



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

## THE NEWS & OBSERVER

### Hurricanes name Jeff Daniels assistant coach

By Chip Alexander

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Raleigh

Jeff Daniels is no stranger to the Carolina Hurricanes bench, having played and coached for the Canes in the past.

He's also happy to be going back behind it.

The Hurricanes announced Monday that Daniels, 49, has been named an assistant coach for new head coach Rod Brind'Amour, completing the coaching staff. Assistant coach Steve Smith and goaltending coach Mike Bales return from last year's staff under former coach Bill Peters.

Daniels has been serving as a director of pro scouting for the Hurricanes, and said he will continue in the short term to assist general manager Don Waddell as the Canes assess players who may be available, either through trades or free-agent signings.

"I really enjoyed the scouting part of it," Daniels said Monday. "I got a chance to watch the game differently. But I always said you miss being in the fire, that competition."

"When you're in it, it's stressful with the ups and downs. You get out of it and you miss that. You miss the competition and competing to win and game-planning and all that. Being at meetings recently and watching Roddy (Brind'Amour) prepare for the job and listening to him talk got me excited."

Soon after Peters announced he was resigning as coach, leaving after four years to become head coach of the Calgary Flames, Brind'Amour publicly stated he wanted to be considered for the head-coaching job. Brind'Amour had been a Canes assistant for seven years, first under Kirk Muller and then Peters, and believed he was ready to take the step up and be a head coach for the first time.

Brind'Amour talked to several candidates for the assistant's job, but Daniels was always high on the list. The two were teammates on the 2002 Hurricanes team that reached the Stanley Cup final, and Daniels an assistant on the 2006 Stanley Cup champions captained by Brind'Amour.

The two have experienced the highs of the sport -- Daniels won a Stanley Cup as a player with the Pittsburgh Penguins in 1992. Both are determined to pull the Canes out of the rut that has seen the team miss the playoffs nine straight years.

"I've talked with Roddy and this is kind of personal for us," Daniels said. "We've seen it when the team has done well and we want to get back to that."

Asked why Brind'Amour should make a good head coach, Daniels said, "Right away, the respect. I think that's the key. He's got the respect of the players from what he did during his career but also the respect from guys watching him work, day in and day out, as an assistant."

"They know he's an extremely hard worker. They know he's not going to ask them to do anything he didn't do when he played. He'll be fair with them and honest with them. Bottom line, you need everybody to buy into what Roddy will be selling and everybody on the same page."

Daniels said he gained invaluable experience in being a head coach at the American Hockey League level, guiding the Canes' AHL affiliates in Albany, N.Y., and then Charlotte from 2008 to 2015. He had a seven-year record of 268-225-51.

"No matter what level, you have more responsibility, you have the final say," Daniels said. "You get feedback from other coaches but as the head coach you have to make the decisions. There's a lot of interaction with players, meetings and stuff."

"It helps you grow as a coach. As much as you think you know what's going on, something's always going to come up you haven't dealt with before. At that level, it's no different than as a player. You're down there to learn and learn from your mistakes and try different things."

Daniels said he's not sure yet about his duties with the Canes. Brind'Amour, for example, handled the power play for Peters. But all that will be sorted out.

"I'm totally in, and whatever he wants me to do I'll be on-board to do," Daniels said.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

## Goalies, trades, Russians ... Seven predictions for the Hurricanes' offseason

By Luke DeCock

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With the Stanley Cup awarded – a full 60 percent of the former Southeast Division has now won it – the NHL offseason begins in earnest, with the draft only 12 days away and free agency queued up right behind that. So far, the Carolina Hurricanes haven't done much, but that should start changing shortly.

With that in mind, here are seven predictions for the rest of the Canes' offseason:

### 1. Not everyone is going to get traded, but Jeff Skinner probably will.

Despite the "everyone must go" headlines, only Skinner is likely to get moved. The message to the rest of the NHL that everyone but Sebastian Aho was available was, as speculated elsewhere, more of an attempt to get a sense of everyone's value than it was an attempt to turn over the entire roster.

Skinner has been identified as the player who would most benefit from a change of scenery, is most easily replaced and still has some trade value despite only one year left on his contract. It's just a question of whether anyone meets the Hurricanes' price at this point.

Justin Faulk could probably benefit as much from a change of scenery – and may also face the embarrassment of being demoted out of the (co-)captaincy – but the odds of finding a right-shot defenseman who can play the kind of minutes he does are slim. So the Hurricanes will instead hope that new coach Rod Brind'Amour will be able to get Faulk back on the path to stardom he looked like he was on earlier in his career. If he can, these past few years will be forgotten.

As a left-shot defenseman, Noah Hanifin is more tradeable, but it would take a big package to get him.

### 2. Justin Williams is the Hurricanes' next captain.

Brind'Amour hasn't exactly been shy about this, even if he hasn't come right out and said it, so it's just a matter of time before Williams gets the "C" officially. There should be a spot in the leadership group for Jordan Staal, who did a commendable job as co-captain under difficult circumstances. The real question is whether Aho is ready for his inevitable leadership role or would be better off shielded from that for now.

### 3. Scott Darling will still be here in the fall and Cam Ward will not.

That's probably not how anyone wants it, but the combination of Darling's bloated contract and an understandable unwillingness to bring both goalies back after a miserable season is likely to leave Ward out in the cold – a shame, since last season he showed that he's a good fit, mentally and physically, as a No. 2 at this point in his career.

The financial window that would enable the Hurricanes to return Darling to the Chicago Blackhawks is probably a year away, so the Hurricanes will hope that Darling can get fit and technically sound enough to contribute, perhaps even as the starter they thought he could be last summer. If not, they'll bury him in Charlotte until they can unload his contract. This much is clear: If he plays like he did last year, he won't be given second, third and fourth chances again.

With some serious competition in the goalie market, [it's anyone's guess who the other half of the tandem will be on Opening Night](#) in October.

### 4. The Hurricanes will take Andrei Svechnikov with the second pick – and might not be done.

While the Hurricanes would absolutely move down within the top six or seven picks if they got a huge return for the No. 2 pick, that would require another NHL team liking Svechnikov exponentially more than the Hurricanes do. [The more the Hurricanes get to know Svechnikov, the more they like him.](#) So it's almost impossible to imagine any team parting with enough starpower to make that deal – and most of the teams in the top seven don't have those assets anyway.

What will be more interesting is if the Hurricanes try to move back into the top dozen or so picks if one of the players they like is still there. The Edmonton Oilers' No. 10 pick is reportedly in play and the Hurricanes might have the materials to make that deal. A bit of history: Fifteen years ago, after taking Eric Staal at No. 2, the Hurricanes tried (and failed) to trade back into the first round to take the top player still on their board, Zach Parise. Lou Lamoriello got there first.

### 5. The Hurricanes will take a run at another Russian, but it's a long shot.

Ilya Kovalchuk has already visited a few NHL teams as he prepares for an imminent return from Russia and the Hurricanes don't have much to pitch the 35-year-old free agent now. But if they're able to add a goalie before July 1 and Kovalchuk is willing to take a two-year deal (he's allegedly looking, at the moment, for three years at \$6 million per), the Hurricanes will make a dark-horse run at him.

Kovalchuk played for general manager Don Waddell with the Atlanta Thrashers and the Hurricanes hope some combination of Kovalchuk's relationship with Waddell and a young team ready to take a leap forward would be an attractive proposition, but there's not much of a blueprint for success to show Kovalchuk as long as Darling is still No. 1 on the depth chart.

### 6. Chuck Kaiton will still be around, in some capacity.

Kaiton's contract negotiations are less about shoving the beloved broadcaster aside and more about the economics of radio. Depending on who you ask, the Hurricanes only have somewhere between 500 and 2,000 people listening to the radio broadcast on any given night. It's cheaper to buy all those people partial season tickets than it is to pay Kaiton and subsidize a broadcast that loses money for the team.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

If you're not near a TV now, you can watch or listen on your phone. Score updates pop up automatically. Radio just isn't as important as it once was, and a television simulcast can serve essentially the same purpose. When Kaiton took a one-year deal last summer instead of two-year deals like television broadcasters John Forslund and Tripp Tracy, it moved this reckoning up a year. It was coming, regardless.

Kaiton is a franchise icon and he's not ready to retire, so there's motivation for both sides to find some common ground where he stays on the air and with the team in some way, shape or form.

## 7. Without some kind of a \*big\* move, Dundon will start to run out of political capital with fans.

So far, a lot of what Dundon has done are things any new owner would or could have done, whether that's firing Ron Francis, reexamining radio, promoting Brind'Amour, winning the second pick in the draft lottery or putting [Hartford Whalers gear on sale](#).

Even the team's new employee health-care contribution – the first in the franchise's history, amounting to a \$6,000 pay cut for employees with families – was in the works before Peter Karmanos sold the team, as unpopular as it is with a

staff that isn't exactly generously compensated for the irregular hours it works. (Professional sports, like journalism, tends to draw people who are interested in less tangible rewards.)

With Glen Wesley's contract as director of defenseman development not being renewed, Dundon has cut ties to two of the three men whose numbers hang in the rafters – while elevating the third to head coach – and may do the same to the Hall of Fame radio guy. That's Dundon's prerogative, but it's going to leave a sour taste if it isn't followed with success on the ice, especially since Waddell was an extremely unpopular general-manager hire given his lack of previous success with the Thrashers. The other two front-office hires, Rick Dudley and Paul Krepelka, probably didn't get the positive reaction they deserved because of that.

Dundon promised to do things differently, and while that's been true in some areas, the Hurricanes are still the same team that ended last season so dismally. Drafting Svechnikov will help, but that won't be enough; the Hurricanes still need to make some kind of a splash to indicate this isn't just another Francis-style draft-and-hope offseason.



## Hurricanes bring back Daniels as assistant coach

### Former Carolina player was an assistant on Peter Laviolette's staff during 2006 Cup season

[June 11, 2018 Cory Lavalette](#)

RALEIGH — Jeff Daniels, who has spent the past 21 seasons in the Carolina Hurricanes organization as a player, assistant, AHL coach and scout, will join former teammate Rod Brind'Amour as an assistant on the first-time coach's staff.

Daniels, 49, was an assistant coach on the Hurricanes' 2006 Stanley Cup-winning team captained by Brind'Amour, and both reached the Cup Final in 2002 as teammates.

"Jeff has served as a head coach in the American Hockey League, and of course won the ultimate prize as an assistant on the NHL level," Hurricanes general manager Don Waddell said in a press release announcing Daniels' hiring. "Rod has played with and under Jeff, so he has a great understanding for the experience and knowledge that he brings to the table."

Daniels fills the vacancy created by Brind'Amour's promotion after coach Bill Peters opted out of the final year of his contract and eventually took the head job with the Calgary Flames. Daniels joins longtime NHL defenseman Steve Smith and goalie coach Mike Bales, both carryover the Peters' era, on Brind'Amour's staff.

A draft pick of the Penguins in 1986, Daniels won a title in Pittsburgh as a player in 1992 and later played for Florida, Hartford, Nashville and Carolina. That included playing in all 23 of the Hurricanes' playoff games in 2002 when the team reached the Stanley Cup Final against the Detroit Red Wings, losing in five games.

After retiring following the 2002-03 season, Daniels stayed with the organization and served in several roles, including being an assistant coach under both Paul Maurice and Peter Laviolette from 2003 to 2008.

Daniels was then named head coach and general manager of the Albany River Rats, then the Hurricanes' AHL affiliate, and guided that team for two seasons before it relocated to Charlotte and became the Checkers. He held the same role



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

with the Checkers for four seasons until 2015, when his coaching contract was not renewed.

He joined the Hurricanes as a scout and most recently was the team's manager of pro scouting.



## Canes name Jeff Daniels as assistant coach

Posted 6:36 p.m. yesterday  
Updated 10:05 p.m. yesterday

Raleigh, N.C. — The Carolina Hurricanes have hired Jeff Daniels to serve as the team's assistant coach, completing the staff under Head Coach Rod Brind'Amour.

"Jeff has served as a head coach in the American Hockey League, and of course won the ultimate prize as an assistant on the NHL level," said Waddell. "Rod has played with and under Jeff, so he has a great understanding for the experience and knowledge that he brings to the table."

Daniels, 49, is in his 21st year with the Hurricanes, most recently serving as Manager of Pro Scouting. The Oshawa,

Ont., native served as head coach of the team's American Hockey League (AHL) affiliates from 2008-15, posting a career AHL record of 268-225-51 in seven seasons with Albany and Charlotte. He was an assistant coach for the Hurricanes from 2003-2008, helping guide the team to a Stanley Cup championship in 2006. Daniels has also worked in player development and scouting for the organization.

Selected by the Pittsburgh Penguins in the sixth round, 109th overall, of the 1986 NHL Entry Draft, Daniels played 425 NHL games with Pittsburgh, Hartford, Carolina, Florida and Nashville, winning a Stanley Cup title with the Penguins in 1992 and helping the Hurricanes reach the Stanley Cup Final in 2002.



## Draft Preview: Second Pick a Game-Changer for Canes

### Hurricanes figure to land impact forward with No. 2 pick

by Michael Smith [@MSmithCanes](#) / CarolinaHurricanes.com

June 11th, 2018

When the 2017-18 regular season ended in early April, the Carolina Hurricanes were preparing to make a draft selection outside of the top 10 for the third year in a row.

Then, everything changed.

In the NHL Draft Lottery, the Hurricanes defied the odds to win the second overall pick, marking the first time in 18 lotteries that the Canes have moved up in the draft order.

"You can't do much better than two," said Director of Amateur Scouting Tony MacDonald. "One would've been great, but I think two puts us in a great spot. We're very excited about it."

"When you go into the day looking at the 11th pick in the first round and move up to second - we didn't go to number one, but I feel like we won the lottery big time," President and General Manager Don Waddell said in a [recent interview](#).

The lottery win changed the frame of the Hurricanes' annual pre-draft amateur scout meetings at PNC Arena, held this year in early May. It changes the type of draft class the team will build out on June 22-23 at American Airlines Center in Dallas. Perhaps most importantly, it changes the structure of the Hurricanes come October and beyond.

The Hurricanes have picked second overall thrice prior in the franchise's history. In 1983, the Hartford Whalers selected Sylvain Turgeon, and in 1993, the Whalers drafted Chris Pronger. In 2003, the Canes selected Eric Staal. Their accomplishments speak for themselves. One scored 40 goals as a 19-year-old rookie. One is a Hall of Famer. The other helped bring the franchise a Stanley Cup Championship is still working on a career potentially worthy of the Hall. Recent No. 2 picks include Nolan Patrick (2017), Patrik Laine (2016) and Jack Eichel (2015). The list, one that boasts immense talent, goes on.

"When you've got such a high pick this time to start out with, it gives you a pretty good base to build the rest of your picks from," MacDonald said. "You're looking at a player who can step in and play and should be able to contribute in the proper situations next season."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

Swedish defenseman Rasmus Dahlin is the consensus No. 1 pick. The next three picks off the board will likely be forwards: Andrei Svechnikov, Brady Tkachuk and Filip Zadina. With the second overall selection, the Canes have their pick of the three.

The prevailing opinion favors Svechnikov, an elite, dynamic offensive force from Russia who, on the heels of scoring 40 goals in 44 games with the Barrie Colts of the Ontario Hockey League, is the NHL Central Scouting Service's top-ranked North American skater.

"He can play the power game. He can play the finesse game. He's big and strong and has skill," MacDonald said. "I think he's probably one of the most complete players we've seen in a few years."

There are arguments to be made, too, for Tkachuk and Zadina.

Tkachuk's hockey bloodlines are strong. His father, Keith, logged 1,065 points in 1,201 career NHL games. Brady's brother, Matthew, currently plays for the Calgary Flames.

"He brings a physical dimension to the table. He's got that quality that every team is looking for and covets. You'd like to have that kind of player in your lineup," MacDonald said. "He makes things happen through effort, grit and determination. He's also got a significant skill level."

Zadina is a sharp-shooter who formed a good bit of chemistry with Martin Necas - likely to make the jump to the NHL this season with the Canes - at the 2018 IIHF World Championship.

"You wouldn't call him a one-dimensional player, but he's a sniper. He likes to score," MacDonald said. "He likes to have the puck on his stick in situations that call for big goals."

The Hurricanes are currently slated to make six additional picks in rounds 2-7 on June 23. While the Hurricanes won the second overall pick in the first round, the draft order reverts to the reverse order of the final standings (and playoff results for the 16 teams that qualified) for the remaining six rounds. That means that, after No. 2, the next pick the Canes will make will be No. 42, the 11th pick in the second round.

"Knowing we're picking at two, we've pretty well got our minds made up. We know who may be available there," MacDonald said. "Who we might be able to pick at 42, that's a more difficult thing to predict. You can make some assumptions and hope that certain players are going to be in the mix there, but you never really have a good idea until after Friday night is over when you get to sit down and reevaluate things. Then you have a real good idea who you might get at 42. We've targeted some players that we feel could be there. The rest, you have to let the process take place and unfold before you really know who it's going to be."

Bookending the second overall pick is the second to last pick in the draft, which also belongs to the Canes by way of Vegas, who assembled a record-setting inaugural season.

Frederik Andersen, though he never played an NHL game with the Hurricanes, remains one of the team's best late-round finds, taken 187th overall in the seventh round of the 2010 NHL Entry Draft. The Canes will pick at 197 and 216 in this year's final round.

"It will be a late pick, but you never know who you're going to come up with. You're always hoping that you're going to select a guy in the seventh round who is going to be able to play," MacDonald said. "They are more than just afterthoughts."

One thing that the lottery win doesn't change is the Canes' draft strategy, whether it's the second pick or the second to last pick.

"The strategy for us in my mind has always been very simple: you want to pick the best players available," MacDonald said. "You focus certainly on that in the early rounds - the best player available regardless of position - and then as you get into the mid-rounds and later rounds, you still follow that pattern of trying to come up with the best player, but you may look at people at a certain position."

With the second overall pick, the Hurricanes will certainly land one of the best players available amongst the entire draft class, an exciting, game-changing scenario for a team on the cusp of taking that next step to become a perennial playoff contender.



## Hurricanes Fans Need Patience (Again)

By [Mark Shiver](#) June 11th, 2018

A word of advice to fans of the Carolina Hurricanes. Just be patient. That is likely not what many want to hear, especially the diehard fans, the "Caniacs," the season ticket holders. But, in light of all of the upheaval that has taken place within the franchise, it's a realistic way to approach the upcoming season.

## Patient with the 'Francis Foundation'

By now, we all know that Hurricanes former general manager and executive vice-president Ron Francis was planning his work and working his plan. He had a vision in mind of a team full of talented young players that would grow together and meld into a playoff-caliber squad. The Francis foundation was coming along, albeit too slowly for some, but it was, for all intents and purposes, coming along.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

He was stymied by former owner Peter Karmanos, who was constantly rumored to be too tight to let Francis acquire a player from another team that had the proven skills the Hurricanes needed to make that elusive playoff run. Back in 2014 when he was just getting his general manager's feet wet, it appeared that [Francis had gotten hold of Karmanos' checkbook](#). He signed Ron Hainsey to a three-year deal, Nathan Gerbe to a two-year deal and even Chris Terry got a one-year deal.

Over the next four years, Francis made some good draft picks, acquiring ten to use in the 2015 NHL Entry Draft. Arguably his best pick was in the second round where he got Sebastian Aho, the current player that new owner Tom Dundon said is the only player on the roster that is not up for grabs. Francis did well in using the draft to build the depth of the franchise, but he was either unable due to financial constraints or unwilling to pull the trigger on any type of deal that would bring proven talent to the team.

## Patient with a Flaccid Offense

The team has needed and still needs a difference-maker on offense, without which the Hurricanes will never advance to the playoffs. They need a proven veteran talent like New York Islanders forward John Tavares to come in and bring life to what has been a flaccid offense for years. Yes, the team has Aho, and Jeff Skinner is capable of going off for 40 goals at any time. The Hurricanes [definitely should not trade Skinner this season](#), but give him a chance to regain his scoring prowess under new head coach Rod Brind'Amour.

The fans have been patient with the team as the offense has underperformed and will likely have to be patient again if moves are not made in the coming weeks to bolster the Hurricanes' offense. Dundon has said that he is not likely to back up a truck filled with cash for a player, but he might need to rethink that if he wants to see his team playing in May or June.

The team [answered questions from fans on its website](#) recently and addressed trades and free agents. Michael Smith wrote for the team, "Free agency is going to be more of a gamble, considering there could be 31 teams vying for the services of a single player. The Hurricanes will be able to make a compelling pitch – helping a team take that next step with a new head coach in a desirable market to live in – but will they be competitive in dollar amount and term to seal the deal and potentially land a more marquee name? That's the biggest unknown."

