



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • Aug. 10, 2017

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Hurricanes sales draft agreement goes to lawyers; Greenberg meets with Centennial Authority chairman

By Chip Alexander and Luke DeCock

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August 09, 2017 6:30 PM

A draft agreement for the sale of the Carolina Hurricanes to a group led by lawyer Chuck Greenberg has been given to lawyers for both sides for vetting, two sources with knowledge of the sale process said Wednesday. Both requested anonymity because of the sensitivity of the negotiations.

While it's another step along the process of selling the team, there are still hurdles for the deal to clear in the details – Greenberg is also still finalizing the makeup of his investor group – and potentially still a small window for another buyer to insert himself into the process, as current Hurricanes owner Peter Karmanos indicated last week.

"With any transaction that may occur, there is a lot of paperwork going back and forth," Hurricanes president Don Waddell said in a statement provided by the team. "But as we said with the letter of intent, there is still nothing binding on either side in terms of a deal to sell the team."

But the process has moved far enough along that Greenberg met Wednesday morning with Centennial Authority chairman Tom McCormick, who at last week's meeting of the authority that oversees the arena said he had not yet spoken with Greenberg – even as the potential buyer met with current minority investors this week and last in the same PNC Arena conference room where the authority meets. Waddell was also present, McCormick said.

"We just chatted," McCormick said. "There were no documents exchanged, no talk about a timetable (for a sale) or anything like that. It gave him a chance to learn more about the authority. Kind of him sizing us up and us sizing him up."

"He seemed like a nice guy. He has a lot of experience with pro sports."

If lawyers sign off on the draft, a binding sale agreement could be in place as soon as the end of August, with the deal potentially closing, with NHL and Centennial Authority approval, at some point around the start of the season in October, if not necessarily before it.

Karmanos, in an interview last week, said the team could sell for about \$450 million to \$500 million and would remain in Raleigh. Karmanos said he had been negotiating with Greenberg and given Greenberg and his group additional time to finalize its financial investment, but said, "If we get a few more weeks down the road and he can't raise enough money, I'm going to tell him sayonara."

Karmanos said the price could rise to \$550 to \$600 million should the team go unsold before the start of the season, then have a successful year. Carolina has not been in the Stanley Cup playoffs since 2009, but many NHL prognosticators believe the Canes could end that streak in the 2017-18 season.

Greenberg, a sports attorney and former CEO of the Texas Rangers, has been in Raleigh often during the past few weeks, meeting with potential investors and handling much of the due diligence that comes with putting together such deals.



Tweetmail No. 154: Summer Showcase, Prospects & Peanut Butter

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

August 9th, 2017

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

Let's get to it.

Janne Kuokkanen was superb for Finland in the WJSS. Where do you see him playing next season? #Tweetmail

The World Junior Summer Showcase, featuring the United States, Canada, Sweden and Finland, wrapped up last weekend, and Hurricanes prospect Janne Kuokkanen was, without a doubt, among the standouts. He got completely snubbed by [NHL.com's list of top players](#) from the tournament, but his performance did not go unnoticed.

His head coach, too, was impressed.



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This short tournament is an interesting one because it's essentially a pre-tournament for the 2017 IIHF World Junior Championship, which will take place Dec. 26-Jan. 5 in Buffalo. What coaches and scouts are seeing are players who aren't yet in midseason shape, but it's easy to notice when someone stands out - and all reports say Kuokkanen did just that.

In five contests, Kuokkanen was a point-per-game producer with three goals and two assists. The 19-year-old forward paced all tournament skaters with 25 shots on goal, and it wasn't even very close. Kuokkanen was also a plus-2.

It was a solid showing for a mid-summer tournament, and I will be intrigued to see how he can carry that momentum into the NHL Prospects Tournament in Traverse City, Mich., in a month. More on that soon. Then in training camp, could he make roster decisions difficult? It's certainly a possibility.

Which leads us to ...

Any word yet on where Martin Necas, Janne Kuokkanen & Julien Gauthier will play in 2017-18 if they do not make [#Canes](#) NHL roster? [#Tweetmail](#)

Both Kuokkanen and Julien Gauthier are eligible to play for the Charlotte Checkers if they do not make the Hurricanes' roster out of training camp.

Kuokkanen played with the London Knights in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) last season, but since he was drafted out of a European league, American Hockey League (AHL) age restrictions do not apply. The move to North America, he told me in April, was beneficial for his development process.

"I think it was a good year for me. I learned lots of things here. The small rink play was a big thing for me," he said. "Culture, language, everything. I had a lot of good friends, and they helped me out a lot this year."

Kuokkanen joined the Checkers for the first round of the Calder Cup Playoffs this season and skated in a game.

"I see what these pro guys are doing every day and trying to learn from them," he said. "I need to get stronger, faster and a harder shot. Everything."

Gauthier will turn 20 years old in October, so he's eligible for AHL play, as well. The goal, of course, will be for him to make the big club, but a year to develop amongst professionals in the AHL wouldn't be a detriment.

Martin Necas, the Canes' 12th overall pick from this year, is more of a wild card. He's got a few options, including heading back to HC Kometa Brno in the Czech Republic for a second season with their big club or playing with the OHL's Saginaw Spirit, who selected Necas in this year's CHL Import Draft.

[#Tweetmail](#) With the prospect tourney a month away, what will the roster look like, what coverage will there be, and will we repeat??

The Hurricanes are aiming to defend their title at the NHL Prospects Tournament in Traverse City, which takes place Sept. 8-12. (As a bonus, fun side-note: as returning champs, the Hurricanes get one of the two big locker rooms at Centre Ice Arena, the other of which is occupied by the tournament host Red Wings.)

