31-prospects-of-the-past-five-years-2019-edition/>
- <https://www.canescountry.com/2019/6/11/18641866/carolina-hurricanes-season-in-review-justin-faulk-performance-review-and-grade>
- <https://www.canescountry.com/2019/6/10/18659868/carolina-hurricanes-season-in-review-lucas-wallmark-performance-review-and-grade>
- <https://www.canescountry.com/2019/6/10/18659235/carolina-hurricanes-season-in-review-warren-foegele-performance-review-and-grade>



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## SportScan

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

1146577 NHL

Lots of fun Seattle Metropolitan's stuff in the Hockey Hall of Fame — if you know where to look

By Geoff Baker

TORONTO – As the Stanley Cup Final was playing out last week, it seemed a good time to check in on memories from when that trophy was first awarded on U.S. soil.

The Seattle Metropolitan's, of course, defeated the Montreal Canadiens in 1917 to win Lord Stanley's mug for the only time. So, what does the Hockey Hall of Fame have to commemorate that franchise? Quite a bit, it turns out.

And not all of it is at the Hall's main display room in downtown Toronto. In fact, once there you'll currently see a game jersey worn by 1916-17 Pacific Coast Hockey Association MVP Frank Foyston of the Metropolitan's and that's about it.

But head out of downtown farther west and you come to the Hall's 18,000 square-foot D.K. (Doc) Seaman Hockey Resource Centre, located in the same building where the Toronto Maple Leafs have their training facility.

The resource center also is where 75% to 80% of Hall of Fame memorabilia has been stored since opening in 2009. Visits are by appointment – usually limited to hockey historians and researchers, with no photography allowed – though the Hall committee is considering opening its doors to the public to raise needed operational funding. One storage room contains up to 4,000 sticks donated by former players.

"We used to store all of the archival stuff on a floor below the main displays," said Izak Westgate, assistant curator for the archives center. "But we eventually realized we would need more space. Even now, the way we keep accumulating things, we're looking at ways to expand within this current facility."

The center's lobby was stacked with shipping crates when I visited. "Sorry for the mess," a receptionist said. "They're all going to Vegas this afternoon."

The crates contained the Hart, Calder, Vezina, Ross, Selke and other trophies to be handed out at the NHL Awards gala in Las Vegas later this month. The Hall safeguards the decades-old hardware as well as the Stanley Cup.

Westgate led me upstairs toward a table where he'd laid out Metropolitan's memorabilia as well as some white gloves.

"Those are the one thing we insist upon," he said.

Once the gloves were on, he pointed to a plastic bag containing another of Metropolitan's star Foyston's game-worn jerseys.

"You can take it out," he said.

The jersey looked and felt fragile, with small holes permeating the century-old wool. But once unfurled, it resembled the same jerseys shown in black and white photographs run in *The Seattle Times* for years – only now in full color. The Hall keeps a similar jersey worn by goalie Hap Holmes.

On the same table, Westgate had left Foyston's MVP trophy from the Stanley Cup year and his skates. The trophy was something to behold and lift, given its authentic silver bowl top adding to the weight.

I tried to envision Foyston holding it as it was presented to him. Though I couldn't imagine using his skates to get anywhere fast, the blades appearing well worn with a century's decay while the leather looked weak compared to today's ankle supports.

But the really fascinating stuff on the table was the paperwork. The Hall keeps row upon row of old newspapers and game programs documenting the game's history.

And one item on the table was a 1915 souvenir program from the old Seattle Ice Arena's debut season. I removed it from its plastic storage pouch – gloves on, of course – and carefully flipped through its 28 pages. Some had already detached from the program's spine, but the lettering was clear as day as I imagined being a Seattle sports fan 104 years ago sitting in the arena waiting for the Metropolitan's to take the ice.

The first thing that jumped out was an ad from the Piper & Taft Sporting Goods Store on Second Ave., selling suits and overcoats for \$15 – and noting that it was a deal because they had a retail value of \$25. There was another ad for the "Washington Natatorium and Turkish Baths" inside the Moore theater building.

Finally, a back page ad noted that the arena itself had been roofed with "The Philip Carey Co's Built-up Asbestos roofing."

Yes, times have certainly changed.

The program contained feature articles on the history of hockey's Pacific Coast development, figure skating and photos of similar ice arenas in New York, Boston, Cleveland and Vancouver.

On the same table was a smaller program from the 1916-17 Stanley Cup Final as well as original photographs of the Metropolitan's and Canadiens posing together on the ice. Also, a 10-cent program from a 1940-41 game in which the Seattle Olympics – the only year they played under that name – played host to Vancouver and a 1949-50 program from a Seattle Ironmen game against the Victoria Cougars.

I'd asked Westgate whether the Hall had Seattle Eskimos or Sea Hawks files. We manually searched the climate-controlled, warehouse-style archives rooms and found a Victoria Cubs program



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from 1928-29 in which they played host to coach Pete Muldoon's Eskimos. Somebody even pencil-marked a scorecard inside the program and it appears the Eskimos won 4-3.

Small details like that are a reason having the original item is often the best way of preserving history. The Hall has a video editing room where they are looking to digitize row-upon-row of film canisters containing game footage as far back as the 1930s.

Westgate figures the same digitizing will eventually replace the slowly-deteriorating newspapers taking up a sizeable archives space. The Hall tries to keep clippings on every team, player and Stanley Cup win – some more recent than others.

There's a Seattle Sunday Times magazine section from Jan. 30, 1921 with its cover showing an illustration of the Metropolitans and Vancouver playing at the Seattle Arena. A referee in the background has a capital letter "R" sewn on his jersey as was then commonplace.

A file folder on the Metropolitans contained a 2017 feature by Times columnist Larry Stone commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Cup victory. The Hall collects as many outside newspapers as possible when its limited staffers travel for events, but the bulk of clippings still come from Toronto's four dailies.

I decided to test the archives' completeness. I told Westgate about covering the "Stanley Cup riot" for the Montreal Gazette in June 1993 after fans went on a rampage following the Canadiens' title victory over Los Angeles – the last by a Canadian-based team.

Westgate quickly moved to a Stanley Cup newspaper cover portion of the archives and within seconds was sorting downward. "Here's 1998, 1996, ah, there we go...!" he said, plucking a plastic-covered Gazette front page with a "Cup Comes Home" headline, a shot of goalie Patrick Roy hoisting the championship trophy and my co-written riot story and byline off to the left, above the fold.

"Congratulations," Westgate said. "You're in the Hall of Fame."

And so are the Metropolitans. You just have to dig a little.

Seattle Times LOADED: 06.11.2019

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The Athletic / Q&A with Ken Holland: On the draft, buyouts, free agency and how to have a successful offseason

By Daniel Nugent-Bowman Jun 10, 2019

Ken Holland has been with the Oilers for a month now and to say things have been hectic would be an understatement.

After spending 22 seasons as the Red Wings' GM, Holland has had his hands full in his new job in a new city.

In Edmonton, he's been tasked with remaking a floundering franchise. So far, he's shipped out members of the old guard, most notably vice-president of player personnel Duane Sutter. Longtime Oiler Craig MacTavish also left to coach in Russia. He's brought in new faces, namely head coach Dave Tippett.

And there are more changes to come. Holland has been working closely with Tippett to round out his coaching staff after Trent Yawney and Manny Viveiros were fired.

Throw in a draft combine, scouting meetings, preparing for the draft itself and free agency, and Holland's plate's been full.

The surroundings may be different now, but at least he's been through this all before.

Amid a frantic month, Holland took some time to speak to The Athletic about his superstar players, roster construction, the status of some colleagues, his draft plan and his blueprint to fix the ailing Oilers.

Note: This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Connor McDavid took part in a recent charity event in Toronto but didn't address his health. Is there any concern with his progress or potential readiness for training camp?

I'm expecting him to be on the ice for training camp in the fall. That's my expectation. I had a lunch with Jeff Jackson, his agent, in Buffalo last week. I've talked to our team doctor (Dhiren) Naidu. I've talked to T.D. Forss, the athletic trainer. They've kept me updated. They've been in contact with the Connor McDavid camp. He's around the Toronto area and he's got some people there that are helping him on rehab. Everything that I've been told is we're on schedule.

In Dave Tippett's press conference, he talked about the potential of playing McDavid and Leon Draisaitl together. I'm curious about your thoughts. Is it important to have them together or anchoring their own lines?

My feeling's always been to put power in the coach. Certainly, as the manager, I'm gonna be around the coaches' room. I'm gonna be on the plane. Lots of nights they'll play together. Other nights they'll play apart. Going into training camp, I think Dave Tippett's expectation is to play them together. As the year wears on, you see how things go and you've gotta react to injuries – not to those guys but the other people – and you have to break them up. Sometimes they're really humming and you've gotta have them together. But I really leave it up to the coach.

But I'm around on a regular basis and I'm gonna voice my opinion; we're gonna have those conversations. But ultimately, I think the coach needs to have the authority to coach the team.

How does that flexibility impact how you construct your lineup? By that, I'm referring to Draisaitl's ability to play wing and centre.

Certainly, in Leon Draisaitl's and (Ryan) Nugent-Hopkins's case, both of them have played centre and both of them have played left wing. Between Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, Leon Draisaitl and Connor McDavid, we have three top-six forwards. Even though they're all centre-icemen ... it's hard to have guys that have 70 points like Ryan Nugent-Hopkins does and put him on the third line. I think you're wasting somebody there.

They're interchangeable parts. I start out with that foundation. Between now and September, I work off that.

June is a busy time of the year and next the buy-out period is approaching. Are you considering buying out any players on the roster?

