



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 14, 2020

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Hurricanes wake up from their 15-month Bruins nightmare, and the script is flipped

By Luke DeCock

Just when it was starting to look more like Game 6 of a series that never really ended instead of Game 2 of the rematch, the Carolina Hurricanes finally woke up from their Boston nightmare.

They shrugged off another night of questionable officiating. They played through any liberties the Bruins may have taken. It took 15 months and one more game, but they finally turned the page on last year's sweep.

This was a massive win, not only to even a series that through four periods was looking decidedly grim, but to flip a script that seemed to be going against them. And it was the ex-Bruin, of all people, Dougie Hamilton, who did the final damage with an unstoppable third-period fastball in a 3-2 win, his first goal since January on a rebuilt left leg.

"It's been a long time for me since I played hockey," Hamilton said. "For seven months you're thinking about scoring a goal like that. That's what fuels you when you're in those tough moments in rehab. It feels great."

The power play finally awakened. The goalie rotation — James Reimer again taking the second half of a back-to-back — proved fruitful. The Hurricanes' top line, broken up to deal with matchup issues, still peppered the scoresheet. This was a game full of turning points, and at a time when the Hurricanes only needed one or two they found several, starting with Andrei Svechnikov single-handedly answering the Bruins for snarl and snark alike.

"There's a lot at stake and a lot of adversity in the game," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "You have to fight through it, everything that seemed to go against us."

Still, Brind'Amour's \$25,000 deliberate technical foul didn't buy the Hurricanes any calls, whether because the Hurricanes are the underdog or just old-fashioned incompetence. Even though he watched his words Thursday night, Brind'Amour may yet need to cough up the other \$25,000 he was threatened with by the NHL.

Charlie McAvoy ripped off Jordan Staal's helmet close enough to one official to risk hitting him with the loose bucket. McAvoy then elbowed Svechnikov in the head. He got away with both. The Bruins seem to know instinctively where the line is. The Hurricanes haven't found it yet.

Then again, who knows where to look? The Bruins tied the score 2-2 at the end of the second on a power play after Torrey Krug backed into a stationary Teuvo Teravainen and Teravainen was called for interference. That's like getting called for holding the stick after it has been lodged into your upper palate. Turns out, the officials can wave off a goal: the potential go-ahead goal was ruled out in the third after Teravainen was checked into the crease, leading to another unsuccessful Brind'Amour challenge.

And then again, regardless of how they feel about the penalties or how much Brind'Amour wants to borrow from his 401(k), the Hurricanes were still going to need to kill one or two of those penalties at some point. The Bruins scored on their first two power plays, but the Hurricanes killed the third, after the Teravainen non-goal, a timely kill if there ever was one.

If there was a game in this series where the Hurricanes should have had a clear advantage, this was it. The younger team in a back-to-back, bringing back two key players who didn't play in Game 1, and with the Bruins missing 48-goal-scorer David Pastrnak to boot. It took the Hurricanes a period or two to find their footing, but once they did they were able to capitalize on circumstances that played into their hands, with Martin Necas leading the way with a pair of assists.

"Every time something seemed to go against us we bounced back," Brind'Amour said. "It evens the series. Nothing to get overly excited about. It at least gets us back to square one."

But it is a series now. The old cliché about a playoff series not starting until the road team wins a game still applies even when both teams are away from home. The Svechnikov-Sebastian Aho-Teravainen line, broken up Thursday, is likely to be reunited Saturday when the Hurricanes have last change. For the first time in more than a year, things have turned the Hurricanes' way.



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Hamilton's third-period goal lifts Canes to 3-2 win over Bruins to even series

By Chip Alexander

Dougie Hamilton had been thinking about it for months, sweating out workouts, aching to get back on the ice, wanting so much to play hockey again.

On Thursday, just when the Carolina Hurricanes needed it, Hamilton had that moment.

The Canes defenseman can hammer a shot as well as any D-man in the league. Against the Boston Bruins in Game 2 of their Stanley Cup playoff series, he did just that, blistering one for the winning goal in a 3-2 victory in Toronto.

Credit Martin Necas with the assist. The rookie forward, a nonstop hustler, had two assists and gave the Canes a ton of energy in the game, and it was his pass to Hamilton that set up the bomb of a shot from the right circle at 8:30 of the third.

"It's been a long time for me to play hockey, so I guess for seven months you're thinking about that kind of stuff, playing a game, scoring a goal, and what it feels like," Hamilton said, noting he also was thinking about his grandmother, Joan Hamilton, on her birthday and scored for her. "That's what kind of fuels you when you're in those tough moments. It feels great."

Hamilton's broken left fibula kept him out of the last 21 games of the regular season before the spread of the coronavirus forced the NHL to pause the season. The decision by the league to return to play allowed him to be fit and ready when the postseason training camp began last month in Raleigh, but he was injured again before the team came to Toronto.

Hamilton again was forced to watch as the Canes swept the New York Rangers in the qualifying round. He finally returned for Game 1 of the Boston series, against the team that once made him a first-round draft pick, but did not have a point in the double-overtime loss.

Hamilton's shot decided a game that was chippy at times and again raised the ire of Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour. The Canes had a third-period goal waved off when it was ruled Teuvo Teravainen had incidental contact with goalie Tuukka Rask, and Brind'Amour then lost his coach's challenge for a second straight game.

The first one resulted in some biting postgame comments by Brind'Amour about the refs and the NHL and a \$25,000 fine from the league — a fine paid Thursday by team owner Tom

Dundon. As for the second, Brind'Amour predictably refused to comment on the play or ruling after Thursday's game.

But Brind'Amour liked the spunk and resiliency of his team. The Bruins twice scored on the power play — David Krejci in the first period and Brad Marchand in the last few seconds of the second — and there were other no-calls that angered Brind'Amour and the Canes.

Captain Jordan Staal had his helmet ripped off by defenseman Charlie McAvoy in the first period. No call was made and Staal only told that he was helmet-less and needed to leave the ice.

The Bruins did not have David Pastrnak, their leading scorer, in the lineup. Pastrnak apparently was injured when he jumped for joy when Patrice Bergeron scored the winning goal in double overtime in Game 1.

Brind'Amour, in turn, made a number of changes. Justin Williams, unfit to play in Game 1, was back in the lineup. Defensemen Sami Vatanen and Trevor van Riemsdyk played. Goalie James Reimer got the start, making 33 saves in outplaying Rask.

The Canes scored twice in 88 seconds in the second period to take a 2-1 lead. Teravainen zipped a shot past Rask on a power play, then Andrei Svechnikov beat Rask high to the blocker side off a nice Necas pass.

While Canes defenseman Haydn Fleury had the biggest hit of the game in the first period, Svechnikov's hit on McAvoy in the second was an energizer. Svechnikov first took an elbow high, then slammed McAvoy into the boards.

"It's a hard game. You have to play hard," Svechnikov said.

To which Brind'Amour added, "He can dish it out as well as he can take it. I think he actually enjoys those challenges."

Beating the Bruins has been a challenge for Carolina. There was the four-game sweep by the Bruins in the Eastern Conference finals last year. Boston shut out the Canes in the only regular-season game before the pause. Then there was Game 1 on Wednesday, when the Bruins again found a way to win.

But not Thursday. The Canes found a way.

"There were a lot of ups and down in that game for a lot of reasons," Brind'Amour said. "We had our moments there where we were a little frustrated but the guys put it behind them. Tonight they weren't going to be denied."



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NHL fine for Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour's comments about refs sets unofficial record

By Luke DeCock

The swiftness of Rod Brind'Amour's fine was as unsurprising as the fine itself, coming only three hours after the Carolina Hurricanes coach called the NHL "a joke" and Wednesday's botched review of a Boston Bruins goal "a crime scene."

What was surprising was the severity of the fine. Brind'Amour was fined \$25,000 with another \$25,000 threatened if he transgressed again in the next calendar year. Only Columbus Blue Jackets coach John Tortorella — the league's most frequent offender by a wide, wide margin — has been fined more than that in the past decade, a \$30,000 hit back in January 2012.

Brind'Amour's Bruins counterpart, Bruce Cassidy, said during last year's Stanley Cup finals that "the National Hockey League's getting a black eye with their officiating this playoffs" among other comments about how the officials were favoring the St. Louis Blues after "the narrative changed after Game 3." He was not fined.

Tortorella was fined \$10,000 in January for these comments: "All this (expletive) technology, right? The technology and getting things right ... the stubbornness tonight, by the officials, and by the league and by Toronto, however it's supposed to (expletive) work, screws us. It's ridiculous."

That was at least Tortorella's 11th fine by the NHL. This was Brind'Amour's first.

Asked if he had any reaction Thursday ahead of the Hurricanes' 3-2 win in Game 2, Brind'Amour demurred.

"Nope," he said. "Moving on."

Afterward, he declined to answer a question about an unsuccessful challenge of a disallowed Hurricanes goal.

IN AND OUT

The Hurricanes made a host of changes in Game 2, one by necessity. Joel Edmundson was "unfit to play" after taking a hard hit in Game 1. Jake Gardiner and Nino Niederreiter were healthy scratches as Justin Williams and Sami Vatanen returned to the lineup after missing Game 1 and Trevor van Riemsdyk saw his first action of the playoffs.

James Reimer got the start in net in the second game of the back-to-back, as was the routine against the Washington Capitals in the last round. And Warren Foegele took Andrei Svechnikov's normal spot with Sebastian Aho and Teuvo Teravainen, with Svechnikov dropping to the third line with Vincent Trocheck and Martin Necas. Necas ended up with a pair of assists, setting up the Hurricanes' second and third goals.

Reimer stopped 33 of 35 shots for his second win of the postseason, running his save percentage to a sterling .952.

The Bruins were without star winger David Pastrnak, who appeared to injure himself celebrating the Bruins' double-overtime game-winner Wednesday night.

FLEURY FLYING

One of the positives for the Hurricanes in Wednesday's 4-3 double overtime loss in Game 1 was the play of 24-year-old defenseman Haydn Fleury, the seventh overall pick in 2014 who has spent most of his NHL career on the Hurricanes' third pairing when not exiled to the press box. But Fleury has steadily improved throughout the playoffs and even saw time against Boston's powerful top line of Brad Marchand, Patrice Bergeron and Pastrnak during Game 1.

"He was a high pick and we have a lot of high hopes for him and I think you're just starting now to see kind of what we expected when we picked him up," Brind'Amour said. "It's been tough for him because we haven't been able to use him as much over the last year and a half. He's been a healthy scratch just because of the numbers. We've got some pretty good defensemen ahead of him. But he's handled it really well. He's taken this opportunity to show he belongs."

Fleury's unexpected goal — a long-range score from the blue line — was his first postseason point. He has scored four goals in 132 NHL regular-season games.

NO DEFENSE

Bergeron's game-winner was the second goal of Game 1 for his line. The first came off a set faceoff play to Petr Mrazek's net that the Hurricanes were unable to defend — and not because they didn't know what was coming, Brind'Amour said.

"Everybody knows they're coming. That's the hard part," Brind'Amour said. "You actually know they're coming and you still can't defend it. That's what happened on the one. We knew exactly what the play was and how we decided to cover it. It wasn't a blown coverage. That's all they need. That's why they're elite."

TAILWINDS

Aho extended his point streak to five games with a first-period assist Thursday. ... Eight Hurricanes players set new highs for ice time in Game 1, but not Jaccob Slavin, whose game-high 37:03 was still 84 seconds shy of Game 7 against the Washington Capitals last season. ... Fleury and Edmundson became the first pair of defensemen to score in the same game for the Hurricanes since Aaron Ward and Frantisek Kaberle in the Stanley Cup-clinching Game 7 against the Edmonton Oilers in 2006.



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Hurricanes 'moving on' from Game 1 loss to Bruins, criticism of referees

By Chip Alexander

There have been times when Rod Brind'Amour watches the replay of Carolina Hurricanes losses and comes away believing his team didn't play that poorly, perhaps deserved a better outcome.

Wednesday's loss to the Boston Bruins was not one of those games.

While forcing the Bruins to two overtimes and having some good moments, the Canes' poor moments drew Brind'Amour's attention after the 4-3 loss in Game 1 of their Stanley Cup playoff series in Toronto's Scotiabank Arena.

Yes, there was a disagreement with the referees over a Bruins goal. It bothered Brind'Amour, greatly, and he said so. His blunt, biting comments about the refs and the league led to a \$25,000 fine from the NHL and was a subject he would not broach Thursday morning.

"Moving on," he said.

Moving on to Game 2 on Thursday night. Unless the 3 p.m. game between Columbus and Tampa Bay goes five overtimes, again, the Canes and Bruins had a scheduled 8 p.m. start.

As for the fine, Canes owner Tom Dundon sent a check for \$25,017 -- the extra \$17 a nod to Brind'Amour's old number, No. 17 -- to the NHL on Thursday to pay it in full.

In assessing Wednesday's game, which the Bruins won on Patrice Bergeron's goal at 1:13 of the second overtime, Brind'Amour praised the play of goalie Petr Mrazek and defenseman Dougie Hamilton, and the work of his penalty killers, but not much else.

"It was worse watching it back (on replay) than it was live," he said on his Thursday media call. "It didn't sit that well. We weren't very good and they did exactly what they wanted to do. So we're going to have to change that up if we're going to win this."

The Bruins possessed the puck and continually broke down the Canes' defense, notably on the game-winner. David Pastrnak skated between defensemen Brady Skjei and Joel Edmundson and found Bergeron open to his right for a well-executed backhand pass. Ball game.

The Bruins had 11 scoring chances to the Canes' three in the overtimes, according to Naturalstattrick.com, a hockey analytics web site.

Noting the Bruins' 40 shots in Game 1, Brind'Amour said, "I thought Petr was good. He had a lot of Grade-As (shots) on him. Way too many for a game if we want to win. He kept us in there and gave us a chance to win the game."

While Brind'Amour has James Reimer available and Reimer was impressive in winning the third game of the New York Rangers qualifying round, Brind'Amour said it was possible Mrazek could start again in Game 2. The Bruins will stick with Tuukka Rask, Boston coach Bruce Cassidy said Thursday.

Defenseman Dougie Hamilton, in his first game since breaking his left leg on Jan. 16, had 26:48 in ice time, including 2:44 on the power play. Hamilton finished the game with a minus-2 plus/minus rating but Brind'Amour like what he saw of the big D-man, a 2020 NHL All-Star.

"For the first game back I thought he was fine," Brind'Amour said. "I thought he was really good, actually. Not the perfect amount of minutes you'd want a guy to play who hasn't played in forever, but he handled it really well."

Justin Williams missed Game 1 after being deemed "unfit to play" and Brind'Amour was hoping to have the veteran winger back in Game 2. Defenseman Sami Vatanen also could return, the coach said, adding, "When we say game-time decisions we'll actually mean it."

With Williams out, winger Ryan Dzingel saw his first postseason action but wasn't very noticeable. Not that he was the only one.

When the Canes had the puck in the offensive zone, the Bruins kept them to the outside for the most part. The Canes got goals from Edmundson and defenseman Haydn Fleury on long shots through traffic that Rask has trouble tracking, and on a strong, shifty individual move by forward Brock McGinn on a shorthanded breakaway.

McGinn's goal gave the Canes the edge on special teams in Game 1 as the Bruins, 7-for-15 on the power play against Carolina in the playoffs last year, were 0-4.

Cassidy's explanation: "Carolina's aggressive nature and the way they form that tight diamond in the neutral zone didn't allow us to gain entry with possession. Maybe the stubbornness by us not to get pucks behind them."



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Game 2 Recap: Hamilton, Canes Even Series

Hamilton nets game-winning goal in third

by Michael Smith

TORONTO - A day after a heartbreaking double-overtime loss in Game 1, the Carolina Hurricanes evened up their First Round series against the Boston Bruins with a 3-2 win.

Dougie Hamilton netted the game-winning goal in the third period, while Teuvo Teravainen and Andrei Svechnikov potted back-to-back goals for the Canes in the second.

Here are five takeaways from Game 2.

1. Fighting Through

A coach's challenge controversy in Game 1. A double-overtime dagger. That was seemingly enough adversity to fight through from just a day prior, but more curveballs were thrown the Canes' way in Game 2. It is playoff hockey, after all.

The Bruins scored on their first two power plays, including one that tied the game at two with just 3.8 seconds left in the second period.

Oh, and there was another coach's challenge, too.

"You know, I'm just going to avoid those questions because I think I'll get in trouble," head coach Rod Brind'Amour shook his head.

Fair enough!

Despite the obstacles, the Canes battled through and were able to even the series at one game apiece.

"There's a lot at stake, obviously. There's a lot of adversity, and things happen in the game, and you have to be willing to adapt and fight through it," Brind'Amour said. "At every turn, everything that kind of seemed to go against us, the next shift, bounce back. I'm proud of the effort, for sure."

And don't think Brind'Amour's postgame comments from Wednesday, which cost the head coach \$25,000, went unnoticed.

"We all respect him so much and play hard for him no matter what. When he said that, we wanted to win for him and rally for him. Not much else to say," Hamilton said. "We want to play hard for him, and we respect him so much."

The Canes played hard, indeed, admittedly after not having their best in Game 1, even though they pushed the Bruins to a second overtime.

In Game 2, the team felt they more so established their game, playing with the puck and putting more shots on Rask.

"We got to our game a little bit more tonight," Hamilton said. "Didn't have too much puck possession in their end yesterday. We got a little bit of that today and did what we need to do."

"There were a lot of ups and downs in that game," Brind'Amour said. "We had our moments where we were a little frustrated, but the guys put it behind them. I felt tonight they weren't going to be denied. I've got to give all the players all the credit in the world for this win."

2. Not Throwing Away His Shot

For Dougie Hamilton, scoring a goal in Game 2 was pretty special.

To start, it was his Gramma Joan's birthday.

"That one's for her," Hamilton smiled.

And then there was the fact that he scored it against his former team. In the third period. In the playoffs. And it was the game-winning goal.

Yeah, that one felt pretty good.

On the scoring play, Martin Necas stickhandled behind the Bruins' net and backhanded a pass to the top of the right circle for Hamilton, who tattooed a laser shot top-shelf past Tuukka Rask, and that ended up the difference in Game 2.

"It's been a long time since I played hockey. For seven months, you're thinking about that kind of stuff. Playing a game, scoring a goal, what it feels like," Hamilton said. "That's kind of what fuels you when you're in those tough moments in rehab. It feels great."

Hamilton finished the game a plus-1 with five shots on goal and three blocks in 24:20 of ice time, this just a little more than 24 hours after he played 26:48 in his first competitive game of hockey since mid-January.

"Impressive, especially back-to-back and all that layoff," Brind'Amour said. "The rust factor you figure would be there, but he was special and a huge goal tonight."

3. The Turning Point

Midway through the second period, the Canes trailed the Bruins, 1-0. They were just a shot away from tying the game, but it felt like they needed something more, some sort of shot in the arm.

Maybe Sebastian Aho weaving his way up the ice, through all five Bruins, and nearly finishing off the rush with a goal on a delayed penalty sequence, was just that.

On the ensuing power play, the Canes finally broke through.

Svechnikov spun off Brad Marchand to wire a pass across the ice to Teuvo Teravainen, who drifted toward the middle of the



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ice from the top of the right circle and sniped a quick wrister through a screen provided by Justin Williams and past Rask.

Just like that, the Canes had evened the score at one and tilted the ice.

4. Adding Another

How much did that sequence and the subsequent goal give the Canes some juice?

Not even 90 seconds later, Andrei Svechnikov put the Canes ahead by a goal, 2-1. With a keep at the point, Trevor van Riemsdyk sent the puck down the far wall to Necas, who recorded the primary assist on Hamilton's game-winner in the third. Taking a quick peek across the ice, Necas fired a pass to Svechnikov in the slot, and the Russian sophomore roofed a lethal wrister past Rask.

"Pretty impressive young man," Brind'Amour said of Svechnikov. "He's still learning - I say learning, but he's pretty much learned everything now. He's getting better and better."

5. Shuffling the Lineup

After both being unfit to play in Game 1, Justin Williams and Sami Vatanen reentered the Canes' lineup for Game 2,

Edmundson Ruled Unfit to Play in Game 2

Williams, Vatanen draw back in

by Michael Smith

TORONTO - While the Carolina Hurricanes are getting a pair of bodies back in their lineup for Game 2 against the Boston Bruins, another has been ruled out.

Game 2 Projected Lineup: Hurricanes vs. Bruins

Williams, Vatanen game-time decisions

by Michael Smith

TORONTO - The Carolina Hurricanes will have some game-time lineup decisions to make prior to the opening face off in Game 2.

Justin Williams and Sami Vatanen, who were ruled unfit to play in Game 1, are among those who will be game-time decisions, according to head coach Rod Brind'Amour. A starting goaltender is yet to be named, as well.

Here is the projected lineup for the Hurricanes.

Forwards

Foegele-Aho-Teravainen
Svechnikov-Trocheck-Necas

while Nino Niederreiter and Jake Gardiner sat out as healthy extras. Additionally, Joel Edmundson was ruled unfit to play, so Trevor van Riemsdyk drew in.

Williams recorded two shots and a blocked shot (and the screen in front of the net on Teravainen's power-play goal) in 12:28 of ice time. Vatanen posted two shots on goal and three additional attempts, plus a hit and three blocked shots in 19:17 of ice time. Van Riemsdyk, who notched the secondary assist on Svechnikov's go-ahead goal, logged three shots and two additional attempts in 12:55 of ice time.

The lines were also juggled around, as the coaching staff searched for a spark.

"I don't know how much closer this group can get. It was just one of those nights where I felt like good things were going to happen to us," Brind'Amour said. "Every time something seemed to go against us, we felt like we bounced back."

Up Next

Game 3 will be a midday special, as the Canes and Bruins face off on Saturday at noon.

Justin Williams and Sami Vatanen, who both sat out Game 1, will draw back in, but defenseman Joel Edmundson has been ruled unfit to play in Game 2.

Edmundson scored the first goal of the series at the 13:02 mark of the first period in Game 1, a one-time blast from the point that beat Tuukka Rask against the grain. Trevor van Riemsdyk will see his first postseason action for the Canes this year in Edmundson's stead.

McGinn-Staal-Williams

Dzingel-Geekie-Martinook

Defensemen

Slavin-Hamilton

Skjei-Vatanen

Fleury-van Riemsdyk

Goalies

Reimer

Mrazek

Scratches: Bean, Bishop, Forsberg, Gardiner, Lorentz, McCormick, McKeown, Nedeljkovic, Niederreiter

Unfit to play: Edmundson, Pesce

Note: Lineup subject to change prior to opening faceoff.



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Hurricanes defeat Bruins in Game 2 of Eastern First Round, even series

Hamilton breaks tie in third period; Pastrnak unfit to play for Boston

by Wes Crosby

Dougie Hamilton scored the go-ahead goal for the Carolina Hurricanes at 8:30 of the third period in a 3-2 win against the Boston Bruins in Game 2 of the Eastern Conference First Round at Scotiabank Arena in Toronto on Thursday.

