



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • June 28, 2018

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Canes' Necas more polished and confident, ready to be in NHL this season

By Chip Alexander

calexander@newsobserver.com

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Raleigh

All eyes were on Andrei Svechnikov when the Carolina Hurricanes' prospects first took the ice Wednesday at PNC Arena.

But Martin Necas was the one quickly catching the eye of many observers.

Certainly the eye of Rod Brind'Amour, the Canes' new head coach.

The Hurricanes made Svechnikov the second overall pick of the NHL Entry Draft last week in Dallas, and the Russian forward has the looks, the skill, the presence of a would-be star.

But Necas, the Canes' first-round pick in 2017, has returned for his second prospect development camp bigger, with more polish to his game, with more self-assurance to his demeanor at age 19.

"There's certainly a huge difference, at least physically and maturity-wise," Brind'Amour said. "When he got here last year he was just a kid. I mean, he's still a kid but there's a major difference in him.

"This camp is not just what they do on the ice. They're not making the team based on this. But you watch him walk in the dressing room now and it's not 'What am I walking into?' It's just a comfort level. He goes on the ice and it's like 'This is normal.' He knows us and that's when you can get the kids to play, when they're confident and they're comfortable."

Brind'Amour paired Necas and Svechnikov together at times Wednesday in some four-on-four drills. The two played off each other well enough, and Necas said they're rooming together this week and already have formed an off-ice friendship.

Necas has one other opinion about Svechnikov: "I think he's NHL-ready."

But Necas feels the same way about himself, even if the center from the Czech Republic is not brash enough to say it quite that way.

"I feel like I'm better than last year," he said. "That's my goal, to make the team and make the opener."

Necas impressed the coaching staff and management with his speed and instinctive playmaking and was kept on the

Canes' roster after preseason training camp last year along with rookie forward Janne Kuokkanen and defenseman Haydn Fleury. Kuokkanen and Fleury played in Carolina's season-opener, a 5-4 shootout win over Minnesota at PNC Arena, while Necas had to wait.

Necas made his NHL debut in the Canes' fourth game, Oct. 17 at Edmonton, in a 5-3 win. Not that was he was totally pleased.

"It was hard," he said. "I didn't play probably for more than two weeks. When I played a game I felt, I don't know what to say, a little bit tired because it was different that just practicing.

"It was a great experience. I enjoyed it. Like I said, I want to play every game here next season."

The decision was made by former general manager Ron Francis to send Necas back for another year with HC Kometa Brno in the Extraliga, Czech's top professional league. Necas made the most of it, also competing for the Czechs in the 2018 IIHF World Junior Championship in Buffalo, N.Y., and then with the national team in the World Championship in Denmark after the season.

"I just played my game," Necas said of the season. "I don't know, maybe I grew up a little."

Necas had three goals and eight assists in 11 games in the World Juniors, tying for the tournament scoring lead. And Brno won the league championship for a second straight year.

"He had a pretty good year," said Tony MacDonald, the Canes' director of amateur scouting. "Early on he did not play as much as much as he hoped to play, then was more of a factor and finished up at the World Championship and was very good there.

"He doesn't need to boost his stock with us. He has an exclamation point beside his name, as far as how good a player he is and we project him to be. In the game played today in the NHL, speed is the most important element. He has it and he's got the skill to go with it. It's a matter of him getting more man strength, and when he gets to 190 pounds he will be a force to be reckoned with."

Necas is closer. A year ago, he came to development camp listed at 6-1 and 178 pounds, lean and lanky. He has grown an inch and said he weighed in Wednesday at 189 pounds.

Could Necas and Svechnikov be used on the same line next season? Were they auditioning a bit Wednesday? Brind'Amour smiled.

"They're going to be teammates for a long time, at least that's what we hope," Brind'Amour said. "They're not stupid."



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They know they're going to be huge parts of this organization. I don't if we're going to play them together, don't know how all that's going to shake out. But they're here. Might as well take a look at it."

A look at the future.

It's just June, but this is the Hurricanes' future. Here. Now.

By Luke DeCock

ldecock@newsobserver.com

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Raleigh

This is how the future arrives, not with flying cars or refrigerators that refill an empty frozen pizza drawer on their own or Miami Beach suddenly disappearing into the sea, all of which will happen eventually. It's arrives incrementally. One day Martin Necas and Andrei Svechnikov are on the ice together in a meaningless June development-camp practice. The next, they're tearing up the NHL. Maybe.

Seeing Necas and Svechnikov together nevertheless had a tangible sense of Rubicon-crossing for the Carolina Hurricanes, especially when they slipped off their practice jerseys for game jerseys late in Wednesday's practice. They, along with Sebastian Aho, will carry this franchise into the future. Or not. Wherever it is headed, Wednesday was the beginning.

Necas and Svechnikov are rooming together this week and they played together during the four-on-four portion, which was absolutely no coincidence at all.

"That was not a mistake, that we kind of threw them together, just for fun," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Just to see. Sometimes it happens right away. That's what we're hoping for. They're obviously two important pieces for this franchise, so why not get them together as soon as possible. See where it goes from there. We're obviously really looking forward to both those guys and what they can do."

Necas, last year's first-round pick, is clearly ahead of everyone else at this point, as he should be. He's taller and broader than he was in his first development camp last June, swooping across the ice with long, languid strides, a cut above everyone else. It took all of 11 minutes to see there's no reason for him to be here; he's beyond this.

The Hurricanes are counting on him to center one of their top two lines and, to the extent these things can be determined

in June, the lanky Czech is ready to take on the challenge – just as Aho was when he made the jump to the NHL.

Svechnikov wasn't quite as fluid or adventurous with the puck. He looked like a talented junior player adjusting to new circumstances and surroundings, just as Necas did last year. The difference between Svechnikov now and Necas then is the NHL-ready body that will give Friday's No. 2 overall pick a stronger chance to survive in the NHL this fall, if he indeed makes the team as the Hurricanes intend and expect.

There seems to be some off-ice chemistry between the two, but at this point that's really a bonus. It's more important that they have chemistry on the ice, especially if they end up playing together this season on a line that would be as talented as it is green. Which sounds like it would be fine with Necas.

"We're already good friends," Necas said, then tried on his management hat. "On the ice, his shot is really good. He's a good skater. He can pass. He's a really good player, NHL-ready."

It is folly to try to determine too much from one on-ice session like this, especially at the end of a day that started with a brutal off-ice workout – "The bike," Svechnikov moaned, "very hard" – and ended with a power-skating class that will strain muscles these kids didn't know they had. Necas has been through it before, and it showed. It's all new to Svechnikov.

There were other key players for the Hurricanes' future on the ice Wednesday, from newly acquired defensive prospect Adam Fox to his future Harvard teammate, second-round draft pick Jack Drury, and others. (Of note: Fox said Justin Williams texted him after the trade, which certainly has the aura of someone acting like they're already the captain of this team.) But none carry the weight of expectation Necas and Svechnikov carry as potential Calder Trophy candidates, and none are as important to the future of the franchise as they are, at least at this moment in time.

The Hurricanes' future has arrived. Whatever form it will take, these two are part of it. This was the beginning of something. What, exactly, only time will tell, but Wednesday offered more than enough reason to be excited about it.



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How the Canes helped themselves by trading for Flames' forward Ferland

By Chip Alexander

calexander@newsobserver.com

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Dougie Hamilton was watching TV coverage of the NHL Draft on Saturday when the defenseman learned he had been traded from the Calgary Flames to the Carolina Hurricanes.

For Flames forward Micheal Ferland, it was a bit different.

"I was on my bachelor party out in California and I was in the pool," Ferland said Wednesday. "One of my buddies came up to me and said he had my agent on the phone, saying I just got traded to Carolina."

That'll get you out of the pool. The Flames and Hurricanes had upstaged the second day of the draft in Dallas with the splashy [trade](#), as the Flames' Ferland, Hamilton and defensive prospect Adam Fox were dealt to Carolina for forward Elias Lindholm and defenseman Noah Hanifin.

"I was shocked at first but as the day went on, and a couple of days went on, I'm actually really excited to get over there," Ferland said.

But it was jolt to the system. The Flames were the team that drafted Ferland, taking him in the fifth round in 2010. Ferland, 26, had overcome some personal struggles to reach the NHL, scoring a career-high 21 goals last season -- his third full year in the NHL -- as he further established himself in the league.

"I really enjoyed Calgary and thought I'd play there my whole career," he said.

Ferland is a native of Swan River, Manitoba, a small Canadian town of about 4,000. He grew up playing junior hockey for the Brandon Wheat Kings of the Western Hockey League before going to the Saskatoon Blades of the WHL.

Ferland's story, his hockey journey, in an inspirational one. As he said, "There has been a lot of obstacles, for sure."

He was raised by a single mother. The family had little money, but his mother and older sister sacrificed to see that he could play the sport. Others in Manitoba would do the same along the way, providing assistance.

But there were deeper, more troubling issues to face -- issues that Ferland is not hesitant to address.

He had a drinking problem. He once faced assault charges after a bar fight, although was later acquitted of those charges.

Again, with the help of friends such as Mike Thompson, a strength coach he first met in the American Hockey League who became a mentor and surrogate father, Ferland said he faced down his personal demons. He went to a rehab center in 2014, stopped drinking and has been sober for four years.

With the Hurricanes, Ferland will have a teammate in goalie Scott Darling who has faced a similar personal challenge. That's reassuring, Ferland said.

"When you meet other sober guys you just sort of instantly click," Ferland said. "You know what each other has kind of been through. That will help going over there, having another sober guy like Scott Darling."

Moving to Raleigh, to the South, will be a culture change for Ferland and his family.

"I've had snow every Christmas and every winter my entire life," he said. "It will be different going to the rink without a foot of snow on the ground."

But there's also been much talk about a different kind of culture change -- on the Canes, in the makeup of the team, in the approach of ownership and management, in the way the franchise is run.

Asked what that usually means to a hockey player, Ferland said, "Obviously things aren't working and you need to change some things. It could be the coach or the players. I think you just need to shake things up to show the players that the owner, the GM and the coach are all in now and they want to win."

Tom Dundon is the owner, and Ferland said he has spoken with him. The same is true for coach Rod Brind'Amour and general manager Don Waddell.

Ferland said Brind'Amour, during their conversation, told him the Canes "haven't had a guy like me in a while and I can help them win."

Ferland does play with an edge to his game. He has good size at 6-2 and 208 pounds, and Hamilton described him by saying, "Everyone who has played with him or against him knows how hard he can hit and how physical and tough he is."

For Ferland, so much will be new. He's in the Eastern Conference, in the Metropolitan Division. He'll be playing more often against an Alex Ovechkin, against a Sidney Crosby.

"It will be a fresh start," he said. "It will be a learning curve at first but it should be fun."

"Everything will be fine. My dream was to play in the NHL and I don't care where I play as long as I get to live my dream out."



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Has goalie Cam Ward played his last game for Hurricanes?

By Chip Alexander

calexander@newsobserver.com

June 28, 2018 08:38 AM

Updated 3 minutes ago

With NHL free agency just a few days away, it appears more likely goalie Cam Ward has played his last game with the Carolina Hurricanes.

Ward, the franchise leader in wins and a star on the Canes' 2006 Stanley Cup champs, is due to become an unrestricted free agent Sunday. His agent, Rick Curran, said Thursday that five teams have contacted Ward.

Curran did not name all the teams but said three have had "extensive interviews" with Ward and confirmed the Chicago Blackhawks were one of those three.

In recent days, there has been building media speculation Ward would sign with the Blackhawks, possibly a one-year deal for \$3 million, when free agency begins Sunday.

Should Ward leave, it would be more evidence of the Canes' determination to reshape the team under new team owner Tom Dundon and general manager Don Waddell.

"My contract is up and the uncertainty and the unknown of what's going to happen, it can be scary at times," Ward after playing the final game of the 2017-18 season, a 3-2 overtime win over the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Curran, of the Orr Hockey Group, has said Ward's preference was to stay with the Hurricanes, the team that drafted him in 2002 with the 25th overall pick. All 13 of Ward's seasons have come with the Canes, he has 318 career victories and was the Conn Smythe Trophy winner in 2006 as the playoffs MVP.

Ward, 34, was prepared to accept a backup role last season after the Canes acquired goalie Scott Darling in a trade with the Blackhawks. But Darling, who had been the Blackhawks' backup, couldn't handle the responsibility of being a No. 1 goalie for the first time in the NHL and Ward's starts increased as the season progressed.

After the Canes missed the playoffs for a ninth straight year, Dundon and Waddell said there needed to be a goaltending change. Now adding irony to the situation is that Ward could land in Chicago.

While Darling struggled, Ward finished the 2017-18 season with a 23-14-4 record, a 2.73 goals-against average of 2.73 and .906 save percentage.

"Cam's been a rock for us this year," Canes forward Justin Williams said after the Tampa Bay game. "Regardless of what people say or what's written about him, he's a rock for us."

Ward signed a two-year contract extension in June 2016 that paid him \$3.5 million in 2016-17 and \$3.1 million this past season.



Tweetmail No. 192: Draft Picks, Trades & Centers

by Michael Smith [@MSmithCanes](https://twitter.com/MSmithCanes) / CarolinaHurricanes.com

June 27th, 2018

Hello and welcome back to Tweetmail, presented by our friends at [Tijuana Flats!](#)

Tweetmail is a weekly feature on CarolinaHurricanes.com in which I take your Twitter questions about the Carolina Hurricanes or other assorted topics and answer them in mailbag form. Hopefully the final product is insightful to some degree, and maybe we have some fun along the way.

Let's get to it.

1. None of the Hurricanes' five picks from the second day of the 2018 NHL Draft are expected to turn pro this year. Jack Drury is committed to Harvard, Luke Henman will head back to the Quebec Major-Junior Hockey League, Lenni Killinen

will remain in Finland, Jesper Sellgren will remain in Sweden and Jake Kucharski, who is currently in the USHL, is committed to Providence.

Outside of the top five picks in the draft (and even then there might be one or two who opt for another season in junior or at college), it's rare to see a kid ready to take the step to the pros at just 18 years of age.

2. Yes, I think it's reasonable to expect that the Hurricanes still have tweaks to make to their roster via trades and/or free agency. The draft-day transaction with Calgary was a major roster shake-up, and there could be one or two more on the way, especially with the frequency [Jeff Skinner's](#) name is floated in conversations. As far as free agency is concerned, I'm not sure the Hurricanes will make a splashy signing - that's not been the team's modus operandi - but depth pieces could certainly be options.



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Martin Necas made the Hurricanes' roster out of training camp last season and made his NHL debut in Edmonton before being returned to the Czech Republic before the end of October. More than anything, his time with the Canes allowed him to get a taste of life in the NHL - he got to know his teammates, he got to practice with an NHL club, he got to experience a road trip.

Those moments should benefit him this year. I believe he again makes the team out of camp, and this year he'll likely stick around.

Where he fits in on the roster is something we'll be watching closely in training camp because it's somewhat difficult to project at this point. He's a natural center, but would playing on the wing help him ease into the league? Or, if he plays center, is he in the top nine? The exhibition season should help work through these questions.

In no particular order, I think [Sebastian Aho](#), [Jordan Staal](#), [Victor Rask](#) and Martin Necas are all candidates to play down the middle. If Necas would be better suited on the wing, especially early on, someone like Lucas Wallmark or Patrick Brown could easily fill a depth center position.

It's apparently 42.

Neither TV's Mike Maniscalco nor I caught on when this question came up on the latest edition of CanesCast. If you haven't listened already, [do so here!](#) And consider subscribing if you like what you hear so you never miss an episode.

Speaking of CanesCast - the first live recording of the podcast will happen on Saturday after the Canes Prospect

Game at the [Summerfest Celebration](#). Stick around in section 119 to hear it. It should be fun!

I saw pictures of said bacon flight on Twitter, but I didn't get a chance to try it or even make it to BrainDead Brewing while in Dallas. Thanks to some travel mishaps (detailed on episode 48 of CanesCast) and quite the busy weekend, time away from American Airlines Center and our hotel was severely limited. But I did get to check out two really dope spots in Deep Ellum: Dots Hop House and Cocktail Courtyard and Adair's Saloon. I'll for sure be returning to both (and hopefully checking out BrainDead at some point, as well).

Who's making the trip to Vancouver for the 2019 NHL Draft? Never too early to start planning.

In the [last edition of Tweetmail](#), I was asked to give a hint about the Canes' new third jerseys, something "something to speculate wildly about for the next couple weeks." I played along and offered up this hint: fish biscuit.

By now you've probably seen the [new third jerseys](#) (which are all the fire emojis) and might be wondering what that hint meant.

(Spoiler alert for the season three premiere, which aired 12 years ago so c'mon.)

In the [season three premiere of LOST](#), Sawyer successfully figures out the "complicated gizmo" that results in a fish biscuit reward. The sequence involves a button that, when pressed, responds with "warning." Hence, the two warning flags and #TakeWarning.

It was obscure, but it was indeed a hint. And speculation was wild. (But [this guy](#) pretty much nailed it.

Five Takeaways: Day 1 of Prospects Development Camp

Necas, Svechnikov stand out on first day of camp

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

June 27th, 2018

The future is now, as Carolina Hurricanes Prospects Development Camp kicked into gear on Wednesday with the first on-ice session of the week.

This year's camp features a group of 28 prospects, including all six players selected in the 2018 NHL Draft, 14 returning players and six camp invitees.

The players arrived in Raleigh on Tuesday and gathered as a group for the first time at a team dinner. Wednesday featured a full schedule of both on- and off-ice activities.

Here are five takeaways from day one of Prospects Development Camp.

1. Off the Ice: Medicals, Testing & Cooking

It was an early morning for the prospects, who began medicals and fitness testing at 7 a.m.

From there, the day's schedule shifted to PNC Arena, where the prospects grabbed lunch with a special guest: [Justin Williams](#).

Then, it was off to the kitchen to learn about proper nutrition and cooking techniques.

At 5:30 p.m., it was time to hit the ice at PNC Arena.

"The first day of this is more to just get their feet wet," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "You're trying to make sure they leave with the message and understanding that this is a place where we're trying to be the best and we want to be the best."

2. Necas Already a Standout

There was Martin Necas. And then there was everyone else.

Necas, the Canes' 12th overall pick from a year ago, was flying around the ice today, and his high skill level was evident. He's bulked up, too.

"I gained some kilos. I grew up a little bit," said the 19-year-old Czech forward. "I feel like I'm better than last year. That's my goal: to make the team."



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"He's grown. His game has obviously gotten better. He's gotten stronger and a little bigger," Brind'Amour said. "He's confident, a lot more confident than he was last year. That's to be expected."

3. Svechnikov Hits the Ice

Andrei Svechnikov arrived in Raleigh on Sunday and took the opportunity Monday to get on the ice. Wednesday marked his first time skating with the group, and, like Necas, he separated himself from his peers. As the second overall pick from this year's draft, that's to be expected.

"I thought Andrei looked really good," Brind'Amour said. "You have to be careful about putting too high of an expectation level on an 18-year-old. ... We're going to set the bar high for him and everybody."

4. Necas-Svechnikov a Tantalizing Pair

At various points throughout the evening, Necas and Andrei Svechnikov hit the ice together as a forward pair. That was by design.

"Those are two pretty important pieces to the future of this franchise, so why not get them together as soon as possible and seen where it goes?" Brind'Amour said. "Really looking forward to both of those guys and what they can do."

Necas and Svechnikov are also roommates this week.

"We're friends. Just talking to him about everything. He told me some from his experience from last season when he was here," Svechnikov said. "It's fun being with him."

"We're already good friends," Necas said. "He's a good skater. He's a sniper. His shot is really good. I think he's NHL-ready."

