



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Hurricanes sign defensemen Haydn Fleury, Gustav Forsling to one-year deals

By Chip Alexander

Defenseman Haydn Fleury, expected to take on a bigger role this upcoming season, has signed a one-year, one-way contract with the Carolina Hurricanes.

Fleury, a former first-round draft pick by the Canes, will be paid \$850,000, the team announced Tuesday.

The Canes also signed defenseman Gustav Forsling to a one-year, two-way contract that will pay \$874,125 at the NHL level and \$70,000 at the AHL level.

Forsling, 23, was acquired from the Chicago Blackhawks with goalie Anton Forsberg in the June 24 deal that sent veteran defenseman Calvin de Haan and offensive prospect Aleksi Saarela to Chicago.

With de Haan gone, Fleury is expected to join Trevor van Riemsdyk as the Canes' third defensive pairing.

"Haydn has taken strides during each of his three professional seasons in our organization," Canes general manager Don

Waddell said in a statement. "We've been encouraged by his development and our hope is that he becomes a fixture in our lineup."

Fleury, 23, played 20 NHL regular-season games for the Canes last season and appeared in nine Stanley Cup playoff games after van Riemsdyk suffered a shoulder injury. He has 87 games of NHL regular-season experience, with nine career assists.

After the Canes were beaten in the Eastern Conference finals, Fleury rejoined the Charlotte Checkers of the AHL and was a part of their Calder Cup championship playoff run.

Forsling has 122 games of NHL experience, including 43 with the Blackhawks last season, when the Swede had three goals and six assists.

"Gustav is a skilled, young defenseman," Waddell said in a statement. "He has shown promise throughout his time in the NHL and we expect him to continue to develop."

The Charlotte Observer

New Checkers head coach: I'm not planning overhauls

By Steve Lyttle

There are a couple things Ryan Warsofsky wants you to know about the Charlotte Checkers team he will coach this season.

It won't be the same team that fans saw win the American Hockey League's Calder Cup with a franchise-record 110 points during the regular season.

"Look, it'll be a different team," he said, referring to the players who have left the organization via trade or free agency since the season ended a month ago.

But fans will see a number of familiar faces, playing a familiar style, he said.

"I'm not planning any major overhauls," Warsofsky, 31, said Tuesday during his initial news conference as Checkers head coach. "And we've got a number of top players back. Plus, we've added some quality people."

Most importantly, said the youngest head coach in Checkers' history and currently serving in the AHL, there's no reason to expect anything less than a successful 2019-20 season.

"We can't win a Calder Cup on July 16," said Warsofsky, top assistant to Mike Vellucci on last season's team. "But we can prepare every day, so we're ready when the season starts. And we can work hard every day to get a little better."

Warsofsky is a former college hockey player who went into coaching after a season in the minor leagues. He was head coach of the ECHL's South Carolina Stingrays in 2016-18 and guided the Charleston-based team to the playoff finals in 2017.

He joined the Checkers last season and handled special teams and defense. Charlotte's penalty-kill team climbed from 24th in 2017-18 to No. 1 last season. The defense ranked second in the league.

He's about to become a father, with wife Caroline expecting the couple's first baby around Aug. 27 — a few weeks before training camp begins.

And he hates to lose.

Checkers radio announcer Jason Shaya recalled a time last season when veteran defenseman Zack Stortini told him, "Some guys love to win. Some guys hate to lose. But that guy (pointing to Warsofsky) ... he really hates to lose!"

Checkers owner Michael Kahn alluded to that Tuesday, saying, "More than anything, I love his intensity. Because I, too, don't like to lose."

COMINGS AND GOINGS

The Checkers roster will look different when the team takes the ice in early October. In fact, the team's top two scorers



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from last season will be playing elsewhere. Here are some signings announced by Charlotte's NHL parent team, the Carolina Hurricanes:

- The most obvious is Vellucci leaving the organization and becoming head coach of the AHL's Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins. Warsofsky said Tuesday that "rarely a day goes by" when the two of them don't communicate.
- Aleks Saarela, the team's leading goal-scorer in 2018-19, was traded to the Chicago Blackhawks. As part of the trade, goalkeeper Anton Forsberg was sent to Carolina. Forsberg is likely to spend some time in Charlotte.
- Forward Andrew Poturalski, the team's leading scorer, signed with the Anaheim Ducks and is likely to spend some time with the AHL's San Diego Gulls.

- Defenseman Alex Lintuniemi, 23, a second-round pick by Los Angeles in 2014, was signed by Carolina to a two-way (both the NHL and AHL) contract. He has 60 points in 176 AHL games.

- Josiah Didier, one of the Checkers' most reliable defensemen, signed with the Boston Bruins organization.

- Center Clark Bishop, who split time between Charlotte and Carolina last season, was re-signed by the Hurricanes.

- Forward Brian Gibbons, 31, who has played in 189 NHL and 329 AHL games, was signed by Carolina and is likely to spend at least part of the season in Charlotte.

THE ATHLETIC

By the numbers: Grading every team's contract efficiency

By Dom Luszczyszyn

Last week we went over the league's best and worst contracts, ordered by how much surplus value the deal provides as well as the likelihood the player will be able to provide positive value. That was just a teaser. Today, we rank (almost) every contract on every team in the league based on the same methodology in an attempt to figure out which teams are the most efficient with the money they spend.

The contracts included in the exercise are every healthy, non-ELC skater that my model has a projection for, as well as any dead money a team has on their cap via buyouts, salary retention and cap recapture penalties. That means no RFAs without a deal, no players on an entry-level deal, no players without a significant NHL sample, no players on LTIR and no goalies. My model doesn't currently spit out future win projections for goaltenders or expected contract value either, so they were unfortunately omitted. Unused cap space is also not considered as there's no knowing how that space would be used. This is about the value of each contract currently on the books.

Teams will be graded empirically based on the surplus value they bring in per player contract (all dead money counts as one) as well as the average probability those deals will provide positive value. Both are based on a player's age-adjusted projected win output according to GSVa and the uncertainty in that projection for future seasons, along with the cost of a win on the open market. How much each team spends to obtain those wins will also be graded.

What's being assessed is the future value of the remainder of each contract, meaning what a player has already done holds no merit here. Future value means age is crucial in terms of grading each contract, with players peaking between the ages of 22-26 and declining afterward.

Surplus value will depend on term, where more seasons give more opportunity to compound value. Positive value probability depends on the certainty of a player's projection which depends on how much variance there has been in the

player's past numbers. Longer term means that uncertainty increases.

Each contract will be graded based on where their combined surplus value and positive value probability fall on the following percentile scale. All contract and roster data is as of July 15.

It goes without saying that you will probably not agree with everything that my model spits out and that's OK. GSVa is not infallible and is meant as a starting point for discussion, keeping in mind that there is no bias against any specific team or player and that everyone is being graded under the same scale. Questions and concerns asked respectfully in the comments will be answered.

Without further ado: analyzing, grading and ranking each team and the efficiency of all the contracts they currently have signed.

Carolina Hurricanes – A

Considering the team has two of the league's best contracts in Sebastian Aho and Brett Pesce, went to the conference final last season, has an extremely talented young core and cap flexibility, it should come as no surprise that the Hurricanes rank as the league's most cap efficient team. It wasn't all that close either. Carolina ranks first in both average surplus value per player (\$300,000 more than the next best team) and positive value probability (eight percentage points more than the next best team). They're second in cost per win. There's a fair amount of dead money on the books, but that's mainly a receipt for how the team weaponized their cap flexibility, procuring a first-round pick in the process.

Carolina has five contracts on the books in the A-range, the most in the league, and zero in the D range. The league average for both is two. Carolina's advantage is that the team not only has some of the league's best deals on the books but also none that are in any way questionable either. Only two deals on their cap sheet carry a negative surplus value, and both are for under \$500,000 – basically, all their deals are market value or better. Emphasis on the better for their trio of



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top-pairing calibre defenders (all at under \$6 million) and their two best forwards too. That they also have former second-overall pick Andrei Svechnikov on an ELC is a terrific bonus to all of this too.

The Hurricanes are one of two teams that spend less than \$3 million per win, spending almost \$3 million less than the league average. The reason for that is likely twofold: less media-driven hype for a team that has generally flown under-the-radar, and most Canes earning their value through driving play which isn't generally a hot market commodity. Players being locked up for their peak years helps too.

Vegas Golden Knights – A-

Remember, this is about contract efficiency (and that goalie contracts don't count). The Golden Knights are completely capped out, yes, but they've still spent that money very wisely to get there. As a new team, they also don't have the same ELC advantage other teams have. The Golden Knights have what should be one of the league's strongest teams next season to show for it. There is some bad money on the books, but a slew of terrific contracts to offset that thanks to the team's strong depth.

Vegas got some of those deals by offering security in exchange for a discount on the AAV. The team has six players signed for five or more years and all six carry a surplus value north of \$10 million total. That's the most in the league. Consider what \$5 million gets on the open market, and whether it's even close to what Jonathan Marchessault provides. Look at recent signings of Kevin Hayes and Artemi Panarin and whether Vegas gets more for less with William Karlsson and Mark Stone. On the back end, the team gets two needle-movers for under \$6 million, or one Tyler Myers. And to top it all off, they've got Alex Tuch locked in for a song thanks to the power of RFA leverage. Even Reilly Smith looks like a bargain now, which is funny considering the Panthers offloaded him as a cap dump in the expansion draft in the first place.

Still, some of that bad money does linger and goes to show that almost every team – even the second most efficient – carries some type of cap burden on their books. Vegas is a good example that even the best-managed caps aren't without concerns. The team is paying nearly \$7 million combined for two fourth-line players (luckily for only one more season) – space that could be used on RFA Nikita Gusev. The team also committed four years to Max Pacioretty before he even played a game for them, a deal that has already backfired as he didn't exactly bounce back as expected in his first season in Vegas.

Toronto Maple Leafs – A-

Toronto ranking so high may come as a surprise, but that's mostly because the local media juggernaut tends to blow everything out of proportion in the centre of the hockey universe.

The Auston Matthews deal looks pricey compared to McDavid's, but that's an unfair bar to be compared to as both players will be vastly underpaid for their services given their current projected value and trajectory. Matthews is one of the most efficient players in hockey and projects to be the league's second most valuable player during the life of his contract. The William Nylander deal is far from a problem –

assuming he can bounce back with a proper training camp. Signing John Tavares, an obviously elite player, to a very fair deal is not the reason the team has cap issues. The grass is always greener on the other side. Spending to the cap is what contenders have to do.

What the Leafs have going for them is their youth. They're one of the youngest teams in the league and their core will only get better, meaning surplus value only grows in the coming seasons. The chance that they provide positive value collectively as a result is high. The average 65 percent rate is the second-highest in the league behind Carolina. That they have five forwards locked into positive value deals for four more seasons is a big plus, as is having Rielly on one of the league's best contracts for three. Those deals will only look better going forward.

The team wouldn't be here though without the efforts of the front office this summer, clearing most of the team's bad money off the books in dropping Patrick Marleau and exchanging seven years of a terrible defenceman for one. The Leafs are one of six teams in the league without a contract in the D-range and should see 83 percent of their deals provide positive value. That's the second-highest in the league. They also saved space where necessary by downgrading on Kadri, but gaining a capable right shot defenceman on a cheap deal, as well as allocating fourth-line resources to league minimum veterans rather than an expensive Connor Brown.

St. Louis Blues – B+

Like Toronto, the Blues rank so highly based on a high volume of good deals, and few albatrosses. The defending Stanley Cup champions have one bad deal on the books, Alex Steen's, but there are only two years left and it's not so bad compared to what other teams have to deal with. Most of the team's other contracts have a relatively high probability of providing positive value, with the 64 percent average ranking third in the league.

Go down the list and there's a bunch of terrific contracts starting at the top with Vladimir Tarasenko and Ryan O'Reilly, both of whom are players worthy of \$10 million deals. The Colton Parayko contract is nearly just as big of a steal considering he's a legit No. 1 option making \$5.5 million. Jaden Schwartz, Brayden Schenn and Alex Pietrangolo all look good too, with each being underpaid by about \$3 million.

The Blues are also a strong defensive team and that's part of the reason the players are relatively underpaid – defence doesn't earn the big bucks. The Carl Gunnarsson deal says it all there as he's making Roman Polak money, while actually doing his job in his own end. Add the contributions of Robert Thomas and Vince Dunn on ELCs to the equation, and it's easy to see how the Blues squeeze so much value out of the cap. That they have no dead money is also a bonus.

Boston Bruins – B+

The Bruins have two of the league's best contracts and another that was close to being an honourable mention making up their entire top line – three players projected to provide over 12 wins of value next season, locked up for under \$20 million for at least the next three seasons. That's a hefty advantage and reason enough for the Bruins to rank as high as they do. It's why the Bruins rank first in average cost per



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win at just \$2.7 million per. With that, the team has a lot of leeway in assembling a competitive roster. Add Jake DeBrusk on an ELC to that as well.

How they've used that advantage is mostly a mixed bag though, and it's why they don't rank higher. In total, the combination of Patrice Bergeron, Brad Marchand and David Pastrnak provides \$92 million of surplus value, providing 48 wins of value for \$84 million combined over the next three-to-six years. The rest of the team is at minus \$11 million in surplus value, though that might just be worth it considering they just went to the Cup final.

There are some good value deals beyond the top line, like the recently inked Danton Heinen contract and the entire left side of the defence corps, but the rest are market value (David Krejci holds the distinction of having the "fairest" contract according to my model) or worse. In two cases, significantly so.

Where Boston has issues is in its free agency spending. David Backes is still an effective player, but not one that deserves anywhere close to \$6 million. Luckily that deal is up in two years, but that same luck isn't afforded to John Moore who is basically \$2.8 million of dead cap space per year the way the team is using him.

Tampa Bay Lightning – B

Considering some of the sweetheart deals the team's superstars have signed, it may be a bit of a surprise that the Lightning rank outside the top five. Doing this experiment before Brayden Point signs for well below market value definitely hurts them. So too does excluding players on ELCs, as all four of Anthony Cirelli, Erik Cernak, Mathieu Joseph and Mikhail Sergachev provide big value at a fraction of their worth. That the team has found value through that avenue speaks more to their development than cap efficiency though.

When it comes to actual deals on the books, there's a pretty large dichotomy between the big guns and the rest. No player in the league provides more surplus value than Nikita Kucherov, who's signed for a pittance relative to his actual worth (around \$15 million), while Steven Stamkos and Victor Hedman's deals easily save the Lightning over \$3.5 million per season. The Yanni Gourde deal isn't bad either, but the rest don't really impress.

There's a lot of money and term tied up to forward depth, with Alex Killorn, Ondrej Palat and Tyler Johnson coming in over \$1 million too high relative to their worth over the remainder of the contracts. They may have been worth it at the beginning of their deals but not so much now. That's likely what will play out with Ryan McDonagh too, who is very much worth it for the first half of his deal but likely won't be as he approaches his mid-30s.

Like the Bruins, the top dogs give the team a lot of leeway in allocating money and it's because of them that the team is third in average surplus value per player (their surplus value is a combined \$84 million). How they've spent it is mediocre, albeit understandable considering the team is in the middle of its championship window.

Keeping the band together is important in that goal, but it may not be long until the team suffers the consequences of that – especially if it means not being able to afford those players

coming off ELCs. It is worth noting though that none of the deals are complete albatrosses and are very moveable as a result, something the team has been very adept at doing.

Pittsburgh Penguins – B

That the Penguins are in the top 10 despite their infamous escapades during free agency should say it all when it comes to team cap efficiency: every team has its problems.

For the Penguins, those problems have all come about recently. Last summer they signed Jack Johnson to a ludicrous contract he doesn't deserve, one my model rates as the 16th worst in hockey (for those wondering why he didn't make last week's list). This summer they learned nothing by signing Brandon Tanev, a third-liner at best, to an overpriced six-year deal. And to top things off, they traded for their two next worst contracts in Erik Gudbranson and Alex Galchenyuk. In those four players, the Penguins are spending \$15.7 million next season to likely subtract 0.4 wins from their bottom line.

So how are the Penguins this high? It's because the rest of the contracts on the books are solid, and like Boston and Tampa Bay, the team has a lot of leeway from huge value deals on three of their stars.

Sidney Crosby was auspiciously missing from last week's best contracts list, but by surplus value alone he would be fifth, while running mate Jake Guentzel is seventh. Crosby makes \$8.7 million per year, but he's arguably worth closer to \$14 million based on the value he provides – an insane number given his age, but not so insane considering his performance last season. On defence, Kris Letang's \$7.3 million contract looks like a steal too as he consistently provides high-level value on the back end for a fraction of what those services have recently gone for on the open market.

Minnesota Wild – B

When I teased the worst contracts list was coming, many dejected Wild fans in the comments joked that it would be a list full of Wild contracts, and yet here the team is ranked seventh. Hmm.

Minnesota's biggest problem is in net, and if those contracts were factored in here they'd likely rank lower as a result. By expected goals saved, Dubnyk has been one of the league's worst goalies over the last couple years.

Aside from that though, the forward contracts on the books give plenty of reason for pessimism. It's a hodgepodge of bad value aside from the terrific (but short) Eric Staal deal and the bargain Jason Zucker deal that for some reason the team wanted to unload. Zach Parise had a resurgence last season that puts some extra life on his deal, but the last four years might get ugly. Neither of the new signees, Mats Zuccarello and Ryan Hartman, project to offer positive value. And of course there's the Victor Rask deal, the worst one here as the rehabilitation project hasn't exactly gone according to plan.

Defence is the team's bread and butter though (hence why Dubnyk looks so bad after accounting for context), and that's where the team finds value. Defence is often underrated and it's likely why my model (now after some improvements anyways) sees the Wild group providing more value than expected. Matt Dumba and Jared Spurgeon are the best deals



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here, but everyone on the back end looks like a good bet to provide positive value. The Wild are one of three teams without a single bad contract on the blue line.

All the defencemen have a pretty high chance of providing positive value, and aside from Rask, the forwards aren't bad in that regard either. The Wild rank seventh by that measure and it's the main reason they're ranked so highly.

