



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • July 18, 2018

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Hurricanes hire Chynoweth as assistant coach

By Chip Alexander

July 17, 2018 03:55 PM

The Carolina Hurricanes on Tuesday announced that Dean Chynoweth would join the coaching staff as an assistant, replacing Steve Smith.

Chynoweth, 49, was an assistant coach with the New York Islanders for three seasons, from 2009-12. Last season, he served as associate coach with the Vancouver Giants of the Western Hockey League.

Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour hired Jeff Daniels as an assistant and now has added Chynoweth to complete his staff. Smith, who coached the defense and penalty kill for the

past four seasons under former head coach Bill Peters, resigned July 9 and joined the Buffalo Sabres staff.

Chynoweth was head coach of the Colorado Avalanche's American Hockey League affiliates in Cleveland and San Antonio from 2012 to 2016.

The Calgary native is a former Islanders first-round draft pick, playing 241 career games with the Isles and Boston Bruins. He also played 249 American Hockey League games.

"Dean brings a great deal of experience as both a player and a coach to the organization," Canes general manager Don Waddell said in a statement. "His knowledge of the game and attitude will be assets for our players."



Chynoweth hired as Hurricanes assistant coach

Former NHLer and longtime coach replaces Steve Smith

[July 17, 2018 Cory Lavalette](#)

RALEIGH — New Carolina Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour rounded out his coaching staff Tuesday, hiring Dean Chynoweth as an assistant coach, the team announced in a press release. Chynoweth, 49, was an associate coach with the Western Hockey League's Vancouver Giants last season.

Chynoweth takes the place of Steve Smith, who handled the team's defense and penalty kill the past four seasons but resigned on July 9, later taking an assistant coaching job with the Buffalo Sabres. Jeff Daniels, who was an assistant on the Hurricanes' 2006 Stanley Cup team and served several roles in the organization since, was named Brind'Amour's other assistant earlier in the offseason.

"Dean brings a great deal of experience as both a player and a coach to the organization," Hurricanes general manager Don Waddell said in a statement. "His knowledge of the game and attitude will be assets for our players."

Chynoweth, a native of Calgary, Alberta, was the 13th overall pick in 1987 NHL Entry Draft by the New York Islanders and played defense for parts of nine seasons with the Islanders

and Boston Bruins, totaling 241 regular season games from the 1988-89 season until 1997-98.

When his playing career was over, Chynoweth immediately went into coaching, serving as an assistant with the IHL's Utah Grizzlies from 1998-2000 before he was named head coach of the WHL's Seattle Thunderbirds.

Chynoweth coached four seasons in Seattle and then went to the Swift Current Broncos, coaching that WHL team for five seasons.

In 2009, he joined Scott Gordon's staff with the New York Islanders, serving as an assistant for one season under Gordon and two more under his replacement, Jack Capuano.

After he was let go by the Islanders in 2012, Chynoweth became coach of the Colorado Avalanche's AHL affiliate, the Lake Erie Monsters, and after three years moved to the Avs' new affiliate in San Antonio for the 2015-16 season. He was fired after missing the postseason in all four seasons coaching Colorado's top affiliate.

Chynoweth is the son of Hockey Hall of Famer Ed Chynoweth, who was president of the WHL for more than two decades and helped form the Canadian Hockey League, serving as its president from 1975-95. In 2007, the WHL



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championship trophy was renamed the Ed Chynoweth Cup, and the Ed Chynoweth Trophy is awarded annually to the top scorer in the CHL's Memorial Cup. The elder Chynoweth died in 2008 of kidney cancer at age 66.

Jeff Chenoweth, Dean's brother and Ed's son, is general manager of the WHL's Calgary Hitmen.



Martinook Gets Taste of Raleigh

Martinook scouts place to live, meets with Brind'Amour in visit to Raleigh

by Michael Smith

July 17th, 2018

[Jordan Martinook](#) could probably count on one hand the number of times he had been to Raleigh, but later this summer, he'll come to call it home.

Already on the East Coast for a wedding, Martinook and his wife, Courtney, dropped by the City of Oaks over the weekend to scout out a place to live and get acclimated to their new surroundings.

Finding a place to live, somewhere that can also accommodate Gus, the French bulldog? Check.

"That's a bit of a relief. We don't have to worry too much when we arrive," he said. "We can have everything situated and show up, and then I just have to worry about the hockey part."

In a move across the country, the first big sojourn Martinook has made in his NHL career, peace of mind was important.

"It makes it easier on me and my wife, too. This is the first time she's really ever done this," he said. "The stress of moving to a whole new place - at least I have the guys, but she doesn't really have anyone until she meets the other wives and girlfriends. To be able to have a place to go and start calling home is something we're excited about."

Getting a feel for Raleigh? Check.

"It was really cool. We went downtown on Sunday. A lot of the restaurants are local. Really cool," Martinook said. "We got a really good vibe from the city. Everybody we met was super nice. We got a really good feeling about the city."

Hopping on an electric scooter downtown? Well, almost.

"People were scootering around," he said. "We were planning on doing that, but it was a little toasty on Sunday."

Tasting some local flavors, specifically the mac and cheese at Poole's Diner? Check, of course.

"We had to have it," he said. "That's what they're known for."

Meeting head coach Rod Brind'Amour? Check.

"We got to get to know each other a little bit. He met with me and my wife. It was awesome to hear his side of what he thinks of the city," Martinook said. "He's been here a long time and married someone from here, so to hear his perspective on the city and his idea of how our team is going to play and how it's going to shape out is nice to have going into camp."

Martinook formed some initial impressions of the first-year head coach after a conversation over coffee.

"He likes the gym," Martinook laughed. "First impressions were that he's a really nice guy, really down to earth. I feel like he's a good communicator, too, which is always good to have in a coach. Just the way he was very personable with me and my wife was awesome to see."

Excitement for the moves the team has made in the offseason? Check plus.

"It's definitely looking really good," he said. "You look at the defense, and it's crazy to see how that's shaping out."

Having played in the Western Conference since 2014, Martinook is no stranger to squaring off against [Dougie Hamilton](#) and [Micheal Ferland](#).

"I've competed with Dougie a lot over the last couple of years. To see the type of player he is and see the caliber he plays at, that's something you always want on your team," he said. "Ferland, I've played against him since junior, and I know exactly what he brings to the table. The toughness, that little added muscle. That's another type of player you want on your team."

Ready for October? Check. Emphasis. Exclamation point.

"It's what Rod was saying: Excitement in the city is ramping up, which is good to see," he said. "It's really exciting."



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Carolina Hurricanes hire Dean Chynoweth as assistant coach

Chynoweth will fill the role that was left vacant after Steve Smith's departure.

By [Justin Lape@LankyLape](#) Jul 17, 2018, 3:43pm EDT

The [Carolina Hurricanes](#) have announced they have hired Dean Chynoweth to be their next assistant coach. Chynoweth will fill a gap in Rod Brind'Amour's coaching roster after Steve Smith departed for the [Buffalo Sabres](#).

Chynoweth served as an assistant coach with the [New York Islanders](#) from 2009-2012, his only coaching experience at the NHL level. He most recently was an assistant coach with the Vancouver Giants, helping lead the team to a WHL playoff berth. Before that, he coached the AHL affiliates of the [Colorado Avalanche](#) in Cleveland and San Antonio for four seasons.

It is unclear what Chynoweth's role will be but it is presumed he will fill Smith's role, presiding over the defense and penalty kill. The release from the team is below.

CANES HIRE DEAN CHYNOWETH AS ASSISTANT COACH

Don Waddell, President and General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today

announced that the team has hired Dean Chynoweth to serve as assistant coach.

"Dean brings a great deal of experience as both a player and a coach to the organization," said Waddell. "His knowledge of the game and attitude will be assets for our players."

Chynoweth, 49, served as an assistant coach with the New York Islanders for three seasons from 2009-12. Last season, he served as associate coach with the Vancouver Giants of the Western Hockey League (WHL). Chynoweth helped lead the Giants to a 36-27-6-3 record and a berth in the WHL playoffs. Prior to joining the Giants, Chynoweth served as head coach of the Colorado Avalanche's American Hockey League (AHL) affiliates in Cleveland and San Antonio for four seasons (2012-16). He has also served as head coach of the WHL's Seattle Thunderbirds (2000-04) and Swift Current Broncos (2004-09).

The Calgary native was drafted by the New York Islanders in the first round, 13th overall, in the 1987 [NHL Draft](#). Chynoweth recorded 22 points (4g, 18a) in 241 career NHL games with the NY Islanders and Boston. He also appeared in 209 AHL games with Springfield, Capital District and Providence, earning 40 points (10g, 30a).

The Hockey News

Five starting netminders primed to bounce back next season

By: [Jared Clinton](#)

July 17, 2018

Not even Carey Price could buck the bad season that plagued the Canadiens in 2017-18, but he heads the class of potential bounce back keepers as he seeks to find his form and right the ship in Montreal.

In the span of one season, Winnipeg went from needing Steve Mason-shaped safety net behind presumptive crease heir Connor Hellebuyck to inking the 25-year-old netminder to a six-year, \$37-million pact on the heels of a campaign in which he led the Jets to the Western Conference final, set the franchise win record and finished second in Vezina Trophy voting. Year over year, it was almost inarguably the greatest single-season turnaround a goaltender saw during the past campaign.

Not every netminder fared the same, though. For a few, one bad year was all it took for them to be left looking for work elsewhere. Take Robin Lehner, who now finds himself as the No. 1 for the New York Islanders. He was once the future in the Buffalo Sabres' crease but was jettisoned as a restricted

free agent. The same goes for Petr Mrazek, who went from heir apparent to the Detroit Red Wings' starting gig only to be exposed at the expansion draft and eventually shipped off at the deadline before landing as a free agent with the Carolina Hurricanes. Similar fates befell Jaroslav Halak, Chad Johnson, Kari Lehtonen and others.