I am considering. I haven't made any final decisions. You have to look at all your options. I am looking at our roster to figure out how we can best use the summer, the cap space, to build the best team possible.



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Editor's note: The Oilers have currently committed almost USD\$73.2 million to 18 players.

Jesse Puljujarvi's name has come up quite a bit recently. What's your assessment of him? It seems like he's gone through a lot in the last few years. Are you confident he'll be re-signed and back with the Oilers next season?

I don't know a lot about Jesse Puljujarvi. I do know he was picked fourth overall. To be picked that high in the draft, he was a talented, young player in his draft class. I like that he's a big guy. He's got skill. He's still relatively young. He's 21 years of age.

In terms of re-signing (him), I've had one conversation with his agent. I haven't talked to him since. Am I confident that we're going to get him signed? I'm going to do everything I can to get him signed. Certainly, it takes two to tango.

I know it's been a tough go for a variety of reasons. Last year was a tough year. It was a tough year for everybody in the Oilers organization. You fire the coach. You fire the manager. That's tough. It's tough on the fans. It's tough on the players – especially younger players. Older, veteran players can probably handle the situation a lot better. But for young players that are trying to make a name for themselves, it's much more difficult. They don't have the confidence.

He's still a good, young, talented player. I'm hoping that myself and Dave Tippett can provide some stability. I hope he wants to be an Oiler. When I get curveballs thrown at me, then I've gotta deal with the curveballs. What would the curveball be? If he doesn't really wanna be an Oiler. I haven't really dug that deep. I know it's been a tough go for him.

Darnell Nurse is coming off his best season and can be signed to an extension in July. Would your preference be to determine his future – either by signing or moving him – this summer or would you be more comfortable letting this season play out and then re-evaluating things?

He's got a contract for '19-20, so that's great. For me to come in and start doing extensions for players that have got a year to go ... I don't really know their talent (or) who they are. Who are they? I've gotta get to know the person. Do they go to the gym? How much do they sacrifice? How committed are they to fitness? How much do they compete on an every-night basis? Those are the things I look at when I'm making assessments and determinations on contract extensions.

With a new guy in charge, if you've gotta contract for the '19-20 season, the reality is you're probably gonna start out and I'm gonna wanna watch you play. I wanna watch the team play. I wanna watch the players play. I wanna assess the team. He's not like he's a UFA at the end. We retain his rights. It's about getting the season started and watching the team play, watching the players play. Then I can start to formulate a plan.

How are you approaching the draft and who's running the draft and making the calls for the team?

For the most part, the chief scouts run the draft. The managers can weigh in philosophically or the managers can weigh in (directly). I have seen lots of those players in the top 10, living in Detroit. I live two miles away from the (U.S. National Development Program) team and a lot of those players are gonna go in the top 10. I went to the world under-18s. We've got pick No. 8. We're gonna get a good player.

In terms of position, there's two ways to look at it: We've got all these good, young defencemen and you could go the forward route.

Or, if you add one more really young defenceman, you could say, "Boy, we're in great shape now."

We've got the guy at pick eight; we've got (Evan) Bouchard; we've got (Dmitri) Samorukov; we've got (Ethan) Bear; we've got Caleb Jones; we've got (William) Lagesson; we've got Darnell Nurse. We've got some defencemen for the here and now and we've got some for a couple years from now. Everybody's always on the lookout for NHL defencemen. Or, we can say, "We've got lots of good defencemen. We're gonna pick a forward." There will be a good forward on the board.

I don't know that either philosophy is more right than the other. If you're gonna be good in the NHL, you've gotta draft good and you've gotta develop good. And we've got an early second-round pick (38th overall). The draft is critical to long-term success. You've gotta hit on pick eight and then you've gotta find another player, maybe two, in the rest of the draft. That's the most important way to build a team that's gonna be built for the long haul.

It sounds like you're going to rely on Bob Green and Keith Gretzky quite a bit. Not much has been mentioned about Gretzky since you took over. Where does he stand within the organization?

Keith's gonna stay. I want him to be the general manager of Bakersfield. He really enjoys Bakersfield. It's really important that we draft, and we develop. Bakersfield is a big part of the development and we wanna real good culture down there. Jay Woodcroft, last year as the head coach in Bakersfield and his coaching staff, the team that they put in with Craig MacTavish and Keith Gretzky and the players that they signed – they made the playoffs for the first time in their (AHL) history.

In Detroit, in Grand Rapids, we developed players. It was a good environment. They played in playoff games. Those are important things in the development of players. Seeing Bouchard leave junior and play eight Calder Cup playoff games and (Tyler) Benson play playoffs games after being down there all year (and) those other players that I've mentioned, it was beneficial to them.

Keith's got a good eye in the amateur draft. He's run an amateur draft. Once we get into the second half of the season ... and once we see where the Oilers might be fitting in the standings and the scouts are out there and starting to get a bit of an idea of a list, I'd like Keith to get out on the amateur beat and go watch games. That way, when we have our end-of-year meetings as we head toward the entry draft, it's another strong voice at the amateur level. Those are his strengths. He's been evaluating players for a long time.

I think Keith is excited about the job. It's a very important job.

You mentioned Jay Woodcroft's name. There's been some speculation that he might leave the organization. Can you confirm that he'll return to coach the Condors?

I'm confident he's going to return. I've had two or three conversations with him. But I've been in the business long enough to know that you never know until it's done. But certainly, I want him to stay.

The Detroit Red Wings were his first professional team. Mike Babcock hired him in '05-06 (as video coach). I've got a relationship with Jay. He's accomplished a lot as an assistant coach in San Jose and in Edmonton. He has a lot of experience. This was his first opportunity to be a head coach and he did a fabulous job in his first year.

I think he's got a couple years remaining on his contract. But I want people to be here because they want to be here. I don't wanna hold people against their will. If they think there's better opportunity out



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there, and we can't fulfill their needs, then you're probably better off to part ways. I want them to be here because they believe they can be part of the solution and they want to be part of the program and part of the process for us to build this team into a playoff team and better than that – a team that can go on a playoff run.

I'm expecting and anticipating he's going to be the coach of Bakersfield. I've talked to him enough over the last 10 days to feel comfortable saying that.

You had a chance to watch a little of his team, the Condors, play after joining the Oilers. Were there any players that you felt were particularly close to being NHL-ready?

I watched two games. The first game, (Joseph) Gambardella had five points and had a massive night.

It's hard to go in there and evaluate 20 guys. I was looking at seven, eight, nine guys. I was looking at some of those defencemen that we've talked about: Ethan Bear, but he played one game, got concussed and missed the next game; I watched Caleb Jones; I watched Lagesson; Evan Bouchard was there and he played good; Benson played really good. He's had 66 points as a rookie in the American Hockey League. That's a tremendous year for a rookie in the American Hockey League.

Jones played some games up in the NHL this year. I'm looking forward to getting to training camp to see some of those young players compete for spots in Edmonton. All the guys that I was looking at, they played good. But it's two games. It's a small sample size.

Going back to the draft discussion: You've never traded a first-round pick for immediate help on the draft floor in the cap era. Could you foresee a scenario where you would do that with the No. 8 pick?

I don't foresee a scenario, but if the phone rings and something intriguing is offered I have a responsibility to answer the phone and hear them out. But there are no short-term fixes. The reality is a lot of the stuff that's speculated isn't real. Maybe it's real in fantasy hockey, but not in the real National Hockey League. History suggests that most teams picking in the top 10 don't trade those players. There are very few top-10 picks that have been traded in the last decade. I'm not gonna go out shopping the pick.

We've gotta build it. In the short term, I'm hoping that the stability of a manager and the stability and structure of a coach like Tippett, the moves that we're gonna try to make – we're gonna try to make some moves over the next six weeks – that we can compete and be competitive in March and be competing for a playoff spot. On the longer look, the eighth pick in the draft, all these players that we've talked about are a part of us building. The core up front is McDavid and Draisaitl. They're 22 and 23. Nurse is 24. Ryan Nugent-Hopkins is 26 and has a couple years to go on his contract. We've gotta build it. There are some younger players. I don't think Bouchard's that far away. I don't think Samorukov's that far away. I don't think Benson's that far away. Hopefully the player we pick at pick 8 isn't that far away. Maybe he's a couple years away.

The good teams build it and then they find players looking for opportunities and they make a trade or two. That's the plan. The plan is to build and add to the foundation of the core group. We've gotta find some depth. The good teams find either entry-level players or cheaper players in the minors that are on other teams and they form the bottom of the roster. They play with grit and they work, and they compete, and they maybe kill some penalties.

It's a league where it's gonna be rocky. It's up and it's down. But you've gotta have a plan. The coach has to have a plan from Day 1

of training camp to the end of the season. The manager has to have a plan from the start of the season but also a one-year plan, a two-year plan, a three-year plan, a four-year plan. You've gotta have a plan and stick to your plan. We're gonna stick to the plan.

I'm a big believer in stability. That's one of the things we had in Detroit. The last three years we missed the playoffs, but I'd like to think that the team this year was competitive. It wasn't quite good enough. It wasn't quite deep enough. It got decimated by injuries in the middle of the season. But you've gotta be steady on the rudder and you can't be reacting to the pressures of the short term.

It takes time to build that. I can't react every time we go on a three-game losing streak and wheel out a draft pick and bring somebody here that's gonna make a difference – because they're not gonna. We have to develop that internal depth where somebody comes up from the farm team. That's where Jay Woodcroft comes in. That's where the drafting comes in. That's where the developing comes in. That's the longer plan. I've got a shorter plan and a longer plan.