Tavares is one of a few players that are likely to hit the free agent market in a few weeks. Sportsnet [recently listed 20 of the top free agents](#) that are likely to be available at month's end. Tavares heads the list which is filled with quite a few players that could help the Hurricanes right away. While the hiring of Lou Lamoriello by the Islanders may give them an edge in keeping Tavares in an Islanders sweater. Also, there will be a bunch of teams that court Tavares, so it would not pay for Hurricanes fans to hold their collective breath on him coming to Raleigh.

One of the names on the Top 20 list is Toronto Maple Leafs' forward James van Riemsdyk, whose brother Trevor is a defenseman with the Hurricanes. Here is a player that the 'Canes might legitimately have a shot of signing. Franklin Steele of the Bleacher Report [wrote that van Riemsdyk will also have plenty of suitors](#):

Van Riemsdyk is another player who can find the back of the net with regularity, and teams with cap space and a desire for more offense could look the way of the 29-year-old forward.

The Hurricanes have a lot of cap space and maybe playing alongside his brother will be enough to win JVR over to the 'Canes. While Steele opined that he thinks the Colorado Avalanche would be a great fit for van Riemsdyk, the Hurricanes would be, also.

## Please Caniacs, Be Patient

The likelihood of the Hurricanes signing a difference-making free agent is not very great. Perhaps there will be some trading taking place that will bolster the team's offense. Of course, there is still the goalie situation that needs to be resolved. But, the most likely scenario is that the Hurricanes' fans will need to be patient with their new head coach as Brind'Amour gets his first-year experience as such.

The "Caniacs" will need to be patient as [likely first-round draft pick Andrei Svechnikov](#) learns the system. He may be all that he is being hyped to be, but Haydn Fleury was hyped, too. It took him several years to break onto NHL ice. They will need to be patient if there are major changes to the roster, and guys like co-captain Justin Faulk are gone after so many years. Some fans will welcome that scenario, but patience will be required nevertheless.

The consistent missing of the playoffs for nearly a decade now is wearing on the fan base. With a new owner, new general manager and new head coach, all the team can do is ask the fans to be patient, and hold out hope that the team is on the right track. Again.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018



**SB NATION**  
**CANES COUNTRY**

## Carolina Hurricanes name Jeff Daniels assistant coach

**He won a Stanley Cup as an assistant coach on a team captained by Rod Brind'Amour, and now he joins his former teammate for his second stint behind the Canes' bench.**

By [Brian LeBlanc@bdleblanc](mailto:Brian_LeBlanc@bdleblanc) Jun 11, 2018, 2:56pm EDT

Jeff Daniels spent four seasons behind the [Carolina Hurricanes](#)' bench as an assistant coach after retiring as a player in 2003. He won the [Stanley Cup](#) on Peter Laviolette's staff in 2006, with a team captained by Rod Brind'Amour. Now, the Hurricanes' new coach is counting on his former teammate to help get the team back there again.

The Hurricanes announced Monday that Daniels has been hired as an assistant coach, joining Steve Smith who will remain in that role on Brind'Amour's coaching staff. Daniels was a Canes assistant until 2008 when he took over as head coach of the AHL Albany River Rats, staying with that franchise through its move to Charlotte in 2010 until he was reassigned in 2015.

Daniels has spent the past three seasons in player development and scouting, most recently serving as the Canes' manager of pro scouting in the 2017-18 season. He was under consideration for the [Pittsburgh Penguins](#)' coaching position that eventually went to Mike Johnston in the 2014 offseason, and while he spent seven seasons as an AHL head coach he has never held a head coaching position in the NHL.

Daniels was an original Hurricane, moving with the team to North Carolina in 1997 although he only played two NHL games that season, spending the majority with the AHL's Beast of New Haven. After a season in Nashville where he was an expansion draft pick of the [Predators](#), Daniels resigned with the Canes in 1999, spending the final four years of his career mostly on the fourth line and helping the team to the [Stanley Cup Final](#) in 2002.

As noted above, the press release states that Daniels' hiring completes Brind'Amour's staff, meaning that Smith, goaltending coach Mike Bales, head trainer Bill Burniston and video coaches Chris Huffine and L.J. Scarpace will return to the Canes' coaching staff next season.

The release from the team is below.

### **CANES NAME JEFF DANIELS AS ASSISTANT COACH**

*Served as assistant coach for 2006 Stanley Cup championship team*

Don Waddell, President and General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today announced that the team has hired Jeff Daniels to serve as the team's assistant coach, completing the staff under Head Coach Rod Brind'Amour.

*"Jeff has served as a head coach in the American Hockey League, and of course won the ultimate prize as an assistant on the NHL level," said Waddell. "Rod has played with and under Jeff, so he has a great understanding for the experience and knowledge that he brings to the table."*

Daniels, 49, is in his 21<sup>st</sup> year with the Hurricanes, most recently serving as Manager of Pro Scouting. The Oshawa, Ont., native served as head coach of the team's American Hockey League (AHL) affiliates from 2008-15, posting a career AHL record of 268-225-51 in seven seasons with Albany and Charlotte. He was an assistant coach for the Hurricanes from 2003-2008, helping guide the team to a Stanley Cup championship in 2006. Daniels has also worked in player development and scouting for the organization.

Selected by the Pittsburgh Penguins in the sixth round, 109<sup>th</sup> overall, of the 1986 [NHL Entry Draft](#), Daniels played 425 NHL games with Pittsburgh, Hartford, Carolina, Florida and Nashville, winning a Stanley Cup title with the Penguins in 1992 and helping the Hurricanes reach the Stanley Cup Final in 2002.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

## THE ATHLETIC

### By the numbers: Examining next season's Stanley Cup odds

By [Dom Luszczyszyn](#) Jun 11, 2018

It didn't take long after the Stanley Cup was awarded to the Washington Capitals for some to already begin looking toward which team might win it all in 2018-19. Shortly after the final buzzer sounded and Alex Ovechkin finally lifted the trophy oddsmakers released their odds for next season's Stanley Cup winner.

Here's what those odds look like, courtesy of Bodog:

*Tampa Bay Lightning – 9/1*  
*Boston Bruins – 10/1*  
*Toronto Maple Leafs – 10/1*  
*Vegas Golden Knights – 10/1*  
*Winnipeg Jets – 10/1*  
*Nashville Predators – 11/1*  
*Pittsburgh Penguins – 11/1*  
*Washington Capitals – 14/1*  
*Edmonton Oilers – 18/1*  
*Anaheim Ducks – 22/1*  
*Chicago Blackhawks – 22/1*  
*Columbus Blue Jackets – 25/1*  
*Dallas Stars – 25/1*  
*Calgary Flames – 28/1*  
*Philadelphia Flyers – 28/1*  
*Los Angeles Kings – 30/1*  
*Minnesota Wild – 30/1*  
*San Jose Sharks – 30/1*  
*Colorado Avalanche – 40/1*  
*Florida Panthers – 40/1*  
*New Jersey Devils – 40/1*  
*St. Louis Blues – 40/1*  
*Montreal Canadiens – 50/1*  
*Carolina Hurricanes – 60/1*  
*New York Islanders – 60/1*  
*Buffalo Sabres – 66/1*  
*New York Rangers – 70/1*  
*Detroit Red Wings – 75/1*  
*Arizona Coyotes – 80/1*  
*Vancouver Canucks – 80/1*  
*Ottawa Senators – 100/1*

Odds for the following season always get posted at the culmination of the playoffs and while they generally provide a decent barometer of what to expect they aren't gospel. Comparing preseason odds with pre-playoff odds makes that pretty clear. Teams that looked like strong contenders before the season look much less so before the playoffs and vice versa, while teams that didn't look like much during the preseason can make it to conference finals and beyond.

*Odds were converted to implied probability (minus the [vig](#)) for clarity.*

Of teams that make the playoffs, pre-season odds explain 29 per cent of pre-playoff odds, which isn't bad for this sport, but does show how tricky it is to predict the outcome of it that far in advance. Hockey is a sport where you should always

expect the unexpected and that should've been the main lesson learned from a wild and wacky 2017-18 season.

The final four teams remaining this season were the Vegas Golden Knights and Winnipeg Jets in the West and the Washington Capitals and Tampa Bay Lightning in the East. Last June, here were each team's odds of winning the Stanley Cup according to [Sports Odds History](#).

*Tampa Bay Lightning – 10/1*  
*Washington Capitals – 10/1*  
*Winnipeg Jets – 65/1*  
*Vegas Golden Knights – 150/1*

While the first two teams were heavy favourites to get there, the latter two weren't. The Western final would've been unfathomable last June, but Winnipeg finally broke through while Vegas shocked the hockey world with an extremely unlikely run. We already know how unprecedented the Golden Knights' season was considering their odds going in, but to put it in further perspective, only two other teams since 2008-09 had odds as low: the 2015-16 Arizona Coyotes and Buffalo Sabres, in the season after both infamously tanked for the right to draft Connor McDavid. They finished the next season with 78 and 81 points, respectively.

But while Vegas making it to the final four was certainly unprecedented, making the playoffs was far less so. Since 2009 there have been 29 teams with Stanley Cup odds at 100-to-1 or lower and seven (including Vegas) of those made the playoffs – three from this past season alone. That list is the 2017-18 Avalanche, Devils and Golden Knights, the 2012-13 Islanders and Wild, the 2011-12 Panthers and the 2009-10 Coyotes. So fret not Sens fans, there is still hope.

The unpredictability of last season is reflected in the odds for 2018-19 as only one team is listed with odds at 100-to-1 or higher. Teams are closer in talent than ever before meaning clubs can go from zero to a hundred, real quick. Vegas's miracle season was the icing on the cake showing that the long-shots do have an actual shot.

That presents a bit of a money-making opportunity considering it's not always the teams you expect that go the distance. Since 2009, there has only been one season where there hasn't been at least one team in the final four with post-Cup odds set at 20-to-1 or higher. In five of 10 seasons, there have been two. Get it right and there's a decent hedge play at stake in the final two rounds.

*For the uninitiated, on the chart below 1,000 is the same as 10-to-1*

This past season had the highest average odds from final four teams thanks to Vegas, but even if the Golden Knights are omitted, you're still looking at an average of roughly 20-to-1 for Cup finalists and conference finalists. The 2017-18 season was an anomaly, obviously, but the past few seasons have seen a recent trend of unexpected teams going farther than many would've initially given credit for. Even if the



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

Golden Knights are excluded, there's still a Jets team that looked like one of the league's strongest teams that was 65-to-1 after last season. Before that the Predators were at 25-to-1 and made the final, and before that there were the Sharks at nearly 43-to-1. No long-shot teams have actually won during this time period (the highest have been both of Los Angeles's Cups at 16-to-1), but getting there is half the battle and ensures you're in a good position to win some guaranteed money with a hedge.

That doesn't guarantee another surprise run next season, but it's still worth exploring which teams might get there against all odds. While some of this is simply great fortune, there was reason to believe some of those past teams were worth the bet. Hell, I made those bets myself taking San Jose in July of that season, Nashville in December at better odds, and Vegas in June just before the expansion draft (I didn't bet on Winnipeg to win the Cup, but I did have them winning the division so close enough), so who better to guide you through which 2018-19 long-shots deserve your money?

There are 20 teams with odds at 25-to-1 or greater, here's which ones might be worth betting on.

## **Columbus Blue Jackets – 25-to-1**

We'll start with an easy one where the odds aren't exactly stacked, but you still get a decent dark horse play. I figured that was the case this season going into the playoffs and thought they looked even stronger when they were up 2-0 ([whoops](#)), but Columbus blew it instead, losing four straight to the eventual Stanley Cup champion. It was the same story the year before where they simply weren't good enough to get past that season's eventual Stanley Cup champion. Two big learning experiences that will make them stronger going forward which is why I'm sticking with them.

The Blue Jackets come in with the 12th best odds which is arguably a bit too low for them. Sitting behind Edmonton, Chicago and Anaheim doesn't sit right with me considering they're a much stronger team than all three. The Blue Jackets have an incredible goalie in Sergei Bobrovsky, an offensive dynamo in Artemi Panarin, and one of the league's best defence pairs in Seth Jones and Zach Werenski. Plus they have depth throughout the lineup. They're a better team than they're given credit for and the Blue Jackets have shown that with two back-to-back strong seasons – now it's just a matter of getting over the hump. The Blue Jackets were a sneaky great team last season with great 5-on-5 numbers, and they'll build on that next season. Right now they're getting overlooked and there's value to be had because of it.

## **Calgary Flames – 28-to-1**

My affinity for the Flames roster is well documented at this point and I'm still stunned they couldn't make the playoffs last season with that team in a particularly weak division. On paper they looked like one of the stronger teams in the league and had the underlying numbers to back it up, they just lacked execution. A lot of that comes down to depth issues. The Flames have one of the brightest young cores in the league, but they haven't been able to surround those guys with talent. Call it the Winnipeg Jets Conundrum where you're left confused at how a team that skilled could be so bad.

You're not getting 65-to-1 odds this time, but you are getting a similar scenario, one where an underachieving team filled with star-power looks to make a big jump the following season. The Flames are helped by the fact that they're in the weakest division in the league, currently led by a first-year team. The three California teams are still good, but are moving past their primes – Calgary should be able to jump over them without much issue. Ditto goes for their ineptly managed Alberta rivals.

The team still needs to fix their depth woes, but the big pieces are in place for what could be a special season for a team on the rise. The key is learning from the mistakes of the Oilers and not trading one of those big pieces away in a panic move.

## **Florida Panthers – 40-to-1**

Despite the current front office regime pillaging its own talent, I'm very in on Florida and specifically its core. Star players get you far in this league and the Panthers are loaded after years of ineptitude. Aleksander Barkov is seriously one of the league's best players, finishing 14th in average [Game Score](#) last season, and he's only getting better. Up front, he's got Jonathan Huberdeau, Vincent Trocheck and Evgenii Dadonov with him, the core of a lethal top six that few teams can stack up against. On defence, Aaron Ekblad leads the way and while I'm skeptical he's a number one defender at this point, he looks like he's getting there.

What's tantalizing about Florida is its flush prospect pool which could lead to some unexpected contributions this coming season from under-the-radar rookies. The Panthers biggest problem last season – because they gave it away – was depth. Getting value from some young guns could go a long way.

The big question mark will be in net. Florida got some terrific goaltending last season from Roberto Luongo and James Reimer, but the latter has inconsistent tendencies and the former is now 39 years old. That's a lot of risk between the pipes and could make or break the season. I have faith though and 40-to-1 feels like a good bet. Having said that, being in a division with the top three teams on the odds board is a scary proposition.

## **New York Islanders\* – 60-to-1**

Okay, that asterisk there is super important. It's the John Tavares asterisk. If he goes, then toss this bet in the garbage because that's where the Islanders will be. If he stays, then this team has some intrigue.

It needs to be stressed that I don't think this team is any good, but there's still likely some value with these odds. A team that has Tavares and Mat Barzal down the middle and the offensive fire-power at its disposal up front should be better than the disaster-case that plagued Brooklyn last season. This team was a defensive catastrophe, undoing an explosive offence that should've been more than enough to make the playoffs.

A new coach should help, as should an off-season dedicated to fixing what ails them. I have faith in what this team is capable of – if they can fix their defence and goaltending. That's one if though, and it's not even the big if. That's Tavares. He needs to stay in order for this team to have any



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

chance of being competitive, but if he does then I do think the Islanders can be a sleeper team in the East.

## **Carolina Hurricanes – 60-to-1**

This is another team with big ifs attached to it, and that starts with a presumably meddling owner who wants to trade anyone not named Sebastian Aho. That's led to prominent names on the block like Jeff Skinner, Noah Hanifin and Justin Faulk and I'm not sure that's the best strategy for a team that has a lot to like that hasn't been able to put it together.

For years, the team has been plagued by Carolina Syndrome, where they've controlled play at an elite rate, but got stung by lady luck to such a significant degree that it felt unlikely it was actually luck at all. What this team needs most is a goalie upgrade. Maybe that's someone new, maybe that's a Scott Darling bounce-back, but it's the biggest problem the Hurricanes have had for the past decade.

There are some great young players on a very deep team, and they're also drafting Andrei Svechnikov in a couple weeks; the offensive superstar they've been missing dearly. Things are coming together and while patience is wearing thin it might be worth it soon. This *finally* might be the year it

comes together for Carolina – though we've been saying that for so long that those words barely matter. In any sense, 60-to-1 is decent value.

## **Arizona Coyotes – 80-to-1**

Will the Coyotes win the Cup next year? Almost definitely no. Will they take a step forward next season and maybe be the team that goes from zero to a hundred? Almost definitely maybe. I, and many others, figured last year was that year after a big off-season and the team completely stumbled out of the gate. A big injury to their new starting goalie was the reason for that, but once Antti Raanta became healthy this was a markedly different team.

It's a bit silly to use goalie records, but for Arizona it says a lot. The Coyotes went 21-17-6 with Raanta in net last year, a 92 point pace and 8-24-6 without him, a 47 point pace. That was the difference last season. Since January 1 last season, the team was playing better in front of their goalies too with a near break-even Corsi and somehow the sixth best goals percentage in the league going 20-14-7. After falling off a cliff to start the season, the team that many expected showed up in the second half. The young players are only getting better so expect the Coyotes to build on that next season and maybe even make the playoffs as a result.



## **Hurricanes name Jeff Daniels assistant coach**

Andrew Schnittker, Sports Editor

16 hrs ago

The Carolina Hurricanes have filled the assistant coaching vacancy on new head coach Rod Brind'Amour's staff. General manager Don Waddell announced Monday that the team has named Jeff Daniels, who has previously served the organization in a number of roles, to that position.

Daniels had been serving as the Hurricanes manager of pro scouting. Before that, he was head coach of the Canes' AHL affiliates in Charlotte and Albany from 2008-2015. Daniels was previously an assistant coach for the Canes from 2003-

2008, including as a member of Peter Laviolette's staff with the 2006 Stanley Cup Championship team.

"Jeff has served as a head coach in the American Hockey League, and of course won the ultimate prize as an assistant on the NHL level," Waddell said in the team's official release. "Rod has played with and under Jeff, so he has a great understanding for the experience and knowledge that he brings to the table."

Daniels also played for the Hurricanes during his 425-game NHL career, and was part of the 2002 team that reached the first Stanley Cup Final in franchise history. Daniels joins assistant coach Steve Smith, who has been with the Canes since 2014, on Brind'Amour's staff behind the bench.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018



## Offseason Weekly Report: June 11, 2018

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

Published: June 11, 2018

*Each week during the offseason the Checkers PR staff will highlight news, notes and other various things to keep you in the loop.*

### NEWS

#### [Hurricanes Re-Sign Andrew Poturalski To Two-Way Deal:](#)

The Hurricanes continue to bring pending free-agents back into the fold, inking Andrew Poturalski to a new deal after the conclusion of his entry-level contract. After leading the team in scoring as a rookie in 2016-17, Poturalski stepped up his goal-scoring game last season and eclipsed his previous career high with 22 tallies, good for fourth on the club.

The 24-year-old finished the season strong with 11 points in the last nine regular season games, and from December through the end of the season only Lucas Wallmark scored more than Poturalski. The forward could challenge for an NHL job in what is setting up to be a wide-open training camp for Carolina, but should he re-join the Checkers Poturalski would provide a strong scoring presence up top.

#### [Checkers Re-Sign Patrick Brown To Two-Way Deal:](#)

The Hurricanes have also brought back Patrick Brown for his fifth season with the organization. Brown has been a mainstay with the Checkers through a litany of changes, wearing a letter in each of the last three campaigns and serving as captain for the last two. The 26-year-old brings strong guidance to a young forward corps for Charlotte and makes an impact on the scoresheet as well, setting a new career high with 20 helpers last season.

[Father's Day Pack Announced:](#) A ticket to three of our guaranteed dates for the 2018-19 season – including the home opener on Oct. 19 – for only \$45. That's the best Father's Day present around and it's not even close.

#### **Prospect Spotlight: Jake Bean**

The 13th overall pick in 2016, Jake Bean put together a strong WHL career with Calgary and Tri-City, racking up 196

points (49g, 147a) over 219 games – headlined by a dominant 2015-16 season that saw him lead all WHL blue liners with 24 goals. Having turned 20 over the weekend, Bean is eligible to begin his pro career next season in Charlotte, where he appeared for one game during the Checkers' most recent Calder Cup run. The Alberta native fits into the mold of offensively gifted, dynamic defensemen that has populated the Charlotte blue line over the last few years and, should he spend time in the AHL next season, could be poised for a strong rookie campaign.