James Reimer made 33 saves, and Andrei Svechnikov had a goal and an assist for the Hurricanes, who tied the best-of-7 series. Reimer started for No. 5-seeded Carolina after Petr Mrazek made 36 saves in a 4-3 double-overtime loss in Game 1 on Wednesday.

"It was just one of those nights that I felt like good things were going to happen to us," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Just the way our engagement, from the start of the game. Like I said, every time something seemed to go against us, we felt like we bounced back.

"It just evens the series. It's nothing to get overly excited about, but at least it gets us back to square one."

Brad Marchand and David Krejci each had a goal and an assist, and Tuukka Rask made 23 saves for Boston, which played without forward David Pastrnak.

Pastrnak was deemed unfit to play after coach Bruce Cassidy said he intended to use the same lineup from Game 1 if everyone was healthy. As part of the NHL Return to Play Plan, a team is not permitted to disclose player injury or illness information.

Cassidy said Pastrnak would likely be a game-time decision for Game 3 in Toronto, the East hub city, on Saturday (Noon ET; NBC, SN, TVAS).

"It's our turn to push back," Cassidy said. "We're a good team at correcting things as we go along. We feel that hurt us the game before, so we'll look at why we gave up some goals from the interior. Better puck support from breakouts. ... Having said that, I thought we had some good looks as well."

Hamilton, who played his first three NHL seasons with Boston (2012-2015), gave Carolina a 3-2 lead with a one-timer from the right face-off circle. In Game 1, he played for the first time since having surgery Jan. 17 to repair a fractured left fibula.

"It obviously feels good," Hamilton said. "I guess for seven months, you're thinking about that kind of stuff, playing the game, scoring a goal, what it feels like. And that's kind of what

fuels you when you're in those tough moments in rehab. It feels great."

It was Hamilton's second game-winning goal in the Stanley Cup Playoffs, and his first since he scored for the Bruins against the Detroit Red Wings in Game 3 of the first round on April 22, 2014.

Teuvo Teravainen and Svechnikov gave the Hurricanes a 2-1 lead with goals 1:28 apart after Krejci made it 1-0 with a power-play goal at 15:41 of the first period.

Teravainen tied it 1-1 with a wrist shot blocker side on a power play at 15:13 of the second period before Svechnikov scored on a snap shot from the slot at 16:41.

Marchand scored a power-play goal with five seconds remaining in the second to tie it 2-2. He tipped a shot from Patrice Bergeron off the left post before collecting the puck for a wrist shot from just outside the crease.

"We know [the Hurricanes] are a great team," Marchand said. "They're in the playoffs for a reason. They ran through [the New York Rangers in the Stanley Cup Qualifiers]. They've shown that they're ready to play. ... The teams that are the best conditioned and work the hardest, that's going to pay off. We knew they were going to push."

The Bruins scored twice on three power plays after going 0-for-13 in their first four games this postseason.

"Obviously, they scored two goals in power play, so we shouldn't take those penalties," Hurricanes forward Martin Necas said. "But other than that, I think 5-on-5 was pretty good. So we just wanted to keep playing like that."

Boston has lost four of five postseason games, including all three in the round-robin portion of the Qualifiers (0-3-0). The Bruins fell to the No. 4 seed in the East after leading the NHL during the regular season with a .714 points percentage.

Rask has started four of those five games, losing three.

"You're not really used to playing back-to-backs in the playoffs," said Rask, who made 25 saves in Game 1. "They don't really happen too often, so I didn't feel tired. I felt good, but too bad we lost."

Hurricanes forward Justin Williams and defenseman Sami Vatanen each had two shots on goal after being unfit to play Game 1. Carolina defenseman Joel Edmundson was unfit to play.

NHL.com staff writer Amalie Benjamin contributed to this report



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Hamilton answering bell for Hurricanes in Eastern First Round

Defenseman scored game-winning goal in Game 2 against Bruins following long rehab

by Amalie Benjamin

For nearly seven months, Dougie Hamilton had pictured a moment like this, scoring a game-winning goal in the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

That moment came true on Thursday, when the defenseman scored at 8:30 of the third period to give the Carolina Hurricanes a 3-2 win against the Boston Bruins in Game 2 of the Eastern Conference First Round at Scotiabank Arena in Toronto.

Hamilton, who was playing in his second game since breaking his left fibula on Jan. 16, skated in to the top of the right circle and scored on a one-timer that beat Bruins goalie Tuukka Rask over his left shoulder and under the crossbar.

The best-of-7 series is tied 1-1. Game 3 is in Toronto, the Eastern hub city, on Saturday (12 p.m. ET; NBC, SN, TVAS).

"It obviously feels good," Hamilton said. "It's been a long time for me since I've played hockey. For seven months you're thinking about that kind of stuff -- playing the game, scoring a goal, what it feels like -- and that's kind of what fuels you when you're in those tough moments in rehab. It feels great."

Hamilton, who had 40 points (14 goals, 26 assists) and a plus-30 rating in 47 games this season, traveled a long road to return from his injury, one that cost him the final 21 games of the regular season and a trip to his first All-Star Game.

After missing Carolina's best-of-5 series against the New York Rangers in the Stanley Cup Qualifiers, which the Hurricanes won 3-0, Hamilton made his return against Boston and played

26:48 in a 4-3 loss in double overtime in Game 1 on Wednesday.

He followed that up by leading the Hurricanes with 24:20 of ice time on Thursday, playing a back-to-back after Game 1 was postponed on Tuesday because the Tampa Bay Lightning and Columbus Blue Jackets went five overtimes in their series opener.

It wasn't exactly optimal for his return after being off for more than half a year, but Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said he has been delighted with the way Hamilton has handled the difficult workload in his first two games.

"Impressive," Brind'Amour said. "I think especially back-to-back and all that layoff, the rust factor you figure would be there. But he was special and obviously a huge goal tonight. But the minutes that he's putting up there, I think that's something we didn't really expect. He's obviously answered the bell on that. Pretty good performance tonight."

It didn't hurt that it came against his former team.

Hamilton, who was selected by the Bruins with the No. 9 pick in the 2011 NHL Draft, played three seasons in Boston before being traded to the Calgary Flames on June 26, 2015. Hamilton would go on to be traded to the Hurricanes nearly three years later, on June 23, 2018.

But that wasn't all. Hamilton had one more reason to celebrate on Thursday: Joan Hamilton.

"First of all, it's my grandma's birthday today, so I think that one is for her," Hamilton said. "Other than that, obviously it's always great to score against your old team in the playoffs in the third period. Always fun to score those."



Hamilton helps Carolina beat Boston 3-2, tie series 1-1

TORONTO (AP) — This is what Dougie Hamilton was hoping for while he waited out the pandemic shutdown that put the NHL season on hold, and then waited some more after injuring himself in practice when the Hurricanes returned to the ice.

The Carolina defenseman scored the game-winner with 11:30 left in the third period on Thursday night to lead the Hurricanes to a 3-2 victory over the Boston Bruins — the team that drafted him, and then gave up on him — and tie their playoff series at one game apiece.

"For seven months you're thinking about that kind of stuff: Playing a game, scoring a goal," said Hamilton, who missed the last 21 games of the regular season and the qualifying round series against the Rangers with separate injuries. "That's what fuels you."

One day after Boston won the delayed, double-overtime opener, Carolina's No. 2 goalie James Reimer stopped 33 shots to beat the Presidents' Trophy winners. Andrei

Svechnikov had a goal and an assist, Teuvo Teravainen also scored, and Martin Necas had two assists for the Hurricanes.

David Krejci and Brad Marchand scored for Boston, and Tuukka Rask made 23 saves. The Bruins, who swept Carolina in the Eastern Conference finals last season, pulled the goalie for an extra attacker and had a chance when Reimer lost his stick in the final 10 seconds, but couldn't convert.

Game 3 is Saturday.

"We weren't expecting to walk through this series," Marchand said. "We knew it was going to be a hard-fought battle all the way to the end. That's the series we're in."

A 2011 first-round draft choice who played his first three seasons in Boston, Hamilton broke his leg in January and, after that had healed, left a return-to-play practice in July. He didn't return until Wednesday's series opener against the Bruins.



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"You sink to the bottom when you're injured. Sitting around, can't walk, watching the guys play," Hamilton said. "(You) wait for this moment. You don't know if it's ever going to come, but you've got to believe in yourself."

After playing a playoff career-high 26:48 in Game 1, which Boston won 4-3 in double overtime, Hamilton led the Hurricanes with 24:20 of ice time on Thursday.

"He was special, and obviously a huge game tonight," coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "He answered the bell on that. Pretty good performance tonight."

The opener was supposed to be Tuesday night, but the quintuple overtime game between the Blue Jackets and Lightning kept the rink occupied. With the games on back-to-back days, Brind'Amour opted to go with Reimer in net instead of Game 1 starter Petr Mrazek; Boston's Bruce Cassidy sent Rask back out about 16 hours after he played 81:13 in the opener.

Brind'Amour was so unhappy after the loss that he called the league a joke, telling the Raleigh News & Observer: "This one's a crime scene." The league fined him \$25,000 and threatened to double it if he acts up again.

He had something else to complain about in this one, when the referee waved off a go-ahead goal with 16:34 left in the third because Teravainen interfered with Rask before the goalie kicked the puck into the net. The Hurricanes challenged, but the call was confirmed.

Brind'Amour declined to comment on the sequence, saying "I think I'll get in trouble." But his players said his tantrum showed he had their backs.

Hurricanes coach Brind'Amour 'moving on' after fined by NHL

By John Wawrow

TORONTO (AP) — Rod Brind'Amour wasn't going to risk another \$25,000 fine from the NHL.

The Carolina Hurricanes coach provided a short, four-word answer, Thursday, when asked if he had anything more to add a day after being fined for calling the league "a joke" in criticizing an officials' ruling on a goal challenge.

"Fortunately, nope. Moving on," Brind'Amour said, during a Zoom conference call from his team's Toronto hotel hours before the Hurricanes played Game 2 of their first-round series against the Boston Bruins.

Brind'Amour caused a stir a day earlier following a 4-3 double-overtime loss, after which the NHL fined him \$25,000 for his comments, and issued him a conditional \$25,000 fine for any similar comments he might make over the next calendar year.

At the very least, Hurricanes owner Tom Dundon had his coach's back. Under the heading "In Rod We Trust," the Hurricanes posted a photo on their Twitter account of a \$25,017 check, with a Hurricanes logo on it, signed by Dundon and made out to the NHL Foundation

Initially upset he wasn't asked about the officials' ruling during a post-game news conference, Brind'Amour later voiced his

"To see him sticking up for us yesterday, we're going to go to bat for him," Hamilton said. "We all respect him so much and play hard for him no matter what. But when he said that, we wanted to win for him, and rally for him."

The Bruins were without forward David Pastrnak, who tied for the league lead with 48 goals this season and was the team's leading scorer with 95 points. Although the team gave no details on his condition, video appeared to show him injuring himself while celebrating Patrice Bergeron's game-winning goal in Wednesday's 4-3 victory in double overtime.

Cassidy said Pastrnak's injury did not appear to be a long-term issue and would probably be a game-time decision on Saturday.

The Bruins took the lead with about four minutes left in the first -- scoring first for the first time since before the pandemic shutdown. Krecji got the puck at the blue line and, with Jordan Staal stickless, he faked twice and then fired one past Reimer.

It stayed that way until the Hurricanes picked up a power play with about five minutes left in the second. Svechnikov made a spinning, cross-ice pass to Teravainen, who wristed it in to tie the score 1-1.

Just 88 seconds later, Svechnikov scored himself, taking a pass from Necas in the slot and beating Rask over his right shoulder.

But Boston tied it with just 5 seconds left in the period when Bergeron's shot rebounded off the post right to Marchand, who punched it in to make it 2-2 heading into the third.

UP NEXT

Game 3 is Saturday at noon.

complaints to several publications which cover the Hurricanes.

At issue was how officials dealt with the Hurricanes challenging Charlie Coyle's second-period goal, which put Boston up 2-1.

The puck was batted by a Bruins' player's hand and fell into the crease, where Carolina goalie Petr Mrazek made an attempt to smother it. Coyle poked the puck loose and scored.

Brind'Amour told the Raleigh News & Observer that in preparing to make his challenge, referees Chris Lee and Francis Charron declined to reveal their on-ice ruling regarding the goal. That left Brind'Amour with having to make a decision over whether to challenge goalie interference or whether play should have stopped because of an illegal hand pass.

Brind'Amour's challenge of an illegal hand pass was denied because Lee ruled Mrazek had possession of the puck even though play wasn't stopped, leading to the possibility of goalie interference. Teams are only allowed one challenge per goal.

"They wouldn't tell you. It makes no sense," he was quoted telling the newspaper. "This is why the league's a joke, in my opinion, on these things. ... That one is a crime scene."



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Though the Hurricanes were penalized for delay of game following the failed challenge, Brock McGinn scored a short-handed goal 11 seconds later to tie the game.

Carolina Hurricanes set to play the Bruins on Saturday

Boston Bruins (44-14-12, first in the Atlantic Division during the regular season) vs. Carolina Hurricanes (38-25-5, fourth in the Metropolitan Division during the regular season)

Toronto; Saturday, 12 p.m. EDT

EASTERN CONFERENCE FIRST ROUND: Series tied 1-1

BOTTOM LINE: The Carolina Hurricanes play the Boston Bruins. The teams meet Saturday for the fourth time this season.

The Hurricanes are 20-17-2 in conference play. Carolina is seventh in the NHL averaging 5.6 assists per game, led by Teuvo Teravainen with 0.7.

The Bruins are 26-9-9 in conference matchups. Boston averages 9.7 penalty minutes per game, the sixth-most in the NHL. Brad Marchand leads the team serving 82 total minutes.

TOP PERFORMERS: Sebastian Aho leads the Hurricanes with 66 points, scoring 38 goals and adding 28 assists. Justin Williams has six goals over the last 10 games for Carolina.

David Pastrnak leads the Bruins with 95 points, scoring 48 goals and collecting 47 assists. Marchand has three goals and seven assists over the last 10 games for Boston.

DURING THE PLAYOFFS: Hurricanes: Averaging 3.4 goals, 5.0 assists, 5.4 penalties and 11.4 penalty minutes while giving up 2.0 goals per game with a .939 save percentage.

Bruins: Averaging 2.0 goals, 3.6 assists, 4.4 penalties and 11.0 penalty minutes while giving up 3.0 goals per game with a .895 save percentage.

INJURIES: Hurricanes: None listed.

Bruins: David Pastrnak: out (unfit to participate).



Hurricanes' Hamilton scores Game 2 winner for Brind'Amour, grandma

By Luke Fox

TORONTO – Perspective is everything, isn't it?

The same worldly night that can feel “dull at times” for the losing goaltender can feel like the light at the end of a gruelling seven-month tunnel for the defenceman who unleashes a not-so-dull game-winning clapper clean over his left shoulder and under the bar.

Where Grandma keeps the victories.

“It's been a long time for me since I played hockey. For seven months you're thinking about that stuff — playing the game, scoring a goal, what it feels like. That's kinda what fuels you when you're in those tough moments in rehab. Feels great,” said Dougie Hamilton, after ending the Carolina Hurricanes' five-game playoff losing skid to his former club, the Boston Bruins.

“It's my grandma's birthday today, so I think that one is for her.”

To be certain, Carolina's 3-2 Game 2 win, which knots the first-round series at a game apiece, did not feel like an exhibition game to Grandma Joan.

Let's get Tuukka Rask's post-loss comments out of the way.

“To be honest with you, it doesn't really feel like playoff hockey right now. There's no fans. It feels like playing an exhibition game,” Rask said, matter-of-fact.

Oh? You don't say...

“When you play at your home rink, you play at an away rink, and there's fans cheering for you or against you and that creates another buzz around the series. There's none of that, so it just feels dull at times.”

The emotions that come packed into 19,000 nervous bodies in a cold rink are most certainly missed, so the onus falls on the players themselves to summon sort of reasonable facsimile.

For the Hurricanes — suddenly turning this thing into a series with legs after getting swept by Boston in the 2019 Eastern Conference Final — all they had to do was glance up behind them, to the man running the bench.

Rod Brind'Amour — the ripped, shirt-optional poster boy for “players' coach” — went to bat for the guys after Game 1's loss, partially turned on a Petr Mrazek gloved puck that Boston jabbed lose for a goal.

“This is why the league's a joke, in my opinion, on these things,” Brind'Amour told The News & Observer. “That one is a crime scene.”

The coach was swiftly dinged a \$25,000 fine from the league, and the Hurricanes cut the cheque, adding a \$17 tip like a bunch of jerks:

A series of iffy calls or non-calls did not fall Brind'Amour's way in Game 2. Charlie McAvoy ripped off Jordan Staal's helmet, which should be a minor by letter of the book. Boston's Brad Marchand tied the game 2-2 on the power-play with three seconds left in the second period and Teuvo Teravainen in the box for a disputed interference call:



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Then Brind'Amour, severely on tilt, unsuccessfully challenged a third-period Carolina goal nixed due to goalie interference, thus forced to kill off a subsequent delay-of-game penalty.

"I loved it. Loved it. There's a lot at stake," Brind'Amour said. "A lot of adversity and things happen in the game, and you have to be willing to adapt and kinda fight through it.

"It definitely brings you that much closer. Although, I don't know how much closer this group can get. It was just one of those nights I felt good things were going to happen to us."

Had Hamilton not bulged the twine, Brind'Amour might've doubled down and gone for \$50,034.

When the coach stepped to the podium, his first questioner offered to spare him any officiating questions.

Brind'Amour pursed his lips, nodded and said, "Thank you."

No stranger to playoff gamesmanship, Brind'Amour's "crime scene" rant came with a degree of calculation. Even if it didn't pay off in an extra call his way (penalties were even, four per side), it paid off in inspiration for his troops.

"When he said that, we wanted to win for him and rally for him," Hamilton said. "We want to play hard for him, and we respect him so much."

"Rod, he's very dedicated, and he's going to have them prepared. I mean, he works, and that's the motto of their team," Marchand said. "The teams that are in the best condition and work the hardest, with the ice conditions, that's just going to pay off. So, we knew they were going to push. They're resilient."

In this back-to-back — perhaps the first of two back-to-backs in the series — Hamilton logged a team-high 51:08. This after not playing a hockey game since snapping his left fibula on Jan. 16.

Were it not for the pandemic, no chance the mid-season Norris candidate would be available for the playoffs. Let alone swinging all his slapshot weight on a recently broken leg.

"All that layoff, the rust factor you think would be there. But he was special," Brind'Amour praised. "A huge goal tonight. But the minutes he's putting up there, that's something we didn't really expect. He's obviously answered the bell."

Clapped it. Top shelf.

Ring, ring.

We have ourselves a series.

"It was a pretty good shot, I guess," Rask said.

You know, for an exhibition game.



Necas, Svechnikov and Hamilton post-Game 2 interviews

Martin Necas, Andrei Svechnikov and Dougie Hamilton spoke to the media via Zoom after the Hurricanes' tied the series 1-1 with a 3-2 victory in Game 2 against the Boston Bruins.

By Ryan Henkel

The Carolina Hurricanes overcame some adversity to defeat the Boston Bruins and take Game 2 by a score of 3-2, tying up the series, 1-1.

While more calls didn't go Carolina's way, the teams overall fight and determination shined through, eventually capped off by a third period go-ahead blast by Dougie Hamilton.

Forwards Martin Necas and Andrei Svechnikov along with Hamilton spoke to the media over Zoom following the game.

Martin Necas

On the officiating: We just want to play 5-on-5 and get to our game. I think we played pretty good today. They scored two goals on the power play so we shouldn't take those penalties, but other than that I think 5-on-5 was pretty good and we wanted to keep it at that.

On playing with more confidence: We switched up the lines a little bit, so I played with [Svechnikov] and [Trocheck] and I felt a bit more comfortable. We still haven't played that many games and everyone I feel a little better. Today I was probably

feeling the best. Just got to keep playing and keep scoring just like that.

Andrei Svechnikov

On having a better performance tonight than in Game 1: That first period was very hard, but when I hit McAvoy, it felt pretty good. After that penalty, I came out and was a little bit frustrated, but I was ready to go. It was a pretty good game of hockey.

On how they are dealing with the Bruins: They're a good team. They beat us last year and we have to give it back to them. It's a hard game, but now it's tied. We have to play hard because they're going to play hard too.

Dougie Hamilton

On getting his first goal out of the way: It feels good. The circumstances of the game and it having been a long time for me since I played hockey. For seven months, you're thinking of that kind of stuff: Playing a game, scoring a goal. That's kind of what fuels you when you're in those tough moments of rehab, so it feels great.

On how he feels physically: I feel good. I think I put a lot of work and preparation into playing again and I feel good.



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On Rod Brind'Amour going to bat for the team: We all respect him so much and play hard for him no matter what. When he said that, we wanted to win for him. Rally for him. Not much else to say other than we want to play hard for him and that we respect him so much.

On what to carry over into Game 3: We got to our game a little more tonight. Didn't have puck possession too much in their

end yesterday and we got a little bit of that today. We did what we needed to do and got some goals from that.

On the game-winning goal meaning anything more: First of all, it's my grandmother's birthday today. I think that one was for her. Other than that, it's always great to score against your old team in the playoffs and especially third period and all that stuff. It's always fun to score goals.

Rod Brind'Amour: 'Tonight they weren't going to be denied.'

The Hurricanes' head coach spoke to the media after the team's game two win on Thursday night.

By Andrew Schnittker

Game two of this series was another eventful one from the Hurricanes. It had questionable officiating, big hits, big saves, a Dougie Hamilton goal and, most importantly, a 3-2 Hurricanes win.

Here's a full breakdown of everything Rod Brind'Amour had to say after the series-evening win.

On Martin Necas: I thought there was a couple plays early that he was a little tentative, but as the game got on, he really started to assert himself. He has that ability, if you give him a little room, that he can definitely make some plays. He obviously can really skate, so he has that speed element. And I thought he was effective tonight for sure.

On the team's response to questionable calls: I loved it. There's a lot at stake, obviously. There's a lot of adversity. You have to adapt and fight through it. With every turn, everything that seemed to go against us, the guys just went on to the next shift and bounced back. So I'm proud of the effort.

On the disallowed goal: I'm just going to avoid those questions, because I think I'll get in trouble. So I'm just going to avoid them.

On Dougie Hamilton: He's been impressive, especially back to back, after all that layoff. You'd figure the rust factor would

be there. He was special and obviously scored a huge goal tonight. But the minutes that he's putting up there, I think that's something we didn't really expect. He obviously answered the bell on that. So it was a pretty good performance tonight.

On adversity: I thought there was a lot of ups and downs in that game for a lot of reasons. I think we had a couple moments where we were a little frustrated, but the guys just put it behind him. I just felt tonight they weren't going to be denied. You've got to give all the players all the credit in the world for this one.

On the team steeling its resolve: It definitely brings you that much closer, although I don't know how much closer this group can get. It was just one of those nights that I felt like good things were going to happen to us just the way our engagement from the start of the game. Like I said, every time something seemed to go against us, we felt like we bounced back. It evens the series, it's nothing to get overly excited about, but it at least gets us back to square one.

