



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • August 27, 2019

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Hurricanes' prospect Stelio Mattheos recovering from cancer surgery

By Chip Alexander

Carolina Hurricanes offensive prospect Stelio Mattheos is completing treatments for testicular cancer, the team said Monday, and will not participate in the Canes' 2019 training camp.

The team said Mattheos, 20, was diagnosed with testicular cancer in June, just after he helped the Charlotte Checkers win the American Hockey League's Calder Cup. He underwent surgery to remove one testicle and has completed multiple courses of chemotherapy in the past two months.

"I'd like to thank everyone who reached out to offer support and well wishes since the diagnosis," Mattheos said in a statement. "I've had amazing support from my friends, family, teammates, coaches and all of the hockey organizations I've been a part of, including the Hurricanes, Checkers and Brandon Wheat Kings.

"I owe a debt of gratitude to my surgeon, Dr. Sabeer Rehbia, and all of the staff at Grace Hospital, as well as Dr. Piotr Czaykowski at Cancer Care Manitoba and all of the nurses on the chemotherapy ward."

Mattheos said he would resume his training for the 2019-20 season as soon as his treatments are complete and he receives clearance.

A Winnipeg native, Mattheos was a third-round selection by the Canes in the 2017 NHL Draft. He joined the Checkers last season after his final season of junior hockey with the Brandon Wheat Kings of the Western Hockey League, scoring 44 goals and adding 52 assists in 65 games.

Mattheos had three goals and an assist in 14 Calder Cup games with the Checkers.



Canes forward Mattheos undergoing cancer treatment

By Mary Dunleavy Sports Anchor / Reporter

RALEIGH, NC – Don Waddell, President and General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today announced that forward Stelio Mattheos will miss the team's 2019 training camp, as he completes treatments for testicular cancer.

Mattheos, 20, was diagnosed with testicular cancer in June, just two days after helping the Charlotte Checkers capture the 2019 Calder Cup as American Hockey League (AHL) champions. After consultation with physicians, the Winnipeg native underwent surgery to remove one testicle, and has since completed multiple courses of chemotherapy over the past two months. Mattheos is expected to return to full health, and he looks forward to resuming his training for the 2019-20 season as soon as his treatments are complete and he receives clearance.

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coaches and all of the hockey organizations I've been a part of, including the Hurricanes, Checkers and Brandon Wheat Kings.

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The Hurricanes' third round selection, 73rd overall, in the 2017 NHL Draft, Mattheos joined the Checkers for the stretch run of their regular season and played in 14 Calder Cup playoff games, totaling four points (3g, 1a). He completed his junior career with Brandon with back-to-back 40-goal seasons, netting 44 goals and adding 52 assists (96 points) in 65 Western Hockey League (WHL) contests in 2018-19.

The Hurricanes organization asks that you please respect the privacy of Mattheos and his family as he continues his recovery.



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Hurricanes prospect Mattheos undergoing cancer treatment, will miss camp

Forward helped Charlotte win Calder Cup, expected to return to full health

NHL.com @NHLdotcom

Stelio Mattheos, a forward prospect for the Carolina Hurricanes, is completing treatments for testicular cancer and will not participate in training camp next month.

The 20-year-old is expected to return to full health and resume training for the 2019-20 season when his treatments are complete and he receives clearance. He was diagnosed in June, two days after helping Charlotte of the American Hockey League win the Calder Cup, had surgery to remove one testicle and has completed multiple courses of chemotherapy over the past two months.

"I'd like to thank everyone who reached out to offer support and well wishes since the diagnosis," Mattheos said in a statement released by the Hurricanes. "I've had amazing support from my friends, family, teammates, coaches and all of the hockey organizations I've been a part of, including the Hurricanes, Checkers and Brandon Wheat Kings.

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Chosen in the third round (No. 73) of the 2017 NHL Draft, Mattheos had 96 points (44 goals, 52 assists) in 65 games with Brandon of the Western Hockey League last season before joining Charlotte. He had three points (two goals, one assist) in 11 regular-season games and four points (three goals, one assist) in 14 playoff games with Charlotte.



Hurricanes prospect to miss training camp due to cancer treatment

By Sean Leahy

The Carolina Hurricanes will be without prospect Stelio Mattheos during training camp next month as the forward undergoes treatment for testicular cancer.