The Canes' roster, which will be released in the coming weeks, should be solid. The team has a talented stable of prospects, and you'll probably see some familiar names - tournament "veterans," if you will - on the roster. It's a group that will be fully capable of repeating as champions, which bodes well for the future of the Hurricanes. However, it is a short tournament, and anything can happen.

As always, you can expect full coverage of the tournament on [CarolinaHurricanes.com](#), which likely will include live streams of the games once again. That was a big add last year, and we're hopeful that can continue.

Important question! Which is better, crunchy or creamy peanut butter? [#tweetmail](#)

Creamy, and it's not even close. End of discussion.

The Hockey News

Six suggestions for the captain vacancies throughout the league

By: [Jared Clinton](#) Aug 9, 2017

There are six teams with vacant captaincies as the new campaign approaches, so who steps up to take on the most important on-ice leadership role next season?

In early August 2016, little more than two months after Anze Kopitar had taken over the Los Angeles Kings' captaincy, there were still six teams who had yet to name a new on-ice leader, but as the summer wound down, that number dwindled.

In late-August, both the St. Louis Blues and Winnipeg Jets took care of their vacant captaincies. St. Louis, who had lost former captain David Backes in free agency to the Boston Bruins, pegged their top [defenseman](#), Alex Pietrangolo, for

the job, handing him the 'C' and asking him to take the Blues to new heights. Meanwhile, in Manitoba's capital, the Jets were without a captain ever since Andrew Ladd's deadline deal to the Chicago Blackhawks ahead of the 2016 post-season, but they filled the hole left by Ladd with Blake Wheeler. For Jets fans, it was a no-brainer choice, with some even chanting "Captain Wheeler" weeks earlier at an unveiling of Heritage Classic jerseys in downtown Winnipeg.

Then, in the days leading up to the season, two more captaincies fell. The first was that of the Edmonton Oilers, who made a proclamation about their faith in Connor McDavid by handing him the captaincy before he had even celebrated his 20th birthday. At 19 years and 266 days, McDavid became the youngest captain in league history, but it was hard to find anyone who disagreed with the selection.



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And while Edmonton was tabbing a young gun for their on-ice leader, the Florida Panthers chose to pass over their litany of young studs and give the captaincy to veteran Derek MacKenzie. It was a bizarre choice to some, but MacKenzie, then 35, was relied upon to lead the Panthers through a tumultuous season and fared well in the role.

However, two teams, the Carolina Hurricanes and Toronto Maple Leafs, failed to name an outright captain before the season began and remained without one throughout the entire campaign. That means now, with two months before the new season is set to begin, both clubs find themselves considering handing out the captaincy once again.

They're not the only teams doing so, however. Like the past summer, six teams in total, including the Hurricanes and Maple Leafs, are without captains, though some of those vacancies are sure to be filled before the season begins. But who takes over the vacant 'C's? Here are suggestions for each of the six teams:

Oliver Ekman-Larsson, Arizona Coyotes

The Coyotes' captaincy was vacated the moment the organization decided to part ways with Shane Doan, and it didn't take long for speculation to ramp up that the 'C' would be heading to Ekman-Larsson. The suggestion isn't without warrant, either. By virtue of playing in Arizona, Ekman-Larsson may remain one of the more underrated and effective offensive defensemen in the league, and, given he's only 26, he could be the perfect cornerstone for the franchise to build around.

Ekman-Larsson has repeatedly been among the leading scorers in Arizona, has represented the franchise at the All-Star Game and has worn an 'A' for the Coyotes for the past four seasons. In addition, he has two top-10 Norris Trophy finishes under his belt, including a ninth-place finish in 2016-17 despite the fact the Coyotes finished a mile out of the playoffs. It never hurts to be led by a player of that calibre.

The one wrinkle here is that Ekman-Larsson's time in Arizona could be running out if the Coyotes don't prove they're serious about winning soon. He has two years remaining on his contract, and with potential unrestricted free agency in the offing, Ekman-Larsson could have his pick of the litter if he hits the [open market](#). Even still, the Coyotes putting the 'C' on Ekman-Larsson and showing the faith in him to be the leader is the right move right now.

Ryan O'Reilly, Buffalo Sabres

There's no confusing the fact that this will be Jack Eichel's team in the near future, but, for the time being, it seems hard to overlook O'Reilly if the Sabres want to name a new captain following Brian Gionta's [departure](#).

Let's run down O'Reilly's importance to the Sabres. First, he takes on more on-ice responsibility than any other player, consistently averaging upwards of 21 minutes per night. Second, he's as responsible a three-zone player as there is in the league. He's been a perennial Selke Trophy contender over the past four seasons while consistently racking up between 55 to 64 points. He's a 20-goal scorer, a power play contributor, talented in the faceoff circle and he's rarely in the penalty box. He has 82 penalty minutes in his entire 570-game career. However, O'Reilly ran into some off-ice trouble which could make the Sabres hesitant. That said, his on-ice case is unassailable.

The big question in Buffalo, though, is whether the Sabres want to wait for Eichel to come along and take the captaincy. He may be less than a season away from earning it as the team's top player and on-ice leader. That could mean we see a rotating 'C' or a cast of alternates until Eichel takes the role.

Jordan Staal, Carolina Hurricanes

The confusing thing about Staal and the Hurricanes is that one would imagine if Carolina had interest in putting the 'C' on him, they would have done so by now. He's been an alternate for the Hurricanes for each of the past four seasons, yet, with a captaincy that has been vacant since 2015-16, Carolina has yet to give him the nod. The time may be coming, though.

Staal continues to be an excellent lead-by-example type in Carolina, and, as a 28-year-old, he's old enough now to command the respect of his younger teammates as an NHL veteran. Staal's never won the Selke, but he is consistently in the running and his contributions at both ends of the ice are underrated. In addition, Staal is locked up for another six years, and while a team's captaincy shouldn't be decided on who's going to be sticking around the longest, that Staal is set to be around long-term offers the team some stability.