For several other keepers, though, last season's poor performance is one that they are primed to erase from the collective conscience with a bounce back season in 2018-19. From all-world goaltenders to last-chance starters, here are five netminders in position to rebound this coming campaign:

CAREY PRICE, MONTREAL CANADIENS

Given his track record, no netminder had a more bizarre statistical campaign than Price. Heading into last season, Price had a career .920 save percentage, 2.40 goals-against average and was only two seasons removed from winning the Vezina, Hart Trophy and Ted Lindsay Award. He had been remarkable, almost unbeatable, for the past four seasons and had earned himself an eight-year extension ahead of the campaign worth \$10.5 million per season. So, to see him struggle the way he did last season verged on



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mind-blowing. Price finished the campaign with a career-worst .900 SP and 3.11 GAA and his 43.8 quality start percentage — starts in which he posted a SP higher than the league average — was 10 percent worse than any other season of his career.

This is Carey Price we're talking about, though, and nothing about his body of work suggests last season's performance is going to continue. He has a career .929 SP at 5-on-5, which is the best mark of any starting goaltender over the past 11 seasons. He has a career quality start percentage of nearly 58 percent. And he's only one season removed from finishing third in Vezina voting. If any goaltender is a lock to put a bad season behind them, it's Price.

BRIAN ELLIOTT, PHILADELPHIA FLYERS

You have to feel for Elliott. Stuck as a split-time starter during his time with the St. Louis Blues, he's finally earned his chance at a No. 1 gig over the past two seasons only for it to go sideways on him. He flamed out in spectacular and heart-breaking fashion in Calgary and followed that up by getting rocked in his first campaign as a Flyer before suffering similar fortunes in the playoffs. But not all is lost.

Last season, 36 netminders played at least 1,500 5-on-5 minutes, including Elliott. And of those netminders, there are only 10 who finished with a better 5-on-5 SP than Elliott's .931 mark. If that's limited further to 2,000-minute netminders, only six goaltenders were better than Elliott. He was excellent when the Flyers kept out of the box. The issue, of course, is that when Philadelphia was shorthanded, Elliott was atrocious posting a .816 SP, the worst among netminders to play 150-plus minutes on the kill.

The good news is there's absolutely no reason to believe that poor shorthanded play will continue to haunt Elliott. He had a career .882 SP shorthanded coming into the past season, the seventh-best mark among 47 goaltenders with 1,000 penalty kill minutes since the start of the 2007-08 campaign. He's been top quality on the PK, and if he improves there, he should shore up the Flyers' crease in a hurry.

MATT MURRAY, PITTSBURGH PENGUINS

Who picked Murray among potential top-five Vezina Trophy finalists prior to last season? Come on, you can safely admit it. It wasn't a foolish choice given Murray was fresh off of posting a .923 SP, 2.41 GAA and four shutouts in 49 games of split-time duty in the Penguins' crease. And with the reins all to himself with Marc-Andre Fleury off to the Vegas Golden Knights in the expansion draft, there was seemingly not all that much standing between Murray and a challenge for top goaltender honors.

Unfortunately, however, the one thing that ended up killing his candidacy for the Vezina was his own mediocre play. Murray wasn't outright bad, but he wasn't altogether good, either. Only 19 of his 45 starts qualified as quality starts as his overall SP dipped by 16 points and his GAA rose by more than half a goal.

Murray's track record suggests that's an aberration, however. This past campaign was the first time since his penultimate major junior campaign in 2012-13 that Murray posted a sub-.920 SP across a 10-plus game span at any level or any competition. All of his longer term OHL, AHL and NHL performances have seen him play as one of the top netminders. Chances are that will continue when the 2018-19 season rolls around.

JAKE ALLEN, ST. LOUIS BLUES

It wouldn't seem it, given the Blues finished with seventh-fewest goals against last season, but their goaltending was somewhat of an Achilles heel last season. Sure, Allen turned in an above-.500 record at 27-25-3, but in his second season with the reins as St. Louis' starter, Allen's SP dipped to .906 while his GAA rose to 2.75. It's not as though there was a sizeable swing in the way the team played in front of Allen, either. In fact, the underlying numbers stayed largely the same from 2016-17 to 2017-18. Allen's inability to shoulder the load, though, vaulted Carter Hutton into a larger share of the starts than the year prior and it was his play, not Allen's, that truly resulted in St. Louis' favorable goals-against total.

So, why does Allen recover? Well, his track record suggests he's much better than what he showed last season. More than that, though, it's the fact that his biggest downfall came not at even strength but on the penalty kill. His .834 SP with the Blues shorthanded was 30 points worse than his previous career low. So, despite actually posting a better even strength SP than the year prior, Allen's overall numbers suffered. With a stronger kill in front of him, Allen should be much improved.

SCOTT DARLING, CAROLINA HURRICANES

A conventional bounce back campaign, one in which a netminder improves his SP by several points, would still leave Darling at the back of the pack when it comes to starting netminders. His first campaign as a Hurricane was atrocious. Suiing up in 43 games, Darling posted an .888 SP, 3.18 goals-against average and he had only 14 starts all season where he posted a single-game SP higher than the overall league average. Considering the amount of action he saw, his career rate suggested he should have had twice as many outings in which he proved himself a capable No. 1.

But Darling might have the easiest case for a bounce back year. Everything around the netminder seems to be in place. Carolina made a move to improve their defense corps by acquiring Dougie Hamilton and now boast one of the best bluelines in the NHL. Their forward group, while not top-tier, is responsible at both ends of the ice and has proven as such over the past few seasons. And Darling is going to have all the support he needs from the organization. They may have flirted with the idea of moving the netminder, but the Hurricanes are behind Darling and believe he can turn it around. He seems a safe bet given his career .923 SP before landing in Carolina would suggest he's got much more promise than he's shown thus far.



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Carolina hires ex-NHL player Chynoweth as assistant coach

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — The Carolina Hurricanes have hired former NHL player Dean Chynoweth as an assistant coach.

General manager Don Waddell announced the hiring Tuesday, saying the former New York Islanders assistant brings “a great deal of experience as both a player and a coach to the organization.”

The 49-year-old Chynoweth replaces Steve Smith, who resigned last week and joined the Buffalo Sabres’ coaching staff.

Chynoweth played 241 career games with the Islanders and Boston, and was on the Islanders’ staff from 2009-12. He was an associate coach with Vancouver of the Western Hockey League last season and has also coached AHL teams in Cleveland and San Antonio.



Hurricanes hire Chynoweth as assistant coach

Staff Report

Former Carolina Hurricanes assistant coach Rod Brind'Amour is introduced as head coach by owner Tom Dundon and President and General Manager Don Waddell on May 9 at PNC Arena. Brind'Amour was the captain on the 2006 Stanley Cup champion team and served as assistant coach for seven seasons before being promoted by Hurricanes management.

The Carolina Hurricanes have filled the vacancy on head coach Rod Brind'Amour's staff created by Steve Smith's recent resignation. General manager Don Waddell announced Wednesday that the team has hired Dean Chynoweth as assistant coach.

Chynoweth spent the last three years as associate coach of the WHL's Vancouver Giants, who went 36-27-6-3 in that span. Before that, he spent four seasons as an AHL head coach in Cleveland and San Antonio, and three as an assistant coach for the New York Islanders.

“Dean brings a great deal of experience as both a player and a coach to the organization,” Waddell said in the team's official release. “His knowledge of the game and attitude will be assets for our players.”

In 241 games as an NHL player, Chynoweth put up four goals and 22 points.

TODAY'S LINKS

- <https://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/canes-now/article215042665.html>
- <http://nsjonline.com/article/2018/07/chynoweth-hired-as-hurricanes-assistant-coach/>
- <https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/jordan-martinook-gets-taste-of-raleigh/c-299508602>
- <https://www.canescountry.com/2018/7/17/17582998/carolina-hurricanes-hire-dean-chynoweth-as-assistant-coach>
- <https://thehockeynews.com/news/article/five-starting-netminders-primed-to-bounce-back-next-season>
- <https://apnews.com/edc934c051ad4f269024e418ce9882c3/Carolina-hires-ex-NHL-player-Chynoweth-as-assistant-coach>
- http://www.technicianonline.com/sports/article_73073bb0-89fd-11e8-bec0-ebca7fc3e146.html



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SportScan

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

1102142 Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes hire Chynoweth as assistant coach

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

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Chynoweth, 49, was an assistant coach with the New York Islanders for three seasons, from 2009-12. Last season, he served as associate coach with the Vancouver Giants of the Western Hockey League.

Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour hired Jeff Daniels as an assistant and now has added Chynoweth to complete his staff. Smith, who coached the defense and penalty kill for the past four seasons under former head coach Bill Peters, resigned July 9 and joined the Buffalo Sabres staff.

Chynoweth was head coach of the Colorado Avalanche's American Hockey League affiliates in Cleveland and San Antonio from 2012 to 2016.

The Calgary native is a former Islanders first-round draft pick, playing 241 career games with the Isles and Boston Bruins. He also played 249 American Hockey League games.

"Dean brings a great deal of experience as both a player and a coach to the organization," Canes general manager Don Waddell said in a statement. "His knowledge of the game and attitude will be assets for our players."

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1102143 Carolina Hurricanes

How Canes' Martin Necas went from a little guy to a full-sized NHL-ready player

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

Milos Peca says he was first contacted about two years ago by Martin Necas, who had a simple request: help make him bigger and stronger.

More so, help him become a bigger, stronger hockey player.

"At the time he was about 175 centimeters tall and his weight only 62 kilograms," Peca says.

In other words, about 5 feet 7 and one-half inches, and about 137 pounds. A little guy, a kid, a lanky teenager.

Two years later, Necas is 6 feet 2 and 189 pounds. A first-round draft pick of the Carolina Hurricanes in 2017, the 19-year-old center from the Czech Republic reported to the team's recent prospect development camp in Raleigh looking the part of an NHL player in the making.

Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour says the difference with Necas is "like night and day" from a year ago. Most expect Necas to make the Canes' roster and stick with the team this season, giving them more offensive creativity -- something in short supply the past few years -- and speed in the lineup.

In an interview with The News & Observer, Peca, a strength and conditioning coach based in Liberec, Czech Republic, described Necas' physical transformation under his watch.

Getting started

Peca says his relationship with Necas began simply enough -- Necas reaching out to him on Facebook.

Carolina Hurricanes forward Martin Necas, left, and strength and conditioning trainer Milos Peca

"He wanted to gain more muscle mass, physical strength and better physical condition in general," Peca says. "In the beginning our work together was rather chaotic as Martin played in Kometa Brno, while I was working in Liberec, which was 320 kilometers away."

That's about a 400-mile round trip, but Necas was willing to make it three times a week during the first three months of Brno's season.

