



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 7, 2018

## THE NEWS & OBSERVER

### Taking a deeper look at where Skinner's exit, Faulk's return leaves the Hurricanes

By Luke DeCock

More than the end of a promising but ultimately frustrating era, Jeff Skinner's departure also appears to mark the conclusion of the Carolina Hurricanes' summer business, with owner Tom Dundon saying in the wake of Thursday's trade the team is not actively trying to trade Justin Faulk or make any other major moves in the month left before training camp.

That leaves two major questions that still need answers after a summer of retooling: What does it mean for Faulk, and how will the Hurricanes replace Skinner's goals?

The Faulk situation is curious, since the Hurricanes will be paying him \$6 million with a salary-cap hit of \$4.83 million to play third-pairing minutes on the right side behind Dougie Hamilton and Brett Pesce. Faulk will almost certainly lose the co-captaincy in Rod Brind'Amour's restructuring of his leadership group, and probably the letter off his jersey entirely.

But the Hurricanes feel no financial imperative to move his contract, they have plenty of cap space and they'll have as talented a third pairing as anyone in the NHL with Faulk there.

This may not be the worst thing in the world for Faulk, either: He'll be a dangerous threat against the opposition's third and fourth lines, with more room to attack on offense and margin for error on defense, and he'll still anchor the second power-play unit. He could end up being this team's Matt Cullen, only on the blue line: the matchup nightmare who slices through the opposition's soft underbelly.

A lot of that will depend on Faulk, what kind of shape he's in and how he handles this essential demotion, but there are tangible gains there for both him and the team if things work out.

While Faulk's return raises those issues, the major concern after the Skinner trade was the loss of his goal-scoring ability – 24 goals last season, 37 the year before, and so on – from a team that finished in the bottom third of the NHL that department last season. It's a fair point and an open question considering the Hurricanes received no immediate help from the Buffalo Sabres in the deal.

With the obvious caveat that looking at last year's goals is the simplest and least predictive way of looking at things, the Hurricanes lost a total of 75 of last season's goals through the departures of Skinner, Elias Lindholm, Noah Hanifin, Derek Ryan, Lee Stempniak, Joakim Nordstrom, Josh Jooris, Martin Kruger and Klas Dahlbeck.

The four players they acquired – Hamilton, Micheal Ferland, Calvin de Haan and Jordan Martinook – scored 46.

So the question really is, how many goals will talented rookies Martin Necas and Andrei Svechnikov score, along with whichever prospect wins the open forward spot in training camp?

It's probably not unrealistic to expect Necas to score 15 goals and Svechnikov 20 and, let's say, Valentin Zykov 10, or to expect that trio of players to combine for at least 45. (Svechnikov in particular could score more, but if they don't score at least that many, the Hurricanes would be in trouble even if they still had Skinner.)

That would put the Hurricanes, even in this very simplistic and shallow accounting, 16 goals ahead of last season, when they were -28 in goal differential.

Using last season's point shares, an advanced metric which tries to measure each player's contribution to the team's overall point total, the four players the Hurricanes brought in almost exactly balance the nine players the Hurricanes lost, and that's with de Haan playing only a third of a season and before accounting for Necas and Svechnikov, leaving considerable runway for improvement in the standings.

The subtext to this entire discussion is that none of it may matter, since the Hurricanes' problem isn't so much putting the puck in the net as it is keeping it out. Even NHL-average goaltending would have bumped their goal differential to +13 last season.

Assuming Scott Darling and Petr Mrazek can get halfway back toward average, and the rookies can contribute at a reasonable level, all of that becomes the very rudimentary calculus of how the Hurricanes could go from -28 to +8 in goal differential, which was good enough to squeak into the playoffs last season.

Not that they'd win anything once they're there with slightly-below-average goaltending, but, you know, baby steps.

All of that is based on the most simplistic assumptions possible, so it should be taken with considerable skepticism. Players regress, rookies struggle, injuries wreak havoc, goalies implode – and, on that note, Darling is still the ultimate wild card. The Hurricanes could have made a case like this last summer, or the summer before, or the summer before, and look where they ended up.

But if this is the team they're going to have, without Skinner and with Faulk, and it looks like it is, that's how the math could work out in their favor.



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**SB NATION**  
**CANES COUNTRY**

## Canes Revisionist History: Ward Doesn't Stop Pisani

The biggest save in franchise history became the bedrock of a long Canes career, and the key play in clinching a Stanley Cup. But what if it never happened?

By Andy House

June 19, 2006. The most important day in Carolina Hurricanes history. Clinching a Stanley Cup on home ice in Game 7 is an indelible memory for every member of that team, as well as all fans of the organization. But what would have happened in this nip and tuck affair had Cam Ward not made the save of his life to deny Fernando Pisani of the game-tying goal with three minutes remaining in the final period?

Well, the sliding doors of this scenario can be wide-ranging because a goal by the bright-burning comet that was Pisani in those playoffs would have resulted in a deadlocked game, meaning Mr. Game Seven, Justin Williams, would not have skated freely for the empty-netter that resulted in the 3-1 score we remember so well. But in order to break down what happens if Cam Ward doesn't make his career-defining save, we have to play a bit more of the what-if game below:

**Pisani Scores, but the Canes Prevail...and its Brind'Amour, Again**

So, in this scenario, Canes fans still have their precious Stanley Cup and an all-time memory, but instead of Ward's save and the Williams empty-netter, they would continue to toast some wonderful goal scorer, possibly in Overtime, who fired the shot heard round the hockey world to deliver a championship to Raleigh. Obviously, this could have been nearly anyone on the ice that night, but for argument's sake, let's say that the winner was netted by the man who led the Canes in every sense of the word then (and literally now), Rod Brind'Amour.

Had Brind'Amour tallied what would have been his lucky 13th playoff goal, including a Stanley Cup clincher, it would seem safe to say that Captain Rod would have received even greater consideration and likely would have won the Conn Smythe Trophy instead of the award going to the rookie Ward. The cast of heroes would have been the same for Carolina fans, but the historical roles would have been slightly altered. One can only speculate, but with Brind'Amour's virtually impeccable career, but conspicuous absence from the Hockey Hall of Fame, is it possible that adding the crown jewel of a Conn Smythe to his resume could have been enough to see him already enshrined?

**Pisani Scores, and Edmonton Finds a Way**

This is the scenario that gives Caniacs the shivers just to think about. What if Pisani squeaked it past Ward and the Oilers found a way to scoring the deciding goal thereafter?

