



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

## THE ATHLETIC

### Bag of Jerks, Part 2: Prospects, prospects, more prospects and that Geekie hair

By Sara Civian

I am a constant combination of stunned and grateful that anyone would pay actual dollars to view my content. It's always humbling when even one of said content-viewers asks me a question.

There were a lot of those this go-round.

Thanks for Part 1, in which we discussed free agency, contract negotiation and celebrity Caniacs.

Thanks for Part 2, in which we're about to discuss Hurricanes prospects and their hair.

It seems there are a lot of prospects in Charlotte that are close to NHL ready but limited slots available next year. How do you see (Hurricanes GM) Don Waddell and company managing the surplus, and which players do you think are the closest to making the jump to the NHL? — Justin P

Hi, Justin P.

The first part of your question reminds me of conversations I've had with Rod Brind'Amour about Warren Foegele, who made the NHL team out of camp last season.

"From Day 1, it's been rewarding to see a guy show up to camp not really sure where he would fit in, then it was just, 'You gotta keep him, you gotta play him,'" Brind'Amour said after Round 1, Game 4. "Today's game (the NHL) is tough because of the way contracts are set up (going into training camp). A lot of times the team is already kind of set up, on your lap. That wasn't the case this year — we had spots open, and you love to have that, you know? When you go, 'Who's the guy that's earned the right to be here?' We've been saying it all along that's what he did. He's earned the right to be here, then he's earned his ice time. He works hard, he does what he has to. Yes, you're happy to see those guys succeed."

(As an aside, it's always hilarious to me when Brind'Amour talks about how much he loves extremely difficult situations like this and assumes we normal folk think the same way.)

Anyway, I'm not sure I totally agree just yet with the premise that there are limited slots available. There are quite a few roles that could be up for grabs if Justin Williams retires, UFAs like Greg McKegg and Micheal Ferland find different homes, or bottom-six players get outplayed. It'll be a competitive training camp.

I see them managing it like they did last season with Foegele — "Who's the guy that's earned the right to be here?"

We'll be going extremely long on the prospect pool shortly, but off the cuff I'll rank the players I consider closest to making the NHL club based on a combination of positional need and readiness.

5. Aleksii Saarela
4. Julien Gauthier
3. Jake Bean

2. Morgan Geekie

1. Martin Necas

Fighting encouraged in the comments.

Among these players, who do you think is most likely to take a big step forward in their production next season: Lucas Wallmark, Foegele, Saku Maenalanen, Greg McKegg or Haydn Fleury? — Peter W.

So, if we're specifically targeting an increase in production here and not just general development, it has to be one of the first three. Just asking around in Finnish circles (a sentence clause I never thought I'd type a decade ago...), Maenalanen actually used to be known as a scorer. The snarl and around-the-board-friendly attitude he plays with now is a recent development.

He had 17 goals and 46 points in 59 games in his last season (2017-18) with Liiga's Kärpät. I have so much respect for the way he changed up his game to make the NHL, and the crazy thing is how organic it seemed. That's why it wouldn't shock me to see him develop as a scorer.

I could see Wallmark do the same, but it really depends on the way he's utilized. He emerged as a beast on the face-off dot when Jordan Staal was out for months, so it seems more likely he works with Brind'Amour to develop as a two-way center. I would consider Foegele's "big step forward" the playoffs, it's just a matter of if he can maintain it. I feel like he's taken the next step in that it's not a pleasant surprise when he scores, but a disappointment when he doesn't, you know?

Thanks for doing this Sara! Are there any Canes prospects that are flying under the radar of the common fan? We've all heard of Necas, Bean, and Geekie after the great seasons they had in Charlotte. But is there anyone who you think could make a big splash in the coming years that we may not know about? — Ryan C.

Anytime, Ryan. C.

The thing about Hurricanes fans is they are very dialed in to prospect talk. I'm sure that's what a league-leading playoff drought does to a fanbase. We need to go down the rabbit hole for this, because Lord knows you've all done your research on the Top 25.

I would tell you to keep an eye on Jack Drury at Harvard this season if you're over the Adam Fox situation. I would also tell you to keep an eye on Matt Filipe, and not just because my whole family went to and/or played various sports at Northeastern.

In conclusion: watch college hockey. Thank you for coming to my TED Talk.

What happens with Mike Vellucci? Do you think he stays with the Checkers, pursues other opportunities or joins Rod Brind'Amour's staff? — Carson B.

We're at the point that it would shock me if Vellucci isn't on the radar for an NHL assistant coaching job and it would



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

disappoint me if he wasn't in line for an NHL coaching position. I've heard so much from players he coached in the OHL in the past, current players he coaches and his peers.

The unfortunate thing about having someone excellent on your professional hockey staff is that they're probably gone in a few years. Vellucci is excellent. He's also, by all accounts, a big family man.

I haven't yet heard legitimate rumblings about his future or offers, but it's hard to imagine he doesn't accept one that:

1. Provides more for his family and still ...
2. Allows him to spend time with it.

The question becomes, obviously, what kind of offer is that? Something internal or elsewhere?

We'll see.

Are you enjoying your time in the Raleigh area? Anything you've done stand out as a staple favorite? — Joseph S.

"I like that there's beer at the coffee shops," she said, sipping one (1) beer at a coffee shop.

I like how chill it is here, and the community feel. I thought I'd be darting for the airport to something exciting when the season was over, but I'm honestly just content to chill here for a few months before the season starts back up.

Do (Tom) Dundon, Don (Waddell) & co. really just love players from Finland? We have like 5 Finnish players now? — Jessi T.

Are you not entertained?

Hi, Sara. First time commenter, long time Twitter annoyer. You might or might not be aware that Morgan Geekie underwent quite a hair transformation his rookie season in the AHL. Similar to Dougie Hamilton. Is it possible that if he keeps letting these golden brown locks of hair grow that he becomes too powerful for the NHL similar to how a nuclear power plant melts down when the water level decreases, the fuel rods begin to heat up and face the risk of melting? — Jakob N.

We here at The Athletic Carolina are well aware of the situation and all its potential ramifications.

Unfortunately (or fortunately?) this is the price one has to pay for Calder Cup glory. We will provide updates as soon as they become available.

## Custance: Examining the trade possibilities of every first-round pick in the 2019 NHL Draft

By Craig Custance

The theory went like this: Everyone knows who is going to go in the top two of the upcoming NHL Draft. But after that, there's a pretty wide variance depending on needs and how much teams like individual players. And after the top dozen, the pool gets even wider. So add in that the parity in the league puts pressure on teams to win now and perhaps we'll see more first-round picks than usual traded in the coming week. Solid theory, right? Right?

"History tells you it's going to be unlikely," answered a Western Conference general manager, quickly deflating it.

Said another GM about teams typically keeping their first-round picks: "The mystery box is so alluring. You go to these type of events and the scouts are so influential."

They're both right. Sure teams move up and down a little in the first round. And sometimes Derek Stepan or Cory Schneider is traded for a high first-rounder. But GMs are actually pretty conservative when it comes to moving their top picks at this point in the NHL calendar. You make it this far, you kind of want to make the pick.

That said, there's a glimmer of hope if you're a fan of trades.

"It's unlikely, but not improbable," said a GM. "It only takes one or two to have a different philosophy than everyone else."

And there are some mitigating factors. The Winnipeg Jets wouldn't mind getting back into the first round and they have high-end players who could be on the move. The same goes for the Toronto Maple Leafs, who lost their pick in the Jake Muzzin deal.

There's a lot of trade talk and, at some point, first-round picks will get dealt. It always happens. Let's take a look at each pick to determine the likelihood of it actually happening:

1. New Jersey Devils – When GM Ray Shero was asked whether he'd move this pick, his response was pretty simple: "You never say never to anything." But ... "You've won the lottery. Who goes out and sells their lottery ticket after they've won it?" It would only really make sense if the Rangers felt like they had to make a big offer to move up one slot and that sounds like a complete non-starter.

2. and 20. New York Rangers – The Rangers are content with who they'll get with their first pick, so all indications are they'll sit and get either Jack Hughes or Kaapo Kakko at No. 2. It's pick No. 20 (from the Jets in the Kevin Hayes deal) where things get interesting. "I can see New York trading their second one," said a GM. Everything is in play with that pick.

3. Chicago Blackhawks – Chicago might be sitting in one of the best spots. They have their pick of the next tier of high-end talent and could be the beneficiary of a team that has really zeroed in on a player, especially Bowen Byram, the clear-cut best defenseman. The Blackhawks received a couple calls already to move the pick, although nothing that gave them pause. Chances are they pick at No. 3, but if the Blackhawks are swept off their feet, they'd listen to move down.

4. and 16. Colorado Avalanche – The Avs are in an interesting spot all around. They could, theoretically, trade down out of four if there's a team that covets one of the top players. Considering they're about to enter a stretch where they should be competing for long playoff runs, there's a case to be made that No. 16 could be packaged for immediate help. As of now, it sounds like the Avs are expecting to make both picks, but there's also an expectation internally that talks will intensify as the draft moves closer.

5. and 22. Los Angeles Kings – With two first-rounders, courtesy of the Muzzin trade, the Kings have flexibility here,



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

but this is a team that needs an infusion of young talent. The smart bet is they make both their picks.

6. Detroit Red Wings – During a conversation with local media on Thursday, GM Steve Yzerman was asked if he'd had any conversations about moving this pick. "Nothing at this point," he said. The Red Wings are in a good spot here in terms of who should be available so it would be a little surprising if they moved at all.

7. and 31. Buffalo Sabres – The Sabres have no interest in trading completely out of the No. 7 spot. There's a strong likelihood they make that pick. They also hold pick No. 31 from the Ryan O'Reilly trade and there is some flexibility there. It's possible they move that pick, but the inclination internally now is for them to make both of these picks.

8. Edmonton Oilers – New Oilers GM Ken Holland made a habit of trading down to accumulate picks in recent years with the Red Wings. That could be an option here. "I won't pay a price to move up," Holland told The Athletic. "We only have six picks in Edmonton. After the top two, there's a lot of good players. If somebody wants to move into the top 10 – am I going to answer the phone? Yeah. I'll see what price they want to pay."

9. and 29. Anaheim Ducks – GM Bob Murray's game plan is typically to make the pick or trade down. The Ducks stayed competitive for a very long time by drafting well and, during Murray's tenure, that included making multiple first-round picks in three drafts since 2008.

10. Vancouver Canucks – There's definitely a belief outside of Vancouver that this pick is very much in play and that GM Jim Benning is willing to deal. "There are players they would move the 10th pick for," said one NHL executive. Vancouver is a team to watch on the draft floor.