"Martin's determination to travel across the republic to practice with me was admirable in this respect," Peca says. "Kometa's owner, Libor Zabransky, however, came up with the offer that I could work in Kometa and so have Martin under my supervision every day."

Smartly adding muscle

The physical gains quickly began to come. For Necas, the willingness to work as hard off the ice as on it was there -- or what Peca describes as Necas' "goal-directed and meaningful cooperation."

"He came to understand the importance of the off-ice workouts as well as nutrition, and based on that he managed to gain 24 kilograms (53 pounds) of muscles and grew up by almost 13 centimeters (5 inches)," Peca says. "His body-fat percentage has been constantly oscillating between seven and 10 percent over the past two years."

As Necas puts it, "I've gained some kilos and maybe I grew up a little bit. I've tried to work hard on getting stronger."

Athletes often call it adding "man muscle." But Peca says Necas didn't just throw himself blindly into his daily routine. He wanted an understanding of what was being achieved.

"Martin is very perceptive person," Peca says. "Not only that he is incredibly talented and has excellent skating and sense for the game, he is also naturally intelligent."



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"In the past two years he comprehended how the human body works from the biochemical, anatomical and physiological points of view, as well as the function of muscles, digestion or the human brain."

Peca says Necas learned when and what to eat -- breakfast, snacks, lunch and dinner. He became a calorie counter.

"What kind of food to eat on game days, on days of strength training or on days aimed at regeneration," Peca says. "And also which supplements are suitable for muscle gain and which are good before and after practice."

"Martin also realized how important is proper sleep and good timing of all recovery procedures, such as sauna, cryotherapy, massage."

Setting goals

Peca, who has worked with professional athletes the past 17 years, says Necas was given a two-year macrocycle, a systematic training plan aimed at gaining muscle mass and increasing his weight to 90 kilograms (198 pounds), saying the workout gym became Necas' "second home."

"I often had to lock the gym so that he would go home," Peca says.

At 6-2, Necas believes his ideal weight for the NHL should be between 190 and 200 pounds.

"Because of the fact that in the past two years he has been working really hard and respected his training plan, he almost reached that goal," Peca says.

A good example, Peca says, of Necas' increased strength would be the deep squat. Peca says two years ago Necas was squatting about 155 pounds. Now, his personal best is about 285.

Peca says the two planned to work together for eight weeks this summer, with a focus on Necas' back hypertrophy, chest, shoulders and arms, saying that's "where he has currently the biggest deficit." His biggest lower-body weakness? His hamstrings, Peca says.

Necas, the 12th overall pick of the 2017 NHL draft, made his NHL debut for the Canes early last season but played just one game before going back to Brno. Back to Peca.

There's more work to be done and Necas says it's not always fun, but Peca is proud of his student and of the progress he has made.

"I believe that this season Martin will be more than 100 percent ready for the NHL," Peca says.

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1102186 Websites

The Athletic / Ray Emery was a complex man who showed friends a different side than the world expected

By Scott Burnside

Jul 17, 2018 22

Sometimes Ray Emery would remind his longtime friend and goaltending coach Eli Wilson that hockey was a game he played, not something that defined him.

Had he been wired differently, who knows what someone with Emery's drive and will might have accomplished in the sport.

But if he'd been wired differently, for better or worse, he wouldn't have been Ray Emery.

"I think he was probably the most misunderstood player, from the outside, that you could ever come across," Wilson said a day after Emery's body was pulled from Hamilton Harbour. An autopsy confirmed that the 35-year-old drowned after going into the water near the Royal Hamilton Yacht Club.

"I think that hockey wasn't his No. 1 priority, it was life, it was people, it was family," Wilson said.

"He knew hockey was more than just wins and losses and stats. That's one thing that he valued, the group, the team a lot more than some people."

What is the measure of a man too soon departed, a man often misunderstood or judged by actions that took place more than a decade ago? What is the measure of a man who was in some ways an outlier in a sport that craves and often rewards conformity?

"It hasn't set in that he's gone," said Wilson, who worked with Emery for years at his camps in Western Canada, was the goaltending coach during Emery's tumultuous time with the Senators and was a key part of the team that helped Emery defy medical experts who said he'd never play again after being diagnosed with avascular necrosis in his right hip.

"It's too young for him to be gone," said an emotional Jeff Reese, who was the Flyers goaltending coach during Emery's two stints in Philadelphia. "Too young."

Reese watched the Images of Emery on television that accompanied news of his death, Images of him battling fellow goaltenders Martin Biron, Braden Holtby or Buffalo tough guy Andrew Peters, or holding the Stanley Cup over his head following Chicago's Cup win in 2013. It was a reminder that Emery's path was never an easy one.

"He wasn't a first-round pick or anything. He always had to battle and fight his way through," Reese said. "Nothing was ever given to Ray Emery."

If there is a moment that helps to crystallize what Emery meant to people and by extension what his passing means it's the visceral reaction from so many to the news of Emery's death.

When asked to talk about the loss of his friend an colleague, Wilson responded within a matter of minutes even though just days before his fiancé died suddenly.

That is the measure of a friendship, the measure of respect and love for a friend and colleague.

Another longtime friend and teammate texted back to a similar request: "I'm not ready to talk yet, I love that guy and need some time."

Brian McGrattan, likewise, felt too overcome to talk about his friend and former teammate.

McGrattan serves as a player assistance coach with the Calgary Flames. It's an important role born of McGrattan's long, often difficult journey as a professional hockey player.

At one point, he and Emery engaged in an epic battle at practice as teammates with the Senators. Not long after that, defenseman Mike Commodore joined the Senators and found himself sitting in the locker room between Emery and McGrattan.

"And I thought, 'oh, this should be interesting,'" Commodore recalled. "And I ended up sitting there and honestly, I can't say enough about Ray and about Brian."



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Based on the reports that were coming out of Ottawa at the time, Commodore expected "something different," not like the Ray Emery he came to know in his short time as a Senator.

"But I didn't know him," Commodore said. "But he was great. He was great."

Veteran defenseman Kimmo Timonen took time out of his family vacation in Venice to pen a heartfelt note on what it meant to play with Emery.

"He was such a good teammate. In my mind one of the best," Timonen wrote. "I sat next to him in the locker room the time he was with Flyers. As a goalie he was loud and very positive on the ice all the time. I remember many times that he stopped me when I was going to the bench and he said awesome play buddy. Not many people do that middle of the game.

"He saved my ass many times when I screw up with the puck hahahah. Off the ice we spent lots of times together on the road. So many laughs together and lots of great dinners. He was always smiling so it was easy to be with him."

Let's be clear, this isn't a story about a person whose past is burnished to a shine that redefines history, puts a lie to the reality of what the person was after their death. That happens sometimes. It's a natural human reaction to death to see things through a different prism.

Emery was the first to admit that he made mistakes.

Emery led the Ottawa Senators to a berth in the Stanley Cup final in 2007 and within two years he was bought out of his contract and banished to the KHL.

There were reports of non-stop drinking and partying.

He was late to events, including a team flight during the 2007 playoffs.

Speaking to Emery on the eve of his lone season in the KHL, he was candid about needing to reassess his own values and his lifestyle.

"Even back in the playoffs in '07, it was overwhelming," Emery said in our conversation in August 2008. "Even at that point, I was sick of everything. I was hiding from everybody. I stayed in my house for a year and a half."

It was during this period that Emery underwent comprehensive therapy to examine why he was behaving the way he was.

He detailed a lot of those issues in a long letter he wrote to longtime agent and mentor J.P. Barry.

Barry, one of the most prominent agents in hockey, first met Emery when Emery was 16. Barry and his colleague were looking for goaltenders during the agency's summer workout sessions. Emery was so impressive that Barry ended up representing the goalie throughout his career, including brief stops in Germany and in the AHL with the Toronto Marlies and Ontario Reign in 2015-16, the final competitive games Emery would play.

Everyone talks about the drugs and the alcohol, Barry said in an interview following Emery's death, "but there was behavior issues going on that I think was a little deeper than that at the time. He wasn't communicating with anybody."

In fact, the prominent agent basically fired Emery and it was only after Emery sought professional help that Barry was able to resume their professional relationship, one defined by new guidelines and rules to which Emery happily abided by.

When Barry texted, Emery texted back. When Barry called, Emery returned the calls.

"He just changed," Barry said.

Sometimes Emery would stop in and visit Barry in Calgary or Kelowna, British Columbia, where Wilson is based. He would skate with Barry's son, also a goaltender.

Emery seemed like a different person during his time in Russia and immediately after when he signed on with the Flyers prior to the 2009-10 season, and change continued to define the Hamilton netminder in the following years.

After undergoing abdominal surgery early that season, Emery was still plagued by pain and was diagnosed with a degenerative hip disorder that spring, the same affliction that cost multi-sport star Bo Jackson his career.

Emery played 29 games for a Philadelphia team that would ultimately lose in the 2010 Stanley Cup final to the Chicago Blackhawks.

Teammate Brian Boucher recalled not being entirely sure what to expect from Emery but being somewhat shamed at the incredible shape Emery was in at the start of the season.

Then, after the injury ended Emery's season, Boucher recalled seeing Emery after undergoing the surgery that would mark the start of one of the most remarkable comebacks in sport.

"They had taken a bone from his ankle and put it into his hip to help that bone regenerate," Boucher said. The swelling from the procedure made it look as though there were two bodies melded together.

"I'd never seen anything as gruesome as that."

That Emery would endure that kind of procedure and then make his way back to the NHL speaks to a man's character, Boucher said.

"I think of a guy, his career had a couple of chapters," Boucher said. "I think towards the end of his career, to me, really showed the true colors of Ray Emery and the fact he was willing to fight through adversity to change his ways and his habits off the ice.

"I think that was the true pro Ray Emery."

At the start of the 2010 season when Emery was still recovering from surgery, he would sometimes drop in the Flyers dressing room when they were in the Toronto area.

Even then he seemed upbeat and positive, Boucher recalled.

"For a guy who wasn't playing, who was on the mend," he said. "I just remember a super nice guy."

After the hip surgery, Emery had to make a decision. Walk away from the game and collect the insurance money or forge ahead with an uncertain rehab, understanding he might still never play again.

The path that Emery would follow never seemed in doubt, even if the outcome was never certain.