Some will argue for Jeff Skinner or Justin Faulk, or maybe even Victor Rask, but all three could use some more seasoning before taking on the role, and there's nothing stopping Carolina from downgrading Staal back to an alternate at some point in the future. The Hurricanes wouldn't be the first team to pull that move, and maybe it's the best way to have a clear-cut leader now while allowing a younger player to be [shepherded](#) into a leadership role.

Roman Josi, Nashville Predators

[We discussed this at length last week](#), but Josi is the perfect fit in Nashville for myriad reasons. He's been around the team for several seasons, has grown into the No. 1 role on the league's best defense, is a consistent offensive contributor and all-situations player. And with Mike Fisher hanging up his skates, it only seems right that Josi would wear the 'C' next season.

But maybe it's not a given. Some suggest P.K. Subban would be a good fit for the captaincy. Others think an underrated but steady hand, a Ryan Ellis or Mattias Ekholm, is the right choice. Still yet some will offer up Filip Forsberg, the Predators' brightest young scorer, as the player to lead Nashville into the future. Each player has their merits, to be sure, but it's incredibly difficult to suggest any of the aforementioned players can outshine Josi's case for the captaincy.

Josi has been groomed for this. He's been an alternate captain for the past two seasons, has played alongside former captain Shea Weber, has had the chance to watch Fisher guide the team and is heading right into the prime years of his career.

Auston Matthews, Toronto Maple Leafs

Matthews was shot out of a cannon to start his rookie season, putting up four goals on his first night in the league and setting a record that's sure to stand for a long time. He finished the campaign by assuming the role as the team's top center, was one of only three players to score 40 goals, led the Maple Leafs with 69 points. He captured the Calder



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Trophy, garnered Hart consideration and even had a vote thrown his way for the Selke. And, with the recent trend of young captains, Matthews seems a perfect choice to lead this team forward.

Now, with that out of the way, is there any other team that seems as certain to stick with the status quo — which is to say remain without a captain — than the Maple Leafs?

Yes, Matthews appears to be ready, and yes, Matthews looks like he's another big year from being the unquestionable leader of the Maple Leafs. But the fact remains that he is playing in what is arguably the toughest market in the entire NHL, heading into his sophomore season, which is traditionally a year in which some players struggle, and Toronto may not want to rush Matthews into anything.

That would be smart, too. What is there to lose by not naming him captain? Nothing. Absolutely, positively nothing.

Oh, and if Toronto does want a captain, why not throw it on someone short-term? Ron Hainsey for two seasons or Patrick Marleau for the next three seem like decent bets if the Maple Leafs want a veteran leader.

James Neal, Vegas Golden Knights

The Golden Knights' captaincy might be the hardest one to pin down, especially given Vegas might forego a captain in their first year as they let the coaching staff, front office and fans get a bit more associated with the roster.

However, if you want to pin down a choice for captain, you have to whittle away the roster and narrow down the candidates. First, you can probably take away the still-developing players, which eliminates about half the roster, including players such as Oscar Lindberg, William Karlsson, Colin Miller and Shea Theodore. Then you can cross out the players who've never really held down leadership roles before, which, given what Vegas had to work with in expansion, is more than half the roster.

The Golden Knights are left with some options that fit the mold of a veteran player with leadership qualities and a history with wearing a letter: Pierre-Edouard Bellemare and James Neal. And when those are your two options — and nothing against Bellemare — one would tend to lean on the side of Neal. He's got three years as an alternate in Nashville under his belt, was considered a possible Predators captain when Shea Weber was traded to the Montreal Canadiens and was a player Nashville GM David Poile really didn't want to lose in expansion. He's valued on and off the ice.

Here's a left-field suggestion, though: put the 'C' on Marc-Andre Fleury. Roberto Luongo was the last goaltender to be named captain, and while the experiment wasn't a smashing success, there's no harm in putting the captaincy on Fleury given he's the most readily marketable player within the organization. He's beloved by fans around the league and it's clear how much his teammates in Pittsburgh valued him. Fleury as Golden Knights captain isn't going to happen, but it wouldn't be the worst choice, that's for certain.



Jagr: 'Didn't expect it would be so hard to get job in NHL'

Second-leading scorer in League history remains free agent

by Michael Langr / NHL.com Correspondent

August 9th, 2017

BRNO, Czech Republic -- [Jaromir Jagr](#) said Wednesday he wasn't expecting it to be so difficult to sign with an NHL team this offseason.

"The most serious negotiations I have are with Kladno. Because Kladno has a smart owner who knows what he wants," joked Jagr, who owns the team in Czech Republic's second-tier professional league. "No, really, I don't have a clue. I leave it all on my agent [Petr Svoboda]. There is a couple of [NHL] teams that showed interest, but nothing specific yet."

The 45-year-old right wing had 46 points (16 goals, 30 assists) in 82 games for the Florida Panthers last season, his 23rd in the NHL. The Panthers said July 1 that they would not re-sign him.

Jagr's 1,914 points are second in League history behind Wayne Gretzky (2,857), and at 1,711 NHL games, he trails Gordie Howe by 56 for most all-time.

"I'm not thinking about the total number of NHL games," Jagr said after an exhibition game to commemorate fellow Czech forward Martin Havlat's retirement. "It's true that when I got back to the NHL (in 2011), I told myself I would very much want to get to 2,000 [NHL] points. But it's still far away. I didn't expect it would be so hard to get a job in the NHL this year."

At 765 NHL goals, Jagr trails Howe by 36 for second behind Gretzky (894).

"I guess I would need at least two more seasons (to catch Howe)," he said.

Six weeks after becoming an unrestricted free agent, Jagr doesn't know whether his next game will be for Kladno, in the Kontinental Hockey League or in the NHL.

