



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 22, 2018



The biggest Mount Puckmore snubs, according to you

Greg Wyshynski

Sometimes we wish we could have put two dozen players on each NHL team's Mount Puckmore, which sought to tell the story of a franchise through the contributions and careers of those selected. Cover all the bases. Honor the honorable mentions. Everyone gets a blue ribbon, a gold star and a participation trophy!

There would still be fans griping about that 25th player who didn't make the cut being disrespected and snubbed ...

In essence, it doesn't matter if it's a Mount Rushmore-inspired four players or 24 players who defined a franchise: Someone's getting left off the peak, and that's going to draw the ire of the supporters.

When we published Mount Puckmore last week, we offered fans the chance to tell us which players we didn't select merited a re-chiseling of the mountain or if our choices were actually rock-solid.

Here's a look at how you voted. Teams that received more votes for a player than for "this was perfect" are featured, with an explanation and some reader commentary. Those teams that had "this was perfect" as the leading vote-getter are listed at the end of each divisional section with the percentage of the vote.

Thanks again for reading and participating in our fun bit of summer hockey whimsy. Here's who you thought were the biggest snubs:

Atlantic Division

Boston Bruins

Our picks: Patrice Bergeron, C (2003-present), Ray Bourque, D (1979-2000), Bobby Orr, D (1966-76), Milt Schmidt, C/D (1936-55)

Your snub: Cam Neely (26%)

The only other name in snub consideration was Zdeno Chara (16%), whom we imagine would supplant Bergeron on this list. Neely is one of the most popular figures in franchise history, and no one on this list can claim to have produced the cinematic magic that was "Sea Bass" in "Dumb and Dumber." A few Bruins fans said it should be Neely over Bourque on Mount Puckmore, which is an understandable sentiment when the final lasting memory of Bourque is him being handed the Stanley Cup by the captain of the Colorado Avalanche in 2001.

Buffalo Sabres

Our picks: Dominik Hasek, G (1992-2001), Ryan Miller, G (2002-14), Gilbert Perreault, C (1970-87), Rob Ray, RW (1989-03)

Your snub: Pat Lafontaine (52%)

This was one of the most emphatic snub votes for any of the Mount Puckmores, with the next highest Sabres vote-getter, Phil Housley, receiving 14 percent. Lafontaine played 268 games in Buffalo, and he ranks outside the top 10 in every cumulative offensive category. But he's first in goals, assists and points on a per-game basis, and he was a Hart Trophy finalist in 1993. Ultimately, we went with specialization: Hasek was an obvious choice for that era, and Ray personified the brutal side of those teams.

Many of the Buffalo fans we polled before publishing Puckmore agreed that Ray deserved a spot, but many also dissented. "I love Rob Ray -- he's absolutely deserving, and it gives our Mount Puckmore an outlier (enforcer) that not too many other team's Mounts will have, but I'm not sure I'd have him land my last spot," reader Conor Hurley said. "I do think Hasek, Lafontaine and Perreault are locks. I don't think any Sabres fan, young or old, could dispute any one of those guy's place up there."

Ottawa Senators

Our picks: Daniel Alfredsson, RW (1995-2013), Erik Karlsson, D (2009-present), Chris Phillips, D (1997-2015), Alexei Yashin, C (1993-2001)

Your snub: Jason Spezza (33%)

As reader Quentin Young simply put it: "Spezza over Yashin."

The current Dallas Stars center is second in franchise history in goals (251) and assists (436), and he remains one of the more popular names among Sens faithful. Our question: Was having the second-best offensive career behind Daniel Alfredsson worthy of a spot on Puckmore? One of the aims was to have players who define the franchise through the years. Telling the story of the Senators would seem impossible without some reference to Yashin, both as an early franchise player and as the thing that brought Zdeno Chara and Spezza to the Sens, thanks to then-Islanders general manager Mike Milbury.

Toronto Maple Leafs

Our picks: Teeder Kennedy, C (1942-57), Dave Keon, C (1960-75), Borje Salming, D (1973-89), Mats Sundin, C (1994-08)

Your snub: Wendel Clark (28%)

This week's "Predictable Thing Is Predictable" award goes to the Leafs fans who demanded that Clark be added to their Mount Puckmore. Clark won the snub vote over Darryl Sittler (18%). Clark had 1,535 penalty minutes (third in franchise history) and 260 goals (eighth). He's the physical forward against whom all physical forwards are judged when they



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join the Leafs -- please recall the Toronto Sun's "WENDEL CLARKSON!" headline when David Clarkson signed his lamentable free-agent deal in Toronto. It's an understandable sentiment from a generation infatuated with this alpha male captain, but Clark is ultimately not Puckmore-worthy.

"None! This list is perfect."

Detroit Red Wings (36%)
Florida Panthers (44%)
Montreal Canadiens (28%)
Tampa Bay Lightning (49%)

Metro Division

Carolina Hurricanes/Hartford Whalers

Our picks: Rod Brind'Amour, C (1999-2010), Ron Francis, C (1981-2004), Eric Staal, C (2003-16), Glen Wesley, D (1994-2003, 2003-2008)

Your snub: Cam Ward (45%)

The goalie who Ken Dryden'd his way to the franchise's only Stanley Cup win and then stayed with the Hurricanes well beyond his best days as an NHL goalie, Ward was an overwhelming choice for biggest snub. An argument could be made for him, for sure, considering his role in Carolina's lone skate with the Cup to date. But it would likely come at the expense of a player with ties to the Whalers; and this is, after all, a Puckmore for the totality of the franchises, not just the Raleigh years.

New Jersey Devils/Colorado Rockies/Kansas City Scouts

Our picks: Martin Brodeur, G (1992-2014), Ken Daneyko, D (1983-2003), Scott Niedermayer, D (1992-2004), Scott Stevens, D (1991-2004)

Your snub: Patrik Elias (60%)

Because it's the Devils, we suppose it's appropriate that so many fans grabbed their pitchforks to protest the exclusion of the franchise's leading offensive player in goals, assists and points. Our argument was that if you agree that the Scotts and Brodeur belong on that mountain -- some would argue that Niedermayer's inclusion on the Anaheim Puckmore should negate his spot here -- then it comes down to Daneyko and Elias. Frankly, we valued that link to the red-and-green jersey, "Mickey Mouse organization" days of the franchise with Daneyko, who also played on all three Cup teams.

Nick Villano of Pucks and Pitchforks was among those dissenting: "I get that. You want Mount Rushmore to extend throughout history. However, the Devils' history has to include Elias. Now and forever, Elias will be one of the best players to ever put on the NJ crest. Whether that's red and green or red and black, Elias 100 percent deserves to be on this Mount Puckmore."

New York Rangers

Our picks: Rod Gilbert, RW (1960-78), Brian Leetch, D (1987-2003), Henrik Lundqvist, G (2005-present), Mark Messier, C (1991-97)

Your snub: Mike Richter (55%)

Nothing speaks to the power of the 1994 Stanley Cup win more than Rangers fans trying to find a place for Richter on Mount Puckmore. Heck, just carve the whole thing in honor of the 54-year curse being lifted: Doug Lidster, Brian Noonan, Jay Wells ... here's your part of the massif, champs. But honestly, who leaves for Richter? Certainly not Lundqvist, the best goalie in team history. Hopefully not Gilbert, who reminds us that Rangers history predated 1994. Leetch? Really?

The votes for Richter have the logical sturdiness of a trade suggestion from a New York sports talk radio caller. ("Hear me out ... Zuccarello and Staal fuh Draisaitl 'cuz the Oilers need winguhs and dee. I'll hang up and listen.")

Washington Capitals

Our picks: Dale Hunter, C (1987-98), Olaf Kolzig, G (1989-2008), Rod Langway, D (1982-93), Alex Ovechkin, LW (2005-present)

Your snub: Peter Bondra (41%)

We fully expected Capitals fans who were still staggering through their post-championship haze to endorse Nicklas Backstrom as the greatest snub, but he garnered 25 percent to Bondra's 41 percent. One thing was clear from both camps: Chisel Dale Hunter off that mountain.

