



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Di Giuseppe re-signs, Nordstrom not qualified by Hurricanes

Carolina tendered qualifying offers to four restricted free agents ahead of Monday's deadline

[June 26, 2018 Cory Lavalette](#)

RALEIGH — The Carolina Hurricanes on Monday tendered qualifying offers to four players and signed another, and the team parted ways with forward Joakim Nordstrom.

Fellow forward Phil Di Giuseppe was also not qualified, but the team then agreed to a one-year, one-way deal worth \$750,000 that will keep him in Raleigh for the 2018-19 season.

"Phil is a versatile player who has shown he can contribute in a number of ways on the NHL level," general manager Don Waddell said in a press release.

A second-round pick out of the University of Michigan in 2012, Di Giuseppe has 13 goals and 37 points in 126 NHL games over parts of the last three seasons with Carolina. He played a career-high 49 games with the Hurricanes last season, registering five goals and eight assists.

The Hurricanes also qualified defenseman Trevor van Riemsdyk and forwards Greg McKegg, Lucas Wallmark and Valentin Zykov.

Nordstrom, who played three seasons with the Hurricanes, came to Carolina as part of the September 2015 trade that also brought Kris Versteeg to Raleigh. Nordstrom was a valuable penalty killer, but he struggled to produce points as the team's depth improved and he moved into more a checking role.

Nordstrom had just two goals in 75 games last season — the first in the season opener against Minnesota, and the second on Nov. 18, an empty net goal. He had a 48-game point drought after that goal, and managed just three assists —

two on March 18 and one on March 30 — in the season's final five months.

The addition of Jordan Martinook, acquired in the trade that sent Marcus Kruger to Arizona this spring, made Nordstrom expendable.

Conditioning camp begins

The Hurricanes' prospect conditioning camp is this week, with players arriving Tuesday and culminating with scrimmages on Saturday. Andrei Svechnikov, the second overall pick on Friday at the NHL Draft, will be the showcase star of the week, along with former first-rounders Martin Necas and Jake Bean. Harvard defenseman Adam Fox, acquired as part of Saturday's [blockbuster trade at the draft](#) that brought Dougie Hamilton to Carolina, will also attend.

All six draft picks from last weekend's draft will be in Raleigh, and all but one player — Finnish goaltender Eetu Makiniemi, who is injured — from the team's 2017 draft class will be in attendance. The team released a [guide](#) to the development camp that includes bios on each player and a schedule of activities, many of which are open to the public.

Gleason back in development role

Tim Gleason, a defenseman played all or parts of nine seasons in Carolina from 2006-15, has been hired as the team's new head of defensemen development. He takes over for another former player, Glen Wesley, who did not have his contract renewed following the season. Gleason will be charged with working with defensemen in the Hurricanes system.

Gleason played more than 700 games with four NHL teams, the majority with the Hurricanes. A former first-round pick, Gleason was traded from Los Angeles to Carolina as the main return in the deal that sent Jack Johnson to the Kings.



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Hamilton excited to join 'young and skilled' team as Canes look to end playoff drought

Posted 3:37 p.m. yesterday
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By Adam Gold, 99.9 The Fan host

Raleigh, N.C. — Trade rumors are as much a part of the NHL Draft as the picks themselves. Reports run wild in the days and weeks leading up to the draft, with many speculating about whether picks or players will change hands as teams across the league add new pieces.

Dougie Hamilton knew his name had been mentioned heading into last week's draft, but it wasn't until he sat down to watch on Saturday that his suspicions were confirmed.

The 25-year-old, who spent the last three seasons in Calgary, was Carolina bound to become a key piece of the Hurricanes' blue line.

"My name was in a lot of trade rumors for a couple years now. You never really know," Hamilton said Tuesday in an interview with 99.9 The Fan. "I knew my name was out there, but I found out from the TV. It's funny how it works. I'm happy with everything and I'm excited for the future."

Hamilton, forward Michael Ferland and prospect Adam Fox became Hurricanes in a deal that sent defenseman Noah Hanifin and forward Elias Lindholm to the Flames.

Saturday's trade is one of many moves the Hurricanes are hoping will end the league's longest playoff drought, currently at nine seasons. Hamilton now has been traded at the draft twice after going from the Boston Bruins to the Flames three years ago.

Hamilton said Tuesday he'll work to get used to a new city and new teammates as quickly as possible.

"I've talked to a couple of guys on the team, and they all told me I'll enjoy it there," he said.

Hamilton said he's excited to learn from some of Carolina's older players while also providing some leadership to younger players both on and off the ice.

"As a team, I think they're really young and skilled. They were always hard to play against, and we would always have close games," he said of the Hurricanes. "I'm excited to play with those guys. Hopefully we can be a better team and try to make the playoffs."

New Hurricanes General Manager Don Waddell said there were "no red flags" about Hamilton and was thrilled to pick up an offensive-minded blue liner who has 220 points in 423 regular-season games.

Hamilton scored a career-high 17 goals for the Flames last season, tied for the most in the NHL by a defenseman. He was second among defensemen in shots (270) and posted a career high in time on ice per game (21:32).

"Goals come from a lot of luck. You get in positions where you try to get good shots," Hamilton said. "A lot of the times when you make a good shot it doesn't go in, but when you make an OK shot or a bad shot it goes in. I just want to keep on trying to help the team, just all around on the ice. It was nice to contribute last year with the goals."



Tom Dundon trying to bring Hurricanes back from anonymity

[Emily Sadler @EmmySadler](#) June 25, 2018, 5:31 PM

Being in the spotlight was never part of Tom Dundon's plan when he became the new owner of the [Carolina Hurricanes](#).

Yet that is where he's found himself, in the early stages of rebuilding a club that's desperately in need of a rebrand, too. It's a concept Dundon understands well as he begins his journey to transform Carolina into a strong hockey market.

"I think the brand of the team is probably on the lower end of the spectrum for professional sports and in the NHL in particular," Dundon said during an interview on Hockey Central at Noon on Monday. "As that brand starts to evolve

and players like [Sebastian] Aho and [Andrei] Svechnikov and guys like [new head coach Rod] Brind'Amour start to define what we're about, then I imagine you'll see a lot less of me."

That rebuilding process is already well-underway with a new head coach, new management, a bunch of new recruits via the draft (including No. 2 overall pick Svechnikov) and a blockbuster trade that sent [Noah Hanifin](#) and [Elias Lindholm](#) to Calgary for [Dougie Hamilton](#), [Micheal Ferland](#) and prospect Adam Fox.

But none of it will mean anything if the team can't translate it into wins.



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"The whole 'winning the summer' thing is probably not that interesting to me. It's cliché, but obviously it doesn't matter until you play and start winning," he said. "And hopefully we play different and win more and then that should start defining the organization."

That's the job of general manager Don Waddell and his staff. Dundon's mission now is to shine the spotlight on his players.

"At this moment, I think we're anonymous, whether it's in our town or across the league, and we do have good players and it's not fair to them that people don't know about them," Dundon said. "If you can win and bring a little more attention to the franchise and to some of these players, I think those are all good things."

THE ATHLETIC

Inside the war room with Tom Dundon and the Carolina Hurricanes

[By Scott Burnside](#) 31m ago

DALLAS — The new GM of the Carolina Hurricanes is thumbing through a well-worn yellow lined legal pad.

Scribbled on the pages are notes Don Waddell made from conversations with various NHL GMs and his own staff regarding potential trades, as well as notes on conversations with the Hurricanes' new owner Tom Dundon.

The owner likes to needle Waddell about the ubiquitous legal pad, but Dundon likes precision and the notes help in that matter, especially as it relates to the fluid nature of trade talks in the NHL.

The other thing that Dundon likes to needle Waddell about is his clothing.

During a meeting with the coaching staff and scouts regarding potential trades two days before the 2018 draft in Dallas, Dundon makes note of Waddell showing up in a short-sleeved workout shirt, shorts and deck shoes.

"Embarrassing," Dundon said jokingly as Waddell departed the room after the first of two sessions with staff leading up to Friday's first round.

There's more than a little tongue in cheek with the comment as Dundon is the poster boy for casual.

The next afternoon we met with the owner in a hotel suite in downtown Dallas and the Dallas-based billionaire was sporting a Carolina Hurricanes t-shirt and shorts, and his habitual two day's growth of beard. Then a few hours later, the 46-year-old looked positively jaunty as he ascended the stage at the draft at the American Airlines Center sporting khakis and a golf shirt to watch his daughter, Drew, announce Andrei Svechnikov as the second-overall pick in the draft.

But the informal dress code and the occasional shot in jest at one another belies an overriding seriousness that permeates the proceedings as the Hurricanes prepare for the 2018 draft.

As the coaching staff and management team gather in a boardroom overlooking the pool at the Omni Hotel two days

before the draft, it is not out of line to suggest this is the most important draft in franchise history.

It certainly marks one of the most closely watched weekends in the team's history given the seismic changes that have taken place with the organization in the past six months, including the firing of GM (and Hall of Fame player) Ron Francis, the hiring of former captain Rod Brind'Amour to his first head coaching position and the presence of Dundon in the midst of all of it.

The first meeting on Thursday morning deals almost exclusively with the team's myriad forays into potential trades of existing NHL players. The meeting begins without Dundon in the room.

Waddell, referring regularly to his yellow legal pad, is the point man. The former GM of the Atlanta Thrashers took over the business side in Carolina under former owner Peter Karmanos in 2014. Dundon's initial forays into hiring an outside GM after buying a controlling interest in the team in early January proved fruitless — due in large part to his determination to not pay market value and term to fill the vacant GM position. So Dundon co-opted Waddell across the divide and back into the hockey ops fray, naming him GM in early May.

The two are virtually tied to each other, if not physically, then certainly electronically with Waddell often picking up the phone and launching into conversation without any time spent on pleasantries, a kind of familiarity that speaks to literally dozens of phone calls and interactions on hundreds of different topics related to the renaissance of this moribund franchise.

In hindsight, it might have been the best thing for all concerned that no one from outside the organization took the GM position given Waddell's familiarity with Dundon, having worked with him on the business side before the sale went through and having an understanding of his desire to be involved at all levels.

"I really felt when they decided to make the move that he should interview people and go through that process, and it became pretty apparent after getting to know him that this is probably isn't a job for a first-time GM," Waddell said. "Because of his involvement. His passion for it. I think if



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someone new [were] coming in trying to put a stamp on their own team, it would have been a little difficult. And I've done this for multiple years so that's not a concern of mine."

There are 10 people in the room during this first meeting in Dallas, including Brind'Amour, who ascended to the head coaching post after Bill Peters departed for Calgary after Dundon took over. Jeff Daniels, at one point in time the head coach of the Hurricanes' AHL affiliate and more recently manager of pro scouting, is here in his new/old role as assistant coach, having served as an assistant to Peter Laviolette when the Hurricanes won their one and only Stanley Cup in 2006, a team captained by Brind'Amour.

Mike Vellucci, the head coach of the team's top minor league affiliate in Charlotte, director of hockey operations and assistant GM, is on hand; as is Waddell's longtime colleague and friend Rick Dudley, most recently part of the Montreal Canadiens front office; and former agent Paul Krepelka. Dudley, senior vice president of hockey operations, and Krepelka, vice-president of hockey operations, represent the two outside hands brought in to round out the management side in these halcyon days of rebirth in Raleigh.

The conversation moves easily from player to player as the Hurricanes try to zero in on moves that will both help change the culture of losing that has become endemic with the club and also makes sense for the long-term health of the club.

Many of the players discussed are players whose names have been banded about in public during the days leading up to the draft. Because the team is cognizant of tampering rules, we will describe the discussions as involving a star center in Buffalo who might be available as the rebuilding Sabres look to get younger; a star player in Montreal whose name has been in the trade winds for more than a year; a young Columbus star whose long-term future with the Blue Jackets has suddenly been thrown into question; Philipp Grubauer, who began the weekend as the backup netminder for the Stanley Cup champion Washington Capitals; and Calgary defenseman Dougie Hamilton.

There is a certain blue sky element to the discussion. Would a particular player be a fit? What would the cost be in terms of assets and then, pending contract status, to keep the player long-term?

The Hurricanes have a handful of restricted free agents, including young defenseman Noah Hanifin and forward Elias Lindholm.

Both have good upside but they are also looking at paydays that might not fall into line with what Dundon wants to pay, so both factor into the discussions about how they might be used to bring in assets from outside the organization.

Jeff Skinner, one year away from unrestricted free agency, is a name that comes up frequently. He is a player that will command heavy interest from other teams and could also benefit from a change of scenery.

Given the fact Martin Necas, the 19-year-old 12th overall pick in 2017, is expected to challenge for a top-nine forward spot and Andrei Svechnikov is expected to make an immediate impact, the team has some enviable flexibility in moving Skinner, who scored 89 goals over the past three seasons.

And so the Hurricanes have options aplenty in making the moves that would seem to be pivotal to charting a new course.

Now it's about getting it done.

About 45 minutes after the meeting begins, Dundon arrives.

Almost immediately the vibe of the room changes ever so slightly.

Dundon isn't coming in to sit at the back of the room and take things in. He's come in to lead the discussion, to ask questions, to move the process along.

There is a discussion of Skinner and his role with the team if he's not moved.

There is a discussion about Hanifin, who is looking for something along the lines of six years at \$5 million.

Hanifin, just 21, was surpassed on the defensive depth chart by Jacob Slavin and Brett Pesce and will be challenged by Haydn Fleury for ice time if Hanifin remains with the team.

"Hanifin will get better. He's going to be a top-three defenseman," Dudley predicts.

But given his contract demands and the potential to add an impact player in exchange for Hanifin, is the risk of missing out on Hanifin's potential evolution worth it?

It's the same conversation that is being held in 30 other NHL meeting rooms: risk versus reward, make a move or stand pat. But in this case, Dundon is asking those questions, trying to sift through the relative values of players and contracts and what will ultimately move his team forward.

Take the Buffalo center who is six years older than Hanifin. There's no question the two-way center would be a nice addition to the Carolina roster and, with Jordan Staal, could create an imposing one-two punch down the middle that would make the Hurricanes much more difficult to play against. But how big a concern is that kind of age gap?

Occasionally Dundon will ask manager of analytics Eric Tulsy what he thinks of a player. Sometimes Tulsy's response is at odds with what the coaching staff thinks, other times it jibes.

That is the nature of the business, the values placed on players are much more subjective than in most businesses. That dynamic is something that Dundon admitted is difficult for him to come to grips with.