Jagr said if he stays in the Czech Republic, he would play for Kladno, not in Extraliga, the top league, because he would like to keep open as an option signing with an NHL team during the season.



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"That would be the advantage of playing for Kladno. One thing is I would be at home and the other is I would have a chance to leave for the NHL anytime there is an opportunity," he said. "Let's say some team deals with injuries and needs help, then I could pack my stuff in the next day and go. If I played in Extraliga, I wouldn't have such an option unless the Czech league season would be over."

Jagr remains hopeful he'll sign with an NHL team, but only if the situation is right.

"Most important for me is to see some serious interest from the team. Because the more serious it is, the bigger the chance to get a better role on the team," he said. "And then it's on me how I would use that chance. Right now, I need to be ready when the opportunity comes. That's all I need to take care of now; taking care of anything else doesn't make sense."

Though he would want a meaningful role to return for a 24th season in the NHL, Jagr, who has been a first-line player for most of his career, said it doesn't matter where a team would put him in the lineup.

"I know very well I'm not the same player like 10 or 15 years ago when I was able to win games by myself," he said. "It's up to the coach what position he wants to use me. Maybe it

would be even better for me if I played on a second or third line because I would play against worse players and worse defensemen. I didn't have as much luck in my entire career, I always had to face the top defensemen. Even in Florida, I always played against the best, which was always very tough."

When Jagr was getting ready to play in the KHL from 2008-2011, his offseason training regimen was different from the one he used to prepare for the NHL. He lost weight and tried to focus on skating and speed more than strength. After he signed with the Philadelphia Flyers as a free agent July 1, 2011, he went back to workouts geared more to the physical North American style.

With his future uncertain, Jagr said it's been difficult to prepare for the coming season.

"It's not that I would change a lot of things during my practices. There are certain changes, but it's a little unpleasant mostly because you don't know where you're going to end up," he said. "The most important is desire and drive. But this situation is a little uncomfortable when I don't know what's going to happen, and also when is the season going to start for me, because the season in Europe starts one month earlier (than the NHL season)."



SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY

Storm Advisory for August 10: Carolina Hurricanes Sale Update and NHL News, Rumors, Links and Daily Roundup

[Could the finish line be in sight for Chuck Greenberg's proposed purchase of the Hurricanes?](#)

by [Brian LeBlanc@bdleblanc](mailto:Brian.LeBlanc@bdlleblanc) Aug 10, 2017, 6:43am EDT

Let's Make A Deal

News broke last night from Chip Alexander and Luke DeCock at the News and Observer that [attorneys for both Peter Karmanos and Chuck Greenberg have received a proposed sale agreement](#) for Greenberg's purchase of the [Carolina Hurricanes](#) and are now reviewing it. Additionally, the N&O reports that Centennial Authority chairman Tom McCormick met informally with Greenberg yesterday, in what was described as a "chat" by McCormick.

Since a binding [purchase contract](#) still has not been signed, the article notes that another potential buyer could still parachute into the process, but it certainly appears, based on what we know now, that Greenberg's bid for the Hurricanes is at an advanced stage. What [remains unknown](#) is the makeup of his investment group, and whether he has finalized the financial package necessary to purchase the team. Karmanos indicated in an interview with Chip last week that he had extended his internal deadline to allow

Greenberg more time to shore up the finances, but that he wouldn't wait forever.

Informed speculation in the article indicates that if everything goes well in legal review and Greenberg's ownership group comes together in enough time, the deal could be wrapped up as early as the end of this month. That would theoretically give the NHL and the Centennial Authority the opportunity to sign off on the purchase before the start of the regular season, although the timeline won't necessarily be dictated by the season opener.

Sources around the team have indicated to Canes Country that the process is closer to the end than the beginning, but there still remain no indications that Greenberg has finalized the financial package although he continues to work in that direction. While anything can happen, and it's too early to say it's absolutely a done deal if Greenberg's ownership group successfully comes together, the feeling is that legal review and the investment makeup are the only two remaining significant hurdles to a deal being completed.



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Reading Assignments

- Cory Lavalette spoke with Don Waddell last week, and among other things, the Hurricanes president confirmed that the team turned a \$2 million profit last year, not including the \$16 million received as the Canes' share of the Vegas Golden Knights expansion fee. [[North State Journal](#)]
- Say goodbye to the Verizon Center and hello to Capital One Arena. [[Associated Press](#)]
- Who has a chance to be this year's version of the [Avalanche](#), cratering from a respectable finish last season to a season in the cellar? (Spoiler: the Hurricanes aren't included as a candidate.) [[Sportsnet](#)]

TODAY'S LINKS

- <http://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article166359102.html>
- <https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/tweetmail-number-154-summer-showcase-prospects-peanut-butter/c-290627156>
- <http://www.thehockeynews.com/news/article/six-suggestions-for-the-captain-vacancies-throughout-the-league>
- <https://www.nhl.com/news/jagr-didnt-expect-it-would-be-so-hard-to-get-job-in-nhl/c-290634078>
- <https://www.canescountry.com/2017/8/10/16123534/storm-advisory-carolina-hurricanes-sale-chuck-greenberg-quebec-nordiques-nhl-news-rumors-links>

SportScan

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

1072144 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / NHL opposes Texas 'bathroom bill,' but stronger stance may be needed

Mark Spector

Many felt the National Hockey League only talked the talk, but backed down at crunch time, when Anaheim's Ryan Getzlaf let loose a homophobic slur during Round 3 of the 2017 Stanley Cup Playoffs but was not suspended.

Today, it appears the NHL may be heading towards a do-over on the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender file.