"Putting Dale Hunter on the Capitals Mount Puckmore over Peter Bondra is like putting Tom Wilson on the poster for last year's team over T.J. Oshie," reader Ryan Cleaver wrote. "Bondra was the Caps' first dynamic forward and first impactful homegrown forward. From his rookie year to his last full season in Washington, Bondra scored the fourth-most goals in the NHL, twice leading the league, with three more seasons in the Top 6. No other Capital to that point, except for a freak season from Dennis Maruk, had finished a season in the top six in goals, assists or points. At certain times he may not have been as recognizable to Washingtonians as Hunter, but this SI article was the first time that the Capitals received national media coverage for something positive and relevant. He was a star with tangible numbers and tangible results both unprecedented for this team. He was that bridge from the post-limo incident Caps to the 'Screaming Eagle' Caps."

Fair enough, and as Cleaver noted, Bondra doesn't carry the stigma of attacking Pierre Turgeon in the playoffs.

"None! This list is perfect."

Columbus Blue Jackets (58%)
New York Islanders (38%)
Philadelphia Flyers (41%)
Pittsburgh Penguins (61%)

Central Division

Chicago Blackhawks

Our Picks: Bobby Hull, LW (1957-72), Stan Mikita, C/RW (1958-1980), Tony Esposito, G (1969-84), Jonathan Toews, (2007-present)

Your snub: Patrick Kane (30%)

Toews and Kane, Kane and Toews ... pick one, and fans of the other will be outraged, as was the case with Patrick Kane



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getting the majority of the snub vote. "You putting Toews over Kane is exactly how Evgeni Malkin got overlooked by the NHL for the Top 100 players list," reader Craig M wrote. "Kane is the better player in every way and star. Toews does not win a Cup without him. The Toews legend is utterly insane at points, ugh."

No matter the choice, one thing was clear from some of the feedback we received from fans: "Honoring" Bobby Hull on Mount Puckmore wasn't honorable, in their eyes. As reader Drew Letko wrote:

"Get Bobby Hull off of this hypothetical monument. It's embarrassing enough that the Blackhawks erected their own actual statue of him just less than 10 years ago. This world does not need another shrine built in tribute to a notorious wife beater. He's also a Nazi sympathizer," he said.

Again, we didn't see this as an honor, necessarily. It's like a history book: Four players who tell the story of the franchise, one way or another. Hull was a seminal player for the Blackhawks. What he was off the ice and is off the ice is part of that story too, and it should never be ignored. The fact is that Hull remains a public face of the Blackhawks to this day, as an ambassador. Perhaps it's a different conversation if the franchise approached his legacy in a different manner.

Dallas Stars/Minnesota North Stars

Our picks: Jamie Benn, LW (2010-present), Neal Broten, C (1980-1995), Mike Modano, C (1989-2010), Sergei Zubov, D (1996-2009)

Your snub: Ed Belfour (25%)

Belfour is an interesting snub choice because he owns the best goals-against average in franchise history (2.19) and was a vital part of a Stanley Cup win and two conference championships. If you want to argue that it's too soon to have Benn on the mountain, that's reasonable, as is the notion that Belfour belongs. He's one of the franchise's most popular players and, well, "unique" personalities. As reader Chad Balcom wrote: "Eddie Belfour would give a billion dollars to make this list."

St. Louis Blues

Our picks: Bernie Federko, C (1976-89), Brett Hull, RW (1987-98), Al MacInnis, D (1994-2003), Bob Plager, D (1967-78)

Your snub(s): Keith Tkachuk (26%) and Chris Pronger

The Blues' Mount Puckmore is, without question, the most contentious one we constructed. Not only was there a groundswell to have Tkachuk make the mountain, but there was an even louder group of fans who were livid over Pronger being a snub from the list of snubs. Wrote Todd Panula of Bleedin' Blues:

"Shockingly absent from this list, given that Jackman is included, is Chris Pronger. Pronger played nine incredibly impactful years with the Blues and scored more points in those years than Jackman even sniffed in his entire Blues career. Pronger was not seen as an offensive powerhouse either. Pronger won the Hart Trophy and the Norris Trophy in the same season, a feat which has not been accomplished since. After a less than stellar debut in St. Louis, he was

always in the top 10 for Norris votes. Sure, he played for many more teams than Jackman, but he's likely more remembered in St. Louis than anywhere else."

Mea culpa, he should have been listed among the snubs -- and remained there.

"None! This list is perfect."

Colorado Avalanche (49%)
Minnesota Wild (32%)
Nashville Predators (29%)
Winnipeg Jets/Atlanta Thrashers (33%)

Pacific Division

Calgary Flames

Our picks: Theo Fleury, RW (1988-99), Jarome Iginla, RW (1996-2013), Al MacInnis, D (1981-94), Mike Vernon, G (1982-94)

Your snub: Lanny McDonald (27%)

We thought we were headed to a Miikka Kiprusoff vs. Mike Vernon showdown for a spot on the mountain, but Kipper received only 14 percent of the votes. No, the snub that burned Flames fans most was McDonald.

"How can you leave Lanny and his mustache off the mountain? With all due respect to Al, when you think of the Calgary Flames, how can you not picture Lanny McDonald and his bushy 'stache lifting the cup? He was the captain after all," reader Kevin Mitchell said. "On top of that, he's still an active member of the Calgary community and the Flames alumni association. I don't think he's bought a drink in Calgary since the '80s. Plus, you could probably get a discount from the monument construction team for the pure joy they would get from blasting his mustache into the side of some sacred mountain in North Dakota."

It's a strong case, what with 492 games in Calgary, 215 goals and a career-capping role on the 1989 Stanley Cup champions. But boy, we'd be hard-pressed to leave the Conn Smythe winner from that team, MacInnis, off the mountain.

Edmonton Oilers

Our picks: Wayne Gretzky, C (1979-88), Jari Kurri, RW (1980-90), Mark Messier, C (1979-91), Connor McDavid, C (2015-present)

Your snub: Paul Coffey (39%)

Again, we were wrong in our assumptions. We figured Oilers fans would reject the early chiseling of McDavid's visage on the mountain in favor of another link to recent Oilers past in "Captain Canada" Ryan Smyth.

"What's missing is a representative of the misery between 1991 and 2015, and especially the brief might-have-been of 2006. That guy can really only be Ryan Smyth," reader Mike Haakstad wrote. "I loved Jari Kurri, but he really belongs in slot No. 7 or 8 at best on the Oilers Mount Puckmore, with Smyth, Paul Coffey and Grant Fuhr all ahead of him. You could maybe even make a corner case for one year of Chris Pronger."



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OK, that last suggestion would be utterly amazing but would also encourage frequent vandalism. Like we said, we thought Smyth would get the most support, but he earned only 9 percent of the vote, while Coffey and Grant Fuhr (29%) received a lot more support as the biggest snubs. Coffey ultimately earned the most support; one assumes that with Gretzky, Kurri and Messier all solid choices, Edmonton fans want the dynasty to have a dynastic hold on Mount Puckmore as well.

Los Angeles Kings

Our picks: Marcel Dionne, C (1975-87), Drew Doughty, D (2008-present), Wayne Gretzky, C (1988-96), Luc Robitaille, LW (1986-94)

Your snub: Rob Blake (29%)

This is another one of those snub votes for which we have to ask, "But instead of which guy?" Gretzky's gotta be there. So does Dionne. So does Doughty, as the representative of the franchise's only Cup wins. Blake over Lucky Luc, the franchise leader in goals (557) and arguably the most popular player in Kings' history?

Maybe if the mountain expanded to five faces, Blake would make the cut. But as we wait for that tectonic plate shift in L.A.'s Mount Puckmore, it's limited to four, and Blake isn't one of them.