"I'd like to thank everyone who reached out to offer support and well wishes since the diagnosis," said Mattheos in a statement via the Hurricanes. "I've had amazing support from my friends, family, teammates, coaches and all of the hockey organizations I've been a part of, including the Hurricanes, Checkers and Brandon Wheat Kings.

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Czaykowski at Cancer Care Manitoba and all of the nurses on the chemotherapy ward."

According to the team, Winnipeg native was diagnosed in June, two days after helping the AHL's Charlotte Checkers win the Calder Cup and three days before his 20th birthday. Mattheos, a third-round pick in 2017, underwent surgery to remove one testicle and has been through multiple rounds of chemotherapy this summer.

Mattheos, who's expected to make a full recovery, played his junior hockey in the Western Hockey League with the Brandon Wheat Kings before signing an entry-level deal and joining up with the Checkers in March. He played 11 regular season games and 14 in the playoffs. Once his treatments



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are finished and he's given the green light, he can resume training and work his way back to returning to the lineup.



Stelio Mattheos being treated for testicular cancer, to miss training camp

The first-year pro will be out indefinitely as he undergoes treatment for cancer.

By Brian LeBlanc

The Carolina Hurricanes announced on Monday that forward Stelio Mattheos will be out indefinitely, and will miss the team's upcoming training camp, after being diagnosed with testicular cancer following the Charlotte Checkers' 2019 Calder Cup championship.

Mattheos, who made his professional debut on an amateur tryout deal with the Checkers in the spring, was in line to take part in Hurricanes camp this fall as part of his first full professional season. Instead, according to a statement released by the team today, two days following the Checkers' championship the forward discovered a cancerous mass that required treatment involving chemotherapy as well as surgery to remove one testicle. The team indicates that Mattheos expects to return to full health following the conclusion of treatment and will resume his training for the 2019-20 season when cleared by his doctors.

Mattheos is the latest in a line of NHL players diagnosed with testicular cancer in recent years. Most famously, Arizona Coyotes forward Phil Kessel was treated and made a full recovery from the disease in 2006, his rookie season with the Boston Bruins. In 2012, Brandon Davidson, a defenseman then in the Edmonton Oilers system, was diagnosed and successfully treated in the first part of his rookie professional season. Mattheos' surgery was performed at Grace Hospital in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and the treatment was supervised at Cancer Care Manitoba.

The Canes Country community offers its best wishes to Mattheos in his fight. The release from the team is below.

MATTHEOS UNDERGOING CANCER TREATMENT

Forward was diagnosed with cancer following Calder Cup championship

Don Waddell, President and General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today announced that forward Stelio Mattheos will miss the team's 2019 training camp, as he completes treatments for testicular cancer.

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PNC Arena joins Carter-Finley in implementing clear bag policy

Bryan Danner, Correspondent

With NC State football season coming up, most fans need a reminder of what can be brought into Carter-Finley Stadium. The clear bag policy, implemented in 2016 by NC State Athletics, is still in effect, and just recently another popular sports venue adopted the same idea.

PNC Arena, most famous as the home for the Carolina Hurricanes and NC State men's basketball team, will implement a "clear bag policy" effective Sept. 18, the first preseason game for the Hurricanes.

Clear bags are meant to make the security line quicker by reducing search times. It will also improve security since dangerous objects will be more difficult to hide.

"It doesn't matter what event you're coming to," President and general manager of the Carolina Hurricanes Don Waddell told WRAL. "[We want you to] just feel you're being watched out for."

Starting Sept. 18, clear bags will be required for all events at PNC, including hockey games, basketball games, concerts

and other events. These bags must be less than 30 inches around (12 x 12 x 6).

There are a few exceptions to the rules. For example, medical bags will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Diaper bags will also be allowed if the child is present.

You may also use a small purse or clutch bag that does not have to be clear but these bags can't exceed 6.5 inches x 4.5 inches.

With this new rule change, many items are now prohibited. Binocular cases, backpacks, camera cases, cinch bags, tote bags, large purses and other non-clear bags are not allowed. This includes tinted bags; they must be absolutely clear.

Clear bags will be sold at PNC Arena and are of no charge to season ticket holders for the Carolina Hurricanes. They can be bought at other retailers as long as they fit the guidelines.