#### **Whatever Happened To: Drayson Bowman**

Selected by Carolina in the third round of the 2007 draft, Drayson Bowman was a member of the inaugural Checkers team and would log 78 points (39g, 39a) in 130 games over three seasons in a Charlotte sweater from 2010-2013. He would split each of those three seasons between the AHL and NHL before making the full-time jump to Carolina for the 2013-14 campaign, when he notched 12 points in 70 games.

Bowman would depart from the organization as a free agent following that season, signing on with Montreal and spending the majority of his 2014-15 season with their AHL affiliate at the time, the Hamilton Bulldogs, and setting a career high with 33 points in 62 games. The following season saw Bowman ink an ECHL deal with the Colorado Eagles, but he would only log three games there before re-joining the Checkers on a PTO. The forward put up four points in 16 games during his new stint with his old team, and at the conclusion of his tryout he would make the jump overseas to finish the season with Duesseldorf of the top German league.

Bowman would spend the entirety of the 2016-17 campaign with Duesseldorf, tying for second on the team in goals, but would return to North America this past summer. Bowman signed an ECHL deal to once again join the Colorado Eagles and spent the entirety of the season with the club, ranking third on the team in scoring during the regular season and helping the team to capture a Kelly Cup last week.

#### **Number of the Week: 5**

The number of defensemen who have been called upon for a shootout more than once while in a Charlotte sweater – Justin Krueger (nine attempts), Bryan Rodney (5), Bobby Sanguinetti (3), Danny Biega (2) and Trevor Carrick (2).



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

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## SportScan

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

1098722 Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes name Jeff Daniels assistant coach

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

RALEIGH—Jeff Daniels is no stranger to the Carolina Hurricanes bench, having played and coached for the Canes in the past.

He's also happy to be going back behind it.

The Hurricanes announced Monday that Daniels, 49, has been named an assistant coach for new head coach Rod Brind'Amour, completing the coaching staff. Assistant coach Steve Smith and goaltending coach Mike Bales return from last year's staff under former coach Bill Peters.

Daniels has been serving as a director of pro scouting for the Hurricanes, and said he will continue in the short term to assist general manager Don Waddell as the Canes assess players who may be available, either through trades or free-agent signings.

"I really enjoyed the scouting part of it," Daniels said Monday. "I got a chance to watch the game differently. But I always said you miss being in the fire, that competition.

"When you're in it, it's stressful with the ups and downs. You get out of it and you miss that. You miss the competition and competing to win and game-planning and all that. Being at meetings recently and watching Roddy (Brind'Amour) prepare for the job and listening to him talk got me excited."

Soon after Peters announced he was resigning as coach, leaving after four years to become head coach of the Calgary Flames, Brind'Amour publicly stated he wanted to be considered for the head-coaching job. Brind'Amour had been a Canes assistant for seven years, first under Kirk Muller and then Peters, and believed he was ready to take the step up and be a head coach for the first time.

Brind'Amour talked to several candidates for the assistant's job, but Daniels was always high on the list. The two were teammates on the

2002 Hurricanes team that reached the Stanley Cup final, and Daniels an assistant on the 2006 Stanley Cup champions captained by Brind'Amour.

The two have experienced the highs of the sport -- Daniels won a Stanley Cup as a player with the Pittsburgh Penguins in 1992. Both are determined to pull the Canes out of the rut that has seen the team miss the playoffs nine straight years.

"I've talked with Roddy and this is kind of personal for us," Daniels said. "We've seen it when the team has done well and we want to get back to that."

Asked why Brind'Amour should make a good head coach, Daniels said, "Right away, the respect. I think that's the key. He's got the respect of the players from what he did during his career but also the respect from guys watching him work, day in and day out, as an assistant.

"They know he's an extremely hard worker. They know he's not going to ask them to do anything he didn't do when he played. He'll be fair with them and honest with them. Bottom line, you need everybody to buy into what Roddy will be selling and everybody on the same page."

Daniels said he gained invaluable experience in being a head coach at the American Hockey League level, guiding the Canes' AHL affiliates in Albany, N.Y., and then Charlotte from 2008 to 2015. He had a seven-year record of 268-225-51.

"No matter what level, you have more responsibility, you have the final say," Daniels said. "You get feedback from other coaches but as the head coach you have to make the decisions. There's a lot of interaction with players, meetings and stuff.

"It helps you grow as a coach. As much as you think you know what's going on, something's always going to come up you haven't dealt with before. At that level, it's no different than as a player. You're down there to learn and learn from your mistakes and try different things."

Daniels said he's not sure yet about his duties with the Canes. Brind'Amour, for example, handled the power play for Peters. But all that will be sorted out.

"I'm totally in, and whatever he wants me to do I'll be on-board to do," Daniels said.

News Observer LOADED: 06.12.2018

1098739 NHL



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

New era of NHL has seen Lord Stanley's Cup captured by more and more teams

By Geoff Baker

Inside the NHL

Sports fans wary of the same teams always competing for championships should rejoice at the Washington Capitals last week capturing their first Stanley Cup.

Since the Cup became the de facto NHL championship 91 years ago, this was just the fourth final to feature two teams that hadn't won before. Longstanding NHL rules and business practices historically made it difficult for all but a handful of dynasty franchises to win titles, and it's only the past two decades or so we've seen a more democratized Stanley Cup competition.

The Capitals defeating the expansion Vegas Golden Knights 4 games to 1 marked the latest in this shift.

Spreading the wealth

The NHL has seen the same teams winning the Stanley Cup for much of its existence. Only the last two-plus decades have the winners rotated as in other major sports.

DIFFERENT TEAMS WINNING TITLES\*

1943-1994

NFL — 19

MLB — 17

NBA — 16 (formed in 1947)

NHL — 11

1995-present

NFL — 13

MLB — 13

NHL — 12

NBA — 11

\*Counts relocated franchises as separate teams

Capitals forward T.J. Oshie, a Mount Vernon native, will become the second Washington-born player with his name inscribed on the Cup. And just in time, since previous Washington-born winner Wayne Hicks will see his name and others from the 1960-61 champion Chicago Blackhawks removed this year to make room for a new band of winners and keep the Cup from becoming too heavy to lift.

What Oshie and Hicks have in common was the rarity of their teams winning.

Hicks' team was the only Cup winner in 25 years of the league's "Original Six" era not from Montreal, Toronto or Detroit. And Oshie's franchise took 43 years to win it all after forming in 1975.

In both cases, lopsided rules were largely to blame. Once-brutal NHL expansion draft rules hampered the Caps throughout their early existence. By contrast, the Golden Knights made the final their inaugural season with improved expansion rules Seattle will also benefit from if awarded a team.

Those early expansion rules were a byproduct of the old six-team NHL protecting legacy franchises. The "Original Six" era began the 1942-43

season after several NHL teams had disbanded to leave just six remaining clubs.

For the next quarter century, the monopolistic owners of the Montreal Canadiens, Toronto Maple Leafs, Detroit Red Wings, Blackhawks, Boston Bruins and New York Rangers resisted any expansion attempts. The NHL actually operated more like a three-team league back then, owing to a "territorial exemption" rule giving clubs exclusive rights to players living within 50 miles of their home ice.

Since the best players hailed from Canada that rule favored the Canadiens, Leafs and a Red Wings squad adjacent the border.

The Canadiens made the final 16 times during the 25 years, the Red Wings 13 times and the Maple Leafs 11 times. Montreal won the Cup 10 times, Toronto nine and Detroit five.

Meanwhile, the Bruins competed in just five finals, the Blackhawks in four and the Rangers in one. As mentioned, only the 1961 Blackhawks won a title.

Seattle Times LOADED: 06.12.2018

1098791 Websites

The Athletic / By the numbers: Examining next season's Stanley Cup odds

By Dom Luszczyszyn Jun 11, 2018 47

It didn't take long after the Stanley Cup was awarded to the Washington Capitals for some to already begin looking toward which team might win it all in 2018-19. Shortly after the final buzzer sounded and Alex Ovechkin finally lifted the trophy oddsmakers released their odds for next season's Stanley Cup winner.

Here's what those odds look like, courtesy of Bodog:

Tampa Bay Lightning — 9/1

Boston Bruins — 10/1

Toronto Maple Leafs — 10/1

Vegas Golden Knights — 10/1

Winnipeg Jets — 10/1

Nashville Predators — 11/1

Pittsburgh Penguins — 11/1

Washington Capitals — 14/1

Edmonton Oilers — 18/1

Anaheim Ducks — 22/1

Chicago Blackhawks — 22/1

Columbus Blue Jackets — 25/1

Dallas Stars — 25/1

Calgary Flames — 28/1

Philadelphia Flyers — 28/1

Los Angeles Kings — 30/1

Minnesota Wild — 30/1

San Jose Sharks — 30/1

Colorado Avalanche — 40/1



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

Florida Panthers – 40/1  
New Jersey Devils – 40/1  
St. Louis Blues – 40/1  
Montreal Canadiens – 50/1  
Carolina Hurricanes – 60/1  
New York Islanders – 60/1  
Buffalo Sabres – 66/1  
New York Rangers – 70/1  
Detroit Red Wings – 75/1  
Arizona Coyotes – 80/1  
Vancouver Canucks – 80/1  
Ottawa Senators – 100/1

Odds for the following season always get posted at the culmination of the playoffs and while they generally provide a decent barometer of what to expect they aren't gospel. Comparing preseason odds with pre-playoff odds makes that pretty clear. Teams that looked like strong contenders before the season look much less so before the playoffs and vice versa, while teams that didn't look like much during the preseason can make it to conference finals and beyond.

Odds were converted to implied probability (minus the vig) for clarity.

Of teams that make the playoffs, pre-season odds explain 29 per cent of pre-playoff odds, which isn't bad for this sport, but does show how tricky it is to predict the outcome of it that far in advance. Hockey is a sport where you should always expect the unexpected and that should've been the main lesson learned from a wild and wacky 2017-18 season.

The final four teams remaining this season were the Vegas Golden Knights and Winnipeg Jets in the West and the Washington Capitals and Tampa Bay Lightning in the East. Last June, here were each team's odds of winning the Stanley Cup according to Sports Odds History.

Tampa Bay Lightning – 10/1  
Washington Capitals – 10/1  
Winnipeg Jets – 65/1  
Vegas Golden Knights – 150/1

While the first two teams were heavy favourites to get there, the latter two weren't. The Western final would've been unfathomable last June, but Winnipeg finally broke through while Vegas shocked the hockey world with an extremely unlikely run. We already know how unprecedented the Golden Knights' season was considering their odds going in, but to put it in further perspective, only two other teams since 2008-09 had odds as low: the 2015-16 Arizona Coyotes and Buffalo Sabres, in the season after both infamously tanked for the right to draft Connor McDavid. They finished the next season with 78 and 81 points, respectively.

But while Vegas making it to the final four was certainly unprecedented, making the playoffs was far less so. Since 2009 there have been 29 teams with Stanley Cup odds at 100-to-1 or lower and seven (including Vegas) of those made the playoffs – three from this past season alone. That list is the 2017-18 Avalanche, Devils and Golden Knights, the 2012-13 Islanders and Wild, the 2011-12 Panthers and the 2009-10 Coyotes. So fret not Sens fans, there is still hope.

The unpredictability of last season is reflected in the odds for 2018-19 as only one team is listed with odds at 100-to-1 or higher. Teams are closer in talent than ever before meaning clubs can go from zero to a hundred, real quick. Vegas's miracle season was the icing on the cake showing that the long-shots do have an actual shot.

That presents a bit of a money-making opportunity considering it's not always the teams you expect that go the distance. Since 2009, there has only been one season where there hasn't been at least one team in the final four with post-Cup odds set at 20-to-1 or higher. In five of 10 seasons, there have been two. Get it right and there's a decent hedge play at stake in the final two rounds.

For the uninitiated, on the chart below 1,000 is the same as 10-to-1

This past season had the highest average odds from final four teams thanks to Vegas, but even if the Golden Knights are omitted, you're still looking at an average of roughly 20-to-1 for Cup finalists and conference finalists. The 2017-18 season was an anomaly, obviously, but the past few seasons have seen a recent trend of unexpected teams going farther than many would've initially given credit for. Even if the Golden Knights are excluded, there's still a Jets team that looked like one of the league's strongest teams that was 65-to-1 after last season. Before that the Predators were at 25-to-1 and made the final, and before that there were the Sharks at nearly 43-to-1. No long-shot teams have actually won during this time period (the highest have been both of Los Angeles's Cups at 16-to-1), but getting there is half the battle and ensures you're in a good position to win some guaranteed money with a hedge.

That doesn't guarantee another surprise run next season, but it's still worth exploring which teams might get there against all odds. While some of this is simply great fortune, there was reason to believe some of those past teams were worth the bet. Hell, I made those bets myself taking San Jose in July of that season, Nashville in December at better odds, and Vegas in June just before the expansion draft (I didn't bet on Winnipeg to win the Cup, but I did have them winning the division so close enough), so who better to guide you through which 2018-19 long-shots deserve your money?

There are 20 teams with odds at 25-to-1 or greater, here's which ones might be worth betting on.

Columbus Blue Jackets – 25-to-1

We'll start with an easy one where the odds aren't exactly stacked, but you still get a decent dark horse play. I figured that was the case this season going into the playoffs and thought they looked even stronger when they were up 2-0 (whoops), but Columbus blew it instead, losing four straight to the eventual Stanley Cup champion. It was the same story the year before where they simply weren't good enough to get past that season's eventual Stanley Cup champion. Two big learning experiences that will make them stronger going forward which is why I'm sticking with them.

The Blue Jackets come in with the 12th best odds which is arguably a bit too low for them. Sitting behind Edmonton, Chicago and Anaheim doesn't sit right with me considering they're a much stronger team than all three. The Blue Jackets have an incredible goalie in Sergei Bobrovsky, an offensive dynamo in Artemi Panarin, and one of the league's best defence pairs in Seth Jones and Zach Werenski. Plus they have depth throughout the lineup. They're a better team than they're given credit for and the Blue Jackets have shown that with two back-to-back strong seasons – now it's just a matter of getting over the hump. The Blue Jackets were a sneaky great team last season with great 5-on-5 numbers, and they'll build on that next season. Right now they're getting overlooked and there's value to be had because of it.

Calgary Flames – 28-to-1

My affinity for the Flames roster is well documented at this point and I'm still stunned they couldn't make the playoffs last season with that team in a particularly weak division. On paper they looked like one of the stronger teams in the league and had the underlying numbers to back it up, they just lacked execution. A lot of that comes down to depth issues. The Flames have one of the brightest young cores in the league, but they haven't been able to surround those guys with talent. Call it the Winnipeg Jets Conundrum where you're left confused at how a team that skilled could be so bad.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

You're not getting 65-to-1 odds this time, but you are getting a similar scenario, one where an underachieving team filled with star-power looks to make a big jump the following season. The Flames are helped by the fact that they're in the weakest division in the league, currently led by a first-year team. The three California teams are still good, but are moving past their primes – Calgary should be able to jump over them without much issue. Ditto goes for their ineptly managed Alberta rivals.

The team still needs to fix their depth woes, but the big pieces are in place for what could be a special season for a team on the rise. The key is learning from the mistakes of the Oilers and not trading one of those big pieces away in a panic move.

### Florida Panthers – 40-to-1

Despite the current front office regime pillaging its own talent, I'm very in on Florida and specifically its core. Star players get you far in this league and the Panthers are loaded after years of ineptitude. Aleksander Barkov is seriously one of the league's best players, finishing 14th in average Game Score last season, and he's only getting better. Up front, he's got Jonathan Huberdeau, Vincent Trocheck and Evgenii Dadonov with him, the core of a lethal top six that few teams can stack up against. On defence, Aaron Ekblad leads the way and while I'm skeptical he's a number one defender at this point, he looks like he's getting there.

What's tantalizing about Florida is its flush prospect pool which could lead to some unexpected contributions this coming season from under-the-radar rookies. The Panthers biggest problem last season – because they gave it away – was depth. Getting value from some young guns could go a long way.

The big question mark will be in net. Florida got some terrific goaltending last season from Roberto Luongo and James Reimer, but the latter has inconsistent tendencies and the former is now 39 years old. That's a lot of risk between the pipes and could make or break the season. I have faith though and 40-to-1 feels like a good bet. Having said that, being in a division with the top three teams on the odds board is a scary proposition.

### New York Islanders\* – 60-to-1

Okay, that asterisk there is super important. It's the John Tavares asterisk. If he goes, then toss this bet in the garbage because that's where the Islanders will be. If he stays, then this team has some intrigue.

It needs to be stressed that I don't think this team is any good, but there's still likely some value with these odds. A team that has Tavares and Mat Barzal down the middle and the offensive fire-power at its disposal up front should be better than the disaster-case that plagued Brooklyn last season. This team was a defensive catastrophe, undoing an explosive offence that should've been more than enough to make the playoffs.

A new coach should help, as should an off-season dedicated to fixing what ails them. I have faith in what this team is capable of – if they can fix their defence and goaltending. That's one if though, and it's not even the big if. That's Tavares. He needs to stay in order for this team to have any chance of being competitive, but if he does then I do think the Islanders can be a sleeper team in the East.

### Carolina Hurricanes – 60-to-1

This is another team with big ifs attached to it, and that starts with a presumably meddling owner who wants to trade anyone not named Sebastian Aho. That's led to prominent names on the block like Jeff Skinner, Noah Hanifin and Justin Faulk and I'm not sure that's the best strategy for a team that has a lot to like that hasn't been able to put it together.

For years, the team has been plagued by Carolina Syndrome, where they've controlled play at an elite rate, but got stung by lady luck to such a significant degree that it felt unlikely it was actually luck at all. What this team needs most is a goalie upgrade. Maybe that's someone new, maybe that's a Scott Darling bounce-back, but it's the biggest problem the Hurricanes have had for the past decade.

There are some great young players on a very deep team, and they're also drafting Andrei Svechnikov in a couple weeks; the offensive superstar they've been missing dearly. Things are coming together and while patience is wearing thin it might be worth it soon. This finally might be the year it comes together for Carolina – though we've been saying that for so long that those words barely matter. In any sense, 60-to-1 is decent value.

### Arizona Coyotes – 80-to-1

Will the Coyotes win the Cup next year? Almost definitely no. Will they take a step forward next season and maybe be the team that goes from zero to a hundred? Almost definitely maybe. I, and many others, figured last year was that year after a big off-season and the team completely stumbled out of the gate. A big injury to their new starting goalie was the reason for that, but once Antti Raanta became healthy this was a markedly different team.

It's a bit silly to use goalie records, but for Arizona it says a lot. The Coyotes went 21-17-6 with Raanta in net last year, a 92 point pace and 8-24-6 without him, a 47 point pace. That was the difference last season. Since January 1 last season, the team was playing better in front of their goalies too with a near break-even Corsi and somehow the sixth best goals percentage in the league going 20-14-7. After falling off a cliff to start the season, the team that many expected showed up in the second half. The young players are only getting better so expect the Coyotes to build on that next season and maybe even make the playoffs as a result.

The Athletic LOADED: 06.12.2018

1098792 Websites

The Athletic / Thirty years after drafting Mike Modano, North Stars GM Lou Nanne fondly looks back on the decision

By Sean Shapiro Jun 11, 2018

In February 1988, Lou Nanne made a trip to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, to watch a draft prospect named Mike Modano.

The American teenager was in the middle of a dominant WHL season with the Prince Albert Raiders. He finished that season with 127 points in 65 games, and Nanne already knew that, if he had the chance, he was going to draft Modano.

On the 30th anniversary of the 1988 NHL draft in Montreal, Nanne spoke to The Athletic and looked back on the process and how he decided to draft Modano with the No. 1 pick.

"I came back from scouting him and I told our owner, 'I'll tell you one thing, we're not selling a lot of tickets right now. But the kid I saw, he could put people in the seats,'" Nanne said. "We needed a franchise-type player that could also lift people out of their seats and that's what Modano did."

The Minnesota North Stars were bad that season, very bad. Minnesota had a 19-48-13 record, finished with a league-worst 51 points and locked up the first-overall pick in the 1988 NHL draft.

Nanne, who was in his final season as the North Stars general manager, was effectively on the clock for two months.

If the North Stars were going to keep the pick it was going to be a decision between Modano and Medicine Hat Tigers forward Trevor Linden. At the time, both were considered future stars, but Linden was considered the safer pick and the one that had less of a chance of bottoming out.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

Linden could be a great player, but he didn't provide the excitement and entertainment on ice that Nanne had seen in person on his trip to Prince Albert.

Nanne wanted to get to know both prospects as people. He wanted to find any potential red flags that would make him re-consider drafting them, and he wanted to see how they interacted with the North Stars ownership group.