Going back to the draft pick. Although I asked about trading it, you've had a long track record of moving down. When is it a good idea to trade down at the draft and get another asset or two?

Coming out of '05-06, Jim Nill was my assistant general manager and he was also running the draft. We had a chief scout of Joe McDonnell. We'd been a team that had been in the playoffs 15 years in a row and then it goes for another decade. When you're a playoff team, you're always spending futures trying to prop up your team. You get to the trade deadline. (and) you trade a second; you trade a third; you trade this; you trade that.

We are trying to be a team that competes with the best teams in the league, so you've gotta have draft picks. If you're trading draft picks, you're not trading players off your team. We felt that over a period of time, we would trade back and try to get some extra draft picks – which we did.

We traded back a few times. The one year with Mantha (2013) we traded from 18 to 20 and got an extra second. We used that pick on (Tyler) Bertuzzi. We traded from 16 to 20 with Arizona (in 2016) in the (Pavel) Datsyuk deal. They took Datsyuk off our hands. They got (Jakob) Chychrun; we got (Dennis) Cholowski. We used the second-round pick on (Filip) Hronek. I think one year we had a first and traded back for three seconds. None of the seconds have really panned out, but it was a strategy. It was a three-, four-, five-year strategy.

You can't hit every time. But Hronek and Bertuzzi are gonna be two players that I think are gonna play for the Red Wings for 10 years. They're both really good players and great picks by our scouting staff.

If you wanna draft good, get lots of picks.

Moving on to the summer here, what does your shopping list look like from a positional standpoint?

I've gotta sign another goaltender to go with (Mikko) Koskinen. If you look at our defence, we have seven defencemen on one-way contracts (Nurse, Oscar Klefbom, Adam Larsson, Kris Russell, Matt Benning, Andrej Sekera and Brandon Manning). So, I'm not looking to add anything on defence. I'm hoping that we can have a little better luck with injuries to our defence.

When you look up front, I've gotta try to build the bottom six. We've gotta do some work up front on our forward lines. I don't have a ton of cap space, but I've got some cap space. We signed (Joakim) Nygard out of Sweden. He was second in the league in goals. He



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fast and plays with pace. We're gonna continue to look to see if we can sign a player or two here.

We've gotta find some cheaper players that contribute whether it's through entry level or they're free agents that have been playing pro and bouncing around or are Europeans like Nygard.

How much help does the team need on the wings?

Oh, we need help. We have to make some decisions. You need eight wingers.

Between Draisaitl and Nugent-Hopkins, that's one winger. I don't know which one, but one of them's a winger. You've got (Zack) Kassian. You've got (Juhar) Khaira. You've got (Sam) Gagner. You've got (Milan) Lucic. I might have missed one or two. I think (Colby) Cave can play wing or centre. Nygard's a winger. Certainly, I'm exploring the marketplace for forwards. We've gotta build up the forwards.

The only prominent UFA on the roster is winger Alex Chiasson. Have there been any serious talks to re-sign him?

I've talked to his agent a couple times briefly. We've had some initial conversations, but nothing more than that at this stage of the game. I've got a couple weeks here and then the interview period. We'll see. I'll be in touch.

How much will you consider aging curves when considering how much term to offer a free agent in his late 20s? I know Justin Abdelkader, for instance, was a player you had within your organization, but did you learn anything from the contract you gave him?

I would say if you're in the business and you think every contract is gonna be team-friendly, you should find another business. You're dreaming.

You have to decide if you wanna let the player go. Easy to sit on the sidelines and have all the answers and second-guess and criticize. But come on in and get into the big chair and then make decisions.

Not every contract that I signed in Detroit worked out. Some were fabulous contracts for the team. You're gonna have some bad ones. These guys are people. They're human beings. There's probably gonna be some contracts signed in the industry this year, this offseason, that down the road they don't look so good. But in the short term, they look awful good. You're dreaming to think you're gonna get a player that the day he's no longer playing at that level his contract expires. It happens occasionally, but not that often.

What I learned from my time in Detroit is you've gotta do more good than bad. You're gonna do some things that don't work out. It's easy to not get criticized. Just do nothing. Don't sign anybody. If you wanna be in the NHL, you've gotta get in the game. You've gotta decide when to pay term. That's how you're gonna land players. If you ask me about the Edmonton Oilers and free agency but you don't wanna give any term, we might as well just go fishing.

I'm gonna sign a contract going forward that probably isn't gonna pan out. But I'm hoping that I'm gonna sign more that do pan out to offset the one that doesn't pan out. All 31 general managers, if you're gonna be involved in free agency – I'm not just talking about this summer, I'm talking about every summer – and even if you're signing your own players, you're gonna have the odd contract where the player doesn't perform to the level they're paid at.

What did I learn from my time in Detroit? I learned that it's a hard league. I believe that you've gotta have a plan. I believe that we're gonna make lots of good decisions. I believe that we're gonna make some bad decisions. You hope that the bad decisions aren't critical. I

learned that the difference between the good teams and the bad teams is marginal.

Finally, complete this sentence: I'll consider this offseason a success if ...

I won't deem the offseason a success until we play the first 40 games and see how we look. When we make moves, we like them. We don't make moves and don't like the moves. We like all of them. We're gonna make some moves. We're gonna sign some people. Then I've gotta go out and watch all those moves. Do they have chemistry?

There's no use analyzing the offseason in August. You haven't played a game yet. It looks great on paper or it doesn't look great on paper. But how do you really know? I guess my sentence would be: If we're legitimately competing for a playoff spot right to the finish line whether we make it or not. I look at the Montreal Canadiens, who competed right till the last game. I thought they had a great season. One more point and you're in. If the Edmonton Oilers can legitimately compete – be in thick of the race, not chasing the race – then I think that we've had a really good offseason. Ultimately, it's about the results.

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The Athletic / Down Goes Brown: Five hard questions the NHL needs to ask before they expand replay review

By Sean McIndoe Jun 10, 2019

Expanded replay review is coming to the NHL, in some form. The Athletic's Pierre LeBrun reported over the weekend that league leadership has already met to come up with a proposal for expanded review and will present it to the competition committee on Tuesday, with the GMs getting a look next week.

LeBrun reports that the recommendation will not include judgment penalty reviews, at least this time around. That will be disappointing to some fans, especially in the wake of controversial moments like Cody Eakin's major and Tyler Bozak's uncalled trip. But it would likely include a review of plays like Timo Meier's hand pass, among other scenarios that aren't covered by the current rules.

I'm with pretty much everyone else in believing that the NHL has a crisis on its hands. The officials have become the story of the playoffs and that's never a good thing. I think the Eakin call was a bad one, as I said at the time. I think the hand pass was an obvious miss. And I think Bozak should have been given two for tripping on Thursday. Three big missed calls, which is three too many.

But now what?

You already know what I think about replay review for penalties. I've made my case that it would be a disaster, and I'll keep banging that drum if only because in a few years when we do have it and everybody hates it, I won't have to hear about how nobody could have seen this coming. And I think there's a good chance that any sort of expanded review will be a mess too because it's being implemented by the same minds that came up with the current offside and goalie interference reviews. Are you happy with how those have worked? Not many of us seem to be.



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But here's the key point: I don't want expanded replay review to be a mess. I'd have no issue with a well-implemented replay system that makes the game better. I don't want this league to screw up yet again. I don't want us to all be sitting around in a few years, screaming at each other over freeze-frames of plays we barely even notice today.

For now, I'm accepting reality by conceding that I'm probably going to lose this argument and that significantly expanded review is almost certainly coming in some form. And yes, that will likely include penalties at some point, even if it's not this year. The question now is whether it can be done in a way that doesn't prove my warnings right. I'm not optimistic, but I don't think the task is impossible.

But the first step is that we have to stop pretending this is easy. Stop saying "just get it right," as if that hasn't occurred to the league or its officials. We all told ourselves that offside review was going to be easy, but it hasn't been – and that's for a call that in theory should be black-and-white. We figured we were just going to catch the Matt Duchene plays and nobody could object to that. Instead, we took a play that nobody had a serious problem with since Leon Stickle in 1980 and turned it into something we all fight about every few days. And we did all of that without catching even one single Duchene-style play along the way. We now have teams with employees whose job it is to watch every zone entry for potential offsidess, all for the purpose of taking perfectly good goals off the board because of a fraction of an inch that nobody even noticed in real-time. If we'd seen what was coming, nobody would have been in favor of this four years ago.

Why did the offside review system we got end up being so different than what we expected? Because we didn't really think it through about how it would work. We saw a missed call or two, we wanted to fix it and we figured that replay review would be easy. We were all wrong. Let's learn some hard lessons from that.

Sure, complain about this year's playoff officiating. If your team is one of the ones who got screwed by those ridiculous calls, you have every right. Scream at the sky, stomp your feet, type in all caps. Get it all out of your system. And then let's start asking some tough questions about what we're actually going to do.

Here are five to get us started.

What should be the standard for changing a call?

There are two basic schools of thought here. The first is that replay is there to catch the obvious errors. Mistakes happen, officials get screened and we need a failsafe for the really big misses that are obvious to everyone except the guy with the whistle. In theory, that means replays should be rare and short because it takes one look to see that yep, Timo Meier committed a hand pass. You don't even need the slow-mo part most times and certainly not the frame-by-frame breakdowns. Often, one look at real speed is all you need.