"I think the main thing I've come away with is there's a lot of players that are in a close area and sometimes you under or overrate people that are close to each other for reasons that I haven't quite figured out," Dundon told *The Athletic*. "That's the main thing I've learned is you've got to really dig in as to why is it that some players or coaches get over or underrated, and trying to get the noise out and make sure you're fair, and it helps you make better decisions.

"You could have a handful [of] players and get very different opinions about them. And that can be confusing, right? Because that's not the way it is in what I'm used to. You sort of have a pretty good idea on certain valuations and, in this case, the value of these players is very, very difficult. It



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changes day to day, year to year. I mean you'll have a player who everybody loved and nobody likes him now. Or everybody hates and now everybody loves. That's harder for me."

There is an update on the contract situation with Lindholm, who is also looking for more than the Hurricanes are currently prepared to offer the restricted free agent.

Hamilton's name comes up again, as does prized defensive prospect Adam Fox, 20, who is playing at Harvard but whose stock has soared. What assets do the Canes have that might move the needle on a deal with Calgary?

Waddell said he's done his homework on Hamilton, 25, and he has no reservations about the young defenseman who was traded at the 2015 draft from Boston to Calgary.

There are teams that have expressed interest in Justin Faulk, who has two years left on his current deal with a \$4.83 million annual cap hit. Dundon wonders about assets on another Eastern Conference team that is in full rebuild mode and has a handful of restricted free agents that might become part of a deal moving forward.

The talk turns to goaltending and, with Grubauer set to be moved by Washington to make room for free agent defenseman John Carlson, ultimately signed to an eight-year deal, there is a discussion about how that kind of deal might work.

If not Grubauer, the team must find goaltending help elsewhere, so pending unrestricted free agent Robin Lehner's name comes up.

On it goes.

Dundon does not dominate the conversation. Everyone in the room has a chance to speak and appears comfortable in sharing their opinions. But the owner is the undeniable center of the spoke from which the discussion radiates.

He presents various scenarios. Would you trade this person for that one? Would you need to add a pick? Would you take a pick back? Why? Why not?

"The way he operates is totally different than the way traditional sports teams and particularly hockey teams have worked," Waddell explained. "We always had a chain of command going, here it's all bets off. If he's got a question about a player, he's going to call the trainer if it's an injury. He's not afraid to just pick up the phone. He's never doing it to go around somebody. He just says, why do I call two people to get the third person? Why don't I just call the third person, and it's up to them to manage up and it makes a lot of sense actually, and since he's been involved here, I think it's working.

"His energy would wear one person out, so to have multiple people, I'm good with it actually. If as a GM I'm worried about him talking to my coach, I might as well quit tomorrow, because it's going to happen, and Rod and I have to stay in contact and talk about things that could become something that we need to deal with."

One top NHL executive was asked how many owners are sitting in on draft list meetings and debating second and third-round picks.

The answer: None.

But, he added, Dundon put down his money to take on a controlling interest in the team, so he can sit in on those meetings if he wants to and is smart enough to be part of the process.

Twice in my conversation with Dundon, I reference the notion that hockey is a small town spread out over a vast geographic area. Dundon is not a small town guy and brings a different perspective to the table than maybe his longtime hockey employees are used to.

"For me, the judgment, it's easy if all 10 people agree on a player or a contract; it gets harder when there's five on each side," Dundon said. "I feel good about my ability to work with the group to differentiate and have judgment when it's close. But when the times when it's not close, I wouldn't try to change, I wouldn't try to go against what everybody thinks. What I would try to do is get them to think about other things and challenge the process. It's easy to like certain types of players. It's easy to like people you know, people you've done business with before and that's not unique to hockey. I think one benefit of being new here is that I don't have those biases, and I want everybody to take a fresh look and say 'OK, are you sure you're just not familiar with this person?'"

The other area in which the NHL resembles a small town is that there's lots of gossip and most have a strong opinion on what their neighbors are doing and how they're doing it. And it's fair to say that the eyes of the hockey world are on the Hurricanes and what they're doing and how they're doing it. Specifically, the eyes are focused on Dundon and his hands-on role in reshaping his team.

Not that he's really concerned about what people think.

"I would never think that anybody really cares. I'm more worried about what we're doing," Dundon said. "I've built a business and operated businesses. It's what I do. My only thought here was this is a business, it's different but it's still a business. If you treat people a certain way — you have high expectations, you give them the resources they need to succeed and you hold them accountable — that probably works here just like everywhere else. So I don't think I know best about this player's better than that player, but I think creating the environment where multiple people can debate it and you get new thoughts, creative ideas, and then have good judgment and make decisions without limitations on budget or any emotional attachments, I think that'll lead to some pretty outcomes."

That's not to say Dundon is trying to create a model that will work everywhere else. That's not his job, frankly, and just as frankly, he doubts it necessarily translates beyond the specifics of the Carolina Hurricanes.

"I don't know if other people should try to do it the way we're (going to do it). As a matter of fact, I'm pretty sure the way we're going to do it isn't going to be the way everybody should do it because it would, it wouldn't be normal I don't think or expected that the same thing would work in across 31 places," he said.

That afternoon the team's amateur scouting staff gathers in the same room to run down their draft list.



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The No. 2 pick is pretty much set with Svechnikov, but there is no shortage of debate about the Hurricanes' next pick, 42nd overall.

Dundon joins this meeting already in progress as the scouts are talking to defenseman Nicolas Beaudin, who will ultimately go 27th overall to Chicago.

After the youngster leaves, Dundon explains they are working on six potential deals, which leads to a discussion of the draft list but also of perceptions of young players.

Dundon recalls that the Canes had a chance to draft Torey Krug and then later to sign him as a college free agent after the undrafted Michigan State standout attended the team's rookie conditioning camp in 2011. Instead, the diminutive defender signed with Boston as a collegiate free agent and has been a mainstay with the Bruins since.

If Krug was in the draft today, would there be any biases about his ability because of his size, Dundon asks.

Some at the table acknowledge there remains a size bias even as the game continues to evolve.

The discussion broadens to the changing values scouts put on attributes like size, skating, quickness, intelligence.

Dudley figures speed and quickness have now become the top asset in a player with size falling to fourth on a scout's list.

"And that's difficult for some of us older guys to come to grips with," he admitted.

Other players who are expected to go late in the first round and into the second round enter the discussion.

Dundon asks why they over value some players and under value others relative to how others have ranked players.

"It's like comparing restaurants, it's personal preference," offered amateur scout Mike Dawson.

"I like Mexican restaurants with good service," Dundon said. "What do we like?"

It used to be that a smaller guy had to be special, bring something extra to the table. Now it's the slower guy that has to have an intangible that puts him on the map.

"It's very, very difficult to find a quick, big man," Dudley said.

Dundon, who frequently refers to a couple of screens in front of him, also wants to know why one of the players on the list around the 42 pick, Jack Drury — the nephew of longtime NHLer and current New York Rangers executive Chris Drury and son of former NHLer Ted Drury — is lower on other draft lists.

Darren Yorke, the team's manager of scouting, explains that it's about justifying your own list as opposed to worrying about other people's perceptions.

You have to have faith in your own guys, added director of amateur scouting Tony MacDonald. If your list is out of whack with other lists, "so be it."

As long as you believe a player is in the right spot on your list, "that's what counts," MacDonald said.

As for Drury, a top United States Hockey League prospect who enjoyed a 23-game point streak this season, "it's more about what he's going to be than what he is right now," MacDonald added.

There are differing views of Drury's attributes, which is natural given that different scouts see players at different points of their seasons.

Dundon asks where Drury's skating ability compares to when they drafted Victor Rask with the 42nd pick in 2011. He asks Dawson, where he would have Drury on his list, while Yorke added that the more you watch Drury, the more impressive he becomes.

"His hockey sense is off the (blanking) charts," Yorke said. "He's captain material."

Dundon asks about Alex DeBrincat, a 5-foot-7 forward who fell to the second round in 2016 and last season scored 28 times, third among all first-year NHL players.

And so it goes. The conversation is lively and informed but undeniably driven by the owner.

As Dundon prepares to depart he asks the scouts to think of players that might be under the radar, players that were hurt or played on bad teams or were forced down the depth chart on good teams but that have upside that might not be readily visible.

In short, he wants his scouts to think about players they might regret not taking when they gather a year from now before the 2019 draft in Vancouver. Like a DeBrincat.

Presumably the scouts have already taken those factors into consideration and perhaps it rankles some in the group who have literally decades of experiences as talent evaluators, but nonetheless, it becomes a talking point even after the owner leaves, players that might fit that bill and become the hidden gems that can propel a team forward in its evolution.

About five hours after Dundon and his family and the rest of the management team have welcomed Svechnikov to the Carolina Hurricanes family, the entire scouting and coaching staff minus Dundon are back in the same meeting room at the Omni.

Snacks have appeared on the sideboards and a container of beer and soda and later a bottle of red wine is delivered to the room.

Waddell's phone immediately rings and he spends most of the brief late-night meeting talking to Dundon, as well as other GMs, as the team prepares for the final six rounds of the draft that will unfold Saturday.

Montreal has a plethora of draft picks and there is discussion about Carolina adding a pick before their No. 42 pick so they could bolster their defensive stockpile. If not, they won't get a shot until the fourth round, assuming they still like Drury with their second-round pick.

Almost everyone has shed their suits from the draft floor and is in casual attire for the brief post-draft meeting.

"There's still some pretty good kids left on the board," MacDonald notes.



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The Hurricanes have 28 defensemen left on their list heading into Day 2 but lots of them will be in demand.

There is discussion about which defensemen they should target if Waddell is able to swing a deal for more picks.

But the list is the list, and there is a casual vibe to the end of day proceedings.

"Can you write how little Duds adds to the process," Krepelka jokes.

"Oh, he knows," Dudley responds.

As Waddell wanders the room with the phone to his ear, MacDonald asks if there are any adjustments the group wants to make given how things unfolded in Round 1.

"I think we've got guys where they should be," he said. "I don't think there's any need to shuffle bodies. You don't reinvent the wheel on Friday night after you've done all the leg work."

Waddell tells Yorke that, if he can get something done, he'll text and/or call as soon as he hears, and the group retires for the night.

The second day of the draft begins without Carolina having made any moves beyond selecting Svechnikov. Grubauer has gone to Colorado even though the Canes offered a slightly better second-round pick to the Caps.

The Los Angeles Kings announced they signed Ilya Kovalchuk, originally drafted by Waddell in Atlanta back in 2001, to a three-year deal. The Kings were a possible destination for Skinner, although that seems less likely now.

None of the many trades that have been hinted at both internally and in the greater NHL universe have materialized, leaving fans and the media grousing at the lack of action beyond the draftees themselves.

Shortly after noon, though, word of a possible deal between Carolina and Calgary starts to percolate through American Airlines Center.

And then it happens. The first blockbuster of the Dundon era and the first major move of the 2018 offseason.

Dougie Hamilton, rugged forward Micheal Ferlund and top defensive prospect Adam Fox are bound for Raleigh with Hanifin and Lindholm, both of whom rejected final offers from the Hurricanes, now reunited with Peters in Calgary.

It's a significant moment on a number of levels.

First, many observers believe the Canes got the better of the deal, at least in the short-term, given the addition of Hamilton, who scored 17 times last year and has 179 points in the past four seasons. While there was significant pressure on Waddell, Dudley et al to get something done, it was imperative they didn't fall into the trap of making a move for the sake of the move. They didn't get hosed. Not even close.

Also, the fact that both Hanifin and Lindholm were offered contracts not out line with market value but were quickly dealt when they didn't come to terms also speaks to the mantra that Dundon is interested only in those who want to be in Raleigh.

"Anybody who says the culture over the last X number of years was a great culture they would just be emotional, they wouldn't be honest," Dundon said. "It doesn't change just because we say it changes, it changes because you do stuff. Of all the things I'm worried about, that is not one of them. I know talent wise and then with the way Roddy is what we'll be willing to do."

Regardless of how much money someone gets paid, no matter how highly touted they are, they'll play because they play hard and the players they bring in will want to be part of the process, Dundon said.

"We'll be willing to not play a player who doesn't give better than their best all the time. Even if they can get away with less than their best because they're so talented, they won't play," Dundon said. "And that's what all of them want. I think everybody in the locker room wants it, and once everybody knows it and it doesn't come up anymore, you don't have to talk about it. They're all grown men. And I don't think, I think it wasn't that far off all these years, but whether you're a step or a mile, you're not there and we weren't there."

In the place of actual wins on the board, a team like Carolina has only one thing to sell: hope.

It's been pretty much the lone staple on the shelf in Raleigh for the better part of a decade and its best-before date is well passed. Still, at this stage, that's all that sustains the team and its fan base — hope that under this owner, under this new management team, under this coaching staff, that good and maybe even great days are ahead.

The trade with Calgary is a big part of that equation.

Make no mistake there's still lots of work to do in the coming days.

The Canes need a goaltender to provide either insurance for Scott Darling, who struggled in his first year as a starter, or take over as the go-to guy between the pipes.

Skinner's future or non-future with the club must be resolved.

And Faulk's role with the team remains in flux given the preponderance of right-handed shots now in the lineup with Hamilton, Pesce, Faulk and Trevor van Riemsdyk all right-handers.

Lots of work. Lots more phone calls between Dundon and Waddell and GMs hither and yon.

But ever so slowly, these days in Dallas suggest a subtle change in the narrative that surrounds the Carolina Hurricanes, a story that hints at a move from outlier franchiser with the outlier owner directing the draft meetings to a team to be reckoned with, a team with a plan and a future.



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SportScan

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

1100720 NHL

From Mathew Barzal to expansion talk, Seattle was Hockeytown in past week

Geoff Baker

Seattle Times staff reporter

Seattle hockey was front and center in Las Vegas last week at both the NHL annual awards show and the board of governors meeting that preceded it.

The awards part was historic for our region as former Seattle Thunderbirds junior star Mathew Barzal, to no one's surprise, won the Calder Memorial Trophy as the league's top rookie. The New York Islanders center from Coquitlam, B.C., amassed 22 goals and 63 assists last season in becoming the first player from a Seattle-area junior team to capture one of the league's premier awards.

And the pre-awards press briefing by NHL commissioner Gary Bettman was interesting for Seattle as well as he hinted at an "aggressive" timeline for renovating KeyArena being a potential stumbling block to an expansion team beginning play by the 2020-21 season.