Nashville Predators – B

The Predators have a pretty clean cap sheet and one of the best – if the centre position wasn't acknowledged at all. The team's two best wingers and two best defenders are on incredible value deals that could challenge for the league's best, with all four being underpaid by about \$4 million or so. There's also decent value for much of the Ryan Ellis deal, and good savings on one-year terms for the team's other top-six wingers, Mikael Granlund and Craig Smith. There's a lot of reason to like what Nashville has done as a majority of the deals are very reasonable.

But those, centres ... yikes. They're the team's four worst contracts on the books by far. Much has been made about the team's epic search for a top-flight centre as well as centre depth and though the team has put in a lot of effort to do so, the end result still isn't very pretty. The team added Nick Bonino to complement Ryan Johansen, but he's struggled for most of his Predators tenure. They traded for Kyle Turris to bridge the gap between the two, but he fell off a cliff last season. Now they've signed Matt Duchene to a pretty bloated deal on top of all that and while he is an upgrade, he still likely won't be the high-end first-line centre the team has been searching for.

The latest deal means the team has \$26.1 million in commitments at the position, the second-most in hockey, barely behind Toronto (depending on how one configures the Oilers lineup). By GSVA, their centre core ranks 20th, though.

Winnipeg Jets – B

The Jets round out the top 10, but their cap picture remains unclear with some high profile RFAs remaining unsigned. There's still plenty of room for them, but their deals would alter how the rest is perceived.

Overall, it's not bad. Mark Scheifele is on one of the best deals in hockey and would easily be worth \$10 million on the open market. Nikolaj Ehlers is extremely underrated and is only getting better, while deals for Josh Morrissey, Adam Lowry and Dustin Byfuglien also look solid.

What hurts Winnipeg is a couple of bad contracts on the books as both Dmitry Kulikov and Bryan Little are earning far too much for what they bring to the table. Little having five years left on his deal is a huge hindrance.

Dallas Stars – B-

John Klingberg deservedly made the best contracts list, but the team confusingly ended up using that surplus value on his main partner Esa Lindell. Klingberg is the main driving force of that pair and Lindell nearly eats up all the surplus value that Klingberg provides. Combined, the duo is still underpaid, but it's still not an ideal use of resources and a rare RFA deal that doesn't look strong.

Elsewhere it's a mixed bag. Alex Radulov wasn't far off the best contracts list himself as he's been a beast in Dallas; a rare UFA steal on a contract that did look scary when signed. Joe Pavelski's deal looks like it could be solid in that vein too. The two big-money deals for Tyler Seguin and Jamie Benn are OK in aggregate, but the latter doesn't look like one that'll age that well. The depth deals range from decent (Jason Dickinson, Corey Perry) to poor (Andrew Cogliano, Blake Comeau, Roman Polak). The Martin Hanzal contract remains one of the worst values for the team, but it thankfully will be off the books next season, and there's a good chance he ends up on LTIR anyway.

Calgary Flames – B-

The four contracts in the A-range are the second highest only to Carolina (no other teams have four or more), with the top line and Mark Giordano all coming in at or close to \$4 million less than their worth. Those offer some big savings that can be used to complement talent well. The Flames falter though by having some ugly deals that mitigate that advantage. Calgary is top-10 in surplus value and cost per win, but 17th in positive value probability.

The James Neal one is, of course, the sketchiest deal after a dismal first season in Calgary. Without much power-play time to boost his value, Neal's stock plummeted and he's now being paid close to \$6 million to provide fourth-line value with little hope for a return to form. Michael Stone is added dead weight as someone being paid \$3.5 million to stay in the press box, though at least there's only one year left there.

The most surprising grade likely comes via Mikael Backlund, with my model pegging his deal as the team's second-worst contract. Backlund has long been a fancy stats darling and his contract looked like it could be a bargain as a result, but his impact on play-driving has lessened over the last few seasons (with the emergence of linemate Matthew Tkachuk softening the blow of his actual results) and at age 30 things likely only get worse from here. He's still a solid player, but I'm a little skeptical at how that deal ages.

San Jose Sharks – B-

With a 60 percent chance of the team's contracts panning out overall, the Sharks rank top five in positive value probability. That's thanks to incredibly strong deals for Timo Meier and Kevin Labanc on top of a high number of players on positive value deals. Two-thirds of the Sharks contracts fall into that category.

It's the deals that don't that bring the Sharks down in a big way (and this doesn't even include the hideous Martin Jones pact). Marc-Edouard Vlasic made the list of worst contracts (though a bounce-back is very possible with a new partner), but he's not alone in lengthy overpays for elder players in San Jose. Logan Couture is a great player (and this doesn't factor for his playoff clutch factor), but \$8 million per year is pretty steep for his ages 30-37 seasons. Evander Kane makes a million less for two fewer seasons and is a similarly bad bet. And while Erik Karlsson is still one of the league's best defencemen, recent injuries make me worry, after seeing how far Drew Doughty fell off last year. The Brent Burns deal at least still looks good though, so it's not all bad for the team's long-term commitments.



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The Sharks are the highest-ranked team with a negative surplus value and I wouldn't be surprised to see them drop down this list once the window closes.

Montreal Canadiens – B-

Montreal has four problem contracts amongst their skaters (seeing as the massive money allotted to Carey Price is the biggest one and not accounted for here). Up front, Jonathan Drouin was paid for his potential, but his lack of defensive acumen is holding him back from reaching that. The Karl Alzner deal was a mistake from Day 1 and the team is paying for it now. It seems they didn't really learn from that mistake seeing as they signed a comparably bad player in Ben Chiarot for the same term and \$1.1 million less. Then there's Shea Weber, who has been excellent of late and should have years left where he's worth it, but five years after that could be an issue.

The rest though? Not bad. Not bad at all. The Brett Kulak deal was a nice bit of work, and there's a nice stable of positive value up front in Max Domi, Phillip Danault, Artturi Lehkonen and Tomas Tatar. Brendan Gallagher carries the best deal for Montreal though, a steal at \$3.8 million per year and a contender for best value contract if only it was a bit longer.

The one issue here might be the lack of commitment up front. The team's forward depth is its biggest strength at the moment and there could be a lot of turnover and hefty raises in line to those guys.

Flexibility is a good thing as it'll allow the team to cut bait when necessary, but they'll have to pony up for the ones they do decide to keep. With 14 contracts for NHL-calibre forwards on the books, Charles Hudon left to sign and prospects knocking on the door, the forward group is getting mighty crowded. Maybe that internal competition and future flexibility will pay off.

Washington Capitals – B-

The Capitals are the definition of average and are the highest-rated team without a single contract in the A-range. They come in 15th here and pretty much every player is relatively close to fair value. Nicklas Backstrom and Radko Gudas are the biggest bargains, but come in at one year. Evgeny Kuznetsov has one of the lowest surplus values due to poor defensive play, but over six years it's not much to haggle over considering his sublime offensive talent. Even criticized deals at the time of signing like T.J. Oshie's, Tom Wilson's and John Carlson's look decent now.

The one issue is with Dmitry Orlov who has provided top pair value commensurate of his paycheque in the past, but slipped tremendously last season. Perhaps that was more his partner, the departed Matt Niskanen, than him. We'll see if a fresh start with a new linemate will do him good.

Colorado Avalanche – B-

The Avalanche have a mountain of cap space with only a couple of free agents left to sign, and if any team can weaponize that it's Colorado. We saw that once when they acquired starting goaltender Philipp Grubauer and they have the flexibility to do it again. In Nathan MacKinnon, the team has one of, if not, the best contracts in hockey, with Gabriel

Landeskog and Nazem Kadri being solid bargains on top of that.

So why are they this low on the list? The team is ranked higher when it comes to surplus value and cost per win, but their average positive value probability is below average. That comes from a few overpayments on defence, mainly Erik Johnson and Ian Cole, both of whom are making a bit too much, and in Johnson's case for a bit too long. Aside from them, and the star players on the team, there's a lot of fair value deals here. Nothing wrong with that, but it explains why they're closer to the middle of the pack.

The other reason is that Colorado should see a lot of value coming from their trio of players currently on ELCs, especially defenders Samuel Girard and Cale Makar.

Columbus Blue Jackets – B-

A little below average in surplus value, a little bit above when it comes to probability of adding value. The best deals belong to Josh Anderson and Seth Jones, but both pale in comparison to what other teams can offer. Jones had a bit of a down year last season after a Norris-worthy campaign the year prior which is why my model likes his contract but doesn't love it as much as others. Cam Atkinson provides the most surplus value due to his length, but that also means more uncertainty in how it'll turn out.

The Blue Jackets have two deals on the books in the D-range and those are the largest issues here. Alex Wennberg and Brandon Dubinsky are signed for a combined \$10.8 million and neither can really be counted on as top six players the way they're paid to be.

Philadelphia Flyers – B-

The Flyers are right near the middle, which is exactly where they almost always end up. If you do a list and the Flyers aren't painfully mediocre, you've probably messed up somewhere along the way.

The Flyers have a plethora of deals that appear to be bad value – three of which came onto the books this summer in Kevin Hayes, Justin Braun and Matt Niskanen – but four deals that save them from themselves. My model rated the Sean Couturier deal as the third-best in hockey and that alone gives the team a lot of leeway. Claude Giroux doesn't come as cheap, but \$8.3 million is still a discount for his services. On defence, Travis Sanheim's bridge deal is going to be a steal, while Shayne Gostisbehere, despite his warts, is still a great asset on his current contract.

Edmonton Oilers – C+

I bet you're surprised that the Oilers aren't in the bottom five or even bottom 10. That's how good the contracts for Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl are with each deserving significantly more. Compared to the market, those two are a steal, and will likely remain so for the entirety of their lengthy contracts, especially as the cap rises. That's the beauty of locking in young players for their prime years. Large shifts in their underlying numbers caused lower certainties for positive probability keeping them off the best contracts list, but by surplus value alone, they both rank in the top 10, with McDavid behind only Kucherov.



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Those two are also the team's only real lengthy commitments which greatly drops the team's cost per win allotment near the top of the league, and gives them positive surplus value overall. They're the lowest-ranked team with positive surplus value though.

It's the rest of the team that's the problem and why the Oilers average positive value probability is only 42 percent, the sixth-lowest mark in the league. A large majority of their other deals will likely bust with some exception. Their \$11 million in dead money is also one of the league's highest marks.

The good thing at least is the team does have flexibility going forward with many of the deals expiring soon – though the biggest problem, one of the worst contracts in the league in Milan Lucic's deal, remains for four more seasons. It probably also stings that the team's worst contract on defence belongs to Adam Larsson, considering what the team gave up to acquire him.

Florida Panthers – C+

If goalie contracts were included, it's likely the Panthers would be much further down the list as spending that much for that long on a guy in his 30s is a huge gamble. That the team has two of the best contracts in hockey with Aleksander Barkov and Jonathan Huberdeau speaks volumes about the rest of the deals. Florida is one of 14 teams with multiple contracts in the A-range.

It's mostly thanks to the defence group commitments, with the team's top four being locked in at a very high price for at least the next three seasons. The Panthers are spending \$24.3 million for the services of Aaron Ekblad, Keith Yandle, Anton Stralman and Mike Matheson and you can argue not a single one is a legitimate No. 1 defenceman. That's a lot of money for a team that was one of the worst defensive outfits last season. Some of that was on the goaltending, but the team sure didn't make things easy back there.

The Panthers are allocating the fourth-highest amount of dollars on D-men (usually a bad sign to begin with since forwards drive the bus more), but rank 29th at the position according to GSVA. Over half of the team's deals are positive, especially at forward, but the high cost of the defence relative to its ability brings the team way down.

New Jersey Devils – C+

The Devils have a lot of cap space to play with and may be able to weaponize it, but for now, the deals they do have are mostly mediocre. Taylor Hall is an incredible value at \$6 million, but only has a single season left. Kyle Palmieri is up there too but only has two.

The rest of the deals on the books are really just average or worse, although it is worth mentioning the team doesn't have a huge albatross on the books either – not with Travis Zajac up in two seasons. Factor in that the team's top two centres, both of whom were first-overall picks, are on ELCs and the team's cap sheet is in a good spot, albeit unremarkable right now. The Hall factor is huge.

Buffalo Sabres – C

The Sabres rank 30th in positive value probability, but 22nd in surplus value and 21st in cost per win. The reason for that is

due to the flexibility of the team's cap sheet in relation to which players are signed long term and which aren't. Jack Eichel and Colin Miller bring the team the most surplus value while Jeff Skinner is signed for close to market value. Those players greatly reduce the price of a win every year they're on the books and offset the guys that drive it up, most of whom are only on one-year pacts. Aside from bad deals for Kyle Okposo and Rasmus Ristolainen, the future cap sheet looks pretty clean.

The immediate present isn't great though. The list goes on for the Sabres that are getting more than their worth, but they won't be here for long. Zemgus Girgensons, Johan Larsson, Jimmy Vesey, Vladimir Sobotka, Zach Bogosian and Marco Scandella are all replaceable talents and likely gone after next season. That they're only here for a year though is what drives the certainty that they won't be worth their contracts way up though. Combined, they'll be worth minus-2.1 wins next season, but somehow cost the team \$18.1 million. That's rough.

The Sabres have eight players with a positive value probability lower than 20 percent, the most in the league. The Sabres also rank dead last with only 24 percent of their contracts being above average value. One day things will be good in Buffalo, but that time isn't now. The team just doesn't have the right pieces surrounding its talented young core.

Anaheim Ducks – C

It'll be interesting to see how this team fares away from Randy Carlyle hockey and I'd imagine this cap sheet will look a lot better when that time comes. For now, it ranks near the bottom thanks in large part to Cam Fowler, as he drags the team's total surplus value down. He has one of the worst contracts in hockey. Adam Henrique isn't far off from that list either as he's making top-six centre money for far too long. It would've been much worse if Ryan Kesler's deal counted.

In Ondrej Kase though, the Ducks have one of the best contracts and that offsets some of the badness from the rest. It's only a two-year deal, but it's for pennies on the dollar. Rickard Rakell had a down season just like the rest of the Ducks, but he's a steal too.

Vancouver Canucks – C

Small victory: the Canucks aren't in the bottom five. They're extremely close though and it comes from their unfettered desire to be big players in free agency despite their contention window not being open yet. Through that avenue they acquired Loui Eriksson in 2016, then Antoine Roussel, Tim Schaller and Jay Beagle last summer, and this summer signed Tyler Myers, Micheal Ferland and Jordie Benn. In total, the team is spending \$86 million on those players. The return on investment: 6.7 wins over the life of the respective deals, a cost of \$12.8 million per win. Overall, the team is bottom five in how much money they spend per win and those deals are a big part of it. Almost all of that value comes from Roussel, Ferland and Benn too – the lone deals that look like they might be OK. The others are a disaster; dead cap space waiting to happen.

The Canucks already rate pretty high in that they have \$11.2 million of dead money on the books, but they add to that with the players they spend it on. You can add Brandon Sutter to



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that list too. He's one of four Vancouver contracts in the D-range, a distinction that ties the team for most such contracts in the league.

There are some good values here that mitigate some of the issues like Bo Horvat's sensible contract, J.T. Miller's courtesy of Tampa Bay and depth signings like Josh Leivo, Oscar Fantenberg and Alex Biega – but overall it's pretty bleak. It somehow leaves Vancouver – one of the worst teams last season – with a limited amount of cap space to sign Brock Boeser. If not for Elias Pettersson doing god's work on an ELC, this team wouldn't have much sense for optimism. Even with him, I'm not so sure thanks to their inexplicable lack of cap flexibility.

New York Islanders – C

It's probably not a great sign when a team's best forward contract is for their fourth-line centre that makes \$3.4 million. Casey Cizikas isn't your typical fourth-line centre and is worth that, plus a little more, but it still speaks to the poor quality of the remainder of the team's deals up front. The Cizikas deal is the only that carries positive expected value among the forwards.

The newly inked Anders Lee deal should be fine for the next little bit, but the back half could be scary. The Jordan Eberle and Brock Nelson pacts are worse, although not inexplicable. Those three are added to a collection of deals that already look sketchy including Cal Clutterbuck and Leo Komarov somehow making \$6.5 million combined and Andrew Ladd still has four more seasons left. The sheer amount of term is difficult to ignore as the Islanders have locked into a forward group that struggles to score. There's seven forwards here still on the books for the 2021-22 season, the second-most in the league behind only Washington. Is this really the forward group to commit to?

The team's saving grace is on defence where all their best contracts lie. The Adam Pelech and Scott Mayfield contracts were largely questionable at the time due to their term, but the two have emerged into legitimate top four options under Barry Trotz and are a bargain at their current price. Same goes for Ryan Pulock and Devon Toews, though they only have one year left.

Having said that, the two worst contracts on the team after Ladd's are there on the back end with Nick Leddy and Johnny Boychuk both fading immensely over the last couple seasons. They're the highest paid there and have three years left. Add those commitments to the pile of forwards with term the Islanders have, and it's difficult to be too optimistic about the team's distant future, especially considering the age of some of those players.

New York Rangers – C

There were a lot of Rangers fans clamouring for respect for Mika Zibanejad's deal, and while it's a massive bargain and easily the team's best, there are others that are stronger for longer on other clubs. Chris Kreider represents the team's only other good deal. After that, it's market value or worse.

Emphasis on worse when it comes to the team's defence corps. Big free-agent splash from a couple of years back, Kevin Shattenkirk, is the "best" contract here, but still not a very good one. The other three are that much worse. Brendan

Smith should be making the league minimum, Brady Skjei took a step back and shouldn't be locked in for term and Marc Staal is massive hindrance providing well below replacement level value and carries almost no chance of being a positive asset.

There are some that believe an injection of youth plus the addition of Artemi Panarin can speed up the team's rebuild, but the team still looks a couple of years away, especially with some of the contracts left on the books.

Arizona Coyotes – C-

I'm not entirely sure what the Coyotes are up to when it comes to giving out long-term deals. It seems as if they're locking into what they project from the player's future value and paying a premium on top of that. It's a commendable move given most RFAs are underpaid for their future services, but I'm not sure I get it for the players they did it for. It'll likely work for Jakob Chychrun, but I don't see it for Nick Schmaltz and Christian Dvorak. Both are fine, but they'll need to massively step up in order to be worth their cap hits, and they haven't shown enough to suggest they can – though pairing Schmaltz with Kessel should help. It's a better bet on players in their prime than with UFAs, but still a bad one with these two.