It goes without saying that the NHL doesn't do it this way because reviews aren't rare and they're certainly not short. The league has gone with the other philosophy, which says that once you've triggered a review, you might as well try to make the best call you can. After all, you've already stopped the whole game, you've got all these fancy cameras and multiple angles and everyone is standing around. Might as well take the time to really figure out what happened. If that means that you only end up being 60 percent sure that you got it wrong, well, that can still be a call worth changing.

Neither of these approaches is necessarily right or wrong, but you have to pick one. And you have to communicate it clearly to fans. Today, the NHL lives in a weird middle ground where the rules say

that the call on the ice is supposed to stand unless the evidence is overwhelming, but the reviews clearly aren't called that way. (Did you ever see a view of the Gabriel Landeskog offside that showed with 100 percent clarity that his skate wasn't touching the line? Me neither.)

Pick a lane, and communicate it clearly every time you have a review. No more middle ground.

One more thing. If your standard is that we'll only change the calls that are obviously wrong, prepare to be surprised by what people think is obvious. That Bozak trip? Not a penalty to everyone's eyes. Lots of people thought the Cody Eakin major was absolutely the right call. Few penalty calls are ever really obvious to everyone watching. Stuff like hand passes and pucks into the netting should be better, but even there we can run into grey areas or views that might seem inconclusive.

Again, this isn't a reason not to try. But it is a reason to stop pretending that any of this is going to be simple, or that you'll make everyone happy with the results.

What would an expanded coach's challenge look like (and do we want that)?

We know what we want it to look like. A call happens or doesn't happen and it's immediately obvious that there's been a big miss. A coach sees this unfold, alerts the referee that he wants to use a challenge and a replay review ensures. The officials see that they made a mistake, overturn the missed call and everyone is happy.

The specifics vary a little, but there seems to be at least some consensus forming around letting the coaches be responsible for driving reviews. Maybe you like Eric Duhatschek's idea of a super challenge, in which each coach gets one challenge for the entire game that they can use on just about anything. Maybe you think one wouldn't cover it and we need multiple challenges, just in case. The key point is that we put the onus on the coaches – not the league, not the war room, not the officials on the ice or elsewhere – to figure out what's worth reviewing. That way, nobody can complain about what does or doesn't get reviewed.

Sounds good. But what do we do when they start challenging every minor infraction? What happens when every NHL team has multiple staffers monitoring the game in real time for any meaningless violation they can find, just in case a goal happens and they want a do-over? Are we OK with reviewing faceoff violations? Line changes? Pucks being dumped in from just short of the red line?

What about penalties? The old line about how if you went by the strict definition of the rulebook you could find a missed penalty on virtually any shift is a cliché, but it's also true. We had some fun with some of the weirder rules in the book last week, but it won't seem all that fun when coaches are using obscure rules you've never even heard of to get goals taken off the board. And they absolutely will do that, because they won't be doing their jobs if they don't.

You can alleviate some of that problem by going through the rulebook and rewriting it, taking out weird old rules that don't work anymore or match how we want the game called. That would probably be a good thing to do in any event. It's hard to reconcile "rewrite the whole rulebook" with the "this is going to be easy" crowd, but sure, rewrite away. But then you still have to figure out what can be challenged and what can't.

Maybe you think I'm being too pedantic here. But we already know how this will turn out because we've already seen it with the offside review. We thought coaches would only challenge the obvious stuff,



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but that didn't happen. Instead, they challenged absolutely anything that they could. In hindsight, of course they did.

Will that happen again if we expand the challenge system? Maybe not, although it's hard to see why this time would be any different. But if you're in the camp that says we should just give the coaches a challenge or two or more and a long list of challengeable calls and let them figure it out, you'd better have an answer here.

And there are answers. One common response is that we'd only allow coaches to challenge missed calls on plays that lead directly to goals. That might work (although it's worth pointing out that such an approach wouldn't cover something like the Eakin call). It also brings us to another question.

What does "leading to a goal" mean?

Many fans and media are calling for us to only review calls that lead to a goal. That's smart, in that it cuts out a lot of the stuff that could get us in trouble. It also fits better with the spirit of what most of us seem to want. Not everything that happens in an NHL game is important enough to warrant review, but goals are crucial. In a league where we still only get maybe six of them a night, even one that shouldn't count can change the outcome of a game, a series, a season. Accept that mistakes will happen in 95 percent of the game, you might argue, but make sure you always get the goals right.

OK. How?

What does it mean for a play to lead to a goal? That turns out to be a tricky question, and there are a few ways we could go. We could take it literally and say that the missed call – the glove pass or high stick or puck into the netting or whatever – has to be the play that puts the puck directly into the net. But that's how the rules already work right now, and nobody seems to think it's enough. And it wouldn't cover stuff like Bozak's trip. For that, we need some sort of lead time. But how much?

You could pick a time – let's say five seconds – and just go with that. But that gets awkward when some team commits a clear hand pass six seconds before an overtime goal and now we're reviewing the game clock to see if we're allowed to overturn an obvious mistake. Maybe it's based on possession, where as soon as the defending team touches or controls the puck, the slate gets wiped clean. Maybe it's a zone entry, although that won't cover the gloved or high-sticked breakaway pass from the neutral zone.

The key part here is that we can't just say that we'll know it when we see it. That's not good enough. We have to draw a line somewhere. And when we do, we have to accept that someday we're going to see a play that falls just on the other side of that line.

What are the unintended consequences we haven't thought of yet?

Even if you think you need expanded review and that your new system really will lead to more accurate calls and a better experience for your fans, you still need to spend the time thinking through all the different scenarios that could come into play. What are we missing? What's the rare but inevitable occurrence that's going to trip us up?

Notice that I'm not asking if there will be any unintended consequences. There will be. There always are. The question is whether we can figure them out in advance, before we've put a new rule in the book, or whether we're left scrambling later.

You don't have to look very far to see the consequences of whiffing on this question. The NFL is going through it right now. In January, they had a playoff game determined by what seemed to be an obvious missed call and everyone freaked out. (Sound familiar?)

Fans, media and teams demanded more replay review. The league gave it to them. And then – whoops – they realized that they'd missed a potentially important detail. Now they're scrambling to fix the rule, layering exemptions on top of exceptions. The season hasn't even started yet and the whole thing is already a joke.

That's what happens when you rush through a rule change in the name of getting it right without thinking through the impact of what you're doing. And if it can happen in the NFL, it can absolutely happen in the NHL. Let's slow down and take the time to work through the details, even if it means we don't get to declare the problem solved in June.

How will we know if we're "just getting it right"?

Everyone keeps saying that we have to get it right. It's repeated like a mantra after every questionable call. That's the answer to all of this. Just get it right!

Great. What does that even mean?

This sounds like I'm being a wiseass, but I'm not. This is actually the most important question of them all. Whenever you implement a new plan, in sports or in business or in life, you have to have a definition of what success will look like.

Therefore, what does it mean to get it right? The phrase implies something close to a 100 percent success rate, but is that realistic? For certain calls, maybe, but not for anything with even a tiny amount of subjectivity. Does getting it right just mean that we don't make any catastrophic errors and live with the vast majority of calls that fall into a grey area? Are we going to be happy as long as we achieve some degree of improvement? If so, how much?

Here's a different way of phrasing this question: How do we manage fan expectations?

This is all matters a lot because when you tell your fans that you're doing something in the name of getting it right, they do this weird thing where they take you at your word and expect you to actually get it right. Then you don't, at least not to everyone's satisfaction all the time, and people are even more frustrated than they were before.

Look at the current system for goaltender interference review. Did you go the whole season agreeing with all those calls, comfortably secure that the league was consistently getting it right? Or are you even more confused about goalie interference now than you've ever been?

The interference debacle is important because it reminds us of something that may be counterintuitive: If you don't manage expectations, you can end up with a system that improves the quality of your calls but still makes the perceived problem worse. Is the NHL getting more goalie interference calls right than they were five years ago before we had replay review? Sure they are. But back then, how often did you get really mad about an interference call or non-call? A few times a season, maybe. Now we're all fighting about it every week.

The NHL told us they were going to "just get it right," so we believed them. Then they made it marginally better. That's not the same thing. And now every interference review feels like a nightmare.

Like other problems I'm highlighting, this one doesn't have to be impossible to solve. If getting it right really does mean 100 percent, or something close to it, then you limit your system to only those calls where that's possible. Nothing subjective, nothing where we don't always have a clear view, nothing that two reasonable people



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could see differently. Only the obvious stuff. That's a system that will get it right, even if "it" will just be a small sliver of the rulebook.

Or you come up with a more realistic definition of getting it right, and then – and this is the crucial part – you tell the fans what that looks like. That doesn't mean poking your head out of a closed-door GM's meeting and mumbling a sound bite on your way to the golf course. It means Gary Bettman and Stephen Walkom and whoever else, front and center and selling a solution. It means taking questions. It means your GMs signing off on the plan and meaning it, and not knifing you the second it works against their team. It means being clear on what your new system is going to do, and what it won't and why it's the best option. It means expecting your leaders to actually do a little leading when it comes to the product on the ice, not just the revenue numbers or the next CBA.

It absolutely doesn't mean implementing a system without putting enough thought into it, watching it turn into a disaster and then shrugging that "the ship has sailed."

It can be done. It really can. The question is whether the same people who've already screwed it up a few times have the ability to finally start getting it right.

Maybe they can because they've learned from their mistakes. We'll find out. And it will start with seeing if they're asking the tough questions.

The Athletic LOADED: 06.11.2019

1146609 Websites

The Athletic / Women's hockey boycott showing cracks as players start to return to NWHL

By Hailey Salvian Jun 10, 2019

If you'd have looked at Mallory Souliotis' Twitter account a month ago, you might have seen the coordinated blast sent out by as many as 200 professional women's hockey players vowing to sit out the upcoming professional season in North America.