Strength and conditioning expert Matt Nichol, the man behind the successful BioSteel sports supplement and training business, recalled his first meetings with Emery as he began his rehabilitation from the hip injury.

Nichol was blunt. No one, including Jackson, had ever come back to play at an elite level after this kind of procedure.

And Emery wanted to be in shape to play before the 2011 trade deadline so he would be eligible to play in the playoffs that spring; so not only were the two fighting history, they were fighting the clock.

"We talked about it and basically I laid it out, here are the facts, I don't have experience with this. Nobody has experience with this," Nichol said.



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Nichol told Emery the task would be complicated, painful and arduous. And there were simply no guarantees he would even be able to get back on the ice let alone play at an NHL level.

Emery was nonplussed.

"He said, 'you just tell me what to do and I'm going to do it,'" Nichol recalled.

"He looked me in the eye and said 'just get me back on the ice, bro.'"

At the beginning, Emery could barely get himself in and out of a chair.

"I learned very quickly with Ray that he always believed in himself," Nichol said. "That he was maybe the toughest guy I ever worked with. His pain tolerance was through the roof."

Twice a day, six days a week, Emery, Nichol and other staff would work on increasing Emery's mobility, strength and endurance.

There was pool work and work related to the most basic occupational therapy.

There was Pilates training and work with an instructor from the National Ballet of Canada.

"He never once complained," Nichol said. "Never asked for any breaks."

"We changed his diet. We changed his entire lifestyle. He was a guinea pig in a lot of ways."

At one point, Nichol got Emery in touch with Jackson, who offered all kinds of encouragement even though Jackson wasn't able to return to his former status.

And then, Emery was back on the ice.

Because it was in-season, Nichol and Wilson, who made his way to Toronto for the on-ice sessions, relied on local junior-aged players to help with shooting drills.

Initially, the shots weren't hard enough to test Emery sufficiently and Nichol pulled one of the kids aside to ask what was up.

Well, the boy admitted, they were a bit afraid of shooting too high on a goalie who was considered one of the toughest netminders in the game.

So future Hall of Famer Eric Lindros was called on to bring some NHL heat to the proceedings.

Lindros beat Emery with some shots and the younger shooters became more confident. At one point, a young man celebrated a goal, after which Emery smashed his stick on the net and dared the kid to try the celebration again.

Nichol doesn't recall a single puck getting by Emery for the rest of the workout.

He was back.

Anaheim GM Bob Murray called Wilson late in the process and asked where Emery's game was at. Wilson told Murray he wasn't angling for jobs but that he'd never seen Emery better. Murray signed Emery, sent him to the AHL's Syracuse Crunch and hired Wilson as the goaltending consultant for the Crunch.

Emery played five games for Syracuse and then 10 more for Anaheim down the stretch, turning in a .926 save percentage.

"That is one of the most rewarding four months of my life as a coach," Wilson said. "It was just an amazing experience for me to be part of. It was an amazing experience as a coach and a friend and mentor."

"It was basically the impossible and, in some sense, he made it look easy."

After one of those early games in Syracuse, Emery called Nichol to tell him he thought he'd pulled his groin.

But he was laughing.

The Syracuse coaches pulled Emery for an extra attacker late in the game and he had to sprint to the bench.

"We'd never done that," Nichol said laughing at the memory.

They were so focused on the very specific movements of the goaltending position they hadn't had time to figure out if Emery could go full-tilt to the bench.

"He said, 'I haven't done that in a year and a half,'" Nichol recalled.

After his comeback with the Ducks, Emery had two seasons of strong play in Chicago as Corey Crawford's backup, culminating with a Stanley Cup win in 2013. Two seasons in Philadelphia followed, bringing to a close Emery's NHL career.

Reese recalls fondly those final two seasons as Emery was the consummate teammate helping a young Steve Mason hone his craft with the Flyers.

"He was so good for Mase," Reese said. "Mase probably had one of his best years (playing alongside Emery). A lot of that's due to Razor, him being there as a mentor."

"That year Ray turned into one of my favorites. Just incredible, an incredible person. I learned a lot from Ray, actually. It's a tough, it's a tough day."

In recent days, Emery spoke to those close to him about maybe trying his hand at coaching, exploring that side of the game. But nothing was imminent.

Emery and Boucher crossed paths occasionally at alumni events in the Philadelphia area, the last time coming last season.

"When I was talking to him, he seemed to be in a good place. He seemed really excited to be there," Boucher said. "I remember him admitting that he was a little nervous to play."

The two shared a laugh about the idea that they would be getting worked up for a charity gig.

There had also been ups and downs in Emery's personal life toward the end of his playing career and beyond as he and longtime girlfriend/fiancée Keshia Chante, a recording artist and television host, ended their relationship last year. Chante alluded in a lengthy Instagram post at the time of the breakup to strife in the relationship and promises to change that went unfulfilled.

"The relationship became unhealthy," she wrote at the time of the end of their seven-year relationship. "Countless chances were given yet not enough changed. Ultimately, you can't help someone who doesn't want to help themselves."

After Emery's death, she posted an emotional memorial.

"I watched u go from bandages, to walking, to skating, to playing pro hockey again then to winning a Stanley Cup like a King," she wrote. "A superhero I called u. Unfortunately my baby, u believed u were invincible in every way. U had demons u were fighting, ones that u felt u were too invincible to confront the way I wanted u to. God, I wish u would have, I wish I didn't need to walk away. Many nights I stayed awake worried about u not coming home. my biggest fear. ur lifestyle catching up with u. today is now the worst day of my life. The day u would leave this earth."



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Barry admitted there were concerns about how Emery would deal with the breakup.

"I think we were all concerned at the time," Barry said. "Obviously he had some demons every once in a while that he had to knock out and he always seemed to rise to the occasion and make the changes he had to make.

"Everyone was hoping for the best for his post-playing career."

Neither the Hamilton Police nor the Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario would discuss what if anything was discovered in Emery's autopsy vis a vis a toxicology screen, citing privacy issues.

His life inexplicably came to an end only hours after taking part in a charity event put on by former teammate Zac Rinaldo.

In the end, the questions will outnumber the answers a thousandfold.

Maybe that's simply asking too much.

Instead what might be more important will be to remember those moments when Ray Emery proved that he was different than maybe anyone anticipated.

"Any time you asked how he was feeling he would quickly turn it around and ask how you were doing or try to cheer you up about something bad going on in your world," Nichol wrote as a kind of post-script to our conversation.

"Even recently when things in life were not as rosy as they were during his comeback, he always stayed positive and never would have accepted any sympathy. I don't know if that's more tough or prideful or what but, for right or for wrong, I admired it all the same."

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The Athletic / Custance: Straw poll of NHL GMs suggests offer sheet drought will continue

By Craig Custance

Jul 17, 2018 63

In the time leading up to the last offer sheet signed in the NHL, a few things were going on behind the scenes. In 2013, Colorado and its young center Ryan O'Reilly tried to negotiate a contract extension but the message to O'Reilly was that the Avs had no interest in exceeding the annual salary of another young forward, Matt Duchene. Duchene was earning \$3.5 million per season at the time and that was seen as the ceiling for O'Reilly's contract. It was a bit problematic for the O'Reilly camp.

About a month before O'Reilly signed his offer sheet with the Calgary Flames, two other teams contacted his agent, Newport's Pat Morris, about the possibility of an offer sheet. As the talks dragged on, the Flames engaged in trade conversations with the Avs but didn't like the asking price.

Finally, it all came to a head at the end of February 2013, when O'Reilly signed a two-year offer sheet with the Flames worth \$10 million. It

became a huge story in the world of hockey. What wasn't known at the time is that O'Reilly was sitting on a pair of offer sheets.

"It's seldom known but Ryan O'Reilly was getting two offer sheets on the day he signed with Calgary," Morris told The Athletic on Tuesday.

Of course, that raises a huge question.

"You'll never know the other team," Morris answered.

It all seems like a lifetime ago. Multiple teams involved in offer sheets. A good, young center nearly pried away from the team that drafted him. Of course, the Avalanche quickly matched. Good friend Chris Johnston later reported it would have been a disaster for Calgary if the Avs hadn't.

And that's it. There hasn't been an offer sheet since. There has occasionally been smoke, with speculation that an offer sheet threat ended up leading to Dougie Hamilton's exit in Boston. Or that the Sharks were going to offer sheet Martin Jones before ultimately landing him in a trade. Last summer, there was some talk of Ryan Johansen being a candidate as those talks extended. But nothing has materialized.

It sure doesn't seem like it's going to happen either, despite an interesting batch of restricted free agents. Colleague Jonathan Willis compiled a list of attractive offer sheet targets that included high-end young talent like Calgary's Noah Hanifin, Detroit's Dylan Larkin, Winnipeg's Nic Petan, Edmonton's Darnell Nurse and Toronto's William Nylander. But don't hold your breath.

In an informal straw poll of nine NHL general managers by The Athletic on Monday, not a single one believed we'd see an offer sheet this summer. And they didn't need a lot of time to consider, either.

One Western Conference GM summed up the thoughts of many of his colleagues: "I just don't see where a team could get a player without the team matching."

"It's not even an option," said an assistant GM last week. "No one is even worried about it."

That's the crux behind the lack of offer sheets. In the NHL's salary cap era, there have been eight offer sheets. All but one (Dustin Penner) was matched.

There's a belief that they ultimately just drive up salaries without actually achieving the goal — getting the player — so general managers aren't eager to use them. One NHL team executive felt like owners didn't necessarily have the appetite to use them liberally either.

"It's one of the things the owners don't do to each other," said the executive. "Those calls come from ownership."

From the player's perspective, you have to want to sign an offer sheet. There have been cases of players receiving offers from teams but not signing them for various reasons.

Often, the instruction to the agent is to get a deal done with the current team.

So that's why it sometimes requires a negotiation turning sour for the offer sheet to become an option. General managers may unanimously believe that there won't be one this summer, but it could change if there are restricted free agents unsigned when the season starts. That's what happened with O'Reilly, and the vultures started to circle.

Another team executive blamed the system. He felt like the compensation received for restricted free agents was too low to make it even a consideration not to match. He suggested that if the league and NHLPA wanted offer sheets to be widely used, the draft pick compensation should be increased considerably.

"That's the only way it's going to work," he said.