On Svechnikov's response to the physicality: It's playoff hockey. It's a physical game. Hockey's still got that element, especially this time of year. I think he can dish it out as well as he can take it. Pretty impressive for a young man. He's still just learning, I say learning, he's pretty much learned everything now. But he's getting better and better and I think he actually enjoys those challenges.



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Hamilton's winner evens series at 1-1

The Carolina Hurricanes evened up their first-round series with the Boston Bruins Thursday night, as a 3-2 Canes' win was highlighted by three great snipes from Dougie Hamilton, Teuvo Teravainen and Andrei Svechnikov.

By Alec Sawyer

All tied up.

After falling to the Bruins in double overtime of game one, the Carolina Hurricanes battled back in game two to even the series at 1-1 with a 3-2 win over Boston in Toronto, courtesy of a game winner from former Bruins defenseman Dougie Hamilton.

Hamilton's game-winning goal came on a perfect snipe from the top of the circle just under midway through the final period, as he gave the Canes new life in the series after a truly wild game. Teuvo Teravainen and Andrei Svechnikov also scored for Carolina, while Martin Necas delivered two beautiful assists.

For Boston, David Krejci opened the scoring on a power play in the first period, while Brad Marchand added a power-play goal with just five seconds remaining in the second frame. Tuukka Rask took the loss in net, stopping 23 of 26 shots faced, while James Reimer got the 31-save win for the Hurricanes.

Both teams came into the game missing some pieces, as Boston's leading scorer, David Pastrnak, was ruled out leading up to the game after an apparent injury in the Bruins' celebration after Bergeron's double-overtime winner Wednesday.

For the Canes, Joel Edmundson, who scored in game one, and Nino Niederreiter were listed as unfit to play, though Carolina did get back Justin Williams and Sami Vatanen, who both missed game one.

Canes defenseman Haydn Fleury, who had the game-tying goal in the third period of game one, delivered a crushing, clean hit on Karson Kuhlman that the Bruins took exception to. Jeremy Lauzon was given an unsportsmanlike conduct in the aftermath of Fleury's hit, giving the Canes the first power play of the game.

Carolina's power play looked as good as it has all series with the early man advantage, but it wasn't enough to break through against a Boston penalty kill that blocked shot after shot before it could even reach Rask in net. The Canes' second unit, quarterbacked by Vatanen, looked particularly crisp, but couldn't get anything through.

Shortly after the Hurricanes' empty power play, Brady Skjei got whistled for hooking to give Boston a man advantage. Krejci made Skjei pay for the mistake, blasting a shot from the point past a stickless Jordan Staal that found the back of the net. Patrice Bergeron and Jake DeBrusk provided some traffic in front of Reimer to help Krejci give Boston its first power-play goal in its fifth opportunity of the series.

After changing up the lines before the game, Rod Brind'Amour shook things up with the lines even more during the first intermission, bringing Jordan Martinook up to Aho

and Teravainen's line. He continued to tinker with things moving forward.

There was some chippiness between Svechnikov, Charlie McAvoy and Zdeno Chara a few minutes into the second period, as McAvoy delivered a high hit to Svechnikov before the Canes' young forward answered back with a hit from behind. Chara took exception to Svechnikov's hit, and he and Svechnikov took roughing penalties.

That moment of physicality from Svechnikov seemed to open things up for the Canes, as Carolina looked to start playing its brand of hockey with some really good shifts starting midway through the game. Reimer also made a few big saves in the back half of the second period.

Boston's Chris Wagner was called for elbowing with five minutes to play, and the Hurricanes tied the game up 1-1 on a wonderful snipe by Teravainen. Svechnikov delivered a beautiful cross-ice pass to Teravainen after a battle in the corner, and Teravainen finished with a stunning shot past Rask.

Svechnikov got one of his own a minute and a half after the Teravainen snipe, giving the Canes a 2-1 lead. Trevor van Riemsdyk made a strong pass to Necas near the boards, and Necas threaded an absolutely perfect pass across to Svechnikov for the strong finish and go-ahead goal.

It was the Canes' turn to go to the box late in the second period, as Teravainen got whistled for a somewhat questionable penalty. Teravainen got called for interference after making some contact with Torey Krug, though it appeared Teravainen didn't have much to do with the initiating of the contact.

Boston took full advantage of the Teravainen penalty, as Marchand netted his first goal of the postseason with just five seconds to play in the second period. Marchand got the rebound off of a Bergeron shot, and he put it into the open net.

Carolina thought it had regained the lead just a few minutes into the third period, but it was immediately waved off for goaltender interference on Teravainen. For the second time in two games this series Brind'Amour challenged a goal call, and for the second time the challenge failed as the call on the ice was upheld. The Canes did kill off the minor penalty for the missed challenge.

It didn't take too long for the Canes to get that go-ahead goal though, as Hamilton, the former Bruin, tallied his first goal since his return from a lengthy injury. Another great setup pass from Necas made things possible, as Hamilton unloaded on the puck and rocketed an unsaveable shot past Rask.

Boston got plenty of good looks in the final 11 minutes following Hamilton's goal, but Reimer stayed strong in net as Boston couldn't find a tying goal. After a somewhat rough start to the evening for the Canes, Carolina really settled in midway through the game and closed things out well to even up the series.

Following an unusual back-to-back to open up this first-round series, the Hurricanes and Bruins will get a day off Friday



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before returning to the ice in Scotiabank Arena at noon Saturday.

Rod Brind'Amour: 'You've got to leave yesterday behind and focus on what's ahead of you.'

The Canes' head coach spoke to the media via Zoom Thursday ahead of game 2 against the Bruins.

By Andrew Schnittker

certainly been an eventful past couple days for the Carolina Hurricanes. Game one of their series with the Boston Bruins was delayed 15 hours because the game before it went to quintuple overtime, and, following a Bruins double overtime win in the game, Brind'Amour was fined \$25,000 by the NHL for his comments on the officiating.

The team will need to move on quickly, as the puck will drop for game two at 8 p.m. tonight. Here's a full breakdown of everything Brind'Amour had to say during his Zoom media availability Thursday morning.

On yesterday's incident: Moving on.

On who will not be fit to play tonight: I don't know as of yet. We had a morning skate with some of the guys that are questionable and they're not back to the hotel yet. So once I kind of get all that info, we'll know better. But I think tonight, when I say game time decisions, we'll actually mean it. I have a few guys I'm not sure about.

On Haydn Fleury: He was a high pick. We have a lot of high hopes for him. I think you're just starting now to see what we expected when we picked him up. I think it's been tough for him because we haven't been able to use him as much over the last year and a half. He's been a healthy scratch, just because of the numbers. We have some pretty good D playing ahead of him. But he's handled it really well. When he finally did get his opportunity, he's taken it now and he's starting to really show that he belongs. I think he's just going to keep getting better.

On the film from yesterday and Dougie Hamilton: It was worse on watching it back than it was live, so that didn't sit that well. But we weren't very good and they did exactly what they

wanted to do. So that's troublesome. But we're going to have change that up if we're going to win this.

Dougie, I haven't seen him yet this morning. We have a meeting here in a little bit. But for first game back, I thought he was fine. I thought he was really good, actually. He's been out almost six months, so it's not the perfect amount of minutes you'd want a guy to play who hasn't played in forever but he handled it really well.

On Boston's top line: Everybody knows they're coming. That's the hard part, you actually know they're coming and you still can't defend it. That's what happened on the one. We knew exactly what the play was and how we decided to cover it, and it's not blown coverage, it's just that much, it's all these guys need. That's why they're so elite. I think there's a lot of great players in the game, but the chemistry that these guys have in just knowing where they're going with the puck before they get it, that's what the top guys do. That's what they are. It's tough to defend. Even when you know they're coming, that's when you know you're in it tough. We've just got to make a couple little adjustments, but it all comes down to inches and we've got to fight for them.

On flushing the first game with the quick turnaround and the morning skate: We only skated the guys that didn't play. We're going to have our meeting right now. This will be the first time actually seeing them. So it's, I guess, a better question for about half an hour from now. But I think the guys are pretty good. They know you've got to leave yesterday behind and focus on what's ahead of you.

On the goaltending and tonight's decision: I thought [Petr Mrazek] was good. He had a lot of grade-As on him, way too many for a game if we want to win. He kept us in there, gave us a chance, certainly, to win the game. Everyone's going to get back here in an hour and we're going to try to figure out the lineup for tonight, but he's definitely a possibility. He's been dialed in.

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SportScan

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

1191002 Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes wake up from their 15-month Bruins nightmare, and the script is flipped

BY LUKE DECOCK

AUGUST 13, 2020 11:29 PM

Just when it was starting to look more like Game 6 of a series that never really ended instead of Game 2 of the rematch, the Carolina Hurricanes finally woke up from their Boston nightmare.

They shrugged off another night of questionable officiating. They played through any liberties the Bruins may have taken. It took 15 months and one more game, but they finally turned the page on last year's sweep.

This was a massive win, not only to even a series that through four periods was looking decidedly grim, but to flip a script that seemed to be going against them. And it was the ex-Bruin, of all people, Dougie Hamilton, who did the final damage with an unstoppable third-period fastball in a 3-2 win, his first goal since January on a rebuilt left leg.

"It's been a long time for me since I played hockey," Hamilton said. "For seven months you're thinking about scoring a goal like that. That's what fuels you when you're in those tough moments in rehab. It feels great."

The power play finally awakened. The goalie rotation — James Reimer again taking the second half of a back-to-back — proved fruitful. The Hurricanes' top line, broken up to deal with matchup issues, still peppered the scoresheet. This was a game full of turning points, and at a time when the Hurricanes only needed one or two they found several, starting with Andrei Svechnikov single-handedly answering the Bruins for snarl and snark alike.

"There's a lot at stake and a lot of adversity in the game," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "You have to fight through it, everything that seemed to go against us."

Still, Rod Brind'Amour's \$25,000 deliberate technical foul didn't buy the Hurricanes any calls, whether because the Hurricanes are the underdog or just old-fashioned incompetence. Even though he watched his words Thursday night, Brind'Amour may yet need to cough up the other \$25,000 he was threatened with by the NHL.

Charlie McAvoy ripped off Jordan Staal's helmet close enough to one official to risk hitting him with the loose bucket. McAvoy then elbowed Svechnikov in the head. He got away with both. The Bruins seem to know instinctively where the line is. The Hurricanes haven't found it yet.

Then again, who knows where to look? The Bruins tied the score 2-2 at the end of the second on a power play after Torrey Krug backed into a stationary Teuvo Teravainen and Teravainen was called for interference. That's like getting called for holding the stick after it has been lodged into your upper palate. Turns out, the officials can wave off a goal: the potential go-ahead goal was ruled out in the third after Teravainen was checked into the crease, leading to another unsuccessful Brind'Amour challenge.

And then again, regardless of how they feel about the penalties or how much Brind'Amour wants to borrow from his 401(k), the Hurricanes were still going to need to kill one or two of those penalties at some point. The Bruins scored on their first two power plays, but the Hurricanes killed the third, after the Teravainen non-goal, a timely kill if there ever was one.

If there was a game in this series where the Hurricanes should have had a clear advantage, this was it. The younger team in a back-to-back, bringing back two key players who didn't play in Game 1, and with the Bruins missing 48-goal-scorer David Pastrnak to boot. It took them a period or two to find their footing, but once they did they were able to capitalize on circumstances that played into their hands, with Martin Necas leading the way with a pair of assists.

"Every time something seemed to go against us we bounced back," Brind'Amour said. "It evens the series. Nothing to get overly excited about. It at least gets us back to square one."

But it is a series now. The old cliché about a playoff series not starting until the road team wins a game still applies even when both teams are away from home. The Svechnikov-Sebastian Aho-Teravainen line, broken up Thursday, is likely to be reunited Saturday when the Hurricanes have last change. For the first time in more than a year, things have turned the Hurricanes' way.

News Observer LOADED: 08.14.2020

1191003 Carolina Hurricanes

Hamilton's third-period goal lifts Canes to 3-2 win over Bruins to even series

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

AUGUST 13, 2020 10:54 PM

Dougie Hamilton had been thinking about it for months, sweating out workouts, aching to get back on the ice, wanting so much to play hockey again.

On Thursday, just when the Carolina Hurricanes needed it, Hamilton had that moment.

The Canes defenseman can hammer a shot as well as any D-man in the league. Against the Boston Bruins in Game 2 of their Stanley Cup playoff series, he did just that, blistering a shot for the winning goal in a 3-2 victory in Toronto.

Credit Martin Necas with the assist. The rookie forward, a nonstop hustler, had two assists and gave the Canes a ton of energy in the game, and it was his pass to Hamilton that set up the bomb of a shot from the right circle at 8:30 of the third.

"It's been a long time for me to play hockey, so I guess for seven months you're thinking about that kind of stuff, playing a game, scoring a goal,



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and what it feels like," Hamilton said, noting he also was thinking about his grandmother, Joan Hamilton, on her birthday and scored for her.

"That's what kind of fuels you when you're in those tough moments. It feels great."

Hamilton's broken left fibula kept him out of the last 21 games of the regular season before the spread of the coronavirus forced the NHL to pause the season. The decision by the league to return to play allowed him to be fit and ready when the postseason training camp began last month in Raleigh, but he was injured again before the team came to Toronto.

Hamilton again was forced to watch as the Canes swept the New York Rangers in the qualifying round. He finally returned for Game 1 of the Boston series, against the team that once made him a first-round draft pick, but did not have a point in the double-overtime loss.

Hamilton's shot decided a game that was chippy at times and again raised the ire of Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour. The Canes had a third-period goal waved off when it was ruled Teuvo Teravainen had incidental contact with goalie Tuukka Rask, and Brind'Amour then lost his coach's challenge for a second straight game.

The first one resulted in some biting postgame comments by Brind'Amour about the refs and the NHL and a \$25,000 fine from the league — a fine paid Thursday by team owner Tom Dundon. As for the second, Brind'Amour predictably refused to comment on the play or ruling after Thursday's game.

But Brind'Amour liked the spunk and resiliency of his team. The Bruins twice scored on the power play — David Krejci in the first period and Brad Marchand in the last few seconds of the second — and there were other no-calls that angered Brind'Amour and the Canes.

Captain Jordan Staal had his helmet ripped off by defenseman Charlie McAvoy in the first period. No call was made and Staal only told that he was helmet-less and needed to leave the ice.

The Bruins did not have David Pastrnak, their leading scorer, in the lineup. Pastrnak apparently was injured when he jumped for joy when Patrice Bergeron scored the winning goal in double overtime in Game 1.

Brind'Amour, in turn, made a number of changes. Justin Williams, unfit to play in Game 1, was back in the lineup. Defensemen Sami Vatanen and Trevor van Riemsdyk played. Goalie James Reimer got the start, making 33 saves in outplaying Rask.

The Canes scored twice in 88 seconds in the second period to take a 2-1 lead. Teravainen zipped a shot past Rask on a power play, then Andrei Svechnikov beat Rask high to the blocker side off a nice Necas pass.

While Canes defenseman Haydn Fleury had the biggest hit of the game in the first period, Svechnikov's hit on McAvoy in the second was an energizer. Svechnikov first took an elbow high, then hammered McAvoy into the boards.

"It's a hard game. You have to play hard," Svechnikov said.

To which Brind'Amour added, "He can dish it out as well as he can take it. I think he actually enjoys those challenges."

Beating the Bruins has been a challenge for Carolina. There was the four-game sweep by the Bruins in the Eastern Conference finals last year. Boston shut out the Canes in the only regular-season game before the pause. Then there was Game 1 on Wednesday, when the Bruins again found a way to win.

"There were a lot of ups and down in that game for a lot of reasons," Brind'Amour said. "We had our moments there where we were a little frustrated but the guys put it behind them. Tonight they weren't going to be denied."

1191004 Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes 'moving on' from Game 1 loss to Bruins, criticism of referees

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

AUGUST 13, 2020 01:55 PM

There have been times when Rod Brind'Amour watches the replay of Carolina Hurricanes losses and comes away believing his team didn't play that poorly, perhaps deserved a better outcome.

Wednesday's loss to the Boston Bruins was not one of those games.

While forcing the Bruins to two overtimes and having some good moments, the Canes' poor moments drew Brind'Amour's attention after the 4-3 loss in Game 1 of their Stanley Cup playoff series in Toronto's Scotiabank Arena.

Yes, there was a disagreement with the referees over a Bruins goal. It bothered Brind'Amour, greatly, and he said so. His blunt, biting comments about the refs and the league led to a \$25,000 fine from the NHL and was a subject he would not broach Thursday morning.

"Moving on," he said.

Moving on to Game 2 on Thursday night. Unless the 3 p.m. game between Columbus and Tampa Bay goes five overtimes, again, the Canes and Bruins had a scheduled 8 p.m. start.

As for the fine, Canes owner Tom Dundon sent a check for \$25,017 -- the extra \$17 a nod to Brind'Amour's old number, No. 17 -- to the NHL on Thursday to pay it in full.

In assessing Wednesday's game, which the Bruins won on Patrice Bergeron's goal at 1:13 of the second overtime, Brind'Amour praised the play of goalie Petr Mrazek and defenseman Dougie Hamilton, and the work of his penalty killers, but not much else.

"It was worse watching it back (on replay) than it was live," he said on his Thursday media call. "It didn't sit that well. We weren't very good and they did exactly what they wanted to do. So we're going to have to change that up if we're going to win this."

The Bruins possessed the puck and continually broke down the Canes' defense, notably on the game-winner. David Pastrnak skated between defensemen Brady Skjei and Joel Edmundson and found Bergeron open to his right for a well-executed backhand pass. Ball game.

The Bruins had 11 scoring chances to the Canes' three in the overtimes, according to Naturalstattrick.com, a hockey analytics web site.

Noting the Bruins' 40 shots in Game 1, Brind'Amour said, "I thought Petr was good. He had a lot of Grade-As (shots) on him. Way too many for a game if we want to win. He kept us in there and gave us a chance to win the game."

While Brind'Amour has James Reimer available and Reimer was impressive in winning the third game of the New York Rangers qualifying round, Brind'Amour said it was possible Mrazek could start again in Game 2. The Bruins will stick with Tuukka Rask, Boston coach Bruce Cassidy said Thursday.

Defenseman Dougie Hamilton, in his first game since breaking his left leg on Jan. 16, had 26:48 in ice time, including 2:44 on the power play. Hamilton finished the game with a minus-2 plus/minus rating but Brind'Amour like what he saw of the big D-man, a 2020 NHL All-Star.

"For the first game back I thought he was fine," Brind'Amour said. "I thought he was really good, actually. Not the perfect amount of minutes



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you'd want a guy to play who hasn't played in forever, but he handled it really well."

Justin Williams missed Game 1 after being deemed "unfit to play" and Brind'Amour was hoping to have the veteran winger back in Game 2. Defenseman Sami Vatanen also could return, the coach said, adding, "When we say game-time decisions we'll actually mean it."

With Williams out, winger Ryan Dzingel saw his first postseason action but wasn't very noticeable. Not that he was the only one.

When the Canes had the puck in the offensive zone, the Bruins kept them to the outside for the most part. The Canes got goals from Edmundson and defenseman Haydn Fleury on long shots through traffic that Rask has trouble tracking, and on a strong, shifty individual move by forward Brock McGinn on a shorthanded breakthrough.

McGinn's goal gave the Canes the edge on special teams in Game 1 as the Bruins, 7-for-15 on the power play against Carolina in the playoffs last year, were 0-4.

Cassidy's explanation: "Carolina's aggressive nature and the way they form that tight diamond in the neutral zone didn't allow us to gain entry with possession. Maybe the stubbornness by us not to get pucks behind them."

News Observer LOADED: 08.14.2020

1191005 Carolina Hurricanes

NHL fine for Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour's comments about refs sets unofficial record

BY LUKE DECOCK

AUGUST 13, 2020 12:56 PM

Boston Bruins left wing Anders Bjork (10) celebrates his teammates goal past Carolina Hurricanes goaltender Petr Mrazek (34) during the second period of an NHL hockey Eastern Conference Stanley Cup playoff game in Toronto, Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2020.

Boston Bruins left wing Anders Bjork (10) celebrates his teammates goal past Carolina Hurricanes goaltender Petr Mrazek (34) during the second period of an NHL hockey Eastern Conference Stanley Cup playoff game in Toronto, Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2020. NATHAN DENETTE AP

The swiftness of Rod Brind'Amour's fine was as unsurprising as the fine itself, coming only three hours after the Carolina Hurricanes coach called the NHL "a joke" and Wednesday's botched review of a Boston Bruins goal "a crime scene."

What was surprising was the severity of the fine. Brind'Amour was fined \$25,000 with another \$25,000 threatened if he transgressed again in the next calendar year. Only Columbus Blue Jackets coach John Tortorella — the league's most frequent offender by a wide, wide margin — has been fined more than that in the past decade, a \$30,000 hit back in January 2012.

Brind'Amour's Bruins counterpart, Bruce Cassidy, said during last year's Stanley Cup finals that "the National Hockey League's getting a black eye with their officiating this playoffs" among other comments about how the officials were favoring the St. Louis Blues after "the narrative changed after Game 3." He was not fined.

Tortorella was fined \$10,000 in January for these comments: "All this (expletive) technology, right? The technology and getting things right ...

the stubbornness tonight, by the officials, and by the league and by Toronto, however it's supposed to (expletive) work, screws us. It's ridiculous."

That was at least Tortorella's 11th fine by the NHL. This was Brind'Amour's first.

Asked if he had any reaction Thursday ahead of the Hurricanes' 3-2 win in Game 2, Brind'Amour demurred.

"Nope," he said. "Moving on."

Afterward, he declined to answer a question about an unsuccessful challenge of a disallowed Hurricanes goal.

IN AND OUT

The Hurricanes made a host of changes in Game 2, one by necessity. Joel Edmundson was "unfit to play" after taking a hard hit in Game 1. Jake Gardiner and Nino Niederreiter were healthy scratches as Justin Williams and Sami Vatanen returned to the lineup after missing Game 1 and Trevor van Riemsdyk saw his first action of the playoffs.

James Reimer got the start in net in the second game of the back-to-back, as was the routine against the Washington Capitals in the last round. And Warren Foegele took Andrei Svechnikov's normal spot with Sebastian Aho and Teuvo Teravainen, with Svechnikov dropping to the third line with Vincent Trocheck and Martin Necas. Necas ended up with a pair of assists, setting up the Hurricanes' second and third goals.

Reimer stopped 33 of 35 shots for his second win of the postseason, running his save percentage to a sterling .952.

The Bruins were without star winger David Pastrnak, who appeared to injure himself celebrating the Bruins' double-overtime game-winner Wednesday night.

FLEURY FLYING

One of the positives for the Hurricanes in Wednesday's 4-3 double overtime loss in Game 1 was the play of 24-year-old defenseman Haydn Fleury, the seventh overall pick in 2014 who has spent most of his NHL career on the Hurricanes' third pairing when not exiled to the press box. But Fleury has steadily improved throughout the playoffs and even saw time against Boston's powerful top line of Brad Marchand, Patrice Bergeron and Pastrnak during Game 1.