Now, it's gone and the defender has re-signed with the Boston Pride after a change of heart about what is best for the future of the women's game.

"(The movement leaders) just didn't have very clear answers and they were very unsure about a lot of my concerns," Souliotis told The Athletic. "I just really didn't understand why they had chosen to take this route when we have a league already there. We have our one league that everybody wanted."

Souliotis' concerns are not new. When the boycott was first announced, a number of NWHL players told The Athletic they abstained from joining the movement because of a lack of concrete details. They also said they felt rushed to make a decision. After taking a few weeks to think, and speak to her peers, Souliotis said she realized she made a mistake.

"At first, I thought that this movement sounded like it could help and if we sit out and then if the NHL forms a league then maybe we'd be paid. It honestly sounded like the whole world, just everything women's hockey wanted and deserved," she said.

"But I still had concerns and reservations with that decision...and a lot of those concerns went unanswered."

The defender said her main concern was that she didn't understand why the players wanted to boycott the "One League" everyone had wanted. She said there was never an explanation as to why the players wouldn't play in the NWHL.

"It was more of, 'If we sit out this year and the NWHL folds, then maybe the NHL starts a league,'" she said. "But there was nothing in writing and there was no promise from the NHL to do that."

The NHL has never been explicitly referenced in the players' comments, but it was talked about a lot leading up to the groups' decision to sit out the 2019-20 season.

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman has been unwavering in his stance that the league will not get involved while the NWHL is still in operation.

"At this point in time, we're letting the dust settle in terms of what's ultimately going to happen with the remaining existing league," Bettman said at a press conference ahead of the Stanley Cup final. "Whether or not it's appropriate for us to get involved with the league, at least starting our own league is something that not everybody agrees on from afar. It's not anything we've focused on yet."

Meanwhile, the players in the For the Game movement have established themselves as a professional association (the Professional Women's Hockey Players Association) as well as a not-for-profit. Players involved say the PWHPA was a natural progression and a necessary step for the players to stay organized and in communication during the gap year.

"Obviously, there's a ton of moving parts that are going to be taking place next year and that's why it was so important for us to establish an association that allows us to stay organized, to stay united and as well to give an opportunity for outside people who are willing to sponsor us and stand behind us," said Renata Fast, a defender for Team Canada and formerly with the CWHL's Toronto Furies.

Fast said there has been talk about NCAA colleges opening up ice time to boycotting players in their regions, as well as the Ontario Women's Hockey Association offering to help keep players in Ontario on the ice.

Shannon Szabados, a goalie who played for the Buffalo Beauts in the NWHL last season, added there have been talks about playing AAA Midget boys' teams – like Team Canada does during Olympic Centralization – and barnstorming tournaments to keep players in games and in front of fans.

"Hopefully all of those options come into play here," she said. "We are still early in the planning process. Luckily we are early into summer so we have time to carve out those exact training experiences and what they will look like, but we are hoping to keep it somewhat similar to what a normal season would look like so the girls are staying at the top of their game with practices and skills sessions every week and some kind of organized games that we will have available to the public."

These were all discussions Souliotis was privy to while a member of the movement, but they were not as compelling to her as playing in an established league.

"I just felt playing in the league was the best option for women's hockey," she said. "Playing against boys and maybe other teams in the area, college or whatever it may be would be fine, but why are



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we giving up this opportunity to grow this league that we already have?"

Despite repeated blows in the last month, the NWHL has maintained that it will continue to operate. On the heels of the boycott announcement, the Pegula Sports and Entertainment group – led by Buffalo Sabres owners Terry and Kim Pegula – decided to hand back ownership of the Buffalo Beauts franchise to the league. The New Jersey Devils dissolved their partnership with the league shortly after.

In a recent press release, the NWHL expressed positivity that it is "here and open for business." The release reiterated that the league is coming off "consecutive seasons of substantial growth" and that the salary cap increased for each team by 50 percent (from \$100,000 per team to \$150,000), along with a 50-50 revenue split from all league-level sponsorship and media deals.

The only sponsorship that has been made public is the \$100,000 from the NHL. Dunkin' Donuts has been one of the title sponsors of the league for its first four years of operation, and sources say the company is expected to return for another season.

The Athletic has learned that the Minnesota Wild will not follow the Pegulas or the Devils in severing ties with the NWHL.

"We have supported the Minnesota Whitecaps since their inception in 2004 and will continue to support women's hockey at all levels as part of our organization's mission to build a Greater State of Hockey," a spokesperson from the Wild said.

As of Monday morning, Souliotis is just one of 18 players to sign with the NWHL for next season. A source within the league told The Athletic the league expects to sign at least one player per day through the month of June, which would put it ahead of last year's signing pace.

The source, who was granted anonymity, indicated Souliotis is not the only player dealing with a change of heart. In the weeks since the May 2 announcement, league general managers and executives have been getting calls and emails from players expressing their regrets in joining the movement and asking to come back to the NWHL.

Madison Packer, who was one of the first players to re-sign with the NWHL, said she "knows for a fact" that there are players who have changed their minds both publicly and behind the scenes.

"Some people are more comfortable in the crowd, which is maybe why it was easy to join that movement to begin with," Packer said. "I think as the dust settles and more names come out and people have a little more time to really think about what they are doing right now, I think there will be more players that come back to the league."

Souliotis agreed that she could see other players following in her footsteps as they start to get a "better understanding and a better perspective that the NWHL is the best option for women's hockey."

"I never had a female athlete to look up to. Every four years you have the Olympics, but that's only for a month that you get to watch the best players in women's hockey on TV," she said.

"We have the stage, we have the league, so I think people will join. I hope they will because I think it will be another incredible season."

The Athletic LOADED: 06.11.2019

1146610 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Six teams that could emerge as Stanley Cup contenders in next three years

Rory Boylen | June 10, 2019, 1:09 PM

If you had predicted the St. Louis Blues would be Stanley Cup contenders back in December, you'd have been laughed off the internet. So as we go through a list of teams in position to possibly rise as a contender over the next three years, keep that in mind.

For this exercise we wanted to focus on teams who aren't there as a contender yet, but have the pieces in place or the flexibility to take a great stride forward in the near future. Parity is the name of the game in the NHL today and we've seen some teams take wild swings from one end of the standings to the other in short order, and sometimes — like this season — in a single stretch of 82 games. Of course, that means any team that isn't currently considered a contender could earn that distinction, but we are doing our best to identify the ones with the most optimistic outlook.

Five of the six teams listed below didn't make the playoffs this season and not all of them will likely even make it next season. Some of these teams could rise as early as 2019-20, while other may take the full three years to get there.

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.

## COLORADO AVALANCHE

They have one of the best players in the world with Nathan MacKinnon, who is behind only Connor McDavid and Nikita Kucherov in points per game average (1.26) over the past two years. But the best thing about MacKinnon may be his steal of a cap hit, which is just \$6.3 million for the next four seasons. Right now, that is the 68th-highest cap hit in the league and will surely fall more this summer. And that's just the start of Colorado's case.

The biggest piece of business this summer is to re-sign Mikko Rantanen, who is coming off a career year and is part of this loaded RFA class. On one hand he could use the leverage of the market around him to push for \$9 million or more, but on the other that MacKinnon contract could help set a frame work given the salary structure of the team.

Go back 20 months and we're looking at this Avalanche team very differently. Matt Duchene is still on the roster and Joe Sakic is trying to trade him, but it's taking a while and looking like a losing proposition for the team. The defence is a huge question mark and weakness, even after drafting Cale Makar fourth overall because he's not coming to the league right away.

But today that blue line is an organizational strength and, arguably, deeper in talent than the forward group.

Sam Girard came back in the Duchene trade and in two years has emerged as a strong skater, good puck mover and someone the Avs are excited to have in their top four moving forward. Makar arrived for the playoffs and had a terrific showing that has most thinking he'll be next year's Miro Heiskanen. Erik Johnson is signed for another four years and is the minute-eating veteran who is a more secure defensive presence. Tyson Barrie had his best NHL season in 2018-19 and it would be terrific to retain him, but the improving situation on defence opens up the possibility Sakic could sell high on Barrie to help the forward situation.



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And the Avs seem to have found their goalie to move forward with as well. Philipp Grubauer was one of the league's best backup netminders for three years in Washington before Colorado acquired him via trade for a second-round pick in 2018. And though he didn't start off all that well with the Avs, he finished strong, took the No. 1 job decisively from Semyon Varlamov, and is on the books for a bargain \$3.3 million for another two seasons.

So Colorado has a good base everywhere in the lineup and have already made two playoff appearances and won a round with it. But what sets them apart is how the bargain contracts on the books give them better flexibility to address roster weaknesses.

"It's a pretty good class this year," Sakic said of the 2019 UFA class. "Already have target players in mind, if they become available, that we're going to want to talk to about joining our club. We see some positions of need... we'll be more aggressive this year with that."

Plus, they hold two first-round picks this summer: the fourth overall and their own at 16. When one or both of those players arrive in the next one to three years that will be another cheap entry-level deal or two potentially providing a healthy diet of depth production. And again, that 16th pick could be used in trade to help right away.

## MONTREAL CANADIENS

This is another GM who's seen the perception around him radically change over the past year. The negativity surrounding Marc Bergevin really started with the P.K. Subban trade in 2016 and snowballed with the handling of Max Pacioretty, who was finally dealt in September following a full season of speculation.