For one, the bitter taste of blowing a 3-1 Stanley Cup Final lead with two contests at home would still be lingering in the mouths of Canes supporters. And with a serious dry spell (outside of 2009) following the championship, it is fair to question if the franchise's position in Raleigh would be as stable as it is currently, had the story of the team's history in North Carolina been largely based on the disappointment and defeat rather than one glorious night in mid-June.

And while winning has a way of covering up history, many fans would point back to the horrific misplay between Cory Stillman and Eric Staal that led to Pisani's overtime winner in Game 5, the first opportunity for the Canes to bring the Cup home: heroes replaced with newly-fitted goat horns.

And it is important to note that Pisani would have most certainly ended up with the Conn Smythe in any scenario in which the Oilers won the Cup. With what would have been his 15th playoff goal, he would have gone down as one of the most unlikely postseason heroes (already has, but even more so), and he would never buy a drink in Edmonton for the rest of his life (that may already be happening too).

**Ward's Career Arc Changed?**

With the game outcome forever changed with either of the two scenarios above, it is also interesting to try to determine how the removal of that save could potentially have had ripple effects on Cam Ward's now-completed career in Carolina. Without that seminal moment and Conn Smythe Trophy burned into our memories — not to mention Jim Rutherford's — would the franchise icon have been as difficult to part with as he proved to be?

Without posting a solid season in net since 2011-12, would Ward have been kept around into his 30's if he were merely "Cam Ward: Stanley Cup Winner" and not CAM WARD: CONN SMYTHE AWARD WINNER, CUP WINNER, AND OMG DO YOU REMEMBER THAT SAVE!?"

I believe that parting with Ward would have become a much easier proposition as the Canes moved forward had Ward not been the Conn Smythe winner, no matter if the Hurricanes won the Cup or not. Management was even able to let go of Eric Staal before removing Ward from the roster, which is evidence to the great loyalty and responsibility felt towards Ward.

Perhaps that doesn't change much about the Hurricanes' results in the past few seasons. Perhaps Ward would have been more rejuvenated with a mid-career change of scenery, similar to Staal in Minnesota the past two seasons. But one thing is for certain, the career of Cam Ward would have likely taken a different path had he not flashed that left pad in front of the net-driving Fernando Pisani.



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In the end, the play that played a major part in securing the Hurricanes' only Stanley Cup did more than that. It helped shape the future of many careers, including that of Ward

himself. And there is only one person who likely thinks about that play more than Ward, and that is most assuredly Fernando Pisani.



## It's Carolina Hurricanes day at PHT

By Scott Billeck

Each day in the month of August we'll be examining a different NHL team — from looking back at last season to discussing a player under pressure to focusing on a player coming off a breakthrough year to asking questions about the future. Today we look at the Carolina Hurricanes.

2017-18

36-35-11, 83 pts. (6th in Metropolitan Division, 10th in Western Conference)  
Missed playoffs.

IN:

Dougie Hamilton  
Micheal Ferland  
Adam Fox  
Jordan Martinook  
Calvin de Haan  
Petr Mrazek

OUT:

Noah Hanifin  
Elias Lindholm  
Marcus Kruger  
Jeff Skinner  
Derek Ryan  
Klas Dahlbeck  
Cam Ward  
Joakim Nordstrom  
Lee Stempniak

RE-SIGNED:

Trevor van Riemsdyk  
Phillip Di Giuseppe

The Carolina Hurricanes now sit in the aftermath of one heck of an offseason storm.

A full-blown shake up from top to bottom has the Hurricanes now heading into the 2018-19 with a new head coach, a new general manager and under the direction of a new owner (who took over midway through the season) who appears determined not to let what's happened for nearly the past decade to continue — missing the playoffs.

Indeed, Bill Peters (who left for Calgary) has been replaced with franchise legend Rod Brind'Amour behind the bench. Don Waddell has taken over Ron Francis' post (after the

latter was relieved of his duties). Tom Dundon, the architect behind the winds of change, became the owner midway through the 2017-18 season. And some of the team's most well-known names — Cam Ward, Jeff Skinner, Noah Hanifin — won't be wearing Carolina red this coming season.

The Hurricanes haven't graced the playoffs since 2009, and while they put up a bit of a fight down the stretch last season, they never really found the extra gear they needed, eventually finishing sixth in the Metropolitan Division and 10th in the Eastern Conference.

Dundon has employed a hands-on approach to the team he now runs, which perhaps scared away prospective coaches and general managers during searches for both. Brind'Amour is a household name in the franchise, but unproven behind the bench and Waddell... well his track record with other teams isn't exactly glowing.

That said, Carolina was handed a gift and then some when they moved up from 11th to 2nd in the NHL Draft Lottery and got their hands on Andrei Svechnikov, who scored 40 goals in 44 games in the Ontario Hockey League last season.

Waddell then went out and traded for defenseman Dougie Hamilton to bolster their backend, gaining gritty forward Micheal Ferland and top prospect Adam Fox in exchange for Noah Hanifin and Elias Lindholm. He also signed defenseman Calvin de Haan in free agency and traded away Jeff Skinner just last week for a few picks and a prospect.

While the Skinner trade seemed like a major loss given the return, the Hurricanes do have a bevy of young talent ready to try and make their mark this season. Svechnikov should inject the offense and Martin Necas looks slated to become a top center within the club. Hamilton and de Haan are fine additions on the backend. Ferland adds a little bit of everything. And there's the wave of youth that's exciting for any team.

"I don't want to say it's a new team, but it will be," Brind'Amour told NHL.com. "We'll potentially have 12 new players, so I think everyone's just excited. There's been a lot of change, but we've done a pretty good job of keeping the pieces we wanted to keep and build around, and then we have a couple young players we're excited to see, new rookie players that I think will be exciting to watch."

Prospect Pool



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Andrei Svechnikov, RW, 18, Barrie Colts (OHL) – 2018 first-round pick

Svechnikov is the type of elite talent any team would be lucky to have. He has size (6-foot-3), an elite selection of shots, and is crafty both inside and on the perimeter. It's likely that he steps in right away and begins to contribute offensively this season. Svechnikov had 40 goals and 72 points in 44 games with Barrie this season — name the OHL's rookie of the year — had four goals and eight points and the world under-18 championships and five assists during the world juniors.

Martin Necas, C, 19, Brno Kometa (Czech) – 2017 first-round pick

Necas has spent the last two seasons playing pro hockey in his native Czech Republic with Brno Kometa, which also features former NHLer Martin Erat. Necas is expected to move into the Hurricanes lineup next season, possibly as the team's second-line center. Necas had 11 points in seven games at the World Juniors this past year and then five more

### Building off a breakthrough: Teuvo Teravainen

By Scott Billeck

A career year in terms of production? Check.

The transformation into a bona fide first-line winger? Check.