11. Philadelphia Flyers – GM Chuck Fletcher has already been aggressive in upgrading the Flyers by trading for the rights to Hayes and acquiring defenseman Matt Niskanen. When asked about the possibility of moving this pick, he didn't completely rule it out. "It's certainly a consideration," he told The Athletic. "It's one thing when you're picking 22, 24, 26 – you move your first in those circumstances. ... When you're picking 11, it's a little bit different. Certainly there's a lot of NHL players if teams are willing to make them available, I would trade pick No. 11 for – it's not something we're looking to do. We'll see what the market bears."

12. Minnesota Wild – GM Paul Fenton made a name for himself in Nashville as a great talent evaluator and a guy who hit on his draft picks, so it'd be shocking if the Wild did anything but make this pick or possibly move down to add another pick. They need young talent in Minnesota.

13. Florida Panthers – The Panthers are making a big push this summer to upgrade their NHL roster, but according to one source, it would take something very compelling to get them out of picking in the first round. Part of the reason is a need for depth on defense. Since taking Aaron Ekblad No. 1 overall in 2014, the Panthers haven't taken a defenseman in the first two rounds.

14. Arizona Coyotes – It's been made clear to many NHL teams that the Coyotes are willing to move this pick in return

for a front line offensive player. The Coyotes are another team of interest leading up to the draft.

15. Montreal Canadiens – The Canadiens made 11 picks last year, including four in the first two rounds. They have another 10 this year, including three in the first two rounds (the additional second-rounder courtesy of the Max Pacioretty trade) and still seem very much in acquiring young talent mode. If they deal it could be to move up slightly but probably not completely out of the first. "I'd be surprised if Montreal is interested in that," said one NHL source.

17. Vegas Golden Knights – One source called the chances of Vegas moving this pick "unlikely" and part of the reason for that could be all the young assets the Golden Knights have moved already in different trades involving Tomas Tatar, Pacioretty and Mark Stone.

18. Dallas Stars – There's still a possibility that the Stars sign Mats Zuccarello, and if that's the case, they would have to send their 2020 first-round pick to the Rangers. It'd be hard to imagine GM Jim Nill moving firsts in consecutive drafts. If they don't sign Zuccarello, the Stars are in a window where they might be willing to use this pick to upgrade the NHL roster.

19. Ottawa Senators – The rebuilding Senators are still at a stage where they're stockpiling young talent. The strategy here might be to move down and keep it going.

21. Pittsburgh Penguins – The Athletic's Rob Rossi reported that the Penguins think highly of this draft and scouts would like to take advantage, but Pittsburgh is still trying to maximize the Sidney Crosby window. According to one NHL source, all options are open here. You can't count GM Jim Rutherford out of anything.

23. New York Islanders – With just two picks in the first four rounds, the Islanders may be a move down candidate to try and get some of those picks back. That said, there's a lot of intrigue surrounding the Islanders so you can't rule anything out.

24. Nashville Predators – The Predators don't have their second-round pick because of the Brian Boyle trade and didn't have a pick in the first three rounds in the 2018 draft. Even for a team in the middle of its Stanley Cup window, it'd be quite aggressive to move out of the first round again this year. They may even be another trade down candidate.

25. Washington Capitals – While you can never count out a team that is a Cup contender trading a first-rounder, one NHL source characterized the Capitals as an "unlikely option" to go this direction. The Capitals have just five draft picks this year, traded their 2020 second-rounder in the Nick Jensen deal and are only a couple years removed from a draft in which they didn't start picking until the fourth round.

26. Calgary Flames – Calgary didn't make its first pick in the 2018 draft until the fourth round and doesn't have a second-round pick in this draft because of the Travis Hamonic deal. With the belief out there that Hamonic or TJ Brodie could be moved (both are entering the final year of their contracts) it's possible the Flames are adding picks and not subtracting.

27. Tampa Bay Lightning – Coming off a historic regular season and crushing postseason, the Lightning are a fascinating team to watch during trade season. The belief



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

according to one NHL source regarding the Lightning is that “nothing is off the table,” including a possible deal involving this pick.

28. Carolina Hurricanes – This pick is in play. The Hurricanes are looking for more offense up front and would use this pick, or one of their three second-rounders, to help make it happen. For teams looking to get back into the first round, this is a spot to target.

## LeBrun Notebook: Lack of comparables make Jordan Binnington’s contract talks a unique situation

By Pierre LeBrun

What is a fair contract for Jordan Binnington this offseason?

Talk about a unique case.

A 25-year-old RFA goalie with only half a season of NHL experience — albeit a sensational half-season which culminated in a Stanley Cup win. There are no comparable contracts out there when you consider those specific criteria.

“Nope, not anymore,” veteran agent Mike Liut said. “There is not a direct comparable.”

Liut, along with Rob Hooper at Octagon, represents Binnington.

“Jordan’s story is one of perseverance,” Liut said, a story which our Scott Burnside chronicled during the Cup final.

There were some before the playoffs started who pointed to Andrew Hammond as a possible comparison after his late-season run with Ottawa in 2014-15 when he posted a .941 save percentage in 24 games. However, the Hamburglar faded out way before ever winning a Cup, appearing in just two playoffs games (he signed a three-year deal that summer that carried a cap hit of \$1.35 million).

Binnington made \$650,000 this past season. His goalie mate Jake Allen still has two years left on his deal at a \$4.35-million cap hit. But I would think the Blues would value having Allen around to protect Binnington in case there’s any regression next season. It’s a solid 1a-1b punch in goal but just as important was how Allen supported Binnington, who was a positive influence and a supporter, there’s value in that.

But now it also has to work under the cap. Can you afford to pay both goalies?

And again, how much is Binnington now worth? Is it \$4 million a year? \$5 million? \$6 million? He’s UFA-eligible in two years so term will also be key. He’s also eligible for salary arbitration this summer as a fail safe.

“There isn’t a comp I can think of but maybe \$5 million to \$6 million range depending on term,” a rival agent said. “Shorter term, closer to \$5 million.”

If you’re the Blues, obviously deep down you have to hope there’s not any significant regression. But how will Binnington react to making real money for the first time?

It’s such a unique situation.

30. Boston Bruins – The Athletic’s Fluto Shinzawa wrote that the Bruins could be shopping for a No. 2 right wing to play with David Krejci. The team also has to make a decision on Torey Krug, whose trade value won’t be higher than it is right now but also showed just how valuable he is to the Bruins during the playoffs. He’s entering the last year of his contract. So there’s real trade possibility for the always active Don Sweeney. Boston didn’t pick until No. 57 last year because of the Rick Nash trade, so they might be inclined to make this pick.

In another attempt to find a recent similar situation, one rival team executive mentioned Matt Murray, who was 22 years old and coming off of his first Cup win when he signed a three-year extension worth \$3.75 million a year, although it didn’t kick in for another season after that. It’s not a perfect comparable because Murray was younger and further away from the UFA apple.

In the meantime, one would expect Liut and Hooper to have very preliminary discussions with the Blues next week in Vancouver at the Draft.

Binnington’s season, punctuated by his Game 7 gem in the Cup final, did not surprise his goalie whisperer from the past few summers.

“Remarkable, what he and the Blues have been able to accomplish,” Andy Chiodo said, who has worked with Binnington the last few years at the Biosteel camp in Toronto.

“I have stood witness to the work he has put in to reach this milestone, the determination he has practiced and prepared with,” Chiodo said (currently a goaltending development coach in the Penguins system with Wilkes-Barre). “You can’t always predict the outcome, or how things play out, but you can certainly dream and match a work ethic to that dream that leads to these moments. Very proud of him and happy for his family, incredibly special.”

Recently, another Eastern Conference team executive noted in amazement that Binnington had passed through waivers, twice. Any team in the NHL could have had him for nothing.

Draft host Canucks

I always feel like the host team will take a chance to make a splash at the draft if they can, although that’s easier said than done.

Who can forget Lou Lamoriello when New Jersey hosted the draft in 2013 and he traded away his first-round pick for Cory Schneider. With the pick, the Canucks drafted Bo Horvat.

Vancouver owns the 10th overall pick and the Canucks are a team to keep an eye on. I think they would both move up or move down depending on offers.

But the real action might be in the second half of the draft’s first round.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

"I think more so than in several years, I've heard more chatter about picks moving from 15 down," said one NHL team executive this week.

Canucks GM Jim Benning, meanwhile, could be busy in other ways. My TSN colleague Darren Dreger first reported his potential interest in Toronto blueliner Nikita Zaitsev. It's more of a Plan B or Plan C scenario the way one source described it to me but very much on the radar depending on what the Leafs end up doing with the Russian D-man.

I do think the Canucks will also kick the tires on pending UFA Erik Karlsson if he gets to the June 23 UFA speaking period, although which team won't be doing their due diligence on the defenseman? I don't have any evidence that Vancouver would rank high on Karlsson's list but I guess you never know.

Pending UFA D Tyler Myers would be another potential option on the right side for Vancouver.

Meanwhile, I'm told the Canucks continue to have discussions with pending UFA blueline Alex Edler and remain hopeful to get him signed before July 1 but at this point, there's no guarantee of that.

Other rumblings from around the NHL

- As I tweeted on Thursday, the Blue Jackets haven't given permission to agent Paul Theofanous to speak directly with teams on pending UFAs Artemi Panarin and Sergei Bobrovsky. Part of me wonders why not, given the team's hope to get at least one of those players involved in a sign-and-trade for the eight-year deal, but I think the reason is simple at this point: the Jackets want to retain control over the situation. They've told teams to make them an offer draft-pick wise. The Flyers gave up a fifth-round pick to talk to pending UFA Kevin Hayes, wouldn't

Panarin at the very least be worth a third-round pick if you thought you could sign him? Florida and the Rangers have long been linked to Panarin and remain very much interested. But I don't believe the Panthers, for example, see the merit in paying a second-round pick to Columbus as part of a sign-and-trade if they can just sign him for nothing July 1. For a lower pick, perhaps.

- There haven't been any real discussions since the season ended between the Hurricanes and pending UFA power forward Micheal Ferland which seems to strongly suggest he's headed to the July 1 market or at least to the June 23 UFA speaking period. I think Ferland would like to keep Carolina as an option but hearing from other teams certainly appears to be in the cards right now.
- A few sources have suggested the cap-crunched Jets are listening to offers on Nikolaj Ehlers, among others. The speedy winger, 23, has six more years on his deal at a \$6-million cap hit. I would think if Winnipeg did move him it would be for a defenceman so they could protect themselves against a trade of Jacob Trouba and potentially losing Tyler Myers to free agency.
- The Leafs are calling teams asking them about their interest in Garret Sparks, 25, who has one more year left on his deal at \$750,000. They need better support for Frederik Andersen whose work load is always a hot topic.
- The Capitals, who created cap room on Friday with their trade of Matt Niskanen, remain in discussions with pending UFA winger Carl Hagelin, whom they see as a good fit.