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As it stands now, you could sign a player for \$8 million and only give up a first-, second- and third-round pick to land him. That's a star-caliber player, and the return isn't worth the team not matching.

If that was four first-rounders, that might give a team pause to let the player walk, even if the contract is fairly reasonable.

"The only way you're getting a guy now is if you overpay," said the executive. "If you don't overpay, it's going to be matched. Why do it?"

One source called for more creativity from teams. Maybe there's a 26-year-old RFA who is one year away from unrestricted free agency who might do a one-year offer sheet the team might not match since it could lose him anyway a year later. Better to get something in return now.

Or maybe there is a young player not getting an opportunity on his team who could be a cheap offer sheet candidate and become the next Yannick Cournoyer.

Another agent suggested targeting teams that can't afford signing bonuses.

"You find a team that's cash poor and you make it all signing bonus," he said. "It's hard to cut a \$14 million check on July 1 when they don't have ticket revenue and parking."

There is no shortage of theories and strategies. There is a shortage of actual execution. And early indications suggest this summer won't be much different.

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The Athletic / What does an NHL statistical analyst do, how do the numbers shape strategy, and where is this all going?

By Justin Bourne

Jul 17, 2018 40

Note: Justin Bourne will be joining James Mirtle and host Ryan Pinder to discuss this topic on Friday, July 20 at the Hockey Coaches Conference in Toronto.

Anytime you enter into a new relationship – whether it be with a colleague at the office, a new neighbour, or a romantic one – there's a bit of a feeling out process. You find out how one another operates, and assuming everything goes well enough, you can usually find some sort of symbiotic relationship. Your many likes, dislikes and tendencies are like fingers on two separate hands, which eventually come together in a clasp to become what makes up your relationship.

That process doesn't always go "well enough" though, and that's where hockey's relationship was with analytics in roughly the mid-2000s. The hands weren't so much clasped, as balled-up fists. That came about when some smart people decided maybe just using raw goals and assists and saves wasn't the most effective way to judge individual players and teams. Bold, I know, but the war between the two sides at the time looked like two clans in a Braveheart-esque movie running toward each other with pens and swords (one of which we know is mightier than the other) to do battle.

This largely shook out on Twitter and in blog comment sections among the general public, but the same debates were taking place inside NHL front offices and dressing rooms around the league. The conclusion from this violent merging of "analytics guys" and "hockey men" (labels which are a far cry from the early days of "nerds" and "jocks") is that the analytics guys won out. That's obviously the only fair conclusion – I can't imagine reading some of the in-depth analysis you see online today a decade ago – but I promise you, behind the scenes, the victors are still doing battle trying to get their ideas implemented the way they'd like. The hockey men ceded ground, yes, but certainly still stand on the larger plot.

So what I'd like to do today is step back and take a look at where the relationship is at today, how teams are using the numbers to shape strategy, and where it all will go. Let's dive in.

The reality for an analyst who was hired by an NHL team over the past 10 years or so is that they're very likely younger than the coaching staff they're going to have to work with. The average age of an NHL head coach is somewhere in the 45-50 range, with the vast majority falling in the 40-50 window. That means those coaches were probably playing in the NHL between the mid-90s and the mid-aughts. That means they grew up learning the game earlier than that.

That means you can take your high danger Corsi against per 60 rel that tells you that Nick Paul of the Ottawa Senators should get more defensive zone starts (or whatever random stat/player Mad Lib you like), and cram it in your fanny pack. Particularly when this info is delivered from someone who "didn't play the game," coaches in the early days of analytics weren't as eager to take the new guy's strategy advice.

I've talked about this at length with Colleague Dellow, who worked the numbers for the Edmonton Oilers for a few seasons. It's not just what you know, or what you can find out with the data, it's how can you convey the information in a digestible way for the coaching staff so that they not only understand what you're saying, but value the information. It really is about presentation, and just like in any job, knowing your audience and how they like to work is crucial. If you roll into Joel Quenneville's office three minutes before a special teams meeting with a complex chart about zone starts, you may not be coming back into his office ever again. If you have an organized meeting, or even just some down time at the end of the day to offer some digestible observations, it's going to go over a little better.

Most of these coaches and front office guys are strong personalities with the type of confidence that comes with having played at the game's highest level (and is needed to play there in the first place). They trust what they know above all else. Changing anyone's opinion is hard, as most people are just looking to reinforce what they think they know (ie. Twitter and politics). Confirmation bias is rampant in sports. So you have to be a bit of a salesman if you want your analytics work to be used.

Like, at all.

I get the impression some of these teams have hired analysts so they don't look like dinosaurs, but the reports still go straight in the shredder.

The teams that started hiring statistical analysts first in hockey no doubt had a huge advantage on their opponents in a number of ways. It would've been possible to find advantages your opponent didn't know existed. I imagine these days, there are fewer exploitable findings given every team has someone running numbers. But the biggest advantage is that they'd have had their pick of some of the best people.

If you think about it: how crazy niche is being a hockey statistical analyst? Like, one who gets into it in-depth, near daily? Hockey itself is niche as hell. And I don't know what the Venn diagram of mathematicians and hockey fans happens to look like, but I'm guessing something close to a set of owl eyes. Then you have some who combine that with being able to program on a computer. Then you need people who actually know the game well so they know what they're looking for and what's actually going to matter to a coach. I mean, there's 31 NHL teams, and



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many teams have three, four, maybe more analysts. It just seems so hyper-niche that being open-minded and landing someone early would've been like gaining a high draft pick. There are still some people doing it well in public, but if you waited until these past few seasons to get in, the pool to pick from is no longer that deep, and the early adopters can still scoop those men and women up, too.

What does an analyst do?

I obviously can't go into the specifics of how the Toronto Maple Leafs or Marlies operate, so I'll speak in generalities here having talked with other NHL analysts and video coaches.

The first thing is someone on a research and development team acts as sort of an organizational hub. They work with the GM and other front office staff on player analysis. Not just their own guys, but other teams as well, what with free agency, the draft, the trade deadline, and pre-game scouting sheets. There are a zillion hockey players out there in a zillion leagues, and a scouting staff/management team can only watch so much hockey. At some point, you have to let the numbers point you to the guys who look like the best players on paper so teams can deploy scouts and do video work.

Then they work with the coaching staff directly, who have endless questions that need answering. "Who's our best shot suppressor on the penalty kill? How's our power play when the units look like this instead of that? What's our optimal lineup construction? It feels like we always get stuffed breaking out the left side, do the numbers bear that out?" The more they know, the better decisions they can make.

Then there's the development staff who want to know where players are statistically weak or strong. Maybe a D-man sucks on retrievals so they start working on pivots to get back to the puck faster.

They're even tied in with the video guys, as some of the numbers lead to questions. A coach may say "The numbers say Player X is our worst at defending zone entries, but I don't agree with that at all. Watch his entries against from the last 10 games and lemme know if that looks right. And if so, what's going on there?"

These guys are never off, they're important to everyone in the organization, and there's basically no offseason for them.

What numbers do they share? How are they used to shape strategy?

This is really hard to know as a general statement because teams have hired some really smart people who they've had for a long time, so they certainly would have proprietary information we – nor other teams – can't see. Outside of that data, the general rule is that coaches are fluent in what's public, and maybe less so with the more complex stuff.

But certainly, everyone has moved on to looking at shot attempts and not just shots. From the stuff you see growing in public prominence — zone entries and exits, for example — to more specific stuff (think results from face-off plays, puck retrieval data) few stones go unturned. The biggest perk is that many teams have internal websites that allow coaches to go online and answer questions for themselves.

The biggest thing I found during my time with the Marlies, though, is that the numbers don't make the decisions. The numbers are like those big orange air traffic control sticks that are basically saying "you can generally do what you like here, but at least keep it on the runway, idiot." The numbers do as much to prevent poor decisions (if not more) than they do to find advantages.

With that guidance, teams have to then decide how much stock they put in what the stats are telling them. Maybe the data say that a certain two D are best when together, but that coach knows that when they play together, it messes up the personnel groups he prefers on special teams. There's a lot fans don't understand about bench management. It often comes down to the order that coach likes to deploy his lines, or how penalties for and against mess up the follow-up lines that roll out after

everything gets scrambled. Simply speaking, it boils down to which players a coach wants available and when. It's imperfect because the game is unpredictable, but certainly there are times a coach is aware of the numbers but prefers to go a different way because he's thinking about how every other line and pair is affected in each game state.

Obviously, though, if the numbers say a certain matchup is getting killed, or your team is better breaking out one way, or a certain forecheck is working better, it's wise to change course. It all comes down to how much the head coach respects the numbers he's being shown.

Player tracking data is going to change everything. I've long maintained, as have many people, that hockey is one of the hardest sports to statistically analyze due to its fluent nature. What players do away from the puck is crucial, and generates no data. When we can tell which players draw opponents to them the most, or which defensemen maintain the tightest gaps, or which players are static or active in the offensive zone, we're going to think differently about a lot of players. The NHL is also working on getting a chip in the puck, which will give us even more data.

So, this where I see analytics going once we have all this information: I already feel like we're drowning in numbers. Public analysts are coming up with their own concepts, and it's tough to know what has value at this point. It's that A Beautiful Mind scene on some websites. This means that the real value is going to be in teams finding people who can properly parse the data. They'll need people who understand what's important and why. They'll need people who can reduce all the percentage signs and jargon and convey to the coach what he needs to know. It's not so much they'll need people to dumb it down; they'll need people who can communicate.

In all, analytics is just one more of the many ways teams today are trying to find an edge, but an increasingly important one. If a coach were to reject any possible means of doing so, he wouldn't be doing his job, which is precisely why analytics have finally found firm footing within hockey.

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Sportsnet.ca / Six early NHL breakout candidates to watch in 2018-19

Rory Boylen | @RoryBoylen

July 17, 2018, 3:14 PM

If you're a dedicated fantasy hockey player, you may already be doing your research ahead of next season and trying to pinpoint a few select breakout candidates who you can pick up at great value. If fantasy isn't your thing, by reading this article in July you are likely a rabid hockey fan trying to figure out who next year's surprises will be.

We're here to help.

What we're looking for are guys who played lower in the lineup last season, but showed something that made a case to take on a greater role in 2018-19.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Rookies won't appear here, so while the likes of Elias Pettersson or Casey Mittelstadt could come straight to the NHL with breakout years, we've already given first-year players their own list.