At the time, the direction of the Canadiens was very unclear. Following two division titles and a trip to the conference final in Bergevin's first three years at the helm, the Habs seemed to be taking a distinct step back from the outset of the Subban trade and have missed the post-season three out of the past four years. But now that outlook is starting to become a little more focused and though their route to contending isn't as obvious as Colorado's and may be more arduous given the division they're in, Montreal could be tracking to get there in a few more seasons.

Without a big-money, star forward it really all hinges on Carey Price, whose \$10.5-million AAV dictates he be the crux of Montreal's push back to contender status. Between the soon-to-be 32-year-old Price and 34-year-old Weber combining for \$18.357 million, the Habs' cap picture isn't as pretty as Colorado's, but it's still very manageable. And there could be a better collection of young players here than previously assumed, which makes the cap potentially even less of a concern.

We won't predict that Ryan Poehling will keep up his 246-goal pace following a hat trick debut that closed out the regular season, but that was one heck of a start for a player named the WJC's best forward this past winter. Between Poehling, Nick Suzuki and Jesperi Kotkaniemi the Habs look to have the centre depth they've been craving under Bergevin, not to mention Max Domi, who had a career-best 28 goals and 72 points at the position this season.

Alexander 'The Czar' Romanov was named the best defenceman at this year's WJC and his stock has sky-rocketed since being a second-round pick last summer. Victor Mete averaged nearly 20 minutes per game in the final two and a half months and will likely cross that mark before long. He and 22-year-old Noah Juulsen only have one more year until their ELCs expire, but defencemen generally get bridge contracts on their second deals and neither should carry an unmanageable cost for a while.

The big questions over the next few years are what Domi (RFA next summer) and Brendan Gallagher (UFA in 2021) will cost on their next extensions. Gallagher will be interesting given he has the leverage to leave on his own in two years and is top 10 league-wide in even-strength goals the past two seasons. And if Domi puts up 72 points again as a centre next season, the topic of his next AAV will be a hot one, and the bar for it could be set by this summer's strong RFA crop.

At this juncture it is very important for Montreal to get production and good minutes from its youngest, cheapest players — the ones who will be on entry-level deals over the next few years. If that comes to fruition, it would give Bergevin freedom to look at moving on from others making \$3 million or more (Paul Byron, Andrew Shaw) to shave off some more room.

It's generally true for all successful teams that they find production from less expensive players, but in Montreal's case they already have significant money tied up in two ageing players. You can only give out those kinds of cap hits to so many players, and they've already used up two of those slots. The possibility of adding Erik Karlsson would make three. But you can see the roadmap is there for Montreal to climb back to being a contender under Bergevin, which would have been laughable even 12 months ago.

## FLORIDA PANTHERS

When Florida finished the 2017-18 season on a 24-8-2 tear, but just missed the playoffs, it seemed this season may be the one the team turned a corner. But Roberto Luongo got injured in the very first game and goaltending was a problem all season long so they never fully got going.

And yet the Panthers head into the summer full of optimism again. It starts with the addition of Joel Quenneville as head coach, who should bring stability to a position that has employed six different people since 2013. They have a base of two solid centres in Aleksander Barkov and Vincent Trocheck, a pair of 30-goal wingers in Mike Hoffman and Jonathan Huberdeau, another 70-point scorer in Evgeni Dadonov, and a couple strong lead blueliners in Aaron Ekblad and Mike Matheson.

But what really takes them over the top is the potential to land both Sergei Bobrovsky and Artemi Panarin.

Adding Panarin would give GM Dale Tallon the option to use his strength at forward to trade someone like Hoffman (one year away from being a UFA) for a top-four blueliner, and give them a new "best winger" for the top line. Arguably, getting Bobrovsky is more important, since without him it's hard to see how Florida would get into the contender conversation with a ton of uncertainty in net.

The Panthers' strength up front looks like it'll get even stronger in the future even if they don't get Panarin. Each of their first two picks in 2017 and 2018 are tracking for NHL spots if not next season, then the one after. Owen Tippett nearly made the team out of camp this season and returned to junior where he scored 74 points in 54 games. Aleksii Heponiemi was the second-highest scorer on his Finnish Liiga team and led that league in rookie scoring. He also, along with Panthers 2018 first-rounder Grigori Denisenko, led the WJC with nine points. And Serron Noel specifically was named by Quenneville as a prospect he was excited about when I asked him about the prospects on this team.

For now, their two highest-paid players are defencemen Ekblad (\$7.5 million through 2025) and Keith Yandle (\$6.35 million through 2023). Huberdeau, Barkov and Trocheck all come in under \$6 million for at least the next three seasons. The Atlantic Division figures to be a meat grinder with Tampa Bay, Toronto and Boston all set up to be



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factors already, plus Florida and Montreal (and maybe Detroit and Buffalo?) quickly on the way up.

## NEW YORK RANGERS

It was just last season when, heading towards the trade deadline, the New York Rangers sent a letter to their fans that basically threw in the towel on the season and set the table for a rebuild. Now, while there is more work to do than any of the other teams on this list, you can see how this might start coming together rather fast.

The Rangers have made five first-round picks in the past two drafts and have another two to use this summer — their own at No. 2 and Winnipeg's at 20. They'll get one of Kaapo Kakko or Jack Hughes with their own and that player will instantly become the best in the pipeline and likely will be a part of next year's team.

As far as their 2017 picks go, Filip Chytil just completed his first full NHL season with 11 goals and 23 points low in the lineup. Lias Andersson didn't stick with the big club and has struggled against NHL competition, but at least some of that could be him adjusting to the North American game.

Two defencemen — K'Andre Miller and Nils Lundkvist — were among the three first-rounders last summer and will likely take a little longer to develop, but forward Vitali Kravtsov signed his entry-level deal in May and will be at training camp this fall with a chance to crack the roster. Kravtsov finished as the highest-scoring under-20 player in the KHL last season.

"He came in, I think it was yesterday, he's gonna be here for the duration, he's gonna learn the language because he doesn't speak English that well. I like that," new team president John Davidson said upon being hired by the Rangers. "He's gonna come in and work with people that can teach him conditioning, teach him nutrition, there's a guy that sounds pretty darn committed."

As a condition in their trade with Dallas, if Mats Zuccarello signs an extension with the Stars the Rangers will pick up their first-rounder in 2020, and leave them with multiple picks in the round for a fourth consecutive year. And this is where the Rangers' candidacy to contend gets interesting: How many of these picks and prospects could/would they use to acquire experienced NHLers?

Their cap space is wide open. Only Mika Zibanejad and Brady Skjei are signed to post-ELC deals beyond 2020-21 and talk is picking up that the Rangers could start throwing some money around again. They're among the teams rumoured to be interested in Panarin this summer and have a projected \$41 million in room next summer with Chris Kreider as the top player in need of a new contract. They maybe don't have the star power of Colorado or the settled salary structure of the Panthers, but the Rangers have the closest thing to a blank slate of any team on this list with a solid stable of futures to work it with.

And who's driving the ship to get them there? GM Jeff Gorton was instrumental in building the Bruins, helping sign Zdeno Chara, draft Brad Marchand and trade for Tuukka Rask as the interim GM before Peter Chiarelli could officially join the club. And Davidson is now the new team president after helping build up a Columbus organization that became a tough out under a budget.

New York will loosen the purse strings a lot more in all areas of the organization and in the hands of these two, the Rangers are going to be one heck of an interesting team to keep an eye on.

## EDMONTON OILERS

I'm doing it. I'm listing the listless Oilers.

Look, when you have arguably the best player in the world who could go off for 120 points or more any given season, you have the potential to rise as a contender. And having Leon Draisaitl as either a 2C or a linemate for Connor McDavid is a great thing, too.

There are certainly issues. Goaltending is one, but given what we saw from the likes of Robin Lehner and Petr Mrazek this season, with a better defensive structure the Oilers could find an affordable UFA goalie who surprises. GM Ken Holland has to clean up some of the wasted cap space and that is the biggest challenge for the team right now.

Dave Tippett behind the bench is a potential game changer. He improved the Dallas Stars by 21 points in his first year with them, and the Coyotes went up 28 points when he first landed there. Tippett should finally bring some needed long-term security to the position in Edmonton, but also has a long history of getting more out of his teams than the roster makeup would suggest was possible.

There is no doubt the Oilers have a lack of scoring support on the wings and need to figure that out. Perhaps Jesse Puljujarvi or Kailer Yamamoto ends up being the answer there, but this should be a realistically acquirable piece of the roster. In the meantime, don't overpay to keep a career year from someone like Alex Chiasson — search for UFA bargains or small trades to find a player or two potentially capable of playing and producing alongside McDavid and Draisaitl. And, heck, you've got the eighth-overall pick this summer that you can either trade for a player, or use to pick someone like Kirby Dach, Peyton Krebs or even USNTDP all-time goal scoring leader Cole Caufield.

And Edmonton's defence may actually be better than advertised. Oscar Klefbom was one of two Oilers defencemen who was on the ice for more 5-on-5 shots for than against and is still only 25 and two years removed from a healthy, solid season. Andrej Sekera was the other blueliner with positive shot measures and though he's only played 60 games the past two seasons combined, he did just have a terrific World Championship and a little luck in the health department could see him have a similar late-career, post-injury resurgence that Andrei Markov did with Montreal.

Evan Bouchard is coming and may be a factor as early as next season. Darnell Nurse had a great season at 24 and is still only getting better. The Oilers' top four could end up being solid, plus Caleb Jones or Ethan Bear could be decent young depth, and OHLer Dmitri Samorukov is coming off his own solid season so he could be a part of this all in a couple years.