They also have Oliver Ekman-Larsson on the books for the full eight years, and it's hard to see him being worth his deal after the past few seasons he's had. He's being paid like an elite No. 1, and based on his ability to drive play at both ends of the ice the last few seasons, I'm not sure he's all that close to that level.

Maybe that's an issue with the supporting cast around him, but what's strange is the team is paying a lot of money for a roster that looks less than average. The Coyotes are somehow capped out and it's because they're paying sky-high prices for a win, the fifth-highest rate in the league. In fact, the Coyotes have the second-highest defence payroll but are nowhere close to earning on-ice value commensurate of that.

Ottawa Senators – D+

A team that once stressed the importance of cost per point is dead last in cost per projected win here. Go figure. The Senators have the least amount of money committed, but what they've committed to isn't all that great. Their two longest deals are spent on extremely replaceable players who make far too much, but perhaps that's not a huge problem for a team that needs to find a way to the cap floor. If Ottawa can use its cap space to buy assets, it might all be worth it, but in their current state, it's difficult to see them even doing that. The best deal here belongs to Christian Wolanin, but there's no guarantee the team will even use him anyways, which is a shame since he's likely an improvement over some of the other drudge the team is trotting out.

Chicago Blackhawks – D+

The Blackhawks are handcuffed by the de facto worst contract in hockey belonging to Brent Seabrook, who is somehow signed for \$6.875 million for five more seasons. The mind reels. But that's not their only issue. The Jonathan Toews deal hasn't aged well (though Patrick Kane should still be a market value commodity for the duration of his deal), Artem Anisimov is closer to a league minimum player than he is to a \$5 million one and Duncan Keith is firmly in the twilight of his career.



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The defence is of big concern here as it was one of the league's worst outfits last year and is rather expensive for that service. Improvements have been made in the additions of Calvin de Haan and Olli Maatta, but they're neither the answer nor come cheap. The Blackhawks are spending the third most on defence (spending bad money on defence seems to be a recurring theme in this post), but are in the league's bottom five at the position (also a recurring theme).

Aside from Erik Gustafsson, who provided big value on the power play last season on an extremely cheap deal, the team is light on good value contracts other than Alex DeBrincat and Dylan Strome currently on their ELCs. It's all a mess and one of the worst cap situations in hockey.

Los Angeles Kings – D

They're not last, but it doesn't get much worse than the Kings. That's mostly due to their two cornerstone pieces not living up to expectations last season but have the potential to bounce back and lift the Kings out of this current predicament.

Drew Doughty made the worst contracts list and that's because his poor 2018-19 made his new contract an extremely high bar to clear for all eight seasons. Anze Kopitar, now 32, took a massive step back after an MVP-calibre season the year prior and has a similarly high bar to clear over the next five years. It's hard to be efficient with the cap when your two best players aren't earning their cut. It's the main reason the Kings are dead last by a lot when it comes to surplus value per player.

In their defence, it's hard to provide value when the rest of the roster is what they're working with. There's just not much to like here. The Kings have just a single contract at a "B" or higher, and that's for a near league-minimum defender. The supporting cast of Dustin Brown, Jeff Carter and Alec Martinez aren't providing much positive value either. Then there's Ilya Kovalchuk who was supposed to rejuvenate this offence, but instead was a shade of his past self and is a millstone on the team's cap at \$6.3 million for the next two seasons. The Kings also have the most dead money on their books in the league, making it even harder to remain competitive.

Detroit Red Wings – D

Last, and certainly least, it's Detroit. How could it be any other team? With four contracts in the D-range on the books, the Red Wings are in a four-way tie for the most bad deals in the league. Where Detroit differs is that the other teams have a

few more above average deals to offset the pain. Not Detroit who have as many toxic deals as above-average ones. Those belong to Dylan Larkin, Anthony Mantha, Tyler Bertuzzi and Andreas Athanasiou – four forwards that provide the bulk of the team's on-ice value. Without them, this team would be cooked.

The biggest issue for Detroit is how much the team is spending for a marginal win over the remainder of their contracts. It's not just the alarming number of poor deals, or the certainty in how bad those deals are, but the fact that those deals are mostly for players that bring huge negative value. The team is spending \$14.5 million per win, the league's second-highest mark. That contributes to the team's 35 percent average for positive value probability which is the league's lowest mark, stemming from seven deals sitting at an under 20 percent success rate.

The team signed a replacement level forward to a two-year deal worth \$3 million per, and it's somehow not even close to being the worst deal on the books. That honour could go to Trevor Daley or Danny DeKeyser or Jonathan Ericsson or Darren Helm or Frans Nielsen or Justin Abdelkader and the fact the team has this many options is why they're ranked so low.

(Abdelkader made the honourable mentions list on last week's worst contracts, but through my own personal error should've actually been ... second. I wrote down that he only had three years left, but he actually has four somehow. My sincerest apologies).

None of them are that expensive, but those deals add up into death by a thousand cuts. Those seven deals are collectively worth \$69 million in financial commitment over the next several seasons, \$29 million of which is tied up in next year's cap. The Red Wings stand to lose just over five wins of value combined from those players over the entirety of their contract, with 40 percent of that coming in 2019-20. That's as bad as it gets.

Well, actually, it gets worse. The next five deals are worth \$17 million and are worth negative 0.1 wins on top of that. I just can't fathom that a professional hockey team is spending over \$80 million on players that are actively hurting the team's chances of winning. New GM Steve Yzerman has his work cut out for him.



Carolina Hurricanes re-sign D Haydn Fleury to 1-year deal

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — The Carolina Hurricanes have re-signed defenseman Haydn Fleury to a one-year contract worth \$850,000.

The team announced the deal Tuesday. The 23-year-old skated in 20 regular-season games with the Hurricanes along with nine playoff games last season. He also saw significant action with the Charlotte Checkers in the American Hockey League.

Carolina took Fleury with the No. 7 overall pick in the 2014 draft. Team president and general manager Don Waddell says the team is encouraged by Fleury's development and hopes he will become "a fixture in our lineup."

The 6-foot-3, 208-pound defenseman has nine assists in 87 NHL regular-season games for his career.



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The Hockey News

The long, winding path of Carolina Hurricanes prospect Pyotr Kochetkov

Passed over twice in the draft because no one could find him, Kochetkov burst onto the scene with an immaculate performance for Russia at the 2019 world juniors. Now he's got his sights set on the KHL and he's not afraid of some stiff competition.

By Ryan Kennedy

During the world juniors this year, I asked an NHL goalie coach why Russian netminder Pyotr Kochetkov had been passed over twice in the draft. His answer? Scouts just never got to see him play. I'll admit: I had never heard of Kochetkov either until he stuffed up the OHL all-stars at this past season's CHL-Russia Challenge in Oshawa.

But after a tour-de-force performance at those world juniors in Vancouver, Kochetkov was no longer an unknown and it was no surprise that he was snapped up in the second round of the 2019 draft by the Carolina Hurricanes. So where was he all this time?

The truth is, Kochetkov was simply making his way up the ranks in Russia and it was an obscure climb. During the 2016-17 campaign (his first year of NHL draft eligibility), Kochetkov played eight games for Dizel Penza in the VHL, Russia's version of the AHL. He also played for a Penza squad in something called the NMHL – a second-tier junior league.

In 2017-18, Kochetkov played in Russia's top junior circuit, the MHL – but on the worst team in the league, Kapitan Stupino. Needless to say, in neither year did he play internationally for Russia so the viewings were quite limited. But when he spoke with NHL teams at the draft combine this year, Kochetkov (through a translator) couldn't help but have some fun with all those talent hawks who couldn't figure out where he came from.

"When scouts asked me that question I said 'Maybe you guys were looking in the wrong places or looking poorly,' " he said. "But I've always been a realist and maybe I wasn't good enough the previous years. But I never lost hope."

While the CHL-Russia game gave North American audiences a taste of just how effective the big netminder was, the world juniors were Kochetkov's true coming-out party. He nabbed top goalie honors while steering Russia to a bronze medal and wresting the starter's job away from Columbus Blue Jackets pick Daniil Tarasov.

"It was a really great tournament, I really enjoyed myself," Kochetkov said. "It was one of my childhood dreams to even get to that tournament. A bronze medal's not bad, but we deserved gold."

Unfortunately, Kochetkov is too old to get another crack at that WJC gold, but it spoke volumes of his talent that he earned his crease time under legendary coach Valeri Bragin.

"I can't say enough good words, he's such an incredible person," Kochetkov said. "I was so proud to play for him and gain his trust and I could not have had a better experience."

Back in Russia, Kochetkov was playing domestically for Ryazan in the VHL, with two appearances in the KHL for Sochi. That's a lot of different cities in three years, but it never fazed Kochetkov.

"No, it doesn't matter," he said. "I'm just happy to get on the ice and play. It doesn't matter what city or team, I'm just happy to play the game I love."

For the upcoming 2019-20 season, Kochetkov will take on his biggest challenge yet. The youngster signed with KHL superpower SKA-St. Petersburg, a perennial favorite whose recent rosters have included the likes of Pavel Datsyuk, Ilya Kovalchuk and Nikita Gusev. SKA's star goalie was New York Rangers prospect Igor Shestyorkin, but he's heading to North America now.

Not that the depth chart has opened up much for Kochetkov. SKA just traded for Chicago Blackhawks pick Ivan Nalimov, with veteran Magnus Hellberg returning after leading last year's squad in appearances. There's also junior standout Alexei Melnichuk to contend with, but Kochetkov remains positive.

"I'm super-excited for the opportunity because it's such a great team," he said. "I'm excited to prove myself on that stage because it's with all those high-calibre players."

Given where he came from and how far he's gone so far, it would be crazy to doubt Kochetkov. He definitely has the make-up of an NHL netminder and with some more seasoning, he could certainly find a place with the Hurricanes – who have options, but no sure things in net for the future. First St. Petersburg, then Carolina? All in due time.



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Hurricanes sign Fleury, Forsling to one-year deals

Fleury will get another crack at scoring his first goal with the Hurricanes next season.

By Brian LeBlanc

Get pumped for another year of breathless speculation about when Haydn Fleury will score his first NHL goal.

The Carolina Hurricanes and the restricted free agent defenseman agreed Tuesday to a new one-year contract. Fleury, coming off his entry-level deal, will receive a one-way salary of \$850,000. He will be eligible for arbitration next summer, and will require clearing waivers to be assigned to the AHL this season.

Shortly thereafter, the Hurricanes also announced that defenseman Gustav Forsling has signed his qualifying offer, a two-way contract which will pay him \$874,125 in the NHL and \$70,000 in the AHL. Like Fleury, Forsling will require waivers to be sent to Charlotte, and qualifies for arbitration in 2020.

The Hurricanes' first-round pick, 7th overall, in the 2014 NHL Draft, Fleury has struggled to stake a claim to a full-time NHL roster spot. He played in 20 games with the Hurricanes last year, recording one assist, and added two goals and 10 points in 28 games with the Charlotte Checkers.

In the final season of his waiver exemption, Fleury was assigned to the AHL seven times over the course of the 2018-2019 season (coming back up at some point after each assignment), and spent a brief stint on the injured reserve list after suffering a concussion in November. However, he took on a larger role in the playoffs, as the seventh defenseman who took the place of Calvin de Haan and Trevor van Riemsdyk while those players were out of the lineup through injury. Fleury had no points in nine NHL playoff games, but contributed six points in 11 Calder Cup playoff games after being sent back to Charlotte following the Hurricanes' playoff elimination.

Despite playing in 87 career NHL games, Fleury is still waiting for his first NHL goal. He is second among active players, behind Victor Mete of the Montreal Canadiens (120 games), in games played without a goal, and is 68 games away from tying former Hurricane Steve Halko's NHL record of 155.

Forsling was acquired on June 24, along with goaltender Anton Forsberg, in the trade that sent Calvin de Haan and Aleksi Saarela to the Chicago Blackhawks. He was a fifth-round pick in the 2014 draft, and has played in 122 games in parts of three seasons with Chicago, scoring eight goals and 19 assists.

The Hurricanes still have five unsigned restricted free agents. Brock McGinn and Forsberg have filed for arbitration, with McGinn's hearing scheduled for Saturday, and Saku Maenalanen, Trevor Carrick and Roland McKeown also remain unsigned.

The releases for both deals from the team are below.

CANES RE-SIGN HAYDN FLEURY TO ONE-YEAR DEAL
Defenseman has registered nine assists in 87 career NHL games

Don Waddell, President and General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today announced that the team has re-signed defenseman Haydn Fleury to a one-year, one-way contract for the 2019-20 season worth \$850,000.

"Haydn has taken strides during each of his three professional seasons in our organization," said Waddell. "We've been encouraged by his development and our hope is that he becomes a fixture in our lineup."

Fleury, 23, skated in 20 NHL regular-season games for the Hurricanes in 2018-19, posting one assist. He also registered 10 points (2g, 8a) in 28 AHL regular-season games with the Checkers last season. Fleury tallied six points (2g, 4a) in 11 AHL playoff games with Charlotte and appeared in nine NHL playoff games with Carolina in 2019. The 6'3", 208-pound defenseman has posted nine assists in 87 career NHL regular-season games and has recorded 39 points (11g, 28a) in 101 career AHL regular-season games. The Carlyle, Sask., native was drafted by the Hurricanes in the first round, seventh overall, of the 2014 NHL Draft.

CANES RE-SIGN GUSTAV FORSLING TO ONE-YEAR DEAL
Defenseman posted nine points in 43 games with Chicago last season

Don Waddell, President and General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today announced that the team has re-signed defenseman Gustav Forsling to a one-year, two-way contract for the 2019-20 season. The deal will pay Forsling \$874,125 at the NHL level and \$70,000 at the AHL level.

"Gustav is a skilled, young defenseman," said Waddell. "He has shown promise throughout his time in the NHL and we expect him to continue to develop."

Forsling, 23, tallied nine points (3g, 6a) in 43 NHL games with the Blackhawks last season. He also skated in five games with Rockford (AHL) in 2018-19, posting two assists. The 6'0", 186-pound defenseman has recorded 27 points (8g, 19a) in 122 career NHL games and has registered 15 points (3g, 12a) in 53 career AHL games. The Linkoping, Sweden, native was selected by the Canucks in the fifth round, 126th overall, of the 2014 NHL Draft. Forsling was acquired by the Hurricanes from the Blackhawks along with goaltender Anton Forsberg in exchange for defenseman Calvin de Haan and forward Aleksi Saarela on June 24th.



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Reports: Seattle to name Ron Francis general manager

The former Hurricanes captain and general manager is reportedly headed to the Pacific Northwest.

By Brian LeBlanc

The new NHL franchise in Seattle is set to name former Carolina Hurricanes general manager Ron Francis to the same position with the as yet unnamed team. The news was first reported by Geoff Baker of the Seattle Times.

Francis was the general manager of the Hurricanes from 2014 to 2018, when he was first reassigned to the position of president of hockey operations and then left the organization abruptly in April 2018. The departure was characterized by the team as a contract termination, but Francis remained under contract to the Hurricanes in some capacity until June 30 of this year. Baker reports that the Seattle braintrust, including owner Jerry Bruckheimer, managing partner David Bonderman and CEO Tod Leiwicke, asked for and received permission from the Hurricanes to speak with Francis prior to his contract expiring.

Following his 2005 retirement, Francis held a variety of jobs in the Hurricanes' hockey operations department, including a stint as an assistant coach under Paul Maurice. He eventually ascended to the general manager's office in 2014, when Jim Rutherford stepped down from the position.

During his nearly four years as Hurricanes GM, the team never made the playoffs, but Francis remained patient as his plan to build the team through the draft proceeded apace. His draft picks included a heist of Sebastian Aho in the 2015

second round and first-round selections of the likes of Noah Hanifin and Martin Necas. He had plenty of misses as well, none more costly than the four-year contract bestowed on Scott Darling that quickly went sideways and forced the Hurricanes to trade Darling in June to the Florida Panthers at the eleventh hour to avert what seemed to be an inevitable buyout.

Famously, Francis never made a trade that included NHL players on both sides during his tenure. That's not to say he was totally inactive; his acquisition of Teuvo Teravainen as the sweetener to take on Bryan Bickell's contract was his high point as GM, and he found himself in the unenviable position of trading Eric Staal in 2016.

Francis will join Seattle a full year before the point in the expansion life cycle that George McPhee was hired by the Vegas Golden Knights in July 2016. With more than two years before the team takes the ice, Francis will have plenty of time to craft his front office and hire a head coach. When the expansion draft occurs in the summer of 2021, Francis will have his pick of players who will be made available under the same rules and procedure that the Golden Knights stocked their team with in 2017.

Most recently, Francis was employed as a commercial real estate broker with NAI Carolantic Realty in Raleigh. It seems that his midstream career change was short lived, however, as he will jump back into the NHL management arena and prepare to get Seattle ready to join the league two years from now.



Checkers introduce Ryan Warsofsky as new head coach

by Nicholas Niedzielski

At Tuesday's press conference announcing Ryan Warsofsky as the Charlotte Checkers' new head coach, broadcaster Jason Shaya led things off with a story.

"Zack Stortini and I were having a conversation about the passion of the game," said Shaya. "He said some guys love to win and some guys hate to lose. Then he points at Ryan and says, 'That guy? He really hates to lose.'"

Even Warsofsky himself – who was named the fifth head coach in team history earlier this month – admits the truth to that anecdote.

"I hate to lose and sometimes it creeps into some bad habits when I'm playing with my nephews in two-on-two football or playing video games, I don't want to lose at anything," said Warsofsky. "That's just in my DNA."

The Checkers have already gotten a firsthand look at the passion Warsofsky brings to the bench, as he helped guide the team to its first ever Calder Cup last season as an assistant coach. Now, even with a large amount of turnover, there will be a familiarity with a new head coach for the first time.

"It's no secret that we've lost some players and we'll need to replace them but there are a good few guys who were here last year who know me and know what I'm all about," said Warsofsky. "That's kind of a seamless transition I think. I wasn't working closely with the forwards, but having just two coaches you get to know the guys pretty well. This long run and the experience we had I think goes a long way. I'm looking forward to this opportunity and I think I'm ready."