A chemistry with fellow Finn Sebastian Aho that could form the basis for one of the league's top lines for years to come? Check.

Teuvo Teravainen has checked off a lot of boxes since his arrival from the Chicago Blackhawks two summers ago. And after putting up 23 goals and 41 assists to eclipse his previous best point total by 22, Teravainen has taken another leap forward as one of the league's premier wingers.

Teravainen improved nearly everywhere last season, from scoring eight more goals to having 14 more assists to finding five more points on the power play and a 3.5 percent increase in his shooting percentage, which hovered over 12 percent. He surpassed his previous career-high point total in just 57 games last season.

The breakout season continued with nearly one goal for every 60 minutes played (0.93), 1.25 assists/60 and 2.18 points/60 while playing all 82 games.

His underlying numbers backed up the eye test with career bests in shot share at 56.43 percent, goals for percentage at 56.12 and high-danger goals-for percentage at 58.82.

This is all good news for the 24-year-old, who enters a contract year in 2018-19 and still a few years away from his prime.

2012 Draft Career Point totals

1. Filip Forsberg (255)
2. Alex Galchenyuk (255)
3. Morgan Rielly (171)
4. Tomas Hertl (170)
5. Teuvo Teravainen (150)

in the same number of games during the world championships this past spring.

"His game has gotten better, he's gotten a little bigger, and he's a lot more confident than he was last year," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour told NHL.com. "I think he's a night-and-day player already from a year ago."

Adam Fox, D, 24, Harvard University (NCAA) – 2016 third-round pick (Calgary Flames)

There are several players who fit the mold here: D Jake Bean, F Valentin Zykov and F Warren Foegele — but its Fox, who the Hurricanes inherited in the Hamilton trade, that's intriguing. Fox is widely regarded as one of the top defensive prospects in the NHL, so it's a good get for a team that gave up quite a bit going the other way. Carolina has amassed quite the stable of defenseman this summer, and Fox fits right into that. He's spent the last two seasons playing in the NCAA with Harvard where he's been a point-per-game player on the backend and had five points in seven games for Team USA in a bronze-medal showing at the 2018 World Junior Hockey Championships.

6. Shayne Gostisbehere (150)
7. Hampus Lindholm (143)
8. Tanner Pearson (141)
9. Nail Yakupov (136)
10. Jacob Trouba (129)

Teravainen only received a modest bump in ice-time (39 seconds on average per game), so assuming he can handle more, there's no reason to think Teravainen can't become a point-per-game player this coming season, especially if the line with Aho and Valentin Zykov sticks together to start the season.

The trio was formed toward the end of last season and the results were juicy. The line combined for a shot share of 65.73 percent during their eight games together. They were simply dangerous and perhaps a sign of things to come if Aho's move to center becomes permanent.

Aho and Teravainen were money together, with Teravainen assisting on 16 of Aho's 29 goals and the latter assisting on 13 of the former's 23. Perhaps linemates that play Fortnite together stay together?

Here's some of that sweet (on-ice) chemistry:

It's Teravainen's improvement, coupled with Aho's — and a bevy of young talented forwards in the system — that likely made Jeff Skinner expendable last week. There's pressure on Teravainen and Aho now to make up for the hole left by that departure, but both have shown they can improve year after year, especially when playing together.

New head coach Rod Brind'Amour has a few decisions to make with his top line, but Teravainen being on it is not one of them. He should be a lock up top and, if his durability holds up, could eclipse the 70-point mark, if not more, by the end of next season.

It's a good thing Carolina has plenty of cap room.



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## Three questions facing Carolina Hurricanes

By Adam Gretz

### 1. Who is going to score the goals?

While so much gets made of the Hurricanes' goaltending issues over the years they have also had a problem when it comes to putting the puck in their opponent's net, having finished in the bottom-10 in goals scored in each of the past five seasons.

Then this offseason they finally traded the best pure goal-scorer on the roster (Jeff Skinner) without any proven NHL goal-scorers coming back in return to replace him in the lineup.

Could be a problem.

The Hurricanes do have some nice young talent led by Teuvo Teravainen, Victor Rask, and the outstanding and underrated Sebastian Aho, as well as some really good two-way veterans in Jordan Staal and Justin Williams. Despite that crop of forwards, they are still lacking a go-to difference-maker that could be a franchise changing player at forward.

They are hoping they have found that at the top of the draft in No. 2 overall pick Andrei Svechnikov, a monster of a prospect with superstar potential.

Along with Svechnikov, they also have 23-year-old forward Valentin Zykov who is coming off of a great year in the American Hockey League (33 goals in 63 games) and a strong first impression with the big club, recording seven points (including three goals) in 10 games.

How good Svechnikov and Zykov can be — and how quickly they can make an impact — will go a long way toward determining how good the Hurricanes' offense can be.

They could also probably use a bounce back year from Rask after his production regressed a bit this past season.

### 2. Will Justin Faulk finish the season in Carolina?

With Skinner traded to the Buffalo Sabres, all eyes are now focussed on defenseman Justin Faulk when it comes to potential trades. Faulk's name has been thrown around in trade speculation for more than a year now, and the

## Under Pressure: Scott Darling

By Adam Gretz

So far in our team of the day series goalies have been a popular pick for the "under pressure" look, and honestly, that is probably very fitting. Goaltending can make or break a team's season unlike any other position in the sport, and there is perhaps no team in the NHL that has come to know that more than the Carolina Hurricanes. Especially when it comes to the "break" part.

The Hurricanes have been trying to solve their goaltending issues for years, and it is a position that has probably done more to keep them out of the playoffs than any other on the team. They finally moved on from Cam Ward this offseason and will be sticking with Scott Darling as their likely starter. He might get a bit of a push from the newly signed Petr

offseason additions of Dougie Hamilton and Calvin de Haan only seemed to increase that.

Given his ability offensive he could be an attractive trade chip for teams looking to add some firepower to their blue line, and perhaps be used to help the Hurricanes deal from a position of strength (defense) to address their shortcomings offensively.

Or they could keep him and continue to build on what is already an outstanding young defense.

### 3. Did the Hurricanes do enough to end their playoff drought?

Even after losing Skinner in a trade to the Sabres there is still reason to believe the Hurricanes improved their outlook for the upcoming season.

The defense is significantly better with the additions of Hamilton and de Haan. It would be almost impossible for Scott Darling to be worse than he was a year ago so they should get some improvement there almost by default. Svechnikov and Zykov are unproven, but their potential is exciting.

Still, is that enough to end what is currently a nine-year playoff drought before it reaches a full decade without a single postseason game being played by the organization? Especially in a division that has the past three Stanley Cup champions and both Eastern Conference wild card teams from this past season? And especially after we seem to try and convince ourselves every summer that this season is the one where they finally they did enough to get back in the playoffs?