So one month before the draft, Nanne and the North Stars owners, George and Gordon Gund, met with both Modano and Linden in Traverse City, Michigan. They spent a couple days meeting with each player, there were discussions about hockey and family, and what it would mean to play for the North Stars.

"We met at the Grand Traverse Hotel in Traverse City," Nanne said. "Everybody loved the two of them, and it was great to meet both. But in our mind, it wasn't even a question anymore. We knew what type of player we needed for our hockey team."

Nanne said Modano was quiet but respectful during those meetings.

"Well, at that time, he was young, just starting to mature. Very quiet, soft-spoken. (Modano) was very engaging and had an engaging smile. He was more quiet and introverted than Linden," Nanne said. "He had all the skills you wanted to see in a hockey player. And as he matured, you knew he'd grow up into a good person."

After that meeting, Nanne was confident he wanted to draft Modano, but he was still at least willing to listen to offers for the No. 1 pick.

The Quebec Nordiques wanted Linden and wanted to move up to No. 1 to select the forward before the Vancouver Canucks picked at No. 2. Quebec offered the third-overall pick and a veteran player, which was reported at the time to be defenseman Randy Moller.

Nanne was only going to make the trade if he could also guarantee that he'd be able to pick Modano with the No. 3 selection. There were conversations with the Canucks about making a side deal to protect Modano and guarantee that he would still be available at No. 3.

It wasn't a realistic conversation for the Canucks, who were understandably not willing to lose out on Linden and Modano. That ended all trade talks, and while there was some public questions about who the North Stars would take, Nanne never wavered on which player he would draft.

"We knew. I really think everybody knew who we were taking, there was no need for cloak and dagger or that other kind of B.S.," Nanne said. "We knew where we were going, we weren't interested in trading the pick if we couldn't guarantee getting Mike. We were looking to get a franchise changing player and that's what we felt we were getting in him."

On June 11, 1988, Nanne announced that the North Stars had selected Modano. Linden went second to the Canucks, and the Nordiques drafted defenseman Curtis Leschyshyn with the third-overall pick.

Modano spent 20 years with the franchise, became the face of the team in both Minnesota and Dallas and finished his career as the top-scoring American-born player in NHL history.

"I think we made the right choice," Nanne said.

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Sportsnet.ca / 8 Stanley Cup champions who survived early deficits

Sean McIndoe | @DownGoesBrown June 11, 2018, 11:14 AM

The Washington Capitals are Stanley Cup champions. That still feels weird to write.

Seeing those words today comes as a mild surprise based on what we expected at the start of the season, when the Capitals were listed with the sixth-best Cup odds. They'd be a bigger surprise based on the start of the playoffs, when Washington went into the post-season with just the eighth-best odds.

But they would have been downright shocking, bordering on the unbelievable, if you'd read them on April 15.

That was the night that Matt Calvert's overtime goal was allowed to stand after an offside review, giving the Blue Jackets the win and a 2-0 series lead in their first-round matchup with Washington. The Caps had blown a two-goal lead on home ice for the second straight game, and found themselves heading to Columbus in a massive hole. There were plenty of reasons to think they wouldn't make it back home for a Game 5. In the history of the NHL playoffs, no team had ever lost the first two games of a best-of-seven series in overtime and come back to win. As Calvert himself put it: "Two games in overtime — that can really crush a team."

It can. But this time it didn't. The Caps blew yet another third-period lead in Game 3, and the two teams headed to sudden death once again. This time, it felt like there was far more than one game hanging in the balance. As a wise man put it at the time:

If the Caps get the next goal they're winning the Cup, if they don't they're getting swept and the roster will probably be detonated. No pressure.

— Down Goes Brown (@DownGoesBrown) April 18, 2018

You know the rest. The Capitals did get the next goal, on a lucky bounce that was credited to Lars Eller. They won the next three to finish off Columbus, slayed the dragon against the Penguins, edged out the Lightning in seven and then handed the Golden Knights their first four-game losing streak in franchise history.

Not bad for a team that was one goal away from a franchise-altering disaster. And yet, this situation isn't all that rare. Looking back at modern NHL history, we can find several examples of Stanley Cup champions who had to overcome the same sort of near-death experience that this year's Capitals did. So today, let's look back at eight other teams from the last 25 years who seemed to be all but done, only to get up off the mat and then go all the way.

### 1) 1993 Montreal Canadiens

The Canadiens' 1993 run is remembered for plenty of things. There was the unbelievable streak of 10 straight overtime wins, Patrick Roy's wink, Marty McSorley's stick, Eric Desjardins's hat trick and Denis Savard's joy. It remains the last Cup for both the franchise and the country, and it didn't even come with all that much suspense — over the last three rounds, the Canadiens never needed more than five games to win a series.

But that first round nearly spelled a quick end to the Habs' hopes, as they drew a tough Nordiques team that was returning to the playoffs for the first time in six years. Quebec held home-ice advantage thanks to a 104-point season, and they looked like the better team early on. Scott Young's overtime winner gave the Nordiques Game 1, and they followed that by cruising to a 4-1 win in Game 2.

Here's where things get crazy. Heading back to Montreal facing a 2-0 deficit, there was talk about whether the Canadiens might try to spark the team with a goaltending switch. That's right — there were people back then who actually thought it might be a good idea to bench a struggling Roy in favour of Andre "Red Light" Racicot. Maybe not many, but they all had the phone numbers of their local call-in radio shows.

There's no evidence that Montreal coach Jacques Demers ever actually considered making the switch, and rightly so. But he didn't shrug off the



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

losses either, delivering emotional post-game sermons to media that included phrases like “We can’t do this to our fans” and “Right now, I’m mad” and “I am very, very, very disappointed.”

Much like this year’s Capitals, the Canadiens found themselves back in overtime in Game 3, knowing that giving up the next goal would almost certainly mean the end of their season. Instead, Vincent Damphousse snuck one by a furious Ron Hextall. We didn’t know it at the time, but Montreal’s unprecedented overtime magic had begun.

Montreal would go 15-2 the rest of the post-season, and Roy would win the Conn Smythe. To this day, nobody who wanted him benched for Racicot has ever admitted it.

### 2) 2011 Boston Bruins

Let’s skip ahead to a year in which the Canadiens were on the other side of a Cup champion’s near-miss. The 2011 Bruins actually faced a 2–0 series deficit twice that year, with the second coming in the Stanley Cup final against the Canucks. But it was the one they faced in the first round against Montreal that felt like it was heading to the kind of loss that reshapes a franchise.

Remember, the Bruins were one year removed from one of the worst collapses in pro-sports history. In 2010, they’d held a 3–0 series lead over the Flyers, only to lose three straight to set up a seventh game. Then they’d led 3–0 in that game, only to blow that lead, too. It was the sort of loss that has even the most diehard fans wondering if something has gone terribly wrong with a team.

That collapse didn’t cost Claude Julien his job, but it had him on thin ice heading into the 2011 post-season. When Montreal went into Boston and took the first two games, holding the Bruins to a single goal in the process, you figured Julien was already packing up his desk. As one Montreal columnist gleefully put it, Julien “has been flat out-coached by Jacques Martin.” That’s generally not a phrase you want to hear in the playoffs.

Game 3 saw Tim Thomas stand on his head in a 4–2 win, and Michael Ryder’s overtime winner in Game 4 sent the series back to Boston all tied up. The two teams would battle until overtime of a seventh game, where Nathan Horton would win it for the Bruins. They’d get some revenge against the Flyers with a second-round sweep, then go on to capture their first Stanley Cup in 39 years.

### 3) 2002 Detroit Red Wings

If there are any Canucks fans still reading after we mentioned the 2011 Bruins, this section should finish them off.

The 2001–02 Red Wings were easily the Cup favourites heading into the season; they were coming off a 116-point season in a year when nobody else managed more than 101. But the eighth-seeded Canucks seemed poised to pull off the upset, stealing the opener on Henrik Sedin’s OT winner and then rolling to a 5–2 win in Game 2.

With the Red Wings on the ropes and a raucous home crowd cheering them on, the Canucks tied Game 3 with a goal midway through the second period and were headed into the intermission with a chance to shove the favourites into an impossible hole.

Every Canucks fan remembers what happened next:

The goal held up as the winner, and the Canucks didn’t win another game. The Red Wings went on to beat the Blues and Avalanche on their way to an easy final matchup with the overmatched Hurricanes.

But look on the bright side, Canucks fans. While the series may have featured one of the most devastating gut-punch goals in modern NHL history, at least it served up a legendary Brian Burke press conference.

### 4) 2000 New Jersey Devils

So far, we’ve focused on teams that had their near-death experience early in the first round. But some eventual Cup champs have made it a bit further into their run before their backs were against the wall.

For example, the 2000 Devils had a relatively easy path to the conference final. They swept the Panthers in the opening round, then knocked out the Maple Leafs in series that ended with the infamous six-shot shootout. That set up a tough matchup against the 105-point Flyers, but the Devils got off to a strong start, stealing home-ice advantage with a 4–1 road win in Game 1.

That’s where things started to unravel. The Devils blew a third-period lead in Game 2 and went on to lose. Then they dropped both games in New Jersey to fall behind 3–1 in the series. It’s worth remembering that at this point, the Devils weren’t anyone’s idea of a proven powerhouse; they’d only won one Cup, and hadn’t been out of the second round since 1995. They’d even fired their coach late in the season. Now they were facing three straight must-win games, two of which would come on the road. And to make matters even worse, the rumour mill had Flyers superstar Eric Lindros almost ready to return to the lineup after missing two months.

That last bit ended up defining the series. The Devils stayed alive with a Game 5 win in Philadelphia. Lindros returned and scored a goal in Game 6, but the Devils held on for a 2–1 win. That set up a Game 7 showdown that turned out to be a classic, with a Patrik Elias goal with less than three minutes left in regulation holding up as the winner.

Of course, that’s not what people tend to remember from that game. Instead, we immediately think back to this:

The Devils went on to beat the Dallas Stars in the final, opening the series with a 7–3 win and closing it out with Jason Arnott’s overtime Cup winner.

### 5) 2013 Chicago Blackhawks

The Devils weren’t the only champs to overcome a 3-1 deficit against a rival; the Blackhawks had to pull off the feat before winning their second Cup back in 2013.

That year’s team went into the playoffs as heavy favourites, having won the Presidents’ Trophy. And they finished 21 points ahead of the Red Wings, a huge gap when you remember that the lockout-shortened season lasted only 48 games. But once the second round arrived, the Wings gave the Hawks all they could handle, taking a 3–1 series lead thanks to three straight wins in which the high-flying Hawks were held to just two goals. There were whispers that Corey Crawford, who wasn’t on the 2010 championship team and hadn’t won a playoff round in his first two seasons as a starter, might not be post-season material.

Crawford settled in and the Blackhawks found their offence in Game 5, taking a 4–1 decision to extend the series. They trailed heading into the third period of Game 6, but scored three straight to earn a 4–3 win and send the series back to Chicago for a seventh game. That one would need overtime, with the winner coming from an unlikely hero.

Brent Seabrook’s goal sent the Blackhawks through to the conference final, and they lost just three games the rest of the way while dispatching the Kings and Bruins to capture their second Cup of the cap era.

### 6) 2006 Carolina Hurricanes

To this day, the Hurricanes’ championship still feels odd. It was completely legitimate, and they won it fair and square (although some Oiler fans might disagree). But it came at the end of one of the most unpredictable years the league has ever seen, as the post-lockout landscape made the season feel almost random. And the Hurricanes missing the playoffs in 11 of the next 12 years makes the whole thing feel like an out-of-nowhere one-hit wonder.

All of which makes it worth remembering how the Hurricanes’ run started, and how close it came to ending quickly. Carolina was a very good team, having put up 112 points and earning the conference’s second seed, and were heavy favourites over the Canadiens. But they got shelled on home ice in the opener, losing 6–1. And they gave up six more in the second game, including Michael Ryder’s overtime winner to send the series back to Montreal with the Habs up 2-0 and thinking sweep.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

That set the stage for a pair of series turning points. The first was Hurricanes' coach Peter Laviolette's decision to bench struggling starter Martin Gerber and hand the reins over to rookie Cam Ward. As bad as Gerber had been, it was at least a somewhat-controversial move; Ward had only 29 games of NHL experience under his belt, and hadn't looked sharp in relief of Gerber in Game 2. But he gave the Hurricanes the sort of performance they needed in Game 3, stopping 27 of 28 shots.

The second key moment came midway through that third game. Justin Williams's high-stick on Saku Koivu put the Canadiens' captain and second-leading scorer out of the game and the series. To make matters worse, the foul went uncalled, even as officials handed out five straight minors to Montreal in the game's second half. One of those came in overtime, and with Tomas Plekanec in the box for hooking it was Eric Staal who scored the winner.

The Hurricanes would win the next three, all by one goal, including another overtime win in Montreal in Game 6. The Hurricanes went on to win their first Stanley Cup and rookie Ward earned Conn Smythe honours. Would Koivu have made a difference in any of those one-goal games if he'd been available to play? We'll never know.

### 7) 2014 Los Angeles Kings

We've been looking at teams that were facing 2-0 or 3-1 series deficits, but we can't forget about the recent Cup winner who pulled off the rare comeback from down 3-0.

The 2014 first-round matchup between the Kings and Sharks figured to be a tight one. The Sharks had been the better regular-season team, but the Kings were just two years removed from a championship while San Jose's playoff history was somewhat less positive. Given the bad blood between the two teams, it looked like a potential classic.

Instead, the Sharks dominated. They took a 5-0 lead in Game 1 before cruising to a 6-3 win. Then they outright embarrassed the Kings in game two, pumping seven straight goals past Jonathan Quick on their way to a 7-2 win. That led to Darryl Sutter offering only a lukewarm endorsement of his starter, calling Quick's game "OK", and creating some chatter of a possible goaltending switch.

Sutter ended up going back to Quick for Game 3 and got a better performance, but Patrick Marleau's overtime winner stunned the L.A. crowd and gave the Sharks a 3-0 lead that seemed to all but end the series.

We all know how that turned out. The Kings didn't just come back — they steamrolled the Sharks. They outscored San Jose 18-5 while winning four straight; Drew Doughty would later tell reporters that the Kings knew they had the series won early on in the comeback, dropping his infamous "you could see it in their eyes" jab at Joe Thornton and the Sharks.

The Kings would face three more elimination games on their way to the final, where they'd knock off the New York Rangers in five to win their second Cup in three years.

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

### 8) 2009 Pittsburgh Penguins

We can't do a playoff-comeback story without at least one mention of the Capitals blowing a series. Don't worry — I'm guessing their fans won't mind right now.

The Penguins were looking to get back to the final after falling just short of a Cup win in 2008. But they'd stumbled through an inconsistent regular season that cost coach Michel Therrien his job before running into the Capitals in round two. The Caps took each of the first two games, including the memorable "dueling hat tricks" showdown between Sidney Crosby and Alex Ovechkin:

Facing a must-win Game 3 on home ice, the Penguins held a 2-1 lead late in regulation. But Nicklas Backstrom scored with less than two minutes left to send the game to overtime, leaving the Caps one goal

away from a 3-0 series lead. Instead, it was Kris Letang who found the net, and the Penguins were back in the series.

The Pens went on to win the series thanks to a 6-2 blowout in Game 7 that helped cement Ovechkin's reputation as a player who couldn't deliver in the clutch. The Penguins would go on to sweep the Hurricanes and then win the rematch against the Red Wings, overcoming another 2-0 series deficit in the process. It would be the first of three Cups for Crosby and the cap-era Pens, and yet another in a long line of Washington playoff failures.

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Sportsnet.ca / Stanley Cup runner-up Vegas Golden Knights' off-season checklist

Sonny Sachdeva June 11, 2018, 7:57 AM

The Vegas Golden Knights upended every facet of the status quo in their first NHL campaign. Now it's time to follow it up.

They had a little bit of everything in their first go-round — a depth player becoming a 40-goal titan, an aging star in net posting the best season of his career, and all manner of other castoffs collectively rising to piece together a season so absurd we may never see one similar. But with the Knights' Cinderella story offering up a twist in its final pages by bowing out of the post-season via four straight losses to the newly crowned Washington Capitals, Vegas' eyes are now turned to the future.

So, what's next?

If the most difficult task general manager George McPhee had to take on was building a contender in year one, a close second would be following up whatever it is we just saw with a similarly thrilling year No. 2.

They have the tools needed to build an equally intriguing second season, with a hefty amount of cap space and, now, some undeniable appeal. With that in mind, here's a look at what McPhee needs to accomplish before his club's sophomore year:

### SOLVE THE WILLIAM KARLSSON CONUNDRUM

The most intriguing puzzle McPhee has to solve is what to do with William Karlsson. The 25-year-old's rapid ascent is well-documented — after posting 18 goals through his 183 pre-Vegas appearances, he more than doubled that total in Knights colours, finishing with 43 goals and 78 points overall. And he did it for the bargain-bin sum of \$1 million in a full 82-game season.

Vegas' cap space (roughly \$26.5 million, per CapFriendly) and the fact that Karlsson is an RFA rather than a UFA make this negotiation easier. But it's still a tricky one. Does Vegas treat Karlsson like a bona fide 40-goal-scorer after the breakout year, and pay him as such?

Perhaps the more important question is, how much does McPhee view Karlsson's previous performance as rooted in limited opportunity vs. limited performance?

If he's taken as what he was in 2017-18, he might be pushing towards something like Vladimir Tarasenko's \$7.5 million cap hit.

However, McPhee inked Karlsson's linemate Jonathan Marchessault to a six-year deal in January paying him \$5 million per year, on par with the other third of the team's top line, Reilly Smith. It's fair to assume they'd like Karlsson's deal to line up in the range of those two. The question is whether they can make that happen or whether Karlsson, who's on the cusp of his first significant payday, looks to angle towards a better deal.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

### THE VETERAN WINGERS: DECIDE WHO'S STAYING AND WHO'S GOING

While the risk of losing Karlsson is mitigated by his RFA status, veteran wingers James Neal and David Perron are far less of a sure thing. Both become UFAs on July 1, granting them the chance to sign with any club they so choose — and suitors are sure to come knocking after the performances they put forth in 2017-18.

McPhee has a few different issues to navigate here. The central one is whether the team wants Neal and Perron back in the fold at all — the 30-year-olds are two of the older members of Vegas' forward corps, and likely won't come cheap on their next deals. That said, they both wore letters on a Knights team that desperately needed leaders early on, and losing the pair would mean a significant shakeup for the top-six chemistry of a Vegas squad that clearly played well together.

It'll be a delicate situation, as McPhee and Co. have to sort out, firstly, whether they want both back, secondly, whether they'd prefer to keep just one of the two (if so, which one), and thirdly, what number makes sense to make that happen without cutting into one of the team's greatest advantages at the moment — their glut of cap space.

Both Neal and Perron have expressed interest in staying in Vegas next season and beyond. But it might not be that simple.

"Not everyone will be back," McPhee told NHL.com's Danny Webster on Friday. "We've all learned lessons over the years. You examine what happens in the salary cap world. You have to be smart about what you do and the contracts you're handing out."

### GIVE 'THE FLOWER' WHAT HE'S DUE

Before Karlsson, Neal, Perron and all the rest, there was Marc-Andre Fleury; the first undisputed star the Golden Knights could call their own. The veteran netminder dutifully served as the face of the franchise until the team around him established an identity and started to spread the spotlight.

Fleury also did his part on the ice, putting up the best save percentage of his career — .927 through 46 games, which held true during the grind of 20 post-season games as well.

Regardless of the championship experience he adds, and all the off-ice influence he brings to the organization, Fleury proved beyond a shadow of a doubt this season that he remains the club's best possible option in the cage, shelving the need to look elsewhere for a future No. 1.

He has one more year on his current deal, paying him \$5.75 million annually, and then hits unrestricted free agency. Sorting out a proper term and cap hit for the three-time champion will be the focal point of working out an extension, but the 33-year-old proved he's still got plenty to give at the highest level.

Fleury: "A couple years ago I was getting told I was too old to play. I still love it, still have a lot of fun."

Certainly Vegas has given me this opportunity to do what I love and I wouldn't want to go anywhere else. Hopefully I can finish my career here." [pic.twitter.com/vl6N1d4xay](https://pic.twitter.com/vl6N1d4xay)

— Vegas Golden Knights (@GoldenKnights) June 8, 2018

### FISH FOR THE BEST IN THE FREE-AGENCY POOL

Year two in Vegas will be all about pushing up against the greatly raised expectations for success and the persisting wait for the breakout names to regress. Adding in some bona fide elite talent on July 1 will help with that effort, whether that be up front with a John Tavares or James van Riemsdyk, or on the blue line with an addition like John Carlson.