Vancouver Canucks

Our picks: Pavel Bure, RW (1991-98), Trevor Linden, RW (1988-97, 2001-08), Henrik Sedin, C (2000-18), Stan Smyl, RW (1978-91)

Your snub: Daniel Sedin (40%)

OK, so we tried to separate peanut butter from jelly, and Canucks Nation spoke loudly to tell us that no mountain can keep the Sedin Twins apart.

Reader Mike Dow thought both Linden and Smyl should leave the mountain: "In the Canucks' three closest Cup chances, they were led by Hart Trophy and Hall of Fame-caliber players: Pavel Bure, Markus Naslund and Henrik and Daniel Sedin. Bure scored 60 goals for the Canucks twice, leading the league once. Naslund may have fallen short of a Hall of Fame career, but he was the NHL's leading scorer from 2001-2004, and he'll be the first three-time First Team All Star not to make the Hall. The Sedins won two Art Ross trophies, one Hart and should've won another. In those four players' best years, the Canucks contended for Cups."

Granted, there would be room for Smyl, Linden and/or Naslund if we did the "Sedins share a Hall of Fame plaque" thing and put them both on the mountain. But reader Ondrej Cernin had a better idea:

"Instead of doing something like a two-headed mutant like you proposed in the original article, I think the best solution would be to just have one Sedin face on there, but not reveal if it's Henrik or Daniel. Since they are identical twins, no one could say which one of the two it is, so you could easily say that you have both twins on there while saving an extra spot and not giving either Henrik nor Daniel more material for their trash talk since they're very competitive with each other!"

This belongs on the Mount Rushmore of novel solutions to monozygotic problems.

"None! This list is perfect."

Anaheim Ducks (38%)
Arizona Coyotes/Winnipeg Jets 1.0 (27%)
San Jose Sharks (42%)
Vegas Golden Knights (54%)



2018-19 Metropolitan Division preview: Carolina Hurricanes

By J.J. Regan

Today's team: Carolina Hurricanes

2017-18 Results: 36-35-11, 83 points, sixth in the division. Did not qualify for the playoffs.

Notable acquisitions: F Micheal Ferland, F Andrei Svechnikov, D Dougie Hamilton, D Calvin de Haan, G Petr Mrazek, head coach Rod Brind'Amour

Notable departures: F Elias Lindholm, F Joakim Nordstrom, F Derek Ryan, F Jeff Skinner, F Lee Stempniak, D Noah Hanifin, G Cam Ward, head coach Bill Peters

When they will play the Caps: Dec. 14 in Raleigh, Dec. 27 in Washington, March 26 in Washington, March 28 in Raleigh

Offseason recap: The offseason was one of change for the Hurricanes as new owner Tom Dundon tried to make his mark. Peters and Ron Francis are out, Brind'Amour and Don Waddell are in as coach and general manager. Carolina's new front office had a busy offseason with a number of splashy moves.

Hanifin, Lindholm and Skinner all will have new homes next season as the Hurricanes traded all three players in two big-time trades. Hanifin and Lindholm netted the team Hamilton,



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Ferland and a prospect while Skinner brought back a prospect, a second, a third and a sixth-round pick.

In addition, Carolina also added Svechnikov with the second-overall pick in the draft.

Biggest strength: Defense

Carolina was solid defensively last season, it just didn't seem that way because of how bad the goaltending was. Adding de Haan and Hamilton bolsters what was already a formidable blue line.

Biggest weakness: Goaltending

Did I mention how bad their goaltending was last season? Darling and Ward combined for a .909 save percentage, better only than the Buffalo Sabres. Ward put up better numbers (2.73 GAA, .906 save percentage) than Darling (3.18 GAA, .888 save percentage), but he has moved on to the Chicago Blackhawks. To replace him, the Hurricanes picked up Mrazek who also struggled last season (3.03 GAA, .902 save percentage).

So to recap, Ward and Darling both had subpar years, but to replace Ward the Hurricanes picked up a goalie who was worse.

It makes sense that Carolina would want to give Darling another shot at earning the starting job considering they

traded for him to be their starter of the future, but just because the goaltending could not get much worse than last season is no guarantee it will be better.

2018-19 season outlook: The Hurricanes enter the season with a lot of question marks.

Can Brind'Amour handle the responsibilities of being a head coach in the NHL with zero head coaching experience at any level? Did they do enough to address their scoring woes? Will someone play like a starting-caliber goalie? Is Dundon breaking the mold of an NHL owner or will his meddling negatively impact the team? Will Hamilton adjust to his new team? Is Svechnikov ready for a top-line role in his rookie season? Is Sebastian Aho a center?

If they can find positive answers to all of those questions, this is a team that could surprise. More likely, however, there are simply too many issues in Carolina right now for this team to make any real noise.

A new owner, new general manager, new head coach and a new-look roster are too much for one team to adjust to in one season.

2018-19 season prediction: The Hurricanes miss the playoffs and it's not close.

TODAY'S LINKS

http://www.espn.com/nhl/story/_/id/24427526/nhl-biggest-snubs-voting-mount-puckmore-all-31-teams
<https://www.nbcsports.com/washington/capitals/2018-19-metropolitan-division-preview-carolina-hurricanes>

SportScan

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

1103108 Websites

The Athletic / One-on-one with Auston Matthews: On Tavares, Babcock, the captaincy, and becoming the best player in the world

By Jonas Siegel

It's the middle of August, and Auston Matthews has finished another midsummer workout in Toronto with Darryl Belfry, the Maple Leafs' player development consultant.

Matthews usually spends a couple weeks in Toronto each off-season working with Belfry, after which he shuttles back home to Arizona.

It's an interesting time right now for the Leafs' young star.

Though he's accomplished a lot in his first two NHL seasons, and could sign a very lucrative long-term extension any day now, there's also been a trail of noise following the 20 year old. Some of it has been overblown

and unwarranted. Most of it has been tied to a disappointing postseason in which he scored only once in seven games.

After pulling off his gear and throwing on a ball cap, Matthews — relaxed and sporting a light beard — took some time to speak with The Athletic about that playoff disappointment, along with a wide range of other topics, including meeting with the new Leafs GM, his pitch to John Tavares, his readiness for the captaincy, and love of The Office.

The conversation has been edited for clarity.

You've lived here for a couple years now. What do you like best about living in Toronto? Obviously, it's a big change.

AM: Yeah, it's completely different than Scottsdale, where I'm from, where everything is so open here. I like it a lot. It's a nice change of pace. When you're here in the season and then you go back home, it's a nice change of pace and then when you're back home and you come back here it's nice. It's busy and traffic's always crazy, but there's so much stuff to do, so many good restaurants and places to go. We've got a young team so guys like to be out and about all the time, so it's fun.

Is it hard for you though to walk around and not be recognized?



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AM: Sometimes. I usually wear a hat, so it's not too bad. I think that's just one of the things about playing here in such a good hockey market. They love the Maple Leafs; they love the guys on the team. And I think that (attention) comes with playing here. Some days, it's just one of those days you don't want to deal with it, but it's definitely something that I know myself and I don't think anybody on the team takes for granted because (the fans) are so passionate about the team and the players.

Is there one crazy experience you've had with a fan or anyone recognizing you?

AM: The first time I think I got recognized here was when I was with my parents and we were just walking home from dinner. I had never played a game here, and I had just got drafted maybe a couple weeks before, and a random mom that was walking her kid on the street recognized me. That was the first time I'd been in Toronto since I was drafted, and I was walking home with my parents from dinner. You're like, whatever, a middle-aged mom and you're walking your kid in a stroller, and she just left it right there and came over and asked for a picture. And I was looking at my parents — I was so surprised. But I think that was the first time when you realize how passionate (fans) are about all the players here.

I was thinking about that. What's it like for you adjusting to the spotlight here? Because for anybody it'd be different having that degree of attention, pressure, and all that stuff. Have you learned anything over two years about that?