"The timetable on finishing the application and doing what we need to do, we can do that as quickly or as slowly as appropriate," Bettman told reporters. "That's a matter of weeks and months, not years. The bigger issue is going to be their timeline on the building."

Bettman didn't touch on our report last week about two apartment complexes challenging the legality of an environmental review on the planned \$600 million renovation of KeyArena, but you can bet plenty of eyes will be on that as September approaches.

The awards ceremony, especially the rookie category, was substantially less in-doubt given Barzal's dominant on-ice performance.

Just more than a year ago, Barzal, 21, had helped lead the Kent-based Thunderbirds to their first Western Hockey League championship. But few foresaw Barzal putting together the best early NHL showing by a T-birds alum since Patrick Marleau with the San Jose Sharks two decades ago.

"He just went there and played his game and didn't compromise a thing," longtime T-birds general manager and current senior advisor Russ Farwell said of Barzal. "The way he held the puck and pivoted and turned

and carried it through the neutral zone. He really went there and asserted himself."

Farwell doesn't view Barzal's award as a milestone moment for major junior hockey in this state. After all, he added, the Thunderbirds and Everett Silvertips have had many quality NHL players graduate their ranks.

Instead, he sees it as Barzal focusing on putting his best foot — or skate — forward after being sent back to juniors by the Islanders early in the 2016-17 season. That demotion enabled Barzal to work on his game and lead the Thunderbirds to the WHL title after they'd been beaten in the finals the prior year.

"He's probably a little more dynamic than Marleau was but he (Marleau) was in the league at 18," Farwell said. "So we didn't really see much of him and the player he could be."

Marleau was the youngest player in his 1997 draft class and had 32 points his rookie season, which began right after his 18th birthday. He had 85 points combined his next two years through his age 20 season, which Barzal just completed.

The only other T-birds grad to win a major award was goaltender Chris Osgood capturing two William M. Jennings Trophies with the Detroit Red Wings in the mid-1990s for his team having allowed the fewest goals. But the Jennings Trophy is a statistical prize and not voted on the way other major awards are.

As for whether our city will soon have hockey beyond the junior level, we won't know for several months. Tod Leiweke, president and CEO of the NHL Seattle group seeking an expansion team, told me he isn't reading ulterior motives into the challenge of the KeyArena environmental review by owners of the Expo and Astro apartment complexes adjacent the facility.

The owners will meet shortly with representatives of the Oak View Group — which is undertaking the renovation — to try to mitigate concerns expressed in a 17-page legal letter they filed during a public comment period. While a handful of other groups also used law firms to file public comments, the joint submission by the corporate owners of the apartment complexes was the only one that questioned the legal validity of the entire process.

It states that the environmental impact statement (EIS) being prepared should have been done as a public endeavor instead of a private one. A public EIS would have required the study of an alternative arena site — like the Sodo District location entrepreneur Chris Hansen says he still wants to build a new arena at.

Hansen already made that same public-versus-private argument through his land use lawyer, Jack McCullough, during the EIS scoping period last



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October. That a colleague from the lawyer's McCullough Hill Leary firm — Courtney Kaylor — wrote the apartment owners' letter has fueled speculation Hansen might be behind the effort.

Hansen's group and one of the apartment owners, SRC Development, have denied involvement with one another. But the letter by Kaylor delves into several broader issues — like the city's plans for an NBA team, the fate of Seattle Center music festivals and the relocation of other nonprofit groups — that have little to do with the two apartment complexes.

The concern for anyone wanting an NHL team here by October 2020 is that the broad scope of Kaylor's letter sets the stage for an appeal of the EIS once a final version emerges in late August or early September.

And any appeal, according to city officials, would push the renovation timeline back several months. That would almost certainly delay the NHL's arrival by at least a season, if not longer.

NHL commissioner Bettman may not believe a KeyArena appeal is coming. But given the league's previous exasperation at our city's arena process, Bettman can hardly be blamed for eyeing that renovation timeline a little more warily ahead of any expansion team being granted.

Seattle Times LOADED: 06.27.2018

1100780 Websites

The Athletic / The non-Tavares guide to what the Maple Leafs need to accomplish this summer

By James Mirtle Jun 26, 2018

When John Carlson re-signed for eight years and \$64-million with the Stanley Cup champion Washington Capitals last week, it wasn't a huge surprise. But it put a big dent in the free agent market.

And at just the position the Maple Leafs still need an upgrade.

A key part of the reason Carlson became one of the highest paid defencemen in NHL history is the fact he is a point producing right shot right defenceman, something that is in incredibly short supply leaguewide. Especially on the open market.

The four highest-minute pending UFA right defencemen available, now that Carlson is off the market, are Mike Green, Greg Pateryn, 37-year-old Kevin Bieksa and Roman Polak.

Similarly, once John Tavares, Joe Thornton and Paul Stastny sign new contracts — and all three are at this point considered likely to remain with their current teams — there will be little available for the Leafs to sign at centre, either.

Without getting Tavares, they're also going to have a ton of cap space and no star players to offer it to.

That sets up an incredibly complex off-season for new GM Kyle Dubas, one fraught with challenges and potential pitfalls. But it also offers opportunity, with the ability to use all that cap room for creative maneuvering.

I think it makes sense to go through their decisions position-by-position, operating under the assumption that they aren't going to be able to get Tavares, something that remains a long shot. Let's start with what's happening in goal, where they have the easiest calls to make.

A promotion, a demotion and a deal.

What will the Leafs do in goal?

Other teams around the league are saying Calvin Pickard, who had a solid turn as part of the Marlies' dominant tandem this season, is available.

I wouldn't be surprised if Curtis McElhinney is up for grabs, too, even after the year he had as the Leafs' backup.

Garret Sparks' AHL goalie of the year award — and Calder Cup — will mean he graduates to the NHL next season. It makes no sense to waive (or trade) him in favour of the 35-year-old McElhinney, whose ceiling is well established as a max 15-start vet.

Sparks also has Dubas in his corner. What may help him further is evidence that Leafs No. 1 Frederik Andersen wore down over the course of the year after starting 66 games (second highest in the NHL) and facing a career high 2,211 shots (highest in the NHL).

The Leafs are going to want a backup that can help more than that. Sparks has earned that chance.

It's hard to imagine Pickard (or McElhinney) fetches much in a trade, what with all of the backup goaltenders available around the league. But after the Leafs re-signed Kasimir Kaskisuo last month, the writing has been on the wall that they want to open a spot for him with the Marlies rather than loan him to another organization again.

So there'll be some movement in goal. Even if, at the NHL level, Dubas has much less to concern himself with there than any other position.

Jared Spurgeon

What will the Leafs do on defence?

The multi-million-dollar question.

What we know already is that, when other teams have come calling, the Leafs have been trying to make some sort of a deal to help the blueline. So movement very well may happen beyond simply picking through the thin free agent crop.

At the moment, the Leafs' depth chart on defence breaks down like so, with only Roman Polak moving on from last season:

Rielly – Hainsey

Gardiner – Zaitsev

Dermott – Carrick

— and Igor Ozhiganov, Andreas Borgman, Calle Rosen, Martin Marincin and Justin Holl serving as depth options. (The latter four Dubas is intimately familiar with from their contributions with the Marlies. Like Sparks, they could get an increased look as a result.)

What the Leafs lack is higher-end options on the right side, someone to complement what Rielly, Gardiner and Dermott offer on the left side.

Dubas has already been talking with Gardiner's agent Pat Brisson about a possible extension, which is important given he's entering the final year of his deal. The Leafs need to establish what he will cost on his next deal and whether or not they're willing to pay that. If they're not, he becomes a trade chip that can be moved, potentially for help on the right side or down the middle.

Mike Russo had an interesting report on Monday about the Wild's new GM Paul Fenton looking at shaking up his roster, and there were enough similarities to what the Leafs need in a trade partner that it piqued my interest. Minnesota is trying to offload a bad contract — the final year of Tyler Ennis' deal (\$4.6-million cap hit) — something Toronto could easily absorb with all the cap space they have in 2018-19.

The Wild also have right shot D and centres they might be willing to move and have needs at right wing and the backup goalie position, two spots the Leafs have excess talent. You wonder if there could be a fit for a Jared Spurgeon or Matt Dumba. The big issue there is Minnesota would then have created a hole on RD, but there seems to be persistent talk about them moving a defenceman to change their mix.



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Maybe it's a situation where it would be a three-team deal?

The other hangup that I see is the Wild's cap situation is not that bad. They can buy Ennis out and sign their RFAs and still have plenty of room to add in free agency or via trade. They're probably not desperate enough to unload that bad money that they'll take a major hit on assets coming back for one of their top four defencemen.

But those are the kind of openings that Dubas and the Leafs are likely looking for here. Those are the conversations they'll seek, just as they went through the entire league and identified possible trade partners when they were attempting to unload David Clarkson's contract back in 2015.

There aren't many teams right now that can look at a 22-point player on a \$4.6-million deal and say, "sure, love to have that headache — if you give us something in return." The Leafs can.

The other thing I wouldn't rule out is anyone except Rielly and Dermott getting traded. Gardiner could get dealt simply because of his contractual situation. Hainsey, Zaitsev and Carrick could be moved simply because Dubas wants a better skating and puck-moving look on the right side of his defence. It's what he had in the Soo and what he had with the Marlies.

It's plausible Dubas will want to open a hole for someone like Holl to get a shot, for example. Or even, as a last resort, to try Rielly or Dermott on the right side. (When asked, Gardiner is adamant he can't play there, so that's not an option.)

I believe almost everything is on the table with this blueline. I'll be surprised if the D core on opening night this fall looks the same as it did in the post-season last year. Changes are coming.

Whether or not it'll make them more effective remains to be seen.

What will the Leafs do at wing?

Andreas Johnsson's performance last season — especially in the AHL playoffs — changes things. In my mind, he went from a surefire depth NHLer to a plausible top-six forward.

Consider that, including his MVP turn in the playoffs, Johnsson had 78 points in 70 games in the AHL in 2017-18. Using NHL, that translates to 43 points over a full NHL season, which would have been good for a tie for 135th among NHL forwards last year.

Easily in a good team's top six, in other words.

That's a crude way of looking at it, based just on point production, but it discounts the other things Johnsson can do. He can play both special teams. He excels at both ends of the ice. He can play with a very good centre and dig the puck out of the corners and make plays.

I'd like to see him play with Auston Matthews or Tavares or Nazem Kadri for a full season next year. Because I think he can keep up in those situations.

I mean, the evidence is right here.

What Johnsson's maturation has done is help solidify Toronto at its deepest position, something that will help offset the loss of JVR — especially at even strength. Assuming Nylander stays on the wing (a precarious notion given this article is based in the non-Tavares theorizing realm), they'll have him, Marner, Brown and Kapanen on the right side and Hyman, Marleau, Johnsson and Leivo on the left.

Plus whatever they add in free agency or via trade, using all their cap space. (Don't be surprised if the Leafs make some bargain buys on the wing in UFA to buy prospects like Carl Grundstrom more time in the AHL. They won't want him to start on a fourth line, getting nine minutes ice time a game, so adding a couple Daniel Carr types makes some sense. Especially if Leivo is finally, mercifully dealt, as has been in league scuttlebutt again of late.)

If Nylander moves to centre, that changes things somewhat, although all three of Marner, Brown and Kapanen are capable in top nine roles. But the Leafs will need more wingers, likely via free agency.

Those additions haven't gotten much attention given the needs on the blueline and at centre are most glaring, but it could well end up being that Dubas does some of his savviest work with reclamation projects on the wing. He'll certainly want a more effective, skilled and productive fourth line than what the Leafs ran out for much of last year.

Not only will that better protect them in case of injury, but it'll give them trade options later in the year if whatever they've entered the season with on the blueline isn't panning out.

There's certainly roster spots to be had up front, even with the talent they have already in place.

What will the Leafs do at centre?

Failing adding Tavares, Stastny or Thornton, it wouldn't surprise me if Nylander gets a long look as the Leafs' third centre.

But there are other options. Players like Boston's Riley Nash and Carolina's Derek Ryan could be fits, although we can debate the degree to which they could drive a line offensively and serve as an upgrade over Tyler Bozak. I could see the Leafs adding a centre like that and using them in some combination with Nylander also in the middle, giving them four quality centres at each slot.

There's also Swedish newcomer Par Lindholm who will be vying for a roster spot as well, trying to prove he's not this year's version of Miro Aaltonen.

Mike Babcock lamented all year last season about his lack of depth at centre, something that really hurt the Leafs when Matthews missed so much time with three separate injuries. One of Toronto's unique problems on that front is so few of their wingers can capably move to the middle.

I expect Dubas will work to solidify the position far better, which could mean adding two new centres via free agency or trade.

The reality is the Leafs simply don't have a lot of internal options down the middle, as even the Marlies were relatively thin at the position during their record-setting season. While it won't be as sexy as winning the Tavares sweepstakes, the Leafs' backup plan of finding smart, two-way, cost-effective options that can (a) play as high in the lineup as 3C, (b) shift to the wing, or (c) fill the 13th or 14th forward slot, will be vital.

In all, I could see as many as eight new roster players on the Leafs next season from the regulars of a year ago. (Nine if you count Johnsson.) A lot of that change is going to happen here within the next week, with free agency opening at noon on Sunday.

It should be really interesting to watch it unfold, given new management's new-school philosophies. And it could go a long way to determining what strides — or steps back — the Leafs take from last year's 105-point campaign.

The Athletic LOADED: 06.27.2018

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The Athletic / How the Lightning can make John Tavares fit in the salary cap

By Joe Smith Jun 26, 2018



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 27, 2018

TAMPA, Fla. — The Lightning have entered the John Tavares sweepstakes, as one of five teams scheduled to pitch the Islanders superstar center this week in Los Angeles.

The one question most everyone has asked since Tampa Bay was listed as a suitor:

How?

The Lightning have just \$10 million in cap space for next season, and that doesn't include the four restricted free agents they made qualifying offers to on Monday (forwards J.T. Miller, Cedric Paquette and Adam Erne, and defenseman Slater Koekkoek). This squeeze comes even with the cap going up from \$75 million to \$79.5 million next season.

In the big picture, the Lightning also want to extend defenseman Ryan McDonagh (who is an unrestricted free agent next summer) and have hefty extensions due to All-Stars Nikita Kucherov and Brayden Point, who are RFAs next summer. And, no, pursuing Tavares doesn't mean the Lightning are going to trade Kucherov, a 100-point scorer.