McPhee's dabble in the free-agency market will come down to more than just deep pockets, though — they've also become an organization that players genuinely want to suit up for.

"They've got a ton of cap room, a boatload of flexibility and players from all over the league asking their agents about going there," Elliotte Friedman wrote in his most recent 31 Thoughts column. "It's a destination. Gerard Gallant's reputation for being a players' coach is growing, too, with Reilly Smith saying he's never had someone 'with a shorter memory.'"

There are more than a few interesting names floating in the free-agency pool (how about adding some intrigue with an Ilya Kovalchuk signing?) and Vegas has the tools needed to be in on the majority of them.

Or they could re-visit a different kind of game-changing move that already nearly came to be.

"The Golden Knights came close to acquiring Erik Karlsson at the deadline. After seeing how the Capitals locked down the neutral zone and point men in the final, you can see how they might revisit something like this," Friedman wrote Sunday. "Word is one of the biggest hang-ups at the end was Cody Glass, drafted sixth overall last June. Vegas didn't want to include him."

Does the manner in which Vegas saw their Cup dreams dashed prompt them to change their mind on the Cody Glass front? Whether or not it does depends on the more fundamental question that's underlying every situation on this list: Where does McPhee see Vegas ending up in 2019?

The original plan was to think long-term and weather a storm for the first few years. That said, an unexpected run to the Stanley Cup Final surely changed that approach. By how much, and to what effect, are the two factors that will determine what happens next.

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

Elliotte Friedman June 10, 2018, 2:02 PM

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

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

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

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

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

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



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

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

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

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

After the season, worried their star wouldn't say no to any request, the organization dialled it back. When a young player gets that much attention, there can be jealousy, but that first year, it wasn't a problem.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A trade?

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

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

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

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

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

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

And the party hasn't even reached Russia yet.

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

## 31 THOUGHTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you are looking for more insight into Trotz, when he did some studio work for Hockey Night in Canada several years ago, he presented us with a copy of Fearless, by Eric Blehm. Trotz said it resonated with him



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

for two reasons: Faith, which is important to him and his family, and the idea that people have layers to them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whatever the case, Kuznetsov was spectacular.

One habit: he never looks at his shifts.

Even when you play this well?

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

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

He stayed three years ago, but it was tight.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Offer Sheet (AAV) Compensation

\$1,339,575 or below None

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Sportsnet.ca / Montreal Canadiens Off-Season Report: Can they find a No. 1 centre?

Eric Engels June 11, 2018

This is not a rebuild.

The Montreal Canadiens aren't stripping it down after a 28th-place finish in the NHL standings this past season. They aren't firing head coach Claude Julien, they aren't trading franchise goaltender Carey Price, and they aren't moving top defenceman Shea Weber.

Knowing all of that is knowing general manager Marc Bergevin is under the gun to make the necessary changes to allow those three men to guide the Canadiens back to the Stanley Cup playoffs—and possibly through them—as early as next season. It's knowing that if there isn't a drastic improvement, Bergevin's contract, which is set to expire in 2022, will likely be cut short.

There's no time to spare on a reset.

There are gaping holes at centre and on defence, and Bergevin won't have a better opportunity to fill them than this summer. The Canadiens have a fair amount of cap space, five picks in the first two rounds and 10 total in the upcoming NHL Draft, and they have some roster players who would be attractive to other teams.

The clock is ticking.

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.

Salary cap space: \$12.4 million (Source: CapFriendly.com)

UFAs

Ales Hemsky, \$1 million

RFAs

Logan Shaw, \$650,000

Daniel Carr, \$725,000

Jacob De La Rose, \$725,000

Phillip Danault, \$912,500

2018 draft picks: 1st, 2nd, 2nd (CHI), 2nd (TOR), 2nd (WSH), 3rd, 4th, 4th (EDM), 4th (WPG), 5th

Biggest off-season need

Same as last year, and the year before that, and the decade before that... The Canadiens desperately need help at centre.

Jonathan Drouin had a hard time in his first NHL season at the position, but he also showed real promise towards the end of it.

As of right now, the plan is to keep the 23-year-old at centre in 2018-19. If they're going to get the best out of him, they're going to need to insulate him by acquiring a centre who can play higher up the lineup.

Expect the Canadiens to also seek out depth at the position.

Another need is a left-shot defenceman who can serve as an adequate partner for Weber.

The team also needs to target a couple of puck-movers who can skate and create offence from the back end.

Possible off-season targets

John Tavares: It's no secret the Canadiens are at the top of the list of teams interested in acquiring the 27-year-old superstar.

Tavares is a perennial point-per-game player in the prime of his career who can do it all and is at his best when the game is on the line — Tavares is capable of altering the complexion of a team in an instant.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

That's what would happen to the Canadiens if they land him via free agency, which is why it's anticipated they'll be willing to put a blank cheque in front of him when July rolls around.

There's no indication yet what Tavares will do. We expect he'll field offers, but all bets are off as to where he'll choose to play for the next seven or eight years.

Consensus is that it will take a lot more than (a boatload of) money to entice him. Molson, Bergevin, Price, Weber and anyone else on the Canadiens will have to persuade him, and they'll have to convince him he can win with Montreal in short order.

If Tavares doesn't come to Montreal, here's a list of centres the Canadiens might target:

**Ryan O'Reilly:** He's got another five years at \$7.5 million on the cap, but he'll be paid \$8.5 million in actual salary next year, then \$6 million in each of the remaining four. A lot of money, no doubt.

But the 27-year-old has consistently produced between 55 and 65 points in each of the past five seasons and is a versatile centre who can play in all situations. He might just be worth it.

O'Reilly's also looking like a strong candidate to move, with Jack Eichel as the established No. 1 and Casey Mittelstadt emerging as a star in the making.

And after O'Reilly shared his opinion on the state of the Sabres by suggesting they accepted a culture of losing, he might already have one foot out the door.

"It's crept into all of our games. Yeah, it's disappointing. It's sad," O'Reilly said on April 29, just two days after Buffalo finished one of its worst seasons in franchise history. "I feel throughout the year I've lost the love of the game multiple times and just need to get back to it because it's eating myself up, and eats the other guys up, too."

Montreal could very well be the place O'Reilly rediscovers his passion, though it's hard to anticipate what the cost of acquisition would be. One would think the Sabres would be interested in a young, talented forward who is already under contract.

We'll see if the Canadiens would pony up to acquire O'Reilly's services.

Other potential targets at centre: Paul Stastny, Winnipeg Jets (UFA), Joe Thornton, San Jose Sharks (UFA), Tyler Bozak, Toronto Maple Leafs (UFA), and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, Edmonton Oilers (trade).

**Noah Hanifin:** Under normal circumstances a 21-year-old defenceman with all kinds of upside, and who was drafted fifth overall in 2015, would be completely off-limits. But under new owner Tom Dundon and new general manager Don Waddell, the Hurricanes have an all-bets-are-off feel to them right now. That could lead to Hanifin moving off a deep, young blue line in exchange for some help up front.

If you're wondering what he'd do for the Canadiens, it's fairly obvious he'd be a perfect fit with Weber. Hanifin is a smooth-skating lefty who's sturdy in his own end and is just scratching the surface of what he can do offensively.

Other potential targets on defence: John Carlson, Washington Capitals (UFA), Tobias Enstrom, Winnipeg Jets (UFA), Oscar Klefbom, Edmonton Oilers (trade), Mike Green, Detroit Red Wings (UFA), Dan Hamhuis, Dallas Stars (UFA), Jack Johnson, Columbus Blue Jackets (UFA), Luca Sbisa, Vegas Golden Knights (UFA), Kevin Connauton, Arizona Coyotes (UFA).

Trade candidates

Canadiens captain Max Pacioretty is a year away from unrestricted free agency and is due a considerable raise on his \$4.5 million cap hit after scoring at least 30 goals in each of the five seasons leading up to his disappointing 2017-18 campaign.

There are reports the Canadiens are discussing a contract extension with Pacioretty, but perhaps that's purely for the purpose of creating cost certainty and increasing his value on the trade market.

The sense is that trading Pacioretty could be a conduit to improve at centre or on defence. Even if he inks a new deal on July 1—the first day he's eligible to do so—don't expect the rumours to die down.

Alex Galchenyuk is another player who could be changing addresses. The 24-year-old has had his name circulating in the rumour mill for the better part of two years, and he could prove very attractive considering his upside and manageable \$4.9 million cap hit.

Galchenyuk took considerable strides in the second half of this season and appears to be on the verge of a real breakout. But so long as the Canadiens view him as a winger, the possibility will exist that they ship him out for help up the middle.

Other potential trade candidates: Jordie Benn (D), Mike Reilly (D), Andrew Shaw (F).

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.12.2018

1098797 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Winnipeg Jets Off-Season Report: A salary cap crunch is coming

Rory Boylen | June 11, 2018, 1:50 PM

Prior to 2017, the Winnipeg Jets had never been big players on either the trade or free agent markets, but that changed in the past 365 days or so.

With a need to add to the blue line and get some security in net, GM Kevin Cheveldayoff signed Dmitry Kulikov and Steve Mason as UFAs last July. Then at the trade deadline, Cheveldayoff swung big for Paul Stastny, which ended up being a very successful acquisition, even if he walks as a UFA this summer.

So now that they have a trip to the conference final under their belt, will this kind of activity be the new norm in Winnipeg? Don't count on it.

For as open as their Stanley Cup window appears, anything the Jets do this summer must have next summer in mind. That's when Patrik Laine and Kyle Connor become RFAs and Blake Wheeler and Tyler Myers become UFAs — Laine's new cap hit could especially warp the team's wiggle room. All four of them could sign their new deals as soon as this July 1.

There are some big, expiring RFA deals to figure out this summer, too. Although the Jets have more than \$20 million in cap space, most of that will go towards players who are already on the team. The Jets have three big RFAs who will be up for large raises and at least one expensive UFA in Stastny who they'd explore keeping — although it just may not be tenable in the end.

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.

Two of their top four blueliners will see a big boost — Josh Morrissey will get his first post-ELC contract and Jacob Trouba is coming off a short-term, two-year bridge deal. If the former gets a bridge deal of his own it could come in higher than the \$6 million total Trouba got, given the rising cap. Trouba, meantime, has more intrigue not just because of how much money he's bound to get, but also because he had asked for a trade once upon a time. That was reportedly rescinded shortly after he resigned, but remains a point of note.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

What will Trouba come in at? Currently the second-most-used blueliner on the Jets, he'll be the guy to take over No. 1 duties from Dustin Byfuglien possibly over the duration of this next contract. Jaccob Slavin, another 24-year-old blueliner who averaged a team-high 22:35 of ice for the Carolina Hurricanes, signed a seven-year extension last July with a \$5.3 million AAV. Colton Parayko (22:37) was 24 when he signed for a \$5.5 million cap hit with the Blues last summer. Are these fair comparables Trouba could come in just above because of the changing upper limit?

Just 24 NHL defencemen have a cap hit higher than \$5.5 million and only two of them (Aaron Ekblad and Dougie Hamilton) are age 24 or younger. The Jets should expect Trouba's contract to at least double.

The biggest increase, however, could come in net. Connor Hellebuyck started the season as the goalie of the future, but not as the No. 1 — by the end of it he was a Vezina Trophy finalist. Coming off a one-year "show me" contract with a \$2.25 million cap hit, the 25-year-old Hellebuyck will command a hefty raise that could also double.

Because of these contracts and the ones due next year, there may not be enough room for Stastny, who will be the second- or third-most coveted centre on the free agent market. If he does stay, however, Mathieu Perreault can play anywhere and \$5.291-million man Bryan Little is a natural centre, so either could become a trade option if Stastny returns. Something would have to give.

Salary Cap Space: \$20.5 million

### UFAs

Shawn Matthias, \$2.125 million

Matt Hendricks, \$700,000

Paul Stastny, \$7 million

Tobias Enstrom, \$5.75 million

Michael Hutchinson, \$1.15 million

### RFAs

Brandon Tanev, \$700,000

Joel Armia, \$925,000

Marko Dano, \$850,000

Adam Lowry, \$1.125 million

Jacob Trouba, \$2.812 million

Tucker Poolman, \$925,000

Joe Morrow, \$650,000

Josh Morrissey, \$863,333

Connor Hellebuyck, \$2.25 million

2018 draft picks: 2nd, 3rd, 5th (own), 5th (BOS), 6th, 7th

### Biggest off-season need

There is no glaring area that must be improved this summer, but Winnipeg's strong track record of drafting and developing is now starting to turn into tough cap decisions. As much as the Jets can keep their eye on a Stanley Cup window that's opening, they have to be mindful of what's to come a year from now.

If Stastny leaves, centre could become an area of need, although Jack Roslovic seems destined to become a full-time NHLer in 2018-19 and can play the position — or Perreault could end up there. Tobias Enstrom will not be back with the only NHL organization he's known, and that opens up the need for a left-shot defenceman. But even that could be filled from within if the team determines 21-year-old Sami Niku is ready. The Finn, and a seventh-round pick in 2015, was the highest-scoring

rookie blueliner in the AHL this season and scored a goal in his one NHL game against Montreal in April.

All this considered, the Jets now face the same task so many high-end teams have been challenged with in the cap era: finding cheap, productive, under-the-radar talent to complement the highly paid core guys. The Jets won't be big players in free agency and given Cheveldayoff's track record and the season the team just had, a roster-changing blockbuster trade is unlikely as well. Winnipeg just needs to tinker, and there are options out there to achieve it.

With the organization so loaded with forward prospects (AHL Outstanding Rookie of the Year Mason Appleton could even get a look), our off-season targets focus more on the blue line and left-shooting defenders.

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

### Possible Off-Season targets

Ian Cole: If a veteran is willing to take a two- or three-year deal that isn't too costly he might be a better fit for this team right away than Niku. Cole would be a nice addition as a third-line guy behind left shots Morrissey and Kulikov, who would fit right in to PK duties that could rise if/when injuries hit.

Kevin Connauton: Given what Vegas just accomplished and the way it played the game, the Jets could look for something much different and target Connauton, a low-risk third-pair guy who moves the puck well and has surprisingly good offensive totals in limited exposure. He scored 11 goals in 2017-18 averaging just 15:11 of ice time and almost no PP time. The Jets use just one defenceman on the PP, so he wouldn't usurp time from other blueliners there. Now that they're chasing Cups, though, it's imperative for Winnipeg to find cheap depth and Connauton is an interesting target in that mindset.

Michal Kempny: A healthy scratch in Chicago before being shipped to Washington at the deadline and thriving with 17:42 minutes per game in the playoffs, Kempny would be worth a look if the price doesn't climb too high in a bidding war. The problem here is that he'll be 28 at the start of next season and has just 103 games played. He wasn't even on the radar before these playoffs. But if the price is right, Kempny would fit as a shutdown third-pair option and he has Stanley Cup experience now.

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1098798 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / In praise of Alex Ovechkin's rowdy Stanley Cup celebrations

Mark Spector | June 11, 2018, 11:43 AM

If you can drink all forms of alcohol out of hockey's Holy Grail, then does it fit to fill it full of water on a Washington Monday morning, and wash down an Advil out of the Stanley Cup?

And if we allow Alex Ovechkin that courtesy, can the metaphor extend to the indignant who have shared their outrage these past few days as Ovechkin and his Capital teammates have taken Big Stanley out on the town like an old college roommate?

So they're havin' a few. You try making it through two months of playoff hockey, with the constant, vice-like pressure and its accompanying abstinence, without releasing the steam valve upon its conclusion.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

Swimming in the fountain? OK, that had a little bit of “Patrick Kane visits Madison, Wisc.,” to it. But so what? It was harmless, though admittedly a little crass.

Only a week ago, much of the hockey world decried the lack of personality on display from players at hockey’s marquee event. Players score hat tricks and give all the credit to teammates and coaches. Then the next day the ham-handed National Hockey League spares its stars the media attention and runs out a bunch of fourth-liners to the podium, while across the way LeBron James and Steph Curry speak twice a day to media for the duration of the NBA Final.

Now, thanks to social media, we get Ovechkin unplugged every day, and folks are complaining? We’ll riff off of an old Bryan Marchment line on this one: “Go watch tennis.”

Oh my god Alex Ovechkin was doing keg stands out of the Stanley Cup in the middle of Georgetown after throwing out the first pitch at a Nationals game and then ended up swimming half-naked in a fountain and I never thought I’d say this but this was all worth the 44-year wait [pic.twitter.com/WZ5Bfh2aEM](https://pic.twitter.com/WZ5Bfh2aEM)

— Rachel Nichols (@Rachel\_\_Nichols) June 10, 2018

The Stanley Cup is the hardest trophy to win, and that’s not just a hockey guy talking up his game. It is fact.

Hockey teams play five times the games and have 10 times the travel of a Super Bowl winner. The NBA is a physical place, but hard collisions are encouraged, not penalized in hockey. Baseball is gruelling, but sorry, it is nowhere close to as physically taxing as playoff hockey.

Hockey players are moving faster on skates than anyone on cleats or sneakers, so the contact is exponentially harder. And find me a comparable in any of those sports to shot blocking, in either volume or pain inflicted. It doesn’t exist.

So when it all ends, and a guy like Ovechkin takes the Cup to the people, how can we not smile?

I live in Edmonton, where the Stanley Cup spent some time in the ’80s. It swam in pools, went to clubs, annually visited Mark Messier’s hometown tavern — The Bruin Inn, in St. Albert, Alta., — and who knows what all was consumed out of that shiny bowl?

The difference? There was no social media when the Oilers, Islanders or Canadiens owned the big mug. No cell phones, no Instagram, and no place to post a sordid Kodak snapshot other than a newspaper.

Sure, Sidney Crosby never took the Cup on the same kind of drunken tours that Ovechkin led over the weekend. So what? Sid’s not Ovi, and if you’re just figuring that out now, well, you haven’t been paying very close attention.

How many people on a D.C patio this weekend looked up to see Ovechkin and his teammates walking by, singing “We Are The Champions!” and offering a chance to have a picture with the Stanley Cup?

What better way to give back in a town that, for 40 years, has seen its hockey team fall short? Not to mention its football, basketball and baseball teams.

So let’s make some comparisons again: Would the dainty, delicate World Series Trophy have survived a Friday night with Ovi and the boys? No chance.

Would you even bother to carry around the paperweights that are the NBA and NFL championship trophies, or would the basketball and football be rolling down the stadium stairs before the seventh-inning stretch at that Nationals game that Stanley watched this weekend?

If you can’t fill your trophy up with champagne and chug it out in celebration, it says here, you should go back to the hardware store and get a new one.

If you can drink out of it, and you’ve been waiting as long as Ovechkin and the Capitals to take that first sip, hell, take it out on the town and have as much fun with it as humanly possible.

They spent the past two months saying the right things. Give ‘em a break, folks, and let the boys cut loose for a few days.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.12.2018

1098799 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Stanley Cup runner-up Vegas Golden Knights' off-season checklist

Sonny Sachdeva | June 11, 2018, 7:57 AM

The Vegas Golden Knights upended every facet of the status quo in their first NHL campaign. Now it’s time to follow it up.

They had a little bit of everything in their first go-round — a depth player becoming a 40-goal titan, an aging star in net posting the best season of his career, and all manner of other castoffs collectively rising to piece together a season so absurd we may never see one similar. But with the Knights’ Cinderella story offering up a twist in its final pages by bowing out of the post-season via four straight losses to the newly crowned Washington Capitals, Vegas’ eyes are now turned to the future.

So, what’s next?

If the most difficult task general manager George McPhee had to take on was building a contender in year one, a close second would be following up whatever it is we just saw with a similarly thrilling year No. 2.

They have the tools needed to build an equally intriguing second season, with a hefty amount of cap space and, now, some undeniable appeal. With that in mind, here’s a look at what McPhee needs to accomplish before his club’s sophomore year:

### SOLVE THE WILLIAM KARLSSON CONUNDRUM

The most intriguing puzzle McPhee has to solve is what to do with William Karlsson. The 25-year-old’s rapid ascent is well-documented — after posting 18 goals through his 183 pre-Vegas appearances, he more than doubled that total in Knights colours, finishing with 43 goals and 78 points overall. And he did it for the bargain-bin sum of \$1 million in a full 82-game season.

Vegas’ cap space (roughly \$26.5 million, per CapFriendly) and the fact that Karlsson is an RFA rather than a UFA make this negotiation easier. But it’s still a tricky one. Does Vegas treat Karlsson like a bona fide 40-goal-scorer after the breakout year, and pay him as such?

Perhaps the more important question is, how much does McPhee view Karlsson’s previous performance as rooted in limited opportunity vs. limited performance?