One of these years it has to happen ... right?!

They need to make up a 14-point gap in the standings from this past season to do it, and while that is not going to be an easy task, it is also definitely not impossible. Especially if they can get adequate goaltending from Darling to fully take advantage of the young, talented defense they have assembled over the years and get a couple of breakthrough offensive performances from their prized prospects Svechnikov and Zykov.

Mrazek, but make no mistake, this is probably going to be Darling's spot to lose.

He still has a lot to prove.

Darling arrived in Carolina prior to the 2017-18 season and immediately signed a four-year, \$16 million contract. Year one with his new team — and his first as a player expected to help carry the workload over the course of a full season — turned out to be a complete disaster. Among the 32 goalies to appear in at least 40 games his .888 save percentage was last in the NHL, and one of only two goalies (Craig Anderson being the other) to finish with a sub-.900 mark. His even-strength save percentage of .897 was also last, and the only goalie to finish below .900. Just speaking strictly from a numbers perspective, he was the least productive regular goaltender in the NHL.



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Simply put, the Hurricanes need more from him, and given the additions the team made on the blue line in front of him there really can not be any excuses if his play does not improve.

The Hurricanes were already one of the best shot suppression teams in the league (and have been for several years) and only added to their blue line by acquiring Dougie Hamilton, one of the best defenseman in the league and a legitimate top-pairing playing, and signing Calvin de Haan in free agency away from the New York Islanders.

## PHT Power Rankings: Best trades of the summer

By Adam Gretz

The two big trades we all expected to happen at this point this summer were Erik Karlsson and Max Pacioretty. To this point neither one has happened and it seems increasingly likely neither one will happen before the start of the season. Even though we are still waiting on the two blockbuster trades, there were still some big names changing teams this summer, some of which will make a huge impact for their new teams.

Today we take a look at the 10 trades from this summer (so far) that might help their new teams the most.

1. Carolina gets Dougie Hamilton. Of all the players to get traded this offseason (so far) none of them have the potential to make a greater impact than Hamilton. He may not be Erik Karlsson, but he is still an outstanding player.

At age 25 he is in the middle of what should be his peak years in the NHL, he is already a legitimate top-pairing defenseman, and he is still signed for another three seasons at what is probably a steal of a salary cap hit (\$5.75 million per season). He is coming off of a 2017-18 season in Calgary where he led all defenseman in goals with 17 and was one of the best possession players in the league, finishing with a 57 percent shot attempt share. Given the makeup of the Hurricanes roster it was a little surprising to see them add to the defense (probably already their strength) but when you have an opportunity to add impact talent you can't really pass that up. Elias Lindholm and Noah Hanifin are good players, but neither one is likely to ever make the impact that Hamilton does and will continue to make. With Carolina still holding on to Justin Faulk its defense has the potential to be outstanding over the next few years with him, Hamilton, Jacob Slavin, Brett Pesce, Trevor van Riemsdyk, Hayden Fleury, and free agent addition Calvin de Haan.

An underrated part of this deal for Carolina: It also got Micheal Ferland and prospect Adam Fox as part of the package. Ferland was just as productive as Lindholm this past season and for a cheaper price. He will be in line for a new contract after this season, but it's a strong trade all around for Carolina.

2. St. Louis gets Ryan O'Reilly. This trade raised some eyebrows simply due to the number of assets the Blues gave up, shipping Tage Thompson, Patrik Berglund, Vladimir Sobotka, and a couple of draft picks to the Sabres. It was definitely a lot to give up for one player. But what if that one player offers more value than the sum of the parts you gave

up? Thompson is an intriguing young player, and the draft picks are a couple of lottery tickets that may or may not amount to anything. Beyond that, Sobotka and Berglund probably had contracts the Blues were looking to jettison. There is a lot of value in a 60-point center that plays the defensive game O'Reilly plays without taking penalties.

Given all of that there is no player in Carolina under more pressure for a big season than their starting goalie.

3. Buffalo gets Jeff Skinner. After years of rumors and speculation the Carolina Hurricanes finally went through with the Jeff Skinner trade and the return was ... underwhelming. Skinner's no-trade clause and ability to choose where he went no doubt handcuffed the Hurricanes in this situation, but in terms of talent-for-talent it is not a great exchange for them.

Cliff Pu is an intriguing prospect and they added three future draft picks to their cupboard (giving them 18 over the next two years). Still, this is a big win for Buffalo, even if Skinner doesn't re-sign before being eligible for unrestricted free agency after this season. He is one of the better goal-scorers in the league, and while there always seems to be some kind of concern about his health (he has had some concussion issues in the past) he has only missed 19 games over the past five seasons (and only eight over the past four). During that same stretch he is 16th in the league in goals scored, giving Buffalo some much-needed goal-scoring punch on the wing.

Even if the Sabres end up being lousy again and they can't get Skinner to re-sign they can easily flip him at the deadline and get back some of the draft pick capital they gave up in the original trade.

4. Colorado gets Philipp Grubauer. Having Grubauer this high on the list is all about potential, because if he ends up being the player he showed that he can be in his limited time with the Washington Capitals he could be a massive addition both in the short-and long-term.

Goalies can be difficult to project, especially when they have such a limited NHL track record, but among goalies that have appeared in at least 50 games over the past three seasons only two (Antti Raanta at .926 and John Gibson at .924) have a higher save percentage than .923 mark Grubauer produced.

He has, at the very least, earned the opportunity to be a full-time starter to see what he can do and it was never going to happen in Washington with Braden Holtby already in place. The Avalanche only had to give up a second-round and take on the final year of Brooks Orpik's contract (which they promptly bought out) to get him. Combined with Grubauer's



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new contract and the buyout hit from Orpik's deal that's a \$14 million investment over the next three years and a second-round pick. If Grubauer becomes the player the Avalanche think he can, be that is a tremendous trade.

5. Arizona gets Alex Galchenyuk. Galchenyuk gets a chance for a fresh start on a new team that might actually trust him a little bit more and give him an opportunity to excel at center. Along with Derek Stepan and (maybe, hopefully) Dylan Strome, the Coyotes will have a pretty intriguing look down the middle that should give them a chance to compete.

To land Galchenyuk they had to give up Max Domi, whose 18 goals over the past two seasons were less than Galchenyuk scored just this past season.

Given his previous production, skill level, and his underlying numbers from a year ago there is very good reason to believe Galchenyuk can once again be a 30-goal scorer in the NHL, perhaps even as soon as this season. He is only a few months older than Domi and their cap hits are similar. Put it all together and this has the potential to be a strong one-for-one trade for the Coyotes.