AM: It's different, for sure. It takes a while to get used to. We've got guys that have been here for a good amount of time that have also dealt with similar things — the spotlight of playing in the city and finding ways to get away from it. We've got a good group of guys that were here a couple years before myself and (Mitch) Marner and Willy (Nylander) were coming in and (they) kind of helped with that transition.

I saw you talked about it at Mitch's event, about going to Mexico after the season. What were those first few days like after the year? What's running through your mind? How are you feeling?

AM: It's kind of tough to get the bitter taste, the bitter ending, out of your head for a couple days. And then obviously you stay in Toronto a couple days (after the season), have your team-end things — meetings and all that stuff — and then you head home and I think that's when you start to, I guess, get your mind off things, relax, you spend time with your family, go somewhere nice, warm, get on the beach somewhere and relax and really get your mind off of hockey. It's obviously a long, grueling season — just get your mind off that. It's definitely nice to get time away before you take a couple weeks off and get back into things for summer.

How long does it take for you to start to feel normal? I know personally the first couple weeks after the year is really weird. I wake up and I'm like, what should I do today? Do you have any of that where it takes some time to get used to it?

AM: Yeah! Years before, (I had) the same thing — nothing to do, don't know what to do, and then I picked up golf two years ago and started doing that just in the summer, to kind of force yourself to not skate or if you're not training when you just get back (home after the season). Just kind of get your mind off something and at least have something to do and not just sit there thinking about hockey.

Is there one part of golf you're actually good at?

AM: I think I've gotten a lot better this summer. I took lessons. My little sister (Breyana, a highly ranked Arizona junior) golfs so I took lessons from her people and I think that helped a lot, but I think I've still got a ways to go. It just depends on the day when I'll do (well) and then some days I'm just terrible.

Who's the best on the team that you've played with?

AM: I never played with (Tyler) Bozak, but supposedly he was the best. I've played with Brownie (Connor Brown), he's very good. (Josh) Leivo's

pretty good. And I've never played with Naz (Nazem Kadri), but he claims to be really good and I don't believe it.

When you look back at the playoffs, do you think your numbers for the series told the story of how you played? I remember watching Alex Rodriguez, I think his first post-season for the Yankees, he didn't hit well, but it's like five, six games, it's a really small sample size. Do you think it told the story? Or do you think it's just small sample size, lots of shots, lots of chances and they don't go in?

AM: I definitely didn't play up to my expectations, but also like you said, I don't think the numbers reflected everything. There's certain situations that I would've liked a little bit more. But obviously that's what I'm paid to do: I'm paid to put up numbers, score goals, and be a leader on the team. And the numbers obviously didn't reflect that and that's frustrating for myself. But at the same time, I don't think it really shows the whole story.

What's it feel like in that moment? What's the pressure feel like in that moment, when you know you're supposed to score and you know you're supposed to produce and it's not happening?

AM: It's frustrating because it's such a small margin for error in the playoffs. You know you're not hitting your spots, and you're only getting a certain amount of opportunities a game and you're not able to capitalize. Maybe you capitalize on one and then the ball gets rolling. It's definitely frustrating. Of course you feel pressure — it's the playoffs. We battled back in the series to force a Game 7, and we didn't come out on top. That kind of feeling obviously leaves a sour taste in your mouth.

The season as a whole, was there one thing you came away thinking, I want to do that different or better next year? You must have something after every year when you've kind of assessed everything.

AM: I definitely think I can be better in a lot of areas. I worked a lot this summer on just straight-ahead speed, my stride mechanics. I worked with Barb (Underhill) a little bit when I was here during the summer and just kind of dialed in on that stuff and just the little things (like) creating separation on the ice. And working with Darryl is always fun, just because you work on so many different things that can translate into a game. So there's tons of things that you can look back on and you want to improve on. For myself, like I want to have more assists than I have goals, and obviously that hasn't been the case the last two years.

So the straightaway speed — one of your assets it seems like is your ability to kind of burst away from the competition. You want to take it to another level?

AM: Yeah, take it to another level. I think being more shiftier on the ice. That's a lot of what I work on with Darryl is just always being able to move one way or the other. Just being more elusive out there. I know I'm a big player and I can protect the puck, but when you throw that into it — like you look at guys like (Patrick) Kane and (Johnny) Gaudreau, and those guys, and even Marner and Willy, they're so shifty, they're tough to hit. So as a big guy, I want to be able to do that as well as being able to protect the puck in the corner and get my shot off and be in a good position with the puck and be (able) to get away from guys quick and be tough to hit and tough to play against.

In terms of getting more assists, do you go into the season thinking 'In situations where I might shoot I'll pass instead?' How do you find that balance because obviously one of your assets is your ability to shoot?

AM: I think I'm always going to be a shoot-first player. And that's kind of...

It's who you are.

AM: Yeah, it's who I am. Everybody's got an identity. But I think I can definitely be better on the power play as a whole. Obviously that first unit was pretty hot all year. So I think a big chunk of that area you can really accomplish on the power play and be more effective there.

I was going to ask you about that. Do you think it got stale a little bit with your unit last year?



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AM: A little bit, yeah. I think at times we had plenty of chances and that's always good, but obviously if we're not going to produce they're going to put the hot line out there and that tended to be that first unit all year. Obviously the object is to win, but you want to be out there as much as you can and help the team win.

Is there a different spot where you think you can be more effective, a different spot on the ice where it would work for you just as well or differently?

AM: Yeah, I don't know. We played around – me and Willy were playing on different half-walls and stuff, played around with who was in front of the net, who was in the middle. And I think that changed a lot and I think at times, too, that can get a little confusing just because things are always moving and stuff. You look at the first (unit), everything was kind of set, guys were always in the same spots.

And for two years.

AM: Yeah, yeah. And they developed that chemistry and stuff, and so it really helped. Obviously you've got a guy like (James van Riemsdyk), who is really good in front of the net; Mo (Morgan Rielly) up top, who can really skate and facilitate the puck; and Naz in the middle, Mitchy and Bozie on the sides. And so they really developed the chemistry on that first unit and obviously were able to produce.

Are you curious what it's going to look like this year?

AM: I am! Yeah, for sure. I don't know what they're going to do. But you obviously add some talent, so it'd be interesting to see how it goes, whether we go with two spread-out units or if we kind of stack one like a lot of teams do. So I don't know, we'll see.

Speaking of that. Where were you when you found out the team signed John Tavares?

AM: I was at home. Actually, I was sleeping and Dubas called me and kind of woke me up. I got up and I was trying to make it seem like I'd been up for like three hours (laughs). He just called me and told me we signed John and obviously I was ecstatic. I honestly couldn't believe it. I didn't know what was going on, what was going to happen. I knew they were happy about the presentation to him (during the interview period) and everything. Once they signed him and they said they were going to announce it in a couple hours I was ecstatic. I called my Dad. I think the whole city of Toronto pretty much erupted. Pretty special.

Had you thought about what it would look like if he was on the team?

AM: Not really. We wanted him — I wanted him. You got a guy like that, a top-10 player in the world, and you add him to this team that is already so dominant up front with our forward group. It just makes us that much better. I think everybody is ecstatic to have him.

You talked to him beforehand. What was your No. 1 selling point of playing in Toronto, your pitch?

AM: He honestly asked all the questions. And one of them he asked is just 'What it was like living (in Toronto) and dealing with everything and playing in such a big market?' I think I kind of told him what I told you. There's obviously pros and cons to everything, but you're playing in Toronto and they absolutely love us here. We're a good team. We're young. We have a good core that can grow into something really special. In my opinion, for him, to come into this situation, it couldn't be better. Obviously that window closes pretty quick, but we've got a window and you obviously want to take advantage of it.

Did you see the — and I will editorialize here and say that they were stupid — stories that Auston was upset (about adding Tavares)? Do you see any of that stuff?

AM: I did, yeah.

Were you like, 'Why would I be upset?'