## Duhatschek: Handing out the full-season NHL awards

By Eric Duhatschek

Every year, around NHL awards time, two questions always seem to arise:

One, do the playoffs count? The answer, of course, is no. Balloting covers the regular season only.

The second question is, should the playoffs count? The answer there is maybe. Maybe they should.

People (reasonably) wonder: Why, if the chase for the Stanley Cup is so valued by all the principal players in the NHL – players, coaches, managers, owners and fans – is playoff performance excluded from the discussion for major awards?

After all, there is no higher praise that can be lavished on a player than to describe him as "clutch" in the postseason. Just about everyone holding a managerial position in hockey will say the same thing: The regular season is when a player earns his salary, but the playoffs are where they create their legacies.

But because the NHL wants an even playing field – and not undermine the award candidacies of players from teams that

missed the playoffs – the awards have only ever covered regular season play.

In the real world, that's probably not going to change either.

Luckily, here at The Athletic, we sometimes operate in a parallel universe and can do the things the league can't. It leaves us in a position to offer an alternative awards option, and examine what it would look like if the NHL ever considered full-season awards, in which both regular-season and playoff performances were factored into the equation.

Procedurally, votes for all the major awards (except general manager of the year) are cast in a 72-hour window between the end of the regular season and the start of the playoffs. The Professional Hockey Writers Association votes for the Hart, Norris, Calder, Selke and Byng. The Professional Hockey Broadcasters Association votes for the Jack Adams; and NHL GMs vote for the Vezina.

The problem, in recent years, is that the NHL rolls out its list of award finalists during the opening playoff round – one trophy per day. This year, the timing probably couldn't have been worse, thanks to all the first-round upsets. It meant, right around the time the NHL was announcing the finalists for the



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

major awards, its top regular-season teams, the ones with all those award candidates, were in the process of quickly exiting the playoffs.

Many of those players didn't see those exceptional regular-season achievements spill over into the postseason.

Helpfully, we've created a hypothetical scenario here to debate the following whimsical notion:

If the NHL awards period were ever extended from opening night of the regular season in October until the June day when commissioner Gary Bettman hands the Stanley Cup to the captain of the winning team, who then would you select as the league's MVP; its best defenceman; its best goalie; its best coach and its most underrated (which would be my way of combining elements of the Byng, the Masterton and maybe even the coveted Mark Messier leadership award)?

I'll start – and then invite any readers who'd like to provide further input to do so in the comments section below.

Full season MVP (The Wayne Gretzky Award)

Winner: Jordan Binnington (St. Louis Blues)

Runners-up: Brad Marchand (Boston Bruins); Nikita Kucherov, (Tampa Bay Lightning)

This year's actual Hart Trophy finalists (awarded to the player adjudged most valuable to his own team) were Kucherov, Connor McDavid and Sidney Crosby. McDavid missed the playoffs altogether with Edmonton, while Kucherov and Crosby were eliminated almost instantly. By contrast, two players who would have been in the regular-season Hart discussion, but didn't qualify in the top three – Marchand and Binnington – had fabulous postseasons overall. Marchand contributed 23 points in 24 playoff games and while there were some nights when he struggled defensively, including one real sour moment in the waning stages of the first period of the final game, the overall body of his work over 79 regular-season games (in which he produced exactly 100 points) and then tied for the NHL playoff scoring lead elevated him past both Crosby and McDavid in my mind.

But ultimately, this choice really came down to their respective performances in Game 7. Now, some people may argue that one game shouldn't determine how a vote that spans a whole season turns out, but in this case, how can it not? If the Bruins had won the Cup, Marchand would have been my pick for MVP. But they didn't, so ... it's Binnington. If you adhere closely to the wording of the Hart Trophy – most valuable to his team – it's hard to dispute the electrifying, unprecedented impact that Binnington had on the Blues.

St. Louis was going nowhere without him – absolutely dead last in the NHL at the beginning of January. Not only did Binnington's arrival stabilize their goaltending, but he also stabilized the whole team. If you combine his regular-season totals (24-5-1, 1.89 GAA, .927 save percentage) with his playoff numbers (16 wins, a record for an NHL rookie), it adds up to a remarkable impact. No single player contributed more to his team's ascension than Binnington did this year. And even if Kucherov's playoffs were decidedly underwhelming, that runaway scoring title – 128 points in 82 games – cannot be dismissed completely out of hand either. From October to

April, he was the best player on the best team in hockey. That means he's a finalist – but not your winner.

Full season Defenseman of the Year (The Bobby Orr Award)

Winner: Brent Burns (San Jose)

Runners-up: Mark Giordano (Calgary Flames); Victor Hedman (Tampa Bay Lightning)

This is the only award in which the playoffs didn't alter my world view – and it was largely because the top playoff performers among defencemen didn't do enough in the regular season to vault themselves into contention. The closest would be the Blues' Alex Pietrangolo, who was sensational in the deciding seventh game and great throughout the playoffs, but he didn't have a great first half and probably won't get more than a handful of fourth or fifth-place votes in the actual Norris balloting. That has to enter into consideration as well.

Now while these three were the actual Norris Trophy finalists, I do believe the playoffs will shift the expected order of finish.

Most of us believe Calgary's Giordano will win the award, and if he doesn't, it'll go to Hedman again, with Burns finishing third. But both Calgary and Tampa lost in the opening round. Hedman looked as if he were trying to play through an injury; and thus, wasn't effective. And Giordano had just an OK playoff, as Calgary exited in five games to Colorado. Burns, on the other hand, had a monstrously effective playoff. Criticized in-season for his lack of attention to defensive details, Burns was so good for San Jose on both sides of the puck in the postseason.

He got into three rounds, produced 16 points in 20 games, led the playoffs in average time on ice (28:25), and was a critical contributor to a team that pushed the Blues to six games in the conference final. Among defencemen who shone in the playoffs, two – Pietrangolo and Seth Jones of Columbus – would have certainly pushed their way up the Norris charts but probably not enough to dislodge any of the top three. But what Burns accomplished in the playoffs sets him apart from the rest.

In our version of full-season NHL awards, Burns would be accepting congratulatory handshakes – instead of politely applauding as someone else captures the actual Norris trophy at the awards in Vegas.

Full season Rookie of the Year (The Teemu Selanne Award)

Winner: Binnington

Runners-up: Elias Pettersson (Vancouver), Miro Heiskanen (Dallas)

Full disclosure: There are a lot of us who believed Heiskanen (and not the Buffalo Sabres' Rasmus Dahlin) should have been a Calder Trophy finalist (Heiskanen was third on my ballot – I had Pettersson one and Binnington two). Traditionally, voters are notoriously tough on players that don't play a full season, so it was heartening to see Binnington emerge as a Calder finalist, even though he didn't get his first NHL start until January. What the playoffs did was give him a chance to catch up to Pettersson in the games-played category by playing in four playoff rounds for the Blues.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

Pettersson's brilliant rookie season would in no way drop him out of the top three, even though the Canucks missed the playoffs, but I suspect Heiskanen's good work for Dallas for two rounds would certainly move him up. After a splashy regular season – 33 points in 82 games, and averaged 23:06 of ice time per night; only Dahlin, at 21:09 came close – Heiskanen was second on the Stars in playoff ice time (25:31 per night). Moreover, he showed a defensive poise that's rare for such a young player competing for the first time on the demanding NHL playoff stage.

But Binnington just added to his regular-season case with his playoff performance – and here's the weird irony. He may be shutout from all genuine NHL awards when they hand out the hardware on June 19 at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas, but in full-season NHL awards, he might be a three-time winner. That's because he would also be a candidate for ...

Full season Goalie of the Year (The Patrick Roy Award)

Winner: Ben Bishop (Dallas Stars)

Runners-up: Binnington; Robin Lehner (New York Islanders)

NHL GMs vote for the Vezina and they didn't have Binnington in their top three after the regular season (instead, it was Bishop, Lehner and Tampa's Andrei Vasilevskiy). In fairness to the GMs, it was a complicated season to assess goalie play. Binnington, Bishop and Lehner finished 1-2-3 in GAA; while Bishop, Lehner and Binnington finished 1-2-4 in save percentage (Los Angeles backup Jack Campbell was No. 3). But Vasilevskiy was No. 1 in wins and finished in the top 10 of all four major goalie categories (GAA, wins, save percentage and shutouts).

Usually, GMs like to vote for workhorse goaltenders, but this year, Bishop and Lehner both played just 46 games apiece – Bishop because of injuries, Lehner because he was part of a rotation with Thomas Greiss. But just as Binnington helped the Blues go deep into the playoffs, Bishop and Lehner were each instrumental in their teams' upset victories in the opening round; and Bishop was sensational in Round 2 as well (Dallas just failing to squeeze by St. Louis in the divisional semifinal). Given that Bishop was a Vezina finalist anyway (and may win), we'll award him the full-season goalie of the year award, just to spread some of the wealth around.

Full season Coach of the Year (The Scotty Bowman Award)

Winner: Craig Berube (St. Louis Blues)

Runners-up, Barry Trotz (New York Islanders); Rod Brind'Amour (Carolina Hurricanes)

Berube, Trotz and Tampa's Jon Cooper are the finalists in actual Jack Adams trophy race, selected by NHL broadcasters; and the expectation is that Trotz will be the runaway winner after guiding the Islanders to the playoffs despite losing their most productive player, John Tavares to free agency and overseeing a defensive year-over-year evolution — from the worst goals-against average in the league to the best.

Trotz also guided the Islanders into the second-round, where their season came to an end against the Hurricanes, a team led by rookie head coach Rod Brind'Amour, who also helped

oversee an extreme culture and chemistry turnaround in Carolina. Getting the Hurricanes to the third round – after helping them end a 10-year playoff drought – is more than enough to bump Brind'Amour up into the top three, though it is hard to dispute Berube's impact in St. Louis, where he took over a team that was flailing – on the ice and in the standings – and got them back on track in the second half to the extent that they surged from last overall in early January to oversee the franchise's first-ever Stanley Cup championship.