6. Florida gets Mike Hoffman. Hoffman is a productive player and still signed for two more years at a fair price. He is a steady 20-goal, 55-to 60-point player and under normal circumstances would either still be in Ottawa or have been traded for a significantly better return. These were not normal circumstances as the Senators have devolved into the most dysfunctional organization in the league, with Hoffman and his fiancée being at the center of some of it. As a result, he ended up getting traded twice this offseason harassment allegations against his fiancée. Senators general manager Pierre Dorion addressed the trade and said their locker room was "broken." It was clearly a bad situation beyond repair.

7. Buffalo gets Conor Sheary. Buffalo ended up getting Sheary and defenseman Matt Hunwick in what was strictly a salary dump trade for the Pittsburgh Penguins. All it cost Buffalo was a conditional fourth-round pick in 2019 and some future salary commitments to Sheary and Hunwick. Sheary is the intriguing one here because even after three years in the NHL we are still not really sure what he is. A lot of his success in Pittsburgh was almost certainly the result of playing alongside Sidney Crosby, and when he is not putting the puck in the net there is not much else that he does to

provide value. You can live with a player like that if they score 30 or 40 goals. Sheary is not that type of player, though. Still, given the cost Buffalo had to give up (very little) and the fact it had the salary cap space to take on the two contracts it is an okay gamble for a team that needs an influx of talented players.

8. Ottawa gets Mikkel Boedker. This was the main part of Ottawa's return for Hoffman when it dealt him to the San Jose Sharks. Along with Boedker, the Senators also picked up a prospect and a sixth-round draft pick. Given the off-ice situation it's not a surprise that the Senators did not get full value for Hoffman in return, but it looks even worse when the Sharks were able to turn around and deal Hoffman later that same day to the Florida Panthers — a team in Ottawa's division — for what was probably better return than the Senators received.

9. New York Islanders get Matt Martin. Martin was a popular player in his first stop with the Islanders as a part of their physical fourth line, but his return in a trade from the Toronto Maple Leafs does not make much sense. Just another fourth-liner with a multi-year contract being added to a team that already has a lot of fourth-liners on multi-year contracts. The optics of it are especially bad when it came just days after the Maple Leafs signed John Tavares away from the Islanders in free agency and the trade simply helping the Maple Leafs create some additional salary cap space.

10. Chicago dumps Marian Hossa's contract. Honestly I'm not really sure who the real winner here is but it was a pretty big trade just for the salary cap ramifications and the names involved.

Arizona was once again the dumping ground for a contract another NHL team didn't want, this time taking on the remainder of Marian Hossa's deal. Arizona picked up Vinnie Hinostroza to add some depth to its forward group, while Chicago ended up getting back Marcus Kruger and no longer has to worry about Hossa's \$5.25 million salary cap hit over the next three seasons. I still wonder if maybe Arizona could have done better in this deal in exchange for taking on Hossa's contract (it is not like Chicago had many other options or teams that would be willing or able to take on that deal) but the Hinostroza for Kruger swap is probably a plus for them.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 7, 2018



## Offseason Weekly Report: August 6, 2018

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

Each week during the offseason the Checkers PR staff will highlight news, notes and other various things to keep you in the loop.

### NEWS

**Canes Acquire Cliff Pu From Sabres:** The Hurricanes made waves during a traditionally calm stretch of the offseason last week by dealing Jeff Skinner to the Buffalo Sabres. In return Carolina acquired a trio of draft picks along with forward prospect Cliff Pu. A third-round pick by Buffalo in 2016, Pu turned 20 earlier this summer, meaning the Ontario native will likely battle for a spot on the Checkers roster to start his pro career come October.

**Checkers Announce Training Camp Schedule:** Mark it down on your calendar, hockey returns to Bojangles' Coliseum on Sep. 21 as the Checkers open up training camp. Like last season, the entirety of camp will take place at the Checkers' home rink, while info regarding media availability and sessions open to the public will be announced at a later date. Charlotte will also have a pair of preseason contests to prepare for the 2018-19 campaign, visiting the Lehigh Valley Phantoms on Sep. 28 and 29.

**Checkers Sign Zach Nastasiuk To AHL Deal:** The Checkers continue to add their stable as the season grows closer, inking a deal with 23-year-old forward Zach Nastasiuk. The Ontario native has spent the majority of his three pro seasons in the ECHL, but has logged substantial time in the AHL for a perennially good Grand Rapids team, making him an option for a midseason ECHL call-up should he not make the Checkers out of camp.

**Platzer, McCarron Sign AHL Contracts:** In more organizational depth news, the Checkers added 23-year-old forward Kyle Platzer and 23-year-old defenseman Patrick McCarron to AHL contracts. Platzer, a fourth-round pick in 2013, has played nearly all of his first three pro seasons with Edmonton's AHL affiliates in Oklahoma City and Bakersfield and set a new career high last season with eight goals in 44 games. Platzer also appeared at the ECHL level for the first time last season and stood out offensively for the Wichita Thunder. McCarron, on the other hand, is coming off a rookie season that saw him stand tall on the blue line for the ECHL's Toledo Walleye. A product of Cornell, McCarron has also made four AHL appearances with the Grand Rapids Griffins.

**Ryan Warsofsky Named Assistant Coach:** The Checkers will have a new assistant coach for just the third time in franchise history this season as Carolina hired Ryan Warsofsky to join head coach Mike Vellucci behind the bench. The 30-year-old

Warsofsky is coming off two successful seasons as head coach of the ECHL's South Carolina Stingrays, going 88-44-10-2 during his tenure and making a Kelly Cup Final appearance in 2017. In an interview with Voice of the Checkers Jason Shaya, Vellucci stated that he was "very excited" about how his staff is shaping up for this season and pointed to Warsofsky's consistently strong penalty kill as a key factor in bringing the young coach into the fold.

**Registration For Mini Checkers Program At XI Now Open:** The Checkers are partnering with Extreme Ice Center to continue to grow youth hockey in the region. The Mini Checkers will consist of 6U and 8U programs and all participants will receive jerseys, a t-shirt and a free ticket to the Checkers' home opener.

### PROSPECT SPOTLIGHT: CLIFF PU

The lone player heading to Carolina in the Jeff Skinner trade, Cliff Pu recently wrapped up a strong junior career. After splitting his first OHL season between Oshawa and London, Pu took a step forward in 2015-16 but really broke out during the Knights' playoff run. He ranked fourth on the team in goals and fifth in points during the postseason as London rolled their way to a Memorial Cup. Pu kept that momentum rolling into the next season, leading the Knights in scoring and ranking eighth in the OHL overall while playing alongside current Checkers Janne Kuokkanen. The 2017-18 campaign saw Pu once again register over a point per game while being traded midseason from London to Kingston, where he teamed up with Carolina prospect Jeremy Helvig to guide the Frontenacs to a berth in the league's conference finals. The 6-foot-2 winger is now set to begin his pro career, likely fighting for a spot on Charlotte's opening night lineup.