The base is there and Tippett should give it a boost, but it all comes down to what Holland does in the GM chair. A fresh set of eyes with all his experience, plus the freedom to do what he needs can inspire confidence that Edmonton could quickly rise back to contender status before long.

## PHILADELPHIA FLYERS

If you were to make a list of teams that are the best candidates to make substantial change this summer, the Flyers would be on it. After pushing for patience when he was hired as GM in December, Chuck Fletcher has work to do with pressure from up top to get back into the playoffs. The good thing about his position is he has a lot of options.

Shayne Gostisbehere is the name most often heard on the trade block and although he had a soft season offensively (37 points in 78 games) he was still Philadelphia's top point producer on the back end. He's in his prime at 26, though, and has another four years left on a deal with a \$4.5-million cap hit. If he does get traded, you can bet the Flyers will get a solid return.



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The Flyers also have a lot of cap space this summer and more opens in 2020 when Andrew MacDonald's \$5-million cap hit finally comes off the books. RFAs Travis Konecny and Ivan Provorov and newly acquired UFA Kevin Hayes are the biggest free agents here, though keeping Hayes after picking up his rights would be a bonus at this point. Those two RFAs should be big parts of this roster moving forward — and although Provorov struggled in his contract season, make no mistake that he could very well be a Norris candidate down the line.

"I think we're going to be very aggressive in the trade and free agent markets in the sense of looking into every possible situation that can help us." <https://t.co/7XqKV6PrH>

— Philadelphia Flyers (@NHLFlyers) June 1, 2019

Just look up and down this roster and definitively say the potential pieces aren't there. The top six is solid and gets better if Hayes sticks. Nolan Patrick hasn't lived up to potential yet, but he'll only be 21 when the puck drops on next season so there's plenty of time. They pick 11th overall later this month, which could be used to pick up another good prospect, or flipped for immediate help. This is the main reason why the Flyers could emerge as a contender in the coming years — they have a good base from which to start and all sorts of flexibility to improve. What they do this off-season and next will be vital.

"We are aggressively looking in the trade market now," Fletcher told NHL.com. "At the right time, we'll certainly speak to every agent for a lot of free agents and see if there's a fit, see if there's players that want to come to Philly and if there's the right fit for our club. The good thing is we've got the assets and the cap space, and sometime in the near future, we'll make some good things happen, and hopefully sooner rather than later."

Even with all that, the one player that puts them over the top in this regard is Carter Hart. The Flyers have struggled to find sturdy netminding since either Ron Hextall or Bernie Parent, depending on your outlook — but either way it's been decades. Hart won the WHL's top goaltender award three years in a row, but it was still somewhat surprising to see him first struggle in the AHL as a rookie pro, but then excel when he was promoted to the NHL anyway. He had a .917 save percentage in 31 games and should only get better from here. It's an element this franchise hasn't had in a while and given he's arrived earlier than anticipated, you could argue it makes Philadelphia's window more immediate.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.11.2019

1146611 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Ville Nieminen has seen both sides of Game 7 in Stanley Cup Final

Chris Johnston | June 10, 2019, 5:06 PM

BOSTON — Fifteen years on, Ville Nieminen still thinks about what he could have done differently. His idle thoughts are a reflection of the emotional stamp every Game 7 in the Stanley Cup Final leaves on its participants.

Nieminen's playing career included a championship — captured in a Game 7 with Colorado in 2001, no less — but he still wonders about

the one that got away a couple years later while he was a depth winger with the Calgary Flames.

More to the point, Nieminen agonizes over how he might better have used his 10 and a half minutes of ice time during a 2-1 loss to the Tampa Bay Lightning in a winner-take-all game for the 2004 Cup Final.

"Yeah. I remember," he says now. "I wasn't at my best. I still know what I did wrong."

Nieminen believes the moment simply got the best of him. After playing an effective 18 minutes and registering an assist in Game 6 for Calgary, his mind raced in the leadup to the game you dream about most as a kid.

It's an inclination some members of the Boston Bruins and St. Louis Blues will have to fight before playing their own Game 7 at TD Garden on Wednesday night. There's a lot of time to think now.

For Nieminen, it came from a good place.

He wanted so badly to do well that his racing mind kept his natural instincts from kicking in. When he got on the ice, there was too much hesitation to his game.

"I was a little shy to go for it," said Nieminen. "I wasn't at my best because I was a hockey romantic. I was romanticizing, I think, a little too much of Game 7s and what's going to happen, how this is going to end, what I'm going to do."

"That's probably because the whole winning the Stanley Cup and the whole NHL was so big of a thing for me growing up, and I really didn't have the tools how to prepare for Game 7s."

Preparing for one with a title on the line at the end of a 100-plus game season is particularly daunting. This remains a sport played with rubber on ice and the outcome isn't always going to be fair.

Weird things can and will happen.

"It's just going to come down to bounces and calls, I think," Bruins forward Brad Marchand said recently. "That's how these things normally play out."

Take Nieminen's Flames, for example.

They were oh-so-close to ending a Canadian championship drought that exists to this day. Martin Gelinis appeared to score what could have been a Cup-clinching goal for them late in Game 6, but there was no conclusive replay available to count it. Then, after losing in overtime, they had to go on the road for Game 7 and got beaten by one.

"It was a long road we skated," said Nieminen. "Tampa Bay was a really good team. They had star players who carried the load."

"Tampa Bay had just a little bit better players to make a difference."

Nieminen is now a promising head coach for Pelicans in the Finnish Liiga and has been serving as the colour commentator for the Finnish language Viasat broadcast at this Stanley Cup Final.

Watching the Bruins and Blues grind towards a seventh game has brought back memories from his own Stanley Cup experiences — both of which saw the road team win a Game 6 before taking Game 7 on home ice.

As much as he admires the Blues' game, he believes it will be extremely difficult for them to get up off the mat after squandering an opportunity to close out the series at Enterprise Center on Sunday night.

Now they have to try and get the job done in hostile territory.



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"You're f—ing alone there," said Nieminen. "There's only 20 guys versus 20,000."

"The good thing is that they have a good road team, good road record," he added. "They have only one plan how they play hockey and it almost got them through. They had a 14-9 lead in scoring chances for the first two periods [in Game 6] and they let it slip away.

"They just have to play their own game as good as they can. They will have a shot, but they have to believe. The Blues need to have a killer instinct right off the bat."

That mindset is reflected in the advice he'd offer anyone preparing for a game as big as this one.

"Make sure you're anticipating, you're going. Do not think," he said. "Even if you feel tired, you're scared or you're too excited or you're too nervous — everything — f—, keep playing. Get involved, keep skating, keep moving. Do not stand still, do not watch."

The 42-year-old has experienced both ends of the spectrum in the biggest Game 7 of them all. His 2001 Avs Stanley Cup ring now resides at the Finnish Hockey Hall of Fame in his hometown of Tampere, but that doesn't keep him from thinking about the second one he never got.

"Winning and losing," said Nieminen. "It's part of the story."

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Sportsnet.ca / Unresolved contracts for Edler, Boeser complicate Canucks' offseason plan

Iain MacIntyre | June 10, 2019, 5:48 PM

VANCOUVER — Fortright about the need to improve his defence, Vancouver Canucks general manager Jim Benning has been searching for another blue-liner since the regular season ended.

But the closer he gets to National Hockey League free agency on July 1, the more likely it is that Benning will need at least two defencemen. And finding someone to upgrade the bottom of the blue line will be much easier than replacing top defenceman Alexander Edler if the career Canuck leaves as an unrestricted free agent in three weeks.

During a week-before-the-draft meeting with Vancouver reporters on Monday, Benning said he continues to talk to agent Mark Stowe about a contract that will satisfy Edler's desire — and the team's — that he finish his career with the Canucks.

Beyond that, Benning refused to provide any details about the apparently-stalled negotiations involving the 33-year-old.

But when asked about the possibility of a deal longer than two years encumbering the Canucks during the 2021 Seattle expansion draft, especially if Vancouver is required to protect Edler when he is 35 years old, Benning told Sportsnet:

"I think it's fair to say we don't have the appetite to do that. We had to do that last time (during the Las Vegas expansion draft in 2017) with Daniel and Henrik Sedin. But we're going to have some good young players that we need to protect or we'll lose them."

Stowe did not respond last week to Sportsnet's interview requests, so for now neither side is revealing details about negotiations.

The shadows behind the curtains, however, appear to show a player and his agent getting ready to go to market to see how much money is available on July 1.

That's how the NHL's free-market system works. And in a lean year for free-agent defencemen, Edler will be one of the most coveted on the market, capable of leveraging a big payday.

There's nothing wrong with that. Except it seems to contradict the many times Edler said how much he wants to remain with the Canucks and indicated that money would not be the driving factor in his next contract.

After refusing at the trade deadline in February to waive the no-trade clause on his expiring, six-year, \$30-million contract, Edler said he was willing to work with the Canucks on an extension.

"I've been fortunate to have very good contracts with money," he said on March 2. "But there are other things, too. It's different when you have a family. There are a lot of factors you have to take into consideration. Those things are important."

Edler has spent his entire 12-year NHL career with the Canucks and is the franchise's all-time leading scorer among defencemen with 94 goals and 368 points in 814 games. He met his wife in Vancouver and this is the only home the couple's two daughters know.

"Maybe I'm just a loyal guy who wants to play here and wants to live here and win here," Edler said in March. "I know that doesn't always happen because the business doesn't work out all the time. I understand that. But I've been treated well by this organization and city, and I've had some special moments here. Going through some tough years, that's never fun. But the future looks better, and it would be pretty special to be part of that."