GM Steve Yzerman, speaking not of Tavares but in general, knows it'd take some maneuvering to make a big move in free agency.

"Well, we would have to make room," Yzerman said. "If we brought in a significant salary, we would have to (make cap room)."

Tavares is a special player, one of the top centers in the game, so it shouldn't be surprising Tampa Bay is interested and will give it their best shot. Many expect Tavares to remain with the Islanders, the team he captains. So this could be, at the very least, Yzerman doing his due diligence. Our Arthur Staple has a good rundown on Tavares' upcoming meetings.

But the Lightning wouldn't be going cross-country for this pitch if they didn't think it could work financially, even with Tavares expected to make \$10 million or more annually. Can it, though?

"Easy," former NHL GM Craig Button texted to The Athletic. "No bad contracts and can trade anybody in seconds. Cap is no issue for the Lightning."

So how does it work?

First, the Lightning have to sell Tavares on coming to Tampa. It's a long shot, but Tampa Bay has plenty to offer, which Tavares' childhood friend, Steven Stamkos, can educate him on.

A chance to win the Cup — The Lightning went to the Eastern Conference final three of the past four years — and four of the past eight.

Strong ownership and management — Many consider Jeff Vinik one of the best owners in the sport, and Yzerman, the Hall of Famer, is as respected as they come. Stamkos cited those two as reasons he decided to stay after his "stressful" sweepstakes two years ago.

No state income taxes — Sure, Dallas (another suitor) has this edge, too. But netting more take-home pay helped make the \$8.5 million Stamkos averages per season about as much as \$11 million if you lived in New York City.

This is where it can get tricky. Yzerman said he wants to make the team better, but believes how you do that is, for the most part, keep it together.

"Not necessarily go sideways," Yzerman said.

So as much as the Lightning would benefit from Tavares, they don't want to get rid of many core pieces to do so. Around \$11 million will come off the books next summer when Braydon Coburn (\$3.7 million), Dan Girardi (\$3 million) and Anton Stralman (\$4.5 million) become unrestricted free agents. Those savings will go a long way in giving sizable raises to Kucherov (who makes \$4.76 million) and Point (\$686,667), plus filling out the blueline.

Another \$5.8 million will be shed in two seasons when Ryan Callahan's contract is done, unless the team decides to buy out or trade the veteran next summer.

Either way, fitting Tavares on the short and long-term would be challenging.

Here are some options how the Lightning can swing it.

Trade J.T. Miller

Miller, 25, acquired in the McDonagh blockbuster with the Rangers at the deadline, got off to a tremendous start in Tampa Bay. No Lightning player — not Kucherov, not Stamkos — had more goals from the trade deadline to the end of the regular season than Miller (who had 10 in 19 games).

Miller had an up-and-down postseason, but the Lightning still went into the summer hoping to hang on to the power forward, which they don't have a lot of in their organization.

The question is, at what cost?

Miller is an RFA with arbitration rights and is hoping for a long-term deal. He's one year away from unrestricted free agency, so don't see him accepting another bridge deal (2-3 years).

You can give Miller a higher number on a one-year deal, or have an arbitrator settle a one-year deal and then walk away from there. But any number with Miller will likely be in the \$5 million or more range.

Miller is coming off a contract making \$2.75 million. He's had three straight 20-goal seasons, including 23 this past season split between the Rangers and the Lightning.

Miller has more goals the past three seasons (67) than the Lightning's Tyler Johnson (54), who got a seven-year, \$35 million deal last summer, and 10 fewer than the Sharks Evander Kane (77), who signed a seven-year, \$49 million extension this year.

Not that Miller is Kane, or Johnson, but he's going to get a big bump.

Miller and the Lightning began negotiations this past week at the draft, but it could be on hold while the Tavares matter is being settled. If you move Miller, that saves at least \$5 million of the \$10 million in cap space left for next season.

Trade Tyler Johnson

The Lightning don't want to trade Johnson, and entered the summer not planning to move him.

I can see coach Jon Cooper — who has loved Johnson since their days at AHL Norfolk — saying "over my dead body," when it comes to moving the former All-Star.

Heck, Johnson is probably one of the main reasons the current staff is still here (who knows what happens if Johnson doesn't put on his superhero cape and save the Lightning from falling behind 3-1 in the first round against Detroit in 2015?).

But Johnson has a no-trade clause that kicks in July 1, coincidentally the same day Tavares can sign with another team. Johnson has a cap hit of \$5 million in each of the next six years, a sizable chunk over the time Tavares would likely be under contract.

Still think it's more than likely Johnson is in Tampa next season. But when a guy like Tavares is available, sometimes the best-laid plans..

Buy out/trade Ryan Callahan next summer

Veteran winger Callahan is a heart-and-soul player who courageously played through a right shoulder injury in the playoffs. He's an alternate captain and a great leader.

But Callahan, 33, had his third surgery in two seasons last month, this time on his shoulder after two on his hip last year. Callahan is expected



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to be out five months, meaning he'll be sidelined probably through at least the first month of the season.

You can't buy him out this summer because he's injured, but there's a chance Tampa Bay could next summer, the final year of his deal that carries a \$5.8 million cap hit.

Maybe the Rangers want their former captain back to help mentor the kids during their rebuild. Or maybe Callahan's hometown Sabres?

Sell Tavares on a short-term deal

This one seems extremely unlikely, but if the Lightning can pitch a rich, short-term deal (1-2 years) for a chance at the Cup, Tavares, 27, could still get another lengthy payday after that contract is up.

It's a lot of risk on Tavares, who reportedly already has an eight-year, \$88 million (\$11 million AAV) offer from the Islanders. Other teams can only offer Tavares seven years. So if Tampa, let's say, got him on a rich one-year deal, they can re-sign him the following summer to a longer-term deal once they figure out their other contracts (see: Kucherov). Our James Mirtle did a great job explaining the pros and cons of this with the Leafs.

Any of these scenarios — trading Miller or Johnson — would require some serious sleuthing. And there's not much time. A Johnson or Miller deal would probably have to involve prospects and picks because taking on any significant salary would defeat the point (at least for Tavares' case).

And if you do sign Tavares in the \$10 million range, you'll potentially have four of your players (Stamkos, Victor Hedman, Kucherov, Tavares), combining for \$35-40 million of an \$80-\$85 million salary cap going forward. That doesn't take into account the sizable bump Vezina Trophy finalist goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy will require in two years when his bargain, \$3.5 million annual hit is over.

By all accounts, the thought of Tavares landing with any team but the Islanders is unlikely.

But if the Lightning successfully court Tavares, they can creatively come up with the cash.

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Sportsnet.ca / O'Ree's Hall of Fame induction long overdue and richly deserved

Scott Morrison

For so much of his life — both as a person and as a hockey player — Willie O'Ree was cruelly told that he didn't belong.

Tuesday wasn't one of those days.

O'Ree, who was truly a pioneer, was announced as one of the 2018 inductees into the Hockey Hall of Fame in the builder category.

Long overdue, richly deserved.

It was 60 years ago — on Saturday, January 18, 1958 at the Montreal Forum — that O'Ree broke the colour barrier in the NHL, almost 11 years after Jackie Robinson had done the same in baseball.

That night, the 22-year-old O'Ree played his first NHL game with the Boston Bruins, unaware he was the first black player in NHL history.

But the next day, in the morning paper, near the bottom of the story it read: "The game...marked the debut of Willie O'Ree, the first Negro to play in the league."

Then it sunk in. He was the first, but he would do everything possible to make sure he was not the last. Though, like his induction in the Hall, the arrival of the next black player in the NHL was a long while coming.

"Willie paved the path for the rest of us," said former goaltender Grant Fuhr. "In that way he is a true builder of the game. If you look up the word 'builder' there should be a picture of Willie. He is the Jackie Robinson of hockey."

O'Ree played just two NHL games that season: the debut a 3-0 Bruins win, and the next night, a 6-2 loss to the Canadiens in Boston.

Almost three years later, O'Ree got recalled by the Bruins and again made history on New Year's Day, 1961, scoring his first NHL goal in another game against the Canadiens. He played 43 games that season, scoring four goals, including two games-winners, and 14 points.

O'Ree played just 45 NHL games, but the impact is still felt today.

"There are a select few about whom it truly can be said: 'He changed the game'," said NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, who will also be inducted in the builder category. "Willie O'Ree is among that select few."

For those of a certain vintage, it's hard to fully understand just how different the world was 60 years ago — though sadly there are still too many days when it feels like it still hasn't changed, at least not enough — and to fully appreciate what O'Ree accomplished and endured.

Remember, back then the NHL was a six-team league, so jobs were limited and in some cases even more so because of colour. O'Ree was exposed to racial remarks and slurs from both players and fans, some cities more difficult than others in which to play. But he persevered and he starred at the minor league level despite only having sight in one eye, but no one knew and no one noticed.

While O'Ree was the first black player in the NHL, there wouldn't be another until 1974, when Mike Marson of Scarborough, Ont., was drafted by the Washington Capitals. Others, of course, would follow — the likes of Bill Riley, Tony McKegney, Fuhr, Wayne Simmonds, Jarome Iginla, P.K. Subban, to name a few.

"None of it ever would've happened without Mr. O'Ree opening the door — not just for me, but for every black hockey player with a dream," Simmonds wrote in an article in The Players' Tribune. "My dream simply does not become a reality without Willie O'Ree."

Sixty years after that first game, O'Ree continues to make an impact. For the past 20 years, he has been a part of the NHL, but working off the ice serving as the NHL's diversity ambassador, helping to grow the game in many different communities, leading the Hockey is For Everyone program, recently honoured by having a community hero award named after him.

"Sometimes, goals, assists, points or shutouts measure a person's place in the game," the great Wayne Gretzky was quoted as saying, "but desire, determination, work ethic and the drive not to let obstacles get in his way? That is why Willie has earned his induction into the Hall."

Where he truly belongs.

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Sportsnet.ca / Maple Leafs, Islanders make pitches as John Tavares meetings begin



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 27, 2018

Chris Johnston

They came one after the other. First, Lou Lamoriello's former colleagues had a chance to pitch John Tavares on the merits of moving to Toronto, and then he took the opportunity to sit down with the free-agent centre himself and outline why it's best to stay right where he is.

It was an unusual situation, especially when you consider how much success Lamoriello and Leafs coach Mike Babcock have enjoyed in these matters together. They rarely missed on a European free agent in Toronto over the last couple years. And while Nikita Zaitsev, Calle Rosén, Andreas Borgman, Miro Aaltonen, Par Lindholm and Igor Ozhiganov are not the least bit comparable to Tavares as players, each had a considerable number of NHL options in free agency and credited the relentless sales work from the GM/coach duo for why they ultimately chose Toronto.

"No salesman's bulls—t," Rosén's agent, Jacob Hedin, told Sportsnet of his client's experience last summer.

On Monday afternoon, it was Kyle Dubas leading Toronto's two-hour pitch to Tavares and his representatives from CAA Sports. Flanked by Babcock and president Brendan Shanahan inside CAA's Hollywood office, the 32-year-old GM delivered what was believed to be a well-prepared presentation to a 27-year-old centre that could become the biggest star in NHL history to test unrestricted free agency.

Now, no one is divulging any specifics from these meetings — not agent Pat Brisson, not the GMs involved — so those aren't likely come to light until after a decision is made.

If they ever surface at all.

Lamoriello took a meeting with Tavares because the New York Islanders general manager and president of hockey operations has taken every available opportunity to speak with him since leaving the Leafs for his new position on May 22 (they even sat down face-to-face once before that). He has kept in touch almost daily since — a practice right out of the recruiting playbook he and Babcock worked from in Toronto.

On Monday night, Lamoriello brought along new Islanders head coach Barry Trotz for a session that stretched two hours 15 minutes and ended with both men smiling on their way out the door. Extending Tavares is essential for an organization making a full-court press to keep its franchise cornerstone in place. It may determine whether Lamoriello has any chance at success with the new job, which makes the ongoing interview period unique since he's now competing with his former team, among others, for his own player.

"I don't look at it like it's a surprise," Lamoriello said following last weekend's draft. "I respect him. He has a right to do that. The important thing is that he's an Islander at the end."

On Tuesday he'll have a chance to imagine what it's like to be a Shark and a Bruin instead. San Jose and Boston are next up on the schedule and might bring something different to the table with Evander Kane hinting on Twitter that he'll be part of the Sharks presentation.

LA.

— Evander Kane (@evanderkane_9) June 26, 2018

Wednesday has been marked off for presentations by the Tampa Bay Lightning and Dallas Stars.

There is also the possibility of phone calls and further meetings with a handful of other teams, but Tavares is hoping to keep the numbers manageable. Nashville, Vegas, St. Louis, Montreal and Colorado are among those that had been looking for a seat at the big table and didn't get one.

The entire process has been carefully considered.

Tavares is a meticulous guy who spent the last couple months reviewing his options and had a 77-page book prepared that contained a deep dive into each of the organizations he was most likely to find appealing.

The face-to-face interviews are the next step he needs to work through before signing a contract that should ensure financial security for generations. League rules are clear about what can and can't happen during these meetings prior to July 1:

"Clubs are permitted to discuss their potential interest in, as well as the general parameters of, a potential future contractual relationship with another Club's pending RFA or UFA during the applicable 'interview periods,'" read a recent memo distributed to teams by the NHL.

"But Clubs may not enter into any agreements, or make any binding offers, promises, undertakings, representations, commitments, inducements, assurances of intent, or understandings of any kind, express or implied, oral or written, concerning the terms of a potential SPC with another Club's pending RFA or UFA."

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In plain terms, Tavares can only legally negotiate and agree to a new deal with the Islanders before officially hitting the open market. The other suitors are left to wait as the clock ticks down towards Canada Day.

And while the notion of a one-year, max deal at \$15.9 million with the Leafs has generated considerable discussion among fans, media and rival front-office members —

"I think they're pushing this," one said Tuesday morning — an insurance industry source with ties to hockey cast serious doubt they'd be able to convince Tavares to take it.

He believes the nature of the sport simply makes it too risky.

The source doesn't count Tavares among his NHL clients, but noted that when players take out an insurance policy on future earnings it only covers career-ending injuries. There wouldn't be a payout if Tavares, say, blew out his ACL and returned to the ice eight months later — albeit at a diminished state that kept him from fetching an \$80-plus million contract the next time around.

As a result, the insurer reasoned, you need to lock down the guaranteed money when it's on the table.