"He was a high pick and we have a lot of high hopes for him and I think you're just starting now to see kind of what we expected when we picked him up," Brind'Amour said. "It's been tough for him because we haven't been able to use him as much over the last year and a half. He's been a healthy scratch just because of the numbers. We've got some pretty good defensemen ahead of him. But he's handled it really well. He's taken this opportunity to show he belongs."

Fleury's unexpected goal — a long-range score from the blue line — was his first postseason point. He has scored four goals in 132 NHL regular-season games.

NO DEFENSE

Bergeron's game-winner was the second goal of Game 1 for his line. The first came off a set faceoff play to Petr Mrazek's net that the Hurricanes were unable to defend — and not because they didn't know what was coming, Brind'Amour said.

"Everybody knows they're coming. That's the hard part," Brind'Amour said. "You actually know they're coming and you still can't defend it. That's what happened on the one. We knew exactly what the play was and how we decided to cover it. It wasn't a blown coverage. That's all they need. That's why they're elite."

TAILWINDS

Aho extended his point streak to five games with a first-period assist Thursday. ... Eight Hurricanes players set new highs for ice time in



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Game 1, but not Jacob Slavin, whose game-high 37:03 was still 84 seconds shy of Game 7 against the Washington Capitals last season. ... Fleury and Edmundson became the first pair of defensemen to score in the same game for the Hurricanes since Aaron Ward and Frantisek Kaberle in the Stanley Cup-clinching Game 7 against the Edmonton Oilers in 2006.

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1190983 Boston Bruins

Bruins goaltender Tuukka Rask on playoff hockey in 2020: 'It feels dull at times'

By Kevin Paul Dupont Globe Staff

Updated August 13, 2020, 11:57 p.m.

The Bruins are two games into 2020 Cup play, knotted at 1-1 with the Hurricanes after Thursday night's 3-2 loss at Toronto.

As serious as that might sound, if not critical, their goalie, Tuukka Rask, made clear after the loss that he feels something's missing.

"Well, I mean, considering I had four months off," said the franchise tender, asked how he felt both mentally and physically after starting on back-to-back nights, "I mean, I'm not in prime shape, but . . . trying to get there. I'm just trying to have fun and play the game. I'm not stressing too much about results and whatnot.

"It's August, and I haven't played hockey forever . . . so go out there and have fun and see what happens for me."

Rask's a different cat, no question, but that was an unexpected and unusual response, and one that no doubt will dominate Boston talk radio on Friday, over the weekend, and perhaps years to come.

Bruins fans live for this time of year, even if the postseason has been tolled into the dog days of summer. They frame their days around playoff games, dare not run to the fridge in the middle of the action. It won't go down easy for many of them to hear the No. 1 goalie isn't stressing like they are stressing.

Because there is "no buzz around the series," explained Rask, noting special circumstances framed by the COVID-19 pandemic, "it feels dull at times."

The lack of atmosphere, he added, "makes it feel like an exhibition game . . . but we're trying our best to kind of ramp up and get energized and make it feel like a playoff game."

The three-game round-robin tournament, in which the Bruins dropped all three and fell three rungs to the fourth seed in the East, was supposed to be where teams shook physical rust and mental cobwebs.

It didn't do it for Rask.

When asked about Rask's comments, teammate Brad Marchand said Rask perhaps was talking about the round-robin tournament. Nope. Rask clearly was focusing on the moment.

"These are playoff games, playoff atmosphere," said Marchand, who put on a one-man penalty-killing clinic in the third period when the Bruins were scraping for the tying goal. "We are going to compete hard. There's no question it doesn't have the same atmosphere, and there's no home-ice advantage . . . it's just straight-up hockey at this point.

"Unfortunately, that's the playoffs this year and, you know, at least we're playing."

• Anders Bjork didn't light up the scoreboard in Wednesday's overtime win, but he was strong on pucks, and generally more aware and assertive. Good choice to slot him into Pastrnak's open spot on the No. 1 line with Brad Marchand and Patrice Bergeron.

Not new territory for Bjork. He made his career debut in the 2017-'18 season opener as the right winger on the Marchand-Bergeron trio. He's fast and smart. His game has lacked, and still needs, more sandpaper. If he can keep growing his grit element, his wheels can put him in a position to connect for 25-30 goals a year.

• David Krejci scored in Game 1, then popped in the first power-play goal for the 1-0 lead in Game 2. With gifted, velveteen hands, he's always looking "pass" as his first option. In his previous 61 playoff games before Wednesday, dating back to the 2013 postseason, he had scored only 7 goals.

Krejci's go-ahead goal ended the Bruins' 0-for-13 run on the advantage since landing in Toronto. They were 0-for-4 in Game 1, after going a sizzling 7-for-15 in last spring's four-game conference final vs. the Canes.

• The 'Canes came with an improved lineup, which helped them limit the Bruins to only six shots in the opening 20:00 (and only two in the first 10:00). No surprise they subbed out Petr Mrazek in net for James Reimer. Mrazek left some fat rebounds in the opener, including the one off an Ondrej Kase wrister that Krejci potted after some nifty stick work.

• Coaches live in the moment always, but especially in the playoffs, so expect Bruins coach Bruce Cassidy to go again with Rask in Game 3. But with a noon start on Saturday, after Rask played on back-to-back nights, it looks like an ideal time for Cassidy to go with Jaro Halak. The Slovak stopper started the round-robin opener vs. the Flyers, his first post-season appearance since the 2015 playoffs.

• The 'Canes in the second period flashed some of the scoring moxie that led to their play-in sweep of the Rangers. Teuvo Teravainen and Andrei Svechnikov scored only 88 seconds apart, first with the advantage and then at even strength. Quick-strike power they didn't show last year vs. the Bruins.

• Svechnikov's release is lightning, reminiscent of the great Mike Bossy. He snapped in a sizzling wrister off a pinpoint, cross-ice feed from rookie Martin Necas into the left circle. The No. 2 pick in the '18 draft has averaged 22 goals his first two seasons. That release, combined with his O-zone chutzpah, makes him a candidate to pop for 40.

• Carolina likes to put heavy pressure at the points during the penalty kill. In Game 1, it led to Brock McGinn's shorthander, when he picked off a lamebrained pass by Pastrnak. Looks like they'll be sniffing for shorties the entire series.

• Joel Edmundson, the ex-Blues defenseman, logged 30 minutes, 33 seconds in ice time in Game 1, second on the 'Canes only to Jacob Slavin (37:03). But the towering Edmundson was a DND for Game 3. Likely reason: He took a serious pop from Nick Ritchie at the 12:40 mark of the third period. Edmundson didn't miss a shift, but he was rattled.

Ritchie has shown little in the first two games, but that was a varsity belt against the 6-foot-4, 215-pound Edmundson.

Boston Globe LOADED: 08.14.2020

1190984 Boston Bruins

Dougie Hamilton roofs winner as Carolina evens series with Bruins



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 14, 2020

By Matt Porter Globe Staff

Updated August 13, 2020, 10:46 p.m.

The Bruins were charging, looking for the tying goal in the third period. Carolina was keeping them to the outside. It was the type of situation suited for David Pastrnak, an ace at stickhandling and shooting the Bruins out of trouble.

But Pastrnak was sitting in the stands at Scotiabank Arena, observing the swells and shouts of Game 2. He wore a mask and the dreaded "unfit to play" tag.

Thus the Bruins fell, 3-2, to the Hurricanes without their top scorer, unable to find that tying goal in a frenzied final few minutes after ex-Bruin Dougie Hamilton nailed the go-ahead strike at 8:30 of the third period.

"It's our turn to push back," coach Bruce Cassidy said, noting his team's need to clean up mistakes in its own zone that led to all three Carolina goals.

This first-round series is tied at 1, entering Game 3 at noon Saturday.

David Krejci and Brad Marchand scored for the Bruins, but the hero was James Reimer. The Carolina backup's last postseason start came in Game 7 of the 2013 first round, when he and the Maple Leafs allowed four late goals in the Bruins' stunning comeback. He made 33 saves on 35 shots on Thursday, pointing to the sky after escaping the Bruins' last-ditch charge with two stops in the final 10 seconds.

"You're never going to replace Pasta," Marchand said. "It was a big hole for our team."

The Bruins opened the night with Anders Bjork on the top line and kept him there, other than a brief Karson Kuhlman turn in the second period. Bjork landed one shot in 11:21. Pastrnak, the happy-go-lucky goal-scoring king (48) of the NHL this season alongside Alex Ovechkin, is believed to have suffered an injury late in Game 1.

"Questionable from the game yesterday," Cassidy said afterward, adding that Pastrnak would be a game-time decision for Game 3. He alluded that Pastrnak needed to test an injury.

The Bruins will not have a morning skate for the noontime puck drop.

On Boston's first power play chance, Krejci slid into Pastrnak's right-circle spot on the No. 1 unit. There was no drop-off in production.

The veteran playmaker found the puck at the top of the Bruins' shifting power play formation. He sent a seeing-eye shot through a maze of sticks and bodies in front at 15:41, scoring the Bruins' first opening goal in a game since March 10.

Carolina charged back in the second period, earning several long stretches of possession in the Bruins' zone. They were also gifted a marginal elbowing call against Chris Wagner, which helped them tie the game with 4:47 left in the second. Teravainen walked in and sniped a wristed shot over Tuukka Rask's blocker.

Just 1:28 later, the Bruins couldn't pick up Svechnikov, who took a sharp feed from the wall and was all alone in the middle. The No. 2 pick in the 2018 draft, who had fed Teravainen his goal with a spinning forehand feed, fired a similar shot in a similar spot. Hard, high, and past Rask in a hurry.

The Bruins got it back before intermission. Torey Krug had a scoring chance and wheeled away from the net. Teravainen was called for interference when Krug tripped backward over his leg.

With 4.4 seconds left in the frame, Marchand snapped home his own rebound off a Bergeron feed he tipped off the post.

Rask, who stopped 23 of 26 shots (.885), made his best save of the night in the opening minute of the third, turning back Vincent Trocheck after a curl-and-drag move from the slot.

Teravainen created more trouble for him. At 3:26 of the period, referee Wes McCauley immediately waved off a loose puck that crossed the line after Teravainen fought through the crease and bumped Rask. After a review, officials upheld the call. More annoyance for Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour, who was fined \$25,000 for voicing his displeasure with net-front officiating in Game 1. He was tight-lipped afterward.

Asked if Carolina was taking liberties with him or if the bumps were part of playoff hockey, Rask took a different tack.

"It doesn't really feel like playoff hockey right now," he said. "There's no fans. It feels like an exhibition game."

Marchand gently disagreed.

"Maybe he was talking about the round robin games," Marchand said. "These are playoff games."

"It's definitely different. It doesn't have the same atmosphere. . . . Unfortunately, that's playoffs this year. At least we're playing."

Their next task is to axe the weak plays and mistakes in front of their net that let Carolina dictate much of the third. At 8:30 of the frame, Hamilton arrived. The ex-Bruin stepped into a short feed and sent a rocket past Rask's glove. All three Hurricanes goals were snipes.

"First of all, it's my grandma's birthday, so I think that one's for her," said Hamilton, asked if the opponent brought added significance. "Otherwise, I think it's great to score against your old team in the playoffs in the third period."

A minute later, Warren Foegele drew a hooking call on Charlie McAvoy, giving the Canes a chance to put it out of reach. Marchand, Sean Kuraly, and Joakim Nordstrom produced a potential game-saving shift, skating their way into several scoring chances in the Carolina end. They grunted and sweated their way to several more in the final minutes, but no payoff. Series, even.

"You don't replace Pasta," Cassidy said. "We'll take another look at it and see what we come up with Saturday."

Boston Globe LOADED: 08.14.2020

1190985 Boston Bruins

David Pastrnak deemed unfit to participate, out for Game 2

By Matt Porter Globe Staff

Updated August 13, 2020, 3:01 p.m.

A surprise for Game 2: No David Pastrnak. The Bruins leading scorer was deemed "unfit to participate," the team announced before puck drop, and will be a game-time decision for Saturday's Game 3.

"Questionable from the game yesterday," coach Bruce Cassidy said. "We don't believe it will be a long-term. It's a day-to-day thing, we hope. Obviously targeting Saturday at noon ... tough to test it, get out skating in a morning skate type of thing."

Cassidy said in his noontime press availability that he expected to use the same lineup from the double-overtime win in Game 1 — of which Pastrnak (goal, assist in 24:58) was a big factor — if everyone was healthy.



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The Bruins had an optional skate Thursday morning in Toronto. Pastrnak was spotted stretching with several teammates in a photo, posted by the Bruins, of players at BMO Field, the soccer stadium inside the NHL bubble in Toronto.

Several broadcast outlets, including NESN, speculated pregame that Pastrnak may have hurt himself jumping for joy after Bergeron's double-OT winning goal. On video, Pastrnak can be seen landing awkwardly, with his feet pointed outward at 45-degree angles. He was in clear discomfort, wincing and exhaling with a concerned look as he celebrated with his joyous teammates.

Anders Bjork began the night in Pastrnak's spot at No. 1 right wing, next to Patrice Bergeron and Brad Marchand. Replacing Bjork on the third line: Karson Kuhlman, 24, who played two games in the round robin (zero points, five shots). He fought his way into the lineup for eight playoff games last year (1-2-3), capping his debut season.

Marchand (21:14) and David Krejci (21:05) were used heavily in Pastrnak's absence. Kuhlman (9:42) was not.

Cassidy said Bjork, who skated 11:21, was promising in his second true playoff game.

"He did some good things," Cassidy said. "Need him to be a little harder in certain situations. Every play matters in the playoffs."

The Hurricanes made several lineup changes, most notably in net. James Reimer started his first playoff game since 2013, when he was on the losing end of the Bruins' three-goal comeback against Toronto in Game 7 of the first round. Petr Mrazek, despite coach Rod Brind'Amour praising him as "locked in" after Game 1, was sat.

Carolina also activated No. 3 right wing Justin Williams and Sami Vatanen, both of whom were "unfit to play" in Game 1, and subbed defenseman Trevor van Riemsdyk for Game 1 goal-scorer Joel Edmundson (unfit). Defenseman Jake Gardiner and forward Nino Niederreiter were also scratched.

Despite short rest, Tuukka Rask gets start

The last time the Bruins had playoff games on consecutive days was in the first-round series vs. Toronto in April 2013, Games 6 and 7.

Goalie Tuukka Rask, then 26, started both games.

Seven years and a few months later, Rask was on the clock for Game 2 against Carolina, finishing the unexpected Wednesday-Thursday set by stopping 23 of 26 shots.

Coach Bruce Cassidy pointed to three factors when asked why he went with Rask, who started all 24 playoff games in last year's run to the Stanley Cup Final, and — not counting the round-robin play in 2020 — has made 79 consecutive playoff starts for Boston.

"How's Tuukka feeling coming out of the game? He felt fine," Cassidy said. "Was there a lot of wear and tear to the point where recovery would require more than 24 hours or 30 hours? I don't think so.

"It was pretty clean in front of him, not a lot of stretches where — demanding stretches. Still, it was four periods of hockey. He had to be ready on his toes the whole game."

Cassidy also said the timing of the games helped Rask's case. The unusual 11 a.m. start for Game 1 left him extra hours to recover for the 8 p.m. puck drop for Game 2. The Bruins also didn't have to travel.

"We went to the rink and back here to the hotel," Cassidy said, speaking from the team's base at Hotel X in Toronto. "So that had a lot to do with it."

Moving on

Brind'Amour, who was fined \$25,000 for comments he made about the league and officiating after Game 1, did not wish to elaborate before Thursday's puck drop.

"Moving on," he said.

On Wednesday, Brind'Amour asserted that the review after Coyle's second-period goal was "a joke" and "a crime scene."

He did have a day-after take on Game 1.

"It was worse watching it back than it was live, so that didn't sit that well," Brind'Amour said. "We weren't very good. They did exactly what they wanted to do. We're going to have to change that up if we're going to win this."

Power outage

Dougie Hamilton skated 24:20 and scored the winner, showing no ill effects from his long layoff. His 26:48 in the double-OT Game 1 was his first action since Jan. 16. "He handled it really well," Brind'Amour said. . . . The Bruins have another back-to-back set in Games 5 and 6 (Wednesday-Thursday), if necessary. Cassidy has not said whether he plans to use goalie Jaroslav Halak in one of those games. . . . If the Bruins clinch this series in Game 6, they could have at least four days off. The second round is tentatively scheduled to start Aug. 25. . . . Cassidy began his postgame comments with a thought for Claude Julien, now bench boss in Montreal, who was hospitalized Thursday with chest pains. "We're wishing him a healthy recovery," Cassidy said. "Our best goes out to Karen and the kids." Canadiens general manager Marc Bergevin said Julien is not expected to return for the duration of the team's first-round series against Philadelphia. Julien, 60, holds the Bruins all-time record for regular season wins (419) and won the 2011 Stanley Cup. . . . Cassidy sits tied with Mike Milbury for fifth place on the Bruins' all-time playoff wins leaders (23). Harry Sinden (24), Don Cherry (31), and Art Ross (32) are in reach this postseason, but Cassidy would need a couple more long runs to catch Julien (57).

Boston Globe LOADED: 08.14.2020

1190986 Boston Bruins

Former Bruins coach Claude Julien hospitalized with chest pains

Staff Report

Updated August 13, 2020, 2:55 p.m.

TORONTO (AP) — Montreal Canadiens general manager Marc Bergevin said that coach Claude Julien was experiencing chest pains Wednesday night and was taken by ambulance to a Toronto hospital.

Bergevin confirmed Thursday it was not COVID-19 related.

The 60-year-old coach is not expected to be back behind the bench for the rest of the team's first-round series against Philadelphia. Associate coach Kirk Muller will take over Julien's role in an interim basis.

Bergevin says he is optimistic Julien will be OK, especially after getting good news from a doctor Thursday afternoon.

"Everything should be fine and we hope for the best," Bergevin said.

Bergevin does not expect Julien's family to join him at the hospital in Toronto. He hopes Julien will be able to return home to rest.

The Canadiens won their qualifying round series to make it to the round of 16. They trail the Flyers 1-0 in the first round, with Game 2 set for Friday night.



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Julien coached the Bruins from 2007-2017, going 419-246-94 and winning the 2011 Stanley Cup before he was fired in the middle of his 10th season with the club.

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1190987 Boston Bruins

Bruins drop Game 2 to Hurricanes

By STEVE CONROY | sconroy@bostonherald.com | Boston Herald

PUBLISHED: August 13, 2020 at 11:20 p.m. | UPDATED: August 14, 2020 at 12:29 a.m.

The Bruins gave the impression that they'd left their round-robin blues behind them with their Game 1 victory over the Carolina Hurricanes on Wednesday, but bad habits die hard apparently.

After being clearly the better team on Wednesday, they were not that on Thursday and they paid for it with a 3-2 loss that they let get away from them in the second and third periods.

Former Bruin Dougie Hamilton blasted a slapper past Tuukka Rask at 8:30 of the third and the Canes held off a furious Bruins push at the end to hang on and tie the series 1-1. Game 3 is noon Saturday.

For a brief second early in the third it appeared the Canes broke the 2-2 tie at 3:26 when the puck ended up behind Rask, who knocked it in with his right leg in a net-front scramble. But referee Wes McCauley immediately waved it off for goalie interference on Teuvo Teravainen, who made a lot of contact with Rask. Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour for the second day in a row challenged the call and for the second time was denied, picking up a minor penalty for his trouble.

The B's, however, could not cash in on the power-play, and then the Canes took the lead for real at 8:30. In one of a string of sloppy shifts for the B's, Martin Necas picked up a loose puck in the left corner and was able to cut behind the net before feeding an oncoming Hamilton. The ex-Bruin stepped into the slapper and blew it past Rask's glove for the lead.

Coach Bruce Cassidy thought the Bruins should have gotten the puck out of the defensive zone.

"You've got to punt in those situations and live to fight another day," said Cassidy. "You've got to clear the zone."

The night started on a disconcerting note for the Bruins when it was announced that Rocket Richard co-winner, David Pastrnak, was termed "unfit to participate" and unavailable to play.

That required Anders Bjork to move up to Pastrnak's spot on the top line. Karson Kuhlman was added to the lineup taking Bjork's right wing spot on the third line.

"We don't believe it will be long-term. It's a day-to-day thing we hope. Obviously we're targeting Saturday at noon," said Cassidy, who said that without a morning skate it will probably go down to a game-time decision.

The B's got better as the first period wore on and took a 1-0 lead on their first power-play goal since arriving in Toronto. Ondrej Kase, who continued to have the puck on a string, drew a stick foul on Brad Skjei and Pastrnak's replacement on first unit scored his second goal of the series. With a stickless Jordan Staal defending in front of him, David Krejci moved left to right out high, faking a couple of shots before finding a clear shooting lane. His long, hard wrister beat James Reimer at 15:41.

They flurried for the rest of the period, but could not build on the lead before the period was out, and that was unfortunate.

For in the second period, the Canes took over the game and, eventually the lead.

It started off with the B's making some unforced errors in their own zone, with both Torey Krug and Brandon Carlo throwing some careless passes into the middle and Zdeno Chara fighting the puck. The Canes started to get traction on a 4-on-4 and kept it going when the teams got back to full strength.

With the B's scrambling in their own zone, Chris Wagner was called for elbowing that neither he nor Cassidy liked too much. The Canes made them pay when Teravainen sniped a power-play at 15:13 from inside of the right circle that beat Rask to the blocker side.

Carolina got another one of their young stars going just 1:28 later when Andrei Svechnikov took a feed from Necas in the slot and wasted no time snapping it over Rask's shoulder.

That finally got the B's attention, and they went back on the attack. After a great chance from the slot, Krug was heading back to the blue line when he appeared to trip himself up over Teravainen's leg. Teravainen may have nudged the leg out just a hair, maybe not, but Brind'Amour, already tagged with a \$25,000 fine for his rant about the officials on Wednesday, threw his hands up in disgust on the bench.

With 4.4 seconds left in the second, they evened it up with their second PP goal of the game when Brad Marchand roofed a rebound of a Patrice Bergeron shot to send it into the third deadlocked 2-2.

Boston Herald LOADED: 08.14.2020

1190988 Boston Bruins

Hurricanes coach Brind'Amour 'moving on' after fined by NHL

Staff Report

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

PUBLISHED: August 13, 2020 at 2:54 p.m. | UPDATED: August 13, 2020 at 3:52 p.m.

TORONTO — Rod Brind'Amour wasn't going to risk another \$25,000 fine from the NHL.

The Carolina Hurricanes coach provided a short, four-word answer, Thursday, when asked if he had anything more to add a day after being fined for calling the league "a joke" in criticizing an officials' ruling on a goal challenge.

"Fortunately, nope. Moving on," Brind'Amour said, during a Zoom conference call from his team's Toronto hotel hours before the Hurricanes played Game 2 of their first-round series against the Boston Bruins.

Brind'Amour caused a stir a day earlier following a 4-3 double-overtime loss, after which the NHL fined him \$25,000 for his comments, and issued him a conditional \$25,000 fine for any similar comments he might make over the next calendar year.