"It doesn't matter what time your show starts, 80% of our people show up 15 minutes before it starts," Waddell said. "We think this will help with ingress, getting people inside the building."

TODAY'S LINKS

<https://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/canes-now/article234391667.html>

<https://www.wralsportsfan.com/canes-forward-mattheos-undergoing-cancer-treatment/18593418/>

<https://www.nhl.com/news/stelio-mattheos-undergoing-cancer-treatment-will-miss-training-camp/c-308664900>

<https://nhl.nbcsports.com/2019/08/26/hurricanes-prospect-to-miss-training-camp-due-to-cancer-treatment/>

<https://www.canescountry.com/2019/8/26/20833411/carolina-hurricanes-charlotte-checkers-stelio-mattheos-testicular-cancer-to-miss-training-camp>

http://www.technicianonline.com/sports/article_b06847ba-c868-11e9-8ba5-8fe1d38d93e6.html



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SportScan

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

1151280 Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes' prospect Stelio Mattheos recovering from cancer surgery

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

AUGUST 26, 2019 02:20 PM

Carolina Hurricanes offensive prospect Stelio Mattheos is completing treatments for testicular cancer, the team said Monday, and will not participate in the Canes' 2019 training camp.

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1151297 NHL

Seattle NHL team's name? Uniform colors? Here's where fans rant, vent and even chat over beers about it

Aug. 26, 2019 at 6:00 am Updated Aug. 26, 2019 at 10:08 am

By Geoff Baker

Inside the NHL

The team has no name, no uniforms, no players or coaches, no tickets for purchase and not even a functioning arena to play in.

But Seattle's incoming NHL franchise does have an unaffiliated Facebook fan group that loves chatting about all of the above – and a rather organized group at that. So organized, in fact, the Seattle NHL Hockey Team Fan Page attempted its first official gathering last week at – where else? – The Angry Beaver hockey bar in Greenwood.

Only a tableful of fans attended the "Hockey Happy Hour" out of 2,200 or so registered page members, but then again, when you're dealing with a team still two-plus years away from even playing you've got to start somewhere.

"I knew it wasn't going to be a huge event, but you do the Facebook Live thing and show people we're there and then you build off of that," said Jonathan West, one of the page administrators who organized the gathering.

West said those attending included "a cool mix of folks" such as the owner of a barbecue catering business and a software developer for

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News Observer LOADED: 08.27.2019

a major technology company who sat down over beers to exchange ideas about all the stuff usually discussed online. He sees the makeup of the future NHL team's fan base – and the Facebook group itself – as having a large subset of people transplanted from other cities with thriving pro hockey cultures.

West knows something about that, being a California native and 20-year veteran of the broadcasting business now residing in Chicago and doing contract work there. From 2010 to 2012, he lived here and was the in-game host for the Seattle Thunderbirds junior team and is now pondering a move back to this region as his involvement grows with the Facebook site.

He'd planned to visit relatives here this month and timed the Facebook gathering to coincide. Seattle, he added, still isn't a thriving NHL market like Chicago or even Las Vegas – where he had worked for an ECHL team – and thus the Angry Beaver gathering marked a first attempt at bringing transplanted and native local fans "out of their shell" so the group can grow.

In many ways, delaying the NHL team's launch by a year to October 2021 has stalled some of the momentum that existed here for professional hockey before last December's awarding of the team. Then again, it has also created a bottleneck of energy with few places to let it out for devoted local hockey fans eager for any tidbits on the team they can find.

After all, when the biggest news in weeks involves trademarking names – Firebirds, Dragons, Sun, Falcons, Hawks and Eagles at last glance — for an American Hockey League affiliate in Palm Springs not even approved yet, that's slim pickings indeed.

So, yeah, local NHL die-hards by now have plenty of pent-up energy as they wait for any news at all about Seattle's club. As we know, social media is a great place to release pent-up energy.

And release it the Facebook group's members certainly have.



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They've ranted, vented and enthused about a variety of topics – the team name, of course, being front and center. Under a "Popular Group Topics" heading on the site where fans can review past discussions, the "Team Name" subject comes first followed by general NHL articles from elsewhere, a "Draft & Prospects" section, an "NHL – Other Teams" heading and a "Jersey & Logo" section.