AM: That's exactly how I responded. I couldn't believe it. I guess you've got to have a story in the summer and that was their story they decided

to go with. But I definitely wasn't upset at all. It was pretty much exactly the opposite. I'm so happy. I called him beforehand and you don't want to be an annoyance because you probably figure everybody's calling him. I think the big thing for me was just letting him know I wanted him here — everybody wants him here. He knows what it's all about — he's from Toronto. I don't think you need to really sell him too much on the team we had because we have a lot of good parts and good players and we add him and you take that to another level.

It seemed like the thing with Babcock (in which he traveled to Arizona to see you right after the season) kind of got blown up bigger than it needed to be. We've seen lots of situations where coaches travel and talk to different players. But why do you think he came out to see you so soon after the year? Do you feel like there was something to just make sure things were okay?

AM: Yeah, there was nothing more than that. Obviously coaches, players, they're not going to agree on everything and I think that was the case. And I think it's just blowing up because it's Toronto. I think it would've been a little better if it was kept hush-hush, but obviously it didn't and it just blew (up) into another, I guess, pointless story that people looked too much into. But that's all it was. It was just a discussion to make sure we're all on the same page and we move forward.

But inevitably, coach-player, his job is to push you and your job is to play. Are there times when he pushes too hard? Does it ever feel like that? And if it does, it's something you just go and tell him?

AM: Yeah. He talks to everybody quite a bit. When you get in a day after the game, practice day, you'll have a meeting with him. Maybe it's the night before, or (if) he just wants to see what's going on, if you're struggling. I think everybody pretty much has a good discussion with him once a week, once every couple weeks.

What's the best way for a coach to get the best out of you? What historically works for you?

AM: It's different just moving up in levels. When you're younger, you're playing midget or you play junior, the coach, he says something for the team and then all the other players it's kind of just like, 'Go play, go out and do your thing.' That's kind of how it's always been for me. And then you get to the NHL level and you're kind of the one setting the example for the team with your work ethic and doing different things.

I never thought of that. The U.S. development teams, there's a lot of good guys on that team.

AM: Yeah, yeah, exactly. I think the top guys typically get a little bit more leeway at the program. Just making — not the safe play. I think at the program with (former coach) Don Granato, he wanted us to be creative, make plays, if you turn it over get the puck back — and that's the way we played. But at times, when games were important, to make the safe play. But for the guys that — I guess, the top players on the team — you want to go score a goal, make a play. And obviously it's different when you move up into the NHL because the margin for error is so small.

The captaincy thing, you've been asked about it before. If they came to you — Mike, Kyle, Brendan — and said, 'Are you ready for this?' What would be your response?

AM: Yeah, I would tell them yeah. I'd tell them I'd feel ready. I don't know what they're thinking about doing, what they want to do. Obviously John has been the captain in New York for a while. So I don't know what they're thinking or what their whole ideal situation is for that. But I don't think it really changes much, whether you have a letter or not, for myself or anybody. I go lead by example, on the ice, off the ice, and being a good teammate is a big part of that, too.

Is it something in your career, when you looked ahead, that you want or you wanted?

AM: I've never really thought about it, honestly. When I played I was always the younger guy on the team so I was never a captain. I was an assistant captain at the program. Playing in Europe obviously (I was) a



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young guy. It's something I've never really thought about too much. But obviously you come into a situation like this and it's something that if it happens then you definitely embrace it and accept it, and if doesn't you go about your business and your thing the same way.

It seems like the captaincy is sort of a media thing. It seems to matter more to people on the outside than on the inside. Is that fair? You haven't had one for two years.

AM: Nothing really changes. There's more responsibility: You've got to do all that stuff that a captain does. I mean, in the two years I've been here we haven't had a captain, but we've obviously had leaders on the team and guys that have been here, like Tyler Bozak, and Mo, who's still a young guy, but he's been here for a while, Nazzie, (Jake) Gardiner – even the guys who don't wear letters lead and when they speak up guys listen. Even guys like Patty Marleau and Ron Hainsey, guys that have been in the league a while, they're not wearing a letter or maybe they're wearing a letter on any given night, but they're still guys that lead the team by example.

OK, so you mentioned Marleau. I've been so curious about this. How are you and Mitch –

AM: (Laughs).

It seems like the most unlikely friendship.

AM: I know, right?

Patrick barely says anything. He's really quiet. Why are you guys all buddies? What is it about Patrick Marleau?

AM: I think we opened him up a little bit, honestly. I know when he signed with us I called him and we had a really good conversation. He was in Hawaii with his family and I didn't want to take up too much of his time. And then he's here for the first month or two and you meet him and then I think slowly it just grew into this relationship (laughs). I don't remember where it was, but early in the season he just came into me and Mitch's room – because we were roommates – and we just watched a movie. And ever since then we go out to dinner every time we're on the road, he'd come (by the hotel room), we'd rent a movie and we'd spend a lot of time together. He's obviously old, but he acts even younger than me and Mitch. It's funny. When he really opens up and gets comfortable, which he did when we were there for a month or two, he's an awesome guy to be around. He's amazing.

PATRICK AND HIS BOYS AFTER DINNER, BEFORE THE EPIC MINI STICK BATTLE. HA HA FOR HELPING WITH OUR ELF ON A SHELF @MARNER93 @AM34 PIC.TWITTER.COM/SYA7N9TW8W

— CHRISTINA MARLEAU (@C_MARLEAU) DECEMBER 19, 2017

Did you get him Snapchatting?

AM: Yeah, we made him download Snapchat and we've got a group on there now and he'll send us videos of his kids and stuff. They love it more than him. Yeah, we've got him going on everything now.

I wondered if you met with Kyle right after he was hired or how well you knew him before he became GM?

AM: I knew him a little bit. I talked to him at the draft, when I was drafted. And then you see him around during the year, the two years I've been here. After he got hired, he came down to Phoenix and he talked to me – me, him, and my Dad. It was really just about whatever. Obviously, Lou (Lamoriello) did a lot for this organization in the three, four years he was here. He was really good to me. With Kyle coming in, obviously a young guy, and I think everybody's really excited about what he brings to the table – the way he's forward-thinking and offensive-minded. I think everybody's really excited about that.

Can you feel he's taking the team in a different direction, maybe more skill? Did you get a sense for any of that stuff?

AM: Yeah, a little bit. (Different) general managers and management staffs are always going to look at things differently. But I think it's been

pretty clear the way that he envisions this team playing, and it's a fast-paced game, (with) offensive, skilled guys. We want to have the puck all game because if you have the puck and Mitch Marner, William Nylander, John Tavares and (their) hands, you're pretty, pretty well off there, with the guys with the puck that are out there on the ice. I think that's kind of the way he envisions his team.

He's gotten branded with analytics and everything like that, but I wondered, how do you like to measure yourself when you're playing? Is there a stat that you typically look at?

AM: No, I think when you play well you know it. You can dive deep into the numbers and all that stuff and I think that's really good. I do do that with Darryl and kind of look into that. But I think as players you know when you play well and you know when you don't play well. Regardless if you have four points or zero points, I think you know if you were dominant or not.

I was reading an article about Kevin Durant and he was talking about his inspiration. He was talking about how he wasn't just driven by titles, he said he was driven by 'individual growth.' I just wondered what drives you? What's pushing you?

AM: I think it's a little bit of both. I think today in sports you're measured by winning and typically the best players win. You look at all the sports – Kevin Durant, Sidney Crosby, Alex Ovechkin, guys like that, Drew Doughty. Those are the guys that are top players in the world and those are the guys that are typically winning. So I think that's kind of what drives you. And then the other part, for myself individually, I want to be the best player in the world. That's something that drives you every day, just because everybody's competitive, everybody wants to be the best. But at the same time, Sidney Crosby is the best player in the world because he wins and because he puts up incredible numbers. So I think it's a little bit of both. But like I said, I think players are really measured on championships nowadays and I think that's the way it should be.

But so do you measure yourself against Crosby and Connor McDavid?

AM: Yeah, absolutely. I want to be on their level. I believe I am and that I can be.

Last couple questions, just quick ones. Is there a show you binged on this summer?