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Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens' Bergevin came close to hitting all marks during draft weekend

Eric Engels June 26, 2018

Marc Bergevin was on the verge of killing three birds with one stone this past weekend, and then reality got in the way.

If things had gone according to plan, Bergevin would've walked away from the draft floor on Saturday having replenished the Montreal Canadiens' cupboards with a bevy of talented prospects, he'd have resolved an uncomfortable situation with captain Max Pacioretty, and he'd have acquired an established second-line centre in Ryan O'Reilly.

But the cookie didn't end up crumbling that way.

Sure, consensus among the draft experts is that the Canadiens' general manager made good on the 11 picks he brought into the organization. But those other big moves never came to fruition, despite his best efforts.



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The frustrating thing for Bergevin has to be that there was more than just a glimmer of hope everything would work out differently.

The Canadiens and Buffalo Sabres had been linked in conversations about O'Reilly, with Sabres GM Jason Botterill asking Montreal for the third overall pick in return. And though that was a deal-breaker for Bergevin, trading Pacioretty for another first-round pick he could package back to the Sabres — along with a couple of other picks the Canadiens held in the draft — was apparently something we're told he came close to doing.

We know getting either Bergevin or New York Islanders GM Lou Lamoriello to admit that they had a potential deal worked out that would've seen Pacioretty going one way and either the 11th or 12th overall pick going the other would be akin to asking Donald Trump to admit to a lie, but that doesn't mean it didn't happen.

It would've been a win for all parties involved, with Bergevin trading Pacioretty and landing O'Reilly after drafting a potential future No. 1 centre in Jesperi Kotkaniemi; with Pacioretty moving to a destination of choice, signing a long-term contract extension and being guaranteed a chance to play with an elite centreman (Mat Barzal or John Tavares) for years to come; with Lamoriello netting a proven 30-goal scorer/one more piece to help him convince his franchise player (Tavares) to skirt unrestricted free agency in favour of a return to the Islanders; and with Botterill pocketing another high first-round pick (and a couple of lower picks, too) to make a dream weekend-over which he drafted a generational talent in defenceman Rasmus Dahlin first overall—that much better.

We're told that deal was on the table up until the picks started rolling in.

The Canadiens took Kotkaniemi, the Ottawa Senators nabbed Brady Tkachuk and then the Arizona Coyotes threw everything out of whack when they took consensus mid-first rounder Barrett Hayton with the fifth overall pick.

As a result, the Detroit Red Wings, who were set on drafting a centre or defencemen, had scoring winger Filip Zadina — who was ranked by most to be the third-best player available in the draft — fall in their laps at six. And after the Vancouver Canucks took defenceman Quinn Hughes, the Chicago Blackhawks took defenceman Adam Boqvist and the New York Rangers went off the board with right winger Vitaly Kravtsov, it suddenly became abundantly clear that Lamoriello was going to land two of the consensus top-10 prospects in the draft by holding onto his positions.

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The Edmonton Oilers took defenceman Evan Bouchard with the 10th pick, and Lamoriello pulled the plug on his deal with Bergevin in order to put flashy forward Oliver Wahlstrom and stud defenceman Noah Dobson into Islanders uniforms.

Bergevin's Plan B was to trade Pacioretty to the Los Angeles Kings. Had the 29-year-old left winger and Kings GM Rob Blake been able to work out a contract extension, we'd be in a different place. But Pacioretty balked at Blake's offer on Saturday, he promptly fired CAA's Pat Brisson and hired Octagon Hockey's Allan Walsh to represent him, and we went back to ground zero.

There's still hope this all gets resolved quickly.

We know that O'Reilly became a primary target in the lead up to the draft, back when what was reported Monday — that the Canadiens wouldn't have a chance to pitch Montreal to Tavares — was made clear to Bergevin. We also know those conversations, which will now have to be centred on different assets, will likely continue as the Sabres explore moving O'Reilly before his \$7.5 million bonus is due on July 1.

If Bergevin can't come to an agreement with Botterill, he'll likely turn his attention to trying to sign pending unrestricted free agent Paul Stastny. A centre who scored 40 points with the St. Louis Blues this season before

joining the Winnipeg Jets at the trade deadline and registering 15 points in their 17-game playoff run.

Bergevin will also continue to seek out trade possibilities for Pacioretty. There's no walking that back at this point, especially not after months of trying to strike a deal. The problem is that it's going to take a concession on somebody's behalf to ensure this situation doesn't bleed into training camp.

We don't expect Pacioretty to scale back his contract demands after living with a six-year, \$27 million deal that fell way short of market value. Pacioretty's decision to part ways with Brisson was a result, in part, of mounting frustration on the part of Pacioretty over the inability of his representatives and the Canadiens to consummate a trade out of Montreal to a destination willing to meet his contractual demands. And on the other side of the coin, we know Bergevin doesn't want to take pennies on the dollar in a trade — which is what he'll be looking at if he chooses to send the perennial 30-goal scorer to a team that has no guarantees he'll sign an extension with them.

In an ideal world, this all gets sorted neatly and promptly. The last thing either party needs is the distraction — and the risk — that comes with Pacioretty returning to Montreal in the fall with an unresolved contract.

But reality can sometimes be a you-know-what.

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Sportsnet.ca / 6 NHL free-agency headlines we'd like to see, but won't

Sean McIndoe | @DownGoesBrown June 26, 2018, 10:43 AM

After a relatively quiet draft weekend, it feels like we're on the verge of some serious fireworks in the NHL off-season. There are plenty of big names still on the trade block, lots of teams with roster holes to fill, and the free-agency window for teams to talk to players is open.

We're going to see some major headlines over the next few days. But which ones? That's the multimillion-dollar question.

But if history is any indication, we can safely predict that whatever happens, it won't be what you were hoping for. It never is. That's just how the NHL works. So we might as well take some time now to get excited over what could happen, before we're inevitably let down by what actually does.

In that spirit, here are a half-dozen headlines that I'd like to see over the next few days (but almost certainly won't).

1) "John Tavares signs a one-year max deal"

The idea works something like this: Instead of signing a contract for the maximum length (eight years with the Islanders, seven years with anyone else), John Tavares should sign a one-year deal for the maximum dollar value. That would come in just under \$16 million, and would make Tavares the highest-paid player in the history of the league in terms of full-season cap hit.

This one is hardly a new concept. In fact, in recent weeks it's bubbled up from the fringes of hockey thinking to become a fairly regular talking point in Tavares speculation. And let's be honest, at least part of that is because it's a scenario that would favour the big-market Maple Leafs.

But there's another good reason: It kind of makes sense.

That sort of contract would be essentially unheard of in the NHL. We occasionally see short-term deals signed by young RFAs, or by veteran



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UFAs nearing the end of their career. But an established star in his prime? Those guys almost always go for the longest deal they can get.

But look beyond the hockey world, and the idea starts to feel a little more familiar. NBA players have been willing to sign short contracts; LeBron James set the trend of stars signing one-year deals, and he's made a fortune doing it. James seems like a pretty smart guy, so if the tactic is good enough for him, you'd think other athletes might at least want to consider it.

Would it be the right move for Tavares? From a purely financial perspective, sure. He'd almost certainly come out ahead on total dollars in the long run, perhaps significantly so. And he'd have control over his future, with the ability to leave a situation that wasn't working and seek greener pastures elsewhere. That could give him a chance to try out a new home like Toronto, San Jose or Dallas. But it could also mean giving the Islanders one more year to get their act together and sell him on finishing his career there.

There would be downsides. For one, there's the small but non-zero risk of an injury that torpedoed his long-term value. More importantly, it's quite possible that Tavares isn't enjoying his UFA journey, and isn't eager to sign up to do it all over again a year from now. There's something to be said for settling into a sense of permanence, even if it ultimately costs you a few dollars down the line.

But from a fan's perspective, it would be fun to see Tavares blow up some long-held assumptions over how free agency is supposed to work. It feels inevitable that some NHL star will eventually go this route, and when it happens it will scramble our expectations of what an offseason looks like. It might even encourage more players to go to the market, and breathe new life into a UFA process that's been getting dull over the years.

Tavares is in the perfect position to be that guy. He probably won't, and if he chooses security and stability nobody will be able to blame him. But a little bit of short-term thinking would make things very interesting over the next few days.

2) "Somebody signs an offer sheet"

Somebody. Anybody. It doesn't even have to be a major star. Just give us some sort of sign that NHL GMs remember these things exist.

As always, there's no shortage of players who would make sense to target. And as always, the most likely outcome is that we make it through the summer without a single offer sheet being signed. That's because the current system is broken, and the incentives for GMs to be aggressive just aren't there.

Could this year be different? You can't rule it out, and there are a handful of players who could be worth watching. For example, there's Toronto's William Nylander. The Leafs are loaded with young talent that's about to get very expensive, and a rival team might want to make sure that happens as quickly as possible. The Leafs would almost certainly match, but forcing them to shell out more than necessary on the deal could cost the Leafs the final piece of a Stanley Cup puzzle someday down the line. And if the Leafs were to somehow pry Tavares away from the Islanders, Lou Lamoriello would almost have to fire off a retaliatory offer sheet just out of spite, wouldn't he?

Mark Stone is another obvious candidate. With the Senators looking like a tire fire and Eugene Melnyk's notoriously tight budget in play, the winger might just be looking for a ticket out. If you want to get particularly nasty, you could point out that the Avalanche should try to pluck Stone away. Remember, if anyone knows about signing big offer sheets, it's Joe Sakic. And the Avs would end up either weakening the Senators' roster or crippling their budget heading into a year in which Colorado holds Ottawa's first-round pick, increasing their odds of seeing the Matt Duchene trade morph into Jack Hughes.

Speaking of which...

3) "The Ottawa Senators buy insurance"

One of the off-season's early subplots involved that draft pick that the Senators owed the Avalanche. On Friday, Ottawa went ahead and used their own pick to select Brady Tkachuk, which means they'll have to send next year's first to Colorado. That pick won't have any sort of lottery protection on it, meaning it could end up falling in the top three. It was a tough choice, but the Senators ultimately decided to take the risk, and now what's done is done.

Or is it?

While the Avalanche now own the Sens' unprotected pick, there's nothing that says the two teams can't circle back and work out an additional layer to the deal, with Colorado agreeing to put some kind of protection on the pick in exchange for an asset or two right now. The two teams could agree that if the pick ends up being in the top three (or four or five or whatever), Ottawa would keep it and Colorado would get the 2020 pick instead. Essentially, the Senators would be buying insurance against the worst-case scenario of suffering through a miserable season and then winning the lottery with a pick they no longer own.

What would that kind of insurance policy cost? I have no idea. Nobody does, because it would be essentially unprecedented. We know the approximate price to rent a top-six forward at the trade deadline, or to move up a few spots in the first round of the draft, because we've seen plenty of those deals in the past. This would be something new, and it would be fascinating to see where the Senators and Avalanche could settle on a fair return.

One thing we do know: It wouldn't be cheap. If it were, there'd be no reason for the Avalanche to even consider it. From the Senators' perspective, this is the equivalent to buying car insurance after you've already been in an accident, but before you know just how bad the damage might be. It won't come at a discount. Sakic would hold all the leverage here, and he'd no doubt want to use it to extract as much as he could.

Maybe that means it wouldn't be worth it, and it's better for Pierre Dorion to just accept the risk and let the chips fall where they may rather than deal from a position of weakness. But if he's feeling creative – or desperate – it might be worth a phone call or two to find out what Sakic would want. And if so, it would give the rest of us a new category of trade to debate.

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4) "The free-agent market for depth goes cold"

It happens every year. We get to July 1, there are a handful of impact players available, and just about everyone else falls into the category of depth pieces. They're good players, the kind that can help a team, but they're not exactly make-or-break additions.

And yet, NHL teams rush to throw money and term at them. Inevitably, many of those deals end up being the worst signings of the summer. Within a year or two, the players are buyout candidates, or being shopped as a salary dump. All because some GM decided they absolutely had to ice a third line that featured David Clarkson or Matt Beleskey or Dave Bolland or Ville Leino or whoever.

It never makes sense. If you have a shot at an elite talent like Tavares, then sure, you pay what you need to pay and sort out the cap implications later. But when you're filling out your middle six or your third pairing, spending big money on a long-term commitment seems like a path to disaster. And it almost always works out that way.

But maybe this is the year that we see the market for depth go cold. It's been trending that way over recent years, albeit slowly. But this year, something happened that should make every GM stop and think: The Vegas Golden Knights.

We all assumed the Knights would be terrible, and they nearly won the Stanley Cup. How did they do it? Coaching, goaltending and a little bit of luck were part of the equation, as they always are for good teams. But



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what set the Knights apart was guys like William Karlsson. He was viewed as a fringe NHLer in Columbus, but turned into a 40-goal scorer when given an opportunity to move up the lineup in Vegas. He was the extreme case, and almost certainly an outlier, but the Knights had plenty of other players who exceeded expectations once they were given a chance.

If you're an NHL GM, you have to wonder if you have any players on your roster who could do the same. You probably don't, at least not at the Karlsson level. But wouldn't it be worth trying to find out, rather than spending millions to plug a hole with an expensive veteran contract you'll almost immediately regret? Why not leave a few key lineup spots open heading into the season, and see if anybody shows you something you weren't expecting?

Every single NHL team should see Vegas' success and think, "hey, maybe we should give that buried player who we insert in the lineup every fourth game for 10 mins a better opportunity? Maybe he can do more with a legit chance?"

— Justin Bourne (@jtbourne) April 18, 2018

If worse comes to worst and you get to the end of October without anybody stepping up, there should be plenty of useful veteran free agents still looking for a contract. And by that point, those guys won't cost you top dollar anymore.

Maybe you don't end up getting your first choice, or that guy your coach had 10 years ago and absolutely loves. But you also don't get an albatross to hang on your cap situation. And as the Knights showed, there's at least a chance that somebody you never suspected ends up surprising you.

5) "The Golden Knights sign everyone"

Whether you loved them or hated them or fell somewhere in between, there wasn't a more interesting story from last season than the Knights' run to the Cup final. So let's keep the party going. Let's have the Knights spend the summer signing just about every star player on the market.

They have the cap room, especially if they let some of their own UFAs walk. Right now, Vegas has about \$30 million to spend, which could be enough to lock down four or five top free agents, and maybe more. So let's do this, George McPhee.