In fact, the name discussion became so animated that administrators banned the topic. A recent post suggesting "Totems" got a reply the author was "stuck in the past" — after which, several responses later, said author called a "Kraken" fan "stupid" for suggesting Totems might spark a lawsuit while another invoked a "krakheads" insult and things devolved from there.

"When people start to get too heated and call people 'bastards' and worse, then we have to shut them up," West said.

The team-jersey discussions are still being permitted as long as conversation stays clean – though since uniforms do incorporate the team's name, that's now become a proxy battleground of sorts over whether "Kraken" is stupid or brilliant.

Still, West admitted, the name moratorium is "a relatively soft ban" and not a total block.

"If you have an interesting idea or an article, then we'll allow discussion."

And the group has had interesting posts: For instance, using their own creativity or borrowed designs to depict how the team's uniforms might look with a given name.

For now, West and three other administrators – two living within the Puget Sound region and one in Portland – are taking cues from Adrian Dsouza, a Florida resident who founded the page in February 2018. The Tampa Bay Lightning season-ticket holder had been moderating "a large NHL trash-talking meme page" while his wife did the same for a large Lightning fan page and both wanted to see something started here.

"I'm very excited to see a team coming to Seattle and want to set the foundation for a fan page based on my experience," Dsouza said in a text message.

As the page grows, he added, he hopes to hand things over to West and others. Dsouza said he sees the page "taking off in a great direction" as the team's launch date approaches.

West and other administrators are primarily taking tips from Dsouza on setting the tone for discussions and what they ultimately want the page to be.

"We're just trying to shape the conversation to be more quality than quantity," West said. "If you're going to go all rah-rah about a particular name, tell us why you want it."

He hopes the page eventually leads to group tailgating parties outside KeyArena, or even a dedicated lounge inside where they can meet.

By then, of course, the team will already have a name and uniform and fans will – thankfully — be debating whether general manager Ron Francis should have drafted a fourth-line center ahead of a stay-at-home sixth defenseman.

Seattle Times LOADED: 08.27.2019

1151320 Websites

The Athletic / Lockout talk: Why each side might (and might not) want to opt out of the NHL's CBA as the deadlines quickly approach

By Sean Gordon Aug 26, 2019

There is apathy, certainly. There is also anger, although how much isn't entirely clear.

Oh, and there's a deadline involved. It is approaching fast.

Or is it? As with most things associated with hockey's labour situation, the picture is somewhat fuzzy.

According to the collective agreement that binds the NHL with the NHL Players' Association, the league must provide formal, written notice by Sunday as to whether it wishes to opt-out of the final two years of the CBA, which is currently set to expire in the fall of 2022.

Should the league decline its option to re-open the agreement, the union will have until Sept. 15 to make a call on whether to terminate the deal in 2020, setting the stage for a possible work stoppage in 12 months time.

The parties have had ongoing talks for months; they met again this past week. There are suggestions those dates could come and go without a definitive resolution, by mutual consent.

"The parties have basically stopped operating under those deadlines," said a source close to the talks.

What might that mean? Is it positive? Does it mean anything at all? Those are all good questions. Shame about the lack of answers.

Deputy NHL commissioner Bill Daly used the words "cautiously optimistic" in Europe 10 days ago to describe CBA talks and said this weekend the tone remains "cordial and constructive." It's a mood the league and PA have been telegraphing since January.

I've talked to a couple of dozen players, agents, and team executives over the past two weeks. I'm still not convinced I have a great read on what's actually likely to happen – just a sense that the further one gets from the table where Gary Bettman and Don Fehr are negotiating, the more caution trumps optimism.

While some hockey people believe the league could surprise everyone and decide to re-open the CBA on the weekend, a far greater number are convinced they are perfectly content to maintain the status quo through the end of the current contract term. Call the latter position the broad consensus view.

So all eyes are locked on the NHLPA.

From the players' side, it would seem from the outside looking in as if the incentives are lining up to ratchet up the pressure. The NHL's national U.S. television deal is up for renewal in 2021, which happens to be the same year the league's 32nd franchise begins playing in Seattle.

And yet multiple sources on the players' side indicate the PA isn't agitating for a fight – not yet anyway.

The non-belligose approach from the players would be understandable. Re-opening the agreement would provide another opportunity for the league to take a run at the Holy Grail: eliminating guaranteed contracts – and likely reducing the maximum contract length, too, for good measure.