AM: I'll always just throw on The Office for background. I've watched that over and over honestly. I just watched that QB1 on Netflix. It's about those three high-school quarterbacks. I thought it was really good. I finished in like one day with my buddy. But that's probably the only show I've really binge-watched this summer.

Who's your favourite Office character?

AM: Dwight. Yeah. Of course (laughs). Love him.

Was there an album or artist that you got into this summer?

AM: Not really. I liked Drake's album a lot. I liked Travis Scott's album actually.

Interesting. It's different.

AM: It's different, yeah for sure. Half the songs I ended up really liking on that album, even though I (thought) I'd only like one or two. I thought that album was pretty good.

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The Athletic / NHL farm system rankings: No. 9 Florida Panthers



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 22, 2018

By Corey Pronman Aug 21, 2018

Corey Pronman's deep dive into the farm system of every NHL organization includes a ranking of all of the team's prospects, broken into tiers based on their projection; the impact on the upcoming season and an overall ranking of all players under 23. Further explanation of Pronman's system and the complete ranking of all 31 teams can be found here.

Florida is one of the thinnest systems in the NHL for me in terms of depth, and tied for second-worst in amount of players I considered NHL prospects. However, its top three prospects, in my view, could go toe-to-toe with nearly any farm system. They are headlined by Henrik Borgstrom, who has continued to win me over as a top-flight talent.

Team's 2017 ranking*: No. 22

Prospect Rankings

ELITE NHL PROSPECT

1. Henrik Borgstrom, C, Denver-NCHC

Borgstrom was one of the best players in college hockey last season. His talent level is off the charts and he has the potential to be an impact player in the NHL. He has elite hands, great vision, skates well, and is 6-foot-3. In other words, he's the total package in terms of tools to be a top scorer in the NHL and appeared on college highlight reels with regularity. He does have to round out his game however. He played some penalty kill for Denver but I have some doubts about how he'll do defensively at the top level, especially with his physical play. His production over years at various levels has also never lined up with the talent even though he put up big numbers this season in the NCHC.

VERY GOOD NHL PROSPECT

2. Owen Tippett, RW, Mississauga-OHL

Tippett was one of the most dangerous offensive players in the OHL after briefly making the Panthers out of camp and showing fine in his initial NHL stint at 18 years of age — although he wasn't invited to Canada's World Junior Championships selection camp. He's one of the most dangerous forwards in junior because of his great speed and shot, on top of having very good puck skills. His east-west game has never been great, but defensemen know when he has the puck. He creates a ton of offense by himself and I saw more flashes of top-end playmaking from him this season. His issues come more without the puck in terms of effort as well as making smart decisions on when to make the extra play, but I do think he has potential on the PK due to his speed.

3. Grigori Denisenko, LW, Yaroslavl-MHL

Denisenko is dynamic around the puck. His puck skills and vision are high-end. He controls the puck so well and is always looking to make a play. His speed isn't as dangerous as his skill, but he skates well and can push defensemen back, which, combined with his skill, leads to lots of controlled entries. I've seen him take draws at times in the Russia league and kill penalties well. He can be dangerous shorthanded. I'd like to see his shot be more lethal, but it's about average. He's a small guy who also has some discipline issues, but I see so many plus components that I'm a big believer in his potential.

LEGIT NHL PROSPECT

4. Aleksii Heponiemi, C, Swift Current-WHL

Heponiemi had a fantastic season, where he led the WHL in assists in both the regular season and playoffs. As you can imagine, he's an excellent playmaker. He QBs a power play as well as anyone, displaying near elite level vision and processes the game at a very quick pace. He couples that with good stick skills and feet although for a small guy he doesn't possess blazing speed. Hepo still has a lot of work to do in terms of bulking up which may help add a little more speed to his game and aid

with winning more battles though he's not a very gritty player to begin with.

5. Serron Noel, RW, Oshawa-OHL

Noel was one of the best athletes in his draft. He's a 6-foot-5 forward who skates and handles the puck well, which is quite unique for a player at his size. He's opened my eyes quite often, as you normally don't see a giant like him at 17 years old able to glide up the ice with the puck and make anything more than a basic play. I don't think his skill and playmaking are high-end. You see good flashes from him, although it's inconsistent, and on the power play for Oshawa, he was more of a net-front guy. There's a lot of developing left in his game in terms of making some better reads, filling out his frame and cleaning up his stride.

6. Logan Hutsko, RW, Boston College-Hockey East

Hutsko possesses high-end vision and great puck skills. When Hutsko has the puck on his stick, he generates chances with high frequency and does it through his creativity. He's very confident with the puck, is willing to try difficult plays and can often execute them. He can also finish plays. He's small, and while not an explosive small guy, he is shifty with decent speed — and coming off knee surgery, you do wonder if he'll recover some explosiveness later. When you see what he was able to accomplish as an 18-year-old freshman after not playing hockey for nearly a year and a half during his time at the USNTDP, I have a lot of hope for his trajectory as long as he can stay healthy.

HAVE A CHANCE

7. Maxwell Gildon, D, Univ. of New Hampshire-Hockey East

Gildon had a fantastic freshman season, being one of the best point and shot producing U19 defensemen in college in recent history. He's a dangerous player when carrying the puck and skates quite well for a 6-foot-3 guy. I think he showed better offensive instincts this season to couple with his feet and booming shot. Gildon still needs some tweaking on the defensive side of the puck in terms of his decisions and risk management, but overall he seems to be trending in the right direction.

8. Jonathan Ang, C, Sarnia-OHL

Ang is a very good skater. He's got a great first step and can jet through the neutral zone as well as most CHL forwards. He's got skill, but he doesn't have enough to project as a scorer in the NHL. He's small but he battles well and can be dangerous shorthanded due to his speed.

9. Jacob MacDonald, D, Binghamton-AHL

MacDonald had a breakout season at age 24, being one of the best defensemen in the AHL and putting up huge numbers. He's a skilled puck-mover who generates clean zone exits. He's not an explosive skater, but he has enough speed to get into the attack and use his offensive IQ to create a play. MacDonald's main issue is his defensive play. He's not great with his positional play and could be tougher on his checks.

DEPTH NOTES

10. Dryden Hunt, LW, Springfield-AHL: Hunt has good skills, makes plays, and his shot impressed me this season as well. He isn't a big guy, and while he's made strides off the puck he'll never be a top checker likely. His foot-speed also continues to need some work.

11. Jayce Hawryluk, C, Springfield-AHL: Hawryluk was a solid offensive weapon for Springfield. He has skill to his game, but it's not high-end skill. Rather, he's a guy who won't drive a line but won't drown his line either. He's undersized, and not a fantastic speedster for his size, but he works hard and is quite physical. Staying healthy will also be key for Hawryluk.

12. Riley Stillman, D, Hamilton-OHL: Stillman skates well, competes hard, and I saw some decent flashes of skill from him this season that gives me hope he could be a player.



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13. Henrik Haapala, LW, Springfield-AHL: Haapala has skill but I'm not convinced that his size and skill/speed combo are high-end enough for the big leagues.

14. Samuel Montebault, G, Springfield-AHL: Montebault is an OK goalie. He moves fine, looks stable in net, has size, but is not dynamic and I'm not sure how smart a goalie he is either.

2018-19 Impact

Borgstrom will be on the roster and could be a big part of the team this season. Tippett got a long look last season including a brief NHL stint and will likely receive a longer look this time. I'd lean towards sending him back but he could be a 50/50 call. Hunt could be a mid-year call-up. MacDonald is a potential sleeper at training camp after his great AHL season.