If he’s taken as what he was in 2017-18, he might be pushing towards something like Vladimir Tarasenko’s \$7.5 million cap hit.

However, McPhee inked Karlsson’s linemate Jonathan Marchessault to a six-year deal in January paying him \$5 million per year, on par with the other third of the team’s top line, Reilly Smith. It’s fair to assume they’d like Karlsson’s deal to line up in the range of those two. The question is whether they can make that happen or whether Karlsson, who’s on the cusp of his first significant payday, looks to angle towards a better deal.

THE VETERAN WINGERS: DECIDE WHO’S STAYING AND WHO’S GOING



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

While the risk of losing Karlsson is mitigated by his RFA status, veteran wingers James Neal and David Perron are far less of a sure thing. Both become UFAs on July 1, granting them the chance to sign with any club they so choose — and suitors are sure to come knocking after the performances they put forth in 2017-18.

McPhee has a few different issues to navigate here. The central one is whether the team wants Neal and Perron back in the fold at all — the 30-year-olds are two of the older members of Vegas' forward corps, and likely won't come cheap on their next deals. That said, they both wore letters on a Knights team that desperately needed leaders early on, and losing the pair would mean a significant shakeup for the top-six chemistry of a Vegas squad that clearly played well together.

It'll be a delicate situation, as McPhee and Co. have to sort out, firstly, whether they want both back, secondly, whether they'd prefer to keep just one of the two (if so, which one), and thirdly, what number makes sense to make that happen without cutting into one of the team's greatest advantages at the moment — their glut of cap space.

Both Neal and Perron have expressed interest in staying in Vegas next season and beyond. But it might not be that simple.

"Not everyone will be back," McPhee told NHL.com's Danny Webster on Friday. "We've all learned lessons over the years. You examine what happens in the salary cap world. You have to be smart about what you do and the contracts you're handing out."

## GIVE 'THE FLOWER' WHAT HE'S DUE

Before Karlsson, Neal, Perron and all the rest, there was Marc-Andre Fleury; the first undisputed star the Golden Knights could call their own. The veteran netminder dutifully served as the face of the franchise until the team around him established an identity and started to spread the spotlight.

Fleury also did his part on the ice, putting up the best save percentage of his career — .927 through 46 games, which held true during the grind of 20 post-season games as well.

Regardless of the championship experience he adds, and all the off-ice influence he brings to the organization, Fleury proved beyond a shadow of a doubt this season that he remains the club's best possible option in the cage, shelving the need to look elsewhere for a future No. 1.

He has one more year on his current deal, paying him \$5.75 million annually, and then hits unrestricted free agency. Sorting out a proper term and cap hit for the three-time champion will be the focal point of working out an extension, but the 33-year-old proved he's still got plenty to give at the highest level.

Fleury: "A couple years ago I was getting told I was too old to play. I still love it, still have a lot of fun.

Certainly Vegas has given me this opportunity to do what I love and I wouldn't want to go anywhere else. Hopefully I can finish my career here." [pic.twitter.com/vl6N1d4xay](https://pic.twitter.com/vl6N1d4xay)

— Vegas Golden Knights (@GoldenKnights) June 8, 2018

## FISH FOR THE BEST IN THE FREE-AGENCY POOL

Year two in Vegas will be all about pushing up against the greatly raised expectations for success and the persisting wait for the breakout names to regress. Adding in some bona fide elite talent on July 1 will help with that effort, whether that be up front with a John Tavares or James van Riemsdyk, or on the blue line with an addition like John Carlson.

McPhee's dabble in the free-agency market will come down to more than just deep pockets, though — they've also become an organization that players genuinely want to suit up for.

"They've got a ton of cap room, a boatload of flexibility and players from all over the league asking their agents about going there," Elliotte Friedman wrote in his most recent 31 Thoughts column. "It's a destination. Gerard Gallant's reputation for being a players' coach is

growing, too, with Reilly Smith saying he's never had someone 'with a shorter memory.'"

There are more than a few interesting names floating in the free-agency pool (how about adding some intrigue with an Ilya Kovalchuk signing?) and Vegas has the tools needed to be in on the majority of them.

Or they could re-visit a different kind of game-changing move that already nearly came to be.

"The Golden Knights came close to acquiring Erik Karlsson at the deadline. After seeing how the Capitals locked down the neutral zone and point men in the final, you can see how they might revisit something like this," Friedman wrote Sunday. "Word is one of the biggest hang-ups at the end was Cody Glass, drafted sixth overall last June. Vegas didn't want to include him."

Does the manner in which Vegas saw their Cup dreams dashed prompt them to change their mind on the Cody Glass front? Whether or not it does depends on the more fundamental question that's underlying every situation on this list: Where does McPhee see Vegas ending up in 2019?

The original plan was to think long-term and weather a storm for the first few years. That said, an unexpected run to the Stanley Cup Final surely changed that approach. By how much, and to what effect, are the two factors that will determine what happens next.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.12.2018

1098800 Websites

TSN.CA / MLSE's top dealmaker Hopkinson leaving for Real Madrid

Rick Westhead

Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment chief commercial officer Dave Hopkinson is quitting Canada's largest sports holding company to run the business operations of Spanish soccer giant Real Madrid, TSN has learned.

Hopkinson, 47, informed MLSE chief executive officer Michael Friisdahl and board chair Larry Tanenbaum of his planned departure on Thursday, two people familiar with the matter told TSN. MLSE staff members were informed Monday morning.

Hopkinson declined to comment. He is expected to join Real Madrid within a month and his departure will send shock waves through the Canadian sports industry.

"Seldom in your life do you run across someone as bright, vibrant, energetic and entrepreneurial as Hoppy," Tim Leiweke, MLSE's former president and chief executive, said in an interview. "He has a personality that doesn't just light up a room. He can set a room on fire.

"Real Madrid is as big a brand as there is in our industry. Normally you'd have a hard time finding someone who could make it better. They just did."

A graduate of Malvern Collegiate Institute, Hopkinson's first job after attending McGill University in Montreal was selling restaurant coupons door to door in Toronto.

After the Toronto Argonauts hired him to sell tickets, Hopkinson moved to the Toronto Raptors in 1994.

"I hired a bunch of kids out of university to help sell season tickets and Dave was in that first wave," said John Bitove, the Raptors' founding owner. "Dave was always active, never afraid to make a cold call. We used to have a bell when you sold a pair of season tickets you could go



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

over and ring it and Dave would continually go over and ring it. He would just turn and smile this sheepish grin. He's just a happy guy. It's in his DNA."

Hopkinson would eventually become one of MLSE's top business-side executives, responsible for many of the sports company's biggest successes.

With Hopkinson as chief commercial officer, MLSE rekindled the Toronto Raptors brand with the team's "We the North" marketing campaign.

Three of the professional teams under MLSE's umbrella – the Raptors, Toronto Maple Leafs, and TFC – have perpetual sell-outs with waiting lists for season tickets.

Last year, Hopkinson helped negotiate a watershed \$800-million deal between MLSE and Scotiabank that will see the Air Canada Centre renamed Scotiabank Arena on July 1. He also helped secure a \$5-million deal with Sun Life Financial to put the insurance company's logo on the Raptors' jerseys.

Brian Cooper, chief executive of Toronto sports marketing firm MKTG, has represented companies including Canadian Tire, Scotiabank and Sun Life in negotiations with MLSE and Hopkinson.

"I marvel at his skill set," Cooper said. "I've seen him go from ticketing to becoming one of the most sophisticated, prepared sports executives in North America."

It's unclear how MLSE will fill Hopkinson's position. Senior vice-president Tom Pistore is well regarded in the industry and could be a possible replacement.

"They have a deep bench," Bitove said. "I don't think they have to go outside to replace Hoppy."

Hopkinson joins a streaking Real Madrid club.

Under manager Zinedine Zidane, who announced on May 31 that he would step down from his position, Real Madrid has in the past two and a half years won a Spanish league title, a Spanish Super Cup, two UEFA Super Cups, two FIFA World Club Cups and three successive Champions League titles.

While star players Gareth Bale and Cristiano Ronaldo have made the team one of the world's best and most visible clubs, the future of both players at Real Madrid are uncertain.

Nevertheless, the opportunities for Hopkinson in Spain are significant.

Real Madrid, run by team president Florentino Perez, is already among the world's most popular and profitable soccer teams.

On Facebook, Real Madrid has 108 million followers, according to sports marketing firm IQUIL Sports. By comparison, the NHL's Maple Leafs have 1.3 million.

According to the accounting firm Deloitte, Real Madrid generated 674.6 million Euros (\$1 billion Canadian) in the year ended June 2017, second most after Manchester United's 676.3 million Euros.

TSN.CA LOADED: 06.12.2018

1098801 Websites

TSN.CA / Off-Season Game Plan: Boston Bruins

Scott Cullen

The Boston Bruins put up a 112-point season, and looked like they could be Stanley Cup contenders, but lost in the second round to the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Off-Season Game Plan looks at a Bruins team that has rebuilt on the fly, supplementing their veteran core with an impressive rookie class last season.

It was the first full season for Bruce Cassidy behind the bench and, after a mediocre start to the season, the team took off and went on a run during which they suffered two regulation losses in a 27-game stretch through the middle portion of the season.

While the playoffs ended sooner than the Bruins would have liked, it's not as though they need to make moves out of desperation as a response.

As long as Patrice Bergeron and Brad Marchand are playing at a high level, they are a top contender, and if last season's rookies can continue to make progress next season, there's no reason to think that Boston will fade away.

### HOCKEY OPS/COACH

Don Sweeney/Bruce Cassidy

### HEROES

Brad Marchand – If he hadn't missed 14 games, Marchand could very well have been in the Hart Trophy conversation. As it was, he still tied a career-high with 85 points.

Patrice Bergeron – Before suffering a broken foot, it was Bergeron who was front and centre in Hart Trophy discussion, as his two-way game was typically stellar and he nearly had a point-per-game for the first time in his career.

David Pastrnak – During his age 21 season, Pastrnak put up 35 goals and 80 points, adding a game-breaking dynamic to the league's best possession line.

### ZEROES

Rick Nash – He wasn't healthy the whole time, but after arriving in trade from the Rangers, the veteran winger had 11 points in 23 (regular season plus playoff) games, scoring six goals on 80 shots.

Adam McQuaid – After playing a career-high 77 games in 2106-2017, the veteran blueliner dressed for only 38 games last season, and his 15:42 of ice time per game was his lowest since 2012-2013.

Brad Marchand	68	34	51	85	56.3
	4.0	102.9	59.0	19:43	\$6.125M
David Pastrnak	82	35	45	80	55.5
	2.5	103.4	62.8	17:58	\$6.666M
Patrice Bergeron	64	30	33	63	57.6
	5.1	102.3	61.2	19:26	\$6.875M
Danton Heinen	77	16	31	47	55.0
	1.8	101.6	54.9	15:01	\$873K
David Krejci	64	17	27	44	54.5
	1.0	100.7	67.9	16:53	\$7.25M
Jake DeBrusk	70	16	27	43	54.5
	1.0	102.9	70.1	14:22	\$863K
David Backes	57	14	19	33	55.2
	1.6	96.5	47.2	15:24	\$6.0M
Anders Bjork	30	4	8	12	54.0
	0.1	102.2	70.4	12:21	\$925K
Noel Acciari	60	10	1	11	48.6
	-6.2	96.2	33.0	12:55	\$725K



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

Ryan Donato	12	5	4	9	54.3
1.3	101.9	63.7	14:42	\$900K	
Riley Nash	76	15	25	41	52.4
-1.7	101.2	47.3	15:25	\$900K	UFA
Rick Nash	71	21	13	34	50.1
3.5	97.0	57.4	17:03	\$7.8M	UFA
Tim Schaller	82	12	10	22	51.4
-3.0	97.0	36.2	13:17	\$775K	UFA
Tommy Wingels	75	9	8	17	48.9
-5.8	96.0	44.0	11:29	\$750K	UFA
Sean Kuraly	75	6	8	14	50.1
-4.6	96.9	36.5	12:15	\$809K	RFA
Brian Gionta	20	2	5	7	53.2
-0.4	100.2	48.3	13:04	\$700K	UFA
Austin Czarnik	10	0	4	4	57.7
1.5	94.5	62.7	10:55	\$675K	UFA

Over the past three seasons, only Alex Ovechkin and Vladimir Tarasenko have scored more goals than the 110 tallied by Brad Marchand, who has gone from being an effective pest to a star who still has some troubling behavioural attributes that he needs to remove from his game. He says that he's going to try to fix that, but we'll see next season if he's got the problem licked.

Brad Marchand and David Pastrnak are Boston's game-breaking goal-scorers.

David Pastrnak has stepped to the forefront of the Boston offence and has put up 150 points in the past two seasons. Connor McDavid is the only player 21-and-under to have more points than Pastrnak in the past two years. He's a great talent, and putting him with a dominant duo like Marchand and Bergeron leads, not surprisingly, to outstanding results.

Corsi God Patrice Bergeron had one of his best seasons in 2017-2018, until he was sidelined by a broken foot, but the Bruins consistently dominate play with Bergeron on the ice. In fact, in his entire career, Bergeron has been outscored at even strength just once – 2014-2015, when he was outscored 50-49 when he had a career-low .895 on-ice save percentage. It's hard to imagine a dramatic drop-off, given his fundamentally strong two-way game, but Bergeron does turn 33 this summer, so who knows how much longer he will remain a top-tier performer?

Coming out of Denver University without too much fanfare, Danton Heinen stepped into the lineup and had a productive rookie campaign. He faded down the stretch and in the playoffs, though, finishing with 10 points in his last 38 (regular season plus playoff) games.

Like Marchand and Bergeron, David Krejci also missed time due to injury, playing just 64 games and his average ice time (16:53) was his lowest since 2008-2009. Even so, he's a productive playmaker, but in more of a supporting role while the 32-year-old's cap hit is closer to star status.

Not only did 2015 first-rounder Jake DeBrusk have a solid rookie season, putting up 43 points in 70 games, but he followed it up with six goals in a dozen playoff games. The 21-year-old winger is a promising talent, and valuable as a source of secondary scoring.

The refrain out of Boston is that 34-year-old winger David Backes is so disappointing, but last season's shot rate (2.81 per game) was the second-highest of his career, and his points per game (0.58) was his best since 2014-2015. He remains a physical presence and the puck was moving the right way when he was on the ice.

21-year-old winger Anders Bjork started the season playing with Marchand and Bergeron, but then injuries and slumps conspired to limit his playing time. With so many other rookies stepping in, Bjork kind of got lost in the shuffle, but he's an intriguing option for next season.

Noel Acciari is a 26-year-old winger who adds some grit to Boston's fourth line, but he's also stuck in the defensive zone quite a bit. He's inexpensive and tries hard.

Ryan Donato had a terrific junior year at Harvard, and scored five goals in five games for Team USA at the Olympics, before adding nine points in 12 regular-season games for the Bruins. So, naturally, he was a healthy scratch for most of the postseason, appearing in just three games. Presumably, Donato will not be fighting for a roster spot next season.

Another rookie, 25-year-old centre Sean Kuraly anchored Boston's fourth line. He's a physical player who has shown that he can generate shots, if not necessarily goals, in his brief NHL career.

If the Bruins can't keep free agent centre Riley Nash, they will have some options to consider. They could take a big swing at a veteran like Paul Stastny or a less expensive alternative in Derek Ryan. Or, maybe the Bruins could move Backes or Heinen into the third-line centre role and sign a free agent winger like Blake Comeau.

The Bruins may also want to explore the trade market. The likes of Charlie Coyle or Patrik Berglund might fit in that third-line centre spot if nothing materializes on other fronts.

Torey Krug	76	14	45	59	54.1
0.0	100.1	64.7	20:24	\$5.25M	
Charlie McAvoy	63	7	25	32	55.5
2.7	101.5	55.7	22:09	\$917K	
Zdeno Chara	73	7	17	24	53.9
0.0	99.7	50.9	22:54	\$5.0M	
Kevan Miller	68	1	15	16	52.9
-0.4	99.5	53.5	19:28	\$2.5M	
Brandon Carlo	76	0	6	6	52.1
-2.1	100.5	54.3	19:14	\$789K	
Adam McQuaid	38	1	3	4	51.5
-4.8	98.0	63.0	15:42	\$2.75M	
Nick Holden	73	4	13	17	47.4
-0.5	99.6	42.2	19:00	\$1.65M	UFA
Matt Grzelcyk	61	3	12	15	55.6
2.7	103.8	55.5	16:44	\$859K	RFA

Torey Krug is on the small side, but he's steadily improved, going from undrafted free agent signed out of Michigan State to putting up a career-high 59 points last season, the third straight year in which he played more than 20 minutes per game. His name has snuck into some trade rumours since the Bruins were eliminated, but that would be a risky move to be sure, as puck-moving defencemen are gaining more appreciation around the league.

Charlie McAvoy had an instant impact on the Boston blueline.

It's looking like the Bruins hit a home run when they selected Charlie McAvoy 14th overall in the 2016 Draft. He suffered a knee injury that limited him to 63 games, but McAvoy played big minutes as a rookie and the Bruins dominated with the 20-year-old on the ice (55.7 CF%, 56.1 SCF%, 60.0 GF%). He has the look of a number one defenceman and, potentially, a Norris Trophy candidate some day.

He's clearly not the dominant force that he was in his prime, but Zdeno Chara is 41-years-old and still playing effectively for nearly 23 minutes per game, though last season's average time on ice was his lowest since 2001-2002. Nevertheless, Big Z is now the steady defensive complement to McAvoy on Boston's top pair and keeps himself in such amazing physical condition that he may still have a few more years left.

30-year-old Kevan Miller isn't flashy, but he's established himself as a steady and hard-nosed presence on the back end for the Bruins. He



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

played a career-high 19:28 per game last season and had a positive goal differential for the fourth time in five seasons.

A late-season ankle injury kept Brandon Carlo from playing in the postseason, but the 21-year-old showed some improvement in his second season. The hope will be that he can develop into a shutdown defender, but is still a work in progress.

Veteran Adam McQuaid saw his role reduced last season, and that may be a reflection of the league getting faster, which poses problems for the rough-and-tumble blueliner. He's going into the last year of his deal, so if there isn't a regular spot for McQuaid in Boston, perhaps another team would be interested in his services.

An undersized puck-moving defenceman, Matt Grzelcyk thrived in a third-pair role for the Bruins as a rookie – the Bruins outscored the opposition 44-22 at evens with Grzelcyk on the ice.

2017 first-round pick Urho Vaakanainen is in the pipeline, but he's still just 19-years-old, and the rest of Boston's defence prospects are kind of lean at the moment – this happens when two rookies step into regular roles, as McAvoy and Grzelcyk did last season - so they may need to find some veteran depth just to have at the ready in case of injuries.

If the Bruins want to make a bold move on the blueline, they could take a run at John Carlson, the unrestricted free agent defenceman. He won't come cheaply, and it might require the Bruins to move a body (contract) or two, but he would certainly provide an immediate upgrade.

Tuukka Rask	54	34	14	5	.917
	.924	\$7.0M			

Anton Khudobin	31	16	6	7	.913
	.917	\$1.2M	UFA		

Tuukka Rask is now 31-years-old, and played 54 games last season, his fewest since 2012-2013. While his numbers aren't what they were in his best seasons, last year's .917 save percentage was still above average and that may be where he sits at this stage of his career: above average but not pushing the top tier like he was from 2012 through 2015.

The Bruins liked the work of backup Anton Khudobin, so they could try to keep him around, but given the decline in Rask's performance, Boston may want to shoot for an upgrade at the backup spot. Jonathan Bernier may be the best chance to do that via unrestricted free agency.

Urho Vaakanainen	D	43	4	7	11
	+8	Saipa Lappeenranta			

Ryan Donato	LW	29	26	17	43
	+15	Harvard (ECAC)			

Trent Frederic	C	36	17	15	32
	-9	Wisconsin (Big 10)			

Jakob Forsbacka-Karlsson	C	58	15	17	
	32	+3	Providence (AHL)		

Alexander Khokhlachev	C	52	19	31	
	50	+3	Moscow Spartak (KHL)		

Zach Senyshyn	RW	66	12	14	26
	+3	Providence (AHL)			

Jakub Zboril	D	68	4	15	19
	+12	Providence (AHL)			

Peter Cehlarik	RW	35	11	12	23
	+2	Providence (AHL)			

Jerrey Swayman	G	31			
	.921	Maine (HE)			

Jack Studnicka	C	66	22	50	72
	+18	Oshawa (OHL)			

Joona Koppanen	LW	45	2	12	14
	-2	Ilves Tampere (SML)			

Ryan Fitzgerald	C	65	21	16	37
	+5	Providence (AHL)			

Daniel Vladar	G	41			
	.911	Atlanta (ECHL)			

Colby Cave	C	72	11	22	33
	-1	Providence (AHL)			

Jeremy Lauzon	D	52	1	6	7
	+1	Providence (AHL)			

DRAFT

No first-round pick.