There is a controversial bill winding its way through the Texas Legislature — known as the "bathroom bill" — deemed homophobic and non-accepting of transgender rights. Should the bill pass, all eyes will be on the NHL, which recently awarded the 2018 draft to the Dallas Stars.

The NHL has undertaken numerous initiatives to prove it is accepting of the LGBT community, including welcoming Pride Tape and pairing up with You Can Play. On Wednesday, both the Stars and the NHL condemned the senate bill.

"We strongly oppose the bill in its original form," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly told Sportsnet in an email Wednesday afternoon. "We hope and expect that bill in that form will not be passed into law. We would obviously have to reassess the situation in the event that happens."

The Senate bill, as described by the New York Times, "would require transgender people to use bathrooms in schools and local government buildings corresponding to the gender listed on their birth certificates or state-issued identification cards."

Championed primarily by the religious right, such a bill would stop school districts or other organizations from making their own decisions regarding acceptance of transgender people. Telling people which bathroom they

are to use, opponents say, takes Texas back to the days when there were separate washroom facilities for blacks and whites.

This past February, the NHL appointed 30 "You Can Play Club Ambassadors," a player from each team who could speak to the inclusiveness of the league.

Still, the NHL remains the only major North American league that has not had a current or former player "come out" as gay.

Meanwhile, Stars president and CEO Jim Lites was the first executive from a pro team in Texas to speak out against the bill on Wednesday.

"Dallas was warm and welcoming when we came to this great city 25 years ago, and it remains so today," Lites said in a statement. "The Dallas Stars stands strongly opposed to any legislation perceived as discriminatory, including proposed bathroom legislation. We welcome fans from all over the globe, and our roster boasts players from half a dozen countries. Dallas welcomes all, and we welcome all.

"We're thrilled that Dallas will host the NHL Draft next year," he added. "We are proud of our home and want every visitor to feel at home here, too, and that's why we oppose this discriminatory bathroom legislation."

There is precedent here, set by the National Basketball Association when it moved the 2017 All-Star Game out of Charlotte over objections to a North Carolina law limiting anti-discrimination protections for LGBT people. The NBA had expressed its opposition to the law prior to its enactment, and moved the game less than a month after state legislators revisited the law and chose to leave it largely unaltered.

The game was moved to New Orleans.

In stating a need to "reassess the situation," Daly left the door open for a similar decision to be made by the NHL, should the bill pass. Should the bill go through, there would be much pressure for hockey to conduct itself the way basketball did.

Said Outsports.com co-founder Cyd Zeigler on Wednesday: "The NHL's decision to host the 2018 NHL Draft, while discriminatory legislation is being pushed by the state senate and governor, shows a complete disregard for the well-being of LGBT fans and partially undoes years of goodwill the NHL has fostered with our community. The message is clear: We'll embrace you when it's easy, not when it's hard."

That's the NHL's conundrum, in a nutshell.



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If you're going to call yourself an inclusive league, team up with You Can Play, and march with the Stanley Cup in Pride parades, then you've got to be there to back the LGBT community on issues like these. If you do not, then you are deemed phony and hollow.

The bill has not been passed as of yet, but is expected to be decided upon either way by mid-August.

After that, the puck will be in the NHL's end, when it comes to Dallas and the 2018 draft.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 08.10.2017

1072145 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Stars become first Texas team to publicly oppose 'bathroom bill'

Sportsnet Staff

The Dallas Stars have become the first professional sports team in Texas to publicly oppose the controversial "bathroom bill."

"The Dallas Stars stands strongly opposed to any legislation perceived as discriminatory, including proposed bathroom legislation," Stars president Jim Lites said in a statement on Wednesday. "We welcome fans from all over the globe, and our roster boasts players from half a dozen countries. Dallas welcomes all, and we welcome all."

The proposed bill, which has not yet been passed, would require transgender people in Texas to use public restrooms that correspond to the gender on their birth certificates.

The NHL has yet to comment on the matter.

You Can Play, an organization that, according to its mission statement, is dedicated to "ensuring equality, respect and safety for all athletes, without regard to sexual orientation and/or gender identity," has supported the move by the Stars.

Thank You @DallasStars for your leadership in becoming the 1st franchise to publicly oppose Texas "bathroom bill"
<https://t.co/MCXfqjJbx> pic.twitter.com/mQvCkGYYgA

— You Can Play Project (@YouCanPlayTeam) August 9, 2017

It previously took issue with the NHL Draft being awarded to Dallas in July.

"We would encourage our partners at the NHL to carefully consider the message sent to fans – all fans – by holding the 2018 NHL Draft celebration in a state that has chosen to write discrimination into law," the organization said in a statement. "Hosting events like the draft is a privilege. We believe events like this should be held in states, cities and venues where all fans, athletes and their families feel welcome."

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1072146 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Down Goes Brown: Five NHL teams who could be this year's Avalanche

Sean McIndoe

The Colorado Avalanche are suffering through one of the worst 12-month stretches in modern NHL history. Short of a team moving or some sort of off-ice tragedy, it's hard to imagine how a year could go much worse for a team.

Their coach walked out on them. They maneuvered themselves into pretty much having to trade one of their best young players, then failed to

make a deal happen. They sure seemed to make a clumsy pass at a future GM, only to come up empty. And worst of all, they suffered through what was probably the worst season of the cap era, then became the first last-place team to lose the same draft lottery three times.

And that's why it's somewhat jarring to remember that one year ago today, nobody thought the Avalanche would be all that bad. We weren't exactly calling them a Cup contender, but they were coming off an 82-point season in 2015–16, good enough to finish ahead of eight teams and to tie them with the Montreal Canadiens. Oddsmakers were expecting them to finish a few points over .500, and had them ranked ahead of eventual playoff teams like the Blue Jackets, Senators and Maple Leafs.