At 31, Warsofsky is not only the youngest coach in franchise history, he's the youngest AHL coach hired since 2000.



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Despite his young age, though, he has plenty of pedigree to draw from at both the ECHL and AHL levels.

"I've learned under some great people in [current Hershey Bears] Spencer Carberry and Mike Vellucci, two really successful coaches," said Warsofsky. "I'm going to continue to learn and try to get better and get our players to buy into what we're selling. That's the main part of being a coach."

Vellucci and Warsofsky proved to be a strong duo in their one year behind the bench, with the latter drawing from the former's vast experience.

"I learned a ton from him and I'll forever be grateful to Mike and how he took me under his wing," said Warsofsky. "He's got a lot of experience and he's a great coach, but even more he's a great person. I have to thank Mike for all the support."

With Vellucci departing for Wilkes-Barre/Scranton earlier this offseason, the door opened for Warsofsky to take what he learned and add in his own twist to the organization's winning formula.

"We'll do some things differently but a lot of it will be pretty similar to what Mike was doing and what the guys in Carolina are doing with [head coach] Rod Brind'Amour and his staff," said Warsofsky. "There will be some tweaks maybe with practice and some little details but for the most part it's going to be a pretty seamless transition."

For Checkers' owner Michael Kahn, watching Warsofsky be a driving part of delivering a championship to the Queen City was more than enough to convince him that this was the right hire.

"More than anything it's his intensity," said Kahn of what impressed him the most about Warsofsky. "I like people that don't like to lose. You can't necessarily make the team win, but you can teach them that it's not fun when you don't win and that winning is the better alternative. I very much

Haydn Fleury re-signs with Carolina

by Paul Branecky

Defenseman Haydn Fleury will officially re-join the Hurricanes organization after agreeing to a new one-year contract on Tuesday.

A key member of last season's Calder Cup championship team in Charlotte, Fleury, 23, split the first three seasons of his pro career between the Checkers and Hurricanes. Carolina's first-round pick in 2014 (seventh overall), Fleury will now require waivers in order to be assigned to Charlotte,

enjoyed Ryan and the intensity level he's bringing to the head coaching position."

Warsofsky has undoubtedly made a strong impression within the organization over the last year, culminating in this summer's development camp.

"I interviewed during development camp and I thought it went really well and then my wife and I got the call from Don [Waddell] as we were driving over to Martha's Vineyard. We hung up and kind of looked at each other and were like 'Wow, that was pretty cool.' It's something you don't forget. There's not one day where I won't be grateful for this opportunity."

He has since continued to be in contact with the Hurricanes, now working out plans for this shortened offseason.

"I talked to Rod a couple times about structure and how we want to play and what he's looking for in certain players," said Warsofsky. "We also talked about rounding out the staff down here. I think finding an assistant coach is my main focus right now. And then getting ready for training camp, schedule planning and the day-to-day planning for the year."

After thriving with the ECHL's South Carolina Stingrays and working his way to head coach of the Checkers, Warsofsky has witnessed firsthand the powerful passion that this region brings for its hockey teams. With his hate-to-lose DNA and a championship pedigree, fans should have plenty to look forward to under his tenure.

"I've been in the Carolinas coaching now for seven years and being here, there's nowhere else I'd want to be in the whole league," said Warsofsky. "It's the best place to play, the players will agree with me. The fans are loud, passionate and they want to win. They got that experience and hopefully that doesn't go anywhere. We want to put a winner on the ice."

which, along with the one-way nature of his new contract, makes further appearances with the Checkers less likely.

During his time with Charlotte last season, Fleury posted 10 points (2g, 8a) in 28 regular-season games and six more (2g, 4a) in 11 playoff contests.

With Fleury and Clark Bishop re-signed in recent days, defensemen Trevor Carrick and Roland McKeown are the only remaining restricted free agents from the Checkers' championship team.



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SportScan

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

1107472 Carolina Hurricanes

JULY 16, 2019 11:40 AM

Carolina Hurricanes re-sign D Haydn Fleury to 1-year deal

Defenseman Haydn Fleury, expected to take on a bigger role this upcoming season, has signed a one-year, one-way contract with the Carolina Hurricanes.

Staff Report

Fleury, a former first-round draft pick by the Canes, will be paid \$850,000, the team announced Tuesday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Canes also signed defenseman Gustav Forsling to a one-year, two-way contract that will pay \$874,125 at the NHL level and \$70,000 at the AHL level.

JULY 16, 2019 10:45 AM

RALEIGH, N.C.

Forsling, 23, was acquired from the Chicago Blackhawks with goalie Anton Forsberg in the June 24 deal that sent veteran defenseman Calvin de Haan and offensive prospect Aleksi Saarela to Chicago.

The Carolina Hurricanes have re-signed defenseman Haydn Fleury to a one-year contract worth \$850,000.

With de Haan gone, Fleury is expected to join Trevor van Riemsdyk as the Canes' third defensive pairing.

The team announced the deal Tuesday. The 23-year-old skated in 20 regular-season games with the Hurricanes along with nine playoff games last season. He also saw significant action with the Charlotte Checkers in the American Hockey League.

"Haydn has taken strides during each of his three professional seasons in our organization," Canes general manager Don Waddell said in a statement. "We've been encouraged by his development and our hope is that he becomes a fixture in our lineup."

Carolina took Fleury with the No. 7 overall pick in the 2014 draft. Team president and general manager Don Waddell says the team is encouraged by Fleury's development and hopes he will become "a fixture in our lineup."

Fleury, 23, played 20 NHL regular-season games for the Canes last season and appeared in nine Stanley Cup playoff games after van Riemsdyk suffered a shoulder injury. He has 87 games of NHL regular-season experience, with nine career assists.

The 6-foot-3, 208-pound defenseman has nine assists in 87 NHL regular-season games for his career.

After the Canes were beaten in the Eastern Conference finals, Fleury rejoined the Charlotte Checkers of the AHL and was a part of their Calder Cup championship playoff run.

News Observer LOADED: 07.17.2019

1107473 Carolina Hurricanes

Forsling has 122 games of NHL experience, including 43 with the Blackhawks last season, when the Swede had three goals and six assists.

Hurricanes sign defensemen Haydn Fleury, Gustav Forsling to one-year deals

"Gustav is a skilled, young defenseman," Waddell said in a statement. "He has shown promise throughout his time in the NHL and we expect him to continue to develop."

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

News Observer LOADED: 07.17.2019



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1107509 NHL

Hall of Famer Ron Francis to be hired as general manager of Seattle's new NHL team

Geoff Baker

Ron Francis, who played in the NHL for 22 seasons and is fifth all time in points, is to be announced this week as the first general manager of Seattle's incoming franchise, sources with knowledge of the situation have indicated.

Francis, 56, a native of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, was a Hockey Hall of Fame captain of the Hartford Whalers, Pittsburgh Penguins and Carolina Hurricanes and amassed 1,798 points. The two-time Stanley Cup winner with the Penguins also became general manager of the Hurricanes after that franchise relocated from Hartford and remained there from April 2014 until being fired in spring of last year.

Francis will be on a multiyear deal described as midrange in terms of annual compensation compared with other NHL GMs. But it's likely the duration matches the five-year contract Ken Holland recently signed with the Edmonton Oilers — given Francis will spend the first two years getting Seattle's new team ready for its October 2021 launch and then have the standard three competitive seasons typically given an NHL GM on any contract.

Hampered by one of the NHL's smallest budgets in Carolina, Francis nonetheless drafted and developed players such as star forward Sebastian Aho and also worked a trade that brought Teuvo Teravainen over from Chicago. The pair finished 1-2 in team scoring last season for the Eastern Conference finalists.

But the Hurricanes failed to reach the playoffs under Francis, and some deals, like signing goaltender Scott Darling to a four-year contract in 2017, didn't work out.

Francis will have full say on his Seattle front-office assistants and coaches, as well as input into the team's decision on a name — expected to come by year's end. The coaches and assistants are unlikely to be hired right away, given the GM hiring is already coming a year before expansion teams typically fill that position.

But Francis could have his pick of a top staff, given the renowned "coaching tree" spawned by the mid-1980s Whalers teams he captained and his other associations with the Penguins.

Francis teamed for years in Hartford with former NHL Seattle senior adviser Dave Tippett — recently hired by Holland to serve as the Oilers' coach. He is also a former Hartford teammate of Joel Quenneville, second on the NHL all-time victories list and now the Florida Panthers' bench boss.

Other Hartford connections include Kevin Dineen, a former Panthers coach and Chicago Blackhawks assistant — whose late father, Bill, played for the Seattle Totems minor pro teams throughout the 1960s. Dineen was hired this week as coach of the San Diego Gulls, an AHL affiliate of the Anaheim Ducks.

During last December's Spengler Cup tournament in Davos, Switzerland, Francis and former Whalers/Hurricanes goaltender Sean Burke served as co-GMs for runner-up Team Canada while Dineen was the coach.

Other former Whalers teammates are Ulf Samuelsson, who had been a New York Rangers and Chicago Blackhawks assistant, and current Columbus Blue Jackets assistant coach Brad Shaw.

Current Arizona Coyotes coach Rick Tocchet teamed with Francis in Pittsburgh, as did current Penguins assistant Mark Recchi and current Buffalo Sabres assistant Bryan Trottier.

Francis also gave current Calgary Flames coach Bill Peters that job in Carolina despite his having no experience as a bench boss at the pro level.

NHL Seattle has had interest in Francis for some time and not merely because of Tippett's former involvement here. Longtime NHL ironman and current Vancouver Canucks senior adviser Doug Jarvis played with Francis in Hartford and had met with NHL Seattle CEO Tod Leiweke in Palm Springs, Calif., within the past year, partly to discuss the new team's GM options.

But first, NHL Seattle needed permission from its ownership group to hire the GM a year earlier than expected. The urgency quickly became apparent once Steve Yzerman, Holland and Vegas Golden Knights assistant Kelly McCrimmon — all of interest to Seattle's team — were taken off the board and Sportsnet reported the Ottawa Senators had approached Francis about their president of hockey operations vacancy.

Then, once NHL Seattle approved the extra year of GM funding needed, there was still the issue of Francis being under contract to the Hurricanes through July 1. NHL Seattle thus needed to obtain formal permission from the Hurricanes to speak to Francis and — upon receiving it — he made an early June visit here during the group's recent ownership meetings to meet managing partner David Bomberman, minority stakeholders and tour the sites of the KeyArena renovation and planned Northgate Mall training center.

Once satisfied he was interested in the job, Francis returned to Seattle a few weeks later for a second visit and formal interviews. Meanwhile, at last month's NHL draft in Vancouver, NHL Seattle owner Jerry Bruckheimer and Leiweke conducted at least two other GM-candidate interviews and spent the rest of their time vetting Francis with a bevy of NHL officials who have dealt with him over the years.

After the draft's first day — satisfied Francis was their GM choice — Bruckheimer and Leiweke left Vancouver a day earlier than expected. The team's new hockey administration director hire, Alexandra Mandrycky, was tasked with running an analytical study of past moves by Francis the week of the July 4 holiday to confirm whether his style meshed with what NHL Seattle had been looking for.

When that turned up no red flags, he was made an offer and accepted last week.

Francis had been an early candidate for the GM position dating to last summer, given his experience, connections to Tippett and prior work in assembling an analytics team with the Hurricanes — something NHL Seattle has made a priority. At the time, though, it was unclear whether Francis would be interested in Seattle's position, given his desire to take time away from the NHL and his recent involvement in a real-estate business in North Carolina.

But the lone season away from the game proved enough for Francis and his wife, Mary Lou Robie, to leave the longtime Raleigh-area home where they raised their three children.

Francis had returned to his former Hartford organization when it relocated to North Carolina in 1997 and spent most of six seasons there. The Hurricanes traded him to Toronto, where he played the



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final 12 games of his career before retiring as a player in September 2005.

From there, he soon joined the Hurricanes' front office as director of player development and then assistant GM. He became director of hockey operations in June 2011, a minority owner of the team in 2012 and GM in April 2014 when Jim Rutherford stepped down.

Francis remained GM until being reassigned to a role as president of hockey operations in March 2018 as the Hurricanes underwent an ownership change. The Hurricanes fired him a month later.

Besides being fifth all time in NHL points, Francis is also second in assists at 1,249 and fourth in games played at 1,731. He won the Frank J. Selke Trophy as the league's best defensive forward in 1995 and twice captured the Lady Byng Trophy as its most gentlemanly player.

Francis was elected to the Hall of Fame in 2007.

Seattle Times LOADED: 07.17.2019

1107510 NHL

AP source: Seattle close to naming Ron Francis as GM

BY TIM BOOTH AP SPORTS WRITER

SEATTLE—Seattle's NHL expansion team is close to an agreement with Hockey Hall of Famer Ron Francis to become its first general manager, a person with direct knowledge tells The Associated Press.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity Tuesday because the team had not made an announcement.

The expansion Seattle franchise is set to begin play in the 2021-22 season as the NHL's 32nd team.

After longtime Detroit GM Ken Holland went to Edmonton, adviser Dave Tippett left Seattle Hockey Partners LLC to become Oilers coach and Vegas' Kelly McCrimmon and Columbus' Bill Zito got promotions, there was a limited pool of experienced NHL executives to choose from for this job. Francis fits that bill.

The 56-year-old has been in hockey operations since shortly after the end of his Hall of Fame playing career. All of that time has come with the Carolina Hurricanes, including four seasons as their GM.

Carolina didn't make the playoffs with Francis in charge of decision-making, though his moves put the foundation in place for the team that reached the Eastern Conference final this past season.

Francis had 1,798 points in 1,731 games over 23 seasons with the Hartford Whalers/Hurricanes, Pittsburgh Penguins and Toronto Maple Leafs. He won the Stanley Cup with Pittsburgh in 1991 and 1992.

Competing for the Cup in the early going will be the expectation for Seattle after the Golden Knights reached the Final in their inaugural season in 2017-18. Francis will have two full seasons to scout the rest of the league before his as-yet-named team's expansion draft in June 2021.

Francis did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

News Tribune LOADED: 07.17.2019

1107540 Websites

The Athletic / Down Goes Brown: Which first name produces the best starting six in NHL history?

By Sean McIndoe Jul 16, 2019 350

Today, we're going to try to answer a pressing question: What's the greatest first name in NHL history?

I'm going to stop right here and acknowledge that you've immediately got two thoughts going through your mind. The first is, "Wow, this is dumb. Slow news day, guys? You're really going to post a whole article about hockey players with the same first names?" Surely you're tempted to cut-and-paste that in the comment section right now.

The second thought involves you immediately coming up with ideas for names you think should be on the list. You're already having the debate in your own head.

I get it. If I'm being honest, I feel the same way. This is dumb, and we're doing it anyway. Embrace the cognitive dissonance.

But first, let's figure out some ground rules. Most importantly, we'll group variations of the same name, e.g., Will and Bill and Willie can all come together to form Team William. We're not going to haggle over minor spelling variations, meaning the Patriks can unite with the Patriks and the Johns and Jons can work together. (One exception: The Shawns will not be invited to join Team Sean, because screw those weirdos. They know what they did.)

And no, we're not going to try to get clever with middle names or anything like that. Whatever a player went by during his playing days is his name as far as we're concerned. We'll use the invaluable hockey-reference.com database to resolve any disputes.

We're going to assemble a starting lineup from each name, which means three forwards, two defensemen and a goaltender. And we want quality at as many of the six positions as we can get, not one or two superstars and then a bunch of guys you never heard of. That knocks a few famous names out of the running right off the bat. There have been plenty of Gordies, but only Howe and Drillon were truly great. We've only had one elite-level Mario, or Dominik or Maurice. There's only been one really good Wayne, or maybe two if you want to count Cashman. None of those names will make our list. Luckily, that still leaves us with plenty of candidates, enough to form a playoff field of 16 with plenty of honorable mentions.

Let's do it. Who's up for wasting a little time in late July? After all, we might as well do this now. Partly because it's summer, but mainly because I've watched enough of the WHL to know that we have a few years left before Team Kayden overwhelms us and makes the whole thing moot.

No. 16. Team Peter

We'll start with what ends up being a surprisingly European-heavy roster, with three modern-era stars up front. The blue line is probably the weakest on our list, so much so that I considered just using both Petr Svobodas to save space and ended up having to rely on a



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journeyman defenseman/pro wrestling patriotic hero just to fill the ice time.

But let's be honest, Team Peter has to make the list largely on the strength of the goaltender, where Petr Mrazek has a solid case but has to give way to a guy who was basically made for this sort of game.

Forwards: Peter Forsberg, Peter Stastny, Peter Bondra

Defensemen: Petr Svoboda, Peter Taglianetti

Goaltender: Pete Peeters

No. 15. Team Chris

As we'll see, most of the teams on our list end up being heavy up front but light on the backend. Team Chris (and Kris) has the opposite problem. We've got decent goaltending and a blue line so stacked that Letang didn't even get a sniff, but they'll have to hold down the fort while a decidedly just-OK forward line tries to score.

Forwards: Chris Drury, Kris Draper, Chris Kunitz

Defensemen: Chris Pronger, Chris Chelios

Goaltender: Chris Osgood

No. 14. Team Ryan

This one ends up being our most modern roster, with pretty much every notable Ryan from NHL history playing in the last decade. (Apologies to Ryan Walter.) It's not the most star-studded squad, at least compared to some of the others we'll run into and the recency bias means there aren't any Hall-of-Famers. But it's solid one-through-six with no obvious weak spots, and while the depth isn't great on the back end, we could at least run a decent second line of Johansen, Nugent-Hopkins and Kesler.

Forwards: Ryan Getzlaf, Ryan O'Reilly, Ryan Smyth

Defensemen: Ryan Suter, Ryan McDonagh

Goaltender: Ryan Miller

No. 13. Team David

Please rise and remove your caps for the playing of the Team David national anthem.

With that out of the way, the actual Davids give us some depth options, but not much more than that. There's David Krejci, Backes, Legwand and Perron. But the only obvious starter that the Davids can offer up is Pastrnak. Also, this Clarkson guy is ruining our cap.