At the very least, Hurricanes owner Tom Dundon had his coach's back. Under the heading "In Rod We Trust," the Hurricanes posted a photo on their Twitter account of a \$25,017 check, with a Hurricanes logo on it, signed by Dundon and made out to the NHL Foundation



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Initially upset he wasn't asked about the officials' ruling during a post-game news conference, Brind'Amour later voiced his complaints to several publications which cover the Hurricanes.

At issue was how officials dealt with the Hurricanes challenging Charlie Coyle's second-period goal, which put Boston up 2-1.

The puck was batted by a Bruins' player's hand and fell into the crease, where Carolina goalie Petr Mrazek made an attempt to smother it. Coyle poked the puck loose and scored.

Brind'Amour told the Raleigh News & Observer that in preparing to make his challenge, referees Chris Lee and Francis Charron declined to reveal their on-ice ruling regarding the goal. That left Brind'Amour with having to make a decision over whether to challenge goalie interference or whether play should have stopped because of an illegal hand pass.

Brind'Amour's challenge of an illegal hand pass was denied because Lee ruled Mrazek had possession of the puck even though play wasn't stopped, leading to the possibility of goalie interference. Teams are only allowed one challenge per goal.

"They wouldn't tell you. It makes no sense," he was quoted telling the newspaper. "This is why the league's a joke, in my opinion, on these things. ... That one is a crime scene."

Though the Hurricanes were penalized for delay of game following the failed challenge, Brock McGinn scored a short-handed goal 11 seconds later to tie the game.

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1190989 Boston Bruins

Bruce Cassidy sees the positive in Bruins' third line

By STEVE CONROY | sconroy@bostonherald.com | Boston Herald

PUBLISHED: August 13, 2020 at 2:41 p.m. | UPDATED: August 13, 2020 at 8:12 p.m.

The Bruins' third line of Nick Ritchie, Charlie Coyle and Anders Bjork had its positive moments in Wednesday's Game 1 against the Carolina Hurricanes, most notably the Coyle goal that was scored off some greasy front-net work by all three players.

But the line was also on the ice for two goals against after a couple of lost battles from Ritchie and some miscommunication.

Still, with the first win under his belt, coach Bruce Cassidy didn't sound like he was at all close to breaking up the line — and he's not a coach who's afraid to make changes. But he did acknowledge that things could have gone more smoothly for them.

"On the first goal, Ritchie certainly had a chance to kill the play. Charlie Coyle's caught on defense. I think (Charlie) McAvoy was up. At the end of the day, that's a D and he helps Ritchie, that play's dead and it's a 1-on-5. From there, Anders comes into the pile thinking Ritchie's going to kill it so he's on the wrong side of the ice instead of returning through the middle. So just a couple little things. Looked like a harmless play, then the Ritchie battle, the Bjork route and all of a sudden they're on a line change and they get the puck in the middle of the ice to fresh legs and they make a play. Honestly, it was one breakdown that led to another. If we kill it early, it's done," said Cassidy. "The other goal we just got a little bit anxious on the wall to get in the battle with Anders and the puck beat him to the top. If it's a righty, he's probably fine, but it's a lefty, (Hadyn)

Fleury, who can drag it into the middle of the ice quicker on his off side. Anders attempted to make the block, but it got through.

"Other than that, they did a lot of things well. They obviously scored a goal for us, had some looks. Anders was all alone in front of the net with a point-blank (chance), a great play by Coyle. They haven't been together a lot obviously so we'll allow them time to grow as a line unless (availability) prevents us from doing that. But all in all, I thought they were better than they were bad, they just happened to be victimized for a couple of goals."

As it turned out, with the surprise scratch of David Pastrnak (unfit to participate), Bjork did have to get bumped up to the top line while Karson Kuhlman took Bjork's spot on the third line.

Meanwhile, just judging from the ever-reliable social media meter, it seems that Ritchie has become an object of many fans' ire. Big men losing battles never looks good. But while Cassidy acknowledged that there are things Ritchie can work on, the coach will allow him to get that work in. He also thought his physicality and size did show up at times, which he believes is needed.

"He had some good hits. He hit (Joel) Edmundson hard, shook him up. Both teams in any series are looking for the physical part so that there's the attrition factor, so time will tell on that," said Cassidy. "He got to the front of the net a lot. We asked him to do that. Now the way Carolina's D are active, you've got to know, 'OK, where am I in front? Am I in good position to recover if there's a turnover or uncertainty on a puck possession so I won't get beat up ice? Or can I take away the goalie's eyes and get right on top of the crease?' Those are some discussions we'll have with him. He didn't find a lot of loose pucks for himself, but Charlie Coyle scored a goal, he was part of that sequence. He went to the front of the net with Anders' chance with Coyle, so he was around there. The physicality part versus Carolina? I think it's important in any series. They've got some big bodies over there. Are you using it to your advantage becomes more of the question for me. We're willing to keep encouraging him to do that. I think he had four hits and got one pretty good lick in there. It's his first (playoff) game with us, so we brought him in for a reason and we'll allow him to grow unless we feel if there's a better option for us, a quicker option, a guy that has different attributes, then we'll use him."

Rask back in net

Cassidy was going right back with Tuukka Rask for Thursday's Game 2, despite the games being on consecutive days.

"There were three factors. How's Tuukka feeling coming out of the game? He felt fine. Was there a lot of wear and tear to the point where recovery would require more than 24 hours or three hours? I don't think so. We were pretty clean in front of him. Not a lot of stretches that were demanding. Still, it was four periods of hockey, so he's got to be ready on his toes the whole game," said Cassidy. "Back-to-back decisions have a lot to do with travel, short night's sleep. We didn't have any of those factors. He went to the rink and back to the hotel, so there's obviously no travel and you get a full night's sleep, so that had a lot to do with it."

Not so powerful

The B's vaunted power play is 0-for-13 since the start of the round robin, with an 0-for-4 outing — including a shorthanded goal against — in Game 1. Carolina has an aggressive penalty kill and Cassidy would like to see his team account better for that.

"The way they form that tight diamond in the neutral zone didn't allow us to gain entry with possession, which is something we try to do as much as any team in this league. It was stubbornness on our part not to get pucks behind them," said Cassidy. "We have a couple of plays that we talked about before. Unfortunately we didn't have a chance to practice the timing of some of them. We always run that stretch play against Carolina off the end boards. We've had some success against them doing that. We actually scored out there. Sometimes we find that will loosen them up. Didn't work for us."



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No stopping them

Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said his team wasn't caught by surprise by the B's top line's set play that led to David Pastrnak's goal in Game 1. And therein lies the problem for his team.

"Everyone knows they're coming. That's the hard part," said Brind'Amour. "You actually know they're coming and you still can't defend it. That's what happened. We knew exactly what the play was and we knew how to cover it. It's not blown coverage, it's just that much (holding his thumb and forefinger an inch apart). That's all they need. That's why they're so elite. There's a lot of great players in the game, but the chemistry that these guys have, just know where they're going with the puck before they get it, that's what the top guys do, and that's what they are."

Play it back

Brind'Amour's assessment of Game 1 after reviewing it: "It was worse watching it back than it did live, so that didn't sit that well. We weren't very good and they did exactly what they wanted to do."

Hamilton's return

In his first game since breaking his fibula in January, Dougie Hamilton played 26:48 in the double-OT Game 1, finishing with a minus-2 and no shots on net.

"For first game back, I thought he was fine. I thought he was really good actually," said Brind'Amour. "He'd been out almost (eight) months. It's not the perfect amount of minutes you'd want a guy to play who hasn't played forever, but he handled it really well."

Boston Herald LOADED: 08.14.2020

1190990 Boston Bruins

Bruins vs. Hurricanes Highlights: Carolina ties series with 3-2 Game 2 win

By Nick Goss

August 13, 2020 10:43 PM

FINAL SCORE: Carolina Hurricanes 3, Boston Bruins 2

IN BRIEF: The Hurricanes will not be swept by the Bruins for the second consecutive season.

The 'Canes had lost five straight postseason games to the Bruins entering Thursday night, and they snapped that skid with a 3-2 victory in Game 2 of their first-round Stanley Cup Playoff series at Scotiabank Arena in Toronto.

The turning point came at 15:13 of the second period when Carolina scored on a Teuvo Teravainen power-play goal, and then the 'Canes scored 88 seconds later to take a 2-1 lead. The Bruins had plenty of chances to build on their 1-0 lead and failed to capitalize. The B's finally ended their power play drought with a pair of goals on the man advantage, but the Hurricanes were the better team at 5-on-5 with a plus-6 edge in scoring chances and a 2-0 goal differential.

The Bruins also were without the league's leading goal scorer in David Pastrnak. The team announced before the game that he was "unfit to participate."

The Bruins were 0-for-13 on the power play in the Toronto bubble entering Game 2, and David Krejci ended the drought with a goal in the

first period. Krejci's shot found its way past two Bruins screening Hurricanes goalie James Reimer before hitting the back of the net.

The Bruins responded by scoring with 4.4 seconds remaining in the second period to tie the score at two goals apiece. Brad Marchand was able to pounce on a loose puck around the crease and beat the buzzer.

Dougie Hamilton put the Hurricanes back on top with an absolute rocket of a shot at 8:30 of the third period that beat Rask up high. This goal must have been extra sweet for Hamilton considering it came against his former team.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 08.14.2020

1190991 Boston Bruins

Maybe it's time to stop doubting the Bruins top guys after busting out in Game 1

By Joe Haggerty

August 13, 2020 9:30 AM

Is everybody done talking about the round robin now?

The Bruins went out and showed on Wednesday that they indeed saved their real live bullets for the actual Stanley Cup Playoffs in a 4-3 double overtime win over the Carolina Hurricanes in the Toronto Bubble at Scotiabank Arena.

After being held scoreless in each of the three round-robin losses, the Perfection Line exploded for a pair of goals, including the double overtime game-winner from Patrice Bergeron and a nifty first period face-off play where all three forwards touched the puck before David Pastrnak finished things off.

Bergeron, Pastrnak and Brad Marchand clearly weren't at their all-time best as Marchand finished with just a single shot on net and the four turnovers from Pasta was a result of being far too casual with the puck. And the top power play unit featuring all three forwards was once again a train wreck and is now 0-for-13 in the Toronto bubble while also falling victim to a shorthanded goal against Carolina.

But Boston's three amigos also once again demonstrated pretty clearly that the Carolina defense isn't going to be able to do much to stop them.

Carolina's best shutdown D-man Jaccob Slavin was on ice for both of the top line's goals and Slavin made a crucial mistake turning his back to the face-off play that Pastrnak finished off at the net right in front of his face. That left both Slavin and Dougie Hamilton as a minus-2 for the game, and Slavin is now a minus-5 in five playoff games against the Bruins over the last two postseasons.

It really doesn't bode well for the Hurricanes if their best shutdown players can't effectively slow down Boston's best offensive players in the least.

After it was over, Bruce Cassidy didn't exactly say "I told you so," but stressed that he wasn't worried about his best forwards showing up now that the Stanley Cup Playoff bell has really been rung.

"These guys are battle tested. Certainly Bergy [Patrice Bergeron] and Marchy [Brad Marchand], and Pasta [David Pastrnak] has been through it — not as much as those guys. We've got a lot of trust in those guys. We have discussions. Where is your game at?" said Bruce Cassidy. "Don't forget that Pasta missed what a lot of teams went through — the training camp. Even though they've played together a long time, it's been four



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months and change. Now you're coming into a part of the season that is high stakes.

"We knew there would be a little bit of... I don't know if rust is the right word. We would take some time for them to make some little plays. Overtime is them. The faceoff play was them. They missed a little bit of that in the round robin. Tonight, they know that there is a little more at stake as well. Put those two things together, those two factors together and we knew they'd be there and competing, and competing at a high level. When they do that, they're so talented and smart that they know things are going to happen for them — and they did."

Certainly, the top guys for the Bruins weren't alone in operating at a high level against the Hurricanes in Game 1. David Krejci scored on a nifty play where Ondrej Kase set up a rebound by firing a puck from his knees, and Charlie Coyle and Anders Bjork crashed the net to disrupt Petr Mrazek and score a very important second period goal.

Bean: B's can build on Game 1, but lineup questions remain

The secondary scoring was there in this one, but the scoring was bookended by two goals from a healthy, rested Perfection Line that is just getting started this postseason.

"We were confident. We're a confident group, confident line. I think we got better as we went on in the round robin. Obviously, you want to keep getting better and taking the next step, especially we thought that [Game 1] was a really important game, starting round one," said Bergeron. "So we had to put whatever was behind us in the past and get some rhythm going. I thought [David Krejci's] line and [Sean Kuraly's] line, they got some momentum for us, they got us going and I thought we followed up.

"When things are going well at times you [can] get complacent and you don't work on things you need to work on. Obviously, you want things to go well all the time, that's a perfect scenario. [But] we were able to look at video and look at the areas that we can get better at. I thought as a team we did that throughout the round robin and now it's behind us. We're focused on Game 2. That's all I can really tell you. I think that's how we were trying to approach it."

The Bruins' top guys really don't need to explain anything to anybody after they went out and played like the stars that they are at the start of the real postseason. Now the trick is going to be sustaining it, staying healthy and continuing to up everybody across the board as the competition and intensity level raises with each game in the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

But the Perfection Line served notice in Game 1 that they are back, well past the meaningless round robin and intent on taking care of the unfinished business from last year's heartbreaking postseason.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 08.14.2020

1190992 Boston Bruins

David Pastrnak won't play for Bruins in Game 2 vs. Hurricanes

By Nick Goss

August 13, 2020 7:39 PM

The Boston Bruins will be without David Pastrnak for Game 2 of their first round Stanley Cup Playoff series versus the Carolina Hurricanes.

The B's announced shortly before puck drop Thursday night that the superstar right winger is "unfit to participate". No other information was provided.

Pastrnak tallied a goal and an assist in Boston's 4-3 double-overtime victory over Carolina in Wednesday's Game 1. His 48 goals scored during the regular season tied Washington Capitals forward Alexander Ovechkin for the most in the NHL.

Anders Bjork will begin Game 2 in Pastrnak's spot at right wing on the top line next to Brad Marchand and Patrice Bergeron. Karson Kuhlman will enter the lineup and take Bjork's place on the third line.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 08.14.2020

1190993 Boston Bruins

Bruce Cassidy admits Bruins are 'behind on the power play'

By Joe Haggerty

August 13, 2020 5:44 PM

The Bruins had the second-best power play during the NHL regular season among the league's 31 teams and relied heavily on their special teams last season to get them all the way to the Stanley Cup Final a little over a year ago.

That hasn't been the case this time around as of yet with the Bruins 0-for-13 on the power play since arriving at the Toronto bubble a couple of weeks ago, and 0-for-4 in Wednesday's 4-3 double-overtime Game 1 win against the Carolina Hurricanes. The B's managed just three shots on net in those power play possessions, which is just anemic for a team that routinely destroyed other teams on the man advantage during the regular season.

Even worse, a telegraphed David Pastrnak pass at the point was intercepted by Brock McGinn for a shorthanded score for the Hurricanes that made things more difficult for the Black and Gold in Game 1. Some of it is clearly about an aggressive Carolina penalty kill that is jumping Bruins puck carriers in the offensive zone, but some of it is also about the lack of practice time with Boston's full group. The absences of David Pastrnak through all of training camp and other players intermittently through Phases 3 and 4 has been problematic while going over the remedial power play work for the group.

"I think Carolina is aggressive, for sure. The way they form that tight diamond in the neutral zone didn't allow us to gain entry with possession. Which is something that we try to do as much as any team in this league. Maybe the stubbornness on our part to not to get pucks behind them — we have a couple of plays, we talked about even before. Unfortunately, we didn't get a chance to practice the timing of some of them," said Cassidy. "We always run that stretch play against Carolina off the end boards. We've had success against them doing that and we actually scored on them up there doing it. We sometimes find that will loosen them up.

B's sticking with Rask, same lineup for Game 2

"Then in-zone, probably forced some plays once we did get possession. I think you have to have a little more of a 5-on-5 mentality when you're going against that, in terms of protecting a puck, maybe spinning out of a hit and get close support instead of thinking they're going to let us set up. Some of it was just, we had to live it. We did. It cost us a shorty. We won the game, so we'll move past it and try to make the necessary adjustments. I think it has hurt us the fact that you're off for that long. Pasta [David Pastrnak] misses camp. [Ondrej] Kase misses camp on the second unit. You don't have a lot of reps. When we got here, a couple guys needed maintenance days. Bergy, Pasta again. Now all of a sudden, you think maybe you can catch up here on the practice time and



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we weren't able to do much of that either. So we're behind on the power play. We're going to have to simplify it and be ready for pressure tonight. Hopefully get it going again because it can be a major weapon for us."

Certainly one of the things the B's can do is make quicker decisions with the puck to beat the pressure coming at them, but some of that is dependent on repetition and PP chemistry that only comes with real-game experience and practice time.

Clearly getting the puck to Pastrnak in the face-off circle rather than closer to the point is something the Bruins want to do more of, but that's clearly something Carolina is paying attention to on the PK.

Unfortunately, in the midst of playing six games in nine days to start the Stanley Cup Playoffs, the Bruins aren't going to get a tone of practice time to tighten things up in the middle of this first round series against the Hurricanes. The B's would be best served by taking care of business against the Canes quickly to work on the PP in practice following this first round series, but that's easier said than done against anybody in the NHL postseason.

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1190994 Boston Bruins

Bruins send Claude Julien well wishes as Canadiens coach is hospitalized

By Darren Hartwell

August 13, 2020 3:05 PM

Claude Julien won't be behind the Montreal Canadiens' bench for their Stanley Cup Playoff series against the Philadelphia Flyers.

The Canadiens head coach was taken to a Toronto-area hospital Thursday after experiencing chest pain Wednesday night and is expected to miss the team's first-round series, general manager Marc Bergevin said Thursday.

"We immediately consulted our doctors and it was agreed to transfer him to the hospital by ambulance," Bergevin said. "He's presently there and he's undergoing tests to determine the exact nature of his condition."

Bergevin added Julien's health situation had "nothing to do" with COVID-19.

It's a scary development for the former Bruins head coach, who is in his fourth season coaching Montreal after 10 seasons in Boston. Julien led the Bruins to a Stanley Cup in 2011 and is the winningest coach in franchise history, with 419 wins.

Associate head coach Kirk Muller will assume head coach duties in Julien's absence.

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Bruins miss David Pastrnak's offense, but it's their D that seals Game 2 fate

By Fluto Shinzawa

Aug 13, 2020

Of course the Bruins missed David Pastrnak.

Their No. 1 right wing, who pulled up lame after setting up Patrice Bergeron's double-overtime Game 1 winner, was unable to play in the Bruins' 3-2 Game 2 loss.

Bruce Cassidy did not believe Pastrnak's ailment was a long-term concern. But any injury that causes a postseason absence has to be considered significant.

"You don't replace Pasta," Cassidy said. "He's a 48-goal scorer. Forty-nine now. You hope someone can go in there and play to the best of their ability and it will work out in your favor."

Pastrnak could have been the difference-maker when Cassidy pulled Tuukka Rask in search of the tying goal. He probably would have recorded more than the one shot that Anders Bjork, his top-line replacement, put on James Reimer. Perhaps the chance that Bjork nestled into Reimer's pads would have slipped behind the goalie with Pastrnak on the trigger. Had Pastrnak been in place, Bjork would have stayed on the third line, which was good in Game 1, not so good on Thursday (zero shots from wingers Nick Ritchie and Karson Kuhlman).

But Pastrnak's strength is offense. The Bruins' troubles in Game 2 came in their own end. The Hurricanes turned it into their playground. Zone exits did not come easily for the Bruins under Carolina's searing heat.

"That's what their team is predicated on," Matt Grzelcyk said. "They work really hard. They kind of feed off that from their coach. We knew that coming in. It's on us, especially as defensemen, to try to move it to the first guy we see available and get out of the zone quickly."

Carolina requires a screaming forecheck to gain possession in the offensive zone. This then activates its defensemen, who jump up to be available inside the blue line and at the tops of the circles.

This was exactly how ex-Bruin Dougie Hamilton scored the third-period winner.

The breakdown started after a David Krejci defensive-zone turnover. The Bruins looked like they had fixed the damage. From one knee, Ondrej Kase settled a loose puck and found Jake DeBrusk.

The left wing had time to turn away from his net and clear the puck. But DeBrusk, feeling the heat from Ryan Dzingel, backhanded the puck into the left corner. There was no help there. Martin Necas pulled away from Kase to win the race. Necas wheeled behind the net, requiring Rask to respect the wraparound.

Instead, Necas spotted Hamilton approaching the top of the right circle, his stick raised to fire. Rask tried to scurry out of his net to cut down the angle. He didn't come out far enough. Hamilton rocketed a riser over his glove at 8:30, giving Carolina a 3-2 lead.

"You've got to punt on those situations and live to fight another day," Cassidy said. "The puck's got to clear the zone when you're running around. Jake had the other one. They didn't sort out with Krech and Kase. It ends up in the back of our net."

In the second period, the No. 2 line was also caught on the wrong end. Rask tried to rim a puck around the wall for Krejci. But the puck wobbled off the glass, tumbled past Krejci and trickled to Hurricanes defenseman Trevor van Riemsdyk at the right point.

Kase pursued van Riemsdyk. But before the right wing could close off the gap, van Riemsdyk passed down the right-side wall to Necas. At the same time, Carolina's dangerous Andrei Svechnikov spun behind DeBrusk and made himself available in the high slot. Necas connected with the winger, who fired a shot under the crossbar to give the Hurricanes a 2-1 lead.



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"They did a good job on the forecheck all night," Cassidy said. "We didn't return to our spots, and they hit a seam in our coverage. Which we were really good at in Game 1. Didn't allow a lot of those opportunities. Tonight, they found some ways in there."

Brad Marchand pulled the Bruins even with 3.8 ticks remaining in the second period. But Carolina had the better scoring chances in the third. Video review confirmed that Teuvo Teravainen interfered with Rask before a Brady Skjei shot bounced over the line. But Cassidy did not like how a failed clearing attempt by Bjork gave the Hurricanes the net-front sniff.

More pressure is guaranteed to arrive in Game 3.

"They were doing a good job on the forecheck getting above us, being on top of our guys right away," Brandon Carlo said. "I think just pushing back, maybe throw more high flips into the neutral zone and get them going back on pucks. We're just trying to get the puck out of the zone as fast as we can and being assertive on the forecheck instead of letting them control that part of the game."

Notes

- Rask (23 saves) said he felt fine playing back-to-back games. But he acknowledged not being at his strongest because of the layoff.

"Considering I had four months off, I'm not in prime shape," Rask said. "Trying to get there. I'm just trying to have fun and play the game. I'm not stressing too much about the results and whatnot. It's August and I haven't played hockey in forever. Just go out there, have fun and see what happens."

He also said the team has needed to work to ramp up for these playoff games, which lack a traditional playoff atmosphere.

"To be honest with you, it doesn't really feel like playoff hockey out there," Rask said. "There are no fans, so it's kind of like playing an exhibition game. It's definitely not a playoff atmosphere out there. You try and play as hard as you can. When you're playing at a home rink and an away rink and the fans are cheering for and against you, it really creates a buzz for the series. There's none of that."