This is also not a list of bounce-back players (find that one here), so anyone who's had a strong season and then regressed will not show up here either.

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

Ondrej Kase, Anaheim Ducks

At the end of the season Ducks GM Bob Murray talked about the need for his team to get faster next season and do things a bit differently. So if you're looking for a player internally who might benefit from a potential shift, 22-year-old Ondrej Kase could be it.

He averaged the ninth-most minutes among Ducks forwards last season, but was among the league's elite in goals per 60 minutes at 5-on-5.

PLAYER	Goals/60	SH%
Auston Matthews	1.68	18.44
William Karlsson	1.38	20.31
Alex Ovechkin	1.37	12.79
Connor McDavid	1.34	14.56
Nikita Kucherov	1.32	15
Nathan MacKinnon	1.31	11.82
James van Riemsdyk	1.29	12.8
Ondrej Kase	1.28	13.49
Brock Boeser	1.26	15.38
Patrik Laine	1.26	14.47

Considering Kase converted on just 6.5 per cent of his shots in 2016-17 you might think he's more likely to level off, however in 40 AHL games across two seasons, Kase's shooting percentage was up over 16, so there might be some level of sustainability here.

And even if we assume his goal rate will drop, there's also reason to believe his assist totals should come up if he's promoted in the lineup. While Kase ranked fourth on the Ducks in primary assists per 60 minutes at 5-on-5, he didn't rank within even the top 10 when looking at secondary assists.

When you put it all together, Kase was producing at a first-line rate and earned a bigger role in next year's Ducks lineup. The GM has talked about moving in that direction, so the question now is if coach Randy Carlyle will entrust the young player with those minutes on the regular.

DUCKS PLAYER	5on5 Points/60
Ryan Getzlaf	2.52
Rickard Rakell	2.22
Ondrej Kase	2.18
Corey Perry	2.03

Andreas Athanasiou, Detroit Red Wings

There is some speculation that the Red Wings could still trade Athanasiou before the start of next season as their group of forwards

gets a little more crowded with the additions of Filip Zadina and Thomas Vanek. His explosive speed makes him exciting to watch and the offensive upside is still there — the question is whether Athanasiou's defensive game will become strong enough that a coach can comfortably make him a top-six player.

In Athanasiou's first two NHL seasons, his shooting percentages were 17 and 15, but that dropped to 9.4 in 2017-18 as he registered 16 goals. It's fair to say that over a full season he should be at least a 20-goal scorer with the possibility for more.

Remember, too, that the 23-year-old missed training camp and the first 10 games in 2017 due to a contract dispute and that often leads to an underwhelming season. Now he's locked in with a two-year, \$6 million deal so should get off to a better start. On top of that, only three of his 33 points came on the power play despite averaging 1:44 PP minutes per game, so there could be an uptick there as well. The crux of Athanasiou's breakout candidacy is in how much ice time the Red Wings (or an acquiring team) give him.

If his goals come up as expected, can his assists and ice time rise to a level that allows him to have a true breakout?

PLAYER	5on5 Points/60	Average TOI/game
Dylan Larkin	2.27	19:51
Anthony Mantha	1.88	17:18
Andreas Athanasiou	1.81	15:19
Martin Frk	1.69	10:17
Henrik Zetterberg	1.65	19:30
Gustav Nyquist	1.59	17:51

Charles Hudon, Montreal Canadiens

The 24-year-old has been a significant producer at every level, from the QMJHL, to AHL and perhaps now in the NHL. In his final AHL season, Hudon budded into a player who scored a goal nearly every other game, and though that didn't transition immediately to the NHL, there is every reason to believe Hudon will improve on his 10-goal rookie year.

Hudon operated with a 5.6 shooting percentage in 2017-18, which is extremely low for a player who projects as a goal scorer — in his last two AHL seasons Hudon converted on more than 15 per cent of his shots. He, like many of the Habs, was snake-bitten all season but Hudon showed promise, especially when he got time alongside the likes of Phillip Danault and Max Pacioretty in the top six. While his possession metrics were good even when he played lower in the lineup with Tomas Plekanec, the goals dried up.

At the very least Hudon's percentages should rise next season because of his raw skill alone. In that sense, he could approach a 20-goal total that would double his rookie output. And if he plays high up in the lineup for a prolonged period, Hudon could see his point total go even higher than 40.

Jakub Vrana, Washington Capitals

The young Stanley Cup champion is having a great summer so far.

On the ice from an individual perspective, next season could go even better for him.

Breaking into the NHL as a full-timer last season, many expected Vrana to burst on to the scene in 2017-18 as a rookie. The 13th overall pick from 2014 scored 13 goals and 27 points so it didn't really come to fruition, but there's reason to believe he could take that step in Year 2.



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First off, he's a quick player, which is a good place to start from these days. Likely because of this, Vrana is great at creating high-danger chances, a skill that was on full display in the Stanley Cup Playoffs, but had been evident most of the season.

According to Natural Stat Trick, Vrana ranked up among the best Capitals in shots off the rush per 60, individual high-danger chances per 60 and team high-danger chances when he's on the ice per 60. His 12:30 of ice time per game was on par with a third-liner and he did go long stretches without scoring this past season. But his role is likely to rise after a strong playoff showing, so if he can continue wreaking havoc with speed, more goals and assists should come.

PLAYER	iHDCF/60	HDCF/60 (team chances)	Rush attempts/60
Jakub Vrana	4.98	12.2	0.7
Alex Ovechkin	4.61	12.31	0.64
Evgeny Kuznetsov	3.18	12.41	0.53
Lars Eller	3.37	9.67	0.64
Tom Wilson	3.62	11.52	0.28

Oliver Bjorkstrand, Columbus Blue Jackets

Too many Columbus players had down years in 2017-18 for them to take the division, but that could change next season. The whole team is bound to bounce back with better years from Cam Atkinson and Alexander Wennberg, season-long production from Pierre-Luc Dubois — and perhaps a breakout from Bjorkstrand.

A third-round pick in 2013, Bjorkstrand exceeded 100 points in the WHL both seasons after his draft year and then scored 10 goals in his first 38 NHL games that were spread across two seasons. But last season his shooting percentage dipped all the way to 6.7 on 163 shots and he struggled to earn a more substantial role in coach John Tortorella's lineup, averaging 14:18 minutes per game.

It's reasonable to expect Bjorkstrand's shooting percentage to rise back to 10 or above and Tortorella has spoken highly of the player in the past. The things the coach says about Bjorkstrand having to develop his two-way game are common refrains when talking about young players, so as Tortorella becomes more comfortable with the budding Bjorkstrand you can see a path to more ice time.

"He's a goal-scorer, he's got a big-league shot. But he's got to learn the other part of the game, too," Tortorella said in November.

There's been some question whether Bjorkstrand can come along as a scorer on a similar trajectory as Cam Atkinson — including this breakdown — another late-round pick who became a fixture in the top-six.

Bjorkstrand is now under contract for another three years and could possibly take that next step in 2018-19.

Vinnie Hinostroza, Arizona Coyotes

The Blackhawks elected to shed Marian Hossa's contract, possibly to free up enough room to chase a veteran scorer such as Jeff Skinner in trade, but it may have cost them a breakout star in 2018-19.

Hinostroza averaged 13:49 of ice time per game for the Blackhawks last season, which ranked eighth among their forwards. He earned some power-play time in there, but got only five points on the man advantage, so nearly every positive sign he showed came at even strength.

First off, if Hinostroza breaks out he'll likely need at least one goal-scoring linemate because he's a playmaker first and foremost. But he did

still manage seven goals on a wholly sustainable 8.1 shooting percentage in 50 games. Playing a full season will boost that total.

But his playmaking is what will turn your head. Hinostroza was 25th NHL-wide in primary assists per 60 minutes, which led the Blackhawks, and kept great company in the stat.

PLAYER Primary Assists/60

Nico Hischier	1.02
Sean Couturier	1.02
Jakub Voracek	1
Vinnie Hinostroza	0.99
David Krejci	0.98
Alexander Radulov	0.98
Sebastian Aho	0.97

With 25 points in 50 games, Hinostroza has good per-game numbers already but could fly under the radar due to his lack of games played. His 1.99 points/60 minutes played ranks around the likes of Nicklas Backstrom, Patrik Laine and Matt Duchene in the NHL.

If Hinostroza gets put on a line with Alex Galchenyuk, a one-time 30-goal scorer with the potential to bounce back to that level, we could see big things.

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Sportsnet.ca / Top NHL rookies: Early Calder Trophy candidates for 2018-19

Rory Boylen | @RoryBoylen

July 5, 2018, 3:37 PM

The NHL is a young man's league these days, where speed and skill rule and with the salary cap putting pressure on teams to find affordable talent to complement their highly paid stars.

We may be early into the summer yet, but we're looking forward to what promises to be a great class of NHL rookies in 2018-19. Some of these players have roster spots all but locked up, while others may need a strong showing in September training camps to hang in the NHL out of the gate.

Although a few have gotten into NHL games already, they all remain rookies. To be considered as such in the NHL, a player must not have played in more than 25 NHL games in any preceding seasons, nor in six or more NHL games in each of any two preceding seasons. Any player who is 26 years old as of this coming Sept. 15 is no longer considered a rookie, regardless of games played.

With that said, we decided to highlight 17 rookies to keep an eye on next season.

Elias Pettersson, Vancouver



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After the Canucks picked him fifth overall in the 2017 NHL Draft, Pettersson went on to have an historical season in the Swedish League, winning the regular season scoring title outright, and winning the league's playoff MVP.

"He's super skilled," Canucks GM Jim Benning told Dan Murphy in April. "He's great with the puck. Great release on his shot. He's a smart player, reads the play, anticipates well. He's slight right now, but he's got good balance on his skates so I think he can come in and be a skilled player for us."

Rasmus Dahlin, Buffalo

Of course the No. 1-overall draft pick shows up on this list. An exciting talent charged with transforming the Sabres' blue line over the next few years, Dahlin has to battle the odds to win it. Only two of the past 14 Calder Trophies were won by defencemen (Aaron Ekblad and Tyler Myers).