5. Power Skating Wraps the On-Ice Session

It had already been a long day. Then the Hurricanes ended their first on-ice session with power skating instruction from Mark Metzger, who dazzled the crowd with his fancy footwork.

"We could do it, but not as good as that guy," Brind'Amour joked.

If the legs weren't already a little noodle-like, they certainly were after the power skating drills.

"It's probably going to be an early bedtime for me tonight," defenseman Adam Fox said.

Up Next

The Hurricanes' prospects will hit the ice twice on Thursday: they'll skate in two groups from 9:45-11:30 a.m., break for lunch and off-ice instruction and then return as one group for more practice and power skating at 5:30 p.m. All on-ice sessions are free and open to the public.

A full schedule and additional information regarding Prospects Development Camp and Summerfest can be found [here](#).



Carolina Hurricanes' Most Crucial Need

By Mark Shiver June 27th, 2018

For the past four seasons that I have been covering the Carolina Hurricanes for The Hockey Writers, I have formed an opinion as to what the team's most crucial need is. After reviewing some numbers, I am beginning to re-think that opinion. I'm not abandoning totally what I believe the team needs, but I am seeing more clearly another area that, if not upgraded, will prevent the team from ever becoming a playoff contender.

It's the Offense, Right?

I have written fairly extensively that the Hurricanes need a proven scoring forward in order to be a legitimate playoff-contending team. At the end of the 2014-15 season, as the team was once again not playoff-bound, [I wrote this very direct statement](#) about what the team needed at that time:

One thing is for sure, the Hurricanes need to figure out how to put the puck in the net, or we will be having this same conversation again this time next year.

Would you have wondered if I were telling the truth about the date had I said that I wrote that statement at the end of the 2015-16 season, or at the end of this past season? Probably not. The Hurricanes have struggled offensively for quite a while.

Whether it was their star forward, Jeff Skinner, [sustaining a third concussion](#) and taking until this past season to look like he was not still apprehensive, or the overpaid, under-performing Alexander Semin suddenly abandoning the game, the Hurricanes' offense has sputtered. A cursory glance at last season's goal differential—goals scored minus goals allowed—speaks volumes.

For example, the Nashville Predators had a goal differential of plus-57 as they scored their way to winning the Presidents' Trophy. They scored 261 goals and only allowed 204. The Stanley Cup-winning Washington Capitals had a plus-18. Compare those numbers with the Hurricanes, who scored 225 goals and allowed 253. This gave them a stout minus-28 goal differential. This comparison is in no way



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intended to be an exercise in advanced analytics, but it is a snapshot that shows the Hurricanes need more offense.

Obviously, the play of Scott Darling, who was brought in to replace Cam Ward as the starting goaltender, contributed mightily to the team's weak goal differential, but the fact remains that the 'Canes need more offense. But, is it possible that it's really more of a goaltending issue? This is where I am re-thinking what the Hurricanes need to be a playoff team.

It's the Defense, Right?

Last December [I wrote about the Hurricanes' offensive offense](#). It was offensive to watch them struggle to score night after night. But, I was shocked to hear Bill Peters, the team's head coach at that time, say that sorting out the team's defensive positional play would sort out the offensive woes. I'm sure the head coach knows more about which he spoke than I do, but it seems a lot simpler. This Tweet breaks it down very nicely:

Darling lost 21 games last season. His play at times was good, but unfortunately most of the time it was bad. A fan

said to me recently, "If Darling had won half of the games he lost, we would have been in the playoffs." An extra 20 points would certainly have helped the cause. But, what really caught my eye was these horrid save percentages when placed beside a statistic in which the Hurricanes actually led the league:

Per Sin Bin Vegas, [a primer to help fans](#) of the expansion Vegas Golden Knights explain the advanced statistic: "Corsi is a statistic that measures the true number of shots a player or team takes during a game. Corsi = Shots on Goal + Missed Shots + Blocked Shots Against. It's fairly simple, it's just all shot attempts. Corsi can be measured for a team or for an individual. For a team, it's simply all shot attempts."

The Hurricanes are apparently quite adept at shooting the puck.

Perhaps the team's fault is not entirely offensive. They do need to either take better shots or work to get the "greasy goals" in front of the net. But, they MUST have a top-notch goaltender. Without that part of their positional defense receiving a big upgrade, writers like me will continue to try to figure out what it is that is keeping them from the playoffs.



Carolina is home for Brind'Amour: 'I bleed Hurricane red'

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Rod Brind'Amour came to Carolina in 2000 and never left.

He worked his way up the Carolina Hurricanes' organizational ladder from key trade acquisition to captain of a Stanley Cup-winning team to the front office to assistant coach and, now, head coach. Along the way, he's become so blended into the fabric of the community that he coached his son's T-ball team in his spare time without drawing much attention.

When he was introduced last month as Bill Peters' successor, the Ottawa native referred to Raleigh as "my town."

"Obviously, I've been here a long time. My wife's from here, we've got our families here," Brind'Amour said. "The organization means something to me, and wearing the crest, it's special, and so I don't envision myself being in the hockey world with anyone else. That's kind of what I meant by it.

"I bleed Hurricane red," he added.

With the NHL's free agency period starting Sunday, Brind'Amour and the Hurricanes have something unique to sell — their new coach's loyalty to the club and the city, and the intimate connection between the team and one of the league's smallest markets — one that is starving for a winner. Carolina has the NHL's longest active playoff

drought, missing the postseason for nine consecutive years, and has made it only once since Brind'Amour hoisted the Cup in 2006.

Brind'Amour, who was traded here 18 years ago by the Philadelphia Flyers in the Keith Primeau deal, holds a rare position among his peers in the coaching fraternity as one of only 20 active coaches in North America's four major professional sports who played for the team he now coaches.

"It's special, and I think the attraction for me is that I believe in this group. ... If we can just add the right pieces, I think we can be competitive," Brind'Amour said. "And I've been here when it was a great market, and we were good and had the support, so I know we can regain that."

None of those 20 coaches have continuously been with their franchise as long as Brind'Amour. The closest comparison might be Milwaukee Brewers manager Craig Counsell, who spent his childhood in that city while his father worked in the team's front office and has been with the club since 2007. After finishing his playing career in 2011, he moved into the front office and took over as manager in 2015 following Ron Roenicke's midseason firing.

"Growing up here and being a fan of the Brewers, and just living here my whole life, the connection to the organization obviously means a lot," Counsell said. "It helps you understand the organization just because you've been a part



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of it and know it for a while. It helps you know the history; it helps you know the people. ... I feel a responsibility to baseball in this state and in this city. I take that seriously."

In addition to Brind'Amour, only three other current coaches or managers have won championships while playing for those teams: Los Angeles Lakers coach Luke Walton won two titles as a forward in the 2000s, Dallas Cowboys coach Jason Garrett was a backup quarterback on two Super Bowl-winning teams in the 1990s, and Boston Red Sox manager Alex Cora was part of that club's World Series-winning team in 2007.

Raleigh's small-town feel also affords Brind'Amour the chance to be a normal father. In a scene that might be hard to imagine in one of hockey's pressure-cooker cities, Brind'Amour spent the spring coaching first base as an assistant for his son's T-ball team in the suburb of Wake Forest.

The team's head coach, Matt Greene, described Brind'Amour as "an active, involved dad" and said watching him with the young players was like "watching the magic work.

"He was talking to the kids about baseball ... (and the parents are talking about hockey, (with the parents telling him) 'I've got my son signed up for hockey next spring,'" Greene said. "But Rod was talking to the kid, and putting it more on the kids. Not that Rod was the star, but the kid was the star in baseball."

Brind'Amour, the son-in-law of former North Carolina State basketball player and ex-UNC Asheville coach Eddie Biedenbach, connected with the Raleigh community pretty quickly after his 2000 arrival, and he hopes the current players can do the same.

"We're a younger team now, but as they get older ... they're going to see that this is a great place to raise a family," he said. "The people here are just friendly, they're down-to-earth and it's a comforting type of lifestyle. At the end of the day, we all try to be a champion and we want to be a Stanley Cup champion, but there's other parts of life, too, that are important.

"Being a hockey player, being successful, you've got to feel good about where you live," he added. "We've checked that part off. Now we've just got to get the hockey part dialed in."



SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY

By The Numbers: The Stats Story for Dougie Hamilton and Micheal Ferland

What can the Hurricanes expect in terms of production from their two newest members?

By [Andrew Ahr@andrew_ahr](mailto:Andrew.Ahr@andrew_ahr) Jun 27, 2018, 1:10pm EDT

The line is that you have to give something to get something in this league, and the [Carolina Hurricanes](#) gave up two former top five draft selections who haven't quite lived up to expectations in [Elias Lindholm](#) and [Noah Hanifin](#).

What they're getting back with [Dougie Hamilton](#) and [Micheal Ferland](#) are two big bodies, 6'6" and 6'2" respectively, who each have the ability to put up 20 goals or more in a Carolina uniform.

The best player involved in this trade is [Hamilton](#). The big right-handed defenseman was taken 9th overall in the 2011 [NHL Draft](#) and has been a stalwart in a top-four role for both the [Bruins](#) and [Flames](#) since his debut in the lockout-shortened 2012-13 season.

An understated advantage that Hamilton has over a similarly tooled [Justin Faulk](#) is his ability to score at even strength. Of his league-leading 17 tallies last season as a defenseman, only six of them came on the power play. And since his entrance into the league, about 66% of his goals came at 5v5.

Faulk, by contrast, has relied much more heavily on man-advantage situations to score goals, as only 54% of his goals

have come at even strength. Not to downplay his role — Faulk has been valuable as the power play quarterback for the last few seasons in Raleigh. But something we've seen for a while now is a lack of production from the Hurricanes' blue line group as a whole at even strength, and Hamilton certainly has the ability to jump start that here.

Hamilton and [Mark Giordano](#) were one of the best pairings in hockey last season, with Hamilton driving the offensive production and [Giordano](#) in a more defense-first role. Hamilton posted a very strong 57.55 CF%, which was just third in the league among defensemen who played more than 15 games (Giordano was second). His on ice shooting percentage sits just above a league average at 7.9% last season, while his expected goals for percentage checks in at an impressive 56.61%.

Hamilton also boasted an expected +/- of 16.2, good for eighth in the league and seven spots higher than his usual partner Giordano. This is indicative of good shot quality at even strength in the offensive zone when he's on the ice while denying on the other end. The numbers reveal that he was one of the strongest offensive defensemen in the NHL last season.

One caveat is that Hamilton did receive some criticism regarding his reliance on his partner in a lot of situations, but his possession numbers did not drop significantly in the rare instances that he was paired with [T.J. Brodie](#) or [Brett Kulak](#).



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And even if Giordano were more defensively sound, Hamilton provides elite offensive talent from a RHD that should be playing with a top pairing shutdown defenseman — something the Canes have a few of.

Hamilton also seems to have some penalty trouble. Last season he committed more than three times as many penalty minutes as he drew, which is significantly higher than the league average. This speaks to a bad habit of taking minor penalties, oftentimes in a pinch in the defensive zone. He's not very physical despite his frame, sometimes to a fault, recording just 1.0 Hits/GP and 1.0 Blocks/GP last season. These numbers are very similar to [Hanifin's](#) (1.0 Hits/GP and 0.9 Bks/GP) who has a similar frame and stature.

The most exciting thing about Hamilton is the upside that could manifest itself on Carolina. He was one of the NHL's most productive defensemen last season playing on a team ranked 27th in goals scored. With more offensive talent on its way to Raleigh and the likelihood of Hamilton seeing more power play minutes (something he reportedly asked for in Calgary last season), it's quite reasonable to expect even more production.

What the Canes are getting with Hamilton is a big - but not physical - offensive defenseman who can step in and post offensive numbers at a higher rate than Justin Faulk. His presence affords the Canes two modern offensive defensemen with the ability to play top pairing minutes on the right side, a luxury that few NHL clubs can boast that.

[Ferland](#) is a big left winger from Manitoba taken in the 5th round of the 2010 Draft. He can be described as a power forward with some skill in his game and an underrated release around the net. Similar to Hamilton, Ferland has a

clear upward trend since his entrance into the league in 2014. He was a 20-goal scorer last season for the first time in his career, but this should be taken with a grain of salt as he was paired on the top line alongside [Sean Monahan](#) and [Johnny Gaudreau](#) due to the Flames' lack of depth on the left wing.

To be clear, Ferland is not a top line winger. Still, he performed very well in his overslotted role, relying on his skilled linemates to create opportunities and find him in a position to score.

Ferland boasted a high GF% at 56.04%, which is to be expected playing on the top line. His xGF% seems a bit more realistic at 50.55% while his CF% checks in at 51.96%. Ferland scored at a pace that is indicative of a solid middle-six forward with some sneaky skill.

His even strength time on ice per games played was just 13:08, which is a bit higher than [Brock McGinn](#) and a little lower than [Derek Ryan](#). I'd expect for him to get a bit more with the Canes, maybe playing closer to 14 minutes per night like Elias Lindholm.

The Ferland acquisition speaks to owner Tom Dundon's desire to become a tougher team to play against moving forward. Ferland is certainly that type of guy, playing a grinding and physical offensive game that allows him to get to prime positions on the ice for scoring opportunities.

Hamilton and Ferland provide Carolina with a top pairing right-handed defenseman and a coach's favorite middle-six winger with some size and physicality that the Canes' lineup has been lacking for years. They bring a lot to the table that should generate some excitement around next season.



Change Of Scenery Sparks Greg McKegg To Furious Finish In Charlotte

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

Published: June 27, 2018

In the AHL, sometimes a change of scenery makes all the difference.

Take Greg McKegg. An established pro with solid AHL numbers and NHL experience, McKegg signed with Pittsburgh last summer and split the majority of the season between there and Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, but couldn't seem to get much traction, notching 12 points in 28 games with the AHL Penguins. In Charlotte, Carolina's offseason acquisition Josh Jooris had found himself the odd-man-out up top and

was sent to the AHL.

Each holding onto a player in need of a shake up, the Hurricanes and Penguins agreed to a swap of the two forwards. Jooris would go on to record a goal in six games with Wilkes-Barre/Scranton mixed in with nine scoreless NHL games. McKegg, on the other hand, would catch fire and finish the season as one of the AHL's best.

"I started out in Wilkes but getting sent here was awesome," said McKegg. "They gave me a great opportunity here and it was a blast the whole time."

McKegg would waste no time pitching in for his new club, notching helpers in each of his first three contests, and that



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would be all the spark he needed. Paired up with some highly skilled linemates, McKegg would roll on to 23 points in his 19 games wearing a Charlotte sweater, with only two players across the AHL scoring more than him over that stretch of the season.

"He has a great set of eyes and can make plays," said Andrew Poturalski, who frequently connected with McKegg down the stretch. "That's fun for me."

The most prolific of McKegg's contributions to the Checkers was his steady production. The 26-year-old recorded a point in all but two of his games with Charlotte, including a franchise record-tying 12-game point streak.

"On a day-to-day basis you have to be consistent and bring the same energy every time you're out there, especially for a guy in my position," he said. "You've got to be going all the time."

Instilling those values onto his new teammates was an added bonus for McKegg, who filled a veteran role on a staggeringly young squad.

"There was a ton of young guys here, they've got a really good core of young guys coming up," he said. "To be a good pro it's all about that consistency. You're not going to have

your best night each night, but if you bring the same work ethic it'll do you a lot of good going forward."

Headed into the offseason as a restricted free agent, McKegg was quick to mention the solid fit between him and the Checkers.

"I really enjoyed my time here," he said. "It was a pleasure working with these guys and the organization was great. I have nothing but good things to say about Charlotte."

With that as the case, both McKegg and the organization are likely looking forward to next season, as the forward was qualified earlier this week and looks to be slated to return to the fold.

"I think he loves it here and is very happy here," said head coach Mike Vellucci during the season. "He's played very well and I'm very happy for him."

Now comes the tough part, as McKegg ramps up to keep his hot finish rolling into his seventh pro season.

"It's a big thing now, the older you get the more you have to be in shape and the more prepared you have to be when camp comes around," said McKegg. "But getting ready to go again is something I'm looking forward to."



Svechnikov skates with Hurricanes for first time at development camp

Forward eager to make impression after being No. 2 pick at 2018 NHL Draft

by Kurt Dusterberg / NHL.com Correspondent

June 27th, 2018

RALEIGH, N.C. -- Andrei Svechnikov practiced with the Carolina Hurricanes for the first time when they opened development camp on Wednesday.

Svechnikov, the No. 2 pick in the 2018 NHL Draft last Friday, blended in smoothly with the group of 28 prospects. There were butterflies, but he considered it a good first step.

"I feel a little nervous because I am a rookie here," Svechnikov said.

Expectations will be high for Svechnikov, who scored 40 goals in 44 games for Barrie of the Ontario Hockey League and was named OHL rookie of the year. He is the first

Hurricanes player selected with the No. 2 pick since [Eric Staal](#) in 2003.

"I just don't think about this," Svechnikov said. "I just keep working hard and stay focused on the hockey."

The 18-year-old Russian forward did some drills with center Martin Necas, Carolina's first-round pick (No. 12) in the 2017 draft. Necas played one game with the Hurricanes this season before being returned to Kometa Brno of the Czech Extraliga, where he had 17 points (nine goals, eight assists) in 24 regular-season games and nine points (four goals, five assists) in 14 playoff games.

"That was not a mistake, that we threw them together just for fun," said Rod Brind'Amour, who was named Hurricanes coach on May 8. "Sometimes (chemistry) happens right away. That's what we're hoping for. Those are two important pieces for the future of this franchise."



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Svechnikov did not speak English before 2016, when he came to North America to play for Muskegon of the United States Hockey League. But between English class and what he has learned from his teammates, he speaks confidently now. It is one of the reasons Brind'Amour believes he will be ready to play NHL hockey in the fall.

"Looking at him and the way he handles himself, it's going to be a lot easier to do than the normal 18-year-old coming in," Brind'Amour said. "He's definitely ahead of the curve on the maturity side. He's going to be an impact player at some point. Sooner rather than later would be great, but you don't want to rush him and put undue pressure on this kid to be that player yet. But he will be in due time."

Svechnikov (6-foot-3, 192 pounds) is a left-handed shot, but he prefers to play the right wing. He is widely regarded as a complete forward because he has the strength to carry the puck to net and the hands to score near the crease.

Asked if he was familiar with players like Winnipeg Jets forward [Blake Wheeler](#) and retired Chicago Blackhawks forward [Marian Hossa](#), he found the comparison fitting.

"Those guys can play in the corner and they have a great shot," he said. "My style of game is kind of the same. I can play a physical game, and I enjoy playing on the penalty kill and the power play."

In the meantime, Svechnikov is aiming to meet the Hurricanes' expectations for some of the basics, including training, nutrition and proper rest. But soon enough, he will find out how he measures up against the best in the NHL.

"I'm not worried right now," he said with a smile. "In a couple months, I probably will worry about it."

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SportScan

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

1100814 Carolina Hurricanes

It's just June, but this is the Hurricanes' future. Here. Now.

BY LUKE DECOCK

RALEIGH—This is how the future arrives, not with flying cars or refrigerators that refill an empty frozen pizza drawer on their own or Miami Beach suddenly disappearing into the sea, all of which will happen eventually. It arrives incrementally. One day Martin Necas and Andrei Svechnikov are on the ice together in a meaningless June development-camp practice. The next, they're tearing up the NHL. Maybe.

Seeing Necas and Svechnikov together nevertheless had a tangible sense of Rubicon-crossing for the Carolina Hurricanes, especially when they slipped off their practice jerseys for game jerseys late in Wednesday's practice. They, along with Sebastian Aho, will carry this franchise into the future. Or not. Wherever it is headed, Wednesday was the beginning.