"So it just feels like dull at times," Rask continued. "There are moments when there are scrums and whatnot, and then there will be five minutes when it's coast-to-coast hockey. There's no atmosphere. So it feels like an exhibition game. We're trying our best to ramp up and get energized, and make it feel like it's a playoff game."

- Krejci replaced Pastrnak at the left elbow on the No. 1 power-play unit. Krejci does not have Pastrnak's one-timer. But the savvy center scored a man-up goal by pump-faking twice on Jordan Staal — who had given his stick to teammate Brock McGinn — and slipping a shot past Reimer.

- Cassidy began his postgame news conference by sending best wishes to Claude Julien. His predecessor was hospitalized on Wednesday night because of chest pains, and is expected to miss the rest of the Montreal Canadiens' series against the Philadelphia Flyers.

"I don't have a lot of details, but on behalf of the coaching staff, players and the whole Bruins organization, we're wishing him a healthy recovery," Cassidy said. "Our best goes out to (wife) Karen and the kids."

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Why Tuukka Rask is starting Game 2 on a back-to-back

By Fluto Shinzawa

Aug 13, 2020

On Feb. 8, Tuukka Rask stopped 29 of 31 shots in the Bruins' 4-2 home win over Arizona. One day later in Detroit, Bruce Cassidy turned to Rask again. Rask made 17 saves in the team's 3-1 loss to the Red Wings.

Rask's back-to-back performance continued a career-long trend. In 20 regular-season starts after playing the previous day, Rask is 7-11-2 with a .913 save percentage.

Cassidy does not believe this will stretch into Game 2 against Carolina.

Even with Jaroslav Halak available, Cassidy will ride Rask on Thursday, one day after he stopped 25 shots in the Bruins' 4-3 double-overtime Game 1 win.

Cassidy cited several reasons. There was no intercity travel involved, and thus no disruption in sleep. Rask felt fine after Game 1. He was not taxed because of how the Bruins defended and controlled the puck.

"It was pretty clean in front of him," Cassidy said. "Not a lot of demanding stretches."

Rask's busiest segment came in the third period. Carolina put 12 pucks on goal. He was beaten on one: Haydn Fleury's long-distance shot.

Otherwise, Rask had a far easier day than Petr Mrazek (36 saves). Torey Krug and Brandon Carlo, in particular, helped to lessen the load on Rask because of how they performed against Teuvo Teravainen, Sebastian Aho and Evgeni Svechnikov, Carolina's No. 1 line.

Carlo played 24:37 at 5-on-5, second-most after Charlie McAvoy (29:51). Carlo played 13:04 against Aho, who recorded one shot. In the first overtime, when Svechnikov loaded up for his signature lacrosse shot from behind the goal line, intending to lift and carry the puck directly into the goal, Carlo rapidly closed on the right wing and knocked the puck off his stick.

One reason Cassidy didn't cite for going back with Rask was the starter's Game 1 performance: good, but not great.

He was caught sliding on Joel Edmundson's shot from distance that opened the scoring, probably because he didn't pick up the defenseman until it was too late. Rask had no chance on Brock McGinn's shorthanded snipe for the second goal. In some games, Rask would have fought through the Ryan Dzingel/McAvoy screen that kept him from spotting Fleury's release for the third Carolina tally.

After such performances, Rask, Cassidy and goaltending coach Bob Essensa like to get the ace feeling better about himself sooner rather than later.

Entries, denied

The power play went 0 for 3 in Game 1. An undisciplined David Pastrnak fling from inside the blue line led to McGinn's shorthanded jailbreak. The play signaled the most pressing problem: too many fumbled entries against Carolina's pressure.

"The way they form a tight diamond in the neutral zone, they didn't allow us to gain entry with possession," Cassidy said. "That's something we try to do as much as any team in the league."

Krug, tasked with retrievals, is the first option to gain the zone. Pastrnak and Brad Marchand are next for speed entries on the flanks. The Hurricanes did well to disrupt those three with their up-ice heat and roadblocks at the blue line.

The Bruins have workarounds. Krug tried one long bomb to Pastrnak off the end boards. Even though the Bruins couldn't pull it off, Cassidy likes his first unit to mix in this play to plant the seed in the penalty-killers' minds.



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The Bruins can also place pucks behind defensemen and hunt them down. This cedes possession. But it can be an effective counter to an aggressive kill. The Bruins didn't do this enough in Game 1.

"We're behind on the power play," Cassidy said. "We're going to have to simplify it and be ready for pressure tonight and hopefully get it going again. Because it can be a major weapon for us."

Praise for the No. 1 line

The Hurricanes knew the faceoff play was coming. If Patrice Bergeron won the draw, Pastrnak would curl behind Jacob Slavin and make his stick available at the far post. Marchand would chase down the puck and send a cross-crease dish to Pastrnak.

Skill, practice and timing can solve even the best prescouts.

"You actually know it's coming and you still can't defend it," Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "That's what happened on the one. We knew exactly what the play was and how we decided to cover it. It's not blown coverage. It's all these guys need. That's why they're so elite. I think they're great players in the game. But the chemistry these guys have, just knowing where they're going with the puck before they get it, that's what the top guys do. That's what they are."

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The Athletic / Pronman: Which prospects improved their NHL Draft stock at summer U20 camps?

By Corey Pronman Aug 13, 2020

There's been a little bit of movement in the hockey prospects world as some European national camps have gone on and leagues are starting to prepare for the 2020-21 season. Here are some preliminary notes and thoughts from the camps this summer.

Germany U20 Camp

(Three games vs. Switzerland's U20 team)

Tim Stutzle, C, Mannheim (2020 draft-eligible): Stutzle had one goal and three points in three games versus Switzerland. It was an up and down showing, with the occasional flash of high-end ability that displayed his great skating and playmaking. He was able to gain the zone a lot with his skating and skill, and roam around the ice well. I thought overall he looked good, but I would say he wasn't as dominant as I thought he'd be for a player of his talent given the quality of his opponents.

John-Jason Peterka, RW, Munich (2020 draft-eligible): Peterka played on a line with Stutzle the entire tournament. While I thought Peterka was fine, I was hoping for a little bit more from a projected first-round pick. He showed flashes of his great hands and good speed, but I didn't see him make a ton of plays. And like Stutzle, that line didn't play at the level I thought it would. Peterka's a good player, but you want to see a 5-foot-11 forward be dynamic, and I didn't see that guy show up in Switzerland. Peterka was drafted by London in the CHL Draft, leading to questions if he would come to Canada instead of playing in Germany next season. I asked him this following the conclusion of Germany's U20 camp. He replied, "This is hard to answer. I am concentrating now on my preseason – getting ready and looking forward to the draft and the following camps. From there we go and decide."

Lukas Reichel, LW, Berlin (2020 draft-eligible): Reichel played on a different line than Stutzle and Peterka, and without as much help

produced more than either, with NHL scouts praising Reichel as the player who helped his case the most of the three top prospects in the event. I don't think he dazzled, but he showed good speed, skill and compete. There was some momentum for his draft stock in the last few months of the season and the camp was another showing of why I think he's going to go in the first round.

Russia U20 Camp

(Four games vs. Sochi's junior team as part of the Sochi Open)

Rodion Amirov, LW, Ufa (2020 eligible): Amirov was one of Russia's top scorers and was consistently dangerous throughout the event. His great skill was on display often, including a lacrosse-style goal and, in general, making defenders miss with his puck handling. He made more plays to his teammates than I've seen in the past, but he also didn't play as fast as I've seen him before. NHL scouts watching the event thought he looked like a player who could go in the teens in the 2020 draft.

Maxim Groshev, RW, Nizhnekamsk (2020 draft-eligible): Groshev helped himself as much as any draft-eligible player this summer. He was first in goals and tied for second in points for Russia. In an interview with The Athletic, Russia's U20 coach Igor Larionov praised Groshev's speed and work ethic, including several great backchecks where he broke up grade-A scoring chances to go with the offense. He's a very skilled and speedy player who looked like a bull in how he created offense at the net with pace. He's not a great passer, but I see a player who can be an effective up and down winger in the NHL.

Egor Afanasyev, LW, Windsor (Nashville): Afanasyev was one of Russia's top players in his first national team appearance since he was 16 years old. He made a lot of plays to his teammates to create chances, and on the power play the unit flowed through him. His skating still isn't good enough, but the rest of his game looks very desirable, as Larionov pointed out. "He's big and powerful, he can pass the puck well and he can score goals," Larionov said. "He has a lot of potential, he's like a North American power forward with a Russian skill set."

Mikhail Abramov, C, Victoriaville (Toronto): Abramov was Russia's top center, building off a strong 2020 season in the QMJHL. "He was good, close to great. He's creative. He made other players better," said Larionov. Abramov's vision stood out consistently. His skating is still average, but his skill/IQ/shot combination looks good enough to give him a real shot to become an NHL player.

Vladislav Firstov, LW, UConn (Minnesota): This was Firstov's first appearance for the national team and it was some of the best hockey I've seen him play in the past two years. I still have minor questions on his skating and how dynamic an offensive player he is, but he stood out among his U20 peers as a player who could drive the bus offensively and help a power play. Larionov was a fan. "He worked his ass off every night," Larionov said. "He reminded me of Chris Kunitz. He passed the puck well, he scored goals, got under people's skins and got the job done."

Artemi Kniazev, D, Chicoutimi (San Jose): Kniazev was named the top defenseman in the Sochi open with five points in three games. It was some of the best hockey I've seen Kniazev play in the past few years. His skating and puck-moving ability made a difference when he was on the ice, and he created a lot of offense. Larionov had the following to say about him: "He has ability to join the rush, he takes a lot of chances. He plays a little like [Alexander Romanov] last year. Romanov needed to learn how to have balance in his game and take care of your defensive play, and Artemi needs some polish as well."

Daniil Chayka, D, Guelph (2021 draft-eligible): Chayka is a late 2002 birth date, very young for the Russian U20 team and didn't look out of place among players who were one or two years older. "His hockey IQ looked top notch," said Larionov. I wouldn't say Chayka's offense popped, but he looked like he was able to move pucks and think creatively at that pace, to go along with good size and skating ability. That package looks like the potential to be a first-round pick in 2021.



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Yan Kuznetsov, D, UConn (2020 draft-eligible): Kuznetsov was one of the youngest players in college hockey as a 17-year-old last season. He held his own but it was a big level jump for a player his age. I've always appreciated the size and mobility, but wondered about the offense. At the U20 camp I don't think his puck game stood out like his pure athletic tools, but he showed good puck poise and made a lot of good decisions. "I like him very much," Larionov said. "He was strong defensively and made some plays with the puck. He's smart, he's reliable, his work ethic was exceptional. He looks like a good NHL prospect."

Czech Republic U20 Camp

(Three games vs. Slovakia's U20 team)

Stanislav Svozil, D, Brno (2021 draft-eligible): I saw Svozil live in February at the U18 Five Nations in the Czech Republic, and I was impressed with how well he played against older players as an underage player and was a top player for the Czechs. He did the same thing as a U18 player on the U20 team this summer, looking poised and capable. He's a very good skater with great hockey sense, allowing him to skate and make plays versus older, stronger players. Svozil has the looks of a top prospect for the 2021 NHL Draft.

Jaromir Pytlík, C, Sault Ste. Marie (2020 draft-eligible): Pytlík led the tournament in scoring with two goals and six points in three games. Despite his big numbers, I wouldn't say he blew me away with his play. I liked how he moved the puck inside the offensive zone and how he played in the tough areas of the ice. His game lacks flash in terms of speed and skill, but he does tend to find a way to produce and play big roles wherever he goes. NHL scouts are split on whether he's going to be a real player in the league for some of the reasons I discussed.

Jan Mysak, C, Hamilton (2020 draft-eligible): Mysak had one goal and four points in the three games of the tournament and was one of the Czech Republic's better players. He's more noticeable than others on a consistent basis because of his great speed. Mysak showed very good vision, but I wouldn't say he stood out as a truly dangerous offensive threat, especially as an undersized forward. When I see Mysak he reminds me a bit of Dillon Dube at the same age, and Dube turned into a quality NHL player, although I don't think Mysak's speed is quite as good.

Finland U20 Camp

Finland's U20's had some intra-team scrimmages a few weeks ago. I wasn't able to watch the camp, so I talked to Finland's U20 coach Antti Pennanen about who he thought stood out during the camp.

Eemil Viro, D, TPS (2020 draft-eligible): "He was our best defenseman," Pennanen said. "He was better than those older players like Ville Heinola or Santeri Hattaka. He was good defensively, he's skillful, he's a very good skater. He will play in the NHL someday."

Kasper Simontaival, RW, Taapara (2020 draft-eligible): "He was very impressive," Pennanen said. "I didn't have too much expectations, but he was very good with the puck. He has a lot of hockey sense, a great attitude."

Matias Mantykivi, C, SaiPa (Boston): "This guy is so good, he is such a smart hockey player," Pennanen said. Mantykivi went in the sixth round because of his size and skating, and the coach recognized Mantykivi's game could slow down at times. "He could play in the KHL, and why not in the NHL, because he is so smart," Pennanen said.

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Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens forge on in playoffs with Julien in their thoughts and hearts

Eric Engels | August 13, 2020, 6:34 PM

TORONTO — It's the image that resonates most in the wake of news that Montreal Canadiens coach Claude Julien was rushed to the hospital with chest pains Wednesday night after his team's 2-1 loss in Game 1 of their Stanley Cup Playoff series against the Philadelphia Flyers: a trimmed-down Julien, seated at the podium of the media room inside the Canadiens' practice facility on the second day of Phase 3 training camp, smiling and eventually joking with several journalists as the questions poured in via Zoom.

He appeared as though the rest from March to July had done him well, like he had enjoyed quality time with family but also taken some for himself to do what the hectic schedule of an NHL coach doesn't always permit. Julien spoke on that day about how excited he was for the opportunity the Canadiens were given to participate in this tournament for the Stanley Cup — especially after a gruelling season that saw them resting in 24th place in the 31-team league when life as we knew it was halted due to COVID-19.

"We have a chance to prove we're a better hockey team than what we showed," he said.

And then he arrived in Toronto 11 days later and helped the Canadiens shock the hockey world with a monumental upset over the Pittsburgh Penguins in the qualifying round of these playoffs.

Julien had them prepared for Game 1 against the Flyers, he coached them through an impressive performance that fell just short of a stunning win, and then he calmly went through his media availability without any indication something was wrong.

But something was.

"I'm here to you inform you of a situation that explains the absence of our head coach, Claude Julien, from our practice this morning," said Canadiens GM Marc Bergevin in an impromptu statement just before 2 p.m. ET on Thursday. "Claude experienced pain in his chest overnight. We immediately consulted with our doctors and decided to rush him to the hospital by ambulance. He went through tests to determine the nature of his condition. This situation has nothing to do with COVID."

"We don't foresee him being back with us before the end of this series against the Flyers."

In a year of the unexpected becoming reality so frequently that it's seemingly turned into the only constant we can rely on, this was still unthinkable. Even with Julien turning 60 this past April.

A hockey lifer — first as a professional player from 1980-92 and then as a coach who worked his way up from the QMJHL to the NHL in just four years — going from the bench to the hospital for reasons unrelated to this global pandemic was a jarring bit of news. For everyone.

Especially the Canadiens.

"A little shock and concern," said Bergevin. "But after talking to [Canadiens head physician] Dr. David Mulder there is some good news early this afternoon."

He explained that Julien was "in good hands" at a Toronto-area hospital, that he spoke with him this morning, that there was hope he'd be out of the hospital within days and that he'd return home — whether it was to Montreal to be with his family, or to Toronto to be with his Canadiens family.

Either way, Julien may be out of sight for some time. But he certainly won't be out of mind.

As the Canadiens forge on, with Kirk Muller assuming head coaching duties and Dominique Ducharme and Luke Richardson sharing the rest of the responsibilities, Julien will be in their hearts, too.



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"I think in these situations there's always a little bit of an emotional factor and, like Marc said, a shock factor," said Canadiens captain Shea Weber. "Obviously, everyone learned about this this morning and the biggest concern is his health. We want to make sure he's healthy first. But I think that's something, for sure, we can draw upon and use it as... not as if we weren't motivated in the first place, [but] this can maybe draw even more out of that."

This situation, though shocking, is not without precedent.

It was during the 1992-93 Canadiens season, when Muller was a player with the organization, that head coach Jacques Demers was hospitalized after experiencing chest pains. He was dismissed after all tests came back clear, and he ended up coaching the team to a Cup win months later.

It was back in 2002, incidentally the same year that Julien began his NHL coaching career, that Pat Quinn (who was 59 at the time) missed Game 3 of the Eastern Conference Final due to a "chest condition." Without him on their bench, the Toronto Maple Leafs fell in overtime by a score of 2-1 and, upon his return, went on to lose to the Carolina Hurricanes in six games.

The hockey is secondary when things like this happen. You think about the man, his family, his friends, and the members of his young team, for whom he is both coach and father figure.

You think about the stress of this work, particularly at this time — when the stakes are so high and the lights so bright.

Geoff Ward knows. The Calgary Flames coach has been through two cardiac episodes himself.

"It's stressful," he told Sportsnet. "When you do it for as many years as Claude has... I can't speak to how the extended stress affects a coach. It certainly is very stressful, especially at this time of year, because it's so short between games. You spend an awful lot of time away from the game, preparing so your sleep is not as good, you're eating at different times.

"The stakes are high this time of year — you have to find ways to get away from the game and relax a bit but that's not always possible. Important things for your health can get neglected at this time of year, when the stakes are high."

You can only imagine how Ward felt when hearing the news about Julien, whom he worked for as an assistant coach — first in Hamilton as part of Montreal's AHL affiliate, the Bulldogs, and then in Boston, with the Bruins from 2007-2014.

"I was shocked," Ward said. "My thoughts and prayers are with Claude and his family. Not only do I feel for Claude and his family, but the organization and the team. It has ripples when something like this happens. He's such a great person and he's a great coach. I'm sure his presence around that team will be missed.

"But right now everybody's thoughts are with him, that he's healthy and doing well. It's not a good thing to hear and, when it's a friend, it's really not a good thing to hear."

Bergevin said that once he received a first bit of "positive news" from Dr. Mulder in the early hours of the morning, he was able to rest a little easier.

His confidence in the Canadiens' ability to move on without Julien put his mind at ease, as well.

"Claude is a guy who works closely with his assistants," Bergevin said. "For our series against the Penguins, and for our game yesterday, I thought, sincerely, our team was ready. And I see no issue. For sure we'll be missing Claude, but our three coaches have experience as head coaches — Kirk in Carolina, Luke in Binghamton and Dom at the world junior championships. So, we have experienced guys who will work together. And, honestly, after speaking with Shea and the team, we're ready. I'm eager for the game tomorrow at 3 p.m."

He added that there's a possibility that Julien would be back behind the Canadiens' bench before long, but that it was more probable he'd first return to Montreal to be with his wife and children.

As Julien was transported to a hospital outside of the bubble, he'd have to go through a mandatory quarantine and produce several negative COVID-19 tests before being permitted to rejoin the Canadiens.

But there are much more important things than that right now.

"We're hoping for the best for him right now," said Bergevin.

So are we.

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Sportsnet.ca / Hurricanes' Hamilton scores Game 2 winner for Brind'Amour, grandma

Luke Fox | August 14, 2020, 2:08 AM

TORONTO — Perspective is everything, isn't it?

The same worldly night that can feel "dull at times" for the losing goaltender can feel like the light at the end of a gruelling seven-month tunnel for the defenceman who unleashes a not-so-dull game-winning clapper clean over his left shoulder and under the bar.

Where Grandma keeps the victories.

"It's been a long time for me since I played hockey. For seven months you're thinking about that stuff — playing the game, scoring a goal, what it feels like. That's kinda what fuels you when you're in those tough moments in rehab. Feels great," said Dougie Hamilton, after ending the Carolina Hurricanes' five-game playoff losing skid to his former club, the Boston Bruins.

"It's my grandma's birthday today, so I think that one is for her."

To be certain, Carolina's 3-2 Game 2 win, which knots the first-round series at a game apiece, did not feel like an exhibition game to Grandma Joan.

Thanks so much. It is the icing on the cake! Gramma Joan

— Joan Hamilton (@Turner13jetJoan) August 14, 2020

Let's get Tuukka Rask's post-loss comments out of the way.

"To be honest with you, it doesn't really feel like playoff hockey right now. There's no fans. It feels like playing an exhibition game," Rask said, matter-of-fact.

Oh? You don't say...

"When you play at your home rink, you play at an away rink, and there's fans cheering for you or against you and that creates another buzz around the series. There's none of that, so it just feels dull at times."

The emotions that come packed into 19,000 nervous bodies in a cold rink are most certainly missed, so the onus falls on the players themselves to summon sort of reasonable facsimile.

For the Hurricanes — suddenly turning this thing into a series with legs after getting swept by Boston in the 2019 Eastern Conference Final — all they had to do was glance up behind them, to the man running the bench.



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Rod Brind'Amour, ripped poster boy for "players' coach," went to bat for the guys after Game 1's loss, partially turned on a Petr Mrazek gloved puck that Boston jabbed lose for a goal.

"This is why the league's a joke, in my opinion, on these things," Brind'Amour told The News & Observer. "That one is a crime scene."

The coach was swiftly dinged a \$25,000 fine from the league, and the Hurricanes cut the cheque, adding a \$17 tip like a bunch of jerks:

A series of iffy calls or non-calls did not fall Brind'Amour's way in Game 2. Charlie McAvoy ripped off Jordan Staal's helmet, which should be a minor by letter of the book. Boston's Brad Marchand tied the game 2-2 on the power-play with three seconds left in the second period and Teuvo Teravainen in the box for a disputed interference call:

Then Brind'Amour, severely on tilt, unsuccessfully challenged a third-period Carolina goal nixed due to goalie interference, thus forced to kill off a subsequent delay-of-game penalty.

"I loved it. Loved it. There's a lot at stake," Brind'Amour said. "A lot of adversity and things happen in the game, and you have to be willing to adapt and kinda fight through it.

"It definitely brings you that much closer. Although, I don't know how much closer this group can get. It was just one of those nights I felt good things were going to happen to us."

Had Hamilton not bulged the twine, Brind'Amour might've doubled down and gone for \$50,034.

When the coach stepped to the podium, his first questioner offered to spare him any officiating questions.

Brind'Amour pursed his lips, nodded and said, "Thank you."

No stranger to playoff gamesmanship, Brind'Amour's "crime scene" rant came with a degree of calculation. Even if it didn't pay off in an extra call his way (penalties were even, four per side), it paid off in inspiration for his troops.

"When he said that, we wanted to win for him and rally for him," Hamilton said. "We want to play hard for him, and we respect him so much."

"Rod, he's very dedicated, and he's going to have them prepared. I mean, he works, and that's the motto of their team," Marchand said. "The teams that are in the best condition and work the hardest, with the ice conditions, that's just going to pay off. So, we knew they were going to push. They're resilient."

In this back-to-back — perhaps the first of two back-to-backs in the series — Hamilton logged a team-high 51:08. This after not playing a hockey game since snapping his left fibula on Jan. 16.