Granted, we're already off to a bad start on this one, since the Knights missed out on Ilya Kovalchuk and are reportedly not one of the five teams invited to the first wave of Tavares pitches. But even with that early stumble, the Knights could still emerge as the off-season's top destination. The city is all sorts of fun, the state has no taxes, and the team went to the final last year. They check every box that a typical UFA is looking for.

So let's get crazy. Have the team call a press conference for noon on July 1. Do it up with the usual Vegas trappings – laser shows, rock concerts, the whole bit. Have the knight come out and fight a sad-looking fan from a traditional market muttering about doing things the right way. Then have them unveil Rick Nash, Paul Stastny, Jack Johnson, Mike Green and James van Riemsdyk. Have them each wear a different colour, then form into a super-UFA like Voltron.

Each week, Jeff Blair and Stephen Brunt tackle the most impactful stories in the world of sports and their intersection with popular culture. Come for the sports; stay for the storytelling and cigars.

Does this directly contradict the last point about promoting from within instead of throwing money at free agents? Sure. But it would be fun, for two reasons. First, the NHL has never really had a super-team during the cap era, and that concept sure seems to be working OK for the NBA. Watching a team put together an all-star roster in an all-out attempt to buy a championship would be fascinating.

But you know what would be even more fun? Watching that super-team fail. Find an old-time hockey fan and ask them about the year the Red Wings went crazy at the trade deadline, or the time the Avalanche signed

Paul Kariya and Teemu Selanne on the same day. Both of those teams face-planted with their new acquisitions, and it was great. The Knights would probably do it, too. After all, everybody seems to already think that they'll regress next year, and maybe even miss the playoffs altogether. And when has the entire hockey world ever been wrong about the Vegas Golden Knights?

So do it, Vegas. Give us all something to hate. Sign every big-name UFA you can find.

Well, except for one...

6) "The Maple Leafs sign Joe Thornton"

Allow me to close with one blatant homer pick. I want to see Thornton come to Toronto.

There's virtually no chance of it happening. Thornton seems to want to stay in San Jose, and why wouldn't he? He's been there for over a decade, and it's hard to imagine a better place to play hockey for a living. And if for some reason the Sharks didn't bring him back, he presumably wouldn't be looking to pack up and move all the way across the continent to find a new team. It's not happening.

But it would be great if it did.

For one thing, the Leafs need a centre. And they'll have plenty of cap room for the kind of one-year deal a veteran like Thornton would presumably be looking for. He could even reunite with old pal Patrick Marleau. Sure, you'd have to mend some fences with Nazem Kadri, but if Michael Peca can forgive Darcy Tucker then there's hope.

Would pairing the player who can never win the Cup with the franchise that can never win the Cup be a good idea? Well... maybe, right? It would be like a double negative. It's like your parents always used to say: Two wrongs make a right. I'm pretty sure that's what they said.

But even if the move didn't help the Leafs win, it would at least make them more fun to watch. Imagine Thornton strolling shirtless down the street, only this time with hundreds of screeching Leaf fans chasing after him like he's Justin Bieber. And really, what better way to celebrate the end of the Lou Lamoriello era than by bringing in the league's most famous beard?

Also, it would mean that Kyle Dubas could still get some use out of the "JT + TML 4EVER" chest tattoo that he got for the Tavares presentation. So there's that.

I don't ask for much, Maple Leafs. For once, let's make your fans happy on UFA day.

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Sportsnet.ca / The roundabout, risky way John Tavares could get nine years

Rory Boylen June 26, 2018

The John Tavares sweepstakes are in full-swing, with reporters standing outside the CAA offices documenting the arrivals of team executives and hoping for a post-meeting thought when they depart.

Good luck with that.

Although Tavares is meeting with five teams, and expected to talk with others over the phone, the prevailing opinion is that he'll re-sign with the Islanders. Lou Lamoriello and Co., don't have a ton of leverage over the



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likes of Toronto, Tampa Bay or San Jose — teams already built to win now — but they do have a leg up on the competition in one regard.

The Islanders are the only team that can offer Tavares an eight-year contract — everyone else is capped out at seven. There have been some wondering whether or not Tavares could be attracted to sign a one-year max-cap deal of \$15.9 million, but that on its own comes with security and injury risks that the player may not want.

"There's so much danger in hockey, everybody gets injured more or less," Sportsnet's Chris Johnston said Monday on the FAN 590's Good Show. "There's so few players that don't have things happen via concussions, they get hit in the face with a puck. There are all kind of fluky ways you could see your career end, so it's hard to give up the security of a seven- or eight-year offer from a team even if you think you might make more down the road.

"I think the one-year deal is too much risk for where he's at in his career and the kind of money that's on the table."

Others are wondering if there is a CBA loophole teams can take advantage of here. If you have a player currently on your roster whose contract expires July 1, 2019, they can be signed to an extension as early as this July 1. Using Toronto as an example, Auston Matthews becomes an RFA next July 1, but could sign an extension on Sunday.

So by signing Tavares to a one-year deal, could a team hypothetically then re-sign him to an eight-year extension on the same day, thus effectively negotiating a nine-year contract?

Article 50.5 of the CBA goes over payroll and Standard Player Contract (SPC) rules and states:

"A Player who is party to a one-year SPC may not enter into an "extension" of such SPC prior to January 1 of the League Year covered by such SPC."

So no, there isn't a loophole in there. If Tavares did sign a one-year contract he wouldn't be eligible to extend that until Jan. 1.

And, in fact, he wouldn't even be able to sign an eight-year extension with the Leafs, or any other non-Islanders team, until after the trade deadline. Further down Article 50.5 is this explanation as to who can sign a player for eight years:

The following practices also shall not be permitted under this Agreement and may not be included in any SPC, nor otherwise agreed to by any Club, any person or any entity:

(iv) An SPC with a term of greater than seven (7) years, provided, however, that a Club may sign a Player to an SPC with a term of up to eight (8) years if that Player was on such Club's Reserve List as of and since the most recent Trade Deadline.

So because Tavares would have been on no team's reserve list at a trade deadline other than New York's last year, he couldn't even lock in to an eight-year deal following a hypothetical one-year contract until late-February or early-March.

That's a ton of risk for a player who is set to earn upwards of \$88 million guaranteed.

Still, there is an interesting scenario to consider here. Would the Leafs, or some other team, be able to lure Tavares to town for the max cap hit one-year deal and then sign him to an eight-year extension after the deadline for a salary cap hit more in line with what the team could fit in coming years? By combining the one max year with eight years of solid earning, Tavares could in the end make more than he would by signing a seven-year deal on July 1, or an eight-year deal with the Islanders prior to July 1.

It would be a perfectly legal move to make, provided the terms weren't agreed to as part of the one-year commitment. If a team did pull this move, though, surely competing teams and the league would want to look into it.

There is no way this should be considered the most likely — or even a likely — scenario as Tavares probably will follow a similar route other big-money UFAs have in the recent past and sign for the long term. A one-year deal on its own is so undesirable because the player would have to take on so much risk to their future earnings, while turning down a pile of guaranteed money.

To land what would effectively be a nine-year deal, Tavares would have to take on the risk of a one-year contract on his own for five months of hockey and couldn't negotiate further security until at least Jan. 1. To max out the earning he'd have to wait even longer for an extension, and if he became injured in the meantime, the whole thing could fall apart.

Nothing about a one-year contract comes with any guarantee.

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Sportsnet.ca / Hlinka Gretzky Cup a chance for players to open eyes on big stage

Mark Spector June 26, 2018, 7:07 PM

EDMONTON — Kevin Lowe was dialing back through his memories of the Ivan Hlinka tournament — rebranded as the Hlinka Gretzky Cup and being played outside Europe for the first time this summer, Aug. 6-11 at Rogers Place in Edmonton.

"I believe it was 2011," Lowe began. "A young, undersized guy was playing for the Americans, and I really thought this guy was one of the most exciting guys to watch. He was off the radar, and I thought, 'How does this translate? He is amazing in this tournament, but can he play in the NHL?'"

Who was the player?

"His name was Johnny Gaudreau."

Ryan Dixon and Rory Boylen go deep on pucks with a mix of facts and fun, leaning on a varied group of hockey voices to give their take on the country's most beloved game.

And so goes what has become, outside the World Cup or a return by the NHL to the Olympic Games, the highest level of best-on-best competition left in the hockey world. This is an under-18 tournament filled with the best 17-year-olds in the world — with no one lost to the NHL, like at the World Juniors. These are the eight best hockey nations on earth with rosters packed full of young men entering their draft year.

"It's a tournament that really gets you ready for the season. It's where you put yourself on the radar, with your draft year upcoming," said Evan Bouchard, the Oilers' No. 10 overall draft pick. "All the GMs are here, and it is really where they see you play first. It's where you put yourself on the radar in the end."

On the radar for the NHL Draft, and for this winter's World Juniors.

"That's the next step for me," smiled Bouchard. "It would be really fun."

At this past weekend's NHL Draft in Dallas, 19 of 31 first-round draft picks played in this tournament, and seven of the Top 10. Overall, 77 Hlinka grads were chosen, or more than two rounds worth of players.

The rebranding and relocation (every second year) of the Gretzky Hlinka is a Bob Nicholson production. The former head of Hockey Canada moved to the Oilers, and had the contacts necessary to secure a tournament around which a summertime hockey festival can be held.



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Ticket prices start at \$20 and organizers will curtain the arena the way they do for the Western Hockey League's Edmonton Oil Kings. They'll sprinkle some pre-tournament games around Central Alberta and place the Pool that does not include Canada in Red Deer.

Then they'll come together for the semifinals and finals in Edmonton on Friday and Saturday night, and there you have it: the world's most elite tournament for draft-eligible players, all packed inside a six-day summer window.

"It's a phenomenal tournament. If you watch the World Juniors, it's so close to it. It's just younger kids playing," said Kailer Yamamoto, Edmonton's first-round draft pick a year ago, who played elite hockey all the way up through USA Hockey's ranks.

"It's a huge mental step," the Spokane, Wash., native said. "Seeing that you're playing against the world's best players, it's really eye-opening knowing that you're right there with them. It's the same feeling going to World Juniors and playing against those kids."

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That kind of confidence breeds a player who, by the time he turns 20 on Sept. 29, hopes to have proven he is the man for the open spot on Leon Draisaitl's right wing this season in Edmonton.

Yamamoto's junior career is over. Is he ready for the NHL?

"I really am," said Yamamoto, who is still small at five-foot-eight but appears more muscular than he was 12 months ago. "I am taking this summer very seriously, trying to get bigger, stronger, and more mentally focused. I really want to make this team this year."

A year ago Yamamoto got in the requisite nine games off the start of the Oilers season. But much like his teammates, he couldn't bridge that fine line between getting chances and production, returning to the Spokane Chiefs with a bunch of fond memories but only three assists.

"When I came here I was a little starstruck," he admits. "Playing against (Sidney) Crosby for the first time, my childhood hero, I think I gripped my stick a little too tightly. Now that I've played nine game, have been around the guys a lot more, I feel more comfortable."

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1100788 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Seven notable unqualified RFAs who are now UFA-eligible

Rory Boylen | June 26, 2018, 2:01 PM

July 1 is always a busy day on the NHL schedule when unrestricted free agency opens and teams scramble to add to their rosters. Even with Ilya Kovalchuk and John Carlson off the market, the biggest fish, John Tavares, is out there and meeting with prospective buyers as we speak. If you're looking for a scoring winger James' van Riemsdyk and Neal might tickle your fancy.

After Monday's 5:00 p.m. ET deadline to qualify RFAs, there are some late additions to the UFA pool. Teams had the option to qualify their younger and controllable FAs, but if they decided they either wanted to move on from the player or not pay the price of a new deal, a player could be left unqualified which makes them a free agent. Some of these players are still negotiating with their 2017-18 team and could end up staying put.

None of them will be hosting interested parties in fancy Los Angeles offices, or likely to come away from this summer with long-term, big-

money contracts, but there could be value to mine here. Here, we take a look at seven of the most noteworthy players who were left unqualified Monday and will now be UFAs this summer.

Robin Lehner, G

A number of teams are looking for a goalie to fill various roles for next season: Edmonton could use an experienced backup to push Cam Talbot, the Hurricanes could use the same for Scott Darling and the NY Islanders need a starter. The Sabres decided that Lehner wasn't working for them, but there will be another team willing to take a shot on him.

"We've made a decision on Robin Lehner. It was a difficult decision. Robin is not coming back next year. We felt we had to make some adjustments." pic.twitter.com/xJ0EmG0h8q

— Buffalo Sabres (@BuffaloSabres) June 22, 2018

Lehner is one year removed from a .920 save percentage season, and in 2015-16 — his first with the Sabres — he had a .924 SP in 21 games. Although he struggled in 2017-18, Lehner has the 20th-best save percentage in the league the past three years, in the same ballpark as Tuukka Rask, Mike Smith and Henrik Lundqvist. He's faced a pile of shots over that time, too, backstopping a team that's best finish was seventh in the Atlantic Division.

He's only 26 years old and shouldn't cost an arm and a leg to acquire. Consider that Carter Hutton is six years older and played 30 or more games in a season just once in the past four years, and that Cam Ward, Jaroslav Halak and Kari Lehtonen have their own performance and age issues. You have to wonder if Lehner is now the best goalie available on the UFA market.

Anthony Duclair, LW

Still just 22 years old, Duclair hasn't been able to produce at the 20-goal level he reached in 2015-16, nothing a total of 16 goals combined the past two seasons, but that's just what makes him a low-risk, potentially high-reward gamble for some team's third line. He did score nine times in 33 games with Arizona this season before he was traded to Chicago in January and cooled. His shooting percentage returned to a level closer to his career average in the first half, but came crashing down in the second.

Duclair can skate, he is still very young and made just \$1.2 million last season, but there is still 20-goal upside in the player. The best teams have already locked in big money on their best players and the key for them in filling out their bottom-six or finding complementary performers to their aces is to find bargains. Duclair falls into that category. His disappointing 2016-17 could be more of an outlier than it appears right now.

Anthony Duclair has not received a qualifying offer yet with 45 minutes until deadline. Too bad, not many players improve their game score percentile ranking from 20 to 61. On the flip side, his on-ice shot share stats dropped off badly this year. #Hawks #FreeAgency2018 pic.twitter.com/th0tOXIVvm

— Bill Comeau (@billius27) June 25, 2018

Derrick Pouliot, D

Just 24 years old, it's easy to forget Pouliot was the eighth overall pick of the 2012 NHL Draft, ahead of such players as Jacob Trouba and Filip Forsberg. He doesn't have that upside anymore, but could be worth a look as a bottom-pair or depth option still. Pouliot's 22 points were the second-most on Vancouver's blue line last season with a 17:51 per game ice time average that ranked seventh. He logged a good amount of minutes on the power play — second-most among Vancouver's defenders — so any team looking for a left-shot defenceman who brings offence to his game could find value in picking up a player with this pedigree.