Necas and Svechnikov are rooming together this week and they played together during the four-on-four portion, which was absolutely no coincidence at all.

"That was not a mistake, that we kind of threw them together, just for fun," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Just to see. Sometimes it happens right away. That's what we're hoping for. They're obviously two important pieces for this franchise, so why not get them together as soon as possible. See where it goes from there. We're obviously really looking forward to both those guys and what they can do."

Necas, last year's first-round pick, is clearly ahead of everyone else at this point, as he should be. He's taller and broader than he was in his first development camp last June, swooping across the ice with long, languid strides, a cut above everyone else. It took all of 11 minutes to see there's no reason for him to be here; he's beyond this.

The Hurricanes are counting on him to center one of their top two lines and, to the extent these things can be determined in June, the lanky Czech is ready to take on the challenge — just as Aho was when he made the jump to the NHL.

Svechnikov wasn't quite as fluid or adventurous with the puck. He looked like a talented junior player adjusting to new circumstances and surroundings, just as Necas did last year. The difference between Svechnikov now and Necas then is the NHL-ready body that will give Friday's No. 2 overall pick a stronger chance to survive in the NHL this fall, if he indeed makes the team as the Hurricanes intend and expect.

There seems to be some off-ice chemistry between the two, but at this point that's really a bonus. It's more important that they have chemistry on the ice, especially if they end up playing together this season on a line that would be as talented as it is green. Which sounds like it would be fine with Necas.

"We're already good friends," Necas said, then tried on his management hat. "On the ice, his shot is really good. He's a good skater. He can pass. He's a really good player, NHL-ready."

It is folly to try to determine too much from one on-ice session like this, especially at the end of a day that started with a brutal off-ice workout — "The bike," Svechnikov moaned, "very hard" — and ended with a power-skating class that will strain muscles these kids didn't know they had. Necas has been through it before, and it showed. It's all new to Svechnikov.

There were other key players for the Hurricanes' future on the ice Wednesday, from newly acquired defensive prospect Adam Fox to his future Harvard teammate, second-round draft pick Jack Drury, and others. (Of note: Fox said Justin Williams texted him after the trade, which certainly has the aura of someone acting like they're already the captain of this team.) But none carry the weight of expectation Necas and Svechnikov carry as potential Calder Trophy candidates, and none are as important to the future of the franchise as they are, at least at this moment in time.

The Hurricanes' future has arrived. Whatever form it will take, these two are part of it. This was the beginning of something. What, exactly, only time will tell, but Wednesday offered more than enough reason to be

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1100815 Carolina Hurricanes

How the Canes helped themselves by trading for Flames' forward Ferland

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

Dougie Hamilton was watching TV coverage of the NHL Draft on Saturday when the defenseman learned he had been traded from the Calgary Flames to the Carolina Hurricanes.

For Flames forward Micheal Ferland, it was a bit different.

"I was on my bachelor party out in California and I was in the pool," Ferland said Wednesday. "One of my buddies came up to me and said he had my agent on the phone, saying I just got traded to Carolina."

That'll get you out of the pool. The Flames and Hurricanes had upstaged the second day of the draft in Dallas with the splashy trade, as the Flames' Ferland, Hamilton and defensive prospect Adam Fox were dealt to Carolina for forward Elias Lindholm and defenseman Noah Hanifin.

"I was shocked at first but as the day went on, and a couple of days went on, I'm actually really excited to get over there," Ferland said.

But it was jolt to the system. The Flames were the team that drafted Ferland, taking him in the fifth round in 2010. Ferland, 26, had overcome some personal struggles to reach the NHL, scoring a career-high 21 goals last season -- his third full year in the NHL -- as he further established himself in the league.

"I really enjoyed Calgary and thought I'd play there my whole career," he said.



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Ferland is a native of Swan River, Manitoba, a small Canadian town of about 4,000. He grew up playing junior hockey for the Brandon Wheat Kings of the Western Hockey League before going to the Saskatoon Blades of the WHL.

Ferland's story, his hockey journey, in an inspirational one. As he said, "There has been a lot of obstacles, for sure."

He was raised by a single mother. The family had little money, but his mother and older sister sacrificed to see that he could play the sport. Others in Manitoba would do the same along the way, providing assistance.

But there were deeper, more troubling issues to face -- issues that Ferland is not hesitant to address.

He had a drinking problem. He once faced assault charges after a bar fight, although was later acquitted of those charges.

Again, with the help of friends such as Mike Thompson, a strength coach he first met in the American Hockey League who became a mentor and surrogate father, Ferland said he faced down his personal demons. He went to a rehab center in 2014, stopped drinking and has been sober for four years.

With the Hurricanes, Ferland will have a teammate in goalie Scott Darling who has faced a similar personal challenge. That's reassuring, Ferland said.

"When you meet other sober guys you just sort of instantly click," Ferland said. "You know what each other has kind of been through. That will help going over there, having another sober guy like Scott Darling."

Moving to Raleigh, to the South, will be a culture change for Ferland and his family.

"I've had snow every Christmas and every winter my entire life," he said. "It will be different going to the rink without a foot of snow on the ground."

But there's also been much talk about a different kind of culture change -- on the Canes, in the makeup of the team, in the approach of ownership and management, in the way the franchise is run.

Asked what that usually means to a hockey player, Ferland said, "Obviously things aren't working and you need to change some things. It could be the coach or the players. I think you just need to shake things up to show the players that the owner, the GM and the coach are all in now and they want to win."

Tom Dundon is the owner, and Ferland said he has spoken with him. The same is true for coach Rod Brind'Amour and general manager Don Waddell.

Ferland said Brind'Amour, during their conversation, told him the Canes "haven't had a guy like me in a while and I can help them win."

Ferland does play with an edge to his game. He has good size at 6-2 and 208 pounds, and Hamilton described him by saying, "Everyone who has played with him or against him knows how hard he can hit and how physical and tough he is."

For Ferland, so much will be new. He's in the Eastern Conference, in the Metropolitan Division. He'll be playing more often against an Alex Ovechkin, against a Sidney Crosby.

"It will be a fresh start," he said. "It will be a learning curve at first but it should be fun."

"Everything will be fine. My dream was to play in the NHL and I don't care where I play as long as I get to live my dream out."

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1100816 Carolina Hurricanes

Carolina is home for Brind'Amour: 'I bleed Hurricane red'

BY JOEDY MCCREARY

RALEIGH, N.C.-Rod Brind'Amour came to Carolina in 2000 and never left.

He worked his way up the Carolina Hurricanes' organizational ladder from key trade acquisition to captain of a Stanley Cup-winning team to the front office to assistant coach and, now, head coach. Along the way, he's become so blended into the fabric of the community that he coached his son's T-ball team in his spare time without drawing much attention.

When he was introduced last month as Bill Peters' successor, the Ottawa native referred to Raleigh as "my town."

"Obviously, I've been here a long time. My wife's from here, we've got our families here," Brind'Amour said. "The organization means something to me, and wearing the crest, it's special, and so I don't envision myself being in the hockey world with anyone else. That's kind of what I meant by it."

"I bleed Hurricane red," he added.

With the NHL's free agency period starting Sunday, Brind'Amour and the Hurricanes have something unique to sell — their new coach's loyalty to the club and the city, and the intimate connection between the team and one of the league's smallest markets — one that is starving for a winner. Carolina has the NHL's longest active playoff drought, missing the postseason for nine consecutive years, and has made it only once since Brind'Amour hoisted the Cup in 2006.

Brind'Amour, who was traded here 18 years ago by the Philadelphia Flyers in the Keith Primeau deal, holds a rare position among his peers in the coaching fraternity as one of only 20 active coaches in North America's four major professional sports who played for the team he now coaches.

"It's special, and I think the attraction for me is that I believe in this group. ... If we can just add the right pieces, I think we can be competitive," Brind'Amour said. "And I've been here when it was a great market, and we were good and had the support, so I know we can regain that."

None of those 20 coaches have continuously been with their franchise as long as Brind'Amour. The closest comparison might be Milwaukee Brewers manager Craig Counsell, who spent his childhood in that city while his father worked in the team's front office and has been with the club since 2007. After finishing his playing career in 2011, he moved into the front office and took over as manager in 2015 following Ron Roenicke's midseason firing.

"Growing up here and being a fan of the Brewers, and just living here my whole life, the connection to the organization obviously means a lot," Counsell said. "It helps you understand the organization just because you've been a part of it and know it for a while. It helps you know the history; it helps you know the people. ... I feel a responsibility to baseball in this state and in this city. I take that seriously."

In addition to Brind'Amour, only three other current coaches or managers have won championships while playing for those teams: Los Angeles Lakers coach Luke Walton won two titles as a forward in the 2000s, Dallas Cowboys coach Jason Garrett was a backup quarterback on two Super Bowl-winning teams in the 1990s, and Boston Red Sox manager Alex Cora was part of that club's World Series-winning team in 2007.

Raleigh's small-town feel also affords Brind'Amour the chance to be a normal father. In a scene that might be hard to imagine in one of hockey's pressure-cooker cities, Brind'Amour spent the spring coaching first base as an assistant for his son's T-ball team in the suburb of Wake Forest.



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The team's head coach, Matt Greene, described Brind'Amour as "an active, involved dad" and said watching him with the young players was like "watching the magic work."

"He was talking to the kids about baseball ... (and) the parents are talking about hockey, (with the parents telling him) 'I've got my son signed up for hockey next spring,'" Greene said. "But Rod was talking to the kid, and putting it more on the kids. Not that Rod was the star, but the kid was the star in baseball."

Brind'Amour, the son-in-law of former North Carolina State basketball player and ex-UNC Asheville coach Eddie Biedenbach, connected with the Raleigh community pretty quickly after his 2000 arrival, and he hopes the current players can do the same.

"We're a younger team now, but as they get older ... they're going to see that this is a great place to raise a family," he said. "The people here are just friendly, they're down-to-earth and it's a comforting type of lifestyle. At the end of the day, we all try to be a champion and we want to be a Stanley Cup champion, but there's other parts of life, too, that are important."

"Being a hockey player, being successful, you've got to feel good about where you live," he added. "We've checked that part off. Now we've just got to get the hockey part dialed in."

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1100817 Carolina Hurricanes

Canes' Necas more polished and confident, ready to be in NHL this season

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

RALEIGH-All eyes were on Andrei Svechnikov when the Carolina Hurricanes' prospects first took the ice Wednesday at PNC Arena.

But Martin Necas was the one quickly catching the eye of many observers.

Certainly the eye of Rod Brind'Amour, the Canes' new head coach.

The Hurricanes made Svechnikov the second overall pick of the NHL Entry Draft last week in Dallas, and the Russian forward has the looks, the skill, the presence of a would-be star.

But Necas, the Canes' first-round pick in 2017, has returned for his second prospect development camp bigger, with more polish to his game, with more self-assurance to his demeanor at age 19.

"There's certainly a huge difference, at least physically and maturity-wise," Brind'Amour said. "When he got here last year he was just a kid. I mean, he's still a kid but there's a major difference in him."

"This camp is not just what they do on the ice. They're not making the team based on this. But you watch him walk in the dressing room now and it's not 'What am I walking into?' It's just a comfort level. He goes on the ice and it's like 'This is normal.' He knows us and that's when you can get the kids to play, when they're confident and they're comfortable."

Brind'Amour paired Necas and Svechnikov together at times Wednesday in some four-on-four drills. The two played off each other well enough, and Necas said they're rooming together this week and already have formed an off-ice friendship.

Necas has one other opinion about Svechnikov: "I think he's NHL-ready."

But Necas feels the same way about himself, even if the center from the Czech Republic is not brash enough to say it quite that way.

"I feel like I'm better than last year," he said. "That's my goal, to make the team and make the opener."

Necas impressed the coaching staff and management with his speed and instinctive playmaking and was kept on the Canes' roster after preseason training camp last year along with rookie forward Janne Kuokkanen and defenseman Haydn Fleury. Kuokkanen and Fleury played in Carolina's season-opener, a 5-4 shootout win over Minnesota at PNC Arena, while Necas had to wait.

Necas made his NHL debut in the Canes' fourth game, Oct. 17 at Edmonton, in a 5-3 win. Not that was he was totally pleased.

"It was hard," he said. "I didn't play probably for more than two weeks. When I played a game I felt, I don't know what to say, a little bit tired because it was different that just practicing."

"It was a great experience. I enjoyed it. Like I said, I want to play every game here next season."

The decision was made by former general manager Ron Francis to send Necas back for another year with HC Kometa Brno in the Extraliga, Czech's top professional league. Necas made the most of it, also competing for the Czechs in the 2018 IIHF World Junior Championship in Buffalo, N.Y., and then with the national team in the World Championship in Denmark after the season.

"I just played my game," Necas said of the season. "I don't know, maybe I grew up a little."

Necas had three goals and eight assists in 11 games in the World Juniors, tying for the tournament scoring lead. And Brno won the league championship for a second straight year.

"He had a pretty good year," said Tony MacDonald, the Canes' director of amateur scouting. "Early on he did not play as much as he hoped to play, then was more of a factor and finished up at the World Championship and was very good there."

"He doesn't need to boost his stock with us. He has an exclamation point beside his name, as far as how good a player he is and we project him to be. In the game played today in the NHL, speed is the most important element. He has it and he's got the skill to go with it. It's a matter of him getting more man strength, and when he gets to 190 pounds he will be a force to be reckoned with."

Necas is closer. A year ago, he came to development camp listed at 6-1 and 178 pounds, lean and lanky. He has grown an inch and said he weighed in Wednesday at 189 pounds.

Could Necas and Svechnikov be used on the same line next season? Were they auditioning a bit Wednesday? Brind'Amour smiled.

"They're going to be teammates for a long time, at least that's what we hope," Brind'Amour said. "They're not stupid. They know they're going to be huge parts of this organization. I don't if we're going to play them together, don't know how all that's going to shake out. But they're here. Might as well take a look at it."

A look at the future.

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The Athletic / Patrick Eaves on his 'life-changing' illness and the road to recovery

By Lisa Dillman and Eric Stephens Jun 27, 2018



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ANAHEIM – The first sign that something was perplexingly wrong for Patrick Eaves came, curiously, on a night that looked pretty good on the scoresheet.

It was the fourth game of the season for the Ducks, and his first. Eaves took a neat pass from defenseman Josh Manson and buried a shot past New York Islanders goaltender Jaroslav Halak.

It was something that happened 32 times the season before in Eaves' breakout goal-scoring campaign.

But for anyone actually watching the game, it was clear Eaves was not himself. Friends and family flooded the inbox of his wife, Katie, wondering why his game was so out of sync.

"They were texting me, 'What's wrong with Patrick? Is he OK?'" Katie said.

It turns out the answer was no. He was not OK. Far from OK.

"I was mad because I couldn't play the way I wanted to. I couldn't skate," Eaves said. "I was avoiding contact. I knew something wasn't right going into the game, but then played through it.

"It's what we do. It's our job."

This was Oct. 11, 2017, the start of Eaves' first full season with the Ducks. As bad as Eaves felt that night, his condition worsened two days later. The Ducks were playing in Denver, the mile-high city, against the Avalanche. Eaves was already having breathing issues before having to play at high altitude.

"That's the most scared I've ever been on the ice," Eaves said. "I couldn't breathe. I couldn't get out of the way. I couldn't do anything."

Things were so bad that Eaves even had a hard time getting undressed after the game. His health continued to deteriorate in the next few weeks in what became a frightening trip down the medical rabbit hole.

Eaves broke his back as a 5-year-old. In his professional career, Eaves faced countless health issues, including multiple concussions. But this prolonged health scare proved to be the most challenging because of the uncertainty.

After consulting with a series of specialists, Eaves was originally diagnosed with Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare autoimmune disorder that affects 1 in 100,000 Americans. Eventually, it was determined to be something else altogether.

Just what? Even to this day, the Eaves family doesn't know for sure. But incredibly, at the end of this long (and still-unsolved) medical mystery, there was finally good news.

After missing all but two games of last season, Eaves expects to play for the Ducks in the season opener on Oct. 3 in San Jose. Other than a shoulder problem that arose during rehab and eventually required surgery, Eaves should be good to go. But there was a long and difficult path to get to this stage. At one point, Eaves was in an intensive care unit at an Orange County hospital, where he felt his lungs starting to shut down.

"I was in ICU and I couldn't move because the blankets felt like they were 500 pounds and I'm just sitting there having trouble breathing," Eaves said. "It got pretty scary.

"I didn't feel like I was going to die but it scared me when the breathing started to go. I couldn't walk.

"Once I was safe, it was definitely life-changing. It makes you look at things a lot differently, that's for sure."

Even to this date, as Eaves' health gradually improved, doctors still aren't sure what ailed him. Officially, the new diagnosis is post-viral syndrome.

During all the months of uncertainty, Eaves had reconciled himself to the fact he might not play again. Instead, the priority was getting his health back so he could go back to living a normal life.

In a 90-minute interview with The Athletic at Honda Center, Eaves and his wife, Katie, spoke on the record for the first time about the challenges of this past season and the issues and worries that their family faced.

After joining the Ducks in 2016-17, following a trade from the Dallas Stars, Eaves was an instant on-ice fit on the top line with Ryan Getzlaf, an effective player for them in the playoffs and an immensely popular figure in the dressing room.

Ducks general manager Bob Murray rewarded Eaves with a three-year contract extension worth \$9.45 million, because Eaves checked all the relevant boxes. He could play on the No. 1 line, score goals and provide a net-front presence on the power play.

"He wanted to come back here," Katie said.

"I told him, 'This is your prime opportunity to be a free agent in a big market.' He said, 'I want to be back in Anaheim.' He's a hockey team player."

Last September, Eaves showed up to training camp, motivated by the best season of his career and the taste of playoff success with the Ducks.

"I loved that feeling of being able to contribute every night," he said. "We were just rolling. That's why I was in the best shape I've ever been.

"I showed up here ready to go and, because I wanted to continue that, I was going to do everything in my power to be ready."

His best-laid plans went quickly awry.

"He went from the best shape of his life, a physical specimen, and by November, he was swollen and puffy all over," Katie said. "Everything was just bad."

The ordeal started when Katie and their three children were sick for two weeks with an upper-respiratory virus and Eaves ended up having to handle household chores, including back-to-school duties before camp started.

"That's completely out of my realm," he said, smiling. "Katie was down and I'm trying to keep this thing afloat and I had no idea what I was doing."

Days before training camp started, Eaves caught the bug and gradually started to feel his body betray him. It was akin to a light bulb dimming.

"I was becoming weak in my arms and legs and all of a sudden my back just went out," he said. "I was just skating, not even close to anybody. I said, 'Oh no.' This had never happened to me before. I wasn't moving very good for about 10 days.

"I ended up getting a chiropractic adjustment on it and it was instant relief. I assumed the weakness in my legs and arms were [related] to my back."

It was his concern over his back that sent Eaves to consult with one of the top back specialists in the country, Dr. Robert Watkins. But things continued to get progressively worse.

"I'm a registered nurse," Katie said. "So, I'm telling him, 'You need to go to ER. You call a CVS pharmacy and tell them you are struggling to breathe, they tell you to go to ER.'"

"You know men.

"There were a few times when I said, 'If you die and leave me ...'"

By the following Friday, Watkins had run more tests on Eaves and told him it was not a back issue. Eaves called Katie to tell her they were on the way to an ICU, and doctors theorized he had Guillain-Barre. Even with her medical background, Katie hadn't previously connected the dots.

"Going back to my nursing [days], it's so rare, it's not really one you deal with," she said. "I was not thinking of anything related to GB or a viral thing."



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The two most common treatments for Guillain-Barre are intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG) and plasma exchange (plasmapheresis), which essentially cleanses the blood of harmful antibodies attacking the nerves. Eaves had five rounds of the latter treatment.