There were other exceptional coaching achievements in the NHL this past year – Rick Tocchet in Arizona, Claude Julien in Montreal, Bill Peters in Calgary, Cooper in Tampa – but if you factor in postseason accomplishments, the trio of Berube, Trotz and Brind'Amour ultimately distanced themselves from the rest.

Full-season Underrated Player of the Year (The Matt Cullen Award)

Someone once described Cullen as the greatest journeyman in the history of the NHL, after he passed the 1,500-game plateau this season, the only player to do so who isn't a legitimate candidate for the Hockey Hall of Fame. It's why, when trying to combine elements of the Byng and Masterton, which try to blend tangible on-ice contributions with intangible qualities, such as leadership, preparation and commitment, I opted to name the award after Cullen. Effectively, what we're aiming for here is to find the league's most complete player, someone who combines performance with perseverance, dedication and sportsmanship.

Winner: Ryan O'Reilly (St. Louis Blues)

Runners-up: Mark Stone (Ottawa/Vegas), Aleksander Barkov (Florida Panthers).

Indisputably O'Reilly, after that playoff performance, is your winner.

But let's start by acknowledging that Barkov didn't get a chance to enhance his credentials in the playoffs, even though he finished 10<sup>th</sup> in the league in scoring, played an unbelievably great 200-foot game, took only four minor penalties and otherwise, was a brilliant under-the-radar performer for Florida.

Stone spent most of the season playing for an also-ran, but he was a better-than-a-point-a-game player for the Ottawa Senators (62 in 59 games). Also: while lots of people want to disparage plus-minus as a statistical measure, the fact that Stone was a plus-13 on a Senators team that finished a net minus-60 on the season speaks volumes to me about his impact. Stone's adjustment to Vegas took some time, at least on the offensive side, but he was exceptional in the postseason (12 points in seven games) and was a little unlucky when the Golden Knights lost to the Sharks in the opening round. It's rare for a trading-deadline addition to go into a new team and have such a profound effect so quickly.

We could make honorable-mention cases for probably a dozen other players in this category – from Philadelphia's Sean Couturier to Calgary's Elias Lindholm – but one candidate soars above all the others and that's O'Reilly.

He is a finalist for both the Selke and Byng awards and was one of the rare bright spots for the Blues during their



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

underachieving first half before they turned their season around. Even as St. Louis struggled through an inconsistent start to the season, O'Reilly brought it every night – on offence, in the faceoff circle, killing penalties, in the dressing room, on the ice.

O'Reilly, the 2019 Conn Smythe Trophy winner as the playoff MVP, also became the first player since Wayne Gretzky in 1985 to score his team's first goal in four consecutive playoff games – the ultimate example of what it takes to win when the going gets tough. If you were to name a transaction of the year, what St. Louis paid to get O'Reilly – Patrik Berglund, Vladimir Sobotka, Tage Thompson, a 2019 first-rounder plus a 2021 second-rounder – and what they got in return is the single biggest reason why the Blues' Doug Armstrong is a finalist for general manager of the year.

Let's finish on that note, with one final observation. The GM of the year is a relatively new award, first launched in 2010.

Officially, the award is conducted among the NHL's GMs, plus a panel of league executives and selected members of the print and broadcast media. I have voted for the award in the past, but not for this year. Back when the award began, our votes were collected right away at season's end. This year, the voting period also covered the first two playoff rounds, which is likely why Armstrong, Carolina's Don Waddell and Boston's Don Sweeney are the finalists. All had their teams in the Stanley Cup semifinals. If the GM of the year award had governed only the regular season, chances are either Calgary's Brad Treliving or the New York Islanders' Lou Lamoriello might have cracked the top three.

It's actually not a bad trend – to factor playoff performance into award consideration.

Maybe we're on to something here.



## Hurricanes to Pick 28th in 2019 NHL Draft

League-high 10 picks currently belong to the Canes

by Michael Smith

The order of the 2019 NHL Draft is officially set, and the Carolina Hurricanes own the 28th overall selection in the first round.

After qualifying for the Stanley Cup Playoffs for the first time in 10 years, the Hurricanes were not a part of the draft lottery process, which landed them the second overall pick just a year ago. One of four teams left standing in a magical run to the Conference Final, the Canes will be the first of the final four teams to select in the first round this year.

"The process doesn't change much from selecting at the top end of the draft versus towards the end of the first round," Director of Player Personnel Darren Yorke said. "When we're selecting 28th overall, there's more variance in the names.

From the process standpoint and decision-making standpoint, you have to make sure all your bases are covered, especially when you have as many picks as we do and the option of trading up or down is even more apparent."

The Hurricanes have never picked 28th in the first round, though they did own the 28th overall pick in 1997, which was then the second pick in the second round. The Canes selected forward Brad DeFauw, who scored two goals in his NHL debut in March 2003. The Canes' most notable late first round selection is goaltender Cam Ward, who the team drafted 25th overall in 2002.

The Hurricanes currently hold a league-high 10 picks, including three in the second round, in the 2019 NHL Draft, which will take place on June 21 and 22 at Rogers Arena in Vancouver.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019



## Metropolitan Division draft needs

Devils, Rangers can add NHL-ready forwards; Islanders, Flyers might look for defensemen

by Mike G. Morreale

The 2019 NHL Draft provides an opportunity for teams to shore up positions of need with an injection of young talent.

The first round of the draft at Rogers Arena in Vancouver is Friday (8 p.m. ET; NBCSN, SN, TVAS). Rounds 2-7 are June 22 (1 p.m. ET; NHLN, SN).

Here is what Metropolitan Division teams could be looking to do when they arrive in Vancouver (teams listed in alphabetical order):

### CAROLINA HURRICANES

Top priority: Goalie

First pick: No. 28

The situation: The Hurricanes reached the Eastern Conference Final behind the play of a stout defense and goalies Petr Mrazek, 27, and Curtis McElhinney, 36, who each can become an unrestricted free agent July 1. Alex Nedeljkovic, 23, is their top goalie prospect but can be a restricted free agent. The Hurricanes have four of their 10 selections in the first two rounds, and now would seem like the right time to draft and develop a goalie of their own before the well runs dry.

Possible fits: Spencer Knight, G, USA U-18 (USHL); Mads Sogaard, G, Medicine Hat (WHL); Pyotr Kochetkov, G, Ryazan (RUS-2)

### COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS

Top priority: Top-nine forwards

First pick: No. 81 (third round)

The situation: The Blue Jackets have two picks in the draft, one in the third round and one in the seventh. Their first-round pick was traded to the Ottawa Senators, along with a conditional first-round pick in the 2020 NHL Draft, for forward Matt Duchene, and their fourth- and seventh-round picks were traded to the New York Rangers for defenseman Adam McQuaid. Duchene, McQuaid and Columbus' other acquisitions before the NHL Trade Deadline, forward Ryan Dzingel and goalie Keith Kinkaid, can each become an unrestricted free agent July 1, as can forward Artemi Panarin and goalie Sergei Bobrovsky.

Possible fits: Nathan Legare, RW, Baie-Comeau (QMJHL); Patrick Moynihan, RW, USA U-18 (USHL); Ethan Phillips, C, Sioux Falls (USHL)

### NEW JERSEY DEVILS

Top priority: Impact players

First pick: No. 1

The situation: The Devils continue to stockpile prospects at every position, and two players at the top of their list could be in the NHL lineup to start next season: defenseman Ty Smith (2018, No. 17) and center Jesper Boqvist (2017, No. 36). Defenseman prospect Jeremy Davies (2016, No. 192), who led Northeastern University with 36 points (eight goals, 28 assists) this season, will start his professional career next season, likely with Binghamton of the American Hockey League. The expectation is the Devils will look to acquire more veterans during free agency to give their prospects more time to develop. New Jersey has the No. 1 pick for the second time in three years and likely will select center Jack Hughes of USA Hockey's National Team Development Program Under-18 team. The Devils also have three second-round picks.

Possible fits: Jack Hughes, C, USA U-18 (USHL); Kaapo Kakko, RW, TPS (FIN); Bowen Byram, D, Vancouver (WHL)

### NEW YORK ISLANDERS

Top priority: Puck-moving defenseman

First pick: No. 23

The situation: The Islanders have several key forwards that can each become an unrestricted free agent July 1, topped by Anders Lee, who scored 28 goals in his first season as captain. It might be imperative for the Islanders to select a few quality forwards among their five picks in the draft. Defenseman prospects Noah Dobson (No. 12) and Bode Wilde (No. 41), each chosen in the 2018 NHL Draft, are developing nicely, but if a quality defenseman is available in the first round, expect New York to go in that direction.

Possible fits: Moritz Seider, D, Mannheim (GER); Ville Heinola, D, Lukko (FIN); Tobias Bjornfot, D, Djurgarden Jr. (SWE-JR)

### NEW YORK RANGERS

Top priority: Top-six forwards

First pick: No. 2

The situation: The Rangers have two first-round picks: No. 2 and No. 20, which was acquired from the Winnipeg Jets in the Kevin Hayes trade. It's the third straight year they have multiple picks in the first round, but they have their first top-three pick since the NHL expanded to 12 teams for the 1967-68 season. New York selected centers Lias Andersson (No. 7) and Filip Chytil (No. 21) in the first round of the 2017 NHL Draft, and right wing Vitali Kravtsov (No. 9), and defensemen K'Andre Miller (No. 22) and Nils Lundkvist (No. 28) in the first round of the 2018 NHL Draft. They'll have an opportunity to



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

add an NHL-ready player at No. 2 who can develop alongside Andersson, Chytil and Kravtsov, who signed an entry-level contract May 3 after two seasons with Traktor Chelyabinsk in the Kontinental Hockey League. The Rangers have nine picks in all, including five of the first 68 selections.

Possible fits: Jack Hughes, C, USA U-18 (USHL); Kaapo Kakko, RW, TPS (FIN); Kirby Dach, C, Saskatoon (WHL)

## PHILADELPHIA FLYERS

Top priority: Top-four defenseman

First pick: No. 11

The situation: It's the first draft in Philadelphia for general manager Chuck Fletcher, who was hired Dec. 3. The Flyers have nine selections in the draft, including four in the first three rounds. They selected forwards Joel Farabee (No. 14) and Jay O'Brien (No. 19) in the first round of the 2018 NHL Draft; Farabee signed an entry-level contract March 25 and will compete for a roster spot next season. Forward Oskar Lindblom (22), defensemen Travis Sanheim (23) and Philippe Myers (22) and goalie Carter Hart (20) are players 23 years old or younger expected to play bigger roles next season.