Were it not for the pandemic, no chance the mid-season Norris candidate would be available for the playoffs.

"All that layoff, the rust factor you think would be there. But he was special," Brind'Amour praised. "A huge goal tonight. But the minutes he's putting up there, that's something we didn't really expect. He's obviously answered the bell."

Clapped it. Top shelf.

Ring, ring.

We have ourselves a series.

"It was a pretty good shot, I guess," Rask said.

You know, for an exhibition game.

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Sportsnet.ca / Flames left with many questions after losing more than just game

Eric Francis | August 14, 2020, 3:17 AM

EDMONTON – They lost the game, they lost Matthew Tkachuk, and for a considerable amount of time, it looked like they lost their confidence.

Yet somehow, the Calgary Flames never lost faith.

Despite yet another parade of punishment dished out by the Flames Thursday night, the Dallas Stars did well to push back on the ice and the scoreboard.

As expected.

Game on, as the series is now tied 1-1.

Livestream the Flames in the Stanley Cup Qualifiers, plus every game of the 2020 Stanley Cup Playoffs on Sportsnet NOW.

In a game with more hits than Rod Carew, the Flames were reminded of the type of big boy hockey the Stars have relished for years.

For the first two periods the Flames dished it out and they took it, but it was Gang Green that managed to sustain plenty of offensive pressure on a younger Flames club that was back on its heels most of the evening.

Yet, despite falling behind 4-2 late in the second period, and having a third-period goal overturned in controversial fashion, the Flames somehow managed to tie it with three minutes left.

Their gutsy comeback was rendered moot in the final minute when defenceman Jamie Oleksiak finished a golden pass from Corey Perry that exposed broken coverage and gave the Stars a 5-4 win, with the winner coming with 40 seconds remaining.

A dagger for a Flames team that surely understood afterwards the better team won.

"We knew they would come out harder, and we had a lot of trouble the first two periods," said Elias Lindholm, who was demoted to the third line in favour of a possessed Sam Bennett midway through. "We were sitting back a little too much and didn't work enough to get open. We battled back and at the end it was tight and could have gone either way. Tomorrow we have to be ready from the beginning."

The Flames took great solace from their ability to get right back at it Friday night with an eye on atoning for their first sub-par effort in four outings.

They may have to do so without the services of Tkachuk, who left the game on three occasions with injuries. The first came from a stick to the groin courtesy of Jamie Benn, and the knockout blow that ended his evening in the third period came when he was sandwiched by Benn and the towering Oleksiak.

There was a better chance of solving the Caramilk secret than getting late-night answers from coach Geoff Ward on Tkachuk's status after he was seen wobbling following a final blow that likely initiated concussion testing.

"Chucky is a warrior — he battles hard for us game in and game out," said Bennett, who was the game's ultimate beast, with a tying goal, five shots and seven hits for a team limited to one scoring chance in the first and just a few in the second. "We'll see what's up with him, but he's a tough kid and he brings a lot to our team. It was unfortunate he had to leave there."



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In their previous three games the Flames had answers to everything, by way of tight defence, punishing physicality and confidence that gave them tremendous momentum.

Now there are plenty of questions outside of Tkachuk's status:

Where has the Flames first line gone?

Johnny Gaudreau celebrated his 27th birthday much the same way he has throughout these playoffs — on the perimeter. Never a scoring threat. Ditto Sean Monahan. In an effort to kickstart their line, Lindholm was shuffled, to no avail.

"I just felt like after the first period we really only had one line going," said Ward of Bennett and Milan Lucic's wrecking crew, which opened the game with a Dillon Dube goal past Ben Bishop 19 seconds in.

"Inject a little life. Sam's line was going well so I injected Sam, Looch and Benny into different lines. As the second period went on it wasn't as lopsided as the first period. For us what we've got to take away from it is we were able to claw our way back. For a young team playoff-wise, that's an important thing to learn."

Who starts in net Friday?

This wasn't on Cam Talbot at all.

Yes, there was one weak goal by Miro Heiskanen that he'd like to have back, but more than a handful of his 31 saves were beauties that, quite frankly, kept things from getting ugly. Yet, in a series with the first four games scheduled over five-and-a-half days, Ward said from the outset there would be the possibility of having to play two netminders.

Is now the time to introduce David Rittich to his first NHL playoff action, with the team reeling from an emotional setback?

Don't expect an answer until shortly before the 8:30 pm MT puck drop Friday.

Can the Flames bounce back and elevate to the level the Stars were at Game 2?

It remains to be seen how the group deals with the physical toll the schedule may start to take, as well as the mental toll of really having the Stars take it to them for the first 40 minutes.

After a lacklustre series debut, Benn and Tyler Seguin started baring their teeth in a gritty game the Stars needed to win. Struggling to score through the round robin and most of the season, the Stars' offensive explosion of sorts had to be concerning for a Flames team that made its last three games look easy with stifling defence and newfound moxie they vowed to show after last year's playoff flop.

The Flames vowed to take the positives out of the setback, which included the late comeback and the fact they weren't flustered by the situation room's decision to call back Andrew Mangiapane's goal five minutes into the third while down 4-2. Mangiapane's skate knocked the puck in as he fell to the ice, prompting video review officials to deem it a kicking motion few Flames fans would agree with.

A shorthanded goal by Tobias Rieder with eight minutes left set up Bennett's dramatic power play redirect with three minutes left to tie it.

Enter Oleksiak, and newfound doubt.

"They came out hard but the important thing for us is we were finally able to get our legs under us and come back and make it a game," said Ward, whose club has lost 11-straight Game 2's, dating back to 2004.

"That's what it's all about this time of year — it's about managing your moments. It's not always about playing a good hand well, sometimes you have to play a bad one. You put it in the rearview."

We'll find out Friday if that's easier said than done.

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Sportsnet.ca / Tight-knit Canucks experiencing tragedy, triumph in trying season

Iain MacIntyre | August 13, 2020, 7:12 PM

EDMONTON – Said by every successful hockey team and a lot that aren't: "We've got a great group of players, a really close team, guys who play hard and sacrifice for each other."

And because this is what good teammates are supposed to say, these ideals often seem like fortune-cookie platitudes, sound bites to satisfy the media and fans during an uninspired road trip in the middle of January.

But then you watch the Vancouver Canucks on Wednesday, and see the raw emotions when Troy Stecher scores a winning playoff goal against the St. Louis Blues two months after his dad died on Father's Day.

You see how teammates including Elias Pettersson hug him during a television timeout, how captain Bo Horvat, a new father himself, is swamped by emotions post-game when he tries to talk about Stecher, how stoic goaltender Jacob Markstrom, who lost his own dad last November, admits to becoming emotional at what he witnessed.

"I know what he's going through," Markstrom said.

You can't fake this. You can manufacture a forecheck, but you can't manufacture emotions like these.

Livestream the Canucks in the Stanley Cup Qualifiers, plus every game of the 2020 Stanley Cup Playoffs on Sportsnet NOW.

The Canucks are a tight group. They are fond of each other and will do anything to help their teammates. And they have grown closer through a series of personal hardships that began last summer when winger Brock Boeser's dad stopped breathing for 15 minutes before he was resuscitated so he could continue to battle both cancer and Parkinson's Disease.

Stecher, who went to the University of North Dakota with Boeser, actually flew to Minnesota from Vancouver in August to support his friend and be with teammate when it seemed Duke Boeser still might not make it.

The Canucks are as real as it gets.

"If that emotion is faked, then the team doesn't go anywhere," general manager Jim Benning said Thursday. "I don't think it's fake. It's got to be real. Where it ends up, where it's going to go, I don't know. But as a general manager, that's what you're trying to do — assemble a group of guys that are going to play hard for each other."

Few teams build a long playoff run on talent alone. Almost always there is something more.

The Blues were the worst team in the NHL halfway through last season, but came together to survive and ended up winning the Stanley Cup.

The year before, the expansion Vegas Golden Knights built one of the most improbable runs in playoff history with a team of castoffs, helping heal Las Vegas after their city was fractured by the almost incomprehensible mass shooting of nearly 500 people at a music festival.

Three Canucks lost their fathers in the span of one season. Three others have welcomed newborns in the last two months.

Things happen.

"Whenever someone goes through something like that, I think we have a close group here and everyone is so supportive of each other," Boeser



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said Thursday. "Even what I went through, the stuff with my dad, everyone texted me last year. It goes a long way.

"When you lose some loved ones over this past year, it's hard. I think our whole team is super supportive. A lot of really good human beings on this team. I definitely think it brings us together."

Canuck coach Travis Green said: "This group likes being together, they enjoy hanging out with each other. And they really want to win badly. As a coach, that's important."

Picked by about nobody to even make the playoffs, the Canucks handled the Minnesota Wild in the qualifying round and calmly took the game away from the champion Blues in the third period on Wednesday, winning 5-2 to open the best-of-seven series.

The Canucks have won four straight playoff games, which last happened on their way to the Cup final in 2011. Vancouver seems to be getting stronger, more confident as their many young players realize they are not overmatched in their first Stanley Cup tournament.

Game 2 is Friday.

"We wanted to try to find the right kind of people – people of high character who are going to play hard and compete hard," Benning explained. "I believe if you work hard, you become more than the sum of your parts. We always make sure we do our background work with the people we draft and who we bring in, the free agents we look at.

"If you have a group of guys that are willing to work hard for each other. . . you can have success with a group like that. Since I've been here, that's always been important to us."

Benning has run the Canucks for six years. The qualifying round was his first playoff series win in Vancouver. The team has been almost entirely rebuilt. Whatever mistakes Benning has made, he and Green got the chemistry right.

As Boeser said, there seem to be a lot of good human beings on this team.

"I think you get to a point where you get out of yourself and you're playing for each other," Benning said. "When you develop that culture where you're going to compete and do whatever you can to win that game. . . guys get out of their comfort zone to do anything that helps the team achieve more. When you can gather a group of players that can do that, I think that's when you have something."

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Sportsnet.ca / From EA to the NHL: How synthetic audio is helping tell story of the game

Emily Sadler | August 13, 2020, 11:25 AM

New camera angles, giant screens, fluorescent lighting around the rink framing the main event – hockey's got a new look this summer.

Fans at home have no doubt noticed it sounds a little different, too.

With the COVID-19 pandemic eliminating the possibility of proceeding with fans in attendance, the NHL decided to bring in some help in the form of synthetic audio in an effort to create a more normal atmosphere.

If it feels like the players are living in a real-life video game, you're not far off. All that audio, aside from the organic stuff – skates on ice, pucks on sticks, chirps on opponents – is supplied by EA Sports' NHL division, makers of NHL '20 and the upcoming NHL '21.

"What you're hearing inside the real-life games right now are the exact same sounds that we use in our product," said David Pritchett, presentation designer at EA Sports' NHL franchise headquarters in Vancouver.

From the Stanley Cup Qualifiers to the Stanley Cup Final, livestream every game of the 2020 Stanley Cup Playoffs, blackout-free, on Sportsnet NOW.

As the "vision holder" for the video game product's visual and audible elements and overall presentation, Pritchett was a major driving force in creating the audio hockey fans have been hearing since 24 return-to-play teams set out in their quest for the Stanley Cup earlier this month.

Upon seeing how EA's FIFA division supplied in-game sound for the return of the Premier League in June, the NHL reached out to Pritchett's team with a question: "What opportunity is there for NHL to do something similar?"

While the video game relies on artificial intelligence to trigger a series of audio reactions programmed to be at the ready at all times, applying that same audio to real-life sports means doing it manually — with an audio operator located at the rink and manipulating the synthetic sound in real time.

Where soccer's sounds come in rolling waves, slowly building to a crescendo as the beautiful game unfolds on an expansive sea of green, hockey provides a much greater challenge with its fast, frenetic pace and unpredictability. (Make it playoff hockey in the year 2020, put it in a bubble, and anything can happen.)

Like every aspect of the NHL's unique return-to-play setup, plans between EA Sports and the NHL came together quickly over the course of about a month and a half of meetings, mock-ups, test-runs, and fine-tuning – done remotely and via Zoom, of course.

"There's a fine line there, where we want something that sounds authentic, but we need to be careful with that," Pritchett said. "What we're really doing is helping with the storytelling of the game."

Working in EA's favour was the NHL's desire to create a more neutral in-game atmosphere, with both sides getting a home-team feel as far as crowd reactions and goal horns go.

"The NHL made it very clear that they don't want it to be something that's kind of in-your-face, and I totally support that as well," he said. "They use it more as a background tool, just to add a little bit of something so that we're not constantly reminded that we're in this COVID era, I suppose. And I think that's great."

The NHL also wanted to keep things positive – i.e., more cheers than jeers.

"There were things that we knew we didn't want, like booing on referee calls," Pritchett explained. "We wanted to keep it positive, for sure – that's the number one thing – but we also didn't want to be in this weird situation where it felt like the NHL was making commentary on the reffing in the games."

(Hockey Twitter will look after that part.)

So, what's in a game? It starts with the general crowd noise, the audible anticipation, as the baseline sound of every game's broadcast — that comes in the form of a three-minute audio loop, mimicking the atmosphere of a rink full of excited fans and void of any "audio landmarks" that would stand out.

"If you listen really, really closely, it's like this mix of close-up fans that you can actually hear reacting to the play plus the 17,000 fans at the same time," said Pritchett.

Then there are shot reactions – "Literally, I've written down in my notes here: 'oohs and aahs,'" Pritchett said with a laugh. These match up with goals, saves, or misses, with every possible reaction coming in at varying voracities, from a glove save in the first play to a Game 7 overtime



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winner with Lord Stanley on the line. There's also applause for a nice play or save, and even a fight loop for the rowdy fans (not) in attendance.

As much as it sounds like Pritchett's team and the league have got it down to a science – for every action, there is an equal and augmented reaction – it turns out it's actually more of an art.

"When we were in discussions with the NHL as to what type of person should be handling the hardware and doing this in real time during the games, we stressed to them the importance of having somebody that was more artistically oriented as opposed to technical," Pritchett said. "This is not a technical tool – this is an artistic tool."

The tool he's talking about is called the Ableton Push 2, operating a system called Ableton Live.

"It's typically meant for DJs. It's more of a musical tool, it's meant for live-mixing, on the fly, at clubs and things like that and it's intended to be easy to use and super intuitive," said Pritchett. "The idea is that it becomes so intuitive for the operators that they'll have one hand on that piece of hardware and not even have to look at it while they're watching the game ... clicking buttons and be using rotary dials as it happens, almost like a musical instrument."

The result is a symphony of sounds that make up a hockey game. And while it may seem like there's an entire orchestra behind the audibles, it turns out it's all the work of a one-man band.

That's where Jeff Kozak comes in. Equipped with the Ableton operating system and EA's collection of clips, it's Kozak who's actually applying the sound effects in real-time to every single Western Conference game in Edmonton's hub city, making the big game sound more like... well, the big game. (Michigan-based audio operator Matt Coppedge is doing the same role for every Eastern Conference game in Toronto's hub.)

Sound is second-nature to Kozak, whose extensive musical experience began when he first started playing piano at a young age and grew as he took up the violin, performing in symphonies and on stage for about 12 years before transitioning to the technical side of things.

Without knowing it, you've heard Kozak's contributions to hockey broadcasts before – over the course of his 31-year career, the freelance sound mixer has traveled wherever hockey goes, helping bring thousands of hockey games (including All-Star Games, outdoor classics, and Stanley Cup Finals) to life on the small screen.

"I know what the building's supposed to sound like in between play. I know what the crowd reaction is going to be on certain aspects of the play – a great body check, a fabulous save, a puck sliding by an open net super slowly," Kozak said. "I was really actually invigorated by the chance to do this."

Kozak, who's used to being tucked away in the sound suite of a technical production truck, is now located up – waaaay up – at the press box level of Edmonton's Rogers Place where normally a commentator and analyst would watch and call the game.

This new vantage point has forced him to re-think how he watches the game he's made a career in, in order to get fully in sync with the ebb and flow of narrating a hockey game through the collective gasps and roars in place of the 18,500 fans that would typically fill the seats at the home of the Oilers.

He's used to listening to a flurry of other voices through his headset – commentators, producers, directors, fellow sound technicians. Now, his focus is solely on the dozen players battling on the icy stage below him.

"They tell me everything that's going on on the ice. I can hear their dialogue up here – it's astounding," he added "So, I'm mixing the game live, to them, and it's super helpful. It really is."

In front of him throughout every game is the Ableton Push 2's panel of 64 colour-coded buttons – eight rows of eight, with dials above each row to adjust the volume and intensity of each sound and reaction.

Kozak was able to configure the grid to his own preference like a personalized, colourful Rubik's cube of a keyboard, all lit up come game time and ready to be played as soon as the players set foot on the ice.

"I can load that with whatever sounds I want in a way where I can make it easy for my hand just to rest on a button and I know that my index finger is a cheer or my thumb is a goal or my pinky is different sound, and I can colour-code all that. And then with my left hand, I have all kinds of different crowd intensity samples – so, as play is moving up the ice, I'm making it louder just like people would cheer a rush up the ice in a real crowd," Kozak explained. "I'm trying to replicate that, but not too much because I still have to be conscious of the fact that I am sweetening the game, I'm not trying to re-create the crowd. The game is dictating to us what it should sound like."

Kozak didn't have much time to prepare – he learned about the job opportunity just a few weeks before traveling to Edmonton from his home base near Peterborough and, once settled inside Edmonton's bubble, he received the fully-loaded hardware and software just two days before the puck dropped on the first exhibition game.

For two days, he called up old hockey games on YouTube, studying the rise and fall of the ambient sound and reactions, recording those games using his own applied audio, and then listening back to compare.

Through that process, Kozak learned that the natural tendency is to put in too many sound effects.

"Less is more, for sure," he noted. "There's commentary overtop of it ... the skate sounds and the sticks and the dialogue from the ice. You have to leave some room in there for everything."

Tom Wilson, noting how at times it is a little bit weird and quiet on the ice playing in front of no fans: "Conversations with the other team are a little easier"

— Samantha Pell (@SamanthaJPell) August 5, 2020

Kozak's biggest takeaway?

"The thing I noticed right out of the gate was, because I'm used to seeing the game on a monitor in a broadcast, was how fast it is up here — it's just so incredibly fast," he said.

Have any plays snuck up on him?

"Well... Connor McDavid," he said, with a laugh. "The other night, that goal under the crossbar..."

"At times, it's very difficult to see the puck up here because you're so high ... It was up and under the crossbar, and I was trying to figure out where the puck was and it was in the net. Just an incredible goal."

That half-second pause between the puck zipping past the goal line and Kozak's finger releasing an eruption of fan noise from the would-be hometown crowd is something he'll "forever remember."

It also brought a human element to a process driven by technology.

"It is comforting to know that that does happen in real life," he said with a laugh. "But it's not comforting when you're the person pushing the button."

Now about three weeks into the action – and working up to three games a day – in Edmonton, the action has slowed down for Kozak and he's clearly having fun with what is a "really unique opportunity."

"As the games have gone by, it's gotten much easier. The game's slowed down enough that you can make the decision," he said. "And 99.9 times you're correct – unless it's Connor McDavid with that backhand under the crossbar."

There are a lot of new normals these days, and it takes some time to get used to them.



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The league and its broadcasters went into this process knowing there would be room for plenty of growth and adjustments to come, and we've seen that already.

Prior to the real competition starting up, the idea of synthetic audio was to have it input only into the broadcast feed — not into the arena itself. That changed at the end of the exhibition games, when the NHL tried feeding it straight into the rink for the players to hear, too.

"The feedback we've been getting from players and officials is that they're very happy with what they're doing," said Kozak. "It's putting them in a place where they feel like things are somewhat normal. That's probably something we're most proud of — is the fact that we're being transparent and neutral."

With plenty more games on the way, expect more evolution — and more unique soundbites. Just as no two hockey games are the same, no two crowds sound exactly alike, either. Kozak, Coppedge, Pritchett and the NHL will continue to collaborate as competition progresses to bring in new sounds as the stakes get higher.

As Pritchett pointed out: "You really have to be thinking about the long game as well, over time — like, what am I going to reserve for those really big moments?"

We'll have to wait and see. And listen.

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Sportsnet.ca / Cheveldayoff's creativity key to Jets regaining contender status

Ken Wiebe | August 13, 2020, 6:41 PM

WINNIPEG — Kevin Cheveldayoff still has more questions than answers when it comes to a flat salary cap and the impact the pandemic could have on his budget.

But one thing the general manager of the Winnipeg Jets is going to have at his disposal is salary cap space — and you can expect him to show some creativity in how he'll work to fill some of the holes in his roster during the offseason.

Simply put, all options will be considered as the Jets look to upgrade the defence corps and bolster a talented forward group.

"There's a strong commitment from this organization group to do the things that need to get done," said Cheveldayoff, who spoke for nearly 42 minutes. "I've never discussed internal budgets or different things like that. But from a perspective of being competitive, this organization is committed to that. I have no concerns there."

"We're sitting here now understanding where the cap number is and understanding there are going to be challenges in how to work with a flat cap, not only now but the cap moving forward as it's laid out. There's not a lot of expected growth because of the pandemic for the foreseeable future. There are going to be some tough decisions, certainly in our organization and some other organizations as well because of the nature of the cap."

Having some cap flexibility could open up some possibilities that some other teams pressed up against the ceiling won't have at their disposal.

"All you can do is project internally here by going over and poring over other team's caps and situations as to what might become available or not. Then, one thing we can provide for those players is an opportunity to play with a real solid core of players," said Cheveldayoff. "Whether it's a

centre or whether it's a winger or whether it's a defenceman, we're an easy sell to say 'you can play with Josh Morrissey' or 'you can play with Player X up front.' Those are enticing things to try to get a player to come in and prove themselves."

The off-season priorities for the Jets are easy to identify — and represent a common theme.

One of the biggest question marks is the health and availability of veteran centre Bryan Little, who has been out since Nov. 4 and carries a cap hit of \$5.291 million for the next four seasons.

A day after an emotional Little spoke with reporters for the first time since suffering the head injury, Jets head coach Paul Maurice showed empathy for the situation but also revealed the need to at least consider a Plan B.

"You'll separate the two things, the person and the player," said Maurice. "From a player point-of-view, we would absolutely now have to plan going forward that he wouldn't be a player, because we've been doing that since his injury. As a person, you want a perfect life for everybody, you want perfect health and you want to be able to enjoy your life. For Bryan, from the Winnipeg Jets and from me personally, I want his life to be great, and if that means he doesn't step on the ice again then that's what I want."

"I don't have the medical answers and clearly, even Bryan doesn't have those, yet, on whether or not he'll be given an opportunity to be a skater. So, we'll just let that happen and hope for the best. But in terms of planning going forward, we have to look at this as Bryan wasn't a player for us this year for good reason, and that wouldn't change and we have to prepare that he won't be a player for us again."

If that turns out to be the case, Andrew Copp is the top internal candidate, especially after filling in admirably after Mark Scheifele left Game 1 of the qualifying round against the Flames with a suspected ankle injury.