And then it all went horribly wrong. But not many of us saw it coming until it was too late. So today, let's ask the question: Could any of the current middle-of-the-pack teams be this year's Avalanche?

To be clear, it's exceedingly unlikely that any team implodes quite like Colorado did – that was a perfect storm of bad luck, poor timing and utter ineptitude. But could any of the teams that finished last season in roughly the same not-great-but-not-awful ballpark as the 2015–16 Avs be in danger of a major collapse of their own?

We'll exclude the four teams that finished last year with 70 points or fewer – that's the Canucks, Coyotes, Devils and (of course) the Avalanche – as well as the expansion Golden Knights, since all of them are expected to be bad. That still leaves us with 10 teams that finished the year roughly in the 2015–16 Avalanche range. Of those, here are five who could be at risk of seeing a Colorado-style plummet down the standings.

New York Islanders

2016-17 finish: 41-29-12, 94 points, 17th overall

Warning signs on the dashboard: John Tavares. I mean, this should be done by now, shouldn't it? Heading into the off-season, we were assured that the Islanders were going to either extend their franchise player for as long as possible or, failing that, explore moving him. Instead, nothing seems to be happening, and it's starting to feel possible that no news is bad news.

We tend to talk way too much about distractions in the sports world, but this year's Islanders feel like a team where it could actually apply. If Tavares heads into the season without a deal and suddenly every minor thing that happens starts turning into a referendum on the team's long-term future, things could get ugly.

That seems unlikely – Tavares still sounds like a guy who wants to stay, and there's a good chance this whole thing gets wrapped up and then Islander fans point and laugh at anyone who suggested it wouldn't. But as Avalanche fans could tell you, sometimes the unlikely worst-case scenario is the one that ends up happening.

Why they should be OK: They're the best team on our list in terms of last year's standings; remember, they finished with as many points as the Cup-finalist Predators. They were also a downright impressive 24-12-8 under interim coach Doug Weight, who now holds the full-time job. And that was before they added Jordan Eberle.

Maybe more importantly, failure doesn't seem to be an option right now. With Tavares looming over everything, new ownership looking for a new arena, and Garth Snow's job potentially on the line, the Islanders don't seem like a team that can afford to be bad this year. That's a dangerous situation, because it can lead a team into some bad long-term decisions. But it should mean that a total collapse would be unlikely, if only because Snow would do everything in his power to prevent it.

But all bets are off if...: Tavares decides he wants out, and Snow has to go into scramble mode to salvage something of the situation. Again, that's unlikely. But among more realistic scenarios, recall that the goaltending is still a question mark, and the blue line just lost Travis Hamonic. The Metro was brutal last year, and with the Flyers and Hurricanes on the way up there won't be much room for error here.

Florida Panthers

2016-17 finish: 35-36-11, 81 points, 23rd overall

Warning signs on the dashboard: Any flashing lights on the Panthers' dashboard probably look more like a question mark. As in: What the heck is going on with this team?



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You know the story by now. The 2015–16 Panthers were fantastic, putting up 103 points to finish first in the Atlantic. But they lost in the first round, then spent most of the off-season fixing a front office that didn't seem to be broken. They started the season slowly, fired their coach, gave their old GM his job back (sort of), and ended up missing the playoffs by a mile. It wasn't quite an Avalanche-like plunge, but the previous year's success arguably made them an even more disappointing team.

So what now? Who knows. On paper, the Panthers are a good young team that should rebound nicely. But their expansion maneuvering was downright weird, they've got a rookie head coach, and their star goalie is 38 years old (but still signed for five more seasons). Plus, they made Jaromir Jagr sad, and teams that do that have a bad habit of hitting rock bottom shortly after.

Why they should be OK: Guys like Aleksander Barkov, Jonathan Huberdeau and Aaron Ekblad are at the age where they should all be getting better, and maybe even making big leaps into the league's elite. Even if age catches up with Luongo, James Reimer is a reasonably dependable backup option, and Jagr was slowed down to the point that they may be better off without him.

And again, this team is one year removed from winning the division. Just about everything that could possibly go wrong last year did (including plenty of injuries), and they still topped 80 points. We've already seen their floor, and it's nowhere near last place.

But all bets are off if...: They start off slowly and management panics. You know, again.

Winnipeg Jets

2016-17 finish: 40-35-7, 87 points, 20th overall

Warning signs on the dashboard: They've done a great job of drafting and developing, but that only takes you so far. With a GM who refuses to trade and a market that has a tough time attracting free agents, they've struggled to make the transition from future contender to a team that can win right now. They've been back in Winnipeg for six years now and have yet to win a playoff game, and eventually that starts to wear on a team. Jacob Trouba already sounded like he wanted out last year; are we really sure that he's the only one?

Plus, after years of seeing their playoff hopes torpedoed by substandard goaltending, they went out and addressed the problem by adding... Steve Mason? That seems sub-optimal.

Why they should be OK: Mason struggled last year, but overall he was better than you think in Philadelphia. And he isn't being asked to come in and win a Vezina here – he just needs to be better than Ondrej Pavelec. Spoiler alert: He is.

Outside the crease, the team has enough talent to contend for a playoff spot. Remember, these guys are supposed to be on the way to the 2019 Stanley Cup – surely this is the year that they finally start generating some momentum in that direction. And if they do start slow, maybe they finally make the coaching change that at least some fans have been begging for.

But all bets are off if...: Mason and Connor Hellebuyck struggle, the team is once again all but out of the Central playoff race by late-November, and fans start wanting to know if there's an actual plan here.

Buffalo Sabres

2016-17 finish: 33-37-12, 78 points, 26th overall

Warning signs on the dashboard: The Sabres struggled through yet another disappointing season. They're the worst team on our list in terms of last year's standings, so they don't even have all that far to fall to get to Colorado territory. And they share some eerie similarities to last year's Avalanche.