Possible fits: Cameron York, D, USA U-18 (NTDP); Victor Soderstrom, D, Brynas (SWE); Moritz Seider, D, Mannheim (GER)

## PITTSBURGH PENGUINS

Top priority: Top-nine forwards

First pick: No. 21

The situation: For the first time since 2014, Pittsburgh will have a first-round selection, and that's a good thing after the Penguins were swept by the New York Islanders in the Eastern Conference First Round. Pittsburgh has two goalies (Matt Murray, Casey DeSmith), seven defensemen and nine forwards signed for next season. They're expected to re-sign 24-year-old forwards Zach Aston-Reese and Teddy Blueger, who each can become a restricted free agent July 1. After making four picks at the 2018 NHL Draft and having four picks this year, it's expected they'll be looking for forwards who eventually could play in their top nine.

Possible fits: Raphael Lavoie, C, Halifax (QMJHL); Brayden Tracey, LW, Moose Jaw (WHL); Nicholas Robertson, LW, Peterborough (OHL)

## WASHINGTON CAPITALS

Top priority: Young, skilled forwards

First pick: No. 25

The situation: After winning the Stanley Cup last season, the Capitals were eliminated by the Hurricanes in seven games in the first round. Washington hasn't selected a forward with its first pick in the draft since Jakub Vrana at No. 14 in the 2014 NHL Draft. The Capitals have five picks this year, and filling the prospect pipeline with forwards would seem to be a good idea now that forwards Alex Ovechkin (33 years old), T.J. Oshie (32), and Nicklas Backstrom (31) each is older than 30.

Possible fits: Samuel Poulin, RW, Sherbrooke (QMJHL); Brett Leason, RW, Prince Albert (WHL); Nils Hoglander, LW, Rogle (SWE)

## The Hockey News

Money well spent: Looking back at the best signings from the 2018 Free Agency class

It's been nearly a full year since the 2018 free agent market opened up. Looking back, how did some of the best players do this season? Here are some of the more notable signings did in 2018-19.

By Steven Ellis

July 1 is drawing near and we're looking at one of the greatest free agent classes of all time. Seriously.

But June is also a perfect time for a retrospective of the past unrestricted free agent group. Even if 2018 didn't boast the same high-quality stars – how do guys like Artemi Panarin, Sergei Bobrovsky and Erik Karlsson sound? – there was an emphasis on scoring depth and goaltenders looking for a second chance.

Not every signing went as planned, however.

Calgary Flames winger James Neal was once one of the best power forwards in the league, but Neal scored just seven goals and 19 points in 63 games with Calgary, which made for the worst season of his career. That came on the heels of him inking a five-year deal at \$5.75-million per campaign. On a lesser scale, blueliner Jack Johnson managed just one goal and 13 points for Pittsburgh and his play steadily declined.

Surely, the Penguins regret signing him for five years, even if he makes just \$3.25-million per season.

But what about the guys who did succeed? Here are how some of last summer's top free agents fared this season, with a few set to hit the market again in just a few weeks:

John Tavares, C (Toronto Maple Leafs, \$11 million/7 years) The Leafs made one of the biggest free agent splashes ever, signing Tavares, a native of nearby Oakville, Ont., who had spent his entire career with the New York Islanders, to a massive seven-year deal. Did it pay off? Toronto didn't make it out of the first round, but after a career-high 47-goal, 88-point season, GM Kyle Dubas has to be ecstatic about his signing. It was a no-brainer of a deal that instantly makes Toronto a championship contender for years to come, even if it put a big dent in the salary cap. Now the challenging part is trying to sign Mitch Marner while keeping this group intact.

Robin Lehner, G (New York Islanders, \$1.5 million/1 year) Is Lehner one of the best bargain signings in the salary cap era? No question after reviving his career on a one-year deal. The signing was an opportunity for him to get another chance to prove himself after some turmoil in 2017-18 with Buffalo. Lehner was vital in the Islanders' first-round sweep of the



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

Penguins, and had he been healthy the whole year, he could have registered somewhere in the 35-win range. A Vezina Trophy candidate, it will be a mistake if the Islanders don't bring the pending UFA back next season.

Petr Mrazek, G (Carolina Hurricanes, \$1.5 million/1 year) Playing a deal identical to Lehner's, Mrazek was instrumental in Carolina's rebirth this season. But it didn't start that way. After years of playing second fiddle with the Detroit Red Wings – and a brief run as a second-stringer with the Philadelphia Flyers – Mrazek took over the starting spot after Scott Darling struggled and was sent to the AHL. Mrazek didn't immediately steal the show, but he went on to finish with a 23-14-3 record, including a 13-4-0 record in his final 17 starts as the Hurricanes snuck into the post-season. Expect the Hurricanes to bring him back before he officially hits the free agent market this summer.

Paul Stastny, C (Vegas Golden Knights, \$6.5 million/3 years) Had Stastny not suffered an injury during the regular season, he would have finished near the top of Vegas' scoring charts after leaving the Winnipeg Jets last summer. Stastny managed 42 points in 50 games, good for 0.84 points per

game average, his best total since his 0.85 in 2013-14. The Golden Knights have him for another two years at \$6.5 million, a very nice deal if he continues to show success with Mark Stone and Max Pacioretty. Just imagine if he played a full season: he was on pace for 69 points, which would have been his best total since 2009-10. He's got a lot left at the tank at 33 and makes Vegas' top six extremely dangerous.

David Perron, RW (St. Louis Blues, \$4 million/4 years) You want to talk about loyalty? Perron has played for St. Louis on three separate occasions and was finally rewarded with a Stanley Cup this week after signing last summer after a one-year stint in Vegas. It would have been even better if he wasn't on injured reserve with an upper-body injury midway through the year, but Perron was a great secondary scoring option, posting 46 points in 57 games. At his 0.81 points per game average, Perron would have scored 66 points if he had played all 82 games, the same total he finished with last year. Perron has played some of his best hockey over the past two years and should return to his 60-point form next year.

## Prospect mailbag: Podkolzin vs. Broberg, the Veleno drop and more

With the 2019 Draft just one week away, our prospect expert takes your questions about this year's class and some of the kids who came before them. It's time to get excited about Vancouver.

By Ryan Kennedy

The 2019 NHL Draft is just one week away and I for one am very excited. Not only because Vancouver has devastating dim sum, but also because this promises to be such an intriguing draft class. Who goes No. 3 to Chicago? When does Cole Caufield get taken? So many questions.

I suspected you, the readers, may have had some queries as well, so I called out on Twitter for your submissions. Here's a bunch of your questions and hopefully, some satisfactory answers. Holler if you see me in Vancouver!

Who should the Canucks take if both Philip Broberg and Vasili Podkolzin are there at No. 10? – Jeff Putnam, @Putsky88

If Podkolzin is still there at No. 10, you gotta grab him. I feel he's a top-five talent and while the 'Russian Factor' may ding his stock a little (he's signed in the KHL for the next two seasons), he's worth the wait. This is a kid who plays all-out in big situations and will have an even meatier role at next year's world juniors than he did on this season's bronze-medal squad. While Broberg is super-intriguing, I see his draft range as being a little further down. So value-wise, go Podkolzin.

If Podkolzin starts to fall past 15 could you see a team like the Caps move up to get –ECB, @bce1801

Based off my enthusiasm from the previous question, I bet you can guess my answer: Yes! Especially since the Caps have had such great success with Russians.

Who do you think is the Charlotte Checker most likely to have an impact at the NHL level next year? – Trevor Davidson, @lasthopehockey

It would be easy to say Martin Necas, Jake Bean or Haydn Fleury, but I'm gonna go off the board a bit and say Morgan Geekie (and congrats to the Checkers on winning the Calder Cup). It was Geekie who finished tied for second in playoff scoring on the team and his hard-working game can translate to the NHL quickly. Even if he's only a fourth-liner to start with, he has value. The more marquee guys I named need to have big summers if they want to become full-timers and while Bean and Fleury have an opening thanks to Trevor van Riemsdyk's injury, they still have to earn it.

I have to ask who the Avs are rumored to take at No. 4. Plus any bold predictions on who might be a surprise early pick like Barrett Hayton was last year? – Jackie, @tigervixxen

I don't have any intel on Colorado, unfortunately (and I am loathe to believe anything 'leaked' leading up to the draft), but I wouldn't be surprised to see them grab Bowen Byram if he's there. As for bold predictions, I'll say Ville Heinola. I don't see the Finnish defenseman going as high as Hayton (fifth overall), but I could see a team jumping up in the 10-15 range for him. Multiple scouts described Heinola as a "poor man's Miro Heiskanen," so there's obviously a lot of potential there.

Can Nic Hague steal a roster spot in Vegas next season? – Aaron Goldschmidt, @lateinthegoldie

You know what? I think he has an outside chance. Looking at the Vegas depth chart right now, there is a path if he has a great camp. His main competition would be Jimmy Schults, another left-shot D-man (albeit with a different skill set) who was signed as a sought-after college free agent from St. Cloud State and, to a lesser extent, NHL veteran Jon Merrill. The Golden Knights set a cultural tone early when they refused to gift Vadim Shipachyov with an unearned roster spot, so if Hague can keep up his strong play this fall, there's no reason not to give him a shot with the big club.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

Do you think the injury Peyton Krebs suffered will play a lot in is selection? That he could be out of the top 10-15? – Novam Desjardins, @LeFrere93

I think he'll be OK. Yes, a torn Achilles tendon is nasty, but scouts already got a full season's worth of Krebs to know what he projects to be in the future. Perhaps even more crucial, they saw what he could do when surrounded by top-end talent, as was the case with Canada at the world under-18s. Krebs had 10 points in seven games while wearing the 'C' as captain.

Whichever team drafts him will just go in knowing that Krebs will need a little more time to develop than initially expected. But that's fine; look at what injury-plagued Edmonton Oilers pick Tyler Benson did with AHL Bakersfield this year (spoiler: he killed).

Which prospect could have the Joe Veleno fall this year? – JJ Hanke, @JJ\_Hanke

I'll go back to Veleno's QMJHL for this one and say Raphael Lavoie. I love him, but I had a 'Q' exec say something fascinating to me about him this year: "Some NHL teams want him, other teams want someone else to draft him." Personally, I think Lavoie's playoff run with the Halifax Mooseheads should put to bed the worries about inconsistency, but that's just my opinion. If he should slide from the middle of the first to the end, it could be a steal. Just like Veleno was for the Red Wings.