"I don't want to assume or have to tell the coaches I want it. I think I want my play to dictate that (Maurice) can't have me anywhere else but that spot," said Copp. "Just try to let my play do the talking. It's not going to be assumed, for sure. I just feel like I'm working hard for it and that's where I see my game going."

Should the Jets be looking to make a deal for an external option, Max Domi of the Montreal Canadiens or Nolan Patrick of the Philadelphia Flyers could be two players that may be looking for a change of scenery once the offseason arrives.

Given the fact the Jets expressed an interest in acquiring Nazem Kadri from the Toronto Maple Leafs last summer, Domi makes a lot of sense — especially since the emergence of Nick Suzuki has essentially pushed him out of a top-six role.

As for Patrick, bringing the former Brandon Wheat Kings captain into the fold would provide a boost in the skill department but given his health during the past two seasons, there would be some inherent risk involved in a potential trade.

But both players would be highly motivated to flourish in a new situation and could fill a void the Jets have attempted to fill with trades during each of the past three deadlines (Paul Stastny, Kevin Hayes, Cody Eakin).

With 11 pending unrestricted free agents from the current roster, there is bound to be some significant turnover, which is what one would expect from a Jets team that should be proud of the way they battled adversity but are also coming off a second straight early exit.

Cheveldayoff says he hasn't opened contract discussions with defenceman Dylan DeMelo, though he reiterated the contribution he made since his acquisition makes him a good fit to stick around.

"He really fit in well," said Cheveldayoff. "We'll definitely take a look at it. We haven't had any negotiations with his representatives. But there has been a constant communication with respect to the understanding that we think he has been a good fit."



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"Being an unrestricted free agent or potential unrestricted free agent, there's obviously different things that I'm sure you know they're considering. The positive side of things there for us right (now) is generally you're sitting here waiting for that salary cap to get set. We do know that number, now it's just a matter of trying to understand our own internal circumstances with respect to filling all the holes that we have, to what parameters we can assign to every situation. But we really appreciated what he brought to the table for us."

It's also possible the Jets opt to go big-game hunting, perhaps making a pitch to St. Louis Blues captain Alex Pietrangelo.

Pietrangelo, who became the franchise leader for points by a defenceman earlier this season, would prefer to remain in St. Louis but a flat cap likely means he'll have to take less than market value to stay in the fold.

Might that leave the Jets with an opportunity to lure him over to a Central Division rival by offering a deal with a larger average annual value?

It would be a bold stroke by Cheveldayoff, one that would bring in a No. 1 blue-liner and provide an even bigger shooting threat for the Jets' power play.

One position the Jets don't really need to worry much about is between the pipes, where Connor Hellebuyck just completed a Vezina-calibre season.

Hellebuyck is a workhorse, but there is a question surrounding who the backup goalie is going to be.

With Laurent Brossoit set for unrestricted free agency, it remains to be seen if he's going to sign another one-year deal where he knows what he's in for — or if he prefers to join another organization where more starts could be available for him.

The Jets also have Eric Comrie, Mikhail Berdin and Arvid Holm under contract for next season, so it's possible the position is filled internally.

While Maurice's assessment is ongoing, he conceded the Jets need to improve metrics on both the offensive and defensive sides of the game.

Before the roster reconstruction picks up, the Jets focus will shift to the 2020 NHL Draft.

Maurice confesses that in the days leading into the NHL Draft Lottery, he allowed himself to dream about the prospect of bringing Alexis Lafreniere into the fold — though he's now likely heading to the New York Rangers.

"We all used to get the Canadian Tire Christmas catalogue, right? So, how I grew up is you knew you weren't getting anything out of it but, man, you went through every page and circled all the stuff you'd love to have," said Maurice. "I also knew I wasn't getting any of it, so it wasn't upsetting on Christmas morning. It was just a fun part. So, the answer to your question is, 'sure.' You had some line combinations and played with some things. But we weren't expecting it."

As of right now, the Jets have only four picks in the 2020 NHL Draft, but one of them is coming at 10th overall.

While the Jets are likely to add an impact forward or blue-liner, the chances are good that the player won't be ready to compete for a roster spot in December and likely will require some additional seasoning.

As is customary, Cheveldayoff made it clear that it will be up to the chosen player to show whether he's ready for NHL duty or not.

"There's some really good, talented players there that are going to be there for us," said Cheveldayoff. "We're going to get a good player. I don't know that any of us when we drafted Ville Heinola felt he was going to come into training camp and do the things that he did."

"Sitting here right now and understanding you're drafting an 18-year-old person, forcing a young player just because you might have a hole in your organization is not the best way in all cases to build your

organization. Now, if that player forces himself onto the team, then you take a good hard look at it."

Cheveldayoff, who is entering his 10th offseason since taking the job, will be taking a hard look at a lot of things during the coming weeks and months.

The moves that he makes will go a long way to determining whether the Jets are going to be a bubble team once again or can get back to challenging for the Stanley Cup like they did in 2018.

"Again, it doesn't necessarily change what year you're in, what the situation truly was in the past here. It's about looking forward, about trying to make assessments of where you're at within an organization, what you have with assets in front of you and what the challenges are that you have to meet," said Cheveldayoff. "It's interesting, last summer sitting here to a person at the podium last year everyone was talking that this summer was going to be the hardest summer that I had with respect to getting contracts done and finding a way. Everyone was talking about offer sheets."

"Obviously we got dusted back from the plate by a couple of curve balls that we didn't anticipate, but I thought we came off the mat and found a way to be competitive and to be in a situation probably sitting here where no one anticipated. This is where the busy time kind of starts for us. We have obviously preparation for the draft coming up, preparation for some internal contract signings, preparation for free agency and preparation for the unknown. So there's lots of work to be done and we're ready for the task."

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Sportsnet.ca / Golden Knights brimming with confidence after fifth win in bubble

Mark Spector | August 13, 2020, 10:13 PM

EDMONTON — Pete DeBoer's Vegas Golden Knights are 5-0 in Edmonton and have not lost a hockey game since March 6. His goalie, Robin Lehner, is 7-0 since coming over from the Chicago Blackhawks at the trade deadline, and even if DeBoer had to use his backup, that player's name is Marc-Andre Fleury.

Even for a National Hockey League coach, a group of guys who can find a flaw in a hole-in-one or a 29 hand in crib, it must be getting difficult for DeBoer to find things to improve on with his team.

"It's not hard," DeBoer smiled, after a 4-3 overtime win that puts Vegas ahead 2-0 in its Round 1 series against the Chicago Blackhawks. "You can ask our group. We lit into them pretty good after the last game about some of our play in the neutral zone. Some of our decisions. But our group is really open to constructive criticism. You never play a perfect game, and we didn't tonight."

"At same time," he added, "you've got to take your hat off to them. They find ways to win every night, and there's a feeling on that bench that, regardless of the situation, they're going to find a way to win."

No one in this tournament is more confident than these Golden Knights, who count 13 different scorers that have scored 23 times in Edmonton. Reilly Smith had two in Game 1 of this series, then zipped the winner past Corey Crawford at 7:13 of the first OT session, Smith's fifth shot of the game.

It was one of those goals that you could feel was coming, the way the ground rumbles as a train pulls into the station.



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"It started the shift before that," said Smith, who watched the line of Nick Cousins, Nicolas Roy and Alex Tuch tire out the Jonathan Toews line before changing. "All five guys cycled the puck, kinda hemmed them in their zone. Then Cousins delayed, created some time for me and (Paul) Stastny to get in. Paul made a good pass and it went in off my stick."

The Chicago Blackhawks haven't held a lead in this series, and with back to back games set for Saturday and Sunday, they're going to need a weekend's work to avoid a sweep. They did come from behind Thursday, erasing a 2-0 deficit, and Dylan Strome hit a crossbar in the extra session.

But they're down 2-0 no matter how you slice it. Saturday is must-win territory for the Blackhawks.

"It's a different team than Edmonton was," said young Kirby Dach, who scored his first-ever playoff goal in this game. "They come at you in waves, but we did a good job of weathering the storm. They're good at collapsing down low. Once we find our groove, we'll be OK as a group. But it's tough to swallow. We had chances in overtime to put the game away, but it didn't happen that way."

Patrick Kane had three assists, but Vegas D-man Shea Theodore was plus-four on the night.

Max Pacioretty, who came up to Edmonton late and played in Game 1 of the series, did not dress for Game 2. He was said to be "unfit to play."

Lehner, meanwhile, has stolen the No. 1 job from Fleury, a development that nobody saw coming when the Golden Knights brought him in from Chicago at the trade deadline.

"Coming into this group, it's a very tight-knit group," Lehner said. "Everyone buys into the system and does the right things, and in the long run you get rewarded. Letting in a goal, there's no panic. Letting in two goals... You trust your team, that we can come back. It's a very well structured team here and a lot of skill at the same time."

Vegas was less dominant in Game 2 than they had been in their 4-1 Game 1 victory. But they won anyhow, a sign of a team that does not need to follow the same script every night.

"When we're playing our game we can win different ways," said Stastny. "When Pete came in it brought a new sense of life into us. It seemed like we spent less time in D-zone, found different ways to win. Since training camp opened up, he instilled in us to get back to what made us good. There aren't a lot of teams that can play our style for 60 minutes."

Not in this series, anyhow.

"I thought we were playing really well the first two periods," offered Kane, "and for whatever reason it just seemed that they came out better than us in the third."

For whatever reason.

The Blackhawks had better start figuring out some answers, or this will be their last weekend in the Edmonton bubble.

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Sportsnet.ca / UFA Jason Spezza makes pitch to Maple Leafs: 'The fire still burns'

Luke Fox | August 13, 2020, 11:26 AM

TORONTO — "The fire still burns, and I really hope to be back here next year."

This is Jason Spezza laying his cards on the table and placing his heart on his sleeve.

The 37-year-old unrestricted free agent does not want his 17-year NHL run to go out like this, his last game-sheet appearance a gutty fight, his final result a heartbreaking loss.

"I know I'm not the player I once was, but I do feel like I can help quite a bit," Spezza said Wednesday. "When you lose, there's consequences, but I'd really love a chance to come back with this group."

Spezza, a father of four girls, has made his home (again) in this city. He has already made his millions and wants another crack at a Stanley Cup. He signed a one-year contract in 2019-20 to chase a dream for the league-minimum \$700,000.

Spezza and GM Kyle Dubas are expected to engage in contract conversations in the coming weeks, although re-upping RFA Travis Dermott and Ilya Mikheyev will take priority.

"We're not up against the cap, contrary to everyone's belief. We've got a little bit of space," Dubas said Wednesday. "We've got restricted free agents only to sign back... So, we'll get them taken care of using the mechanisms the league provides for both and have discussions with their people."

The question becomes: Does Spezza — a fast favourite among teammates — fit into Dubas's vision of filling in the fringes?

Despite his age, Spezza remained healthy all season, contributed to the second power-play unit and was an invaluable voice of experience in a young room.

In the play-in series loss to Columbus, his fourth line didn't register a goal, but didn't get scored on either. Spezza started the majority of his shifts in the defensive zone and ended the majority in the O-zone, prompting Blue Jackets coach John Tortorella to call out his own fourth-line pivot, Alexander Wennberg, after Game 4.

"Wenny just hasn't stepped up, plain and simple. He's done a really good job killing penalties, but Spezza's line fed it to him. "That's why Toronto was playing Spezza's line. If it wasn't the Matthews, Marner and Tavares with the goalie pulled, it was Spezza's line."

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Spezza finished the abbreviated regular season with nine goals and 16 assists, an uptick in production rate from his previous two seasons in Dallas.

"To me, it's special to play for the Toronto Maple Leafs. It's special to play for an Original Six team, being a Toronto boy, something I dreamed of. You wanted to be a part of something special," Spezza said.

"I didn't take for granted any days I got to put the jersey on. It was really important for me and for us to have a good culture to do well, and it's really disappointing to be done this early."

Dubas will not waste time reaching out to the GMs of the 14 other eliminated franchises and sketching out a course to fill around his core with free agents and trades.

Spezza is an option, but he won't be the only one.

"It will be on me to be creative," Dubas said.

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Sportsnet.ca / Blue Jackets' Korpisalo chooses great time for hottest run of career

Chris Johnston | August 13, 2020, 8:00 PM

TORONTO — It's starting to look like Joonas Korpisalo might be the only thing that can save us from 2020.

The stoic Finn has certainly had a significant hand in getting the Columbus Blue Jackets to where they are in these bubble-bound playoffs, tied 1-1 with the Tampa Bay Lightning and seemingly getting stronger with each test of mental fortitude.

This is the stuff that legends are made of.

Korpisalo, at age 26 and with more than 180 professional games on his resume, has timed the hottest run of his NHL career with the first six career starts he's ever made in the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

"It's just awesome to have him in net," teammate Oliver Bjorkstrand said after Thursday's 3-1 victory over the Lightning.

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As committed and stout as Columbus plays defensively, they've needed some help. Korpisalo turned aside 36 shots in Game 2 against Tampa, bringing his total to 154 in the last three outings alone.

And no, that's not a typo.

His recent body of work includes a shutout to eliminate the Toronto Maple Leafs — one of two he posted in that qualifying series — and a record-setting 85-save masterpiece during Tuesday's quintuple overtime loss to Tampa.

"You just try to go save by save. Not thinking too much and just grinding through it," Korpisalo said by way of explanation for how he kept his concentration into the eighth period.

Losing in that manner could easily break the spirit of some players and teams, especially when Tampa surged ahead on a Nikita Kucherov goal less than six minutes into Game 2. But Korpisalo didn't let another puck get past him, giving teammate Pierre-Luc Dubois time to find his legs and the chance to set up Ryan Murray and Bjorkstrand for big goals, before Alexander Wennberg iced it with a glorious individual effort in the third period.

Korpisalo has a .962 save percentage to show for these playoffs so far and it would be unreasonable to expect him to continue allowing fewer than two goals per game with this much work.

But sustainability is a concern for another day.

The Blue Jackets rank 22nd of 24 teams with an expected goals percentage of 40.51 at even strength during this return-to-play and yet they've managed to outscore opponents 13-7 in that game state.

No wonder the Leafs have already gone through end-of-season media availabilities and the Lightning are having to answer questions about why this series won't end up being a repeat of last year.

Korpisalo backed up Sergei Bobrovsky during the sweep of Tampa in April 2019 and got the nod from John Tortorella to start this post-season largely out of loyalty. The Blue Jackets coach wanted to reward the work he put in during four seasons as the backup and ended up going to Elvis Merzlikins for a game and a half in the Toronto series, only to see Merzlikins get injured.

Now he needs Korpisalo. The Blue Jackets have recently flown Veini Vehvilainen to Toronto in order to have him enter the NHL bubble,

observe quarantine and give them a third goaltending option behind Matiss Kivlenieks

But they only have six games of NHL experience between them.

Fortunately, Korpisalo has been more than up to the task for a Jackets team that has already played 28 periods of hockey in its seven playoff games.

"We all know in the dressing room that he's one of the best goalies in the NHL and he's feeling really good right now," said Dubois. "Every time we make a little mistake he's there to stop the puck and give us confidence to try plays and that's all you can ask from a goalie.

"He's been, since Game 1, since he started, he's been amazing for us."

Do you need further proof?

With Thursday's performance, Korpisalo became the first goalie in NHL history with 121 saves through two games of a playoff series, surpassing Curtis Joseph's 118 for St. Louis against Toronto in 1993.

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1191133 Websites

TSN.CA / With coach Julien in hospital, Montreal Canadiens want to 'Win for Claude'

Frank Seravalli

Montreal Canadiens coach Claude Julien was hospitalized after experiencing chest pains on Wednesday night and is expected to miss the remainder of the Habs' first-round series, the team announced Thursday.

"He is presently there and he's undergoing tests to determine the exact nature of his condition," GM Marc Bergevin said in a prepared statement. "This has nothing to do with COVID."

Julien was transported to a Toronto hospital by ambulance hours after the Canadiens dropped the opening game of their best-of-seven series with the Philadelphia Flyers by a 2-1 margin.

Bergevin said the early returns on tests for Julien were "positive."

"A little shock and concern, but after talking to Dr. [David] Mulder, there is some good news early this afternoon," Bergevin said. "I think he's in good hands at the hospital here, and everything should be fine, and we should hope for the best."

Bergevin said it's possible Julien would return to the team's hotel in the Toronto bubble, but it's more likely he returns home. In order to resume coaching duties, Julien would be required to quarantine in his hotel room for a period of time — as determined by the NHL's Hub Medical Director — since he was transported outside the league's secure zone.

"No decision has been made yet," Bergevin said.

In the meantime, associate coach Kirk Muller — who was head coach of the Carolina Hurricanes from 2011-14 — will take over as acting head coach. Muller will work in conjunction with assistants Dominique Ducharme and Luke Richardson.

"We understand that Kirk does not speak French, but there are exceptional circumstances and we are asking you for your understanding," Bergevin said in his statement.

Julien, 60, helped the Habs knock off the No. 5 seed Pittsburgh Penguins in a massive qualifying-round upset last week to begin his second playoff



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appearance in his second stint as the Canadiens' head coach. The Blind River, Ont., native guided the Boston Bruins to a Stanley Cup in 2011 and holds a 66-53 all-time playoff record behind the bench.

News of Julien's hospitalization rippled through the hockey world.

There was a crack in the voice of Flyers coach Alain Vigneault, his counterpart in this series, when he was asked about his friend of nearly 40 years. The benches of the Canadiens and Flyers are intertwined; in the early 2000s, Vigneault was replaced by current Flyers assistant Michel Therrien and Therrien was then replaced by Julien.

The coaching fraternity is tight, but it's even tighter among French-Canadians - and Vigneault and Julien go back further still, to long before either ever picked up a white board.

Vigneault and Julien skated on the same blueline with the CHL's Salt Lake Golden Eagles in the 1981-82 season. The two also opposed each other in the Stanley Cup Final in 2011.

"We have come a long way together," Vigneault said. "A lot of things go through your mind. I've known Claude since I was 20, so we go way back. We're good friends. Right now, I want to get this press conference done to go see if I can't reach out to maybe him, or Berg, and find out the latest development."

Captain Shea Weber said news of Julien's hospitalization filtered through the Canadiens' players at breakfast on Thursday morning. They held a team meeting before practice.

Weber said there is a natural emotional and shock factor upon learning the news, one that the Habs could channel into a 'Win for Claude' push.

"The biggest concern is obviously his health and we want to make sure he's healthy," Weber said. "But I think that's something that for sure we can draw on and use that - as if we weren't motivated in the first place. But this just draws a little more out of that."

Muller experienced a similar situation as a player with the Canadiens. On March 9, 1993 - a few weeks before the Stanley Cup playoffs - head coach Jacques Demers was hospitalized for chest pains. Habs GM Serge Savard called on Jacques Lemaire to spell him for a few games.

Demers later returned to the bench and the Habs went on to win the Stanley Cup that spring, which began a 26-year drought for Canada's clubs that is in danger of turning one year older.

What a story it would be if the Canadiens could be the ones to break that spell.

"I met with the coaches this morning. I have faith in them. We beat the Pittsburgh Penguins and it's not the coaches that beat them, it's the players," Bergevin said. "We have the same group ... We shocked a lot of people winning the first series, and I expect them to rise to the occasion and keep on going."

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1191134 Websites

TSN.CA / Intriguing chess match developing between Vancouver Canucks and St. Louis Blues

Travis Yost

For more than a year now, the Vancouver Canucks young core - anchored by forward Elias Pettersson and defenceman Quinn Hughes - has been looking for a statement victory. In their first playoff game on Wednesday night, they got it.

Travis Green's team scored five goals to beat the defending Stanley Cup champion St. Louis Blues 5-2 in the series opener, putting the Canucks in the driver's seat.

There were a few important takeaways from Game 1. First and most importantly: Vancouver clearly belongs. This was not an inexperienced team that looked rattled. In fact, I thought they did an excellent job of using their speed on the wings to effectively counterattack St. Louis on a number of occasions, an important development considering the Blues' ability to own the puck for extended periods of games.

Other things that were encouraging: The power play was on fire (Pettersson, Bo Horvat, and J.T. Miller all scored while up a man), and Jacob Markstrom clearly looked more comfortable than Jordan Binnington.

If there was one area of concern, it was at 5-on-5. Right before the dam broke early in the third period, the Blues were really starting to lean on Vancouver - utilizing their vicious forecheck to beat the Canucks blueline deep into their own zone. The trio of David Perron, Ryan O'Reilly and Zach Sanford may have been the best unit for either side at even strength:

It wasn't a problem in Game 1, thanks to a few phenomenal individual plays, a sizable goaltending advantage and some fantastic power-play work that was a continuation of the kind of success we saw all season long.

But Craig Berube throwing his best line at Vancouver's top unit was an effective strategy, even in an otherwise losing effort. The Pettersson, Miller, and Boeser line didn't generate a single shot from the "high-danger" area of the ice, in large part because they were working so feverishly to win the puck back and break out of the defensive third.

This was by design on the St. Louis side, no question about it. Berube rotated his top two defensive pairings - one anchored by Alex Pietrangolo, one by Colton Parayko - behind the O'Reilly line to slow down Vancouver's big guns. The rest of the St. Louis lineup, as a result, didn't see much of the Pettersson line:

Berube didn't have to go deep into the playbook to figure out putting his best line - a line that is very capable on both ends of the ice - would be an effective mitigation strategy for Vancouver's top scorers. But few groups have been able to take the Pettersson line out like that at even strength.

Part of the reason Vancouver was an intriguing upset pick here, and why they were successful during the regular season, was the direct result of the team's ability to form a very formidable top line. The trio was light years ahead of the rest of the Canucks and most other lines around the league.

When Vancouver's top line wasn't driving the team across the finish line - well, those generally were the games that the Canucks lost this season:

This shouldn't take anything away from Vancouver's win - special-teams play matters, goaltending advantages matter even more, and if Vancouver's depth players hold up better than expected (they certainly did in Game 1), this becomes less of an issue.

But it's also a great example of something that I'm sure Green and the rest of the Canucks organization is dissecting after celebrating Wednesday night's win. For this team to beat St. Louis and make a deeper push into the Stanley Cup playoffs, they are going to need to fire up their most dangerous weapons in the offensive zone as much as possible.

The Blues looked rough in Game 1, but the fact that they were able to successfully slow down the Canucks top line at even strength could be a harbinger of a lengthy series to come.

The chess match continues on Friday.

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USA TODAY / Montreal Canadiens head coach Claude Julien hospitalized with chest pains

Steve Gardner

Following a 2-1 loss to the Philadelphia Flyers in their NHL playoff series opener Wednesday night, Montreal Canadiens head coach Claude Julien was hospitalized after experiencing chest pains.

Canadiens general manager Marc Bergevin said Julien was undergoing tests to determine his condition, but the symptoms were not related to COVID-19.

Julien is not expected to return to the bench for the rest of the Canadiens' best-of-seven series with the top-seeded Flyers. Associate coach Kirk Muller will take over as acting head coach.

Julien, 60, began his NHL coaching career with the Canadiens in 2002, but was fired midway through his third season. He led the Boston Bruins to the 2011 Stanley Cup during his 10 seasons there before returning to Montreal midway through the 2016-17 season.

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