Dylan DeMelo, D



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The Sharks shaved off a little more cap space by leaving DeMelo unqualified, and the 25-year-old is another player a team could find value in for a third-pair option. DeMelo doesn't come with the offensive upside of Pouliot and didn't score a goal in 63 games, but he played reliable depth minutes for San Jose. DeMelo's value comes at the defensive end and he was the Sharks' third-most used defender on the penalty kill behind Marc-Edouard Vlasic and Justin Braun. He's a right shot, too, which a lot of teams are looking for this time of year.

The fact a lot of people are ignoring regarding Dylan DeMelo not being qualified is that the #SJSharks already have six defenseman on 1-way contracts, including Tim Heed. If they're eyeing a particular UFA defenseman, lacking guaranteed NHL ice time is not a selling point!

— Kevin Lacy (@KevinLacy22) June 26, 2018

Tobias Rieder, LW

The Kings picked up Rieder to try and add a little speed and maybe a few goals further down the lineup, but his \$2.25 million price tag was just too much for the cap-strapped team to qualify. Rieder isn't a top-six player, but could come in around 16 goals and with a little shooting percentage luck, maybe even hit the 20-goal mark. If you're looking for a bargain winger who brings speed and that kind of goal upside, you could do worse than take a shot on Rieder.

Petr Mrazek, G

No one is going to want to sign Mrazek as their No. 1 goalie and no one was willing to pay him the hefty \$4 million he was due on his own deal — but there could be interest in taking a swing on him as a backup with a decreased cap hit. Now 26 years old, Mrazek is just two years removed from a .921 save percentage with the Red Wings when he was on the verge of taking the top job from Jimmy Howard. Mrazek was seen as a potential stud on the rise — but since then the bottom has fallen out of his game. He was left exposed to Vegas at last year's expansion draft, but they passed, and the Wings were finally able to find a taker for him when they sent him to Philadelphia for two conditional picks in February. Mrazek finished with a save percentage below .900 with the Flyers. At this point it seems a long shot he'll ever be an NHL No. 1, but in the right situation under the right goalie coach, there could still be talent to mine here.

For the record: Huge fan of Andrew Allen's work as the Sabres goalie coach.

— Joe Yerdon (@JoeYerdon) June 25, 2018

Daniel Carr, LW

This 26-year-old left winger was about a point-per-game player in 20 AHL games and in 38 NHL games with Montreal he had the fourth-best 5-on-5 points per 60 minutes played rate. The knock on Carr is his foot speed, which isn't ideal in today's game, but he is a feisty player who can create chances and forechecks well. Again, with a low cost there could be some even strength offensive upside to find on the cheap here.

Daniel Carr is an instinctive offensive player, has a real knack for being at the right place at the right time, like just as a rebound pops free. His lack of foot speed at his size appeared to always hold him back with Montreal though.

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1100789 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Why Maple Leafs prospect Eemeli Rasanen is off to the KHL

Luke Fox | June 26, 2018, 1:34 PM

TORONTO – For six months, Eemeli Rasanen has known he would be leaving the Ontario Hockey League in search of tougher competition.

"I need harder games than junior," the towering Toronto Maple Leafs prospect said Tuesday at development camp.

"That's what I decided after Christmas. I want to go pro. I didn't know then where I wanted to go, but then I decided the KHL must be the best for me."

After two years patrolling the Kingston Frontenacs' blue line, the Finnish-born Rasanen is jetting back across the Atlantic for the next stage of his development, inking a two-year pact with Helsinki-based Jokerit.

What lured Rasanen back home is head coach Lauri Marjamaki. Jokerit's decorated new bench boss most recently guided the national team at the world championships and has rapidly gained a reputation for molding Finnish prospects into NHLers.

Marjamaki had a hand in the development of Edmonton's Jesse Puljujarvi, Carolina's Sebastian Aho and Nashville's Eeli Tolvanen. Rasanen picked his peers' brains before making his decision.

"I've heard only good things about him and feel he likes younger players," Rasanen said. "It's a great opportunity for me."

The move also buys the Maple Leafs time as they decide whether to sign their 2017 second-round pick to an entry-level deal.

"He'll need to continue working on his development there, and we'll be there to support him in his individual process," said Leafs director of player development Scott Pellerin.

#Leafs 2017 2nd RD pick Eemeli Räsänen signs a 2 year in the KHL.

Räsänen was drafted out of the OHL, which gave the club until June 1, 2019 to sign him. However, if Toronto's given him a Bona Fide offer in the last calendar year, today's news extends that window to June 1, 2021 <https://t.co/kwNQB7zJYv>

— CapFriendly (@CapFriendly) May 25, 2018

For a 19-year-old, Rasanen already possesses a decidedly adult build (six-foot-seven, 226 pounds) and a mean streak.

Although his production (five goals, 33 points in 61 games) as a sophomore in Kingston nearly mirrored his rookie numbers (39 points in 66 games), Rasanen pumped his plus/minus from a dash-7 to a plus-16.

Given top-pair, shutdown minutes from the beginning of the season, his defensive game improved and he simply felt more comfortable in Canada.

"I was top-one or top-two D-man. That was a position, honestly, I've never been before," Rasanen said. "I was always under that."

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The rugged defenceman's primary intent this summer is to increase his speed. No more skipping leg day.

Once the Frontenacs were eliminated from the playoffs this spring, Rasanen was invited to practice with the AHL Marlies during their run to the Calder Cup championship.

Running drills alongside the Marlies opened the teenager's eyes to the quality of play and devotion to fitness necessary at the pro level.

"I was happy I decided to go there and not go right home after the season," Rasanen said. "That experience was great, for sure."

The biggest takeaway from those practices, both for Rasanen and Leafs fans?

"I don't think I'm really far from there," he smiled.



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Sportsnet.ca / Why you shouldn't expect Bettman to slow down anytime soon

John Shannon | February 1, 2018, 2:39 PM

This column was originally written on Feb. 1, 2018. Gary Bettman was elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame as a builder on June 26, 2018.

It is well known that over the past 25 years the NHL has grown from a \$400 million enterprise to one in excess of \$4 billion. Over that same time, it has grown from 24 teams to 31, with a potential 32nd franchise on the horizon.

Stability in professional sports can mean many different things. Through the introduction of the salary cap, limits on player contracts (both for term and maximum dollars) and revenue sharing, many would say the NHL has never been more stable. Wealthy clubs still drive revenue, while the gap between them and the less profitable ones isn't as large as it once was. The man responsible for all these changes over the past quarter century is the one in the NHL commissioner's chair: Gary Bruce Bettman.

As he enters his 26th season as the NHL's leader, Bettman has never enjoyed more authority at the executive and board level. Some of the challenges facing Bettman and his team of senior executives today are the similar to other ones he has presented with earlier in his tenure. Today, Bettman takes them on with a great deal of experience under his belt, with the confidence to manage the league's corporate partners, even through lockouts, opting out of the 2018 Olympics and some continued franchise instability.

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It should be noted that since the departure of league COO John Collins in 2014, Bettman has restructured the organization to create more direct reports to himself, thereby giving him a more direct day-to-day feel for the various business units within the NHL's New York City offices. When Collins left the NHL, there were those who felt that his vision for the future of the game would leave with him. That has not been the case. Many feel Bettman has become even more informed about the day-to-day management of the league, and made it a much more nimble operation in this digital age.

Bettman also continues to grow the game at his own pace. Whether it be the Las Vegas experiment, which has worked very well, or sojourns into Europe and Asia, Bettman makes the final decision when it comes to what is good for the NHL and what isn't. He will tell you that he is just carrying out the will of the NHL board of governors, but there is such trust and confidence in Bettman and his leadership group, that board approval merely reflects the long range plan that Bettman has devised.

Over the next few years, Bettman will be presented with a few challenges if he is going to continue to grow the game. They should be enough to keep him engaged well into the next decade:

Expansion

With Seattle having the inside track, and new fees increasing to \$650 million, Bettman will add yet another geographic notch on his belt: the U.S. Pacific Northwest. A Seattle team will create more rivalries for West Coast teams, and add a Top 15 U.S. television market to the league's footprint.

Franchise stability

Gary's total and undying loyalty to Arizona is admirable, yet baffling. The location of the arena remains a key point in why this franchise has yet to succeed. Add in a lack of playoff appearances, and the current overall poor performance of the team, and you have to wonder if this franchise will ever succeed. But Bettman has always been a believer. However, you have to wonder if the financial drain the Coyotes have been (both from a revenue sharing perspective and an overall debt service perspective) will finally push the commissioner into the camp of those who have said enough is enough, and move the team.

Bettman has always been reluctant to relocate teams, but when there are markets potentially wanting into the club — markets that could generate positive revenue — you have to wonder if that time is near. The Carolina situation seems to have resolved itself with new owner Thomas Dundun, at least for now. Is Florida still a hot spot? Panthers ownership says no, but empty seats give another impression. Managing this issue and finding willing participants to purchase teams has always been Bettman's strength. This is not the time to doubt whether he can manage any crisis that he and the league has to face.

New arenas in Calgary and Ottawa

Bettman has always been of great assistance to owners in bridging the gap with local politicians. All you have to do is look at Edmonton to remember the vital role he played as a conduit between the Mayor of Edmonton and Darryl Katz in order to get Rogers Place built. And while there is certainly progress in Ottawa between the city, the National Capital Commission and Eugene Melnyk and his partners in the development of LeBreton Flats the same can not be said in Calgary.

Friction between the city, the mayor and the Flames remain. Tension between the mayor and Bettman is also palpable. There's no disagreement over the need for a new arena. The debate is over how it will be financed. The situation is ugly and will take considerable negotiations and mediation. But right now the sides aren't even talking.

Naheed Nenshi celebrates his victory as Calgary's mayor following municipal elections in Calgary, Alta., early Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017. (Jeff McIntosh/CP)

Naheed Nenshi celebrates his victory as Calgary's mayor following municipal elections Oct. 17, 2017. (Jeff McIntosh/CP)

The next collective bargaining agreement (CBA)

The current CBA is much closer to its conclusion than anyone wants to admit. The agreement is set to expire on Sept. 15, 2022. However, both the NHL and the NHLPA have the right to terminate it on midnight Sept. 15, 2020. The NHL has another option to terminate it on or before September 1, 2019. If NHL has not already done so, the NHLPA may exercise its option to terminate the deal on or before September 15, 2019. Quite frankly, that's not that far away.

Is the current CBA working? For the owners, yes. For the players? For some, yes. The NHL has always rebounded well from postponed and cancelled seasons. One would hope that Bettman won't have to lock-out players again, and the players don't consider a strike. The issues? The same as always: Escrow, contract term limits, revenue sharing and international competition.

The next U.S. television contract

NBC's current 10-year deal expires in 2021, so unless an extension signed, Bettman will take the rights to the open market. NBC has been a very good partner at \$200 million per year, a number that looked good when the contract was signed, but the landscape has changed. Television rights fees in other sports have exploded. The digital landscape with Amazon, Netflix and Facebook has opened many peoples' eyes to the possibility of a larger, more lucrative window for hockey on television. Do you stay with the incumbent? Do you hope that Fox/ESPN (who now own regional properties following the Fox purchase) come back to hockey in a big way, or is there someone else out there worth exploring?



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The Olympics

Days away from the start of the 2018 games, there has been much less clamour over the absence of NHL players than even Bettman's most ardent critics would have anticipated. But what about Beijing in 2022? Can the NHL pass up a chance to participate in Games in the world's largest consumer market? And while most of us have surmised that NHLers participating in Beijing is a given, the guarantees the NHL are asking of the Chinese, the IIHF and the IOC will be no different four years from now. He will not compromise what his 31 member clubs require in order to participate. Appearing on the world's biggest stage is great, but not at any cost. It's important not to compromise what every team needs to maximize revenue for 41 home dates.

Canada

While still not the most popular person in our country, Bettman has certainly endeared himself to his Canadian owners, the Canadian corporate community, and even government. Bettman has been good for Canada, with the U.S. currency assistance program in the 1990s, the return of the Jets to Winnipeg. He understands our passion for the game and the importance of strong Canadian franchises to ensure the overall health of the league.

Over the past 25 years, Bettman has had his contract renewed at least three times. It has always come with little or no fanfare, let alone a press release or some sort of announcement. When pressed on it, he downplays the extensions and the money, saying it's not worthy of public discussion.

At 25 years Bettman is closing in on Frank Calder (26 years as the NHL's first president) and he is just six years shy of matching Clarence Campbell, who headed the league from 1946 to 1977, in longevity. His quarter-century reign is also within a field goal of Pete Rozelle's time as NFL commissioner (29 years) and a jump shot short of David Stern's 30-year tenure running the NBA.

Could he surpass Rozelle, Stern and Campbell? Absolutely.

Will he become the longest running commissioner in pro sports? Without a doubt and when he does it will be with little or no fanfare.

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TSN.CA / The two Marty's enter Hockey Hall of Fame together

Frank Seravalli

One man handled the puck so deftly as a goaltender that the NHL created a rule to curb his skill.

The other refused to be curbed because of his vertical challenge, proving wrong naysayers who doubted a 5-foot-9 undrafted player could make in the NHL.

The two Marty's – Martin Brodeur and Martin St. Louis – will enter the Hockey Hall of Fame together as first-ballot inductees this fall. They were elected on Tuesday alongside Russian star Alexander Yakushev and women's hockey star Jayna Hefford, as well as Willie O'Ree and Gary Bettman in the builder category.

The Class of 2018 will be enshrined at the Hall of Fame on Nov. 12 in Toronto.

All six received at least 13 of the 17 'yes' votes required for entry, with one fewer voter casting ballots than normal after the passing of selection committee member Bill Torrey.

There was little Brodeur, three-time Stanley Cup champion and owner of 12 individual NHL records including most wins in league history (691), would be inducted on the first try.

"It was exciting," said Brodeur, who was sitting next to Hall of Famer Larry Robinson at the St. Louis Blues prospect camp when he got the call. "Even though there's a lot of talk, until you get the phone call from the proper people, it's something you always think: 'What's going to happen? How's it going to happen?'"