### WHATEVER HAPPENED TO: MARK FLOOD

Mark Flood joined the Checkers in 2013-14 after having spent most of the 2011-12 season in the NHL before jetting to Russia for the following campaign. His return to North America saw him set a franchise record in Charlotte with 13 goals, a career high, but his stay wouldn't last long. After his historic showing in Charlotte, Flood went back to the KHL and led his team's blue liners in scoring in 2014-15 before a down year for a new team in 2015-16. He would return to form in 2016-17, however, jumping to Austria and ranking second among Salzburg defensemen in assists. This past season saw Flood attempt a comeback in North America, beginning the year on a tryout with the Manitoba Moose, but he would appear in just one game before jetting to Sweden, where he notched eight points in 38 games with Ilves Tampere of Liiga. Looking ahead to the 2018-19 campaign, Flood is slated to log his second consecutive season with a



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team for the first time since 2009-09 after re-signing with Ilves.

NUMBER OF THE WEEK: 60

Days until the 2018-19 season starts

## TODAY'S LINKS

<https://www.newsobserver.com/article216153580.html>  
<https://www.canescountry.com/2018/8/6/17655542/carolina-hurricanes-revisionist-history-cam-ward-fernando-pisani-2006-stanley-cup-final>  
<https://nhl.nbcports.com/2018/08/06/its-carolina-hurricanes-day-at-pht-3/>  
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<http://gocheckers.com/articles/features/offseason-weekly-report-august-6-2018>

# SportScan

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

1102681 Carolina Hurricanes

Taking a deeper look at where Skinner's exit, Faulk's return leaves the Hurricanes

BY LUKE DECOCK

August 06, 2018 09:59 AM

More than the end of a promising but ultimately frustrating era, Jeff Skinner's departure also appears to mark the conclusion of the Carolina Hurricanes' summer business, with owner Tom Dundon saying in the wake of Thursday's trade the team is not actively trying to trade Justin Faulk or make any other major moves in the month left before training camp.

That leaves two major questions that still need answers after a summer of retooling: What does it mean for Faulk, and how will the Hurricanes replace Skinner's goals?

The Faulk situation is curious, since the Hurricanes will be paying him \$6 million with a salary-cap hit of \$4.83 million to play third-pairing minutes on the right side behind Dougie Hamilton and Brett Pesce. Faulk will almost certainly lose the co-captaincy in Rod Brind'Amour's restructuring of his leadership group, and probably the letter off his jersey entirely.

But the Hurricanes feel no financial imperative to move his contract, they have plenty of cap space and they'll have as talented a third pairing as anyone in the NHL with Faulk there.

This may not be the worst thing in the world for Faulk, either: He'll be a dangerous threat against the opposition's third and fourth lines, with more room to attack on offense and margin for error on defense, and he'll still anchor the second power-play unit. He could end up being this team's Matt Cullen, only on the blue line: the matchup nightmare who slices through the opposition's soft underbelly.

With the Carolina Hurricanes prospect development camp ending June 30, 2018, coach Rod Brind'Amour assesses NHL free agency and the Canes' biggest needs.

By Chip Alexander

A lot of that will depend on Faulk, what kind of shape he's in and how he handles this essential demotion, but there are tangible gains there for both him and the team if things work out.

While Faulk's return raises those issues, the major concern after the Skinner trade was the loss of his goal-scoring ability – 24 goals last season, 37 the year before, and so on – from a team that finished in the bottom third of the NHL that department last season. It's a fair point and an open question considering the Hurricanes received no immediate help from the Buffalo Sabres in the deal.

With the obvious caveat that looking at last year's goals is the simplest and least predictive way of looking at things, the Hurricanes lost a total of 75 of last season's goals through the departures of Skinner, Elias Lindholm, Noah Hanifin, Derek Ryan, Lee Stempniak, Joakim Nordstrom, Josh Jooris, Martin Kruger and Klas Dahlbeck.

The four players they acquired – Hamilton, Micheal Ferland, Calvin de Haan and Jordan Martinook – scored 46.

So the question really is, how many goals will talented rookies Martin Necas and Andrei Svechnikov score, along with whichever prospect wins the open forward spot in training camp?

It's probably not unrealistic to expect Necas to score 15 goals and Svechnikov 20 and, let's say, Valentin Zykov 10, or to expect that trio of players to combine for at least 45. (Svechnikov in particular could score more, but if they don't score at least that many, the Hurricanes would be in trouble even if they still had Skinner.)

That would put the Hurricanes, even in this very simplistic and shallow accounting, 16 goals ahead of last season, when they were -28 in goal differential.

Using last season's point shares, an advanced metric which tries to measure each player's contribution to the team's overall point total, the four players the Hurricanes brought in almost exactly balance the nine players the Hurricanes lost, and that's with de Haan playing only a third of a season and before accounting for Necas and Svechnikov, leaving considerable runway for improvement in the standings.

The subtext to this entire discussion is that none of it may matter, since the Hurricanes' problem isn't so much putting the puck in the net as it is keeping it out. Even NHL-average goaltending would have bumped their goal differential to +13 last season.



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Assuming Scott Darling and Petr Mrazek can get halfway back toward average, and the rookies can contribute at a reasonable level, all of that becomes the very rudimentary calculus of how the Hurricanes could go from -28 to +8 in goal differential, which was good enough to squeak into the playoffs last season.

Not that they'd win anything once they're there with slightly-below-average goaltending, but, you know, baby steps.

All of that is based on the most simplistic assumptions possible, so it should be taken with considerable skepticism. Players regress, rookies struggle, injuries wreak havoc, goalies implode – and, on that note, Darling is still the ultimate wild card. The Hurricanes could have made a case like this last summer, or the summer before, or the summer before, and look where they ended up.

But if this is the team they're going to have, without Skinner and with Faulk, and it looks like it is, that's how the math could work out in their favor.

Sports columnist Luke DeCock:

News Observer LOADED: 08.07.2018

1102693 NHL

It's time to set aside NBA and concentrate on Seattle NHL fans who have paid deposits

Originally published August 6, 2018 at 6:00 am

Updated August 6, 2018 at 8:01 am

By Geoff Baker

The Leiweke brothers, Tim and Tod, dropped an eye-opening tidbit last week that 40 percent of season-ticket deposits for Seattle's future National Hockey League team came from people living within four miles of KeyArena.