Organizational Top 10 (23 and Under)

Aleksander Barkov, C

Aaron Ekblad, D

Henrik Borgstrom, C

Owen Tippett, RW

Grigori Denisenko, LW

Denis Malgin, C

Alexsi Heponiemi, C

Jared McCann, C

Serron Noel, RW

Logan Hutsko, RW

Barkov is one of the best players in the NHL. He's an elite two-way center with the skills and brain to carry a shift. Ekblad is not as elite but he's still a very good player. His numbers haven't hit that next level yet, in part because I don't see him as a true elite offensive weapon, and in part because Keith Yandle gets the PP time. Still with his size, IQ and mobility he can be a real good two-way defender for a long time. I have time for Jared McCann still even if I don't love him. He's got ability, and can flash high-end ability but doesn't do it consistently and I'm not sold on him being a true top offensive weapon.

The Athletic LOADED: 08.22.2018

1103110 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Auston Matthews: 'I'd feel ready' for Leafs' captaincy if asked

Emily Sadler | August 21, 2018, 2:04 PM

The Toronto Maple Leafs have had a captain-by-committee approach over the past two seasons, and with the 2018-19 campaign still more than a month away, there's no rush to stitch a letter to anyone's sweater just yet.

But still, the question has been popular one in the hockey-crazed Canadian market, especially following the signing of Toronto native and former New York Islanders captain John Tavares, whom many believe should take on the captaincy ahead of his first season playing for his hometown team.

Others have pointed to third-year centreman Auston Matthews, dubbed the future of the franchise since the lottery balls lined up in the Maple Leafs' favour, as the man to lead the club as captain.

Matthews was asked about the possibility of wearing the "C" in an interview with The Athletic's Jonas Siegel, which was published Tuesday, and said he'd "feel ready" if management asked him.

"Yeah, I would tell them yeah. I'd tell them I'd feel ready," Matthews told Siegel (subscription required). "I don't know what they're thinking about doing, what they want to do. Obviously John has been the captain in New York for a while. So I don't know what they're thinking or what their whole ideal situation is for that. But I don't think it really changes much, whether you have a letter or not, for myself or anybody. I go lead by example, on the ice, off the ice, and being a good teammate is a big part of that, too."

In the interview, the 20-year-old also shared some insight into his off-season training and cleared up some early-summer storylines surrounding his relationship with head coach Mike Babcock and his response to the Maple Leafs' signing of John Tavares. Here are five brief takeaways from the interview:

He tallied 29 assists in each of his first two seasons, but wants plenty more this year.

"There's tons of things that you can look back on and you want to improve on. For myself, like I want to have more assists than I have goals, and obviously that hasn't been the case the last two years."

He's studying smaller players in an effort to be more elusive with the puck.

"I know I'm a big player and I can protect the puck, but when you throw that into it – like you look at guys like [Patrick] Kane and [Johnny] Gaudreau, and those guys, and even [Mitch] Marner and [William Nylander], they're so shifty, they're tough to hit. So as a big guy, I want to be able to do that as well as being able to protect the puck in the corner and get my shot off and be in a good position with the puck and be [able] to get away from guys quick and be tough to hit and tough to play against."

He's "so happy" the Maple Leafs signed Tavares in free agency and dismissed the narrative that he was upset about it.

"I definitely wasn't upset at all. It was pretty much exactly the opposite. I'm so happy. I called him beforehand and you don't want to be an annoyance because you probably figure everybody's calling him. I think the big thing for me was just letting him know I wanted him here — everybody wants him here."

He believes the frenzy of storylines that came out of head coach Mike Babcock's Arizona visit earlier this off-season was blown out of proportion.

"Obviously coaches, players, they're not going to agree on everything and I think that was the case. And I think it's just blowing up because it's Toronto. I think it would've been a little better if it was kept hush-hush, but obviously it didn't and it just blew (up) into another, I guess, pointless story that people looked too much into. But that's all it was. It was just a discussion to make sure we're all on the same page and we move forward."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 08.22.2018

1103111 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Auston Matthews talks Babcock, Tavares, contract, new lines

Luke Fox | July 27, 2018



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 22, 2018

TORONTO – Auston Matthews looks and sounds like a man refreshed.

Fresh dipped in a sheen burgundy suit and a pair of dress shoes that scream stylish and expensive — no tie, no socks — the young face of the Toronto Maple Leafs franchise barely resembles the one we saw humbled and frustrated in the wake of Game 7 agony in Boston three months ago.

For one, he's got a (mostly neck) beard.

"You should see Willy Nylander," Matthews says (and you can, here.) "It's summer. You obviously let loose and have fun a little bit."

But there's more to it than a 20-year-old's facial hair.

Back in Toronto to support Mitch Marner's Assist Fund and attend Nazem Kadri's wedding, he moves about a lakeside nightclub smiling easy, hugging Marner, chatting with Morgan Rielly, and mock-boozing friend and now former teammate James van Riemsdyk when JVR gets introduced at the charity function.

After the Leafs blew three one-goal leads in Beantown, again ending their season in Round 1 of the playoffs, Matthews flew away to a beach in Mexico as rumblings of a (denied) rift between he and head coach Mike Babcock surfaced.

"Get away from life," Matthews says.

Trading the spotlight for sunlight was healthy. So was being back home around family and friends in Arizona. Matthews suffered three different injuries and sat out 20 games in his sophomore year. Rest helps.

Babcock did travel out to Matthews' home to chat in person and clear the air early in the off-season, but the star centre downplays the significance of that visit.

"It was just a discussion, you know?" Matthews says. "I think you [media] guys look too much into it. It probably would've been better if it wasn't so out to the public. The conversation went well. You move on from it and you go forward. Obviously, both of us hope to be here for a long time."

Babcock's contract runs through 2022-23. He makes more money and has more job security than anyone running a bench.

A restricted free agent in 2019, Matthews has a chance to achieve a similar status as a player. The other elite centremen of his generation, Jack Eichel (\$80 million) and Connor McDavid (\$100 million), both inked monster eight-year extensions before they could play a single shift of a contract year.

The case against Matthews as the next nine-figure star: McDavid won a scoring race, a playoff series, and a Hart Trophy before earning his deal. Also, it's nice to leave some cash on the table so your GM can build a balanced roster.

The case for: the salary cap has since gone up since the McDavid deal, and Matthews plays the most important position in Canada's most scrutinized and revenue-generating hockey town.

New Leafs GM Kyle Dubas guaranteed that Toronto will fit extensions for Nylander, Matthews and Marner all under the cap. "We can, and we will," Dubas asserted on the 31 Thoughts podcast. Dubas, however, has picked up former boss Lou Lamoriello's mantra of "If you've got time, use it."

Although contract discussions between the three dynamic forwards and management have begun, RFA Nylander remains unsigned with training camp a little over a month away, and Matthews has been told by both Dubas and his agent, Judd Moldaver, to be patient.

"They've obviously started [negotiating]. It's not something I'm too in tune with. I let my agent and management handle that and focus on my summer, training, getting on the ice and being ready for the season,"

says Matthews, unsure if pen will hit paper before puck hits dot. "When it gets done, it gets done, but I don't think anybody's in too big of a rush."

Matthews says he was "pretty sad" to see Lamoriello depart, but every Leafs player we've spoken with this summer seems invigorated by Dubas's ascension.

"His plan, his vision, everything he wants to accomplish, it's very exciting," Matthews says. "You wish Lou the best. My sisters loved him. My parents loved him. They were really close. So it's sad to see him leave the organization, but I think everyone's really excited we have Kyle Dubas."

Moldaver would do well to drag Matt Martin into the negotiating room with he and Dubas. Martin, traded back to the Islanders this summer, is also back in town to see friends and speaks glowingly about his former teammate.

"Auston's a pretty rare breed," Martin says. "He took the league by storm. Scored 40 goals his first year. He would've had 40 if he played a full year last year. He's going to continue to grow and be one of the best players in the world—if not the best player in the world—in time."

Auston Matthews back in Toronto to support Mitch Marner's Assist Fund and attend Nazem Kadri's wedding. He's not clean shaven. pic.twitter.com/RCozZcXNfu

— luke fox (@lukefoxjukebox) July 27, 2018

The 2018-19 Leafs now boast the best centre depth in hockey. Matthews knew free-agent prize John Tavares from summer training sessions with Darryl Belfry, performance coach to the stars, and sharing a dressing room at the 2018 All-Star Game. So he called Tavares up during the UFA courting period to let him know he'd be welcome.