Brodeur, now 46, said he stepped away to "soak it in" when his phone rang with a Toronto area code – knowing Hall of Fame chairman Lanny MacDonald would be on the other line.

The NHL literally re-wrote the rule book, adding the trapezoid behind the net to limit goaltender's ability to play the puck, because Brodeur was so strong in breaking up forechecks and aiding his team on the breakout. He captured the Calder Trophy as rookie of the year in 1993-94, took home four Vezina Trophies in five seasons (2003-08) and his Devils teams allowed the fewest goals against in the league in five campaigns. He spent all but seven of his 1,266 regular-season games in a New Jersey uniform, save for a short run as a 42-year-old with the Blues, where he remains as an assistant GM.

St. Louis, now 43, was not as much of a first-ballot slam dunk as Brodeur, but his Hart and Ted Lindsay trophies separated him from the pack. Only three of the 52 eligible Hart Trophy winners have not been selected to the Hall (Jose Theodore, Al Rollins and Tommy Anderson).

"It was not a sprint to get in," St. Louis said. "I'm glad that I'm in. For me to join the great players that are in now is unbelievable."

It is almost as unbelievable as St. Louis' career itself. After a four-year career at the Univ. of Vermont, the undersized St. Louis waffled between the NHL and AHL/IHL for three seasons before the Calgary Flames let him walk in 2000. He was passed over in the NHL Expansion Draft that summer, then latched on with the Tampa Bay Lightning.

He only went on to become the first-ever Lightning player to have his number retired.

That's because St. Louis led Tampa Bay to the franchise's only Stanley Cup when he paced the Bolts and the league in scoring in 2004. He later won a second Art Ross trophy in 2013 when he became the oldest player ever to win it at age 37. He went out on a high note with 52 points in his final NHL season. St. Louis racked up 1,033 points over 1,134 games, was named the most gentlemanly player as Lady Byng winner three times, and paved the path for small players to star in today's game.

"When people tried to discourage me along the way, that's just life," St. Louis said. "I definitely used that as motivation in trying to prove people wrong."

O'Ree, now 82, proved an entire sport wrong when he became the first player to break the NHL's colour barrier in 1958. A total loss of vision in his right eye hampered his playing career, leaving him to just 45 NHL games played, but he joined the league in 1996 as ambassador for the Hockey is for Everyone program.

Since then, he has logged more than one million miles on the road, literally building the game by reaching 100,000 young people to open their eyes to the possibility of playing hockey.

O'Ree said he was "pacing" the halls of his house on Tuesday waiting for word, wondering whether this would be the moment 60 years in the making. His has been an incredible life dedicated to the NHL, one long overdue of hockey's ultimate honour.

"Congratulations Mr. O'Ree," Flyers forward Wayne Simmonds tweeted. "Finally in your rightful place."

Hefford, now 41, is also in her rightful place after helping Team Canada to four Olympic gold medals and seven IIHF World Championships. The Canadian Women's Hockey League named their most outstanding player award the Jayna Hefford Trophy in her honour.



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"I have chills and am very proud," Hefford said. "I am happy for this incredible honour and especially want to share it with my family."

Yakushev, now 71, actually wasn't able to be tracked down at the time of Tuesday's election because he was playing pick-up hockey in his native Russia. He is best known here for starring for the Soviets in the 1972 Summit Series, with only Phil Esposito's 13 points topping Yakushev's 11. He often lived in the shadow of teammate Valeri Kharlamov on the international stage but was a bona fide star in his own right as the Soviet league's scoring champion, later coach of the Soviet national team and became a referee at major international events.

Bettman will enter the Hall with mixed reviews. His contributions to the game are innumerable. During his 25-year run as commissioner, the NHL has grown from 24 teams to 31 and increased revenue from \$400 million to \$4.5 billion. Hockey barely had a pulse in the United States when he took over in 1993.

But Bettman has also presided over three work stoppages and a fourth may soon be on the way. Now 66, Bettman is under contract through the 2021-22 season. The former NBA executive who has been ostracized by traditionalists as "not a true hockey man" will now be enshrined in hockey's hallowed Hall forever. That caught even him by surprise.

"When I received the call from Lanny and John Davidson, I was literally speechless," Bettman said. "I really wasn't focused on whether this was happening now, I was really focused on whether Willie O'Ree was going to be selected because that to me was a very important act for the Hall to take. I'm delighted Willie is going to be going in and I'm going to be going in with him."

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TSN.CA / Just how good is Justin Faulk?

Travis Yost

I'm not sure you would call it a blockbuster of a deal, but the Hurricanes and Flames did engineer the biggest deal on draft weekend.

The five-player trade saw Dougie Hamilton, Michael Ferland, and Adam Fox to Carolina in exchange for Elias Lindholm and Noah Hanifin. There's little doubt that the Flames gave up the best player in the trade in Hamilton – he's the type of blueliner that can soak up huge minutes for any team and should move to the top-pairing immediately in Carolina. The Flames, meanwhile, are hoping that Lindholm (entering his fifth year) and Hanifin (entering his fourth year) can take another developmental jump in 2018-19.

What's fascinating to me though is how a deal like this can actually facilitate further transactions down the road.

Consider Carolina's position here. Hamilton is a top-pairing guy and another right-shot defender – one of four on Carolina's roster. And their top four – between the aforementioned Hamilton, Jacob Slavin, Justin Faulk, and Brett Pesce – are soaking up nearly a quarter of the expected \$79.5 million cap next season. There's no doubt that Carolina's roster strength is on the back end, but that's a lot of money for four guys. Doubly so when you remember that unless one of these guys plays on their off side, you are going to have a situation where a \$4 million to \$5 million defenceman is playing third-pairing minutes.

So you can see how the Hamilton trade may reverberate further down the lineup. One of these guys is probably going to get pushed out and the general sense is that if someone goes, it's probably Faulk. He's unlikely to play ahead of Hamilton, could have some of his minutes absorbed by

Pesce and has a no-trade clause that kicks in on July 1. That means Carolina has a little under a week to unconditionally shop him around the league. On our Trade Bait board, he currently holds the No. 5 slot.

As tends to be the case with most Carolina skaters, it can be difficult getting a feel for how impactful Faulk has been because the goal differential numbers are so ugly. The Hurricanes have had abysmal goaltending for years now. Their save percentage over the last three seasons is around 91.1 per cent at 5-on-5 and 89.9 per cent in all situations. Both are dead last. If you were a player playing big minutes over those years, like Faulk was, there's a great chance your "plus-minus" or any goal-based measure is going to look horrific.

And make no mistake, they do. At 5-on-5, Faulk is 67 goals in the red. His 44 per cent goal percentage is the second-worst of any regular defender in the league, beating only Buffalo's Rasmus Ristolainen (41 per cent), and driven in large part by leaky defensive zone play.

What clouds the issue is every non-goal-based measure takes a bit of a liking to Faulk, which is also true of a number of other Carolina skaters. For example, the Hurricanes have outshot their opponents 7,551 to 6,680 (+871, or 53 per cent) over that same stretch with Faulk on the ice. The same is true for similar measures, be it scoring chances, dangerous shot attempts, or expected goals.

Normally you would look at something like this and say that Faulk has just been a good player in a bad or unlucky situation. After all, generating that degree of shot volume – and getting outscored the way Carolina has – is tough to do. But Faulk has now seen terrible on-ice save percentages for six seasons now. And in each of those six years, Carolina's stopped a higher proportion of shots with him off of the ice than him on the ice.

I'm not sure yet what to make of this just yet, but consider the below numbers. It shows (a) Carolina's save percentage, 5-on-5; (b) Carolina's save percentage, 5-on-5, Faulk on ice; and (c) average save percentage, league-wide.

Carolina has had some questionable goaltending over the years (save 2013 and 2015). If they just received average goaltending over this timeframe, they would have been about 75 goals better – and that's substantial.

But Faulk's numbers are even worse. Faulk's on-ice save percentage is 90.7. That means that in the minutes Faulk has been on the ice, Carolina is 52 goals worse than league average and 27 goals worse than what Carolina could have reasonably expected with their goaltending talent.

About that 90.7 save percentage: It's the worst number of any defender in the past six years, true by a considerable margin:

Now let's put aside the math for a moment. What any interested trade partner has to answer is whether or not Faulk is having a detrimental impact on his team's goaltending performance, or a victim of circumstance.

Carolina's had bad goaltending for years but it certainly appears exacerbated with Faulk on the ice. And although we know that defenders appear to have very little control over the save percentages their team realizes, Faulk's numbers stick out because (a) they are objectively bad; (b) have been objectively bad for a considerable period of time; and (c) are an exceptional outlier even in comparison to other players with poor numbers.

If you think Faulk is a big-minute, point-producing blueliner who has been hampered by the play of his goaltenders and/or teammates for years now, then he's a no-brainer add this summer. He has a diverse skill set and is suited for today's speed game. Perhaps that's why Carolina, historically, has lived in the offensive zone whenever he's on the ice.

But if you think he has any control over the save percentage his teams have realized over the last six years, then this is quite the red flag. Again, no other defender has seen this type of foul stop rate for such an extended period of time. And at the age of 26, he's probably hit the apex



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of his development curve. He's either tremendously unlucky or a top-four blueliner who has significant difficulty in his defensive third.

Not an easy question to answer considering the craziness that's enveloped Carolina for years. I imagine some team will roll the dice here though, and it will be a great storyline to follow in 2018 and beyond.

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TSN.CA / Statistically Speaking: Hurricanes, Flames swing blockbuster trade

Scott Cullen

The Calgary Flames broke up the league's top defence pairing in a blockbuster trade with the Carolina Hurricanes.

Statistically Speaking looks into a deal that involves four players players that had significant roles on their teams along with a high-end prospect.

Dougie Hamilton	Calgary	D	81	17	27
44	57.6	6.7	98.7	53.0	21:32
Micheal Ferland	Calgary	RW	77	21	20
41	51.9	-2.0	101.6	56.1	15:01
Noah Hanifin	Carolina	D	79	10	22
32	56.2	2.5	96.9	62.8	18:52
Elias Lindholm	Carolina	RW/C	81	16	28
44	53.3	-1.8	97.4	56.9	17:54
Adam Fox	Harvard (ECAC)	D	29	6	
22	28	+3			

The Flames Get: C/RW Elias Lindholm and D Noah Hanifin

Lindholm, 23, is a talented forward who can play wing and centre, but he has yet to surpass 45 points in any of his five NHL seasons.

While he generates chances, and tends towards favourable shot differentials, he's been a relatively low percentage finisher (8.9% career shooting percentage) who plays with low percentage finishers – over the course of five seasons, his 5-on-5 on-ice shooting percentage is 6.2%, which is remarkably low for a player who plays on a scoring line.

Calgary does offer a wonderful opportunity for Lindholm, though, as he should get a chance to play the right side on the top line with Johnny Gaudreau and Sean Monahan.

A restricted free agent, Lindholm is looking at a significant raise. According to Matt Cane's free agent model, Lindholm could be looking at a deal of five years at nearly \$5-million per season.

Noah Hanifin had a career-high 32 points last season.

Hanifin is a 21-year-old blueliner who was the fifth pick in the 2015 Draft and has already played three seasons. He hasn't had to deal with difficult minutes, and played a career-high 18:52 this season, but he's a young defenceman on the rise who will take on a bigger role with the Flames.

In Calgary, Hanifin is set to play on the second pairing alongside Travis Hamonic, with T.J. Brodie rejoining Mark Giordano on the Flames' top pair. Hamonic and Brodie struggled last year, so perhaps Hanifin can make that work better. While he was outscored 58-48 at 5-on-5 in Carolina last year, Hanifin had spectacular shot rates, both offensively, and defensively.

Hanifin is also a restricted free agent, coming off his entry-level deal, and Cane's model suggests that a two-year bridge deal, at a cost of a little more than \$2.3-million per season, is warranted. It would come as no surprise if the Flames were to make a bigger commitment to Hanifin with expectations that he'll be a big piece of their defence for years to come.

The Hurricanes Get: D Dougie Hamilton, RW Micheal Ferland and D Adam Fox

Hamilton, 25, is one of the premier right-handed defencemen in the league, coming off an outstanding season, at both ends of the rink, alongside Giordano on Calgary's top pair.

He's a fluid skater at 6-foot-6, and while he could play with more of an edge, Hamilton's skill puts him in the top tier of defencemen. In the past two seasons, Brent Burns and Victor Hedman are the only defencemen with more goals than Hamilton's 30.

In Carolina, Hamilton figures to be on the second pair, where he can play more of an offensive role, while Jacob Slavin and Brett Pesce handle the shutdown defensive role. At the moment, Carolina has an imbalance of right-handed shots on the blueline. In addition to Pesce and Hamilton, Justin Faulk and Trevor van Riemsdyk are right shots, so it appears that Faulk could be expendable, unless Carolina is going to run a pair of two right-shot defencemen in its top four.

In addition to the benefits that Hamilton provides on the ice, he also comes with a rather appealing contract, signed for three more years at a cap hit of \$5.75-million per year. For a first-pair defenceman, that's nice value.

Micheal Ferland will add bite to the Hurricanes lineup.

Ferland is a 26-year-old winger who had battled his way into a prominent role with the Flames. He was probably playing over slot when he was skating on the first line, but 36 of his 41 points last season were at even strength, and his 2.05 points/60 was more than respectable. He plays a physical game and can shoot the puck.

In Carolina, he's probably better suited to a middle-six role, but that may depend on what other moves the Hurricanes have up their sleeve.

Ferland is under contract for just one more season, at a \$1.75-million cap hit, after which he will be an unrestricted free agent.

Fox may be the wildcard in this deal. The 20-year-old right-shot defenceman was a third-round pick in 2016, but has quickly established himself as a top prospect, putting up 68 points in 64 games in two seasons at Harvard while adding nine points in 14 games at the past two World Juniors.

The risk for the Flames was that Fox would not sign a contract, and ultimately elect unrestricted free agency when his collegiate days were done. Now that risk carries over to the Hurricanes, but if they can convince Fox to sign on that would be a huge get for Carolina.

Verdict: The Hurricanes get the better talent in the deal – Hamilton is clearly the best player – but the contracts have potential to be more favourable for Calgary; that is, the players are under team control for longer. Nevertheless, if the Hurricanes secure Fox's services, then that would tip the scales, making Carolina's edge quite significant overall.

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