It's another indicator of Seattle's changing demographics and that what we thought we knew about the NHL fan base was vastly underestimated. Almost nobody envisioned 33,000 season-ticket deposits within 31 hours and a waiting list of 4,000. Now, we're told a huge percentage of those deposits came not from far-flung areas, but the very heart of this changing city.

So it's time those fans got the attention and respect their size deserves, especially with an NHL franchise looming. Instead, much of the city's arena discussion still treats hockey supporters as an afterthought and is spent constantly reassuring a segment of local NBA fans they haven't been duped.

Look, we all know what the Sonics meant for four decades before being uprooted to Oklahoma City in 2008. Nobody is criticizing basketball fans worried the NBA might never return.

But the discussion needs to move forward.

Whether it's NHL Seattle president Tod Leiweke insisting at every speaking engagement that the NBA remains a priority, or Oak View Group CEO Tim Leiweke touting portions of a \$700 million KeyArena remodel being devoted to basketball purposes, they've given just about every reassurance possible.

Those reassurances continued at last week's news conference announcing the KeyArena renovation's general contractor. The Leiwekes and partners showed off new renderings of arena designs for basketball,

talked about the venue's NBA capacity increasing to 18,600 and of a separate dressing room being built for a future Sonics team.

NBA fans have increasingly warmed to their approaches and some eagerly await the remodeled facility. But others will never be satisfied unless guaranteed an NBA team.

And that can't happen until the NBA expands or relocates. Eventually, the Leiwekes will have to stop trying to win over this contingent and focus more on the still-developing NHL fan base. They can't placate the angst of every Sonics fan, nor prevent others from sowing further seeds of doubt.

Soon after last week's news conference, a paragraph in a wide-ranging ESPN.com story on expansion plans of multiple professional sports leagues took a swipe at Seattle's NBA hopes.

"The deal to renovate KeyArena for a potential NHL expansion team was much less favorable to the NBA than the plan to construct a new arena in the city's SoDo district," the article stated. "Now, with an NHL team likely to be first in, it's even less desirable because it would limit an NBA team's revenue streams."

The paragraph wasn't attributed to any source, but predictably set the internet ablaze on how our city has blown its NBA chance. Nobody I've spoken to within the NBA or its head office since would corroborate the league prefers the Sodo plan of entrepreneur Chris Hansen. How should antsy Sonics fans react? Well, I'd suggest considering some facts.

Tim Leiweke helped build arenas meeting NBA revenue requirements in Minneapolis, Denver and Los Angeles. Later, with encouragement from current NBA commissioner Adam Silver — who he'd partnered with on NBA-compatible arenas in Shanghai and Beijing — Leiweke ran the Raptors franchise in Toronto.

In a conversation with Silver last fall, I asked him whether Leiweke could make KeyArena a venue his league would play in.

"Tim has been involved in the building and operation of more NBA arenas than anybody on the planet," Silver told me. "I have no concern that the building proper won't meet our requirements."

I also asked Silver to characterize his relationship with Leiweke.

"It's often the case that the people you work around are also your friends," Silver replied. "It's a friendship built around our business relationship."

Lakers owner Jeanie Buss and Warriors president Rick Welts gave similar on-the-record assurances about Leiweke, whose current partners include New York Knicks owner James Dolan and Boston Celtics minority owner David Bonderman.

The Seattle City Council votes next month on green-lighting KeyArena construction. If the NBA truly doesn't want KeyArena, does anyone believe Silver — who has conversed for years with city officials and the Leiwekes — wouldn't speak up and advise his own friends, business associates and NBA owners against sinking their private money into that project?

Or that the city, hearing from Silver he prefers Sodo, wouldn't revisit that proposal?

But none of that is happening. Instead, KeyArena steams forward with another \$100 million in private money committed.

In a conversation after the ESPN story appeared, Tim Leiweke dismissed the notion he can't please the NBA. His pitch is that instead of an NBA owner spending between \$800 million and \$1 billion building a new arena, they can walk into a revamped KeyArena and immediately reap contractually protected revenue from naming rights, sponsorships, luxury suites, concessions and merchandising.

"They don't have to spend the \$800 million," he said. "They don't have to take the risk."



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Regardless of the NHL coming first, he added, all contracts include provisions protecting future revenue for any NBA team.

"I know how to keep the anchor tenants happy," Leiweke said. "And I know how to make deals and create leases that protect the best interests of the NBA."

Logic and facts agree. But again, until the NBA expands or relocates here, there's no way to definitively prove anything.

Meanwhile, local NHL fans await answers about the cost of season tickets they made deposits on months ago. And about the expected hockey team's name, colors, practice facility, general manager, coach and expansion-draft plans.

These hockey fans appear a major part of our newly emerging city and not the second-tier arena patrons they've too often been portrayed as during this yearslong saga.

The NBA queries have been asked and answered, with nobody contradicting the replies on the record. It's high time more energy is focused on answering and placating the NHL fans we'll soon be counting on to carry the winter-sports load for this market.

Seattle Times LOADED: 08.07.2018

1102706 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Hlinka Gretzky Cup will showcase best U18 players in the game

Mark Spector | August 5, 2018, 3:41 PM

EDMONTON — An international hockey tournament featuring the world's best players in an age group, held on Canadian soil? Hockey interrupting Edmonton's short summer window in August?

Seriously... Is the Hlinka Gretzky Cup going to fly?

"You know, you could have asked the same question of the World Junior Championship a number of years ago too," Hockey Canada CEO Tom Renney pointed out. "A World Junior tournament at Christmas time? Are you kidding me? Now, it's probably one of the best properties there is."

The message: never underestimate a Canadian fan's thirst for hockey, particularly when it is a best-on-best men's game and the highest pedigree available. And this tournament — heretofore known as the Ivan Hlinka tournament and held mostly in the Czech Republic — does not lack for talent.

Whereas the World Junior, or Under-20 world championship, annually loses a few of its best players to the National Hockey League, this tournament does not. As such, it becomes the starting point for the 2019 NHL Entry Draft, with multitudes of NHL general managers and scouts expected at Rogers Place to watch a field entirely comprised of Under-18, draft eligible players.

As such, 77 players from last year's tournament were chosen in the 2018 NHL draft, seven being drafted in the Top 10. Historically, this tournament has produced numerous first overall NHL draft picks, including Sidney Crosby, Aaron Ekblad, Joe Thornton, Nathan MacKinnon, Rick Nash, Taylor Hall, Marc-Andre Fleury and Vincent Lecavalier.