Luckily, things get better when the Daves show up. The forward ranks include two Hall-of-Famers in Keon and Andreychuk, a quasi-candidate in Taylor, some solid options in Gagner and Christian and plenty of intimidation in Semenko, Williams and Brown. We don't have any superstars on the back end, but the 1980s and 1990s serve up at least a few solid blue line candidates from the Dave brigade in Ellett, Manson and Babych. So yeah, the Daves are carrying us here. Also, this Bolland guy is ruining our cap.

Unfortunately, goaltending is going to be an issue for Team David. As best I can tell, it comes down to a battle between Dave Dryden and David Aebischer. I guess we've got to go with the guy who was at least traded for an MVP.

Forwards: Dave Keon, Dave Andreychuk, David Pastrnak

Defensemen: Dave Ellett, Dave Babych

Goaltender: David Aebischer

No. 12. Team Douglas

Now here's a classic hockey name. There have been like two dozen notable Dougs in all of human history, and the whole list is basically Flutie, Henning, Adams, Stanhope and then a bunch of hockey players.

Unfortunately, none of those hockey players are goaltenders, so we're kind of stuck there. Still, we're pretty set everywhere else, with a few Hall-of-Famers plus a blueliner who should be there. The depth is OK, with Dougs on-call including Jarvis, Risebrough and Smail. Unfortunately, the pipeline isn't great, with only Dougie Hamilton available among active players. Get to work making more Dougs, hockey parents of the world.

Forwards: Doug Bentley, Doug Gilmour, Doug Weight

Defensemen: Doug Harvey, Doug Wilson

Goaltender: Doug Favell

No. 11. Team Mark

We've got Messier and a Howe, so this team is pretty much overflowing with leadership and longevity. What it doesn't have is a whole lot of help from the NHL's first half-century or so, meaning we'll need to supplement the roster with some help from the present day. That came down to Scheifele vs. Stone up front, plus a pretty obvious choice for the blue line.

After conferring with the International Society for Hockey Naming, we decided not to include Markus or Marco on the eligibility list for Team Mark. (Sorry, Naslund and Sturm.) We did allow Marcs to be considered, although Marc-Andre Fleury was not. And that's too bad because man did we ever need the help in goal. It's OK, Messier will sprinkle magic winner dust all over the crease and we'll be fine.

Forwards: Mark Messier, Mark Scheifele, Mark Recchi

Defensemen: Mark Howe, Mark Giordano

Goaltender: Mark Fitzpatrick

No. 10. Team Joe

Talk about going all-out on offense. We're absolutely loaded up front, so much so that we could run out a second line of Hall-of-Famers like Nieuwendyk, Mullen and Primeau and still have room for Pavelski, Murphy and Juneau in the bottom six.

Team Joe will score a bunch. And they'll need to because the back half is a mess. We've got one old-school star on the blue line and then we have to start seriously considering guys like Reekie, Corvo and Cirella. And our goaltending is ... well, let's just say we'd better score a bunch.

Still, what we lack in balance we more than makeup in classic old-timey nicknames. There's something about the name "Joe" that just goes perfectly with a solid one-word nickname. Jumbo will feel right at home in this group.

Forwards: Joe Sakic, Phantom Joe Malone, Joe Thornton

Defensemen: Bullet Joe Simpson, Joe Watson

Goaltender: Joey MacDonald

No. 9. Team Steven

This is yet another squad where the back end is an issue, with two solid blueliners and not much at all in net, especially if we don't stretch the rules to include Stephanes. But there's just so much firepower up front that we have to include them. Those three



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forwards might outscore every other team on the whole list, and that's without even using guys like Larmer, Sullivan or Thomas. If our goalie can get hot for a few games, we have a chance. And he's done it before.

Forwards: Steve Yzerman, Steven Stamkos, Steve Shutt

Defensemen: Steve Duchene, Steve Smith

Goaltender: Steve Penney

No. 8. Team Alexander

I like this one because it's one of the few names that gives us a great mix of North American and European players. We're loaded up front, and that's without even trying to sneak into the "Alexei" column. We could have also used Alex Tanguay, Alex Tuch, Alexander Steen and even Aleksander Barkov. And just for fun, we could also throw out a Semin/Daigle/Radulov line just to drive the coaches crazy.

The blue line isn't bad, although it would be better if Al MacInnis was an Alexander instead of an Allan, or if Al Iafate wasn't an Albert. (Side note: I can't be the only Leaf fan from the Ballard era who was genuinely disappointed to find out Iafate's real name wasn't Aloysius.) Still, we do OK with a couple of modern Alex's.

The one issue we run into, yet again, is goaltending. I can't find anyone better than Alex Auld or Alex Stalock, and that bumps our roster down from Alexander the Great status to Alexander the Pretty Good.

Forwards: Alex Delvecchio, Alexander Ovechkin, Alexander Mogilny

Defensemen: Alex Pietrangelo, Alex Edler

Goaltender: Alex Auld

No. 7. Team Edward

Here's a weird bit of random NHL trivia: There have only been three guys who went by "Edward" in league history, and they only combined to play 30 games. So we're not off to a great start.

But once you drill down to the variations, this name moves up the list on sheer volume. Start with Ted, which gives us Kennedy (but not Lindsay; he's holding out for Team Theodore). Move on to Ed, and you can add Westfall, Olczyk, Giacomin and Jovanovski. But the real stars show up when you branch out to Eddie, which gets you Shore, Shack and Belfour. Now we're talking, and we've got ourselves a team that's in contention.

Forwards: Ted Kennedy, Ed Olczyk, Eddie Shack

Defensemen: Eddie Shore, Ed Jovanovski

Goaltender: Eddie Belfour

No. 6. Team Sergei

We don't have a lot of what you might consider European-only names on our list, mainly because that shortens the amount of NHL history we have to work with from 100+ years to roughly 30. Still, that's more than enough to stack this team.

It's not a deep lineup by any stretch and even one injury would probably knock us out of contention. And the third forward spot is a weak one, with Samsonov beating out Berezin, Nemchinov and Brylin. Still, we've got three Hall of Famers, two Calder's and two Vezinas. That's not bad. And we didn't even need to try to sneak Sergio Momesso onto the team.

Forwards: Sergei Fedorov, Sergei Makarov, Sergei Samsonov

Defensemen: Sergei Zubov, Sergei Gonchar

Goaltender: Sergei Bobrovsky

No. 5. Team Mike

Important information: There have been plenty of Michaels in NHL history, but every one of them who made the Hall of Fame went by "Mike." This means something. There's still time to make the change, Dal Colle.

The odd thing here is that we don't get much in the way of help from active players even though this has apparently been the most common name for an NHL player over the last decade. That's fine, though, since we're all set up front with three slam dunk Hall-of-Famers in Bossy, Modano and Gartner, and at least some decent depth with Foligno, Peca, Ricci and Ridley.

The blue line is a bit thin, to the point where I spent way too much time debating whether John-Michael Liles could make the team. But our goaltending is deep, with options including Vernon, Richter, Smith and Liut. And we're probably going to need all of them, since our coach is Keenan and our GM is Milbury.

Forwards: Mike Bossy, Mike Modano, Mike Gartner

Defensemen: Mike Green, Mike Rathje

Goaltender: Mike Vernon

No. 4. Team Bill

Technically, we did say this should be Team William. But it's the Bills who end up doing all the work, with a bunch of old-time Hall-of-Famers taking up all the roster spots and not leaving any room for modern-day Williams like Karlsson and Nylander. Can a team made up entirely of Bills contend for a title? (Remembers literally everything about NFL history.) Probably not, no, but with inspiration from Willie O'Ree and a kick-ass team song, they deserve a spot in our top five.

(And if you disagree, feel free to take it up with our backup goaltender.)

Forwards: Bill Barber, Bill Cowley, Bill Cook

Defensemen: Bill Gadsby, Bill Quackenbush

Goaltender: Bill Durnan

Honorable Mentions

We capped the list to 16 rosters, which some might argue was 16 too many. But that still left some decent candidates on the sidelines. I'm sure I forgot a few names, but before we get to the top three, let's take a moment to recognize a few who did get consideration before being left on the cutting room floor.

Team Phil gets off to a fun start with Esposito and Kessel up front and Housley on the blue line but doesn't have much to offer after that. Team Martin offers up a nice blend of English, French and European options, but once you get past Brodeur and St. Louis there isn't much to get all that excited about. Team Guy doesn't have much to work with, but almost makes the list on the strength of three francophone Hall-of-Famers (Lafleur, Lapointe and Carbonneau) plus a sneaky American goalie pick (Hebert). Team Bernie gets closer than you'd expect, while Team James is surprisingly sparse. And Team Eric/Erik starts strong with Lindros, Staal and Karlsson, but is just OK after that and would need to rely on Eric Fichaud for its goaltending.

There's a solid case to be made for Team Paul, and Leetch and Trotter form a solid foundation for these guys. Team Matthew has a



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few options but isn't all that deep unless you loosen the rules to include Mats, and even then it's not overwhelming. There's not as much as you might think for Team Tom or Team Tim, and the same could be said for some common names like Team George, Team Charles and Team Andrew. Team Frank could find a few Hall-of-Famers, including Mahovlich, Brimsek and Boucher, but wouldn't have a blue line. Team Nick seems promising, but it gets too complicated sorting through the Nikita/Nicklas/Nikolai variations. Team Scott starts strong until you realize it's just the 2003 Devils. And while Team Richard has plenty of impressive talent, it's almost entirely up front. There's probably a Dick joke there, but I'm not making it.

OK, let's finish this off with the top three. This is your last chance to make your guesses before you scroll any further ...

No. 3. Team Patrick

Let's start with a tricky ruling. Does "Patrice" count as a Patrick? It's a tough one. We're one letter off, and I'm all for building bridges between the French and English cultures. But I feel like those are two separate names, so I'm ruling Bergeron ineligible for Team Patrick.

That hurts, but not as much as you might think, since we're still in good shape up front. We start with a pair of American stars in Kane and LaFontaine. From there we could go to guys like Marleau, Sharp and Verbeek. But I'm going to give the last slot to Elias, who edges out fellow a Patrik in Laine.

The blue line is trickier. We lose out on Briseboise thanks to our Patrice ruling, and we're not going to try to sneak James Patrick onto the roster. But we can reach back a few decades to find a couple of solid blueliners in Stapleton and Quinn. Granted, the latter was better as a coach and GM than a player, but he'll come in handy if any of these other teams' superstars start running around.

And if Quinn doesn't provide enough toughness, well, let's just say we've got a pretty decent enforcer in net too. Don't mess with Team Patrick.

(Just, uh, don't draft any of them with top picks. Right, Stefan and Falloon?)

Forwards: Patrick Kane, Pat LaFontaine, Patrik Elias

Defensemen: Pat Stapleton, Pat Quinn

Goaltender: Patrick Roy

No. 2. Team Johnathan

There's the potential for some controversy here, as our whole "group variations of the same name together" rule could lead to us including Jacks on this team. Does "Jack" really count as a variation of John? That always seemed to weird to me too. But luckily we don't really have to worry about it since NHL history hasn't produced all that many great Jacks. The only one who'd be a candidate for our team is probably Eichel, and his official full name is just Jack, so we can skip him with a clear conscience.

That leaves us with our various Johns and Jons (but not Jeans), and we've got plenty to choose from. There's only one Hall-of-Famer in the mix, but it's a good one in Johnny Bucyk. And we can fill out our forward ranks with two current players who seem headed to the Hall one day in Jonathan Toews and John Tavares, who narrowly beat out Johnny Gaudreau. That's a strong top line, one that doesn't even have room for Johns like LeClair, MacLean and Tonelli, not to mention Jon Marchessault and Jonathan Huberdeau.

Here's the weird thing: While Team Johnathan is impressively deep up front, there isn't much to get excited about on the blue line. Apparently, if you name your kid John, he's going to be a forward. Somebody write a sociology paper about this. We've got one current Norris candidate in John Carlson, and then the best I can find are solid guys like Johnny Oduya and Boychuk. If any team was going to try to get away with going with a four-forward setup, it might be this one.

We're all set in goal, though, where Hall-of-Famer Johnny Bower heads a crowded field that includes Gibson, Quick and Vanbiesbrouck.

Forwards: Johnny Bucyk, John Tavares, Jonathan Toews

Defensemen: John Carlson, Johnny Boychuk

Goaltender: Johnny Bower

No. 1. Team Robert

At first, this might seem like an odd choice for the top spot. With apologies to Gary, there haven't actually been all that many Roberts in NHL history. You've got Lang, Svehla and Reichel, but that's about it. Shorten it to Rob, and you get your first serious star with Blake.

But switch over to Bob, and you're in business. Now you've got Gainey, Baun, Bourne and Carpenter, plus Badger Bob Johnson as coach and Pulford as GM. And if anyone argues with Team Robert in the top spot, we can send Probert after them.

But of course, Bob isn't why this name ends up in first place. For that, we've got to turn to Bobby. That gives us the unbeatable trio of Orr, Hull and Clarke. Round that out with Bauer and Smith, and maybe even slip in a Holik or a Ryan, and we're all set.

Our only weak spot is in goal, where we'll be stuck with Bob Sauve, Bob Essensa and Robert Esche. Can we slip Roberto Luongo in here? Can we lure over Sergei Bobrovsky and try to use some sort of nickname loophole to pass him off as a Bob? We might need a ruling on this.

But ultimately it won't matter, because we've got Orr, Hull and Clarke and the puck will never be anywhere near our zone. Here's your winning roster ...

Forwards: Bobby Clarke, Bobby Hull, Bob Gainey

Defensemen: Bobby Orr, Rob Blake

Goaltender: Bob Sauve

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The Athletic / Duhatschek: How a one-time favor turned into a tradition for every NHL champion – a day with the Cup

By Eric Duhatschek Jul 16, 2019 110

When the Stanley Cup is won nowadays, it makes the rounds with players from the winning team over the course of the summer – a global march that takes the enduring symbol of hockey supremacy to the far corners of the earth. This year, the Stanley Cup began its



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world tour in St. Louis at the end of June, before adjourning to tiny Calahoo, AB., home of Blues' coach Craig Berube for a Canada Day celebration.

From there, it made its way east – to Saskatchewan, Manitoba and then into Ontario this past weekend. By the time training camps open for the 2019-20 season, the Stanley Cup will have visited eight Canadian provinces, seven U.S. states, plus Russia, Sweden and Finland.

In that time, it will log just under 30,000 miles (just over 48,000 km), much of it in the company of its primary custodian, Phil Pritchard.

Officially, Pritchard is the Hockey Hall of Fame's curator and the vice president of the resource center, but his Twitter handle gives you a more precise definition of his role: @keeperofthecup.

According to Pritchard, the tradition of an NHL player getting to spend a day in the company of Lord Stanley began almost completely by accident – and can be traced back to the events of a single night in Toronto in June of 1989, during the league's annual awards ceremony.

Pritchard had only been working for the Hall of Fame for less than a year when the Calgary Flames won the '89 Stanley Cup. As a 119-point regular-season team, the Flames were well-represented at the awards gala, where multiple players, plus coach Terry Crisp, were nominated for NHL trophies.

That evening, as the award show afterparty was winding down, Pritchard serendipitously passed within earshot of a conversation taking place between Frank Torpey then the NHL's security chief and Flames' forward Colin Patterson, a Selke Trophy finalist.

Patterson grew up in the north Toronto neighborhood of Rexdale and had just made a request to Torpey – was there any chance to get the Stanley Cup out to his parents' home for a few hours the next day, so they could celebrate the Flames' championship with family, friends and neighbors?

Torpey told him no: That security around the Stanley Cup had tightened, ever since word got out that it had appeared on stage at a strip club in Edmonton, in the immediate aftermath of the Oilers' 1984 win.

Pritchard, who was packing up the trophies, volunteered to help.

"I introduced myself and asked Colin where he lived," Pritchard said. "When he told me where, I said, 'hey I can take the Cup up to you, if you want, in the morning for a few hours' – because I had an event later that day anyway in that same part of town."

And the rest, as they say, is history.

"That was probably around midnight or 12:30 a.m. when we were packing everything up," Pritchard continued. "I lived in Burlington at the time and so I didn't get home until after 1 o'clock because I had to drop the Cup off at the Hall, which was still on the CNE grounds then. The next morning, I went downtown to pick it up and I had to drive through traffic to get there.

"Remember, at the time, there's no GPS, nothing like that, so I've got a map out, trying to find Colin's address. It was around 9:30 in the morning by the time I rolled up his street and looked out and saw all these people with all these signs and realized, 'this must be the driveway I'm looking for.' It was unbelievable. It was as if this party had been planned for months. They had banners up. I don't know how he pulled it together so fast. But he did."

(Courtesy of Colin Patterson)

Nowadays, a player's day with the Stanley Cup is a structured, organized event that involves detailed planning and a complicated off-season travel schedule, the opposite of what occurred the first time it happened – which was weirdly organic.

"Hockey is a product of evolution," Pritchard said. "There is no exact date of its start. It just evolved into hockey one day at a time – and the same thing happened here. It evolved into a tradition, players getting to spend a day with the Stanley Cup. But for me, that's the day it all started – at Colin Patterson's parents' house."

Three decades have passed since that event occurred and, in that time, Pritchard's fame and notoriety have greatly increased.

That's him, every year, wearing the white gloves, shown on television, polishing the Stanley Cup, whenever there's a final's deciding game. For a long time, Pritchard also starred in a series of credit card commercials for one of the NHL's rights holders, who used the Stanley Cup as a central figure in their advertisements.

But back in '89, he was a young, anonymous HHOF employee who was trying to do a favor for a Stanley Cup champion.

According to Patterson, when he'd casually approached Torpey about possibly getting the Stanley Cup out to his parents' home, he had no idea what the protocols were – or even who Pritchard was when he made his offer.

"When he said he could do that, I was thinking, 'this is fantastic,'" Patterson said, "but you also have to remember that this was 1989. You don't have cellphones. You don't have any way of connecting to people. Luckily, a couple of my buddies had snuck into the awards dinner and so I told them, 'get on a payphone and start calling people. Let's get the Coconut Telegraph going.' It was pretty late at night, but they made a few calls and I made a few calls. But it was probably about five in the morning before we got back to my parents' place."