"Coming from a medical background, we've always joked, throughout our marriage, we tend to say, 'You're OK,'" Katie said.

"As a nurse, you see life-threatening [events] and sometimes, you're just numb to that.

"I believed he was going to be better. I definitely believed hockey was over, 100 percent. And that was OK. But I know it wasn't OK for him."

Eaves eventually made peace with the prospect that he had played his final NHL game. The possibility first hit him after he got out of the hospital and didn't see any improvement in the first month.

"It was OK for me then. At that point, I was just trying to be a dad," Eaves said.

Their search for the real answers to what ailed him was ongoing. In time, the NHLPA helped put him in touch with one of the top Guillain-Barre specialists in the country, Dr. Perry Sheih, a clinical neurophysiologist at UCLA Hospital.

"We went over everything," Eaves said. "He obviously had my charts from the other place and within two hours he told me I didn't have Guillain-Barre. I never had it."

Katie said: "He asked Patrick, 'why do you think you have it?'"

Patrick said: "I said, 'doctors like you told me I had it. What do you think I have?' Then the whole room went ... He said, 'I do GB. I know it's not this. I'm not trained to tell you it would be anything else.'"

That consultation came right after Thanksgiving, the third week of November.

The difficulty in making a diagnosis is that many neurological conditions often present similar symptoms in the beginning.

"For instance, some patients – they might think they have Lyme disease," said Lisa Butler, executive director of the GBS/CIDP (Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy) Foundation International.

"Or they think they might have MS [multiple sclerosis]. Some patients are told they have ALS. This sort of numbness and tingling and pain can be very common in a lot of these conditions, so it's hard to sort it out. We frequently hear that someone will take themselves to the ER one day and they'll be sent home with the [diagnosis] that it's stress-related or you're dehydrated or something like that. They end up in the ER the next day on a respirator for a month."

Eaves' next stop in the search for answers was the renowned Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. One of Patrick's best friends is Mark Stuart, the former Winnipeg Jets' defenseman, whose father, Michael Stuart is an orthopedic surgeon at the Mayo Clinic. Working together with Dr. Walter Wilson, an infectious disease specialist, the two put together a plan that obliged Eaves to go through what he described as a "year's worth" of testing in one week.

"They checked every system I had," Eaves said. "It was top to bottom. They were checking for rare mosquito bites in South America. Once you go to Mayo, they get a plan together and execute it."

One by one, potential diseases were ruled out. It turns out, professional athletes are no different from the rest of us when it comes to gathering information. Eaves turned to 'Dr. Google' in the corridor of the Mayo Clinic to see what the Internet had to say about his symptoms.

"I was in a wheelchair, sitting there before one of my appointments, and I just started Googling things – which is the worst thing you can do," said Eaves. "You are so curious.

"I couldn't walk, so I'm just slumped over in the wheelchair, going, 'Oh no.'"

Eaves finally started to see the light after going to Port St. Lucie, Florida, to consult with strength and conditioning coach Mike Barwis, who previously worked with professional athletes, including the New York Mets, as well as patients with neurological disorders.

"He was barely walking," Barwis told The Athletic. "Basically, he was a neurological client, he wasn't a hockey player.

"When every step is a task, playing in the NHL at the highest level is probably not the closest thing to your mind.

"You're thinking, 'Oh my gosh, am I ever going to be able to walk normally? Am I ever going to be able to play with my children the way I want to? Am I going to be the husband I want to be?' Those things are going through your mind with those struggles."

Eaves makes no bones about it. He unequivocally gives Barwis the credit for getting his life and career back in order. Without Barwis's intervention, he isn't sure where he'd be.

"He's a brilliant man and he knows the neuro system," said Patrick. "It's crazy to see what he does. You see people who haven't moved in five years move their leg. And they break out in tears. It kind of puts everything in perspective."

Eaves was in such bad shape that Barwis didn't recognize him on his first day in Florida.

"Which is insane because I know Patty really well," Barwis said. "A number of professional athletes were in there at the same time. He walked over and got to the wall and was leaning on it because he was having trouble holding himself up. I turned and looked at him, 'Oh my gosh, you have to be kidding me.' He was slumped over; his shoulders were hanging. It was bad."

Eaves began by walking in a harness on a treadmill, at 0.8 miles per hour, which according to Katie, was painfully slow. "Older, geriatric people walked faster than him," she said.

But after three days, he was able to graduate to a slide board – a slick surface where you can simulate the side-to-side skating motion as if you were on ice.

"The first two days, he didn't even have enough stabilization to function," Barwis said. "If I would have put him on the first two days, he would have buckled. By the third week, he was going through intense workouts and sliding like he would on the ice."

The about-face was sudden and unexpected. What triggered the turnaround?

According to Patrick, "Neurologically he just turned you back on again. It was like a dimmer switch. He strips nerves and resets them.

"It was the hardest training I ever had to do and the most tiring by far. I'd go in the mornings. I got home at 4:30 one day. I'll never forget this. I was staying at his – he has a big RV that was close to the gym – so he'd let me stay there. I got in at 4:30. I'd get in and I'd just fall on the couch and take a nap.

"I'd get a text from the trainers and they were going out to dinner at 7:30. They said, 'Come out with us. We know a good spot.' So, I'd get back out to the car and the car was still running.

"I was so tired I didn't even turn the car off. But that's what it was. That pretty much sums everything up."

Katie described it as an emotional time.

"I knew whatever Mike was doing was hormonally adjusting him too," she said. "There were times when he wouldn't stop crying. I'm like, 'Are you OK?'"



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Said Patrick: "My body was changing again to normal. That was my goal going down there. At that point, hockey was out of the question. Just the way I was feeling, that was not going to happen.

"And so, I went there, and by Day 3, I realized, I'm going to be a dad again. It was unbelievable."

After more than a month in Florida, Eaves returned to Southern California to participate in "Patrick Eaves Beard Night" in a Jan. 25 game against the Winnipeg Jets. Spectators were given replicas of Eaves' beard, and his children – Norah, Della and Axel – were on the ice with him as he dropped the ceremonial first puck.

"By then, I was walking like I was a human again," Eaves said. "I was able to walk out on the ice with the kids. I was able to pick up my son. That was the first chance to show my kids that I was their big, strong dad again.

"These were things I couldn't do two weeks prior – and that was pretty awesome."

Provided his recovery remains on target, Eaves is on track to return to the Ducks in a significant role for the 2018-19 season.

"People forget about him and they shouldn't be forgetting he was gone," Ducks general manager Bob Murray told The Athletic. "The good part is I've seen him in the last couple of weeks and I can't wait until September. I know he's going to be close to being ready to play when we start the season. I can't wait."

Murray has been an NHL executive for decades and has never seen a case quite like this.

"First of all, it was so scary when all this started to happen," he said. "We thought it was the back and then the back doctor says you better see a neurologist. Then all of a sudden, he's having a hard time breathing. Then you're just worried about him. The heck with hockey.

"There were times he told me he had a hard time walking from our dressing room out the ramp to his car.

"He missed the game. He missed playing and he missed it badly. That's a tough thing when a guy is just coming into his own as a player, at a later age. And he's excited and this happens to him. It's got to be so frustrating, so hard on the family. It was devastating."

The only medical issue currently facing Eaves is a shoulder problem that arose when he was doing his therapy in Orange County back in mid-November. Eaves injured his right shoulder trying to do a push-up and ultimately required a surgical fix. But he is doing therapy three times a week and reports that he is ahead of schedule and that things are healing well. By the season opener, it should not pose an issue.

Just how good will Eaves be when he returns to the ice for the Ducks? Murray says he's "not worried at all because he's such a fit guy."

"He's very conscious of his body," Murray said. "Don't forget, back in the day, us guys that weren't quite as fit, if you missed a year, you struggled. A guy like him, he's a consummate pro. He looks great. He feels great. He's going to be just fine."

Throughout the ordeal, Patrick says the one constant was the support he received from Katie – even if it occasionally drifted into tough love. Whenever the urge to feel sorry for himself arose, she put a quick stop to it.

Patrick said: "Nurse Katie won't allow that," he said, with a smile. "Maybe I got 24 hours."

"I won't let him," she said. "He gets 24 hours to sulk. I let him have his 24 hours. You eat as many brownies as you want – 24 hours and it's back to normal. You get up and go. I'd show him terrible pictures of what people were going through in the world and say, 'Your life is OK.'"

"It puts everything in perspective," said Patrick. "We're pretty darn lucky.

The couple first met more than a decade ago in Chicago, soon after Eaves' Ottawa Senators lost to the Ducks in the 2007 Stanley Cup final. Eaves was driving home to Minnesota from Ottawa and decided to break up the trip by stopping in Chicago for an evening. Katie was living in Chicago and attending graduate school when they met in a popular State Street restaurant, Dublin.

"I texted all my friends that night, 'I just met the guy I'm going to marry,'" said Katie. "There's this stereotype of a professional athlete that they have the egos and the stuff like that. He's not like that at all. He's just a normal Midwestern guy, which is somebody I was always looking for.

"We've been hit with a lot of things over the years. Patrick was bought out of his contract by the Senators on our honeymoon. They found us in Bora Bora to let us know. Silver linings – everything keeps taking you to the next better thing."

Thank goodness that 2007 Ducks-Senators series ended in five games. Otherwise, the two might not have met.

"I lost the Stanley Cup," said Eaves, "and I won a wife."

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The Athletic / Inside the war room with Tom Dundon and the Carolina Hurricanes

By Scott Burnside Jun 27, 2018

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.



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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 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 bandied 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 Tulsky what he thinks of a player. Sometimes Tulsky'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.



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"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 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.

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.



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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 (blinking) 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.

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 Ferland 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.



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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 of 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 franchise 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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The Athletic / Why taxes shouldn't prevent John Tavares or any free agent from signing with a Canadian team

By Marc Antoine Godin Jun 27, 2018

John Tavares is currently being courted as an impending unrestricted free agent by five American teams and the Toronto Maple Leafs. The Montreal Canadiens are not in the race for all sorts of reasons; that's his prerogative.

But taxes should not be one of them.

Every year it's the same story. When the Canadiens strike out in free agency and have trouble attracting the best players to Montreal, taxes always come up as a serious deterrent. But it's simply not true to say a player would automatically be crippled financially by taxes if he came to play for the Canadiens or the Maple Leafs or any other team in Canada.

"I can make it so signing in Montreal is the same as signing in Texas," an agent told The Athletic.

Really? Residents of Texas pay federal tax at a lower rate than Canadians and pay no state tax on their home games. That's tough to beat, no?

"In my opinion, the tax rate can be as low, or if not very close to what it is in Texas, Las Vegas, Florida or Tennessee," confirms Jason Chevrier, an accountant and tax advisor with an expertise in cross-border taxes. "It's a myth that Canadian players — I say that because taxes in Ontario are higher than they are in Quebec at that tax bracket — it's a myth to say Montreal is the worst place to play hockey. Montreal can even be one of the best places if it's planned properly."

Now we're getting to the heart of the matter.

There are different strategies available to players to mitigate the 53 percent tax burden in Quebec, but the most effective of those strategies is called a Retirement compensation arrangement, or an RCA.

Basically, an RCA is a mechanism to defer paying income taxes for high earners who will suffer a significant drop in revenue as soon as they retire. This is something that is available to everyone, but professional athletes are eligible for exemptions that most people don't have available to them. Not only that, but not everyone has the same financial flexibility to contribute to an RCA as professional athletes. They are in a special category of taxpayers. In terms of hockey players, it is mainly those who will go live in a place where the tax laws are more beneficial once they retire who use an RCA. Many European players and some American residents take advantage of it, but there are still some Canadians who are already planning to retire out of the country.

The way the RCA works is a player will generally place 40 to 50 percent of his salary in a trust and that amount would be sheltered from the high tax rates in Ontario or Quebec, for example. When you put money into an RCA you don't have access to it until you are no longer employed by the team, but it is intended for when the player has stopped playing professional hockey. Once he retires and is no longer a Canadian resident, he can withdraw that money and pay a one-time tax on it at a rate of 25 percent. In some cases, the tax rate would be even lower if the withdrawal is stretched over a longer period. Not only is it a favourable arrangement, but part of that money in the trust will have grown with interest over a few years.

The RCA can single-handedly make a huge difference and essentially eliminate the tax handicap that plagues Canadian teams.

"I think it can really help," another agent told The Athletic. "There aren't too many teams who push this. If I were them, it's something I would bring up right away. It would be worth it for a team to have a tax specialist in the GM's office."

For some reason, some Canadian teams appear to have trouble alleviating the taxation concerns of players by proposing this solution to them. At the same time, the responsibility falls on the agent to properly inform his client because it's the player who has to initiate the trust and indicate to the team where the money is to be deposited.



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Some agencies provide these services to their clients themselves and others outsource them to firms specializing in these matters. But not every agent is created equal and some totally ignore the existence of the RCA route and the potential benefit for their clients.

The fact some teams don't use this to alleviate a player's concerns and some agents don't advise their clients of all the avenues available to them gives life to the common perception that taxes remain a severe Canadian handicap in the NHL.

The players who will become unrestricted free agents Sunday should have a good accountant because taxes for these athletes are extremely complex. It is not a question of simply reading a T4 and using some home tax software. It's a huge jigsaw puzzle.

A Canadian who plays for an American team, for example, spends the majority of his time in the United States and can therefore declare he is not a Canadian resident. But he still has to produce a tax statement for each American state he played in over the course of the season, another for the U.S. government, another for the government of Canada, yet another for Quebec, and that's not counting the cities that collect municipal income taxes.

So every player's tax situation is distinct and heavily influenced by the division he plays in, the schedule, and his primary residence for taxation purposes.

"When we get to July 1 and start receiving offers, we will calculate what \$4 million in Texas is compared to \$4 million in Alberta, in Ontario or in California," one agent said. "It won't be the same net amount, there are big differences. So Canadian teams need to use every advantage they can, and the RCA is one of them."

The U.S. congress passed a tax reform bill in December that was a bit of a game changer, reducing the highest federal tax rate from 39.6 percent to 37 percent. More help for the rich, you might say, but there are two sides to it. Because while it appears to be good news for the highest earners, that same bill will eliminate certain deductions that allowed for a reduction of taxable income. For example, it was previously possible to deduct state tax at the federal level, which is no longer the case. When you play in California, where the state tax is 13 percent, and suddenly you can't deduct that amount from your federal taxes, it makes a big difference.

"It really plays in the hand of states that don't have state income tax," another agent told The Athletic. "So it's even more valuable now in Florida, Vegas, Washington state, so Seattle."

But this reform does favour Canadian markets because of mechanisms like the RCA, which allows players to reduce the gap in how much tax they pay.

It won't be warmer in the winter, but at least it will be less expensive.

An RCA is not the only way a Canadian team like Montreal or Toronto can present a favourable tax strategy; to a lesser extent, signing bonuses can also be a useful tool.

Because of the tax agreement between Canada and the United States, a signing bonus is subject to a 15 percent tax in Canada and that amount can be deducted from that player's federal tax bill in the United States. Let's take an American resident who, on July 1, lists Florida as his primary residence for tax purposes. Even if he is playing for the Canadiens, as long as he receives the signing bonus while he is living in Florida, he will pay less Canadian tax on that amount.

"In the short term it could be an advantage to use signing bonuses," said Chevrier, the cross-border tax specialist. "But on a long-term contract, the best option for tax savings is an RCA. You could do both but on a seven-year contract, the benefit of the signing bonus is limited."

Let's be clear, if a player chooses a team based on tax rates he might not be playing hockey for the right reasons. But taxes are nonetheless one of many considerations unrestricted free agents need to take into account and one the teams who are negotiating with those players need to

address. It's important for a team like the Canadiens or Maple Leafs who are talking to a player who falsely believes Quebec or Ontario is a tax nightmare for him.

There are tools available. It's just a matter of knowing them and making sure the player knows them as well.

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1100922 Websites

The Athletic / Q&A: Willie O'Ree on breaking the NHL's color barrier, the call from the Hall of Fame and the work left to be done

By Scott Burnside Jun 27, 2018

For more than two decades, Willie O'Ree has basically been giving the game of hockey one non-stop hug.

It's an unconditional love for a sport that is both rare and heartwarming.

On Tuesday, the first black player to put on an NHL jersey and skate in an NHL regular season game got a return hug from the game as he was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame.

You can debate that it took too long – sure it did – but if there is one thing about O'Ree, it's that his life has taught him to take the long view.

The grandson of slaves who used the Underground Railroad to escape the United States to Eastern Canada, O'Ree was a talented baseball player and hockey player who broke the color barrier in the NHL on Jan. 18, 1958, with the Boston Bruins, where he helped defeat the powerful Montreal Canadiens at The Forum. He played two games that season and then returned to the Bruins for the 1960-61 season when he recorded all of his 14 career NHL points while playing 43 games.

He did so having lost almost all sight in his right eye thanks to a deflected puck when he was playing junior hockey, a condition that doctors initially told him would cost him his career, which few people knew of.

If the point totals were modest, O'Ree's impact on the game has been anything but.

After completing a stellar minor pro career (he played 13 seasons in the old Western Hockey League, retiring only when he reached his mid-40s), O'Ree joined the NHL in 1996 as part of its diversity group and worked tirelessly over the past two decades to keep the NHL on the forefront of embracing new hockey communities around North America and opening up the game to as diverse a group as possible.

His easy manner with people and self-effacing personality were perfectly suited for his interaction with literally thousands of young people, many of whom were experiencing the game for the first time.

If his work with underserved communities at the grassroots level has been exemplary — not to mention tireless — it seems fitting that his path to the Hall of Fame was a grassroots one as well with friends and supporters appealing through letters and testimonials forwarded to the Hall of Fame's selection committee in recent years.

To say O'Ree, 82, has been an inspiration to dozens of black hockey players who have to overcome prejudice to make their NHL dreams come true is an understatement.

In a poignant piece penned for The Players' Tribune this spring, Wayne Simmonds of the Philadelphia Flyers wrote how his parents introduced him to O'Ree's story when Simmonds was just learning that being a black hockey player meant being different. The Flyers star and former MVP at the NHL All-Star Game wrote how he did a book report on O'Ree



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when he was in school and how he came to learn what a long, lonely journey it must have been for the man who broke the color barrier in hockey.

"I got the chance to meet Willie for the first time during my rookie year with the Kings, and I was exactly like the little kids who come up to us for autographs after games," Simmonds wrote at the time. "I was totally speechless. I was meeting my hero. For every single kid who was ever told to 'stick to basketball,' Willie was like the first man on the moon. He wasn't just a hockey player. He was an astronaut."

Tuesday, Simmonds Tweeted: "Congratulations Mr. O'Ree finally in your rightful place."

Hard to argue those sentiments.

Late Tuesday, we got a chance to chat with O'Ree about becoming a Hall of Famer, at long last.

Scott Burnside: Hello Willie. Let's start with congratulations.

Willie O'Ree: It's been a busy, busy, busy day but absolutely fantastic.

Burnside: I know people have asked you, but were you in your house when you got the call, describe the moment when the call comes through to you.

O'Ree: Yes, I was in my house. I was with Bryant McBride, who actually hired me with the National Hockey League back in 1996, and they're working on a documentary, and there was a young lady by the name of Lauren who was here doing some filming. They got to the house around 7:30 this morning. We had a bite to eat and we were basically preparing ourselves for the call from the Hall of Fame. And then the NHL called this morning. Lanny McDonald and John Davidson called me and said, ... 'we've selected you and you're going into the Hall of Fame in November.' We started cheering and tears came to my eyes and I was trying to take a deep breath. It was wonderful news and I'm overwhelmed, overwhelmed and really thrilled about being inducted.

Burnside: Have you been waiting for this call or been aware of this call every year?