FREE AGENCY

The Bruins have approximately \$66.1M committed to the 2018-2019 salary cap for 17 players.

NEEDS

One top-nine forward, depth forward, depth defenceman, backup goaltender

WHAT I SAID THE BRUINS NEEDED LAST YEAR

One top-nine forward, depth forwards, one top-pair defenceman

THEY ADDED

Danton Heinen, Jake DeBrusk, Sean Kuraly, Anders Bjork, Charlie McAvoy

TRADE MARKET

David Backes, Anders Bjork, Torey Krug, Adam McQuaid, Brandon Carlo

Brad Marchand	Patrice Bergeron	David Pastrnak
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Jake DeBrusk	David Krejci	Danton Heinen
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Ryan Donato	Derek Ryan*	David Backes
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Tim Schaller	Sean Kuraly	Noel Acciari
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Anders Bjork	Jakob Forsbacka-Karlsson	Peter Cehlarik
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Colby Cave	Trent Frederic	Ryan Fitzgerald
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Zdeno Chara	Charlie McAvoy	Tuukka Rask
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Torey Krug	Kevan Miller	Jonathan Bernier*
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Matt Grzelcyk	Brandon Carlo	Zane McIntyre
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Jakub Jerabek*	Adam McQuaid	
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Jakub Zboril	Emil Johansson	
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TSN.CA / Off-Season Game Plan: Toronto Maple Leafs

Scott Cullen

The Toronto Maple Leafs reached the playoffs for the second straight season, the first time since 2004 that they have gone to the playoffs in back-to-back seasons.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

Off-Season Game Plan looks at a Leafs team that has lost in the first round in those most recent playoff appearances and is no longer satisfied with those results; they have expectations for more.

It's already been an interesting offseason for the Maple Leafs, as they promoted Kyle Dubas to general manager, resulting in the departures of Lou Lamoriello and Mark Hunter.

With Dubas now calling the shots, there are some big decisions on his desk. For starters, the Maple Leafs have lots of salary cap space for next season, enough that they could be big players in free agency, whether that means taking a shot at John Tavares or John Carlson or, I suppose, keeping James van Riemsdyk in the fold.

The issue for the Leafs is that the following season will be when new contracts are needed for Auston Matthews and Mitch Marner, presumably two big deals that will eat into whatever cap space still exists at that point, and those extensions could come as soon as this summer.

If Toronto can't secure the services of Tavares or Carlson, what will they do with their cap space? Will they be left to take a run at trades for players that have one year left on their contracts?

That seems like an approach that would be less than optimal and, with a new general manager and lots of cap room, it would come as no surprise if the Maple Leafs take advantage of this opportunity to make a big deal.

### HOCKEY OPS/COACH

Kyle Dubas/Mike Babcock

### HEROES

Auston Matthews – He missed 20 games with injuries and may not have been 100% when he managed two points in seven playoff games, but the 20-year-old just had 63 points in 62 games. That'll play.

Mitch Marner – The sophomore winger had 16 points in the first 29 games of the season, but with the help of a line chance, he finished with a point per game the rest of the way.

Fredrik Andersen – Matching his career average with a .918 save percentage might not be so noteworthy, but when the league is surrendering more goals and the Maple Leafs are giving up quality chances when he's in net, Andersen's steadiness in 66 starts kept this team on the playoff track.

### ZEROES

Leo Komarov – After a couple of seasons in which he contributed solid secondary scoring, the veteran winger managed just seven goals in 74 games.

Ron Hainsey – It's possible that asking Hainsey to handle 22 minutes a night against top opposition is a little much at this stage of his career. He had his worst possession stats since 2012-2013 (47.7 CF%, -2.8 CFRRel%) and those shots against weren't easy pickings.

Tomas Plekanec – Granted, the Maple Leafs cut the veteran centre's ice time as he moved into a fourth-line role, and he was solid in the postseason, but two assists in 17 regular-season games was underwhelming.

Mitch Marner	82	22	47	69	51.7
	2.7	101.2	54.3	16:23	\$894K
Auston Matthews	62	34	29	63	50.0
	0.5	106.9	49.0	18:08	\$925K
Nazem Kadri	80	32	23	55	48.4
	-2.1	100.8	39.9	16:46	\$4.5M
Patrick Marleau	82	27	20	47	49.1
	-1.0	101.3	43.2	16:59	\$6.25M
Zach Hyman	82	15	25	40	49.7
	-0.1	104.2	47.5	17:21	\$2.25M

Connor Brown	82	14	14	28	49.4	
	-0.5	100.5	51.6	15:01	\$2.1M	
Matt Martin	50	3	9	12	49.0	
	-1.5	100.1	41.3	7:59	\$2.5M	
Kasperii Kapanen	38	7	2	9	50.5	
	0.5	98.8	34.2	11:15	\$863K	
Josh Leivo	16	1	3	4	47.7	
	0.9	101.1	28.2	10:34	\$925K	
Nathan Horton					\$5.3M	
William Nylander	82	20	41	61	50.2	
	0.5	105.7	47.6	16:41	\$894K	
James van Riemsdyk		81	36	18	54	
	54.3	6.0	100.5	60.8	14:54	\$4.25M
					UFA	
Tyler Bozak	81	11	32	43	52.3	
	3.5	101.8	55.8	15:39	\$4.2M	
Tomas Plekanec	77	6	20	26	51.4	
	0.0	98.4	39.1	15:08	\$6.0M	
UFA					UFA	
Leo Komarov	74	7	12	19	45.1	
	-5.8	99.2	34.8	15:47	\$2.95M	
UFA					UFA	
Dominic Moore	50	6	6	12	49.3	
	-0.3	100.8	37.5	10:18	\$1.0M	
UFA					UFA	

He might look like a high school sophomore, but Mitch Marner is a bad man with the puck on his stick. The 21-year-old is one of the league's most creative, and daring, players. Once he joined Nazem Kadri's line, after a relatively slow start, Marner's production took off and there should be no question that he's a core piece around which the Maple Leafs can build.

Mitch Marner adds flair to the Maple Leafs' attack.

The first overall pick in the 2016 Draft, Auston Matthews ran into some injury problems in his second season, but he's still scored 61 even-strength goals in his first two NHL seasons; that's tied with Connor McDavid for the most even-strength goals in the past two seasons (and Matthews has played 20 fewer games).

Matthews has lived up to the hype, and then some, so the Maple Leafs know that that he's central to their future, and explains why there could be any concern when it's suggested that there is a rift between Matthews and head coach Mike Babcock. It's not unreasonable for Matthews to want to play more than 18 minutes per game, and if ice time is all that's up for debate, that would seem to be an easily solvable problem. If there's something more, then the Maple Leafs will have to manage carefully so that two of their most expensive assets are headed in the same direction.

Nazem Kadri provides outstanding value for the Maple Leafs. He's a skilled player who plays with an edge and has notched a dozen power-play goals in each of the past two years to help him score 32 goals in back-to-back seasons.

He's 38-years-old, but Patrick Marleau just scored 27 goals and didn't miss a game for the ninth consecutive season. There probably isn't much reason to be concerned about Marleau's performance over the last two years on his contract, but the concern would be related to tying up more than \$6-million per season in Marleau because that will most likely cost the Maple Leafs other (obviously younger) players; a James van Riemsdyk, for example.

A favourite of head coach Mike Babcock, Zach Hyman was more productive in his second full season. He's still not a big scorer like linemates Matthews and William Nylander, but Hyman is the mucker who digs in the corners for loose pucks and complements those players. It's



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

fair to wonder if that brings out the very best in those highly-skilled linemates, but this is an established preference for Babcock, who operated similarly for years in Detroit.

After a 20-goal rookie season in 2016-2017, Connor Brown slipped to 14 goals last season, but the rest of his game wasn't dramatically different. His ice time and shots per game were both down a little, but it's still reasonable to expect Brown will fill a complementary role in the Toronto lineup.

When the Maple Leafs signed Matt Martin to a four-year contract as a free agent, it appeared regrettable from the moment the ink dried, and yet he was a regular in the lineup for a year-and-a-half before the Maple Leafs finally made some changes and then suddenly Martin couldn't get back into the lineup, playing three games in the last two-and-a-half months. This doesn't mean that Martin can't fill a role, and maybe the Maple Leafs could find another team that would be more inclined to play Martin regularly, but it means that his physical presence doesn't necessarily provide a great return on investment.

When Kasperii Kapanen earned his place in the Maple Leafs lineup, the injection of speed made the team more dangerous, and Kapanen could move up the depth chart more easily because he has the speed and skill to be more than a fourth-liner and penalty killer. Next season, he'll have a chance to play from the start.

There's a reasonable case to make that 25-year-old Josh Leivo is an NHL-calibre winger, as he's put up 22 points in 57 career games, but he's been kept in the press box so much that it's hard to really know what he could do with a real opportunity. Nevertheless, he's under contract for next season, so either the Maple Leafs can play him, keep him buried, or consider using him as an asset to deal.

One of the Maple Leafs' strengths is that they have inexpensive prospects coming in the pipeline and that helps free up money to spend elsewhere. Andreas Johnsson seems assured of a spot on next year's team after impressing in a late-season audition. Miro Aaltonen, Par Lindholm and Carl Grundstrom are some more forwards on entry-level deals that could earn a spot on the roster, or at least be a short cab ride away when needed.

Of course, the Maple Leafs have enough cap room to take a big swing in free agency and both John Tavares and John Carlson would fit various needs. Tavares is obviously the big prize in free agency this year and the Maple Leafs would surely love to bring him home. It would be expensive, but if Tavares wants to play in Toronto, the Maple Leafs can probably create the room to make it happen, and if it forces difficult decisions down the road, they can cross that proverbial bridge when they get to it.

If Toronto allows Leo Komarov to leave via free agency and manage to find a taker for Martin, they also might want to add a cheaper fourth-liner who could check and still play with some physicality. Maybe someone like J.T. Brown or Curtis McKenzie would do the trick.

Morgan Rielly	76	6	46	52	50.8
	2.0	101.1	45.2	21:36	\$5.0M
Jake Gardiner	82	5	47	52	49.4
	-0.7	102.3	47.8	22:32	\$4.05M
Ron Hainsey	80	4	19	23	47.7
	-2.8	102.3	41.3	21:52	\$3.0M
Nikita Zaitsev	60	5	8	13	47.4
	-3.7	102.3	45.6	22:13	\$4.5M
Travis Dermott	37	1	12	13	54.8
	6.4	103.8	51.3	16:00	\$863K
Connor Carrick	47	4	8	12	52.5
	3.1	101.0	58.1	15:08	\$750K
Andreas Borgman	48	3	8	11	50.2
	0.6	102.3	55.5	13:41	\$925K

Roman Polak	54	2	10	12	48.0
	-1.3	100.5	40.7	17:39	\$1.1M UFA

Given more of an offensive role in his fifth NHL season, 24-year-old Morgan Rielly delivered a career-high 52 points, with 25 coming on the power play. He's a terrific skater and moves the puck well, but his defensive game isn't necessarily where it needs to be if he's going to be considered a top-tier defenceman. He may well be Toronto's best defenceman, but it's not really known if that's going to be good enough get where they ultimately want to go.

Morgan Rielly had a breakout season, putting up 52 points.

A smooth skater who frequently makes zone exits look easy, then later make an egregious turnover, Jake Gardiner has consistently generated positive shot differentials and, over the past two seasons, the Maple Leafs have outscored the opposition 140-104 at 5-on-5 with Gardiner on the ice.

That doesn't sound like someone who should be under fire, but after an especially rough performance in a Game Seven loss against Boston, he doesn't seem to have the steadiest footing in the organization. Gardiner is going into the last year of his contract and, given the deals that the team needs to get done elsewhere, he may be playing out that last year.

The Maple Leafs put a lot on 37-year-old Ron Hainsey, including asking him to spend about four minutes per game on the penalty kill. After a solid first month or so, his possession numbers dropped dramatically; perhaps an indication that he was being asked to do too much. The challenge for the Maple Leafs is finding someone to play the right side that will allow them to cut back on Hainsey's ice time.

Signing Nikita Zaitsev to a seven-year deal after he had played one year in the NHL was a questionable decision, putting an optimistic spin on those first-year results, and last season wasn't terribly encouraging for what lays ahead. The Maple Leafs outscored the opposition with Zaitsev on the ice, but he had the worst shot differentials among Toronto defencemen. Given their investment, Toronto had better hope he can handle a top-four role.

Calling up 21-year-old Travis Dermott gave the Maple Leafs another competent puck-moving defenceman. He rode ridiculous percentages (104.0 PDO) to have the Maple Leafs outscore opponents 28-13 with him on the ice at 5-on-5, but had outstanding possession stats (54.8 CF%, +6.4 CFRel%) too, so there is a lot of reason to be hopeful that the 2015 second-rounder will grow into a significant piece on the Toronto blueline.

He's on the smaller side, and maybe that's contributing to why he has a hard time securing a regular spot in the lineup, but Connor Carrick has had strong results (52.7 CF%, 53.1 GF%) in the limited role he's received with the Maple Leafs. It wouldn't be the worst idea in the world to just give him a regular role and see if those results can hold up.

The Leafs kept Andreas Borgman around until the beginning of February, before sending him to the American Hockey League, and his results were fine – Toronto outshot and outscored the opposition with him on the ice. He adds a physical dimension and could be worth another look next season.

Toronto has signed 25-year-old Russian blueliner Igor Ozhiganov, a right shot defender who is 6-foot-2 and plays a physical game. If he transitions smoothly to North America, maybe he can be a part of the Maple Leafs defence corps.

Toronto has some other candidates for playing time coming from the AHL Marlies. Top prospect Timothy Liljegren is still just 19, but if he's playing well next season, he could be ready for a look. Otherwise, Justin Holl or Andrew Nielsen, who both have multiple years of AHL experience, offer interesting depth possibilities.

Frederik Andersen	66	38	21	5	.918
	.921	\$5.0M			
Curtis McElhinney	18	11	5	1	.934
	.949	\$850K			



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

Frederik Andersen has been a very good goaltender for two seasons in Toronto, closer to outstanding if his Octobers of those seasons (during which he has a .889 save percentage) are thrown out of the equation.

Frederik Andersen gives the Leafs a chance to win most nights.

Before joining the Maple Leafs, Curtis McElhinney was a clearly below-average goaltender. In 32 games for Toronto, though, he has a .925 save percentage, which is surprisingly above average performance. He's still under contract for another year and, given that performance, it would be fine to keep him around, but they also might have more promising options.

Both Garret Sparks and Calvin Pickard could very well be NHL-calibre goaltenders. Sparks, 24, has been outstanding in the American Hockey League and is ready for the next level, whether it's with the Leafs or another team. Pickard is a 26-year-old who has a .913 save percentage in 87 career NHL games, but somehow he was stuck in the AHL.

Timothy Liljegren +12	D Toronto (AHL)	44	1	16	17
Carl Grundstrom +8	RW Frolunda (SHL)	35	17	7	24
Andreas Johnsson +16	LW Toronto (AHL)	54	26	28	54
Joseph Woll .915	G Boston College (HE)	30			
Jeremy Bracco +6	RW Toronto (AHL)	50	6	26	32
Eemeli Rasanen +16	D Kingston (OHL)	61	5	28	33
Garret Sparks .936	G Toronto (AHL)	43			
Andrew Nielsen +3	D Toronto (AHL)	65	6	20	26
Dmytro Timashov +5	LW Toronto (AHL)	67	13	21	34
Josh Leivo 0	LW Toronto (NHL)	16	1	3	4
Miro Aaltanen +29	C Toronto (AHL)	64	20	23	43
Pierre Engvall +12	LW HV71 Jonkoping (SHL)	31	7	13	20
Trevor Moore +1	LW Toronto (AHL)	68	12	21	33
Yegor Korshkov +4	RW Yaroslavl (KHL)	52	8	18	26
Igor Ozhiganov +12	D CSKA Moscow (KHL)	42	2	7	9
Calvin Pickard .918	G Toronto (AHL)	33			
Adam Brooks +7	C Toronto (AHL)	57	8	11	19
Justin Holl +23	D Toronto (AHL)	60	7	21	28
Par Lindholm +18	C Skelleftea (SHL)	49	18	29	47
Calle Rosen +1	D Toronto (AHL)	62	4	18	22

### DRAFT

25th – Ryan Merkley, Jared McIsaac, Joe Veleno, Ryan McLeod

### FREE AGENCY

The Maple Leafs have approximately \$52.7M committed to the 2018-2019 salary cap for 16 players.

### NEEDS

Two top-nine forwards, depth forwards, one top-pair defenceman

### WHAT I SAID THE MAPLE LEAFS NEEDED LAST YEAR

A fourth-line centre, one top-pair defenceman, backup goaltender

### THEY ADDED

Patrick Marleau, Dominic Moore, Andreas Borgman

### TRADE MARKET

Connor Brown, Matt Martin, Kasperii Kapanen, Josh Leivo, Nikita Zaitsev, Curtis McElhinney

Zach Hyman      Auston Matthews      William Nylander

Patrick Marleau      John Tavares\*      Mitch Marner

Andreas Johnsson      Nazem Kadri      Connor Brown

Kasperii Kapanen      Miro Aaltonen      J.T. Brown\*

Josh Leivo      Par Lindholm      Carl Grundstrom

Trevor Moore      Frederik Gauthier      Pierre Engvall

Morgan Rielly      Ron Hainsey      Frederik Andersen

Jake Gardiner      Nikita Zaitsev      Garret Sparks

Travis Dermott      Connor Carrick      Calvin Pickard

Andreas Borgman      Igor Ozhiganov\*

Andrew Nielsen      Justin Holl

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TSN.CA / The numbers say stick with the 3M Line

Travis Yost

One of the biggest challenges for general managers in the off-season is where to upgrade the roster.

Every team wants more talented players in their lineup. The trick is being able to isolate which areas of the roster are in real need of improvement. Since the NHL is a league with a hard salary cap and fixed number of roster spots, every decision has an opportunity cost. Misidentify the real problems with your team and you may take another step backwards.

The Calgary Flames are perhaps the most interesting case study here. Their playoff aspirations soured in the middle of the season and they finished the year with a disappointing 84 points – good enough for fifth in the Pacific Division. Their undoing, by and large, was driven by goal-scoring challenges. They finished the year averaging just 2.6 goals per game (27th in the NHL) with a power play that converted just 16 per cent of the time (28th in the NHL). Fix that and you probably have a playoff team.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

Not being able to turn quality zone time and scoring chances into goals is probably the easiest way to post-mortem Calgary's season. There's no doubt that the Flames were effective at driving play into the attacking third – they just had a whale of a time beating opposition goaltenders. And while that's generally true for most of the team, one group in particular – the vaunted "3M Line" of Matthew Tkachuk, Michael Frolik and Mikael Backlund – was particularly snake bit.

To illustrate, consider each Calgary skater's on-ice performance versus break-even. An average skater would see about 50 per cent of the shots, scoring chances, or goals in favour of Calgary when he was on the ice. An average skater would also see a 92.3 per cent save percentage behind him, while finishing on 7.7 per cent of all shots. The further you get away from these measures, the harder it's going to be to win games.

Take a look at each skater last season:

You can see that just about every Flames skater outshot and outchanced the opposition over the full season, but the goals didn't fall as kindly. The 3M Line in particular was that to an extreme.

Over the course of the season, they ran roughly a 57 per cent Corsi%, 56 per cent scoring chance rate, and 55 per cent dangerous shot attempt rate, all per Natural Stat Trick. So whichever your preferred non-goal measure of performance, it's clear they threatened more often than not.

But their goal rates were abysmal – around 42 per cent for the full year. That's in large part because their "percentages" – the percentage of shots they scored on and the percentage of shots against that ended up being goals – were way askew from league norm. The group experienced a save percentage barely over 90 per cent, and scored on about 5.6 per cent of their shots. That's crippling.

The thing about the percentages is they tend to be highly volatile and not particularly indicative of any individual player's talent. It's something that has been measured exhaustively, but you don't need to take my word for it. We can simply look at each of these players historically and see exactly how "out of the norm" last year was.

Here's on-ice shooting percentage:

For Backlund and Frolik, those are the worst numbers we have seen in years. Think about how mathematically challenging this is, too. One unit scores on 5.0 per cent of their shots, whereas league average is around 7.7 per cent. To score the same number of goals at that conversion rate, this line would need to generate about 40 per cent more shots than your average line around the league. That, of course, is easier said than done. (It's probably close to impossible.)