Three hours later and still feeling the effects of a long night of celebrating, Patterson got up and started walking up and down his parents' street, knocking on neighbors' doors, issuing invitations to the party. The first house he came to was the Goodwins, who lived three houses down from the Pattersons.

"I grew up with their kids," Patterson said. "Mr. Goodwin was about 75 at the time. He answers the door and hugs me and says 'Colin, congratulations.' I said, 'Mr. Goodwin, we have the Stanley Cup coming to my mom and dad's place at nine and we'd love to have you there.' He says, 'I'd love to come, but I can't. I have a dentist's appointment.' So, I said, 'where's your phone? Who's your dentist?"

"So, I dialed his dentist's office and I went through the whole story and explained that we're having this party and can Mr. Goodwin see the dentist later in the day?' They just laughed and said, 'Tell him to come in whenever he wants.' From there, I went up and down the street and finally, I ended up at Mr. Carlo's house. I grew up with his kids too, but Mr. Carlo was a pretty strict, gruff guy – and one time, I'd put a puck through his window back in about 1972 and I don't think he ever forgave me for that.

"So here I am now, 29 years old, and I'm still afraid to knock on his door. I'm shaking, plus I'm starting to sweat because it's getting hotter out and maybe I should have gotten more sleep. Now, I'm 6-2, but Mr. Carlo is a big, stocky man and even at his age, he's an intimidating-looking guy. He looks at me and he says, 'Colin Patterson, you put a puck through my window in '72.' I said, 'Mr. Carlo, I know, I know, I'm sorry, I apologize, but we've got the Stanley Cup coming to my parents' place this morning and we'd love to have you stop by. It's arriving at 9 o'clock.'"



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Even though it was first thing in the morning, Patterson and his friends had instructed people to bring their own liquor or beer so they could celebrate with the tradition of drinking out of the Cup.

"By around 8:50, people are arriving with their hooch," Patterson said. "My neighbors, the Van Langes, had three girls and they'd had made this sign for me with the No. 11 on it. We'd just had a baby during the Stanley Cup run, Stephanie, so they had a baby on the thing. It was great – all these posters and banners. Now, we're marshaling in front of the house, and we bring this old restored table outside, so we have someplace to put the Stanley Cup.

"Nine o'clock comes and goes and no Cup. Now people are starting to get a little antsy. I'm reassuring them: 'Don't worry, any minute out, this armored truck will pull up and the Stanley Cup will be here and it'll be great.' Meanwhile, more and more people are starting to arrive – and now there's 75 or 100 people gathering outside my parents' place.

"By now, it's 9:15 and I'm thinking, 'I'm pretty sure Phil said today – but I'd had a few drinks and my memory is a little fuzzy.' So, I go back into the house, but I don't even know who to phone. I don't know Phil's number. I don't even know his last name.

"All of a sudden, it's 9:30 and the grumbling is starting to get louder when this little Toyota hatchback pulls into my parents' driveway. I start to think, 'who's this? I gotta get this guy outta here.' So, I go wheeling outside and I go up to the car and the driver rolls down the window ... and it's Phil.

"I'm in a panic now. I said, 'Phil, when's the Cup coming?' He says, 'it's right here, in the back.' It was in the back of this tiny Toyota. So, we go around and open the hatchback and it's not even in one of those cases that you see now. It's just wrapped in bubble wrap, and there's a blanket draped over it. So, we unwrap it and we pull it out and I hoist it over my head and start yelling and celebrating. It was just great. Finally, I went to set it down, but I'm so excited that when I do set it down, I put this massive divot in a table that it took my dad about 20 years to restore. My mom's there, she's just glaring at me – and my dad says, 'hmm, maybe we should get a cloth to put underneath.'

Colin Patterson with Phil Pritchard. (Courtesy of Colin Patterson)

"Too late now."

From there, the party cranked up and lasted, by Patterson's estimate, four or five hours.

"Nowadays, everybody's got these rules about how you can't lift the Cup or touch the Cup unless you win the Cup, but that day, nobody cared. My buddies were passing it around and pouring stuff into it and drinking out of it," Patterson said.

"But the mystique of the Cup and the beauty of the Cup – shining in the sunlight – really, that's one of the greatest days of my life. Winning was great too, but to have that moment with my family, my friends and my neighbors was unbelievable. It was just a spectacular day.

"Then early in the afternoon, as we were starting to wrap up and people were saying goodbye, Mr. Carlo comes by – the guy, where I put a puck through his window as a kid? He doesn't say anything. But he just put his hand on my shoulder and nodded – and I think, 'finally, I've been exonerated. I'm golden.' And then he left."

In Pritchard's view, which is really the only one that counts, the tradition of the summer Stanley Cup victory tour began that day in Patterson's driveway.

"In 1995, the first time the New Jersey Devils won, that was the summer every guy on the team started to get the Stanley Cup," Pritchard said. "In '89, it was just one – Colin Patterson. The next year, it just one again. The Oilers had won and John Muckler's family was having a party for him in Rhode Island and they called and asked if they could have the Cup for a day. So, I told them about Colin Patterson's event the year before – and so that summer, I took it to John Muckler's so he could have a day with the Cup."

The Penguins won back-to-back Stanley Cup championships in 1991 and 1992, so in each of those summers, Pritchard drove it back and forth to Pittsburgh for a couple of days at a time, so the players in the area could get a day with the Cup.

In 1993, when Montreal won, it also coincided with the 100th anniversary of the Stanley Cup, so the Canadiens put the trophy on tour around the province of Quebec. Pritchard also escorted the Cup down to Vermont, where John LeClair made his off-season home; and then they circled back to Kingston, to take it to Kirk Muller.

"By then, commissioner Gary Bettman started with the league and so we started talking about how to formalize things – and from there, it evolved into a bigger thing," Pritchard said.

"The Devils were the first team where everyone got it. As we all know, Lou Lamoriello ran a tight ship with the Devils, but he ran a great ship. There were 22 guys on the team and it went out to 22 guys in 22 days – and that was it. They were told when they were getting it. It wasn't like they got to choose. And we did it all from the middle of July until the middle of August.

"From there, Colorado made it an even bigger deal in 1996 – and it's just kept growing from there."

Pritchard particularly remembers how every year that Martin Brodeur won the Stanley Cup with the Devils, he would organize a street hockey game for his childhood friends, to mimic the ritual of playing for the Stanley Cup when you were a 10-year-old. The only difference: This time, the Stanley Cup was on the road, and they were playing for the actual trophy, not the metaphorical equivalent.

"From what happened at the 1989 NHL awards to last summer, when we went to seven different countries with the Washington Capitals, it's really something to see how it's grown," Pritchard said. "It went to Russia twice last year. It went to Denmark for the first time ever. That 100 days with the Cup is on a whole new level now than it was with Colin Patterson and that first street party in '89.

"Obviously, I'm a Canadian who grew up playing hockey and wanting to win the Stanley Cup like everyone else. I knew early on I wasn't going to do that, so I went into the administrative side of sports. This past February, we had the Washington Capitals visit the Hall of Fame to donate a Stanley Cup ring. I'm really fortunate to do what I do, and to be in hockey, and to be associated with the Stanley Cup and all of its history.

"It's a good day when you see people smiling – and the Stanley Cup always brings a smile to people's faces."

It wasn't until years later that Patterson actually found out how seminal that moment was, in terms of ushering in an era. By then, Pritchard and the Stanley Cup were making commercials for the Discover card, which had become an official NHL sponsor.

"One day, out of the blue, I got an e-mail from a lady I didn't know who said, 'we're doing this commercial, Phil Pritchard's top-10 moments with the Stanley Cup, and we were wondering if you had any pictures or video,'" Patterson said. "I told her, 'I think I do, let me get back to you.' I wasn't even sure if it was a legitimate query or not, but the next time she texted me, she copied Phil and so I knew it



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was real. So, I texted my daughter Stephanie – she was born in the third round in 1989 – and she gathered some pictures and video and sent them off. It wasn't until then, when Phil said it in this commercial, that I realized it was the start of the modern day-with-the-Stanley Cup tradition.

"I was a bit player in the game, so for me, that was pretty cool. Other guys had it before, but it wasn't a supervised party the way this was. And Phil was there the whole time, with a big smile on his face. You could tell he thought it was pretty neat too. This past year, my wife Sherrie's been taking our VHS tapes and putting them on DVDs, so I came home a couple of weeks ago and she had that one on the TV – and I was killing myself laughing. I had these shorts on, with my shirt tucked in – I looked ridiculous – but that was the style at the time. Everything about it was hilarious. My buddies' kids, who are now 32, 33, 34, are just little back then, standing there by the Cup.

(Courtesy of Colin Patterson)

"It truly was one of the greatest days of my life – and I can only imagine how much fun the guys have with it now because you get to plan it all out."

After all that, there is even a postscript to the story.

Two blocks from where the Pattersons grew up, Michael Futa – now the Los Angeles Kings' assistant general manager – lived in the same neighborhood.

Futa's mother was the receptionist at the dentists' office who answered the phone when Patterson called to reschedule Mr. Carlin's appointment that morning in '89.

Patterson and Futa are childhood friends and over the years, would get together every summer to play in a baseball tournament.

In 2012, when the Kings won the first of their two Stanley Cups, Futa brought the Cup back to the old neighborhood.

"There's a little place we used to go to after our ball tournaments called Remo's," Patterson said. "It's tiny, about 200 square feet – and Mike takes the Cup there. My old house where we grew up is about three blocks away. My parents don't live there anymore and he didn't tell me he was going to do this, but we were on a bus, leaving the bar when it pulls up at my parents' old house. So, we all got off and took another picture on the lawn with the Stanley Cup – 23 years later.

"The best part is, there's this young Asian family that lives there now. They weren't home when we first arrived – I knocked on the door to explain what we wanted to do – but they're just pulling into the driveway as we're all there, posing on their front lawn with the Stanley Cup. So, I went into this massive explanation – of how I grew up in the house; about the celebration, we had with the Cup back in '89; and how we were trying to duplicate that.

"They're just looking at me, and their expression is saying, 'what the heck are you talking about?'"

"But we coaxed them into this picture we're taking with the Cup. There are about 30 guys that Michael has invited to go along on this tour – and I was laughing so hard, I was crying. And then we went down to where his parents used to live and did the same thing. That was another great day for hockey."

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Sportsnet.ca / NHL's Top 10 UFAs remaining: Latest rumours, reports

Luke Fox | @lukefoxjukebox July 16, 2019, 9:32 AM

Two weeks after the madness, here we sit.

National Hockey League general managers will need to dig deeper, and jobless players may need to lower their asking prices, but there are still a few gems — or at least some worthy gambles and depth additions — to be unearthed from 2019's UFA class after the July 1 frenzy.

We round up the rumours and assess the value of the free agents who are taking a more patient approach this summer (in some cases, that's even by choice) and are still up for grabs a week in mid-July.

1. Jake Gardiner

Age: 28

Position: Defence

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$4.05 million

Gardiner, a Minnesota native, enjoyed being a Maple Leaf, and despite his defensive lapses — which can be magnified — the Leafs weren't happy to let him walk.

The Canada Day acquisition of Tyson Barrie, however, officially brings Gardiner's tenure in Toronto to a close. (Rumour had it, the defenceman was partly waiting to see if there was a way Kyle Dubas could make room for a return.)

That Gardiner's back ailed him during the post-season and he considered surgery should serve as a yellow flag for pursuant teams.

Yet he's a solid power-play quarterback, an excellent skater and passer, and a 50-point defender when healthy. He should be trying to fetch a long-term deal in the ballpark of \$6 million to \$7 million annually, using Tyler Myers' deal in Vancouver as his base.

The Chicago Blackhawks and Montreal Canadiens were rumoured to be interested in Gardiner, while the Toronto Sun's Steve Simmons reported Florida, L.A. and hometown Minnesota as some of the player's preferred destinations.

I made a case for Detroit's Steve Yzerman to inquire.

Now that Habs GM Marc Bergevin swung and missed on the Sebastian Aho offer sheet, does Gardiner become his next serious target? Or will lefty Ben Chiarot — signed last week — suffice?

The New Jersey Devils certainly have the cap and roster space to take a run here.

How much of the delay is based on Gardiner carefully selecting his next home versus clubs being wary of the puck-mover's injured back?

For our money, he's the best talent still unclaimed.

2. Joe Thornton

Age: 40

Position: Centre

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$5 million



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When the ageless Jumbo Joe announced at the NHL Awards that he was keen to keep playing, GM Doug Wilson described the news as "a pleasant surprise."

The cap-crunched Wilson let UFAs Joonas Donskoi and captain Joe Pavelski walk for more money elsewhere on July 1 as he made re-signing RFAs Timo Meier and Kevin Labanc (a steal!) his priority.

A popular theory: Labanc was convinced to accept a \$1-million deal in part to save money for Thornton.

"I think you know the relationship we have with Jumbo. He and I have had conversations and talk every couple days. We'll get that resolved in due time," Wilson said of Thornton's inevitable extension.

"Just getting Timo done as recently as we did was where most of my focus was. We'll start exploring whatever else we may do."

Question: If an active Jim Rutherford can be elected into the Hockey Hall of Fame, why can't we just slide Jumbo in there already?

It's the goats birthday today! Joe Thornton it's always an honor to watch you play it puts a smile on my face like a kid in a candy store! 40 years young and can't wait for the new season
pic.twitter.com/jcKmH5vPBi

— Harris (@RHarris_19) July 2, 2019

3. Ben Hutton

Age: 26

Position: Defence

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$2.8 million

Of all the UFAs still floating out there, none averaged more time on ice than Hutton (22:21). The left-shot defender is coming off a nice little bounce-back season after a dismal 2017-18 but was curiously not qualified by the Vancouver Canucks, and they lost a 26-year-old defenceman for nothing.

No doubt, Jordie Benn is an upgrade from Hutton as a third-pairing guy in Vancouver, so now does Montreal (Benn's former club) take a look at Hutton? The L.A. Kings are also reportedly interested here.

We wonder if the Ottawa-area native would consider the Sens, who have plenty of cap space and could use more experienced NHLers.

If you're a believer in plus/minus, it doesn't paint a pretty picture here: Hutton has been a dash-21 or worse in three of his four NHL seasons. He's a fifth-rounder who took a step last season, and at 26 his best days should still lie ahead. Next to Gardiner, he's the most intriguing defenceman available.

Nothing imminent on Ben Hutton front. Don't expect anything to happen today. Several teams still in pursuit to varying degrees, including MTL & LA (@DennisTFP reported earlier LA initial offer was turned down, they could circle back).

— David Pagnotta (@TheFourthPeriod) July 1, 2019

The longer Ben Hutton stays on the market, the more I suspect the #Canucks are working on a Chris Tanev trade. That would allow Jordie Benn to slide to the right and open up a spot for Hutton to return.

— Stephan Roget (@StephanRoget) July 2, 2019

4. Justin Williams

Age: 37

Position: Right wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$4.5 million

Age ain't nothin' but a number. Mr. Game 7 enjoyed his most productive season (23 goals, 53 points) in seven years last winter with the Hurricanes, captaining Carolina to its best season in a decade. Teammate-turned-coach Rod Brind'Amour called Williams the club's most important player, and not just because he invented the Storm Surge.

The three-time Stanley Cup winner will be 38 when the puck drops on 2019-20, so it's understandable that he's seriously weighing retirement. Incredibly, Williams has missed just three games total over his past eight seasons — that includes six deep playoff runs.

"We've been in contact with Justin here recently," Hurricanes general manager Don Waddell said on July 2. "He hasn't given us 100 per cent yet which way he's going to go. I think he potentially could be leaning toward playing, but I think in the next few weeks it will shake out."

Williams built a house in Raleigh and would prefer not to move his family again.

"I'm going to take my time and make sure I make the right one, right?" Williams said upon season's end.

"Because if I'm all in, I'm going to be all in. If I'm not quite all there, then I have to reassess the situation. I'm not going to be good if I'm 85 per cent all in. I've got to be all in. That's the only [thing] that's fair to me, fair to the teammates, fair to everybody."

Waddell: "I think Justin Williams could be leaning towards playing."

— Sara Civ (@SaraCivian) July 2, 2019

5. Derick Brassard

Age: 31

Position: Centre

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$5 million

Brassard put up a career-best 60 points with the Rangers in 2014-15. The following season, he rang up 27 goals. Since then, he's gradually been on a downward slide, playing with four franchises over the past two seasons and failing to stick.

Bad fits? Player in sharp decline?

Brassard is a centre who has shown in the past he can both check and score, and yet he's nowhere near a \$5-million asset anymore. Until he proves otherwise, he's a third-liner.

Available centremen are scarce, however. This feels like a case of a player needing to lower his asking price, and we wouldn't rule out a return to Columbus or New York, where Brassard enjoyed his most success.

The Oilers are also in the market for affordable veteran forwards.

Montreal has been aggressive in its hunt for centre depth. Would Bergevin give Brassard a look?

What sort of contract could Derick Brassard (and other NHL free agents still on the market) expect to receive?
<https://t.co/fC43ApxPL8>

— Taylor Haase (@TaylorHaasePGH) July 5, 2019

6. Pat Maroon

Age: 31



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Position: Left wing / Right wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$1.75 million

Maroon took a one-year, bet-on-himself deal at this time last summer to be able to spend more time with his son, Anthony. (Hometown discounts still exist!) And he was rewarded with some quality family time and a Stanley freaking Cup.

Now, he's right back to square one.

Not the fleetest of foot, Maroon is a big body who can crash the crease and is well-suited to playoff hockey. The Edmonton Oilers and Calgary Flames are among the clubs who have expressed interest.

A return to the Blues — who have several key RFAs to sort out — cannot be completely ruled out but appears doubtful.

The Blues' top beat writer, Jeremy Rutherford, reports that Maroon's offers are all for one year, again.

Update on Maroon: a week into free agency, he remains unsigned. He has offers, but the belief is they're all for one year. He's looking for a couple years and the right fit and is willing to be patient. Several sources have said the Blues' interest remains limited. #stlblues

— Jeremy Rutherford (@jprutherford) July 8, 2019

Edmonton looking into returning Pat Maroon to the fold. Oilers among a few teams pitching for the big LW.