"We're excited about this week, just to get him acclimated a little bit with people within our organization," Sabres GM Jason Botterill told NHL.com ahead of the team's development camp. "Rasmus will come back in the fall and between the rookie tournament, and then we have seven pre-season games, we'll try to get him in quite a few of those games just to get him acclimated to the North American game and set him up for success at the start of the season."

Anthony Cirelli, Tampa Bay

Although he played 18 NHL games last season, the 20-year-old will still be a rookie in 2018-19 because he finished seven games short of the threshold. Cirelli scored 11 points in those 18 games and added three in 17 playoff games. He may be on Tampa Bay's third line, but that comes with the upside of being on one of the NHL's highest-scoring teams. And there's always a chance he works his way into the top six, taking his candidacy to a new level.

"Anthony Cirelli came in late," Lightning GM Steve Yzerman said in June. "We threw him in there with 20-something games to go in the regular season and he's going head-to-head against Nick Backstrom, and Kuznetsov and Jay Beagle — really, really good NHL centremen and holding his own. So we're encouraged by that."

Valentin Zykov, Carolina

The 23-year-old has played 12 NHL games over two years, but maintains his rookie status for not playing six or more games in both years. In the 10 games he played this past season, Zykov posted seven points — all of which came at even strength. Most of Zykov's season was spent in the AHL, where he led the league with 33 goals in 63 games. He was better than a point-per-game player in each of the three seasons he spent in the WHL.

Andrei Svechnikov, Carolina

The No. 2-overall pick should stick in the NHL right away — after all, how much more is there to accomplish in junior for a player who scored 40 goals in 44 games? The 18-year-old missed a couple months to injury last season, but still separated himself from the other forwards in the running to be picked right after Dahlin. An exciting, explosive and physically mature talent.

"Andrei is the type of elite talent that you can build a team around," Hurricanes GM Don Waddell said. "He has a bright future in a Carolina Hurricanes uniform."

Casey Mittelstadt, Buffalo

The 19-year-old's place in the lineup became a little clearer with the trade of centre Ryan O'Reilly. Mittelstadt scored 30 points in 34 games for the University of Minnesota, led the WJC in scoring with 11 points and had a successful first taste of NHL action at the end of the 2017-18 season,

posting five points in six games. Mittelstadt is set up to have a successful rookie season with the Sabres.

"You're always excited about Casey's hockey sense and his skill level," Sabres GM Jason Botterill told the Buffalo News. "Those are things that we've talked a lot about with our group here in Buffalo, improving our team speed and improving our team skill level."

Filip Chytil, NY Rangers

The Rangers didn't depart from their plan to focus on youth this summer and have available positions for a player like Chytil to earn and see minutes in the top six. The 21st-overall pick in the 2017 draft came to North America last season and even cracked the Rangers lineup out of camp, though was quickly sent to the AHL where he had 31 points in 46 AHL games. In nine total NHL games he had three points, and then posted two in seven games for the Czechs at the world championship. He's 6-foot-2, over 200 pounds and a skilled centre for the team to move into the future with.

"It was a dream come true playing in the NHL at 18 years [old], it's something special," Chytil told the New York Post. "I enjoyed every minute, every shift. I think I'm more ready than before."

Lias Andersson, NY Rangers

The other centre of the future in New York, Andersson was the seventh-overall pick in 2017 and split 2017-18 between the Swedish League and the AHL. This terrific talent even got a taste of NHL action, scoring two points in seven games, and then had two points in 10 games for Sweden at the worlds.

Logan Brown, Ottawa Senators

The Senators may be a disaster next season, but someone has to score. At 6-foot-6 and 220 pounds, Brown is looking to build off the brief NHL exposure he had at the start of last season when he initially made the Senators out of camp. Injury shortened his season and WJC tournament, but with 48 points in 32 OHL contests he's ready for the next step up. The 20-year-old is good friends with two other Sens prospects, Colin White and Brady Tkachuk, all of whom are centrepieces of what fans hope is a brighter future.

Colin White, Ottawa Senators

It's not all bad in Ottawa — there are still some players to look forward to in the system. The 21st-overall pick in 2015 had six points in 21 NHL games last season and 27 in 47 AHL games, though he missed the start of the season with a broken wrist. White got more good exposure representing USA at the world championship, where he shared a dressing room with the likes of Johnny Gaudreau and Patrick Kane. White has already been given some top-line time, so if he gets that next season he could be in a spot to put up enough points to make a Calder case.

It's worth noting Tkachuk's absence from this list — it is not yet clear whether he'll join the NHL or go back to NCAA hockey with Boston University.

"I think I've done some good things, but I think there's definitely still some things to learn," White said in February. "I think I've got to have more patience out there with the puck."

Eeli Tolvanen, Nashville

The 30th-overall pick in 2017 arrived in North America at the tail end of the regular season to great fanfare following a hugely productive KHL season. With 36 points, Tolvanen had the second-best point total ever in that league for an under-20 player, finishing four points shy of Evgeny Kuznetsov's record — and Tolvanen played 30 fewer games. He didn't register a point in three NHL games, but since he'll come into 2018-19



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fresh and accustomed to his surroundings, he could take off. The only thing holding him back could be limited minutes on a deep team.

"The first couple of games were really tough for me," Tolvanen said of his NHL start. "But that was huge to have those couple games out of the way and just to see the tempo and what the game is like back here. Now, I know I have to get stronger, bigger and faster, and I have to be ready when the training camp starts."

Miro Heiskanen, Dallas

If Erik Karlsson ends up being traded to a team other than Dallas, it may be because the Stars didn't want to let this potential top-pair blueliner go. The third-overall pick in 2017, Heiskanen has all the tools: he can skate, pass, shoot, has good composure and is responsible on the defensive side of the puck, too. He had 23 points in 30 games in the Finnish League — a 0.77 points per game mark that was the best among all blueliners in the league.

"He was the best defenceman in the league and one of the best in Europe," HIFK manager Tobias Salmelainen told The Hockey News. "He makes the game look easy. His IQ is off the charts and his skating is elite. He was our most important player."

Martin Necas, Carolina

The 12th-overall pick in 2017, Necas' 17 points in 24 Czech League games this season led all under-19 players and his points-per-game mark was .29 higher than Martin Kaut, the 16th-overall pick of the 2018 draft by Colorado. Necas had five points in seven world championship games and tied Mittelstadt for the WJC scoring lead with 11 points.

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

Kristian Vesalainen, Winnipeg

So Kyle Connor scored 31 goals as a rookie this past season, Patrik Laine hit 36 the season before and was a Calder finalist — could the Jets go three years in a row with a freshman hitting the 30-goal mark? Vesalainen is already a big body at 6-foot-4, 207 pounds and with 43 points in 49 Finnish League games he led all under-20 players in scoring (as an 18-year-old) and was the sixth-highest goal scorer overall with 22 tallies. Only three players in Finnish League history scored more points than Vesalainen before turning 19: Teemu Pulkkinen, Aleksander Barkov and Sebastian Aho.

"It's not usual. He's a special kid, I think," HPK coach Antti Pennanen told the Winnipeg Free Press. "This is something that doesn't happen."

Henrik Borgstrom, Florida

Borgstrom was a human highlight reel coming out of the University of Denver, and nobody is shocked anymore that Florida used a first-round pick (23rd overall) in 2016 to get him. Normally a league where older players dominate, Borgstrom had 95 points in 77 NCAA games across two seasons and was tied as the fourth-highest point-getter in the nation last season, finishing as a Hobey Baker finalist. He's still filling out his 6-foot-3 frame, but did manage one goal in his end-of-season four-game stint with the Panthers. Borgstrom's success on the scoresheet could directly tie to where exactly he fits on the depth chart in 2018-19.

"He's learned being a centre, being low and slow and not blowing the zone," Panthers director of player personnel Bryan McCabe told the Sun-Sentinel. "He's a guy that wants the puck and can do a lot of special things with it. He's not too far off. I think he's got to get a little stronger, upper-body wise."

Andreas Johnsson, Toronto

Already stacked with talent, someone has to fill the vacancy created by James van Riemsdyk's departure and Johnsson could be it for Toronto. With 54 points in 54 games, the 23-year-old had the best points-per-game mark on the Marlies last season and was their big game-breaking talent, adding 24 points in 16 playoff games en route to being named post-season MVP. He had three points in nine games with the Maple Leafs and if he earns a plum spot next to either John Tavares or Auston Matthews, look out. Johnson was a seventh-round pick in 2013.

"He's a special, special kid," Marlies head coach Sheldon Keefe told Sportsnet's Chris Johnston. "He's taken the long road to road to get here. He's another example that it doesn't matter when you're drafted or even if you're drafted, you just keep working and the cream rises to the top eventually."

Filip Zadina, Detroit

When we look back on the 2018 draft in 10 years time, we might wonder how Zadina fell all the way to Detroit at No. 6. Once neck-and-neck with Svechnikov for the No. 2 spot, Zadina's place in the end was a surprising development, considering he was easily the QMJHL's best rookie with 44 goals and 82 points in 57 games. The kid has a wicked shot and is hungry to make the teams that passed him over regret it.

"We tried to pick him apart — how creative is he? How good is his hockey sense?" Detroit's director of amateur scouting Tyler Wright told MLive.com. "He wasn't a one-trick pony that would just score, he's got good hockey sense, he creates plays, he's a good character kid, he competes, he kills penalties, he scores in various ways, he's got a good release, just a very good overall offensive hockey player."

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Sportsnet.ca / 5 NHLers poised for bounce-back seasons with new teams

Emily Sadler | @EmmySadler

July 12, 2018, 1:18 PM

Sometimes a fresh start is all a skater needs to get himself back into hockey's good graces.

Here's a look at five NHL players who could be set up for a successful bounce-back year with their new club.

Tyler Ennis

Signed by: Toronto Maple Leafs (one year, \$650,000)

2017-18 stats (Wild): 8G | 14A | 22Pts

The three-time 20-goal scorer with the Sabres saw his young career derailed by injuries, including concussions, resulting in him playing just 74 games over the course of two seasons between 2015 and 2017.

A healthy Ennis was expected to rebound last year after being acquired by the Wild, but never really hit his stride with his new club, falling down the roster, playing less than 12 minutes a game and eventually being a



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healthy scratch before ultimately having the final season of his five-year, \$23-million contract bought out by Minnesota.