O'Ree: A few years ago I'd met with several of my friends and read several interviews that I should be in the Hall of Fame, and at that time I thought, if it happens it happens. It would be a wonderful thing. But really, when it came down to it, about six weeks ago I was in New York with Bryant McBride [formerly the vice-president of business development for the NHL] ... and Bryant said, 'Willie, it's your time, you've got to be in the Hall of Fame,' and so he knew a lot of influential people that he'd talked to over the past month and they all agreed, and so he said we're going to make it happen. So we got together and we talked about it and then I was going to be traveling with my work and then being in Toronto and then being in Las Vegas for the awards and then Bryant traveling together here the past couple of days and he said things are coming together, he says '(I think) it's going to happen.' When I got the initial call this morning, I was just overwhelmed. Even Bryant, Bryant hasn't cried in 25 years and it brought tears to his eyes and we gave one another a big hug. It's just been a great day, honest. This year has been a great year for me.

Burnside: Do you remember when Bryant first came to you, what did you think of the idea of going to work for the league and taking on this role?

O'Ree: When I retired from professional hockey in 1980, I wanted to get back into hockey in some capacity. I felt like I had something to give back to the sport or to give back to the community. Bryant contacted me and he was in a meeting in his work with some other people, and Lou Vairo, who was with USA Hockey, and Bryant got together and said that they wanted USA Hockey and the NHL to get together and open hockey up for more boys and girls, so he contacted me in San Diego — and he had a time trying to find out where I was — and when he did, he contacted me and kind of laid out the plan, what he was planning on doing and he was for it 100 percent and Commissioner [Gary] Bettman was with it 100 percent and so they laid it out and I looked at it and I said this is

something that I'd like to do. So I started working in '96 and it's just been so great. The program works. I wouldn't have stayed with it for 21 years if I didn't think the program worked. It's fantastic. I've just had the greatest time contacting more boys and girls and letting them know that there is a sport that they can play. Traveling around to different schools and boys and girls clubs and YM/YWCAs and juvenile detention facilities, you know contacting boys and girls and getting them on the ice and letting them know that this is another sport they can play and helping them set goals for themselves and helping them work towards their goals.

Burnside: When you think back, do you sometimes sit back and think that it's amazing this is still going on and that it's part of your legacy? Do you sometimes sit back and go, holy cow, that's pretty unbelievable?

O'Ree: I gave it some thought. When I first started with the program, I was traveling between 12 and 14 days a month, traveling around to different programs and schools and so on. I didn't give it any thought. I'd go and see a couple of schools and maybe a clinic in one day and maybe three schools the next day and a clinic or whatever. I just looked at it as getting to meet as many boys and girls as possible and letting them know that working and setting goals for themselves and working towards those goals. I have Bryant here, Bryant can tell you right now about my travel, how far I've traveled with the program since '96.

Bryant McBride: Scott, this is an interesting stat that you'll enjoy. In preparing for Willie's Hall of Fame, his proposal and the paperwork that went into it, we charted the number of days over the last 21 years that he's been working with the NHL in this capacity, we charted the number of days that he's been traveling, and it's been over six years.

Burnside: That's pretty incredible. I was just curious if you often think back to that night in 1958 and the call you got from Boston and when you went from Quebec (O'Ree was playing for the Quebec Aces of the old Quebec Hockey League) to Montreal, what you were thinking? What was that like?

O'Ree: I remember it quite clearly. I got the initial call from the Bruins that I was to meet the Bruins in Montreal to play two games against the Montreal Canadiens. Saturday January 18th in Montreal and Sunday January 19th in Boston. My parents and some of my friends came up for the game. See I was no stranger to the Montreal fans because I had played the Montreal Royals, the professional team, in The Forum, and I'd played against the Montreal Junior Canadiens at The Forum, so when I stepped on the ice, I was Willie O'Ree with a Bruins jersey on and the fans recognized me from watching me when I played. It was a regular scheduled NHL game, now I had played against the Montreal Canadiens in exhibition games, but this was a regular scheduled game, and warming up I could see the fans pointing in my direction and I had butterflies for the first couple of minutes, but then when the game started and I settled down. We were fortunate enough to beat the Canadiens that night, we beat them 3-0 right in Montreal. That was just a big thrill for me even, although I didn't get any goals, no assists, no penalties. We did come out with two points and then we got on the train after the game and went to Boston and played there Sunday, and the Canadiens beat us [6-2] in Boston, but I remember the two games quite clearly.

Burnside: I know you've said in the past you didn't realize at that time exactly what that moment meant, but I wonder if you were nervous going into the locker room or on the train, or was it simply a matter of this was your job and you went and did it?

O'Ree: When I arrived in Montreal, coach Milt Schmidt and general manager Les Patrick were there and they sat me down and said, 'Willie, we called you up because we think you can add a little something to the club.' They said, 'don't worry about anything else on the ice except going out and doing what you do best,' and they told me that the Bruins organization is behind you 100 percent, so basically that's what I did, I went out and played hockey and tried to represent the hockey club to the best of my ability.

Burnside: What does it mean when you hear from guys like Wayne Simmonds or Joel Ward and some of the other black players now to hear how much you've meant to them and how much your journey meant to



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them in dealing with some of the difficult things they've encountered moving through the system?

O'Ree: Yes. I had the pleasure of meeting a lot of the not only black players but players of color. One, in particular, is Jarome Iginla, who played for a number of years in the National Hockey League, and when I first met Jarome he was playing with the Calgary Flames and he said, 'Willie, I can't imagine what you had to go through to make it possible for guys like me to play in the league.' He says, 'I have the highest admiration and respect for you, for what you accomplished and you stayed focus on what you wanted to do because you wanted to make hockey your career even when the doctors told you that you'd never play hockey again, you wouldn't accept that.' So it's a nice feeling to hear from players that are playing in the National Hockey League, because they're there and they have the skill and the ability to be there.

Burnside: Did you ever find it lonely whether in the NHL or playing in the minor pros before or after your time in the NHL?

O'Ree: Well, sometimes you know when you hear the racism and the bigotry on the ice, but thanks to my older brother who was not only my brother and my friend but he was my mentor, he taught me a lot. If I was going to pursue hockey as a career and he said, 'Willie, names will never hurt you. If people can't accept you for the individual that you are, then that's their problem, not yours. And just go out and work hard.' He said, 'there's no substitute for hard work. I know the type of hockey player that you are, so when you go out, work as hard as you can and represent your hockey club to the best of your ability.' My brother's name was Richard, and he was about 12 years older than I was. I thank him for the advice that he gave me.

Burnside: Have you started thinking about your speech in November in Toronto?

O'Ree: I was just talking with Bryant here and I said I'm going to need your help. But he said just go up and just talk from your heart, how you feel and what it means to you to be inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Burnside: Well, it's long overdue but maybe when it happens that means it's the right time.

O'Ree: This is the right time. This is the right time.

McBride: And I think it's important to mention, I said to him, you know what the most important part is? He's not done yet.

Burnside: That's a great point. Let me ask you before you go, then, what's left for you, what would you like to see happen as you keep moving around and talking to people? How much work is left to be done, maybe that's the best way to ask it?

O'Ree: Well, I would love to see not only more black players and players of color get into the league, but I would like to see more coaches and more managers. And more positions filled by black individuals. I think there's room there to expand and I hope that, if I can work a few years, I can get involved and make this happen for some other black players.

The Athletic LOADED: 06.28.2018

1100923 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / NHL rumblings: Chatter picking up with July 1 on the horizon

Hockey Night in Canada's Chris Johnston joins Evanka Osmak talk about the ongoing John Tavares saga.

Elliotte Friedman

Some rumblings as we approach July 1:

- The John Tavares meetings are over, and he was debriefing Wednesday night with agent Pat Brisson. It is in his hands now.

- Meanwhile, a current teammate is one of the more intriguing free-agent cases.

The blue line market took a hit when John Carlson returned to Washington. Multiple reports indicate Jack Johnson is going to Pittsburgh. Kevin Connauton, who scored 11 goals in 2017-18, remained in Arizona. The Coyotes are also keeping two of next summer's biggest prizes: Oliver Ekman-Larsson and Niklas Hjalmarsson. The expectation is Drew Doughty will commit to Los Angeles. Tampa Bay GM Steve Yzerman said he wants to extend Ryan McDonagh, and when Yzerman tips his hand like that, there's a good chance it happens. It is believed talks are underway.

All eyes are on Ottawa and Erik Karlsson. But, if you're not in that race, there aren't too many full-time, under-30 options.

Washington is making a serious run at keeping Michal Kempny. There's Ian Cole, overtime hero John Moore, Greg Pateryn — and Calvin de Haan.

De Haan did not play after Dec. 16, 2017, needing shoulder surgery that ended his season. That occurred in January, and "after two weeks of sitting around doing nothing," as he joked Tuesday, de Haan began the rehab process.

He resumed skating a couple of months ago, and, as one GM said this week, "there's a lot of interest."

"We had the time to make sure things were done right," de Haan said. "You never want to get hurt. It sucks. I wouldn't wish it on anyone. But we had nine months to make sure it healed. I feel better than before."

Was there fear about having surgery on an expiring contract?

"It does cross your mind," he answered. "I like to think I'm an easygoing guy. It's kind of how we approached things. We had the best shoulder doctor on the planet. He was very positive."

That's Dr. Tony Miniaci. De Haan's agent, Andy Scott, made the doctor's notes available to interested clubs. "Anyone who asks for them gets them," he said. "(Dr. Miniaci) was adamant we get it done."

Two years ago, Steven Stamkos said the free-agency meeting period goes much faster than you can prepare for.

"He's right about that," de Haan said. "It feels like a whirlwind. But it's nice to be wanted."

He wouldn't discuss specific teams that reached out, but has been in contact with the Islanders.

"It's all I've ever known. I know people talk about the arena situation. It is what it is. The ice surface is 200 feet regardless. Great people. The worst part about being injured was watching my teammates, my buddies, not succeed. When you score as many goals as we do, you should make the playoffs. You want to be out there."

He'll be back. We're just waiting to find out where.

- Another defender with some serious interest: Pateryn. Don't be surprised if he ends up somewhere in the \$2-million range. Believe Minnesota is one interested party.

- It sounds like Chicago continues to monitor the possibility of a Justin Faulk deal.

- With reports that Cam Ward is going to Chicago and Robin Lehner visited Detroit, there is even more belief that Buffalo is aggressively pursuing Carter Hutton. If the Sabres are willing to go three years, they probably get him.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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• Toronto has fielded calls on the AHL championship tandem of Garret Sparks and Calvin Pickard.

• A few readers/tweeters wanted more information on something from the 31 Thoughts blog last week: I mentioned Los Angeles, New York and Florida are rumoured to appeal to Artemi Panarin. You asked if that meant one New York team or both. I'm under the impression it is both. You also asked if that meant both Florida teams or just the Panthers. I'm less clear on that one, but I think it is both.

Agent Dan Milstein wouldn't comment on potential destinations, but did say reports that Panarin wanted to go somewhere his girlfriend would have more opportunities to further her own career are not true.

That's all for now...

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Sportsnet.ca / 31 Thoughts: All eyes on John Tavares during UFA interview period

Elliotte Friedman

Monday afternoon, John Tavares begins The Process (sorry, Sam Hinkie).

Five NHL teams will be invited to pitch him on a new NHL home.

Dallas, San Jose, Toronto, Boston and Tampa Bay are in. Several teams are in a holding pattern, including Nashville and Vegas. It's been reported that Los Angeles removed itself from consideration after signing Ilya Kovalchuk eliminated cap room. Things can always change, though. Maybe it ends up being more than five teams.

Adding to the drama is the fact Islanders GM Lou Lamoriello went right from Dallas to California. It's a smart move, staying close to the action. (He's probably got the room bugged.) The Islanders don't count as one of the five; Tavares already knows what he's got there.

All things being equal, my feeling from the beginning was Tavares wanted to remain an Islander. But, as the season progressed and they slid from a playoff position, you could see the frustration on his face. Clearly, ownership saw it, too, bringing in Lamoriello and Barry Trotz. The organization is paying a ton of money in salaries when you add what is still owed to Garth Snow and Doug Weight.

If Tavares returns, ownership will consider that money well spent.

Draft weekend was excellent for the Islanders, even if a plan to use one of their first-rounders to add a current NHLer failed. Tavares's new contract is going to be a big one, so the team will need effective youth on entry-level deals. They've got two more years of Mathew Barzal. And, in the near future, they can point to Noah Dobson and Oliver Wahlstrom. That was a coup for New York.

He's got to believe he can win. If he's convinced, it will be difficult to pry him out.

The other teams are intriguing. Four of them were in the playoffs. Dallas, Nashville, Tampa and Vegas have no state taxes. Most will have challenging long-term decisions if they are Tavares' choice. Dallas can extend Tyler Seguin July 1 — that's also going to be a big number. Tampa wants to extend Ryan McDonagh and is one year away from either a massive contract or arbitration with Nikita Kucherov. He is unrestricted in 2020.

Toronto is going to owe Auston Matthews, Mitch Marner and possibly William Nylander. The Predators have to reward Ryan Ellis and Roman Josi.

Meanwhile, Vegas basically is a blank canvas and word was going around last week that they might let all of their impending UFAs reach free agency. San Jose's positioned itself for this. Doug Wilson's got a Hall of Fame case as both player and executive. The Stanley Cup is the one thing he doesn't have. He wants this opportunity, badly.

On the weekend, one executive asked if there was any way Tavares takes anything less than seven or eight years. The honest answer is: I don't know. But my guess is someone is going to ask if he's willing to take an enormous short-term deal to see if he can win with a loaded roster before other players have to be rewarded. It would also allow him the potential of another major payday.

Another possibility: When the Toronto Blue Jays signed Roger Clemens before the 1997 season, they promised that if he was unhappy before the term of the contract was up, they would trade him. Two years later, they did, moving him to the Yankees. They got caught and were punished by Major League Baseball, but I can see the possibility of a similar promise. (The key is not leaving a paper trail.)

All of this, of course, is conjecture. Finally, we're getting to the end. We've asked many questions. Soon, we get the answers.

31 THOUGHTS

1. Of all the GMs stating their case, I'm most curious about Toronto's Kyle Dubas. He's definitely a different thinker. It was reported the Maple Leafs prepared an elaborate on-ice presentation. In *The Cubs Way* (a book about their 2016 World Series victory), author Tom Verducci reported that GM Theo Epstein, in wooing pitcher Jon Lester, hired special-effects Masters from Hollywood and producers from the gaming industry to make a lifelike movie of the team winning the World Series. "(Epstein) didn't want Lester to just imagine what it would be like to win," Verducci wrote. "He also wanted him to see what it looked like." Tavares may get the same treatment.

2. I really don't like taking shots at players who get traded. You're gone, move on, let's go. Dougie Hamilton was hit with personal criticism when dealt from Boston to Calgary, and now while en route to Carolina. Hamilton politely declined a request to address all this, not wanting to toss more gasoline on the fire.

The move out of Massachusetts definitely was a personality clash, with differing opinions on who was right and who was wrong. After making a few calls, this is not about who's attending team slumber parties. This is about role. Hamilton did not formally request a trade, but there is confirmation there were discussions about his spot in the lineup. There is also the issue of brother Freddie. When he was traded, Dougie was openly upset and that bothered the Flames. There was agreement a move would be better for both sides.

The Flames wanted to re-unite TJ Brodie and Mark Giordano, which will happen. They felt Travis Hamonic would benefit from playing with a steadier partner, as opposed to Brodie, more of a jazz-musician freelancer. That would take Hamilton off the top pair, which didn't thrill him. He also didn't start last season on the top power play, eventually replacing Brodie midway through. That was another bone of contention. This was necessary for both player and team. Hamilton will benefit from Carolina: he hears everything. Less noise there.

Noah Hanifin and Elias Lindholm were unhappy, too. Their contract talks were difficult, with Lindholm's last conversation ending in a blowup the day before he was traded. A lot of players eager to prove something.

3. Last summer, when Calgary traded for Hamonic, the Flames fought hard to keep Adam Fox from the Islanders. Before Round 1 on Friday, Flames GM Brad Treliving made his final pitch to Fox's advisor, Matt Keator. Treliving wasn't going to risk losing him for nothing.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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4. Jeff Skinner, who has a no-move clause, provided Carolina with a small list of where he'll go.

5. On Saturday, The Boston Globe's Kevin Paul Dupont reported the Bruins had been told Rick Nash, who has a concussion history, was considering retirement. Reached on Sunday, Nash texted he is "weighing all options of where I want to pick up the family and move to. My main goal is to the win the Cup." The Athletic's Aaron Portzline reported Sunday night that Columbus is at the top of Nash's list.

Denied by Kovalchuk, will Bruins turn attention back to Nash?
@GlobeKPD <https://t.co/FRGYPuwaHk> via @BostonGlobe

— Kevin Paul Dupont (@GlobeKPD) June 24, 2018

6. Sometime before Round 2, Montreal went to Max Pacioretty with a trade offer from the Kings. An extension was included. It was time-sensitive, because 2018 draft picks were included. Pacioretty said no, and switched agents to Allan Walsh. Can it be revived? Not sure. I do think the Kings considered adding two scorers, not stopping with Ilya Kovalchuk. But the issue is going to be Pacioretty's next contract.

I do believe he would like to play in Los Angeles, but would also like to make up for what he left on the table with the Canadiens. LA can't fit that. Pacioretty is upset and the Canadiens are upset, so even though word was they may keep him now, that's going to be awkward if it happens. GM Marc Bergevin will revisit this, maybe depending on who misses their target on July 1.

7. There were rumblings Jake Muzzin was part of the Pacioretty trade, but that was denied. The Canadiens are believed to have inquired about Carolina's Victor Rask.

8. Sounds like Los Angeles will not qualify Tobias Rieder. Acquired from Arizona just before the deadline, he will be a free agent.

9. Now that John Carlson has signed, Washington will try and keep Michal Kempny. Much more interest now than at the deadline, but the Capitals are still in it. Since Colorado bought out Brooks Orpik, he can return to Washington at a new salary. Someone is going to make it very difficult for Jay Beagle to stay. He's got a lot of respect around the league for what he does. Carlson's signing thrusts Erik Karlsson back into the spotlight, with Ottawa trying to create a bigger market for his services.

John Carlson will be tied for the second-highest AAV among NHL defencemen at \$8M — behind Subban (\$9M) and alongside Burns (\$8M). OEL jumps to \$8.25M a year from now.

Doughty and Karlsson are on the clock.

— Chris Johnston (@reporterchris) June 24, 2018

10. In addition to their Tavares pitch, San Jose is working hard on several extensions. What's their history? Take care of guys a year before they hit the market. Two summers ago: Brent Burns. Last year: Martin Jones and Marc-Edouard Vlasic. It is Logan Couture's turn, and several sources indicate it is coming. It's also possible we're going to see something with Tomas Hertl.

11. The \$79.5 million cap will make it tough for Winnipeg to keep Paul Stastny. The key might be offering some kind of draft pick/asset for another team to take Steve Mason. He has one more year at \$4.1 million. If they can clear that, we're in business.

12. Not surprisingly, a lot of Day 1 interest in James van Riemsdyk. One team indicated they were told he'd narrow the field in the middle of the week.

13. Apparently, Toronto was asking a pretty big price for anyone to get into the 25th spot. They were looking for defencemen.

14. Draft rumblings were that Artemi Panarin's preferences (in no particular order) are Los Angeles, New York and Florida.

15. It's believed Buffalo is in on Carter Hutton.

16. There was Western Canadian interest in Jason Zucker. I asked if that meant Calgary, Edmonton and/or Vancouver, and was told, "Yes." God only knows if that referred to one, two, or all three of them.