— Mark Spector (@SportsnetSpec) July 1, 2019

Meanwhile, Maroon spent the weekend coaching his son Anthony's roller hockey team, which won the @TORHS_2H4I in Tampa, Fla. They received a Cup and when players celebrated in the locker room, Maroon went to the concession stand, bought a few Powerades, came back and filled it up. pic.twitter.com/ThxC7IGEC3

— Jeremy Rutherford (@jprutherford) July 8, 2019

7. Brian Boyle

Age: 34

Position: Centre / Left wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$2.55 million

Mostly we wanted to include Boyle here because of his incredible July 1 tweet (see below), but it helps that the veteran role player is still an effective centreman who can do all the little things (kill penalties, win faceoffs, block shots, provide leadership) coaches and teammates respect.

Boyle would be a nice add for the Oilers' culture, so it's intriguing that Edmonton is one of the clubs reportedly on his list.

Brian Boyle is reviewing his options. Told 5 teams have serious interest in signing him. A decision could come later today, but he's not rushing things.

— David Pagnotta (@TheFourthPeriod) July 2, 2019

8. Deryk Engelland

Age: 37

Position: Defence

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$1.5 million

Two days prior to free agency's opening, it appeared Engelland's re-signing with Vegas on a one-year deal was inevitable. So, it is a bit curious that by July 8 an announcement on the veteran has yet to be made. He's been remarkably durable in his mid-30s and, birth certificate be damned, is arguably the best right-shot defender still out there.

Yes, Engelland is getting up there in, um, experience and down there in foot speed, but on a cheap, one-year term, he can still munch a lot of blue-collar minutes (19:52) and provide the kind of hard defence that should make him worth every penny.

McPhee notes they're working on a contract with Deryk Engelland right now.

Based on his tone and mention of working out bonuses it sounds like he's very confident Engo will be back #VegasBorn

— Jesse Merrick (@JesseNews3LV) June 29, 2019

Deryk Engelland at \$1 million, Malcolm Subban at \$800K and a Nikita Gusev trade would give the Golden Knights a cap-compliant roster...with what's left of my car payment to spare #VegasBorn pic.twitter.com/CR0GURL5NX

— Justin Emerson (@J15Emerson) July 2, 2019

9. Jason Pominville

Age: 36

Position: Right wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$5.6 million

Welcome to Pominville, where the unemployment rate is 100 per cent... for now. The 1,060-game veteran certainly isn't worth the \$5.6 million he was raking in Buffalo last season, but he's put together consecutive 16-goal, 30-point seasons, could contribute on a second PP unit and won't take foolish penalties. If he wants to keep the dream alive, Pominville might have to earn a spot on a PTO or take a third-line role on a club in need of wing depth.

I know they didn't/don't have much money to play with but yikes. I feel like, at the very least, they should be in on a guy like Jason Pominville. Has averaged 1.71 points/60 at 5v5 over last two years and could give them a bit of pop on the wings at a cheap price.

— Todd Cordell (@ToddCordell) July 15, 2019

10. Ben Lovejoy

Age on July 1: 35

Position: Defence

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$2.67 million

As soon as Erik Karlsson re-signed in San Jose, right-shot defenders became the weakest position among this summer's free-agent class, and it's not even close. A stay-at-home veteran like Lovejoy could land a decent contract simply based on a lack of available talent. After Lovejoy, we're talking about names like Dan Girardi.

Buyers know what they're getting in Lovejoy: a stay-at-home, experienced, durable defender who can kill penalties and log minutes. Dallas liked the Reverend enough that they traded New Jersey the younger Connor Carrick plus a third-rounder to rent him for its 13-game playoff run.

If anyone knew Ben Lovejoy was this valuable, might've gotten more than a 3rd for him. Devs look lost.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • July 17, 2019

— Arthur Staple (@StapeAthletic) February 23, 2019

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 07.17.2019

1107543 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Keith Kinkaid's arrival should help Canadiens manage Carey Price's load

Eric Engels July 16, 2019, 12:40 PM

There were a lot of numbers for the Montreal Canadiens to take into account before making their decision to give goaltender Keith Kinkaid a one-year, \$1.75-million contract on July 1, but the most important one was 82. That's the number of games Kinkaid has appeared in over the last two seasons.

It was more relevant to the Canadiens that he played 41 matchups with the New Jersey Devils last season than his 15-18-6 record, disappointing 3.36 goals-against average and underwhelming .891 save percentage. Especially since they could balance those numbers against the ones he posted in 41 games a season prior, when he managed to go 26-10-3, with a 2.77 goals-against average and a .913 save percentage to push a weak Devils team into the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

But a combined 82 games told the Canadiens just about everything they needed to know, which is Kinkaid could help them do what they weren't able to do last season when backup Antti Niemi faltered down the stretch and forced starter Carey Price into six more games than he was originally penciled in for. This is mostly about managing the soon-to-be 32-year-old Price's workload, which is something Kinkaid says he's prepared for.

The 30-year-old New Yorker, who arrived in Montreal on Sunday, met with media on Monday sporting his new Canadiens threads.

"I'm just happy to be here," he said, wearing No. 37. "Happy to have another opportunity to play in the best league in the world. To work with a guy like Carey Price is going to be tremendous. If I can take his workload and lighten it up for him a little bit — I want to be a guy they can count on when they need somebody to win a game and give Carey a night off."

That's what they want, too.

The Canadiens are aware of the trend going around the NHL where starting goaltenders play fewer games than they have in any season over the last two decades. They're also aware Price was forced to make 66 appearances last season — 12 fewer than Stanley Cup finalists Tuukka Rask and Jordan Binnington combined to play.

They know that if they're going to keep Price playing at an elite level, if they're going to preserve his best self over the seven seasons he remains under contract for, they're going to have to lean a bit more on someone else.

It wasn't going to be Charlie Lindgren, the 25-year-old who has accumulated just 18 games of NHL experience since signing with the Canadiens in 2016. It wasn't going to be 22-year-old AHLer Michael McNiven, either. And Cayden Primeau, the 19-year-old college superstar who has yet to appear in a game as a professional, was out of the question.

But Kinkaid made a lot of sense for the Canadiens, not only because he could lighten Price's load, but also because he's a seasoned professional with 151 games of NHL experience under his belt. The value of his tenure, in the event that Price suffers an injury or misses some games due to illness, is considerable.

Price has missed games in every season since coming into the league including 133 due to injury or illness since 2008. This Canadiens team, which has missed the playoffs twice in a row and three times in the last four seasons, needed a proper insurance policy and found one in Kinkaid.

In an ideal world, the Canadiens won't have to use him in that capacity, but they will have to use him much more than they used Niemi, who made just 17 appearances last year after making 19 in his first year with the team.

Knowing they could depend on Kinkaid for at least 30 games this coming season gave the Canadiens the peace of mind to offer him a contract. They may only want to use him for 22 to 25 games, but they don't have to ask themselves whether or not he's capable of playing more.

And Kinkaid believes he's ready to handle the load. The fact he's up for the challenge of playing in this hockey-mad city counts for something, too.

"The past few years, I've gotten the highs and lows of the NHL and the rigours of it. It'll just help me going forward, especially in a place like Montreal where there's a lot of pressure," he said. "You have to perform."

With a lifetime record of 64-55-17 on a sub-standard Devils team that's only made the playoffs once in the last five seasons, there's ample reason to believe Kinkaid can.

"I want to be that person that can help in any way," he said. "I want to get the wins for the team when I'm in net. If they give me more games or less games, I'll be there."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 07.17.2019

1107544 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / NHL's Top 15 RFAs of 2019: Latest rumours, reports

Luke Fox | @lukefoxjokebox July 16, 2019, 10:28 AM

Blame the centre of the hockey universe.

Over the past eight months, Toronto Maple Leafs restricted free agents William Nylander and Auston Matthews each played a role in rewriting the rules for stars coming out of their entry-level deals.

One pushed his rookie general manager to the final five minutes of the signing deadline and reaped a generous financial reward as a result. The other inked a massive bridge/commitment hybrid deal that will walk him to unrestricted free agency at the age of 26.

Carolina's star RFA centre, Sebastian Aho, signed a July 1 offer sheet with Montreal. The Hurricanes matched, walking another explosive talent to UFA status at 26.

San Jose's excellent RFA forwards, Timo Meier (four years) and Kevin Labanc (one year), also opted for shorter term.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • July 17, 2019

The negotiating leverage has nudged toward the young stars ruling a faster, more skilled league. That's evident by the number of emerging stars who turned down in-season offers, opting instead to put up pinball numbers and cash in on the bets they made on themselves.

Here's a look at our top 15 RFAs, whose sluggish contract negotiations we're most intrigued to see play out based on their 2018-19 performance.

This summer's class — loaded with Canadian-team stars — will have an especially significant impact on the salary cap pictures in Toronto, Winnipeg, Tampa and Calgary.

Several of these restricted free agents have had the option of discussing offer sheets with opposing clubs since late June. Some have filed for arbitration, which will expedite the process.

For others? Well, the next true pressure point won't arrive until the first day of training camp.

1. Brayden Point

Age: 23

Position: Centre / Right wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$686,667

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: Established as one of the NHL's premier two-way centremen and earned some Selke votes. Can check top lines. Put up 41 goals and 92 points. NHL-best 20 power-play goals. Ranked top-10 in plus/minus (+27).

The latest: Point's agent, Gerry Johansson, had a plan to let his client's fabulous platform year play out before opening serious extension talks. In light of Tampa's impending cap crunch, The Athletic's Joe Smith reports that Point is open to wide range of term, anything from a two-year bridge deal to a five-year Auston Matthews-type deal to an eight-year lockup.

"He loves it in Tampa," Johansson told Smith.

Point's loyalty to Tampa reportedly factored into Montreal GM Marc Bergevin's decision to target Carolina's RFA centreman, Sebastian Aho, with his July 1 offer sheet (quickly matched).

Lightning GM Julien BriseBois maintains extending Point is top priority while also needing to find space for RFA Adam Erne and considering long-term extensions for goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy, defenceman Mikhail Sergachev and centre Anthony Cirelli — all of whom will need significant raises next summer.

To that end, BriseBois freed up funds by trading winger J.T. Miller to Vancouver for futures and placing alternate captain Ryan Callahan on long-term injured reserve.

With the salary ceiling set at \$81.5 million, the Lightning have just \$5.6 million to take care of Point and Erne.

That's, uh, not quite enough.

Other than Brayden Point (nothing new on that front yet), the other main rostered #tblightning RFA not yet signed is Adam Erne. Erne did not file for arbitration by last week's deadline. Am told both sides just still working on a deal. Paquette, Martel, Verhaeghe signed last week

— Joe Smith (@JoeSmithTB) July 9, 2019

Asked @mnwild coach Bruce Boudreau on #TBLightning Brayden Point: "The player in the league that no one knows how great he is. Come contract time next year, they'll know." Said he thinks Point is "the catalyst for that team."

— Joe Smith (@JoeSmithTB) October 20, 2018

2. Mitchell Marner

Age: 22

Position: Right wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$894,167

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: Maple Leafs scoring leader in 2017-18 and 2018-19. Quarterbacks power play. Kills penalties. Established wonderful chemistry with top centre John Tavares and improved as a shutdown winger. Put up career highs in goals (26), assists (68), points (94) while trimming his penalties to a career low (22). Local kid and fan favourite.

The latest: As the Maple Leafs split for the summer, Marner reiterated his desire to remain in blue and white for the foreseeable future and GM Kyle Dubas, facing one heck of a cap dilemma, said his top priority was locking up Marner prior to July 1, when he'd be eligible to sign an offer sheet.

Speculation has the Marner camp, led by agent Darren Ferris, looking for a contract comparable to Auston Matthews' five years at an \$11.6-million cap hit. The NHL's highest-paid winger is the newest New York Ranger, Artemi Panarin, at \$11.64 million a season.

Dubas, of course, would love to keep Marner's AAV to seven digits and sign his top scorer for term.

Originally vowing to match an offer sheet should these prickly negotiations reach that point, Dubas changed his tone at the draft, saying there's no guarantee he'd match.

"Without an answer on Mitch, we're going to be in a stalemate," Dubas said. "It is a top priority because we're not going to jump around and chew up our cap space we are going to need for Mitch... It's important. We just have to get right on it and get it done."

Dubas helped his own cause by trading away Patrick Marleau's hefty \$6.25-million cap hit to Carolina and Connor Brown and Nikita Zaitsev to Ottawa, as well as getting Colorado to take care of half of Tyson Barrie's salary.

The Marner camp appears to have dug in its heels.

"My understanding is that a very significant offer was made [by Dubas], a full eight-year term and \$10 million a year," Sportsnet's Brian Burke said on-air. "Now the issue is they don't want an eight-year term."

After signing new acquisitions Cody Ceci and Alexander Kerfoot, the Leafs have just \$3.8 million in projected cap space.

Rumours of a potential Marner offer sheet coming from Lou Lamoriello or Jarmo Kekalainen have circulated, but nothing has come to fruition.

The standoff continues. Wheee!

Marner's got moves.

(: @Marner93) pic.twitter.com/oUyvD0YA9i

— Sportsnet (@Sportsnet) July 8, 2019



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • July 17, 2019

"From what I understand it should happen today...I heard \$12.5M." @RadioVendetta confirms the report from @TheFourthPeriod that a team is "very seriously considering" presenting an offer sheet to Marnier @gregbradyTO @hughwburrill. #LeafsForever

: <https://t.co/G4dsL69kzk> pic.twitter.com/R55798Xf43

— Sportsnet 590 The FAN (@FAN590) July 5, 2019

3. Mikko Rantanen

Age: 22

Position: Right wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$894,167

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: Led club in playoff scoring (14 points) and is a career point-per-game performer in the post-season (18 in 18). Second only to Nathan MacKinnon in team assists (56) and points (87), despite playing just 74 games. Back-to-back 80-point seasons. Play-maker on the most dangerous line in the West. Invited to first All-Star Game. A big boy (six-foot-four, 215 pounds). Career-high plus-13.

The latest: Prior to opening night, Rantanen smartly chose to let the season play out in full before negotiating. Then he went out and had a career season on one of the best lines in hockey.

Colorado's highest-paid player, MacKinnon, carries a \$6.3-million cap hit. Rantanen has enough leverage to blow his centreman out of the water.

"It's not something we're worried about," GM Joe Sakic said of Rantanen's next deal. Cap space isn't an issue in Colorado. "He's going to be here a long time."

Despite a lack of resolution on the Rantanen front, Sakic actively pursuing free agents and traded for Nazem Kadri in effort to support his monster top line. The GM also made a significant offer to Artemi Panarin before the Russian star joined the Rangers.

NEW #AVS PODCAST: Colorado signs Andre Burakovsky and what's Mikko Rantanen's worth? (via @MikeChambers)

LISTEN <https://t.co/1gr8XxtDLc>

— Denver Post – Avs (@avsNews) July 16, 2019

4. Matthew Tkachuk

Age: 21

Position: Left wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$925,000

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: Sixth-overall pick. Career highs in games (80), goals (34), assists (43), points (77), while posting a career low in PIM per game. Good genes. Likely successor to Mark Giordano as captain. Gets under Drew Doughty's skin.

The latest: Tkachuk believes Matthews' five-year monster extension raised the bar, which is a scary thought for the Flames, who must make Tkachuk their highest-paid player.

"It sets that new bar for guys that are in a position to be up for a deal to be a restricted free agent this year," Tkachuk said on Feb. 6. "It kind of changes every year, it seems like. There's always that one

guy or a couple guys who change the money, whether higher or lower.

"Auston changed it, too, just going with the approach of a five-year deal, too. Maybe people haven't seen it in a couple years, but it's not uncommon. Guys used to do that all the time. He definitely set the bar for this year."

Gulp.

GM Brad Treliving, who has a track record of locking up his RFAs, has maintained confidence that Tkachuk's negotiations will have a happy ending.

"We'll get him signed. I don't know when that's going to be," Treliving said on Jan. 15. "But we'll work away at that quietly and I can tell you we'll let you know as soon as it's done, whenever that is."

Because Tkachuk and fellow RFAs Sam Bennett and David Rittich need significant raises, Treliving has been rumoured to be entertaining trade offers for James Neal, T.J. Brodie, Michael Frolik, and possibly Travis Hamonic.

RFAs Bennett, Rittich, plus AHLers Ryan Lomberg and Rinat Valiev all filed for arbitration, assuring new contracts.

With less than \$10 million in cap space, the crunch is being felt in Calgary... but that didn't keep Tkachuk from attending the Stampede.

#Flames GM Brad Treliving on contract negotiations with Matthew Tkachuk: "Saw Mathew was riding a horse (at the @calgarystampede parade) the other day... I was trying to run behind him."

— Kristen Anderson (@KdotAnderson) July 6, 2019

5. Brock Boeser

Age: 22

Position: Right wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$925,000

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: 2018 Calder Trophy runner-up. 2018 All-Star Game MVP. Lethal shot. Great chemistry with franchise centre Elias Pettersson. Class act. Back-to-back 26-goal seasons despite never reaching the 70-game mark. Registered career highs in assists (30) and points (56). That flow.

The latest: While GM Jim Benning was active in both the UFA and trade markets, Boeser's camp and the Canucks have at least opened extension talks, which is a positive sign. It remains a matter of closing the gap, which Sportsnet's Irfaan Gaffar reported was still a significant one as of late May.

If Boeser is able to avoid a bridge deal, he should become the highest-paid member of the team.

Gaffar suggests Benning would be more comfortable with a six-year term, which is what he gave Bo Horvat when he came out of his entry-level deal, than an eight-year pact.

"Bo took a huge step in his third year, and I think I can do the same," Boeser said.

Since embarking on another UFA spending spree — Tyler Myers, Michael Ferland, Jordie Benn — and bringing in J.T. Miller, Benning finds himself up against the cap. After the Roberto Luongo recapture penalty, he's left with just \$5 million in cap space to sign Boeser.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • July 17, 2019

Disgruntled veteran Loui Eriksson looks like he could be the odd man out.

Count me surprised the #Canucks would sign Ferland (4 years and 3.5 million) before they signed Boeser. They have till opening night to figure it all out but will Ferlund contract effect Boeser deal and what that will look like.