I keep seeing that Ethan Keppen is a "sleeper." At what point is he not a sleeper if everyone thinks he's a sleeper? Do you think there's a chance he'll be a 2nd-3rd rounder? – Colton Hunter, @ColtonHunter17

Ha ha! That's a pretty good point about "popular" sleepers. I see Keppen as a third-rounder with the potential to go in the second if a team loves him. Keppen is one to keep an eye out for because he has power forward potential and that's hard to find these days. A guy who can score and impose his will on a game physically? Everybody is looking for that next Tom Wilson. Whether or not Keppen can turn into a Wilson clone is up in the air, but for teams looking for that combination, he'll be a popular option.

At 15th overall, would you draft the Best Player Available or draft for your need? –Miguel Leduc, @LeducMiguel13

Here's the funny thing: at 15th overall, a team still probably has a lot of options from high on their list. It's always suspicious when a GM says "we didn't think he'd be available when we picked" after a kid is picked, but oftentimes it's true because individual franchises have such differing opinions, even on top-end prospects (look at Columbus taking Pierre-Luc Dubois over Jesse Puljujarvi, for example). So for that team, they're going BPA because that player may have been fifth on their list. Drafting for need tends to happen more when a team has exhausted their list in the middle rounds and noticed that hey, they haven't taken a left winger in two years.



## 2019 NHL Draft Prospect Profile: John Beecher

With the NHL Draft quickly approaching next weekend, we profile the second of six players that the Hurricanes will be in the mix for when drafting 28th overall in the first round on Friday night.

By kleblanchockey

We continue today our profiles of potential Hurricanes draft selections for the 2019 NHL Draft. If you missed our profile of Samuel Poulin, our Mock Draft selection, you can find it here.

The Hurricanes can do many things with their selection, as they are finally in a place where they are not having to fill a need with the pick. Instead, they can either bolster their prospect group with another solid prospect, or improve their NHL roster via trade, an outcome which would not be surprising in the least. Owner Tom Dundon has been on record with his feelings of (not) drafting defensemen in the first round, so if he has any say in the decision-making process it's pretty obvious where the focus will be positionally. Therefore, our focus will be on some of the forwards who will be available at the end of the first round, with maybe a surprise thrown in.

John Beecher

- DOB: 4/5/2001

- Team: USNTDP
- Center | Shoots: L | 6'3", 210 pounds
- 2018-19 Stats: 63 GP - 15G, 28A, 43 points, 88 PIM

### Pick Breakdown

When playing in a lineup as dominant as this year's USNTDP, where six of the team's forwards could go in the top 15 picks in the draft, there will always be players who get overshadowed. Beecher was the Swiss-army knife of the team, filling in up and down the lineup, playing in all situations and excelling in less ice time than you would typically expect a potential first-round pick on any other team to play. As he continues to add responsibility, we could look back down the line and wonder why he was drafted when he was in the first round.

Beecher is a big man, and he will play his full freshman season at the University of Michigan as an 18-year-old next year. As a young player in his birth year, and with the added awkwardness of still filling out his 6'3" frame, there is a lot to like in terms of his potential development offensively as he grows as a prospect.

Scouting Analysis



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

Much of Beecher's game is projectable to the next level. However, like with most players who could be drafted at the end of the first round, he will need time to develop and continue to grow.

For a big-bodied center, he moves very well, with good top end speed and agility. Beecher plays an in your face, grinding style which projects very well to the cycle, possession oriented game that Carolina prefers. If he loses possession, he will work to separate an opposing player from the puck to win it back for his team.

As he continues to gain strength, it will be a chore for defenders to move him from the front of the net, or knock him off the puck. The pivot has a nasty streak to him, and is not afraid to throw his body around along the boards, where he has a decided advantage physically.

In terms of scoring upside, some of Beecher's ultimate potential is untapped. He's smart, with and without the puck, which leads to him generally being in the soft areas of the ice

to create and capitalize on scoring opportunities. He has a tremendous shot, an asset which will presumably be used from the slot numerous times over the course of his career. His future is going to be a circles and below net front finisher, and likely a mainstay in front of opposing goaltenders on the power play.

## Final Thoughts

As forwards drop to the end of the first round, typically it's because they have a couple of elite projectable skills, but may not be a finished product. The fact that Beecher is going the college hockey route will give him multiple years to develop in a structured system; however, the only drawback is the fact that it opens up whichever team drafts him for the college free agent scenario that has not played out well for the Hurricanes in the past. Beecher would be a welcome addition to the prospect group and another in a long line of big, two-way centers to join the Carolina system.

## About Last Season: Teuvo Teravainen Performance Review and Grade

The Finnish forward took great strides this season on the Hurricanes top line.

By Justin Lape

Teuvo Teravainen: 2018-19 By The Numbers

- Age: 24
- NHL Seasons: 6
- Games Played: 82
- Scoring: 21 goals, 55 assists, 76 points
- Ice Time: 17:55 all situations
- 5-on-5: 55.6 CF%, 51.7% oZS, 48.3% dZS
- Contract Status: Signed a 5-year, \$27 million extension during 2018-19 season

### Making The Grade

The longer you look at Teuvo Teravainen play hockey, the more you realize what a steal you're getting for the price you're paying. Acquired for a 2nd and a 3rd round pick, plus the cost of Bryan Bickell's contract, Teravainen's value to this team has continued to skyrocket and the 2018-19 season was no exception.

The Finnish forward finished with a career high in assists and points and played a full 82-game season for the second

season in a row. He played alongside dynamic linemates Sebastian Aho and Nino Niederreiter that has helped form the best first line the Hurricanes have had in at least a decade.

Teravainen took strides as a reliable source of offense and seemed to be in the right place at the right time when the Hurricanes needed a goal or a great pass to set up an offensive opportunity. The Hurricanes took a low-risk gamble with the two-year bridge deal Teravainen was on for the past two seasons.

But with every great performer comes a raise. Teravainen signed a 5-year, \$27 million extension during the course of the 2018-19 season. The deal may come off as one of the best "bangs for your buck." Compare it to former Hurricanes forward Jeff Skinner, who signed a 8-year, \$72 million deal after putting up a 40 goal, 63 point season. Teravainen eclipsed 70 points this season for the first time in his career, a feat Skinner has never been able to accomplish. When looking at Teravainen's comparables, the Hurricanes management team should receive much credit for retaining the forward on such a team friendly deal.

With a surging Aho as his linemate, it's hard to predict Teravainen's ceiling from here. However, he has the tools to consistently put together 70-point seasons and help the Hurricanes thrive as a result.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019



## Charlotte Checkers win Calder Cup, top off historic season

By Ryan Henkel

In what has already been a remarkable year for North Carolina hockey, the Charlotte Checkers, the Hurricanes American Hockey League affiliate, put the icing on the cake, winning the first Calder Cup in franchise history.

Defeating the Western Conference top-seeded Chicago Wolves, the Las Vegas Golden Knights AHL affiliate, in five games, the Charlotte Checkers did not cave under expectations. Posting their best season record in franchise history since relocating to Charlotte in 2010, 51-17-7-1, it was good enough to finish as the No. 1 team overall in the AHL.

The Charlotte Checkers looked good from opening night. The team started off the season with a 10-1-0-0 record and kept up the dominance throughout the rest of the season. The Checkers never lost more than two games in a row without at least obtaining a point and the team was never winless for more than three.

The Checkers found success in nearly every position this year but were exceptionally talented in goal, backstopped by starting goaltender Alex Nedeljkovic. Nedeljkovic played 51 games for the Checkers, posting a 2.26 goals against average and a 0.916 save percentage with 34 wins and nine losses. Nedeljkovic was also awarded the Aldege "Baz" Bastien Memorial Award for the league's best goaltender.

In the playoffs, Nedeljkovic came up huge for the Checkers alongside Charlotte-backup Dustin Tokarski. Tokarski was a 29-year old rental player that the Checkers loaned from the Hartford Wolf Pack, the New York Rangers AHL affiliate, in exchange for defenseman Josh Wesley who was playing down in the Eastern Coast Hockey League, the league directly below the AHL.

Tokarski was brought in as a veteran backup with playoff experience, having previously won the Calder Cup in 2012 with the Norfolk Admirals. Tokarski played seven regular-season games and five playoff games for the Checkers, posting a perfect record in those games, 12-0.

The most impressive players for Charlotte at the opposite ends of the ice were Andrew Poturalski and rookie Martin Necas.

Poturalski finished the regular season with a team-leading 70 points with 23 goals and 47 assists. Poturalski continued that performance through the playoffs, being named playoff MVP after finishing with 23 points with 12 goals and 11 assists despite suffering a broken foot blocking a slapshot in game one against Hershey.

Necas spent a few games with the Hurricanes before being assigned to the Checkers to help build his overall game. Necas found immediate success with wingmate Janne Kuokkanen and kept up strong power play performances. Necas finished the regular season with 52 points with 16 goals and 36 assists and the playoffs with 13 points with five goals and eight assists.

The first round of the playoffs saw the Checkers matched up with the Providence Bruins, the AHL affiliate of the Boston Bruins. Charlotte won the series 3-1 as the first round of the Calder Cup is a best of five. In the second round, the Checkers easily swept the Hershey Bears, the AHL affiliate of the Washington Capitals, in four games.

The third round saw the Checkers with their hardest matchup of the playoffs against the former Calder Cup Champion Toronto Marlies, the AHL affiliate of the Toronto Maple Leafs. Toronto won the first game of the series but Charlotte's skill and work ethic were too much for the Marlies to handle as the Checkers won the third round 4-2.

The Calder Cup Final saw the Checkers defeat the Chicago Wolves in five games. Charlotte lost the first game of the series in overtime after dropping a 3-1 lead in the third period, but they would win the next four in strong performances.

One of the Checkers biggest boons in the playoffs was its special teams. The Checkers scored six shorthanded goals and 11 power-play goals en route to the Calder Cup. Martin Necas led the way on the power play with three power-play goals and Nicolas Roy had two of the shorthanded goals.

The Checkers, behind Coach of the Year Mike Velucci, proved that the future for Carolina hockey is very bright. The young team is laden with talent and while many Checkers players found time with the upper club, the higher-end talent of Charlotte has yet to prove their worth in the NHL. While hard work beats talent when talent doesn't want to work, hard work and talent will always shine.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019



## A Special Team

by Nicholas Niedzielski

When the season started eight months ago, there were 31 teams with hopes of raising the Calder Cup. Bit by bit those teams had their hopes dashed until there was only one last team standing – the Charlotte Checkers.

So what was it that separated the Checkers from those 30 other teams that fell short of the ultimate goal?

You could point to any single facet of Charlotte's game – from scoring to defending to special teams, the Checkers stood as one of the league's best – but there were plenty of teams with similarly skill-stacked rosters. Above those things there was something special about this Checkers team, and everyone in the room knew it.