With the Maple Leafs' new-found depth at centre, there's no pressure for the versatile Ennis to fit into one position up front, and plenty of potential for him to find his scoring stride once again with a capable crew of playmakers surrounding him.

"I'm confident in my talent and my abilities and I feel like I haven't been able to show that recently," Ennis told the Toronto Sun's Terry Koshun after signing with the Maple Leafs. "I felt restricted and I am ready to get my swagger back and show people what I can do."

Anthony Duclair

Signed by: Columbus Blue Jackets (one year, \$650,000)

2017-18 stats (Coyotes, Blackhawks): 11G | 12A | 23Pts

He's only 22, but Duclair is already on his fourth NHL team. The third-round pick (2013) put together an impressive 44-point rookie campaign in Arizona after being dealt to the desert by the Rangers but struggled to match that magic in the two seasons that followed. A short stint in Chicago ended when the Blackhawks didn't extend a qualifying offer his way.

Duclair has the talent to get back on track on the scoresheet but questions surrounding his work ethic are reportedly what held teams back from signing him. Still, reports indicated there were several offers for Duclair's services, and some were left scratching their heads at the one-year, \$650,000 deal he ultimately signed. As disappointing as his season was, surely he could earn more than the league minimum on the open market.

Hockey's intangibles are tough to teach, but John Tortorella is a coach that rewards his grinders and won't hesitate to tell players when they need to step it up. Tortorella's tutelage, as well as the Blue Jackets' depth on the wing (and uncertainty surrounding Artemi Panarin's future there), will make for healthy competition in the lineup — and a real test for Duclair.

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Jaroslav Halak

Signed by: Boston Bruins (Two years, \$5.5 million)

2017-18 stats (Islanders): 20-26-6 | 3.19 GAA | .908 SV% | 1 SO

After 49 starts last season the 33-year-old will resume backup duties in Boston behind Tuukka Rask — and behind a far superior blue line than the one in New York, which ranked last in shots allowed. (The Islanders were also last in goals against.)

His presence in Boston will give the club a bit more confidence in its goaltending depth after struggling in that department with Anton Khudobin as the No. 2.

"I think we have two guys that have carried the ball for their teams, that will push each other, that will complement each other, and we feel good that now, going in every night, that that's an area we aren't going to be concerned about, hopefully," Bruins GM Don Sweeney told reporters upon signing Halak.

Halak will also be reunited with former Islanders goalie coach Mike Dunham, under whose guidance he played well for three seasons in New York — including his biggest workload in 2014-15 when he earned a career-high 38 wins and six shutouts.

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

Tobias Rieder

Signed by: Edmonton Oilers (one year, \$2 million)

2017-18 stats (Coyotes, Kings): 12G | 13A | 25Pts

He has never suited up as an Oiler, but the one-year deal signed with Edmonton brings a homecoming of sorts for Rieder, who was drafted by the Oilers back in 2011 but left unsigned before having his rights traded to the Coyotes in 2013. Bringing Rieder in on an affordable, low-commitment contract could turn out to be one of the biggest bargains of the off-season if he can rediscover his offence with the Oilers. The speedy German forward had two impressive seasons with the Coyotes (37 points in 2015-16 and 34 in 2016-17) but didn't quite find his place with the Kings after being dealt to L.A. at the 2017-18 trade deadline.

Now the versatile 25-year-old, who's capable of playing all three forward positions, should have plenty of opportunity in Edmonton. He's had success playing alongside fellow countryman Leon Draisaitl on the international stage, filling a need for the Oilers after a season of line-shuffling, and if he finds chemistry alongside Connor McDavid? Safe to say, he'll be earning a little more next off-season.

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Jack Johnson

Signed by: Pittsburgh Penguins (five years, \$16.25 million)

2017-18 stats (Blue Jackets): 3G | 8A | 11Pts

"It just seemed like a perfect fit in every which way," Johnson told reporters upon signing with Pittsburgh. "I've been really wanting to be part of a winning culture and a place where the expectations to win are as high as they could be."

Those comments ruffled a few feathers over in Columbus, prompting some strong words from Tortorella.

Clearly a fresh start was needed for the talented defenceman who kind of flew under the free agency radar amid all the #TavaresWatch drama and (still ongoing) Karlsson trade rumours.

Johnson, 31, tied career-lows in goals (3) and points (11) in 77 games last season, was scratched near the end of the campaign and watched all six of his team's playoff games from the press box — not what you'd expect from one of the top American rearguards in the league. Now, he looks like a logical fit to complete the Penguins' blue-line puzzle, adding versatility, good movement and special teams know-how to an already-strong squad run by the man who drafted him third overall in 2005 (Rutherford was the Hurricanes' GM back then). Sounds like a recipe for a rebound.

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Sportsnet.ca / Elias Lindholm expects to score more with Flames: 'That's my main goal'



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • July 18, 2018

Mike Johnston | @MikeyJ_MMA

July 17, 2018, 6:12 PM

Elias Lindholm was given a six-year, \$29.1-million contract by the Calgary Flames despite having never worn his new team's uniform and having never scored more than 17 goals or 45 points in any of his five NHL seasons.

Some Flames fans had raised eyebrows when it was announced the 23-year-old's cap hit was going to be \$4.85 million considering his point totals don't necessarily jump off the page.

Offensively, Lindholm's numbers over the past three seasons are comparable to the likes of Sam Reinhart, Dylan Larkin, Bo Horvat, Jakob Silfverberg, Alex Killorn, Kevin Hayes and Adam Henrique (who earned a more lucrative contract than Lindholm on the same day) to name a few.

Lindholm, when speaking to Sportsnet 960 Tuesday, described himself as a two-way forward that tries to work hard every night but made it clear he expects his goal and point totals to increase once he steps on the ice wearing a Flames sweater.

"I think the depth we have throughout the forwards can help me," Lindholm said. "Hopefully I can score some more goals. That's my main goal this year."

It's unclear where head coach Bill Peters will place Lindholm into Calgary's lineup, but there is a potential open spot on the top line beside Sean Monahan and Johnny Gaudreau.

"Sean Monahan, since he came into the league, is a superstar," Lindholm said of his new teammate. "It's fun to see that he's up there [among the league's top forwards] and that's where I want to be too. Hopefully I can take that step in Calgary."

Flames general manager Jim Treliving hopes and thinks he can take that step too.

"We think he's a real good player," Treliving told Sportsnet 960. "Elias will probably be the first to tell you he hasn't reached yet the offensive production that either he or maybe others thought he would by this time. We think he can be a player that's gonna pop."

Although he's new to Calgary, Lindholm will be more familiar with Peters than any Flames players since they've spent the past four years together.

"He trusts my game so obviously it's more comfortable coming in [to a new team] knowing the coach from before," Lindholm said. "It makes my move easier to get used to the system and Calgary as well."

Lindholm was selected fifth overall by the Hurricanes in 2013—one spot ahead of where the Flames took Monahan—and has been in the NHL since he was 18 but has only known pre- and regular season play.

"I was there for five years and obviously the most disappointing thing is that we didn't make the playoffs in all my years there," he explained. "I know Carolina had to do some things and they told me if we couldn't make a deal [on a new contract] they would probably trade me. I was ready for that and to me that's the NHL. Things happen quick and you've got to be ready for anything."

"We lost too much in Carolina," Lindholm added. "[I was] kind of sick and tired of that. I just want to make the playoffs and go as far as possible. ... The thing about hockey [in Canada] is it's crazy, so I'm super excited to join that. I think it's more me, like, living hockey 24 hours [a day]."

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Sportsnet.ca / Flames GM thinks Elias Lindholm is a 'player that's gonna pop'

Sportsnet Staff | @Sportsnet

July 17, 2018, 5:09 PM

After missing the playoffs in 2017-18 and falling well short of Stanley Cup aspirations, Calgary Flames GM Brad Treliving looked for some big change this summer to go into next year with a new look — while maintaining lofty expectations.

With the entire core locked in place, Treliving made a huge splash on the trade market sending Dougie Hamilton, Micheal Ferland and prospect Adam Fox to Carolina for Elias Lindholm and Noah Hanifin. Both of the players Calgary acquired were RFAs this summer and while Hanifin is still without a contract Lindholm signed on for six years and a \$4.85 million cap hit on Monday.

Hanifin is a stud defenceman on the rise, coming off a 10-goal, 32-point season and the closest to a sure thing coming to Calgary. Lindholm has great pedigree as well, having been drafted fifth overall in 2015, but hasn't yet hit on that potential. Still just 23, his career high in goals is 17 and points is 45.

Still, Treliving bought into Lindholm hitting that potential and thinks this contract could even turn into a value deal before long.

"We think he's a real good player," Treliving said Sportsnet 960 the FAN's Big Show. "Elias will probably be the first to tell you he hasn't reached yet the offensive production that either he or maybe others thought he would by this time. We think he can be a player that's gonna pop. Conversely on Elias' side they're thinking the same thing so you're trying to manage expectations on both sides and both sides are trying to protect their downside and limit any exposure on the upside."

Lindholm was chosen one pick ahead of Sean Monahan in that draft and though Monahan has already blossomed into a strong playmaker and perfect complement to Johnny Gaudreau, earning a seven-year, \$44.625 million contract in 2016, Lindholm's development has been less pronounced. The Hurricanes never made the playoffs in his five years with the team and he didn't turn into the offensive generator they so sorely need.

But Treliving did note that Lindholm's game has a good defensive base and with the ability to play both centre and wing, provides lineup flexibility for new coach (and former Carolina boss) Bill Peters. Calgary's top three centres, Monahan, Mikael Backlund and Mark Jankowski are all left shots so the right-shot Lindholm can take strong side faceoffs. Last year he won 54.5 per cent of the 793 draws he took.

Even though Treliving later signed sniper James Neal to a long-term contract off the UFA market, early indications are that Lindholm will play on the top line. But the beauty about the player from Treliving's perspective is that he can move just about anywhere in the lineup.

The GM feels good about his prediction that Lindholm will "pop" because he's followed the player and been a fan of his game for many years. And with Peters coming in from Carolina and his more recent experience dealing with Lindholm, the GM has a coach who backed up his conclusions.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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"Our interest in Elias goes back a long time," Treliving said. "Prior to me even coming to Calgary, I remember watching him at length and real deep spending a lot of time in Sweden watching him in his draft year. Obviously with Bill here now we felt there was a lot of internal intelligence on him."

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