— Rick Dhaliwal (@DhaliwalSports) July 10, 2019

Polled 10 agents about what Brock Boeser contract could look like.

Long term – some said 6.5 to 7 million – some said 7-8 million

Bridge deal of 3 years – 5 million range

2 years – 4 to 4.5 million

— Rick Dhaliwal (@DhaliwalSports) April 10, 2019

6. Charlie McAvoy

Age: 21

Position: Defence

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$916,667

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: A beast who led all Bruins in average ice time, both in the regular season and playoffs. Added years to Zdeno Chara's NHL career. Led all Boston D-men in even-strength points and game-winning goals. Shutdown guy. 2018 All-Rookie Team. First-round pick. Right shot. A playoff stud who came within one win of getting his name on the Cup.

The latest: The Athletic's Fluto Shinzawa reported in February that McAvoy turned down a long-term extension offer, citing the eight-year, \$7.5-million AAV contract that Florida Panthers defenceman Aaron Ekblad inked in the summer of 2016.

McAvoy has outpaced Ekblad offensively and has performed better in his own end of late. A \$7.5-million cap hit — the ballpark agent Rick Curran is targeting — would make McAvoy the highest-paid player in Boston, ahead of David Krejci at \$7.25 million.

The Bruins' concern here is health: McAvoy has suffered heart and concussion issues and has yet to play more than 63 games in a season.

"The Bruins will try to dig in a little bit. They'll point to his games and they'll use [David] Pastrnak, who's a superstar. It'll be a tough deal to do, a tough deal to evaluate. It may end up that a solution is four years," an anonymous agent told Shinzawa.

In addition to McAvoy, Boston must also find raises for defenceman Brandon Carlo, who filed for arbitration. As of now, there is only \$8.1 million to accommodate both D for the upcoming season.

Since McAvoy is ineligible for an offer sheet, his only leverage is to withhold his services.

i just want the bruins to sign charlie mcavoy so i can start getting sleep again

— Sofia (@jakedebruhs) July 12, 2019

Charlie McAvoy on his future in Boston. He is an RFA this summer: "I want to be here forever. ... This is the best place on earth."

— Conor Ryan (@ConorRyan_93) June 14, 2019

Charlie McAvoy, Brandon Carlo and Marcus Johansson want to be back in Boston. David Backes' status is a little uncertain. The quartet spoke on media day on what lies ahead.
pic.twitter.com/GBTqsAl3N7

— Bruins Daily (@BruinsDaily) June 15, 2019

7. Jacob Trouba

Age: 25

Position: Defence

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$5.5 million

Arbitration rights: Yes, and he filed

Bargaining chips: Top-10 first-round pick. No one played more hockey for the Jets this season. Co-led team in shorthanded points. Key penalty killer. Career highs in assists (42) and points (50). A plus defender six years running despite drawing difficult assignments. One year away from unrestricted free agency.

The latest: The relationship between Trouba and Winnipeg was always a tenuous one, so his off-season trade to the New York Rangers came as little surprise.

Trouba asked to be traded out of Winnipeg prior to the 2016-17 season. As an RFA last summer, Trouba and Cheveldayoff endured a marathon arbitration, with Trouba seeking upwards of \$7 million per season. He's worth it now.

Trouba was awarded a one-year, \$5.5-million deal for 2018-19 and needs another raise. He filed for arbitration and is scheduled to have his case heard on July 25.

Trouba is thrilled to be in a city where his fiancée can pursue her dreams as well, and the Rangers arguably made the greatest splash this summer, adding big-time talents Kaapo Kakko (draft) and Panarin (free agency) up front in addition to trading for Trouba and NCAA stud Adam Fox.

8. Kyle Connor

Age on July 1: 22

Position: Left wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$925,000

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: Back-to-back 30-goal campaigns. First-round pick. Coming hot off career highs in goals (34), assists (32) and points (66). Bright spot (three goals, five points) in Jets' disappointing first-round exit. Can contribute to both special teams. Better two-way winger than fellow RFA Laine. Wonderful chemistry with Winnipeg's top players, Mark Scheifele and Blake Wheeler.

The latest: Now that Trouba and Kevin Hayes have been traded, the Jets only have 13 impending free agents to sort through. Godspeed, Kevin Cheveldayoff.

"It's not an easy time, so to speak, right now, to worry about anyone else but yourself. Everyone is just doing what they need to do within their own organizations," Cheveldayoff told the Winnipeg Free Press of the draft weekend's cost-cutting deals.

"Everyone has their own pressure points and jobs they need to do."

Connor, a relatively unsung star and the most complete young forward of the bunch, needs to stay put.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • July 17, 2019

Pierre LeBrun of The Athletic reported that rival clubs have reached out to Connor's camp, but that doesn't guarantee an offer sheet is forthcoming.

If Nikolaj Ehlers is worth \$6 mill, what's Kyle Connor worth? Better player #gojetsgo

— Andy Strickland (@andystrickland) May 3, 2019

9. Patrik Laine

Age on July 1: 21

Position: Right wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$925,000

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: Second-overall pick. Otherworldly shot. World junior champion. 2017 NHL all-star. Three consecutive 30-goal seasons. Showed well in post-season (three goals, five points in six games). Beauty quote.

The latest: "Not worried about that right now," Laine told reporters, regarding his next contract, at season's end. "Right now, I want to forget everything that is involved with hockey."

Laine revealed he suffered a minor groin injury in the playoffs and was dealing with back problems during a season in which his year-over-year production dropped from 70 points to 50.

He's flashy, he's streaky, and his defensive game is under question, but the man can score in bunches.

A shorter-term deal might serve the player here, because Laine is better than 2018-19 showed.

Laine opted to skip the world championships. He flew back to Finland to golf and spend time with family and friends.

There was some smoke around the notion that Montreal considered trading for or offer-sheeting Laine.

Multiple teams have considered pursuing Marner, including the NY Islanders & Montreal. Hearing Islanders are serious about pursuit, while Canadiens may be focused on Laine. Whether Isles, or another team, move forward with an offer sheet remains to be seen.

— David Pagnotta (@TheFourthPeriod) July 5, 2019

Still no talks yet between #gojetsgo and Patrik Laine

— Andy Strickland (@andystrickland) May 3, 2019

"It's still not written in stone that he is a big part of this future here on a long-term basis."

The #SigningSeason panel weighs in on what kind of contract we could see for Patrik Laine.

Have your say <https://t.co/ngME4iiKUB>
pic.twitter.com/BLVqQ7AWqR

— Sportsnet (@Sportsnet) July 1, 2019

10. Zachary Werenski

Age on July 1: 21

Position: Defence

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$925,000

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: Eighth-overall pick in 2015. Second only to all-star Seth Jones in Columbus ice time (22:54). Able to shutdown top forwards and contribute 40-plus points a season. Recorded a Gordie Howe hat trick in the second round of the playoffs. Only 21! Best years still ahead.

The latest: For all of the outgoing bodies this summer in Ohio, Werenski will not be one of them. He and Jones are a major reason the 2020 Blue Jackets won't suffer the drop-off you might think.

"I haven't thought about it, honestly," Werenski told reporters, following Columbus's ouster by the Bruins. "Obviously, that's something we're going to have to get done this summer. But I'm not worried about it at all. I guess it's something I'll have to start thinking about."

After losing a handful of stars to free agency and coming to terms with RFA defenceman Ryan Murray, GM Jarmo Kekalainen should have no issue finding the funds to give Werenski an appropriate raise.

One of the unwritten rules of playing the offer sheet game, is to make sure your own house is in order before you start looking through your neighbor's belongings. #CBJ still have D Zach Werenski as an unsigned RFA. Next year, Dubois will be RFA. And so on.

— Aaron Portzline (@Aportzline) July 12, 2019

11. David Rittich

Age on July 1: 26

Position: Goaltender

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$800,000

Arbitration rights: Yes, and he filed

Bargaining chips: Undrafted, late-blooming gem. Career-high 42 starts, 45 appearances, 27 wins, and .911 save percentage. Fun-loving team guy adored by teammates.

The latest: Big Save Dave has a golden opportunity to become the Flames' undisputed No. 1 goalie next season, considering veteran Mike Smith — who performed well but went 1-4 in the playoffs — is off to Edmonton while a struggling Cam Talbot joins Calgary as Plan B.

"Ritter is an unbelievable kid with a bright future," said coach Bill Peters, following exit meetings. "There are things he can do to allow himself to be able to play more games, too, as far as his ability to look after himself with nutrition, with everything that goes along with that, to make a real solid commitment to being a pro, a big-time NHL pro. And he's going to do that."

"He has a lot of confidence in himself, and that's earned. I thought he had a very good year. This is the most he's played in the NHL was this year, and he's looking to take that next step too."

The giant organizational debate here: Can Rittich handle a full NHL workload and return the Flames to the post-season?

"I think he has the ability to do that, yeah," Peters said. "But until you've done it and been there, everyone is going to question it, right?"

That Rittich filed for arbitration ensures at least a bridge deal will be reached and he'll be in attendance for Day 1 of training camp.

That Cup-winning RFA Jordan Binnington signed for a reasonable two years at \$4.4 million per season with the Blues should help keep Rittich's payday in check.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • July 17, 2019

Four members of the #Flames have filed for salary arbitration: David Rittich, Sam Bennett, Ryan Lomberg, and Rinat Valiev.

With players filing for arb, Calgary is now eligible for the NHL's second buyout window in August.

— Pat Steinberg (@Fan960Steinberg) July 5, 2019

12. Travis Konecny

Age: 22

Position: Right wing / Left wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$894,167

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: First-round pick. World championships silver medalist. Increased production with every NHL season. Back-to-back 20-goal man. Career-best 24 goals and 49 points (plus career-low 40 penalty minutes) in 2018-19.

A late-round steal in 2017, Konecny has been a wonderful addition to the Flyers, and now it's time to pay him. The retooling Flyers must also find the dollars to award raises to forward Scott Laughton and defenceman Ivan Provorov this summer.

Serious extension talks with Konecny's camp reportedly did not begin until after GM Chuck Fletcher made a couple off-season trades and explored the UFA market.

Philly has started contract talks with RFAs Travis Konecny & Scott Laughton. Nothing close yet, but they literally just got started on talks.

— David Pagnotta (@TheFourthPeriod) July 3, 2019

13. Jakub Vrana

Age: 23

Position: Left wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$863,333

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: First-round pick. Improved production and worth with each NHL season. Career-high 24 goals, 47 points and 82 games played in 2018-19. Stanley Cup champion. Czech national team regular.

The latest: Vrana followed up his Cup party by enjoying a breakout season in Washington and surpassing Andre Burakovsky as the club's youngish European winger on the rise.

It's pay bump time.

On July 1, Capitals GM Brian MacLellan said he's in "ongoing discussions" with Vrana's representatives and must be cognizant of how tight Washington is to the cap ceiling.

The Caps have just \$4.3 million in projected space, with Christian Djoo and Chandler Stephenson also in need of contracts.

GMBM noted there may be some creative avenues to free up cap space. Washington also now has two of the biggest pending UFAs of 2020, Braden Holtby and Nicklas Backstrom, free to ink long-term extensions at any point.

Toronto's contract for RFA Alex Kerfoot (four years, \$14 million total) could serve as a comparable here.

Next up for #Caps is getting a deal done with Jakub Vrana. Per @CapFriendly they only have \$4.285 million left in cap space.

Brian MacLellan was asked for an update & whether he was concerned about a potential offer sheet from another team. pic.twitter.com/lm8dqRnvP1

— Rob Carlin (@RobCarlinNBCS) July 2, 2019

14. Pavel Buchnevich

Age: 24

Position: Right wing / Left wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$925,000

Arbitration rights: Yes, and he filed

Bargaining chips: Young scorer on a team that needs them. Despite being relatively new to the NHL, he's entering his eighth year as a pro (KHL). Coming off career-best 21-goal season. Good for 40-plus points if healthy.

The latest: The cap flexibly Jeff Gorton granted himself is suddenly drying up in the wake of landing this summer's greatest UFA prize, Artemi Panarin.

While Jacob Trouba is now the top signing priority, RFAs Buchnevich, Brendan Lemieux and Anthony Deangelo also need deals. The Blueshirts have only a shade over \$8 million in cap space to work with, so with a second buyout window coming, an expensive defenceman like Brendan Smith or Kevin Shattenkirk could be at risk.

There is also the possibility of trading a winger like Chris Kreider (UFA 2020) or Buchnevich himself.

Buchnevich's arbitration is set to be heard July 29.

Arbitration-eligible RFAs can file for arbitration today. NHL will announce the names of players who have filed at 5 p.m. Pavel Buchnevich has filed. He had a career high 21 goals in 2018-19, in 64 games. This means the Rangers will be able to open a second buyout window.

— Colin Stephenson (@ColinAS Steph) July 5, 2019

15. Nikita Gusev

Age: 27

Position: Left wing

2018-19 salary cap hit: \$925,000

Arbitration rights: No

Bargaining chips: Posted league and career high of 82 points during his 2018-19 KHL campaign. 2018 Olympic gold medalist. Nine seasons of professional experience. Ranked 10th all-time in KHL scoring (332 points). Elite playmaker. Better than a point-per-game in 2019 KHL post-season. Did not make noise about being scratched in NHL playoffs.

The latest: The Golden Knights, who acquired Gusev's North American rights from Tampa during the expansion draft, are in cap hell and may need to shed some salary if they are to sign Gusev — the most dominant offensive player in the KHL last season.

In the middle of their first-round playoff series against San Jose, the Knights signed Gusev to an entry-level contract, making him a restricted free agent this summer. But they elected not to dress the Russian star.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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"You don't know what transpires in the playoffs. We have some real good depth. Never had a problem having too many good players around," president George McPhee said in April.

According to The Athletic, Vegas and Gusev are as far as \$2 million apart in negotiations. The winger, whose contract with SKA has expired, is said to be looking for \$4 million per season on a two-year commitment.

A trade is possible if the sides can't bridge the gap.

"We think he's a really good player. We'd like to work something out here," McPhee said on July 1. "If that doesn't work out, we'll look at options. But there's definitely interest in him. We've had people call us on him, and we'll see what develops. I can't tell you today what will develop, but we'll work on it.

"He's been very, very good on the international stage. He wants to play in the NHL. He worked hard to get over here, and we're going to accommodate him one way or another, either here or with another club."

A player who has been terrific everywhere he's played. Gave up bonuses to come to Vegas. Didn't get to play in the playoffs and didn't say a word. Said amazing things about the city and the fan base. And a guy who is looking for a fair contract. That's who Nikita Gusev is so far.

— SinBin.vegas (@SinBinVegas) July 7, 2019

More notable RFAs: Kevin Fiala, Ivan Provorov, Anthony Beauvillier, Brandon Carlo, J.T. Compher, Colin White, Sam Bennett, Pavel Zacha, Andrew Copp, Linus Ullmark, Joel Edmundson, Will Butcher, Colton Sissons, Ryan Donato, Jake McCabe, Brock McGinn, Charles Hudon, Colton Sissons, Connor Carrick, Zach Aston-Reese, Oskar Sundqvist, Neal Pionk

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USA TODAY / Philadelphia bar seeks payment from St. Louis Blues' 'Play Gloria' craze during Stanley Cup run

Scott Gleeson, USA TODAY Published 11:54 a.m. ET July 16, 2019 | Updated 12:07 p.m. ET July 16, 2019

The Philadelphia bar that inspired the St. Louis Blues' "Gloria" fad is seeking money from the items — T-shirts, hats and other small merchandise — that were sold inside and outside of Enterprise Center during the team's run to its first Stanley Cup.

Attorney Rob McKinley, who represents The Jacks NYB, told USA TODAY Sports that the Blues' postgame victory song, Laura Branigan's 1982 disco classic "Gloria," was only part of the equation.

The fanbase's rallying cry, "Play Gloria!" began at The Jacks NYB, and as such, McKinley said that idea comes with a price for others making a profit off it.

"The bottom line is they created this brand and supported the St. Louis Blues and their fans on the Stanley Cup run," McKinley said Tuesday. "Other people are capitalizing off something of value they created. If you created the Nike swoosh and Nike comes over and says, 'That's a great idea we're going to take that and use it,

promote millions of dollars and goods ... but you get nothing,' that's unfair.

"It's not about the T-shirt, it's about what's on it. Common sense shows the answer is to pay for the idea. People are sometimes fortunate with ideas that become profitable every day. It's about making a fair deal after that."

GOT JOKES: Tiger jokes Koepka hasn't been so helpful for British Open prep

SHAQ LOSES BET: But will he now kiss Steve Kerr's feet (with cheese)?

St. Louis Blues left wing Pat Maroon (7) shares the Stanley Cup with the fans during the Stanley Cup championship parade and rally at the Gateway Arch.

ESPN.com was the first to report the news.

Blues team members were inspired to adopt the song after watching the Eagles' NFC wild-card game against the Chicago Bears on Jan. 6 at The Jacks NYB. "Right there we decided we should play the song after our wins," defenseman Joel Edmundson said on the team's website back in February.

The Jacks NYB filed a trademark application May 8 with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for "Play Gloria" that covered usage on T-shirts. The bar filed a second application for "Play Gloria!" on June 1 that covered an assortment of items from hats and shirts to blankets and beverage cans.

McKinley said that the conversations The Jacks NYB has had with the Blues have been cordial, with no likelihood of a lawsuit. The bar put out a statement on Facebook on Friday denying a report that said it threatened to sue the Blues. It sent cease-and-desist letters to smaller companies like Arch Apparel, who continues to use "Play Gloria!" for profit.

"Anheuser-Busch and the St. Louis Blues, they don't use 'Play Gloria!' because they understand how this works, they're sophisticated companies," McKinley said. "It's some of the smaller companies that are making enormous profits."

McKinley added: "Right now, (The Jacks NYB) is talking to many companies to partner with them to use the trademark." McKinley did not disclose which companies those were because the deals are remaining confidential until they are finalized.

The Blues were selling "Play Gloria" shirts in their arena store during the playoffs, but as of Friday the team only sold shirts that read "Gloria Gloria" for sale on their online store.

Messages from USA TODAY Sports to the Blues organization were not immediately returned.

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