For some, it was evident right away.

"I knew from the very start," said Julien Gauthier. "We had a great group of guys who all got along, there were no cliques or anything. We were so happy to play with each other and that made us really strong together."

For others, it became apparent as the year went along and Charlotte remained unbothered at the top of the league standings.

"I think around the halfway mark," said Andrew Poturalski. "We had a hot start and a lot of teams will fall off after that but we never did. We had guys battling adversity, guys getting called up, and we kept winning games. Then I knew what we had was special."

Some even have a specific game to point to – on Dec. 8 after giving up an empty-net goal to fall behind Springfield 4-2 with two minutes to play, the Checkers rallied to tie the game and then finished the Thunderbirds off in overtime.

"That game we came back and won in Springfield," said head coach Mike Vellucci. "I thought to myself, 'Wow, this is a really special team.'"

While the Checkers took care of business on the ice, a vital part of what made them special was brewing in the locker room. A team filled with players of varying ages, experience and backgrounds was meshing together in a way that many hadn't ever witnessed.

"The way we all got along, you hung out with everybody, no matter if you're 31 or 19," said Bobby Sanguinetti. "It's what keeps everybody together. We all cared about each other and that showed with the way things went."

"To be honest I didn't expect to have such a good group of guys here," said Martin Necas. "I had always heard that the AHL was guys who were only trying to battle and get into the NHL but we had a great group of guys."

From that mutual adoration grew the communal belief that this team was bound for a championship. That belief was clearly illustrated in the way the Checkers refused to accept losing as an option.

"Every night we expected to win," said Alex Nedeljkovic. "Guys took losing to heart a little more than most other teams do. That's how many winners we have on this team. We're a bunch of winners."

"There wasn't a single guy on this team that didn't want to win the whole thing," said Patrick Brown. "Not that there's guys who don't want to win, but it's so easy to just say, 'I want to win.' To make the commitment from day one to be the best team you can be and have fun doing it, you don't see that every day."

That commitment paid off in the end. As the Checkers took turns hoisting the Cup that night in Chicago, that tight knight group who hated to lose became something bigger.

"We're brothers forever now," said Brown. "You've got your teammates, you've got your friends, you've got your close buddies and then you have your brothers that you won a championship with. I've got 30 more brothers I can add to my family now. That's pretty special."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

## TODAY'S LINKS

<https://theathletic.com/1028752/2019/06/15/bag-of-jerks-part-2-prospects-prospects-more-prospects-and-that-geekie-hair/>  
<https://theathletic.com/1029034/2019/06/16/custance-examining-the-trade-possibilities-of-every-first-round-pick-in-the-2019-nhl-draft/>  
<https://theathletic.com/1028192/2019/06/14/lebrun-notebook-lack-of-comparables-make-jordan-binnings-contract-talks-a-unique-situation/>  
<https://theathletic.com/1027772/2019/06/14/duhatschek-handing-out-the-full-season-nhl-awards/>  
<https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/hurricanes-to-pick-28th-in-2019-nhl-draft/c-307852694>  
<https://www.nhl.com/news/nhl-draft-metropolitan-division-needs/c-307857478>  
<https://thehockeynews.com/news/article/money-well-spent-looking-back-at-the-best-signings-from-the-2018-free-agency-class>  
<https://thehockeynews.com/news/article/prospect-mailbag-podkolzin-vs-broberg-the-veleno-drop-and-more>  
<https://www.canescountry.com/2019/6/14/18679569/carolina-hurricanes-2019-nhl-draft-prospect-profile-john-beecher-national-team-development-program>  
<https://www.canescountry.com/2019/6/14/18678470/carolina-hurricanes-season-in-review-teuvo-teravainen-performance-review-and-grade>  
[http://www.technicianonline.com/sports/article\\_2b3836e2-9099-11e9-bbac-bf9816934975.html](http://www.technicianonline.com/sports/article_2b3836e2-9099-11e9-bbac-bf9816934975.html)  
<http://gocheckers.com/articles/features/a-special-team>

# SportScan

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

1147160 Websites

The Athletic / Examining the trade possibilities of every first-round pick in the 2019 NHL Draft

By Craig Custance Jun 16, 2019

The theory went like this: Everyone knows who is going to go in the top two of the upcoming NHL Draft. But after that, there's a pretty wide variance depending on needs and how much teams like individual players. And after the top dozen, the pool gets even wider. So add in that the parity in the league puts pressure on teams to win now and perhaps we'll see more first-round picks than usual traded in the coming week. Solid theory, right? Right?

"History tells you it's going to be unlikely," answered a Western Conference general manager, quickly deflating it.

Said another GM about teams typically keeping their first-round picks: "The mystery box is so alluring. You go to these type of events and the scouts are so influential."

They're both right. Sure teams move up and down a little in the first round. And sometimes Derek Stepan or Cory Schneider is traded for a high first-rounder. But GMs are actually pretty conservative when it comes to moving their top picks at this point in the NHL calendar. You make it this far, you kind of want to make the pick.

That said, there's a glimmer of hope if you're a fan of trades.

"It's unlikely, but not improbable," said a GM. "It only takes one or two to have a different philosophy than everyone else."

And there are some mitigating factors. The Winnipeg Jets wouldn't mind getting back into the first round and they have high-end players who could be on the move. The same goes for the Toronto Maple Leafs, who lost their pick in the Jake Muzzin deal.

There's a lot of trade talk and, at some point, first-round picks will get dealt. It always happens. Let's take a look at each pick to determine the likelihood of it actually happening:

1. New Jersey Devils – When GM Ray Shero was asked whether he'd move this pick, his response was pretty simple: "You never say never to anything." But ... "You've won the lottery. Who goes out and sells their lottery ticket after they've won it?" It would only really make sense if the Rangers felt like they had to make a big offer to move up one slot and that sounds like a complete non-starter.
2. and 20. New York Rangers – The Rangers are content with who they'll get with their first pick, so all indications are they'll sit and get either Jack Hughes or Kaapo Kakko at No. 2. It's pick No. 20 (from the Jets in the Kevin Hayes deal) where things get interesting. "I can see New York trading their second one," said a GM. Everything is in play with that pick.
3. Chicago Blackhawks – Chicago might be sitting in one of the best spots. They have their pick of the next tier of high-end talent and could be the beneficiary of a team that has really zeroed in on a player, especially Bowen Byram, the clear-cut best defenseman. The Blackhawks received a couple calls already to move the pick, although nothing that gave them pause. Chances are they pick at No. 3, but if the Blackhawks are swept off their feet, they'd listen to move down.
4. and 16. Colorado Avalanche – The Avs are in an interesting spot all around. They could, theoretically, trade down out of four if there's a team that covets one of the top players. Considering they're about to enter a stretch where they should be competing for long playoff runs, there's a case to be made that No. 16 could be packaged for immediate help. As of now, it sounds like the Avs are expecting to make both picks, but there's also an expectation internally that talks will intensify as the draft moves closer.
5. and 22. Los Angeles Kings – With two first-rounders, courtesy of the Muzzin trade, the Kings have flexibility here, but this is a team that needs an infusion of young talent. The smart bet is they make both their picks.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

6. Detroit Red Wings – During a conversation with local media on Thursday, GM Steve Yzerman was asked if he'd had any conversations about moving this pick. "Nothing at this point," he said. The Red Wings are in a good spot here in terms of who should be available so it would be a little surprising if they moved at all.

7. and 31. Buffalo Sabres – The Sabres have no interest in trading completely out of the No. 7 spot. There's a strong likelihood they make that pick. They also hold pick No. 31 from the Ryan O'Reilly trade and there is some flexibility there. It's possible they move that pick, but the inclination internally now is for them to make both of these picks.

8. Edmonton Oilers – New Oilers GM Ken Holland made a habit of trading down to accumulate picks in recent years with the Red Wings. That could be an option here. "I won't pay a price to move up," Holland told The Athletic. "We only have six picks in Edmonton. After the top two, there's a lot of good players. If somebody wants to move into the top 10 – am I going to answer the phone? Yeah. I'll see what price they want to pay."

9. and 29. Anaheim Ducks – GM Bob Murray's game plan is typically to make the pick or trade down. The Ducks stayed competitive for a very long time by drafting well and, during Murray's tenure, that included making multiple first-round picks in three drafts since 2008.

10. Vancouver Canucks – There's definitely a belief outside of Vancouver that this pick is very much in play and that GM Jim Benning is willing to deal. "There are players they would move the 10th pick for," said one NHL executive. Vancouver is a team to watch on the draft floor.

11. Philadelphia Flyers – GM Chuck Fletcher has already been aggressive in upgrading the Flyers by trading for the rights to Hayes and acquiring defenseman Matt Niskanen. When asked about the possibility of moving this pick, he didn't completely rule it out. "It's certainly a consideration," he told The Athletic. "It's one thing when you're picking 22, 24, 26 – you move your first in those circumstances. ... When you're picking 11, it's a little bit different. Certainly there's a lot of NHL players if teams are willing to make them available, I would trade pick No. 11 for – it's not something we're looking to do. We'll see what the market bears."

12. Minnesota Wild – GM Paul Fenton made a name for himself in Nashville as a great talent evaluator and a guy who hit on his draft picks, so it'd be shocking if the Wild did anything but make this pick or possibly move down to add another pick. They need young talent in Minnesota.

13. Florida Panthers – The Panthers are making a big push this summer to upgrade their NHL roster, but according to one source, it would take something very compelling to get them out of picking in the first round. Part of the reason is a need for depth on defense. Since taking Aaron Ekblad No. 1 overall in 2014, the Panthers haven't taken a defenseman in the first two rounds.

14. Arizona Coyotes – It's been made clear to many NHL teams that the Coyotes are willing to move this pick in return for a front line offensive player. The Coyotes are another team of interest leading up to the draft.

15. Montreal Canadiens – The Canadiens made 11 picks last year, including four in the first two rounds. They have another 10 this year, including three in the first two rounds (the additional second-rounder courtesy of the Max Pacioretty trade) and still seem very much in acquiring young talent mode. If they deal it could be to move up slightly but probably not completely out of the first. "I'd be surprised if Montreal is interested in that," said one NHL source.

17. Vegas Golden Knights – One source called the chances of Vegas moving this pick "unlikely" and part of the reason for that could be all the young assets the Golden Knights have moved already in different trades involving Tomas Tatar, Pacioretty and Mark Stone.