17. There looks to be a pre-July 1 price and post-July 1 price on Ryan O'Reilly. He is due a \$7.5 million bonus, and that's affecting what the Sabres can get. If Buffalo pays, it probably makes sense to keep him, except that the offers may improve. St. Louis was circling, and it's possible that morphs into something bigger. The Blues might want Vladimir Sobotka to be part of the package, too. I could see the Sharks being a possibility if they don't get Tavares.

18. Interesting: a few agents said we could see more arbitration cases this summer. We're still a couple months away, but they reported tougher-than-usual negotiations for this time of year. In 2017, one of 30 possible cases had a hearing (Nate Schmidt). In the past five years, there were 124 potential hearings. Just five saw no settlement before a ruling, with a handful coming after the hearing, but before a judgement (for example, PK Subban). One of those was Sobotka, who had left for the KHL.

19. Filip Zadina is a confident lad. He told Montreal face-to-face that if they passed on him, he'd fill their net with goals. Then, he said it to the Detroit media when the Canadiens, Senators and Coyotes went elsewhere. The Red Wings wanted centres and defence, but threw that out the window when Zadina dropped in their laps.

Love Filip Zadina's swagger. Said he's going to make Montreal & Ottawa pay for passing on him.

"I was telling my agent, if they will pass on me, I'm going to fill their nets with pucks. I want to prove to Detroit that they make a pretty good decision."

— Helene St. James (@HeleneStJames) June 23, 2018

The Canadiens also liked Barrett Hayton, who went two spots later to Arizona. There was real debate over which centre to take. Ottawa GM Pierre Dorion said he was worried the Canadiens would take Brady Tkachuk. Edmonton almost traded up to get Evan Bouchard, but realized as things unfolded that they wouldn't need to.

20. Hours before the draft, rumours circulated Tkachuk would go back to Boston University. The Senators didn't back down and made the selection. Nick Kypreos had a good idea: the Senators should let him, particularly if this is going to be a hard year. Don't expose him to the negativity and see where everyone stands 12 months from now. Will college teammate Dante Fabbro, a British Columbian, return for his junior season, or will Nashville come calling?

21. Doug Wilson on Ryan Merkley: "We spent a lot of time with him. We asked him the tough questions, we liked the way he handled it...the answers he gave us made us feel comfortable looking him in the eye that he wants to be a great player and hockey is what he wants to do. He's a young man, and watching him play he just has to channel some of his frustrations differently...We see a real high end to this player."

22. A team thinking of trading for Mike Hoffman tracked down one of his fiancée's college roommates to find out as much as they could.

23. Senators owner Eugene Melnyk pulled the Darcy Oake disappearing trick after the Board of Governors' meeting, but made it clear to compatriots that he is determined to stay.

24. One possibility for Minnesota's front office: Tom Kurvers, currently with Tampa. He's from Minneapolis and was briefly new GM Paul Fenton's teammate in Toronto.

25. Dwight King, who played last season in the KHL, is looking to return, even on a two-way deal. He's played 365 NHL games for Los Angeles and Montreal.

Tape II Tape



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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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.

26. Great, but hot, week in Dallas and Vegas. I sensed some grumbling about the Awards moving from a "neutral site" to a "home game" for Vegas. The Golden Knights won several awards and the hometown fans loved it. I really hope this does not become a problem, and everyone thinks bigger picture. After a long season, you want people to attend and be enthusiastic. There is nowhere like it available.

I was impressed with the opening, led by Brian Boyle, Kevin Cheveldayoff, Gerard Gallant, PK Subban and Blake Wheeler. Rare that Subban loses best suit, but Pekka Rinne's lime green linen ensemble was really good. Jamie Benn and Mike Modano were great at the draft. Keep it coming. Show off the personalities.

27. Selke finalist Sean Couturier had a great line about Game 6 versus Pittsburgh. It's not exactly a pleasant memory, since the Flyers were eliminated, but he had five points despite a torn MCL. When teammates were finally able to joke about it, Couturier said they told him his performance wasn't that good, "because you really weren't hurt, were you?"

28. As he re-united with the newly-retired Daniel and Henrik Sedin, Roberto Luongo reflected on his lengthy groin injury from the 2017-18 season. "There were times I wondered if that was going to be it," he said. "It wasn't much fun." But Luongo recovered, as did the Panthers, to make a late-season charge that just missed the playoffs.

"You remember how much you love it. I want to go as long as I can. We have something special here, and I want to be a part of it when everyone else realizes it." After acquiring Hoffman, the Panthers are overloaded at forward. GM Dale Tallon said the players will sort it out by how they perform.

29. Colorado's Jared Bednar on what he learned watching the playoffs: "The intensity, speed and tenacity of the puck pressure by Vegas. That's what we're going to have to match."

30. I was worried that the NHL Awards recognizing Las Vegas, Parkland and Humboldt would be too much and too exploitative. Thankfully, there was nothing to worry about. The recognition was tasteful and respectful, featuring marvelous speeches from Luongo, George McPhee and Christina Haugan.

I rarely get nervous anymore, but was before the Humboldt media conference Tuesday and Willie O'Ree presentation (with Scott Oake) Wednesday. You want to do them proper justice. Two players are returning to the team — Brayden Camrud and Derek Patter. Patter said he "didn't listen to any other offers," solely concentrating on a return to the Broncos. Camrud was hilarious at the morning rehearsal, deliberately giving me wrong name pronunciations for a good laugh.

Kaleb Dahlgren will play at York, alma mater of assistant coach Mark Cross, who died in the crash. Bryce Fiske will dress for the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. Tyler Smith is waiting to see how a finger injury heals before figuring out his next move. Xavier Labelle is graduating on time from high school, even though he only recently left hospital. Grayson Cameron joined the coaching staff of the Midget AAA Red Deer Optimist Chiefs. Matthieu Gomerick went from Vegas back to Winnipeg for a skate at Mark Scheifele's hockey camp.

Goalie Jacob Wasserman, just released from hospital, talked about a visit he received from the great Rick Hansen, that reset his mind. Ryan Straschnitzki was headed back to Philadelphia for more rehab work. Flyers GM Ron Hextall and assistant GM Barry Hanrahan visited there and planned on taking him to their facility. Three players — Morgan Gobeil, Layne Metchuk and Nick Shumlanski — were unable to attend.

31. Worst rumour: Jeff Marek says he hears Sabres GM Jason Botterill is going to wear the same suit he wore in 1994, when drafted by Dallas — this year's host team for the draft. I ask Botterill about it, and he looks at me like I'm nuts. Thanks, Jeff.

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Sportsnet.ca / Oilers focusing free agent efforts on adding depth players

Gene Principe and Mark Spector discuss free agency and how the Edmonton Oilers stack up for July 1st.

Mark Spector

Death by a thousand cuts.

That's how Edmonton Oilers general manager Peter Chiarelli described his team's demise last season.

As the salary cap walls close in on Chiarelli this summer, do the same words apply to the Oilers' salary cap issues?

With just \$10.9 million in cap space to play with, only five NHL clubs have less wiggle room this July 1 than the Oilers. That cap space includes re-signing Darnell Nurse and Ryan Strome, so nearly \$11 million is — in reality — closer to \$4-5 million to sign three or four players.

"We've done interviews with (free agents). The level of player varies," Chiarelli said on Wednesday, just five days before the doors open on free agency at noon ET Sunday. "I don't expect we'll be active from a star player perspective. That would require trades too (to move out salary), if we did that.

"There are depth players. There are bottom six players. We're looking at those."

So, as the Oilers try to rebound from a season that cost people jobs throughout this organization — from the bench, to the coaches' office, to the empty cubicles inside the Oilers Entertainment Group offices — the free agent market is, by the GM's own admission, not a place where the Oilers will find impactful relief.

Sure, they'll add a fourth or third-liner who can kill some penalties, and a seventh defenceman in case young Ethan Bear is not deemed ready for primetime coming out of training camp. But the few million dollars in cap space the Oilers lack this July 1 is not at Chiarelli's disposal because it has been unwisely used elsewhere to top up deals that now tie the GM's hands.

Let's start with a backup goalie named Mikko Koskinen. The unproven Finn was given a \$2.5-million, one-year deal on May 1 coming out of the KHL — where goalies are notoriously difficult to assess.

That salary is simply too much for any backup goalie, let alone one who turns 30 in July and has four NHL games under his belt — almost a decade ago on Long Island. Backup goalies should make \$1 million, when they are proven. Koskinen is starkly overpaid, particularly when you note that on May 2 Colorado signed a goalie named Pavel Francouz, who later that month would be named the KHL Goalie of the Year.

Francouz's price was \$690,000 on a one-year deal, and his numbers last season — a 1.80 goals-against average and a .946 saves percentage — were very similar to Koskinen's 1.57 and .937. And, Francouz is two years younger.

The roster Chiarelli has built here in Edmonton is dotted with bad contracts to varying extents, and now that Connor McDavid has moved to his second contract, this lineup is virtually devoid of value contracts.

31 Thoughts: The Podcast

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



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Andrej Sekera at \$5.5 million is an overpay, even when healthy. Kris Russell, who is a contributor, is overcompensated by a million dollars at his current AAV of \$4 million.

Milan Lucic at \$6 million is not pretty, coming off a 10-goal campaign. That he replaced Taylor Hall, who won a Hart Trophy while being paid \$6 million, is a black mark on Chiarelli's managerial record.

Zack Kassian is a fourth-line player making \$1.95 million for two more seasons. Goalie Al Montoya makes just over \$1 million, though there will be little cap penalty if he spends the season in the minors.

Death by a thousand cuts? When it comes to salary management, Chiarelli may have something there.

So, it is clear that, by necessity, the solution in Edmonton is already inside its locker room. And there is some irony in that the very contracts that have put the Oilers in cap jail belong to the players who will have to pick up their games if Chiarelli is to keep his job here.

Lucic must return to being a 20-goal, 50-point player, because a buyout would only exacerbate the cap issues in Edmonton. He has five years left at \$6 million per, with a buyout that is anything but team friendly.

Sekera must show that the torn ACL he suffered in May 2017 is not career altering. He is 32 and has three years left on a deal that is lavish, for a second-pairing defender.

Russell has to be the other half of what would be a \$9.5-million second pairing with Sekera, because you can't pay third-pairing D-men four million bucks.

Jesse Puljujarvi and Kailer Yamamoto, two Entry Level Contracts, could ride to Chiarelli's rescue here if they become top-6 wingers this season. Same with fresh draft pick Evan Bouchard, whose skill set, if it germinates, will provide some value contract seasons.

It is easy to look at McDavid's annual \$12.5-million salary, which kicks in this season, and Leon Draisaitl's \$8.5 million, which began last year, and let Chiarelli off the hook for having cooked this broth.

But cap jail isn't built on just two contracts. It is a death by a thousand cuts, something they are growing familiar with in Edmonton.

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1100926 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / 2018 NHL trade candidates: 22 players who could get dealt this summer

Rory Boylen

The NHL draft may have been a disappointment on the trade front (Even though we did get a significant blockbuster!), but with free agency on the horizon and a ton of names still being bandied about in rumours, the floodgates could open on the trade front at any point.

Alex Galchenyuk, Max Domi, Mike Hoffman, Dougie Hamilton and Noah Hanifin are some big names who have been moved already and this should still just be the beginning.

Here are 22 more players who could move at some point this summer, if the offers are right.

Tape II Tape

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.

OSCAR KLEFBOM, EDMONTON OILERS

Peter Chiarelli hasn't been shy to make big trades in his career as a GM. Tyler Seguin. Taylor Hall. Jordan Eberle. The last two were moved in the past two years, and with the Oilers coming off a terribly disappointing season, Chiarelli may be motivated/pressured to do more.

The 10th overall pick was expected to be in play, but when coveted defender Evan Bouchard slipped, the Oilers couldn't pass up the prospect who also fills an organizational area of need. They could also use a backup to push Cam Talbot. Speed up front on the wings is a priority, as is a puck-mover on defence.

Oscar Klefbom's name has been floating around the rumour mill since Edmonton's season ended, which could be a dangerous proposition. Injury limited Klefbom to 66 games this past season and his point total dropped by 17 from 2016-17. He averaged 22:51 per game, so he was the Oilers' most-used defenceman, and at just 24 years old, Klefbom is under control for a while with a contract that carries a \$4.167-million cap hit running another five seasons.

Lots of people tossing out Torey Krug for Oscar Klefbom trade idea because Krug is more offensive-minded but Krug, 27, has two years left until he's UFA and Oscar, 25 in July, has 5 yrs and Krug makes \$1 mil more on cap hit. Plus Krug shoots left not right.

— Jim Matheson (@NHLbyMatty) May 9, 2018

Klefbom seems like a player more likely to bounce back than continue to struggle. And if Edmonton is looking to add an offensive-minded blue-liner, Klefbom already fills that role so what's the rush? If anything, the Oilers could be selling low on a young, controllable asset, depending on the return.

ERIK KARLSSON, OTTAWA SENATORS

Everybody was waiting for this deal to happen at the trade deadline. Now, everyone is expecting it this off-season.

Karlsson, one year away from unrestricted free agency, had suggested earlier in the season that he would be seeking top dollar on his next deal, echoing comments from Los Angeles's Drew Doughty (more on him later). Karlsson would certainly be the most attractive player for any of the other 30 teams to add via trade, and with Ottawa struggling and considering some form of a rebuild, the Swedish defenceman was linked to various teams, including Vegas and San Jose, at the deadline.

Karlsson can sign an extension with Ottawa as soon as July 1, and if he's not dealt by then we could quickly get a better idea of how likely it is he'll stick around. The Sens are facing the prospect of paying him \$10 million or more on his next deal, which may become a sticking point. The Senators also elected to keep the fourth overall pick to take Brady Tkachuk, meaning their 2019 first-rounder goes to Colorado, so the team would prefer to not finish in the basement next season.

For his part, Karlsson shot down any notion he wanted out of Ottawa.

"I never wanted to leave. I never had any say in that," Karlsson said after the deadline passed. "That's a different part of the business I can't control. Hearing your name being thrown around as much as it was is very stressful and not something that I enjoyed going through. I love it here, I've always loved it here. I think the city of Ottawa has really made it home for me. I love everything about it, I love the fans. I'm pleased with where I'm at and I signed a long-term deal for a reason."

Adding to this speculation was the recent story involving Karlsson's wife and Mike Hoffman's fiancée. Since Hoffman was traded out of Ottawa, perhaps it becomes more likely Karlsson stays — but even with that, it seems Ottawa is more in position to rebuild than to keep an expensive cornerstone it could receive a massive return for.

JUSTIN FAULK/JEFF SKINNER, CAROLINA HURRICANES

With a new owner and new faces at the top of hockey management, changes have started to come on a team that hasn't reached the playoffs



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in nine years. The only player who has been given a vote of confidence is forward Sebastian Aho, who's fresh off a 29-goal, 65-point season and was just named the best forward at the world championships. No one else is safe, and Noah Hanifin and Elias Lindholm have already been moved.

Goaltending is an obvious area that needs an upgrade, but it's unlikely that teams will come calling about Scott Darling and his \$4.15-million cap hit. Carolina could use more goal scoring too, as it finished with the 23rd-ranked offence in 2017-18 and has cracked the top 20 just once in the past five years. Micheal Ferland, just acquired from Calgary, scored five more goals than the departed Lindholm, while Hamilton was tied for the league lead in goals among blue-liners in 2017-18.

In the present, Hamilton is an upgrade on young Hanifin so Carolina's strength along the blue line got even sturdier with the trade, but it's opened up questions about one of their other top defencemen.

Justin Faulk has been a solid producer for the 'Canes in the past, but coming off a down year with eight goals and 31 points his role could be filled by Hamilton. There's a contract on the horizon to consider here, too: Faulk is two seasons away from being UFA eligible, so given this position is already a source of strength for Carolina, it might be wise to deal Faulk to a team that would pay up for two years of service rather than paying for a rental a year from now.

Up front, Jeff Skinner is a player to watch. He is one year away from unrestricted free agency and has 30-goal upside, though he's only hit that mark once in the past three seasons. The thing about finding a new home for Skinner is that he would need to agree to any trade since he has a no-movement clause in his contract.

Jeff Skinner controlling where he'll eventually end up. Turned down a few trades #canes

— Andy Strickland (@andystrickland) June 24, 2018

"[Skinner and Faulk] are guys certainly that people have called about," 'Canes GM Don Waddell told Steve Kouleas on the NHL Network's Sirius XM radio show recently. "I talked to almost every general manager, that we're looking to make some changes, so certainly when other teams are calling, they usually want to call about your better players. So we're in discussions with not only those players but multiple players."

RYAN O'REILLY, BUFFALO SABRES

Everyone is always in the market for centres in the NHL, so if the Sabres do decide to move O'Reilly there will be no shortage of suitors. The 27-year-old is coming off a 24-goal, 61-point season and is one of the better two-way forwards in the NHL. While he brings a good level of offence — finishing second in team scoring — O'Reilly is very much also a shutdown option who matches up against the opposition's best. He's also under contract for another five years, with a \$7.5-million cap hit.

If everything went according to Montreal GM Marc Bergevin's plan, O'Reilly would have been a Hab over draft weekend. But since Buffalo wanted the third overall pick, the price was too rich for the time being.

The added wrinkle around O'Reilly is that he's due a \$7.5-million bonus on July 1, which may turn off some teams from giving up a pool of assets until after that's been paid out. If O'Reilly isn't traded prior to July 1, the market and acquiring price could increase. The St. Louis Blues have also been linked to O'Reilly.

Re: O'Reilly trade report, the Blues remain in talks with Buffalo and are among the teams interested in a post-July 1st trade. But as of now, there's no truth to a deal being a deal in place or any framework being agreed upon. #stlblues

— Jeremy Rutherford (@jprutherford) June 27, 2018

MAX PACIORETTY, MONTREAL CANADIENS

Had the first round shaken out differently, Pacioretty may have been moved for another first-round pick Montreal could have used to flip in an

O'Reilly deal. It didn't happen that way, but Pacioretty remains one of the more likely players to get traded this summer.

It seems the Habs were close to striking a deal with the Kings for Pacioretty over draft weekend, but when contract extension talks fell through, so did the trade. Later on Saturday, news came out that Pacioretty had fired CAA's Pat Brisson as his agent and signed on with Octagon Hockey's Allan Walsh.

We are proud announce that Max Pacioretty of the Montreal Canadiens is now a client of Octagon.

— Allan Walsh (@walsha) June 23, 2018

Pacioretty was one of the hottest commodities at the trade deadline. As the UFA market starts to thin out, he could become an even more valuable piece for teams who either missed out on a target or want to complement one. The 29-year-old winger has one year left on a very team-friendly deal before becoming UFA-eligible himself. That's why a contract extension — which couldn't be made official until July 1 — is crucial for both the Canadiens to get the highest price and the acquiring team to get bang for its buck.

The \$7-million contract extension Evander Kane signed with San Jose is an interesting measure for what Pacioretty could get on his next deal. He's surely worth more than a player who has scored 30 just twice before with inconsistent offensive levels through his career.

"I did not ask for a trade."

Max Pacioretty addressed the trade speculation that surrounded him before the deadline. <https://t.co/FuXFpnnyCpic.twitter.com/gEUgM6rdC4>

— Sportsnet (@Sportsnet) February 27, 2018

PHIL KESSEL, PITTSBURGH PENGUINS

Penguins GM Jim Rutherford has never been shy to make trades. At this past trade deadline he picked up Derick Brassard, filling the third-line centre role he was searching for all season. He got Phil Kessel a few years ago for a cheap acquisition cost considering he's scored 83 goals over three seasons with the team. Carl Hagelin was a great pickup three years ago and a central piece of the HBK line for Pittsburgh's first of the back-to-back championships. Justin Schultz has been a successful reclamation project.