Edler can still get his wish. But if he wants a full-market deal with a no-movement clause, he'll have to take his family somewhere else to get it, which would look like a lose-lose for both Edler and the Canucks.

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

- Having had a few days to compose himself and draw his jaw back to the closed position, Benning didn't flinch when asked Monday what effect Jeff Skinner's massive, \$72-million extension with the Buffalo Sabres might have on future negotiations involving Canuck players.

Benning is trying to re-sign restricted free agent Brock Boeser "sooner rather than later," but may see the asking price go up after the Sabres agreed to pay \$9-million per season to a player who scored a career-high 40 goals last year but has averaged only 52 points during his eight full NHL seasons.

Benning correctly noted that Skinner, 27, was an impending UFA while the Canucks "control" Boeser, the 22-year-old RFA. But all contracts matter, including massive ones coming soon for Toronto Maple Leafs RFA Mitch Marner, 22, and Calgary Flames free agent Mathew Tkachuk, 21.

"Those guys signing could affect Brock's contract, but we're more concerned about our own business and trying to figure something out for Brock that makes sense for him and the team," Benning said.

- There is always a good deal of smoke swirling around the Canucks, and Benning added to the smudge when he said he'll be



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contacting winger Loui Eriksson this week to ask about comments attributed to the Swede during last month's world championships.

In an interview with website HockeySverige that was reported on the West Coast through Google-translate, Eriksson was quoted as saying of Canuck coach Travis Green: "The coach and I don't really get on 100 per cent. It is difficult when I do not get the same trust that I received from all the other coaches I've had during my career."

Eriksson, 33, has scored only 32 goals in three seasons since signing a front-loaded, bonus-heavy \$36-million six-year contract with the Canucks in 2016. He was a healthy scratch once for the Canucks last season, but Green has trusted Eriksson in a shutdown role and as a key penalty killer.

Benning didn't rule out the possibility that Eriksson may need a fresh start elsewhere, and there have been unsettling rumours of a possible trade involving the Edmonton Oilers' Milan Lucic, who has been an even bigger disappointment since signing a seven-year, \$42-million deal the same day the Canucks signed Eriksson.

Stay tuned.

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Sportsnet.ca / Tom Anselmi hire opens doors beyond hockey in Edmonton

Mark Spector | June 10, 2019, 4:34 PM

EDMONTON — The Oilers Entertainment Group has always wanted to be like MLSE — Maple Leafs Sports and Entertainment — or perhaps even bigger.

So it seemed an obvious question when Tom Anselmi, who once guided MLSE and has signed on as the President, Business Operations and COO in Edmonton, was asked, "When are you bringing in an NBA team?"

"Uh, my guess is it's going to be a little while here. But who knows?" he responded.

We get it — Edmonton is never going to be Toronto, with the Raptors, the Blue Jays, and those constant, nagging National Football League aspirations. But this little prairie berg has always had greater success than Toronto at hosting one-off events like the World Track and Field Championships, World Figure Skating Championships, and games for our national soccer teams.

The dream is to get back to the forefront in Edmonton, so last weekend while in Spain at the UEFA Champions League final, OEG's Bob Nicholson sat down for a chat with the Chairman of Wanda Group — the Beijing-based, multinational corporation that owns a piece of Atletico Madrid. Wanda also owns the marketing company with the TV rights for all FIFA events from 2015-22 — including two World Cups — and many other valuable sports properties worldwide.

Nicholson, who will pass most of his operational duties to Anselmi's desk, as he becomes the Oilers' Chairman, is in charge of getting Edmonton back in the international sporting game, and taking the OEG brand abroad as well.

"There's UFC. There's soccer..." Nicholson began. "Everyone knows Daryl Katz, and this will give us a chance to grow that vision again.

"We want to look at what we can do in Edmonton, but make no mistake: We're looking a lot bigger than Edmonton for where we might take that reach," Nicholson said. "We want to be a global leader in sports and entertainment. It's about the Oilers — that's why Daryl got involved — but you can see what he's done to the city here. Now that he's starting to see that dream (unfold), he'd like to take it to a much more global vision."

Still, this is a hockey town. So getting the Oilers up off their knees is priority No. 1. New hire Ken Holland is in charge of the on-ice side of that equation, with Anselmi responsible for the rest. His resume includes being the CEO in Toronto, GM of Arena Operations in Vancouver, and opening Rogers Centre where the Blue Jays play.

"I've opened a bunch of buildings, and it takes a few years to get the kinks out and figure it out," Anselmi said of Rogers Place, which will open its fourth NHL season in October. "Hopefully we can take where we're at and make it better. Make the team better, the experience better, the food and beverage better... And while we're doing that, we can have start thinking about how to grow the business.

"We're in a league that allows you to share and steal all the best ideas, so we've got to make sure we're doing the best of everything. We've got all the technology here to do whatever we want to do."

Think about it.

Edmonton is small, with a metro population of just over a million people. But it's got the newest major arena in Canada, the best hockey player in Canada, Commonwealth Stadium, and an emerging Ice District with room to host an OEG version of Jurassic Park that is at least twice the size of the area outside Scotiabank Arena in Toronto.

Meanwhile, the arena in Calgary is well past its due date, and Vancouver is not that far behind.

"Every (concert) tour plays Montreal and Toronto and maybe Vancouver," Anselmi said. "After that, you've got to work hard to make yourself be great. We've got a great building, so they do want to play here."

You want some pie in the sky ideas?

How about a deal that sees the Raptors here every pre-season? How about a new, domed stadium that seats 35,000? Could OEG help the Eskimos and the CFL? Undoubtedly, they could.

Winnipeg gets an NFL pre-season game this year? Why not here next?

A World Cup of Hockey partially played out West? Why not?

The possibilities are endless, as is Katz' desire to drive a global brand. But it starts with the hockey team, and as you can see this spring, whatever was wrong with "the water" here, they're doing everything that can to change out the plumbing.

And the plumbers.

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TSN.CA / Cassidy's Game 7 playbook already written

Travis Yost

Nine months removed from the opening of the 2018-19 regular season, we need one last day to decide this year's Stanley Cup champion.

The Boston Bruins forced a Game 7 with one of their most impressive road performances of the playoffs in a 5-1 victory over St. Louis on Sunday. Five different skaters – Brad Marchand, Brandon Carlo, David Pastrnak, Karson Kuhlman, and the ageless Zdeno Chara – scored for the Bruins, while Conn Smythe favourite Tuukka Rask stopped 28 of 29 shots to keep the Blues attack at bay.

Now the Bruins return home, which should prove advantageous for myriad reasons. They get to play in front of a raucous Bruins crowd at TD Garden, a place where Boston has won a whopping 68 per cent of games this season. Just as interesting: head coach Bruce Cassidy will get control of the matchups, which he has used to his advantage all season long.

Out of curiosity, I went and pulled all of the matchup and usage data from Boston's three home games in this series to see how Cassidy has thought about his lineup's deployment against St. Louis in the past. Running through the data, there are clearly some matchups Cassidy has prioritized.

The below table shows percentage a Boston player's total minutes head-to-head against a given player from the St. Louis side:

One data point that jumps off of the page to me is how Boston is handling the vaunted Vladimir Tarasenko-Brayden Schenn-Jaden Schwartz line. The Blues' top unit has been on fire all postseason and has been the one line that has given Boston some real trouble in the series, as you would expect.

The Bruins are basically throwing two combinations of five-man units at this group when they have last change. The first is the Marchand-Patrice Bergeron-Pastrnak line, anchored by Chara and Charlie McAvoy. In the event that the Boston shutdown line isn't available for use, the Bruins have been leaning on the Noel Acciari-Joakim Nordstrom -Sean Kuraly line in front of the aforementioned Chara and McAvoy pairing.

It's impossible to completely shut down the Tarasenko line (true for any team!), but the Bruins have mitigated the damage they've done in the series. A lot of that is because they have been effective in spots – save for a bit of a debacle in Game 2 – at keeping the Tarasenko line on the perimeter.

If you look at the series to date, the Tarasenko line has managed about 56 per cent of the shots while on the ice at 5-on-5, but scoring chances (51 per cent) and expected goals (49 per cent) are much closer to break-even. And all in, they have been on the ice for just four goals and a plus-two goal advantage. They've been successful, but it's not the type of series-changing performance that we've seen from this line in recent history.

Boston focusing on the matching St. Louis' top line creates other natural matchups further down the lineup. The Charlie Coyle-Danton Heinen-Marcus Johansson line has seen a healthy serving of the David Perron and Ryan O'Reilly tandem (this duo has played with a mix of Sammy Blais, Zach Sanford and even Tyler Bozak; anchored predominantly by Brandon Carlo and Torey Krug). That has left the Jake DeBrusk-David Krejci-David Backes grouping – along with the Boston's third pairing – to take on Alex Steen's line.

I suspect both the Bruins and Blues are comfortable from a matchup perspective because both teams are considerably deep and have shown that they are willing to regularly play all four lines. But for a head coach with home ice, the chess game tends to start with taking the other team's strongest firepower out of the equation. For Boston, that means throwing your best two-way tandems and possession-dominant players against a dangerous St. Louis line that only needs a handful of opportunities in a game to find the score sheet.

There are many storylines to follow heading into what should be a highly entertaining, winner-take-all Game 7 on Wednesday night, but how Boston attempts to take St. Louis' best line out of the equation may be the most fascinating. If you study the three previous Boston home games in the series, it would seem the playbook has already been written.

Enjoy the season finale!

Expected Goal Data via Natural Stat Trick

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