18. Dallas Stars – There's still a possibility that the Stars sign Mats Zuccarello, and if that's the case, they would have to send their 2020 first-round pick to the Rangers. It'd be hard to imagine GM Jim Nill moving firsts in consecutive drafts. If they don't sign Zuccarello, the Stars are in a window where they might be willing to use this pick to upgrade the NHL roster.

19. Ottawa Senators – The rebuilding Senators are still at a stage where they're stockpiling young talent. The strategy here might be to move down and keep it going.

21. Pittsburgh Penguins – The Athletic's Rob Rossi reported that the Penguins think highly of this draft and scouts would like to take advantage, but Pittsburgh is still trying to maximize the Sidney Crosby window. According to one NHL source, all options are open here. You can't count GM Jim Rutherford out of anything.

23. New York Islanders – With just two picks in the first four rounds, the Islanders may be a move down candidate to try and get some of those picks back. That said, there's a lot of intrigue surrounding the Islanders so you can't rule anything out.

24. Nashville Predators – The Predators don't have their second-round pick because of the Brian Boyle trade and didn't have a pick in the first three rounds in the 2018 draft. Even for a team in the middle of its Stanley Cup window, it'd be quite aggressive to move out of the first round again this year. They may even be another trade down candidate.

25. Washington Capitals – While you can never count out a team that is a Cup contender trading a first-rounder, one NHL source characterized the Capitals as an "unlikely option" to go this direction. The Capitals have just five draft picks this year, traded their 2020 second-rounder in the Nick Jensen deal and are only a couple years removed from a draft in which they didn't start picking until the fourth round.

26. Calgary Flames – Calgary didn't make its first pick in the 2018 draft until the fourth round and doesn't have a second-round pick in this draft because of the Travis Hamonic deal. With the belief out there that Hamonic or TJ Brodie could be moved (both are entering the final year of their contracts) it's possible the Flames are adding picks and not subtracting.

27. Tampa Bay Lightning – Coming off a historic regular season and crushing postseason, the Lightning are a fascinating team to watch during trade season. The belief according to one NHL source regarding the Lightning is that "nothing is off the table," including a possible deal involving this pick.

28. Carolina Hurricanes – This pick is in play. The Hurricanes are looking for more offense up front and would use this pick, or one of their three second-rounders, to help make it happen. For teams looking to get back into the first round, this is a spot to target.

30. Boston Bruins – The Athletic's Fluto Shinzawa wrote that the Bruins could be shopping for a No. 2 right wing to play with David Krejci. The team also has to make a decision on Torey Krug, whose trade value won't be higher than it is right now but also showed just how valuable he is to the Bruins during the playoffs. He's entering the last year of his contract. So there's real trade possibility for the always active Don Sweeney. Boston didn't pick until No. 57 last year



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

because of the Rick Nash trade, so they might be inclined to make this pick.

The Athletic LOADED: 06.17.2019

1147161 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Breaking down the trade value of Maple Leafs defender Nikita Zaitsev

Andrew Berkshire June 16, 2019, 8:15 AM

Going into the off-season everyone knew that the Toronto Maple Leafs were going to have to move some salary around in order to resign Mitch Marner and have their full core locked in through their prime years, and now we know that two of the names likely to be moved are Patrick Marleau and Nikita Zaitsev, both by player request.

Marleau is at the end of a near-Hall of Fame career, but shouldn't draw much in return for what he's able to do now with the cap hit he carries.

Zaitsev however, is a bit of a wild card. He'll be 28 years old when next season is less than a month old, signed until 2023-24 for \$4.5 million per season. The general view is that Zaitsev is overpaid for what he brings, but the average salary for a player on a team that spends to the cap these days is about \$3.61 million, so if he's an average player, he's only making a league minimum contract over average wage, which isn't that bad.

Combine that with the value of the contract decreasing as the salary cap increases, the trust Mike Babcock placed in him over the last three seasons — playing over 20 minutes per game last season after playing 22 or more the previous two — and it shouldn't be surprising that there's a bit of a market for him.

Right-handed defencemen always seem to have value, and there has to be some curiosity about Zaitsev's rookie season, where he was given a bit more opportunity to produce offence and managed to put up 36 points.

Is Zaitsev a diamond in the rough stifled by the role the Maple Leafs forced him into behind more talented offensive defencemen like Morgan Rielly and Jake Gardiner? We can dig into the data to find out.

One of the first things I go to in order to get the feel of a player's place in the league as a whole is the positional ranking project I do for Sportsnet in the summer. Obviously that data hasn't been compiled for this season yet since I do that work over the off-season, but we can look at how his first two NHL seasons ranked against his peers.

You can get a detailed breakdown of what goes into this graphic here, but essentially what we're looking at is where Zaitsev ranks in a plethora of categories amongst his peers both as a percentile of positive impact, and in the percentage of the peak player of the position's score.

On the strength of his rookie season, Zaitsev's biggest strength as a player was his ability to take part in the offence, ranking as a high-end second-pairing defender there, but after another season similar

to his sophomore year, that will have likely dropped off considerably once the numbers are all crunched.

The minutes Zaitsev plays are between high-end second pair to low-end first pair in terms of difficulty, which while displayed separately for visualization purposes, is already factored into the other metrics.

Even when accounting for those tough minutes, Zaitsev's impact on transition and defence for the Leafs through the first two seasons of his career was that of an average third-pairing defenceman. That's not very promising, and his overall impact added up ranked 139th of 191 eligible defencemen in the project, putting him just outside of top-four defenceman range, which ends at 124.

That's not great news for the Leafs in attempting to get value for a player who is paid like a low-tier No. 3 defenceman, but it's also not including last season, so let's take a look at some key stats from 2018-19 to see if there's more to Zaitsev than meets the eye.

Comparing Zaitsev to his Leafs teammates, things don't come out looking so good.

No Leafs defenceman last year was less involved in the offence than Zaitsev was — even Ron Hainsey was getting in on the action more often. In fact, of the 161 defencemen who played at least 800 minutes at 5-vs-5 last season, no defenceman completed fewer offensive-zone passes per 20 minutes played than Zaitsev did.

Complaining to a Russian publication, Zaitsev claimed that he wasn't given a chance to play in the offensive zone, asked to change as soon as the Leafs gained the zone in favour of other defencemen. That could be a real thing that Toronto's coaching staff did from time to time that stuck with Zaitsev, but it's something we can check.

Last season Zaitsev spent 37.6 per cent of his ice time in the offensive zone, 39.8 per cent in the defensive zone, and 22.6 per cent in the neutral zone. While it may seem tilted towards the defensive zone, it's relatively average zonal deployment for a defenceman. He spent the same percentage of his ice time in the offensive zone as Brady Skjei, Nick Leddy, Darnell Nurse, and Nate Schmidt.

Of course, Zaitsev didn't spend as much of his ice time in the offensive zone as Rielly, but a lot of that ice time is earned, and it's clear from Zaitsev's individual contributions that he wasn't very proficient at moving the puck.

One area where Zaitsev did improve last season was in completing outlet passes, he was even ahead of the team average for the first time, but he was way behind in completed stretch passes and carry outs. He also had the highest turnover rate in the defensive zone of all Leafs defencemen last season, so it's not like he was an excellent puck handler by any means.

Add into all this that Zaitsev was a below-average puck battle winner on the Leafs, an area they struggled in anyway, and the bigger question to me isn't whether he can be a top-four defenceman, but why Babcock trusted him so much.

Whenever you're trading a defenceman who plays hefty minutes for your team, you want to get some value back, but this is a tough one. Maybe the Leafs can find a team who 'saw him good' and is willing to overpay, but expectations on the return should be set relatively low.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.17.2019

1147162 Websites



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 17, 2019

Sportsnet.ca / Flames GM Treliving thinks RFA class could slow draft trade activity

Eric Francis | June 16, 2019, 8:33 AM

One of the NHL's most active draft day general managers believes the large number of big-name RFAs could stymie draft floor activity next week.

Brad Treliving, who has made several of his most significant moves on draft weekend, said it will be harder for him and many of his colleagues to manoeuvre as freely as they have in the past due to the cost uncertainty associated with unsigned young stars.

"You can't go out and buy all sorts of cars before you know what the mortgage payment is," said the Calgary Flames GM, who will arrive at the NHL Draft in Vancouver next Friday unsure how much of his \$14.5 million in cap space he will have to allocate for restricted free agent Matthew Tkachuk.

"People have got to take care of that piece. Until you have some certainty there it's hard to chase a bunch of things.

I think there are a lot of teams going in very cautious because if you don't have (a significant RFA) this year you probably have one next year."

Coming off a career year with 34 goals and 77 points, Tkachuk is in line to make anywhere from \$7 to \$10 million annually, depending on term.

It will also depend largely on what the raft of other RFAs sign for, including Toronto's Mitch Marner, Tampa's Brayden Point, Colorado's Mikko Rantanen, Carolina's Sebastian Aho, Vancouver's Brock Boeser, San Jose's Timo Meier, Boston's Charlie McAvoy and Winnipeg's Kyle Connor and Patrik Laine.

Complicating the re-written rules for stars coming out of entry-level deals is the fact it could take plenty of time for the aforementioned to sign their names to what will no doubt continue to be precedent-setting pacts.

No one wants to go first, as everyone in that market hopes to ride the coattails of others who continue to raise the bar like William Nylander and Auston Matthews did last season with respective \$6.9 million and \$11.6 million deals.

Leafs GM Kyle Dubas said his priority is to have Marner inked by July 1, which few believe will come to fruition given how tight Toronto's cap situation is and how lucrative the deal will be.

Many GMs are braced for RFA stalemates that extend into the start of the season like the Nylander saga did.

Treliving's situation is further complicated by the need to sign RFA Sam Bennett, as well as two goalies, including young standout David Rittich who is also due a hefty raise as an RFA.

The draft weekend has long been the most active gathering for GMs who have the best chance to exchange ideas and shape their rosters by using draft picks to sweeten trade offers.

Treliving made the biggest splash at last year's draft when he swapped Dougie Hamilton, Micheal Ferland and prospect Adam Fox to Carolina for Noah Hanifin and Elias Lindholm.

The previous year he landed highly sought-after Travis Hamonic in a deal with the Islanders involving four draft picks.

In 2016 he acquired Brian Elliott for two draft picks.

This year it's likely he'd be open to discussing swaps for players like Michael Frolik or TJ Brodie, but the Tkachuk signing may prevent him from effecting changes he'd otherwise be looking to make.

"If something happens, great," said Treliving, who has five draft picks, including the 26th overall.

"But we may just go there and draft some players."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 06.17.2019