"He's a guy who takes his craft very seriously, and he's been one of the premier players in the NHL since he's been in the league," Matthews says. "We're extremely excited to have John. He makes our team a lot better. It's another step to reaching our ultimate goal."

Tavares accepted a cap-friendly \$77-million deal (\$11 million AAV) and took less than he could've fetched elsewhere to join the already-loaded Leafs offence. Dubas no doubt hopes the example set by Tavares (as well as Connor Brown and others) of not driving for every penny trickles down.

In light of the Tavares addition (and, perhaps, the Arizona summit), Babcock will start camp with a rejigged top six. Matthews is penciled in to centre Nylander and Patrick Marleau, who replaces Zach Hyman on his left side.

"I'm excited about it. Me and Patty are really close. He's been in the league for so long. He such a smart player. For his age, he still skates like the wind. He put up really good numbers [27 goals] last year—a guy that can finish," Matthews says. "To play with a guy of his calibre, what he can on the ice, it's pretty exciting for myself."

Slated to join the Tavares-Marner duo, Hyman—known more for hard work than soft hands—shrugs off the switch.

"We have so many great players, whoever you play with, you're going to have a good linemate." Hyman says. "Every year you start fresh."

Feels a little extra fresh this year, doesn't it, Toronto?

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Sportsnet.ca / Montreal Canadiens goalie Carey Price knows he can play better



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 22, 2018

Mike Johnston | August 21, 2018

If the Montreal Canadiens are going to sniff the playoffs in 2018-19, Carey Price is going to have to play like his old self.

Price was off his game one season ago, as were his teammates, and the Canadiens failed to qualify for the post-season for the second time in three years.

"At the end of the day, I know how I feel about my game and I know I could have played better," Price told Kevin Woodley of NHL.com. "I always feel like that regardless, but I know I can play better than that and I know my teammates will be looking to perform better this season as well."

Price is coming off the worst season of his 11-year NHL career, statistically speaking, and finished with a 16-26-7 record in 49 games. His .900 save percentage ranked 58th among goalies with at least 10 appearances and his 3.11 goals-against average ranked 53rd.

The 31-year-old recently participated in the fourth annual "Day with Price" camp in Summerland, B.C., where he met and worked with aspiring young goalies. The camp was hosted by Eli Wilson Goaltending and even for a keeper as decorated as Price, camps like this can provide an opportunity to improve skills and tweak inefficiencies in one's game.

"I found I was getting too spread out, like getting your feet too far apart from each other," Price said of a bad habit he had developed. "You are pretty much committed to the shot essentially when you do that, so that's something we'll be continuing to work on, keeping more of a neutral position and that will allow me to move better in any situation."

The eight-year, \$84-million contract extension Price signed in 2017 kicks in this year, which means expectations of Price will be elevated compared to previous years. The fact the Canadiens have a dearth of high-end talent on the blue line with Shea Weber out long-term only adds to the pressure Price faces.

The Canadiens won their season opener in 2017-18 but then proceeded to drop eight straight, so by mid-October the team was already behind the eight ball and seeking answers. All Price and his team can do is learn from their past mistakes.

"It felt almost like we were trying to overcorrect for things," Price added. "You start to try too hard and do things you shouldn't because you feel like you are helping, but at the end of the day you are hurting yourself. Sometimes less is more. . . . We have some new coaching staff this year, and a new defensive coach in Luke Richardson, so we'll have to sit down at the start of training camp and iron out what we want to do."

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TSN.CA / Jooris eyes depth role with Maple Leafs

Kristen Shilton

TORONTO — When NHL free agency opened on July 1, two of the Toronto Maple Leafs' quickest signings were players with local roots. Josh Jooris can forgive those who have forgotten he was one of them.

The mania that followed Mississauga, Ont.,-bred John Tavares' acquisition, announced less than an hour after Jooris inked a one-year, \$650,000 deal with Toronto as an unrestricted free agent, made the Burlington, Ont., native a mere footnote in the Leafs' productive day.

For a number of reasons, the two signings couldn't have been any more different. For one, Jooris didn't have a Tavares-like childhood photo of himself asleep in Maple Leafs' sheets to share on the day he joined the team. In fact, Jooris had never been a fan of the Leafs at all – and it's too late to start fibbing now.

"I would say I [was], but I can't lie. It's in the archives," Jooris said with a smile Tuesday after a summer skate at MasterCard Centre. "I've been honest before when I was on other teams. I was a [Red] Wings fan growing up. I had a bunch of buddies and a cousin who were diehard Leafs fans, lot of family and friends [who are], but unfortunately I was born into a Red Wings family. My dad was a big Wings fan."

If Jooris has his way, dad will have ample reason to turn on Leafs games come fall. But the road to reclaiming a permanent NHL job won't come easy for the forward, especially following the most tumultuous season of his five-year pro career.

Jooris, 28, started out last year with the Carolina Hurricanes, but was demoted to their AHL farm team in Charlotte for his first minor league designation since 2014-15. With only three goals and three assists in 31 NHL contests to his credit by mid-season, Jooris was traded in February to Pittsburgh, where he skated in nine NHL games (with zero points) and six more tilts in the AHL with Wilkes-Barre/Scranton.

"It's not the easiest thing, playing for four different teams and meeting four different groups of guys, but it's good experience," Jooris said of his season. "Coming into this year, I want to...use my experience and my knowledge and just be a confident guy out there. It's definitely adversity, you know, bumping around. You have a different appreciation for how hard it is to be an NHL player and stick in this league."

Earning a fresh start with the Leafs will mean Jooris jumping ahead of those already pencilled in on the nightly 20-man roster. With NHL experience on the wing and at centre, coupled with good penalty killing ability, Jooris could push for the Leafs' fourth-line centre job, but he'll be a dark horse contender for that slot after front-runner Par Lindholm signed from the Swedish Hockey League to a one-year, \$1.775-million deal on April 30. Frederik Gauthier, who just inked a two-year, \$1.35-million extension with the Leafs, will also be in the mix. Toronto could also seek out another option for that role before training camp opens.

The Leafs are equally stacked on the wing with talent, including off-season signee Tyler Ennis. So how does Jooris intend to stick with the club?

"I've been around enough to know that nothing is ever given to you, you have to earn it. So that's definitely going to be my mindset," he said. "I think I've come a long way as a player. I like to be a steady, reliable guy out there at both ends of the ice and use my speed when I can, make it hard on the opposition, get in on the forecheck and bring an edge to the game. And if I can chip in on offence, there is [that]."

Despite his relatively low career point totals (23 goals, 32 assists in 213 NHL games), Leafs' general manager Kyle Dubas wasted little time going after Jooris in July, moving from an initial conversation to signing in less than 24 hours. But Dubas has a broader history with Jooris than most, dating back to when he scouted a 16-year-old Jooris for the Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds (Jooris played at Union College instead).

A decade later, Jooris and Dubas have reunited, on what could be the best Maple Leafs team in a generation.

"[Kyle] was kind of my family advisor when I was going through the [recruiting] process there at a young age," Jooris said. "Obviously [he has] a wealth of knowledge. To be able to talk to him and have him give me a call and welcome me to the organization, it's just coming full circle and it's pretty cool to be a part of this organization with him where he is [now] from where we were back then."

The only hiccup is that Jooris doesn't yet know exactly where he'll be come October – playing a bottom-six role with the Leafs or potentially a top-six one with the AHL's Marlies. Having just won a Calder Cup in June, the Marlies (not unlike the Leafs) are a more desirable landing spot



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than they might have been a few years ago, but they aren't exactly Jooris' end game.

"I want it to be in the NHL and help the Maple Leafs win," he said. "But if that's going to take some time, then so be it. More so than any other place, this organization with their connection between the AHL and the NHL is really [solid]. I'm just here to help in any capacity that I can."

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