So when Rutherford says he's looking for change in the off-season, your ears perk up.

"I think it's obvious that I'm going to keep an open mind to making some changes, and I will make some changes," he told local media after the Penguins were eliminated in Round 2. "I can't give you a definite answer on who that's going to be right now and exactly the positions, but we're a good team, and we will be a good team going forward. We'll have a chance to win again. We have the nucleus to do that."

GM Jim Rutherford: "It's fair to say that this will be a different looking team by the time we open next season. It doesn't mean there will be drastic changes, but there will be changes in the areas that will become necessary."

State of the Team: <https://t.co/U2gPg4X5uzpic.twitter.com/C48oNOd9qc>

— Pittsburgh Penguins (@penguins) May 9, 2018

On Wednesday, Rutherford flipped Conor Sheary and Matt Hunwick to the Sabres for a draft pick, which freed up cap space and leaves them with \$10.2 million in available room. This could mean the Penguins are making room to add a free agent defenceman — Jack Johnson has been linked — and it could mean bigger moves are coming.

Kessel's name has popped up again and again in the rumour mill since the season ended, and maybe Rutherford explores selling high on a player coming off a 92-point career season. Head coach Mike Sullivan disputed a report there was some sort of rift in the relationship between himself and Kessel.



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With three centres in tow, the most pressing need for the Penguins to address is on the blue line and Kessel could be used toward that, or as a headliner in a package to go even bigger. Rutherford has connections to the Hurricanes, so they could be a target, or if you want to dream big, you have to wonder if Rutherford could work out something for Karlsson.

Rutherford: "Our priority in this offseason is to add another defenseman." He adds that creating balance through the entire lineup is also important.

— Pittsburgh Penguins (@penguins) June 27, 2018

ANDRE BURAKOVSKY, WASHINGTON CAPITALS

When the Capitals had to shed the likes of Justin Williams and Marcus Johansson last summer, the thinner roster opened an opportunity for Burakovsky, who scored 17 goals and 38 points as a sophomore in 2015-16. More ice time and better linemates were expected to bring out the best in the 23rd-overall pick from 2013, but injuries and mental frustration stunted his season and he finished with just 12 goals and 25 points in 56 games.

Two days ago, Burakovsky told us he's hired a sports psychologist because of how hard he is on himself.

— Isabelle Khurshudyan (@ikhurshudyan) May 24, 2018

Now Burakovsky is one year away from being an RFA, finishing off a deal that paid him \$3 million against the cap. Burakovsky will surely get some kind of a raise when the time comes, and his play next season could determine just how much of one, but could the Caps leverage the potential the player still has for an upgrade? An acquiring team would be adding an intriguing 23-year-old talent with the hopes he'll have his breakout next season.

JASON ZUCKER/NINO NIEDERREITER/CHARLIE COYLE, MINNESOTA WILD

The Wild have made six straight post-season appearances, but haven't reached the third round and have gotten out of the first round just twice. When this year's team failed to move on from the Round of 16 again, GM Chuck Fletcher took the fall and was replaced with former Nashville assistant GM Paul Fenton. Some degree of change is destined to come to the Wild, because expectations start sky-high for the new guy in charge.

"I'm confident we have a very good team in Minnesota and believe Paul shares that same belief. The goal remains to bring a Stanley Cup to the state of hockey," Wild owner Craig Leipold said at Fenton's introductory press conference. "No pressure, Paul, but that is where it starts."

There is no rebuild coming for this team. The owner is expecting a championship and the salary structure makes it hard to move away from a significant portion of this core. Still, there are options, and in a season-ending column wondering where it went wrong for the Wild, the Pioneer Press's Dane Mizutani pondered two players who could become moveable assets:

Although Parise and Suter are unmovable based on their matching 13-year, \$98 million contracts, guys like Coyle and Niederreiter might have finally worn out their welcome after following up disappointing regular seasons with scoreless post-seasons.

Over the last three years Niederreiter has a +8.1 Rel CF%, +8.33 Rel GF% and more 5v5 points than Johansen, Voracek, Pacioretty, Atkinson, Toews, Bergeron, etc. Would be an intriguing option for any team if available. <https://t.co/Bbltok917w> [pic.twitter.com/CRFDVCYePw](https://twitter.com/CRFDVCYePw)

— Todd Cordell (@ToddCordell) May 23, 2018

In the past few weeks, Jason Zucker's name has been added into the mix, and it's possible the Wild could move on from a guy who just scored a career-high 33 goals and has all the speed in the world. Minnesota seems primed to do something, it's just not clear which one or two players (at least) will move on. There are all sorts of options for Fenton to consider and not just up front...

Zucker, Niederreiter, Coyle all in the middle of ongoing #mnwild trade talk <https://t.co/CTzWzFNVHN>

— Michael Russo (@RussoHockey) June 22, 2018

MATHEW DUMBA/JONAS BRODIN, MINNESOTA WILD

The Wild were one of the teams facing difficult expansion draft decisions last summer, and before they lost Erik Haula and Alex Tuch to the Golden Knights, there was a lot of speculation the Wild would make a trade elsewhere so they would have enough protection spots to keep everyone they wanted. Included in those discussions were defencemen Jonas Brodin and Matt Dumba, for whom the Wild received offers.

Dumba's role with the team has increased the past few years; he averaged a career-high 23:49 and scored a career-best 50 points in 2017-18. Now he's an RFA due a hefty raise and if there is any hitch in those negotiations, he could become a valuable trade option. The ugly season-ending injury sustained by Ryan Suter, and the uncertainty of his recovery time, may make it more likely Dumba stays as his importance in the lineup grows, but he would bring back the biggest return of any Minnesota blue-liner via trade.

If Fenton looks at trading a defender, Brodin may be the more likely option on his own. The 10th-overall pick in the 2011 draft, Brodin came into the league with major expectations and mostly lived up to them early on. By Corsi and Relative Corsi, Brodin's best season was his rookie year, though, and he's never been a big offensive driver. Brodin's value is as a defender and his contract isn't bad, with a \$4.16-million cap hit for another three years.

But remember, Fenton is coming from a Predators team that built its identity around a strong and deep blue line, so this may be a little out of character.

Tyler Ennis was listed in our buyout candidates list because he's been unproductive with a \$4.6-million cap hit for one more season. Since he hasn't yet been bought out, it's also possible Ennis and his contract become part of a deal involving any one of these five Wild players.

LUKE FOX

Penguins trade Sheary, Hunwick to Sabres for draft pick

COREY PERRY/JAKOB SILFVERBERG, ANAHEIM DUCKS

Like his counterpart in Pittsburgh, Anaheim GM Bob Murray is never afraid to make a big splash in the trade market and did it again this past season by swapping Sami Vatanen for Adam Henrique in November. With his team eliminated in a quick four-game sweep at the hands of the much-faster San Jose Sharks — a team that re-tooled itself with youth after the 2016 Cup final — Murray talked about the desire to build a faster team and was critical about one long-standing franchise pillar in particular.

"Corey's (Perry) got to buy into some more things in the off-season," Murray said in April. "He's got to buy into playing fast."

"Hopefully I can give [Carlyle] a healthy hockey team to start the year to see if they will change."

Perry has been a central piece of Anaheim's roster since he entered the league, but his play has started to dip in his 30s and he hasn't scored 20 goals in either of the past two seasons. The problem in trying to trade Perry is that, with an \$8.625-million cap hit for another three years, he's not an enticing pickup for many teams. Any potential move would likely have to involve either Anaheim eating a portion of that salary, or adding a valued prospect or defenceman to make the deal work.

As Perry struggles, another right-winger, 22-year-old Ondrej Kase, is on the rise. The third-liner scored 20 goals in his sophomore season and brings the kind of speed Perry has lost.

Jakob Silfverberg could be the more realistic trade option here, because he's still in his prime (27) and his contract isn't too onerous (\$3.75 million). His deal does expire at the end of next season at which point he



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could become a UFA, so unless an extension is agreed to, Anaheim might not be able to regain full value. Murray landed Silfverberg in the first place from Ottawa for Bobby Ryan, who had two years left on his deal at the time.

It's not that Silfverberg is a problem, but if the Ducks are going to slowly transition this off-season he's a good candidate to start the process. Silfverberg is a decent checker with 20-goal upside and has PK responsibilities.

CHRIS TANEV/ALEXANDER EDLER, VANCOUVER CANUCKS

As long as the Vancouver Canucks are rebuilding, their veterans will pop up in the trade rumour mill.

But for Vancouver to trade either of these two defencemen, the player would have to sign off on it. Edler has a full no-trade clause, while Tanev can submit a list of eight teams to which he cannot be traded, per CapFriendly. With the Canucks likely to finish near the bottom again, the 32-year-old Edler and 28-year-old Tanev may be open to a move if one comes up, though.

Tanev's contract is a very affordable \$4.45 million for another two seasons and he's a defensively responsible right-shot, which is a valued piece around the league. He's a better fit as a second-pair blue-liner on most teams than a No. 1 or 2, but the downside is that Tanev is prone to injury — he has not played more than 70 games in his career and has failed to even reach 54 games the past two seasons.

"I'm happy in Vancouver," Tanev told Sportsnet's Starting Lineup in Vancouver. "I love the city, I love all the guys, it's out of my control."

Chris Tanev on getting 'beefed up' and other strategies for injury prevention

May 09 2018

Edler would be the most logical trade candidate if he didn't have full trade protection, but his destiny is in his own hands. He's one year away from unrestricted free agency and has been a huge part of Vancouver's defence for nearly a decade, averaging at least 23 minutes a game eight years in a row. Although the Canucks are rebuilding, it's important to maintain competitiveness and if they trade either Edler or Tanev, a ton of on-ice minutes would leave the roster.

Benning: Tanev, Edler & Sutter are important guys because they're veteran leaders of our group. Help with process of developing young players. Not looking to move them, would take a lot to move players of this caliber. #Canucks

— Rick Dhaliwal (@DhaliwalSports) June 21, 2018

KEVIN HAYES, N.Y. RANGERS

After folding at the trade deadline and announcing a new focus on young players and picks, the Rangers offloaded Ryan McDonagh and J.T. Miller to Tampa Bay and Rick Nash to Boston, giving them an extra two first-round picks in this year's draft.

New York has roughly \$29.4 million in cap space with a number of RFAs, headlined by 24-year-old defenceman Brady Skjei. New York Post columnist Larry Brooks wrote that he expects the Rangers to make a move or two, and while teams have reportedly called about RFA Ryan Spooner, the most likely to get traded could be Kevin Hayes.

Brooks noted the Rangers are overflowing with players who can play centre, a position which holds value on its own around the league. Hayes, Spooner, Mika Zibanejad, Filip Chytil, Lias Andersson and Vlad Namestnikov, he pointed out, can all play the position. Granted, none of those players are stand-out talents yet, but the Rangers would prefer to not bury rookies Chytil and Andersson when they're given a full-time shot in 2018-19.

Hayes, 26, is coming off a career season in which he posted 25 goals in 76 games and is an arbitration-eligible RFA. Brooks wrote that Hayes would "likely command a five-year deal in the neighbourhood of \$4.75

million per," which is more in line with a second-line player, whereas Hayes would probably fit better as a third-liner on the Rangers in the future.

Brooks suggested the Rangers would be in the market for a right-shot defenceman, with the idea being they could use Hayes to take a step towards improvement with this deal, rather than continuing towards a build-up of picks and prospects.

MILAN LUCIC, EDMONTON OILERS

This may be a hard trade to pull off, considering Lucic is a big, slow, bruiser in a league getting faster by the season, and making \$6 million against the cap for another five seasons. But reports indicate the team is working on it.

From Elliotte Friedman's 31 Thoughts column on June 10:

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

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

Lucic managed only 10 goals and 34 points this past season, both of which were full-season lows since he was a rookie. If the Oilers do find a taker for Lucic, it seems it would have to be as part of a package for a more appealing asset, such as Klefbom, who we mentioned above.

TOREY KRUG, BOSTON BRUINS

Boston's power-play quarterback, highest-scoring blue-liner, and a 59-point player who has seen increased production three years in a row can't escape being mentioned in trade rumours. Krug is making \$5.25 million against the cap for another two seasons before he becomes a UFA at 29 years old and would be a valuable pick up for some other team.

However, if the Bruins do trade Krug, you can bet it won't be for prospects and draft picks. Boston is a contender, and trading him would have to involve a return for an upgrade.

The most popular link in rumours is to Klefbom via Edmonton, but he has never recorded as many points as Krug has totalled each of the past four seasons. The Bruins would have to explore getting a left-hand shot back for Krug, which Klefbom is, because without Krug Boston is left with only two left-shot defencemen: Zdeno Chara and Matt Grzelcyk.

Lots of people tossing out Torey Krug for Oscar Klefbom trade idea because Krug is more offensive-minded but Krug, 27, has two years left until he's UFA and Oscar, 25 in July, has 5 yrs and Krug makes \$1 mil more on cap hit. Plus Krug shoots left not right.

— Jim Matheson (@NHLbyMatty) May 9, 2018

COLTON PARAYKO, ST. LOUIS BLUES

It's not that 35-point defenceman Parayko is on St. Louis' trade block, but teams are reportedly calling about the six-foot-six, 230-pound defenceman who has four more years left on a contract that pays him a very manageable \$5.5 million against the cap.

You know who be the perfect "right shot D" for the Oilers?

Colton Parayko.

Buried behind Alex Pietrangolo in St.Louis.

Hasn't reached offensive ceiling yet.

Terrific person.

Fair contract.

Understands Edmonton market.



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Acquisition cost would be pricey though.

— Bob Stauffer (@Bob_Stauffer) June 19, 2018

As Friedman noted in his 10 pre-draft thoughts, the price to acquire Parayko would be “enormous” and the Blues aren’t in a situation where they have to trade him for money reasons. The 25-year-old averaged 22:37 last season and it’s believed there’s still more offence to come out of his game.

He’s a valued right shot and can blast the puck. He doesn’t play a top role on St. Louis’ power play, and that’s where a team interested in his services would likely find a bigger spot for him.

CRAIG ANDERSON, OTTAWA SENATORS

It was reported last week that Anderson had “expressed his desire to move on from the Senators.”

Now, the goalie market is never strong for trade and Anderson is coming off one of the worst seasons of his career with an .898 save percentage, but there is a case to be made that he is the best option out there for teams looking to upgrade or find a No. 1. In 2016-17, Anderson posted a .926 save percentage in the regular season, then followed it up with a .922 mark in a post-season run to the conference final.

If you look at Anderson’s career he tends to yo-yo from one season to the next, so he may be in line for a rebound of sorts in 2018-19. Granted, he’s 37 years old and on the downside of his career, but at \$4.75 million for two more years, is he a “safer” option than the likes of Carter Hutton or Robin Lehner? His age and contract mean there’s no long-term commitment to make and the general weakness of the goalie trade market means he’s unlikely to cost anything much to acquire.

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Sportsnet.ca / Maple Leafs development camp notes: Wickenheiser coaching prospects

Luke Fox

TORONTO – You can’t help but do a double-take.

Sure, you’ve seen Hayley Wickenheiser in many a uniform adorned with maple leaves, but those garments have always been red and white, not blue and white.

Yet the ponytailed coach you happen to be following into the Toronto Maple Leafs’ MasterCard Centre practice pad is indeed the most accomplished player in women’s hockey.

One year removed from her no-brainer induction into the Hockey Hall of Fame, Wickenheiser is taking another baby-step toward getting involved in the men’s game as a coach.

She was brought in this week by new Maple Leafs GM Kyle Dubas and director of player development Scott Pellerin to guest-coach Leafs hopefuls at development camp, which runs through Saturday.

“We thought it would be a good addition to have her come to camp here, and we’re excited to have her. She’s obviously a Canadian icon,” Pellerin says, “and we’re looking to learn from her too.”

The 39-year-old Wickenheiser, who becomes HHOF eligible in 2019, served in the same role for the Edmonton Oilers in the 2017 off-season. She believes it’s only a matter of time before we see a woman behind an NHL bench.

“Whoever that would be would have to be competent enough to do it, would have to have the experience and knowledge of the game and also want to be in this environment. It’s a different environment, and it’s male-dominated, so you have to be comfortable being around these guys,” Wickenheiser told the Edmonton Journal at the time. (The Maple Leafs will make their golden guest coach available to reporters on Thursday.)

“Certainly being around the NHL would be something I’m interested in. I’ve been around it a lot through my career. I’ve been to two [Hockey Canada] development camps and trained with players and been around a lot of coaches so I know the environment. I also know that it’s a lot of work to get there, too.”

Great to be here! <https://t.co/rzqpDnF7Fo>

— Hayley Wickenheiser (@wick_22) June 26, 2018

Meet the third-best Rasmus in the Draft

Tuesday brought us our first look at Toronto’s 29th-overall pick in a Maple Leafs uniform.

Undersized puck-moving defenceman Rasmus Sandin is a ball of optimism, eager to meet the other prospects and soak in as much knowledge as he can. He also has grand designs for a trip to the Eaton Centre.

“It’s one step closer to the best league in the world,” says the third-highest Rasmus selected in Dallas. “It’ll be a fun week.”

Sandin excelled in his OHL rookie year with the Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds, but Dubas believes the Swede is still two years away from making the jump to the North American pro game.

The prospect has one more season on a pro contract with Rogle back home, the same team for which older brother Linus plays. His intent prior to the draft was to go back overseas, but that decision — the Soo, Rogle, or the AHL Marlies — has been pushed to the backburner until September.

Sandin feels lucky to have fellow Greyhounds defenders Noah Carroll and Mac Hollowell (“a friend from the beginning,” Sandin says) in camp with him.

Following camp, Sandin will vacation with his family for four days in Florida, then take his Leafs homework back with him to Sweden and start training. He’ll fly back for Canada in July for the 2018 World Junior Summer Showcase in Kamloops.

The dream here would be for the first-rounder to build his strength and acceleration and eventually grow into a Travis Dermott type.

“If he ends up where Travis is at this point, we certainly would be content if the comparison came true,” Dubas said at the draft. “But he’s his own person and player.”

Welcome to the team @Rasmussandin happy to have you!

— Mitchell Marner (@Marner93) June 23, 2018

Here comes more Matthew Barnaby

Matthew Barnaby Jr., a 20-year-old centre, was invited to camp as part of the undrafted group after wrapping his second consecutive season as the leading scorer for CCHL Pembroke.

“I’ve been a Leafs fan for a while, so it was a pretty easy answer for me to come here,” says the 6-foot-2 Barnaby, who has committed to Lake Superior State University. “As I get taller, I think my game is starting to progress.”

Barnaby recalls Dad shoving his baby feet into a pair of skates at six months of age and is happy to talk about his “unbelievable memories” growing up around NHL rinks and borrowing stars’ sticks to practice with his father.



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"Oh, man. I think I was on skates before I could walk. Just having my dad pull me around out there," recalls Barnaby.

"I was scared of Darius Kasparaitis in Pittsburgh. I didn't like him too much. Just a big, scary guy. Whenever I saw him in the dressing room, he would scare me, so I wasn't too fond of him as a young kid."

The younger Barnaby still talks hockey with his proud dad daily. The best piece of advice he's received from the man with 834 games and 2,562 PIMs on his resume?

"Work ethic trumps talent nine times out of 10," Barnaby says. "You might not be the best guy there, but you can always outwork him."

Yep never thought this would happen #GoLeafsGo
pic.twitter.com/Eg3pJHIDCH

— Matthew Barnaby (@MattBarnaby3636) June 26, 2018

Either this or the army

Rare is the elite prospect who hails from Tel Aviv.

Sudbury Wolves forward David Levin wasn't selected last weekend, so he was understandably disappointed to become the first OHL first-overall pick in 14 years (since John Hughes in 2004) to go undrafted.