Both teams feature a young core that should be good, but has underachieved. Both have questionable blue lines. Both have good goaltenders who've battled hip and leg problems. And both head into the season with a new head coach who's never held that job at the NHL level before. Hell, the Avalanche even stole Buffalo's whole "getting screwed by the draft lottery" bit.

Why they should be OK: On paper, the Sabres look like a team that should be on the way up, not down. Jack Eichel is ready to break out as one of the league's very best forwards, Ryan O'Reilly is one of the

league's best No. 2 centres, Sam Reinhart could finally break through, and they'll either have a motivated Evander Kane in a contract year or whatever they eventually get back for him in a trade. The blue line is still a mess, and that's the big concern right now. But Robin Lehner should be healthy and ready to go, and he was really good last year.

But all bets are off if...: Phil Housley can't hit the ground running as a rookie head coach, the team gets off to another slow start, and a long-suffering fanbase gets even more frustrated than they already are. Or Eichel gets hurt again. Either of those would be bad news, and both would be a recipe for disaster. Still, of all the teams mentioned here, the Sabres seem like the biggest long shot to flatline.

Tape II Tape

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

Detroit Red Wings

2016-17 finish: 33-36-13, 79 points, 25th overall

Warning signs on the dashboard: Of all the teams on this list, the Red Wings stand out as the most obvious candidate for a plunge. In fact, their dashboard isn't just blinking — it's smoking and starting to spark.

After 25 straight post-season appearances, the Red Wings' streak finally ended last year. Even the most diehard Detroit fan could see that coming — the team hadn't won a round since 2013, and had barely squeaked in on a tie-breaker in 2016. On paper, the team isn't all that good. It's also relatively old, and absolutely packed with ugly-looking contracts. There's even a good case to be made that the Red Wings have the worst long-term cap situation in the entire league.

Despite it all, GM Ken Holland insists that he won't rebuild, at least not in the traditional tear-it-all-down sense. With a new arena ready to open, maybe he feels like he can't. But we've seen old and expensive teams try to reload on the fly before, and it rarely ends well. It's not hard to imagine a season playing out that sees beleaguered coach Jeff Blashill fired, Holland forced to start trading veterans, and the Red Wings finishing close to dead last.

Why they should be OK: Between Jimmy Howard and Petr Mrazek, the Wings have two goalies who've had NHL success. Granted, both have been inconsistent lately, but only one needs to play well to prevent the season from going completely off the rails. And while the core is old, there's enough young talent on the roster and on the way that things could get at least marginally better.

Besides, Holland has been at this for a while and should get some benefit of the doubt. If he really thinks they don't need to rebuild, maybe he's right and the rest of us are wrong.

But all bets are off if...: Holland changes his mind (or was bluffing all along) and decides to tear it down. That would be more of a controlled demolition than an Avalanche-style collapse, but the end result would look the same.

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Sportsnet.ca / Alex Ovechkin on Olympics: There is always a chance

Tim and Sid discuss whether people will still watch the Olympics despite the NHL electing to skip the tournament.

Emily Sadler

So you're telling me there's a chance.

The NHL has not wavered on its decision to forego participation in the 2018 Olympic Games in PyeongChang, South Korea. The same can also be said for Alex Ovechkin and his continued desire to play, which he reiterated earlier this week.



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Ovechkin told Russian news outlet Sport-Express that he's still hopeful he could represent Russia at the Olympic rink next February.

"We are hoping they let me perform," he said in Russian, as translated by Sportsnet. "There is always a chance."

This latest statement comes around the same time as the NHL's announcement that any player under NHL contract — even those playing in the minors — will not be permitted to play at the Games.

Ovechkin has been vocal about his Olympic hopes throughout the league's long negotiation process that dominated headlines over the course of the 2016-17 NHL season.

"It's the biggest opportunity in your life to play in the Olympic Games," he said back in April, shortly after the NHL announced its decision not to go to the Games. "Somebody going to tell me I don't go, I don't care, I just go."

Connor McDavid, Erik Karlsson, Johnny Gaudreau, and Claude Giroux are among others who have spoken out on the topic.

Capitals owner Ted Leonsis has even gone on the record to support his captain's Olympic dream, though that was back in December — before the NHL's official ruling.

Ovechkin has suited up for Team Russia on the Olympic stage three times, registering eight goals in 17 games, but has never reached the podium. He has also been known to jet across the pond to join Team Russia during the IIHF world championships upon the Capitals' elimination from the post-season, helping his country claim eight medals — including three golds — since 2005.

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Sportsnet.ca / How the Gretzky trade changed Edmonton forever

Mark Spector

This story was originally posted on Aug. 9, 2013, the 25th anniversary of the trade that sent Wayne Gretzky to the L.A. Kings.

THE MICRO-CASSETTE still sits in my desk drawer, though we're not sure we still possess the micro-cassette recorder to play it on.

How could any self-respecting sportswriter, particularly one born and raised in Edmonton, part with that tiny cassette simply labelled: "The Trade."

Full disclosure: It was not recorded live at the Molson House, the venue where Wayne Gretzky famously broke down, admitting, "I told Mess I wouldn't do this." No, I was a junior reporter at the Edmonton Journal, told to stay back at the office and work the phones.

So instead I called Walter Gretzky at the house in Brantford, as was my assignment, and informed him that his son had been traded to Los Angeles.

"You sure about that?" Walter said.

"I'd better be," I thought, before saying, "Well, the press conference goes in a couple of hours."

He might have known of the deal, but Walter played it like he'd never heard anything or the sort. "How could I be informing him about The Trade?" I thought. Then again, nothing went the way it was supposed to go that August day, a day that was a blur on so many levels.

Not because it was the most impactful trade possibly in the history of hockey, but more because it was pure heresy to trade the best player in the world.