And this year Rimouski winger Alexis Lafreniere — the early favorite to go first overall in 2020 — is expected to star for Canada.

"(The Hlinka Gretzky) will take time to get some traction, we understand that," said Renney. That's why they've teamed up with the Oilers,

respectfully added Wayne Gretzky's surname after Hlinka's, and quietly consider this another crown jewel in Hockey Canada's Program of Excellence crown.

Remember, the Program of Excellence began back in 1982 as a project that could provide international exposure for players as young as 17 years old, that would leave them with big-ice experience should they graduate all the way to those old, amateur-built Hockey Canada Olympic teams.

Much has changed in 2018, with Renney's group leaving the U-16 level to the provinces, but taking over control of selecting national team candidates from age 17 and up. The U17 protocol used to be that Hockey Canada took a certain number of players from each region across Canada. Those days are gone.

"Now we are taking what we deem to be the best 112 players in the country — no matter where they're from," Renney said. "There are no quotas. Now we get to that needle head a little sooner, with the right people."

In the 27 years this U18 championships has been held, Canada has won gold 21 times and medalled 24. The red Maple Leaf has won nine of the past 10 tournaments, as our polite Canadian persona gives way to a nation that sees itself as the best hockey country in the world, and is OK with acting that way.

"It is high performance. We need to win — to put our best players on the ice — if we are going to inspire little kids to play," Renney said. "It's OK to want to be the best at something, but in saying that we want to inspire kids to play regardless of what they become beyond that."

Renney estimates that "around 70 percent" of players who wear the Team Canada sweater at the U-18 level end up playing in the World Junior tournament.

It is a quick, Monday-to-Saturday tournament played in Edmonton and the suburb of St. Albert, the town that gave hockey Mark Messier and Jarome Iginla. It features eight of the world's top hockey nations — Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.

Three rule changes will be experimented with during the tournament:

- A team will lose the opportunity to change lines if a defending player or goaltender unintentionally dislodges the net, augmenting the current rule that a minor penalty will be assessed to any player who deliberately dislodges the net.
- Teams awarded a power play may choose which offensive zone circle the ensuing face-off will occur, regardless of where the penalty was called.
- When the power play team makes its decision, the short-handed team will be allowed to change lines first, followed by a line change by the power play team if necessary.

Canada is in a pool with Switzerland, Slovakia and Sweden, played out Monday through Wednesday. After an off day Thursday, the semifinals go Friday before the medal games are played next Saturday.

Hockey in August.

Let's face it: We're hooked on the game.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 08.07.2018

1102707 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Gretzky brand key to spotlighting summer U-18 tournament



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 7, 2018

Canadian Press August 3, 2018, 8:31 AM

Bob Nicholson hopes a rare best-on-best men's tournament, and Gretzky brand, will pull people into Edmonton's Rogers Place to watch hockey in the middle of summer.

The Hlinka Gretzky Cup, an annual tournament of the world's top under-18 players, starts Monday in Edmonton and Red Deer, Alta. The rebranded event was formerly named the Ivan Hlinka Memorial Tournament in honour of the iconic player and coach from the former Czechoslovakia, and was co-hosted by Slovakia and the Czech Republic over the last 21 years.

Canada opens Monday against Switzerland at Rogers Place. The Czechs, Slovaks, Finland, Sweden, Russia and the United States round out the field. The gold-medal game is Aug. 11 in Edmonton.

One of Nicholson's last acts as president of Hockey Canada before leaving in 2014 was to negotiate a revenue-sharing deal with the Czech and Slovak federations to bring the tournament to Canada in 2018, 2020 and 2022.

"I think it's a property that will grow once Canadians see what it is," said Nicholson, now chief executive officer of the Oilers Entertainment Group.

Hlinka won three world championships and Olympic silver and bronze medals playing for Czechoslovakia.

He also played for the Vancouver Canucks from 1981 to 1983 and coached the Pittsburgh Penguins in 2000-01. Hlinka died in a car accident in 2004 at age 54.

Hockey star and Edmonton Oilers vice chairman Wayne Gretzky agreed to lend his name to this tournament and championship trophy.

"You notice the name is Hlinka Gretzky, and that's the way Wayne wanted it, which I think shows the character of Wayne too," Nicholson said.

"He knows what his name brings, but he didn't want to diminish the name Hlinka."

With the NHL no longer participating in the Winter Olympics, there are few international tournaments where all the world's top male players of any age compete against each other.

NHL playoffs conflict with the International Ice Hockey Federation's annual men's world championship, as does the Canadian Hockey League playoffs with the IIHF's world men's under-18 championships every spring.

There are always big-name players missing from the mid-winter world under-20 championships because NHL teams tend not to release their teenagers for that tournament.

The Hlinka Gretzky Cup, which has been held under various names dating back to 1991, hasn't been similarly encumbered in the middle of summer.

Canada has once previously hosted the tournament in 1996 in Nelson and Castlegar, B.C.

Canadian teams have won gold 21 of 27 times.

The tournament has never been an IIHF-sanctioned event, but it's become a fixture on the international hockey calendar particularly for NHL scouts.

Seventy-seven players in last year's tournament in Breclav, Czech Republic, were drafted by NHL teams in June. Seven were top-10 selections. This year's tournament features players born in 2001.

"These are the very top players who are going to be in the 2019 draft," Hockey Canada's vice-president of events Dean McIntosh said. "I don't think the public is aware of that."

"People are going to start to realize what this event means, so it's an education process.

"Wayne's been very involved to this point. He's a big part of this and him giving his name is a huge step that we thought was very important to North-Americanize the event."

Hockey Canada projects the tournament will have a regional economic impact of \$5 million based on events of similar scope.

TSN will broadcast 10 games of the tournament, so it gives Hockey Canada another television property to sell to sponsors.

For the Oilers, it gets people in Rogers Place seats midsummer.

The most northerly NHL franchise can be a tougher sell to free agents choosing a team, so it helps the Oilers to have dozens of top prospects experience Edmonton's posh arena that opened in 2016.

The tournament is also a tie-in with the world under-20 championship starting Dec. 26 in Victoria and Vancouver, as some players on Canada's team in Edmonton could also wear the Maple Leaf there.

A "Centre Ice Summit" will be held alongside the tournament bringing arena operators, hockey officials, NHL, IIHF and Western Hockey League representatives to the city, Nicholson said.

Attendance expectations are modest for this year, however. Red Deer's games will be in the new, 1,400-seat Servus Arena, which is smaller than the 7,100-seat Enmax Centrium.

The upper bowl of Rogers Place will be draped over and the hope is Canada's pool games there draw between 3,000 and 4,500, McIntosh said.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 08.07.2018