But an invite to Leafs camp keeps his improbable dream alive.

Levin's father, Pavel, was a soccer player who learned of hockey in Latvia, but when Pavel began raising a family in Israel, heat was abundant and ice was scarce. Needing a job, Pavel opened a roller hockey rink and began training his sons, sans skates.

At age nine, David asked his parents if he could move to Canada to play the game on ice.

"They said I was too young. I had to grow up. Three years later I asked them again, and they said, 'Yeah, you can try,' " Levin recalls. "I'm only 18 years old and I have a lot ahead of me, so I'm going to keep working hard and see where I get."

The kid doesn't have much of a choice. Back home in Israel, mandatory military service awaits.

"When you're 18, you have to join until you're 21. So if I go back, my career is over. I have to stay here," David says. "It's better to be here than in the army."

A first look from the first skate at the 2018 @MapleLeafs Development Camp. #TMLtalk pic.twitter.com/rTtJzZbJE

— Toronto Maple Leafs (@MapleLeafs) June 26, 2018

One-Timers

Development camp was trimmed from 60-plus players in 2017 to 46 this year.... Barnaby isn't the only NHLer's son at camp. Defenceman T.J. Fergus, son of former Leaf Tom, was invited after a four-year OHL run with stops in Erie, Hamilton and Barrie.... Defenceman J.D. Greenway, a third-round pick in 2016, is the younger brother of impressive Minnesota Wild power forward Jordan Greenway.... 2018 second-rounder Sean Durzi made the biggest leap of any skater in the draft, according to North American Central Scouting. Pellerin says his confidence with the puck sticks out.... Goalie Joseph Woll has elected to participate in the U.S. National Development Team Program.... Barnaby on his dad's infamous clip of singing along to Shania Twain's "Man! I Feel Like a Woman" in the penalty box: "I haven't seen that yet. I don't know if I want to see that."

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1100928 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Penguins trade Sheary, Hunwick to Sabres for draft pick

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Sabres general manager Jason Botterill is drawing from his championship past in Pittsburgh to provide a boost in Buffalo.

The Sabres improved their top-six forward ranks by acquiring Conor Sheary and defenceman Matt Hunwick in a trade with Pittsburgh on Wednesday. The Penguins obtained a conditional 2019 fourth-round pick that could improve to a third-rounder in move that frees up \$5.5 million of space under their salary cap before the NHL's free-agency period opens Sunday.

Sheary was the key to the deal for Botterill. He's the former Penguins assistant GM who watched the undrafted player develop in making the jump from signing a minor-league tryout contract to winning two Stanley Cup titles playing alongside Pittsburgh captain Sidney Crosby.

"When people were saying he couldn't do it, he found a way," said Botterill, who had a hand in signing Sheary in 2014. "That sort of determination and compete and work ethic something we're looking to bring to our group."

Sheary is a dependable two-way forward who will be given an opportunity to play wing on one of Buffalo's top lines centred by Jack Eichel or Ryan O'Reilly.

Botterill valued Sheary's playoff experience and ability to perform against other teams' top defenders.

There is no salary retained in the BUF-PIT trade. With Sheary owed \$3M the next two seasons and Hunwick owed \$2.25M the next two seasons, the #pens cap concerns have been erased considerably.

— Chris Johnston (@reporterchris) June 27, 2018

After scoring 23 goals and 53 points in 61 games in 2016-17, Sheary's production dropped last year, when he finished with 18 goals and 30 points in 79 games.

Sheary has one year left on his contract before he is eligible to become an unrestricted free agent.

The Penguins are shaking up their lineup after failing to win a third consecutive title. The trade came a day after Pittsburgh signed forward Bryan Rust to a four-year contract extension. The Penguins on Wednesday evening used some of their newfound cap space to re-sign forward Riley Sheahan to a \$2.1 million, one-year contract.

Hunwick is an 11-year veteran, who signed a two-year contract with the Penguins in free agency last summer. He finished with four goals and 10 points in 42 games last season. The Sabres become his fifth team in six years.

Drafted in the seventh round by Boston in 2004, Hunwick played three-plus seasons with the Bruins, and has also played with Colorado, Toronto and the New York Rangers. He has 25 goals and 117 points in 521 career games.

Hunwick joins Buffalo's already crowded defensive ranks, which are expected to include 18-year-old Swedish blue-liner Rasmus Dahlin, who was selected with the No. 1 pick in the draft last week.

Buffalo's returning defencemen include Rasmus Ristolainen, Zach Bogosian, Marco Scandella and Jake McCabe.

Dahlin drew a crowd of about 1,800 fans Wednesday, when the Sabres opened a four-day rookie development camp.

The Sabres are coming off a disappointing season in which they finished last for the third time in five years.

Botterill won't say if he's done attempting to improve his lineup through trades, including ongoing chatter involving O'Reilly.



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Botterill has acknowledged receiving interest in O'Reilly, but dismissed a report he had a deal in place to trade the centre to Montreal during the draft.

"I understand why people are calling on him, but the validity of a lot of the rumours are simply untrue," Botterill said. "I would just say from Day 1, we've been very happy with Ryan being part of our group."

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1100929 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Filip Zadina showcases skill at Red Wings development camp

Alex Craig

Only five days have passed since the Detroit Red Wings selected Filip Zadina as the sixth-overall pick in the 2018 NHL Draft. In only a short period of time, the 18-year-old Czech forward has created enormous buzz around the league.

Filip Zadina has been showing off his world-class skating and stickhandling abilities this week at Red Wings development camp held at Little Caesars Arena.

Zadina's explosive mobility and quick release will be sure to make him an offensive threat to NHL netminders across the league.

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1100930 Websites

TSN.CA / Trade Bait: Pens clear space, will Jets and Bolts follow?

Frank Seravalli

Jim Rutherford's big-game hunt is on as originally scheduled this weekend.

Rutherford cleared \$5.25 million in crucial salary cap space on Wednesday when his Pittsburgh Penguins traded winger Conor Sheary and defenceman Matt Hunwick to the Buffalo Sabres in exchange for a conditional fourth-round pick.

That opens up the space required for Rutherford to target any number of big names to take a run at a sixth Stanley Cup in franchise history.

Could the Pens dabble in the market for Rick Nash or James van Riemsdyk to play alongside Sidney Crosby? How would Max Pacioretty look in that spot? Rutherford drafted and developed Jeff Skinner in Carolina, who remains No. 3 on our Trade Bait board. The focus may be on defence, where the Penguins could be targeting Jack Johnson.

Stay tuned.

The bigger question is who will follow Rutherford in clearing cap space: the Winnipeg Jets or Tampa Bay Lightning?

Both teams are going to have to make similar transactions if they'd like to fulfill their off-season wish lists.

With just over \$5 million in cap space, the Lightning – one of six teams selected for an in-person pitch by John Tavares – can't afford to sign

Tavares as currently constituted. That's why alternate captain Ryan Callahan, who has two years left at \$5.8 million, joins the board at No. 15. Tyler Johnson has also been rumoured as a potential trade chip if Callahan is more difficult to move.

Winnipeg GM Kevin Cheveldayoff has made no secret his interest in resigning centre Paul Stastny. The Jets get thin quickly down the middle. But Stastny will require a big ticket after his successful rental run with Winnipeg. That's why Mathieu Perreault joins the list at No. 19.

(For what it's worth, all three players listed at No. 19 have been traded so far this off-season: Alex Galchenyuk, Dougie Hamilton and Sheary)

The Jets would love to find a taker for Steve Mason's \$4.1 million deal, but that might require a buyout with such a flush goalie market and only three teams looking for starters. Restricted free agent Jacob Trouba is still on the board (21). Tyler Myers could also be a potential trade candidate at some point.

It all depends how Cheveldayoff wants to play it and how much he values the centre depth Stastny provides. This is a critical summer to setup the Jets' payroll for years with Connor Hellebuyck, Josh Morrissey, Trouba, Joel Armia and Adam Lowry all hitting restricted free agency at once, followed closely by Patrik Laine and Blake Wheeler next summer.

Here is TSN's latest Trade Bait board, which always seeks to blend prominence of player with likelihood of a trade:

1. Erik Karlsson, OTT	RD	28	\$6.5M
71 9 62	1	M-NTC	
2. Ryan O'Reilly, BUF	C	27	\$7.5M
81 24 61	5		
3. Jeff Skinner, CAR	LW	26	\$5.73M
24 49 1	NMC	82	
4. Max Pacioretty, MTL	LW	29	\$4.5M
64 17 37	1		
5. Justin Faulk, CAR	RD	26	\$4.83M
8 31 2		76	
6. Zack Smith, OTT	C	30	\$3.25M
5 19 3	M-NTC	68	
7. Jason Zucker, MIN	LW	26	\$2M
82 33 64	RFA		
8. Craig Anderson, OTT	G	37	\$4.75M
58 3.32 .898	2		
9. Artemi Panarin, CBJ	LW	26	\$6M
81 27 82	1		
10. Phil Kessel, PIT	RW	30	\$8M
34 92 4	M-NTC	82	
11. Kevin Hayes, NYR	C	26	\$2.6M
76 25 44	RFA		
12. Matt Dumba, MIN	RD	23	\$2.25M
82 14 50	RFA		
13. Brandon Montour, ANA	RD	24	\$925K
80 9 33	RFA		
14. Colton Parayko, STL	RD	25	\$5.5M
82 6 35	4		
16. Milan Lucic, EDM	LW	29	\$6M
82 10 34	5	NMC	
17. Alex Petrovic, FLA	RD	26	\$1.85M
67 2 13	RFA		
18. Ryan Spooner, NYR	LW	26	\$2.83M
59 13 41	RFA		



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20. P.K. Subban, NSH	RD	29	\$9M
82 16 59	4		
21. Jacob Trouba, WPG	RD	24	\$2.81M
55 3 24	RFA		
22. Bobby Ryan, OTT	RW	31	\$7.25M
62 11 33	4 M-NTC		
23. Rasmus Ristolainen, BUF	RD	23	\$5.4M
73 6 41	4		
24. Chris Tanev, VAN	RD	28	\$4.5M
42 2 11	2 M-NTC		
25. Corey Perry, ANA	RW	33	\$8.63M
71 17 49	3 NMC		

OFF THE BOARD

Traded: 5. Philipp Grubauer (Colorado); 8. Elias Lindholm (Calgary); 9. Mike Hoffman (San Jose/Florida); 13. Noah Hanifin (Calgary); 18. Max Domi (to Montreal); 19. Alex Galchenyuk (to Arizona); 19. Dougie Hamilton (Carolina); 19. Conor Sheary (Buffalo).

Re-signed: 8. Oliver Ekman-Larsson.

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1100931 Websites

TSN.CA / Statistically Speaking: Sheary a good get for Sabres

Scott Cullen

The Pittsburgh Penguins needed salary cap space and the Buffalo Sabres needed an infusion of skill, so the two clubs came together to address those needs.

Statistically Speaking looks into the deal sending Conor Sheary to Buffalo.

Conor Sheary	Pittsburgh LW	79	18	12
30	52.0 -0.7	99.1	55.2	13:57
Matt Hunwick	Pittsburgh D	42	4	6
10	48.9 -4.1	98.1	50.4	17:31

The Sabres Get: LW Conor Sheary and D Matt Hunwick

Sheary, 26, is a small skilled winger who has tallied 41 goals in 140 games over the past two seasons, though his most common linemate, by far, over the past two years has been Sidney Crosby, so it's reasonable to surmise that Sheary's production is a function of time spent on the wing with No. 87. His role decreased as last season progressed. Over the last couple of months and through the playoffs, he was down to about 12 minutes of ice time per game.

Nevertheless, he's shown that he knows what to do with the puck in the offensive zone, scoring 81 points in 90 AHL games after finishing his collegiate career at UMass. Of his 48 career NHL goals, 44 have been scored at even strength.

In Buffalo, Sheary is looking at an opportunity to play with a skilled young centre, either Jack Eichel or Casey Mittelstadt. (Ryan O'Reilly would be an option, too, if he's still in Buffalo.) Sheary is also likely to see a bump in his ice time, after dropping nearly two minutes per game from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018, so he should have a fair opportunity to score 20 goals.

Sheary is a useful player on a bargain contract for two more seasons at a cap hit of \$3-million per season.

It's worth noting that current Sabres GM Jason Botterill was the GM of the AHL Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins in the spring of 2014 when Sheary was signed as a collegiate free agent. They have a history together.

Matt Hunwick had a tough season in Pittsburgh.

Hunwick is a 33-year-old defenceman who has had an up-and-down career, and is coming off a poor season with the Penguins.

He ended up playing just 42 games, his fewest in a season since 2011-2012, and the Penguins were outshot (48.9 CF%, -4.1 CFRel%) and outscored (24 GF, 32 GA) with him on the ice.

Moving to Buffalo, Hunwick is likely a seventh, potentially even eighth, defenceman unless the Sabres shed some of their current blueliners. With Hunwick, Buffalo already has seven NHL defencemen under contract, plus top draft pick Rasmus Dahlin is a sure bet to play and prospect Brendan Guhle figures to have a decent shot to make the team.

Hunwick is under contract for two more seasons, at a cap hit of \$2.25-million per season. That's expensive for someone outside the top six on the blueline, but it's entirely possible that the Sabres could move out at least one of their veteran defenders and Hunwick could provide serviceable depth. The Sabres could also buy out Hunwick, but it doesn't make a lot of sense if they aren't pushing against the salary cap.

Failing that, taking on Hunwick may effectively be the tax that the Sabres had to pay in order to get Sheary.

The Penguins Get: A conditional fourth-round pick

The fourth-round pick that the Penguins receive could become a third-round pick, but the difference in value between third and fourth-round picks isn't that significant. Historically, a pick in the third-round range offers a 27.6% chance of yielding an NHL player, while one in the fourth-round range falls a little under 20.0%.

The real value in this deal for Pittsburgh is getting \$5.25-million in cap space over the next couple of seasons. That could allow Pittsburgh to either make a big move in the trade market (Jeff Skinner? Max Pacioretty?) or they could dip into the free agent pool. Either way, the Penguins do have some financial flexibility that they would not have without this deal.

Verdict: This may set the Penguins up for a future move but taking this deal in a vacuum means that the Sabres are getting a viable middle-six winger at a relatively low cost, an upgrade for a Sabres team that needs more talent.

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1100932 Websites

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



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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 Jaccob 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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1100933 Websites

TSN.CA / Statistically Speaking: Kovalchuk deal worth the risk for Kings

Scott Cullen

The Los Angeles Kings made a big splash by agreeing to a deal with free agent left winger Ilya Kovalchuk.

Statistically Speaking breaks down the deal, which is a significant investment from the Kings for a great goal-scorer who is returning to the league in his mid-thirties.

Ilya Kovalchuk	SKA St. Petersburg (KHL)	LW	53
31	32 63	+12	

The Kings Get: LW Ilya Kovalchuk

Kovalchuk, 35, is a premier shooter who has scored a point-per-game in his NHL career, but hasn't played in the NHL for the past five seasons. In the past six years with SKA St. Petersburg, Kovalchuk has tallied 138 goals and 327 points in 298 games. He also has 10 points (8 G, 2 A) in 11 games at the past two Olympic tournaments.

From 2003-2004 through 2009-2010, mostly with Atlanta, Kovalchuk terrorized opposing goaltenders, scoring at least 40 goals in six straight seasons, scoring on 14.7% of his shots. His production declined in the next two-and-a-half seasons in New Jersey though, as he scored 79 goals in 195 games, scoring on 11.7% of his shots.

Now, add in the fact that he has spent half a decade in the KHL since and it's fair to wonder how much Kovalchuk will have left in the tank. He was never a great puck possession player, and logged huge minutes – close to 22 minutes per game – during his previous time in the NHL.

Using NHL equivalencies, Kovalchuk's 63 points in 53 KHL games last season translates to nearly a point-per-game in the NHL, but he was also



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on a powerhouse team – they scored 52 more goals than any other team in 56 games – one that might tilt the numbers a bit.

In any case, Kovalchuk is a good enough shooter to make a significant contribution. If he generates three shots per game and shoots 12% that would net him nearly 30 goals in a full season, but expectations need to be reasonable for seasons that will be played when Kovalchuk is 35, 36 and 37-years-old.

Kovalchuk's deal in Los Angeles is reportedly for three years at a cap hit of \$6.25-million per season, the same price that the Maple Leafs paid for Patrick Marleau last summer.

Verdict: There is certainly some risk involved in signing Kovalchuk, including his age and time away from the NHL, but there is also a really good chance that he can still put the puck in the net for a Kings team that needs someone capable of pulling the trigger in the offensive zone. If Kovalchuk skates with a play-driver like Anze Kopitar, that should mean lots of chances for Kovalchuk to score, even if his ice time and shooting percentage aren't going to be what they were in his peak NHL seasons. For a team like the Kings, with an older core of star players, it's worth bringing in Kovalchuk and taking a shot to see if they can still compete at the highest level.

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1100934 Websites

TSN.CA / Statistically Speaking: Capitals create cap space in deal with Avs

Scott Cullen

The Washington Capitals needed to move some salary and the Colorado Avalanche were eager to help out, adding a couple of veterans in the process.

Statistically Speaking examines the trade sending Philipp Grubauer and Brooks Orpik to Colorado.

Brooks Orpik	Washington	D	81	0
10	10	44.3	-5.5	99.4
19:22				49.7

Philipp Grubauer	Washington	G	35	.923
.934				

The Avalanche Get: G Philipp Grubauer and D Brooks Orpik

Grubauer, 26, has been one of the top backup goaltenders in the past three seasons, posting a .923 save percentage in 81 games, and he took the starting job down the stretch and into the first couple of playoff games for Washington last season, so he's probably ready for a bigger role.

The story gets even better when considering the quality of shots that Grubauer faced. His expected save percentage over the past three seasons is only .908; the difference between his actual save percentage and expected save percentage works out to .0148, the best among goaltenders with at least 2000 minutes played over that period.

A restricted free agent, Grubauer is due for a good raise (two years at a little over \$3.5-million per, according to Matt Cane's free agent model) and should have an opportunity to play in Colorado. The arrival of Grubauer could give the Avalanche the option to deal current starter Semyon Varlamov, an above-average starter who has one year, with a \$5.9-million cap hit, left on his deal. The Avalanche also have Pavel Francouz, a 27-year-old Czech netminder who was dominant in the KHL, coming to North America next season.

Orpik is a 37-year-old heavy hitter on defence, who probably had to play a too much in 2017-2018. He was outshot (44.3 CF%) and outscored (40.9 GF%) rather handily during 5-on-5 play.

He hasn't scored a goal in the past two seasons, but he's also won two Stanley Cups in a career that has seen him play 982 regular-season games. The Avalanche apparently aren't interested in keeping Orpik, he was merely the tax for acquiring Grubauer, so he's either going to be flipped to another club or, failing that, bought out.

Orpik has one year, with a \$5.5-million cap hit (\$4.5-million salary), left on his contract.

The Capitals Get: A second-round pick

Washington receives the 47th pick in this year's draft. Pick in that range have, historically, offered about a one-in-three chance of turning into an NHL player.

But, the value of this deal for the Capitals isn't in the draft picks, it's in clearing out salary cap space. Avoiding a significant raise for Grubauer and shedding Orpik's contract should leave them enough space to make a formidable offer to retain unrestricted free agent defenceman John Carlson – that's the impetus for making this deal.

Verdict: It's a deal in which both teams get something that they can use. Grubauer offers a potential long-term solution in goal for Colorado, though the price paid to get him is not insignificant, and Washington gets much-needed financial flexibility. Given the stakes, it looks like the Capitals made out pretty well from a potentially tight situation.

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