Edmonton had won four Stanley Cups in the past five years; Gretzky was the best player on earth, the first-line centre on the previous summer's Canada Cup. He'd won seven Art Ross Trophies in a row, and only lost the 1987-88 race by 19 points to Mario Lemieux, only because Gretzky

played 13 less games than Mario. He had won the Hart Trophy eight straight times, where no one else had ever won it more than four straight times (Gordie Howe and Phil Esposito).

Gretzky was king. Why on earth would anyone want to make him a King?

It was the day that shook Edmonton's sporting foundation, a moment that changed the course of the franchise abruptly. Within years the Oilers were an also-ran without a chance. Peter Pocklington sold Gretzky; Glen Sather recouped enough actual players to help win one last Cup in 1990, and by 1993, the Oilers fell off the edge of the earth.

No Gretzky, soon no Messier, no Kurri, no Fuhr... No chance.

But to understand the impact that Aug. 9, 1988, had on this city, you have to recall what 1988 was like. There was no Internet for the masses, no Twitter. Nobody had a cell phone yet, and in fact, as reporters dispatched for Molson House and the early afternoon news conference, I for one was still naïve enough to wonder if somehow it was all a hoax.

"It was back in an era where there wasn't much technology, and the media wasn't breaking all the stories. It was a pretty well-kept coup, from what I remember," said Craig MacTavish, a third-line centre on that 1988 Oilers team. "Quite a shocking time, for not just Edmontonians and the Edmonton Oilers players, but for the entire country."

There wasn't a person in Edmonton who didn't think owner Peter Pocklington wasn't capable of selling Gretzky at some point, as the Oilers longtime owner was The Grinch incarnate. Once considered a flashy entrepreneur, Pocklington was forever being chased for unpaid debts, real or perceived — and by 1988 everyone who lived here knew it.

He was ruthless in business as the bitter, six-month-long Gainers strike had proven. Peter Puck had the gall of 10 men, accepting a \$55-million loan from the Alberta government of the day to help save the Gainers meat-packing plant, then walking away from it within three years.

But Gretzky was different.

No. 99 wasn't Pocklington's to sell, was he? Gretzky belonged to Edmonton, where he'd shown up during the World Hockey Association days, and Sather had shrewdly shielded The Great One from the National Hockey League's Draconian expansion draft.

There was just one other thing an Edmontonian could say that his city possessed that was better than anything anyone else had of the sort, and that was a stupid mall. Gretzky actually made Oilers fans the envy of nearly every hockey fan in the game, and the Oilers were a travelling road show that did for this smallish Northern Alberta city what no travel board could dream of.

Soon, he would be coming through town with a divisional rival, dressed in black and silver. And for every Oilers fan, it must have truly sucked.

"We really didn't know how to react the first time we played against Wayne," said MacTavish. "I remember Kevin (Lowe)... taking a vicious run at him, and that kind of set the tone on the mentality going forward, on how we were going to deal with (Gretzky). "It was at that point I really felt from a player's perspective that there was a separation between Wayne the friend and Wayne the L.A. King."

Wayne Gretzky would not win another Stanley Cup after leaving Edmonton. Obviously, Edmonton had a hard time finding a replacement for No. 99.

It was, alas, a deal that hurt both sides.

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Buffalo Sabres

Sabres Hall of Famer and former Buffalo coach Craig Ramsay has been named head coach of the Slovakian national team, earning a two-year deal to direct the team in the 2018 Winter Olympics and as the host in the 2019 World Championships.

Carolina Hurricanes

A draft agreement for the sale of the Carolina Hurricanes to a group led by lawyer Chuck Greenberg has been given to lawyers for both sides for vetting, two sources with knowledge of the sale process said Wednesday. Both requested anonymity because of the sensitivity of the negotiations.



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While it's another step along the process of selling the team, there are still hurdles for the deal to clear in the details – Greenberg is also still finalizing the makeup of his investor group – and potentially still a small window for another buyer to insert himself into the process, as current Hurricanes owner Peter Karmanos indicated last week.

Dallas Stars

The NHL's Dallas Stars have become the first Texas professional sports franchise to officially oppose a "bathroom bill" targeting transgender people.

Team President Jim Lites said in a statement Wednesday that the Stars are "strongly opposed to any legislation perceived as discriminatory."

The NFL and NBA have previously joined dozens of powerful businesses in opposing a proposal requiring transgender Texans to use public restrooms corresponding to the gender on their birth certificates.

Texas' Republican-controlled Legislature failed to pass the bill during a legislative session that ended in May. Gov. Greg Abbott convened a special session to revive the issue, but it looks unlikely to pass before that ends next week. A similar law in North Carolina sparked national uproar and costly boycotts before lawmakers rolled back much of it.

Vegas Golden Knights

The Vegas Golden Knights will get to keep their nickname.

The NHL expansion team was successful in its appeal to have its name trademarked after the United States Patent and Trademark Office gave approval for the team to continue to use its name for identification and competition purposes.

However, it did not grant the same approval for the team to protect its logo on its merchandise and sportswear. That trademark request is suspended pending further appeal. But it won't prevent the team from using the logos in selling jerseys, hats and T-shirts.

Washington Capitals

The downtown home of the Capitals, Wizards, Mystics, Georgetown men's basketball and Valor has a new name: Capital One Arena.

On Wednesday morning, Monumental Sports and Entertainment announced that McLean-based Capital One will be replacing Verizon as the new naming rights partner for the building, which opened in 1997.

Although the new name takes effect immediately, the full signage and branding changeover will happen in the coming months.

Vancouver Canucks

The Canucks have signed forward Brendan Gaunce to a two-year, one-way contract worth an average of \$750,000 annually.

Canucks GM Jim Benning made the announcement Wednesday.

END