Tkachuk notably slid considerably from his rookie to sophomore season. A lot of this is collinear with the struggles of Backlund and Frolik, but it's still a pretty massive downswing.

But shooting percentage is only one side of the equation. If you're getting goaltending, even in spurts, you may still put together a nice season. Except that cratered too, just as badly:

Other than Backlund having a horrible 2012-13 season, steady state for all three of these players looks like a save percentage somewhere around league average. Except in 2017-18, save percentage numbers sat near (or in Frolik and Backlund's case, below) 90 per cent. Again, think about this in context: If this trio wanted to prevent the same number of goals as another unit in the league with a 90 save percentage, they would have had to slice off about 23 per cent of the shots they faced. Good luck with that!

Bringing this back to the original question: There will be an abundance of questions for Brad Treliving and company to answer, and they will take a few swings this July to try and upgrade the roster.

Perhaps the best move they can make, though, would be to avoid touching their second line. They had a tough season, no question. But the supporting data suggests they were far better than what meets the eye. If resources are available to the team, they probably expend them elsewhere.

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TSN.CA / Off-Season Game Plan: Calgary Flames

Scott Cullen

The Calgary Flames missed the playoffs for the seventh time in the past nine seasons, and they have brought in a new coach to help turn the tide.

Off-Season Game Plan looks at a Flames team that has good talent at the top of the roster, but may be in line for another major deal or two to shake up the squad.

The first big change of the offseason was to bring in a new head coach, and Bill Peters comes from a Carolina team that had the best shot differentials in the league, but couldn't buy a save (or a goal, for that matter). If Peters can keep the Flames on the right side of the shot counts then they will have a chance to be in the playoff picture.

There is also a long-term consideration that goes into this summer, as the Flames currently have no picks in the first three rounds of the draft, a terrible situation for a team that didn't even make the playoffs. But, the Flames also have the wherewithal to acquire picks, if they wish, by moving out a proven player or two.

Generally, there should be enough talent here to compete for a playoff spot, but their goaltending situation was precarious last season and their depth wasn't effective enough when it mattered.

With a new coach and potentially a handful of new players, though, they could enter next season with elevated expectations.

HOCKEY OPS/COACH

Brad Treliving/Bill Peters

HEROES

Johnny Gaudreau – The 24-year-old winger had the best season of his career, putting up a career-best 84 points while generating a career-best 2.84 shots per game.

Sean Monahan – Despite playing through injuries that required post-season surgery, the 23-year-old centre tied a career-high with 31 goals and set a new career-best with 64 points.

Mark Giordano – Alongside Dougie Hamilton, Giordano anchored what may have been the best defence pairing in the league. Even without massive point totals, Giordano had a dominant season.

ZEROES

Troy Brouwer – The downward trend of his career has accelerated and the veteran winger managed just six goals and 22 points last season, the worst production of his career.

Curtis Lazar – On one hand, it was fairly unreasonable to have significant expectations for Lazar, but the Flames thought enough of him to spend a second-round pick to acquire him from Ottawa and protected him in the expansion draft. So, two goals in 65 games was less than ideal.

Sam Bennett – Following a tough 2016-2017 season, Bennett didn't see his production rebound, managing just 11 goals and 26 points. The Flames were surely expecting more at this point from the fourth pick in the 2014 Draft.

Johnny Gaudreau	80	24	60	84	54.2
	1.2	101.1	58.2	19:25	\$6.75M



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

Sean Monahan	74 1.9	31 101.3	33 57.6	64 18:41	54.7 \$6.375M
Matthew Tkachuk	68 5.5	24 97.5	25 45.2	49 17:15	57.3 \$925K
Mikael Backlund	82 3.8	14 95.1	31 46.2	45 19:01	56.2 \$5.35M
Micheal Ferland	77 -2.0	21 101.6	20 56.1	41 15:01	51.9 \$1.75M
Sam Bennett	82 -1.3	11 97.4	15 59.2	26 14:24	52.6 \$1.95M
Michael Frolik	70 4.1	10 94.9	15 47.7	25 16:55	56.9 \$4.3M
Troy Brouwer	76 -3.7	6 98.5	16 41.6	22 13:56	50.8 \$4.5M
Curtis Lazar	65 -3.4	2 96.9	10 50.7	12 9:51	51.6 \$950K
Mark Jankowski	72 -2.5	17 98.3	8 61.6	25 13:21	51.7 \$925K RFA
Nick Shore	64 3.2	5 98.2	14 38.9	19 14:10	53.4 \$925K RFA
Chris Stewart	54 -6.7	10 100.2	6 51.7	16 10:45	42.4 \$1.15M UFA
Garnet Hathaway	59 -0.5	4 99.9	9 54.2	13 11:32	53.5 \$775K RFA
Matt Stajan	68 -1.4	4 101.6	8 39.8	12 10:56	52.2 \$3.125M UFA
Kris Versteeg	24 -5.5	3 99.7	5 47.0	8 13:11	47.6 \$950K UFA
Tanner Glass	16 -2.5	0 93.4	0 44.7	0 9:23	51.0 \$650K UFA

He's small, but Johnny Gaudreau has established that it doesn't hold him back at the highest level. He's quick, elusive and creative, and his 287 points over the past four seasons ranks 13th in the league. He's the star that drives the Flames attack.

It's one thing that Sean Monahan put up 31 goals and 64 points, another fine offensive season that fits with that he's done in his career, but he also required four surgeries (wrist, groin, hips x 2) after the season. He's been a solid complement to Gaudreau on the top line, and now it's time for the Flames to find a suitable right winger to really make this line click.

In two NHL seasons, Matthew Tkachuk has established that he's both an impressive productive two-way winger, but he's also one of the most aggravating players to play against. He took a step forward offensively in his second season, and he's only 20-years-old, so Tkachuk should continue to get better.

Mikael Backlund is a top-notch two-way centre.

He probably doesn't get the requisite amount of public recognition, because he's never scored more than 53 points in a season, but Mikael Backlund is one of the top two-way centres in the game. He starts more of his shifts in the defensive zone, faces top competition, and consistently generates the best shot differentials – over the past five seasons, only eight forwards have a better relative Corsi than Backlund among those that have played at least 3,000 5-on-5 minutes.

Micheal Ferland has taken major steps forward and had a career-best 21 goals and 41 points last season, but the Flames may be better off with a more skilled option alongside Gaudreau and Monahan, leaving Ferland to still have a positive impact on the third line, where his physical presence and heavy shot can provide value.

A feisty player who has good skills, Sam Bennett has not been able to put his game together at the NHL level, effectively regressing since his rookie season. He's still only 21, so maybe patience is going to be rewarded at some point, but after back-to-back down seasons, it's hard to be anything more than cautiously optimistic about Bennett's future (and it's certainly possible to feel that it could be worse).

In a season with miserable percentages (6.0 SH%, 94.9 PDO), Michael Frolik saw his point production drop from 44 to 25, year-over-year, but he's still a solid contributor to the Flames' great two-way line with Backlund and Tkachuk.

A 32-year-old winger who seems to have been passed by the faster game, Troy Brouwer still has two years left on his deal. He could be bought out, but may still be kept in a fourth-line role.

Curtis Lazar has good speed, but hasn't been able to fulfill his potential at the NHL level, managing 15 goals in 245 career games. He's probably fighting for an NHL job at this point, but is still under contract for next season.

2012 first-round pick Mark Jankowski was on a relatively slow development plan, playing four years at Providence College plus a year in the AHL, before getting called up early last season. He did score 17 goals in 72 games, which is a good start, but the question is whether he's capable of handling more responsibility, or with Monahan and Backlund already in-house, whether Jankowski will even get that opportunity.

Picked up from Ottawa after starting his career in L.A., Nick Shore has been an intriguing fourth-line centre. He does typically post solid possession numbers, with very little offence (15 goals in 236 career games), but he's an entirely reasonable option to fill that spot with the Flames.

An agitator who plays a physical game, Garnet Hathaway played a career-high 59 games last season and the 26-year-old could very well hold down a regular job, but the 26-year-old is probably still at the stage of his career where he's battling for a roster spot.

The one major need for the Flames is to find a right winger to play with Gaudreau and Monahan on the top line. Via free agency, maybe James Neal would fit that spot; that would also likely be an expensive proposition, but the Flames do have cap space. It's possible, too, that left wing prospect Andrew Mangiapane warrants a look in a scoring role because he had 46 points in 39 AHL games.

Otherwise, Calgary could venture into the trade market. The Flames don't have a pick in the first three rounds of this year's draft, so they can't very well offer up picks to acquire talent, but if they use some of their defensive depth, they could possibly find a suitable winger, and maybe even recoup a pick or two.

Teams like Detroit (7), N.Y. Rangers (7) and Montreal (6) have excess picks in the first three rounds of this year's draft, so those might be suitable teams to target. Montreal, with four second-round picks, could offer a young winger and a couple of picks and that might reasonably address needs for both clubs.

Dougie Hamilton	82 6.7	17 98.7	27 53.0	44 21:32	57.6 \$5.75M
Mark Giordano	82 6.7	13 98.6	25 53.5	38 24:47	57.7 \$6.75M
T.J. Brodie	73 -3.9	4 99.1	28 50.0	32 23:41	50.7 \$4.65M
Travis Hamonic	74 -3.3	1 98.9	10 50.0	11 20:42	51.4 \$3.857M
Michael Stone	82 -5.4	3 98.1	7 51.0	10 16:45	49.7 \$3.5M
Brett Kulak	71 -2.3	2 98.6	6 51.6	8 12:59	52.3 \$650K RFA



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

Matt Bartkowski	18	0	3	3	46.2
	-7.3	98.1	52.5	13:21	\$660K UFA

A rare talent, 24-year-old Dougie Hamilton is a smooth-skating, 6-foot-6, right-shot rearguard who tied for the lead among defencemen with 17 goals last season. Paired with Mark Giordano, Hamilton was part of what may have been the league's best defensive pairing, and was the more offensive component of the duo, generating a career-high 3.29 shots per game. He has also missed just one game in three seasons since arriving in Calgary.

Dougie Hamilton and Mark Giordano may be the league's top defence pairing.

There are occasionally rumours about Hamilton being available in trade, and presumably it's because he would bring a massive return, and for a team missing its first three picks in the draft, Hamilton would offer some hope of recouping some picks as well as adding additional young talent. That would be some blockbuster deal if it ever came to pass.

34-year-old captain Mark Giordano has been a steadying influence in Calgary, and even though last season's total of 38 points counted as his fewest in a full season since 2011-2012, Giordano remained a two-way force and he played more than 23 minutes per game for the eighth consecutive season. There may come a time when age catches up to Giordano, and he is under contract for four more seasons, but he's still really effective.

A puck-moving defenceman who surpassed 30 points for the fifth straight season, T.J. Brodie struggled with new partner Travis Hamonic, and that could make Brodie an expendable piece on the Calgary blueline. For one thing, the Flames have some prospects looking to push for a spot and Brodie, a 27-year-old on a very reasonable contract for two more seasons, would likely yield a decent return.

His first season in Calgary did not go well, and that's troubling since his last season with the Islanders was no prize either, but Travis Hamonic seems likely to get another shot for redemption under a new coach. At the very least, it would seem that the Flames have to try Hamonic with a different partner because the Brodie-Hamonic pairing was a problem area for the Flames.

The Flames obviously have some affinity for Michael Stone, but he's now an overpaid third-pair defenceman, making \$3.5-million against the cap while playing less than 17 minutes per game last season. He's still under contract for two more years and his numbers on the third pair didn't suggest that he should be getting more responsibility.

24-year-old Brett Kulak made it as an NHL regular last season, playing in 71 games, but he also played 13 minutes per game, so he's still on the roster bubble, especially with some quality prospects on the way.

Two of those prospects may be ready for NHL jobs next season. 21-year-old Rasmus Andersson has put in two strong developmental seasons in the AHL and is due for a long look next season. 2017 first-round pick Juuso Valimaki had an outstanding season in the WHL, and he may be talented enough to make the jump. Those would be two significant, and cost-effective, additions.

Mike Smith	55	25	22	6	.916
	.923	\$4.25M			
David Rittich	21	8	6	3	.904
	.911	\$725K	RFA		
Jon Gillies	11	3	5	1	.896
	.886	\$725K	RFA		

Before suffering a groin injury, Mike Smith was having one of the best seasons of his career, posting a .921 save percentage in 47 games through mid-February. Once he got hurt, though, the Flames' season fell apart and Smith wasn't the same when he came back from injury, managing a .880 save percentage in eight starts.

Mike Smith was great for the Flames, until he got hurt, then the season went downhill.

The 36-year-old is heading into the final year of his deal, and is probably set to be the starter next season. Given what happened last season, though, there will be pressure on the backup to be better.

25-year-old David Rittich emerged as the top backup for the Flames, but he ran hot and cold. He could very well be a bona fide backup, but there were some bumps in the road during his rookie season.

The expectation for some time has been that 24-year-old Jon Gillies would be the goaltender of the future for the Flames, and he's been solid in the American Hockey League. He got into 11 games with the Flames last season, and had some trouble, but he's still in competition with Rittich for that spot. Calgary needs one of them to show that they can play at an NHL level.

Juuso Valimaki	D	43	14	31	45
+15		Tri-City (WHL)			
Adam Fox	D	29	6	22	28
+3		Harvard (ECAC)			
Tyler Parsons	G	28			
.902		Kansas City (ECHL)			
Dillon Dube	C	53	38	46	84
+17		Kelowna (WHL)			
Rasmus Andersson	D	56	9	30	39
+20		Stockton (AHL)			
Oliver Kyllington	D	62	7	28	35
-12		Stockton (AHL)			
Jon Gillies	G	39			
.917		Stockton (AHL)			
Andrew Mangiapane	LW	39	21	25	46
+17		Stockton (AHL)			
Morgan Klimchuk	LW	62	19	21	40
+1		Stockton (AHL)			
Matthew Phillips	C	71	48	64	112
+20		Victoria (WHL)			
Glenn Gawdin	C	67	56	69	125
+61		Swift Current (WHL)			
Adam Ruzicka	C	63	36	36	72
+21		Sarnia (OHL)			
Spencer Foo	RW	62	20	19	39
+6		Stockton (AHL)			
Hunter Shinkaruk	LW	63	17	15	32
+3		Stockton (AHL)			
Zach Fischer	RW	46	22	14	36
+13		Spokane (WHL)			

### DRAFT

No first-round pick

### FREE AGENCY

The Flames have approximately \$62.5M committed to the 2018-2019 salary cap for 15 players.

### NEEDS

First-line right winger, depth wingers and defence

WHAT I SAID THE FLAMES NEEDED LAST YEAR



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018

One top-nine forward, one top-four defenceman, two more defencemen, two goaltenders

### THEY ADDED

Travis Hamonic, Brett Kulak, Mike Smith, Eddie Lack

### TRADE MARKET

Sam Bennett, Curtis Lazar, T.J. Brodie, Dougie Hamilton, Rasmus Andersson

Johnny Gaudreau	Sean Monahan	James Neal*
Matthew Tkachuk	Mikael Backlund	Michael Frolik
Sam Bennett	Mark Jankowski	Micheal Ferland
Garnet Hathaway	Nick Shore	Troy Brouwer
Andrew Mangiapane	Dillon Dube	Curtis Lazar
Morgan Klimchuk	Glenn Gawdin	Spencer Foo
Mark Giordano	Dougie Hamilton	Mike Smith
Rasmus Andersson	Travis Hamonic	David Rittich
Brett Kulak	Michael Stone	Jon Gillies
Juuso Valimaki	Justin Falk*	
Oliver Kyllington	Josh Healey	

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USA TODAY / NHL free agents 2018: Capitals' John Carlson leads ranking of top 15 potential UFAs

Kevin Allen, USA TODAY Published 11:27 a.m. ET June 11, 2018

After spending the Stanley Cup Final scheming to slow down defenseman John Carlson, the Vegas Golden Knights will be among teams trying to persuade him to join them.

Vegas general manager George McPhee drafted Carlson when McPhee was in Washington. One of the Golden Knights' most pressing needs is an offensive difference-maker on the blue line.

Carlson, who could still re-sign with the Capitals, is USA TODAY Sports' top potential unrestricted free agent.

The 28-year-old is No. 1 on our list because top-pairing, right-shot defensemen are in short supply. He led all blueliners in scoring (68 points) in the regular season and he led all defensemen in the playoffs (20 points in 24 games).

At the NHL trade deadline last March, McPhee made an aggressive attempt to acquire Erik Karlsson from the Ottawa Senators. They could resume talks with the Senators after the season. But Carlson could be viewed as a more intriguing option because it wouldn't cost the Golden Knights assets.

Free agency opens July 1. Here are others on USA TODAY Sports' top potential free agent list:

2. Center John Tavares: With Lou Lamoriello taking over as the New York Islanders' president of hockey operations, the buzz around the NHL is the Islanders now have a better shot at re-signing Tavares.

Players usually appreciate Lamoriello's no-nonsense style. Tavares saw the impact Lamoriello had in Toronto in helping build a winner. He knows Lamoriello's front-office history, which includes a 1987-2015 stint with the New Jersey Devils when they won three Stanley Cups.

If, however, Tavares explores the market, the St. Louis Blues, San Jose Sharks, Montreal Canadiens, Nashville Predators, New York Rangers, and even the Golden Knights, are possible destinations. Tavares is a franchise center who will command the most lucrative contract this summer.

3. Left wing James van Riemsdyk: Would bet Lamoriello will be interested. Expect the New Jersey Devils to be in the hunt, along with the Los Angeles Kings, Pittsburgh Penguins and Philadelphia Flyers. Half of the NHL could come calling.

Van Riemsdyk scored 36 goals last season, and he has essentially been a 30-goal for the past five seasons.

4. Left wing Ilya Kovalchuk: Is the romance of Kovalchuk overshadowing the reality? Perhaps. But multiple teams are interested, and they are probably willing to give the 35-year-old two or three seasons on his next contract as he returns after five seasons in Russia's Kontinental Hockey League.

The Sharks and Kings are interested. Depending upon what happens with Tavares, the Islanders should be in the mix. Maybe the Rangers and Detroit Red Wings, although Kovalchuk's objective is to win a Stanley Cup.

He looked sharp in helping the Russians win the gold medal at the 2018 Olympics. Kovalchuk can still be a 25-plus goal scorer.

5. Center Paul Stastny: He's a two-way No. 2 center. The Winnipeg Jet would probably like to re-sign him, but he likely could earn more on the open market.

Several teams are looking for centers, including Montreal and the Carolina Hurricanes.

6. Goalie Carter Hutton: With the Islanders, Hurricanes and Red Wings all looking for goalies, Hutton suddenly could be a hot commodity. He's not going to command a large contract.

For him, it could come down to the opportunity to play more. He has always been considered a strong backup goalie. Could he thrive if given more starts? He posted a .931 save percentage last season and owns seven shutouts over the past two seasons (62 games).

7. Left wing James Neal: It's mildly surprising that he hasn't re-signed in Las Vegas because he would like to stay there. He's one of the team leaders. It still could get done.

He would be popular if he enters the market because he's a consistent scorer. He has scored 20 or more in all 10 of his seasons.

8. Defenseman Mike Green: While the Detroit Red Wings are rebuilding, they would love to have him back. He was their best defenseman. He likes Detroit.

But they won't give him a longer deal. Is he what the Florida Panthers are looking for? How about the Canadiens?

9. Left wing Thomas Vanek: It feels as if half the NHL has Vanek penciled in as their Plan B option. He's a smart, likable, offensive player who can give a team a scoring boost.

Every team can find room for him. For Vanek, it will probably come down to term. Who will give him multiple years? He's up a few spots on the list because he could be a value player -- offering offense for a reasonable price.

10. Left wing David Perron: With 66 points, Perron is coming off his best season. He's 30. With so many teams looking for offense, he should have multiple options.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

**NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 12, 2018**

11. Left wing Rick Nash: Not the player he once was. But at the right price, he's still a valuable piece as a 20-goal scorer. The Canadiens should be interested.

12. Center Tyler Bozak: A 45-50 point forward. Good on faceoffs. Could be a nice addition for a contending team.

13. Right wing Michael Grabner: It's a speed league, and Grabner can fly. Scored 52 goals over two seasons with the Rangers. They might want him back.

14. Left wing Patrick Maroon: Offers size, strength, grit and goals. He's 6-3. Will have multiple options. How would he look on the Tampa Bay Lightning?

15. Defenseman Ian Cole: A veteran defenseman with Stanley Cup rings, Cole can help several teams. The Devils seem like a prime option. The Buffalo Sabres will be interested. How about the Colorado Avalanche?

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