As an agent was quick to note, if the players opt-out with a view to gaining ground on a series of demands, they can expect the other side to show up with a lengthy shopping list as well.

That's not to say some players aren't feeling militant.

San Jose Sharks defenceman Marc-Édouard Vlasic said recently he wouldn't mind if there was a work stoppage.

Quite the contrary in fact: He's hoping for one.

"We'll wait and see what the league will say on Sept. 1, but of course there's a lot of stuff that I'd like to change," Vlasic said. "If the players aren't satisfied on certain fronts, then we should rethink the CBA."



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The main sticking point for Vlasic, and for a great many other players, is the escrow mechanism. In order to ensure a 50-50 revenue split with the owners, players see a portion of their salary withheld each season in order to compensate for any shortfall in revenue growth.

It can take years to get a reimbursement, and often it amounts to pennies on the dollar, partly because the players have not shied from exercising their annual escalator option to increase the salary cap. (The cap increasing more quickly than revenues = more escrow. Roughly half of the increase in the NHL's escrow-retention percentage is due to the rise in the upper limit.)

"Escrow should be eliminated. It should be zero," said Vlasic, who was involved in the last labour talks in 2012 and plans to play a role in the coming negotiations. "I mean, players sign a big contract, and they get 15 percent taken away immediately because of escrow. It's not our fault. We're the product, and it's our job to ensure people watch our league. It's not our job to take care of (equalizing revenues). Players keep saying year after year that they don't like escrow. Now's the time to put on the big-boy pants."

Though the 'E' word is always quick to come up in the list of player grievances, it's probably better to consider it a symptom rather than the actual disease.

"What they're really talking about is the revenue split," said a player agent who, like many sources for this story, insisted on anonymity in exchange for candour.

Players realize just how constraining and narrow the definition of hockey-related revenues (HRR) is. For one thing, they've received a cut of zero percent of the \$1.15 billion (U.S.) in expansion fees the league has raked in since the last deal was signed.

The owners' argument is the benefit to the players has been 46 new NHL roster spots in perpetuity, which is true. But is that add worth \$575 million to the current crop of players?

Many of the significant concessions won by the players in the last negotiation – like increased benefits and a better pension plan – effectively come out of their piece of the revenue pie. HRR is a net number, and things like employer pension contributions are counted as expenses that can be deducted from the gross revenue amount.

One source who is well-acquainted with the numbers said the players are also footing both the employer and employee portion of payroll taxes. According to that source's back-of-the-envelope calculations, the players' actual share is likely closer to 46 percent when all is said and done – and that's of a whole that represents something short of 100 percent of league revenues. (Other sources dispute that contention, saying the league has plugged multiple sources of "leakage" over the past six years.)

"The players basically didn't get anything in the last lockout," Vlasic said. "We gave in on something like 7 percent of revenues because players wanted to play. If I'm the league, 'Hey great, we were able to get that much, how much more can we get (next time)?' But, look, every player has his own way of thinking. Some guys make \$700,000 a year and just want to play. Some guys are 35 and don't have a lot of years left. You have players like me, who have long-term contracts and can afford to not play for a year. Other players can't. It's harder to get the players to agree on something than 30 owners."

Vlasic is just one player, and as such represents only himself. He's right to point out the wide diversity of opinion in a collective counting more than 700 members. But you don't have to look for very long to find others who feel similarly aggrieved, at least in private.

"We got screwed pretty good last time around, and I want to see at least some of what we lost addressed," said a player who preferred that his name not be used in part because he has yet to voice his

opinions internally in the dressing room or with the PA leadership. "I know I'm not the only one."

Is it more than a fringe element? Probably not. But who really knows at this point? The NHLPA surely has a handle on what the membership is thinking, but they're not saying much other than reiterating the fact that talks are ongoing.

Summer poses a challenge to attempting anything more than an unscientific poll of players, but in canvassing a raft of agents about their clients' feelings, a sense emerges that the current contract, which has driven salaries upward, is more than good enough for much, if not most, of the membership.

"The players want a deal, and they want one without a lockout," said an agent with a sizable client stable. "If there was a mechanism to reduce escrow in the next CBA, my guess is it would be supported overwhelmingly."

That basically scans with what Vegas Golden Knights forward Paul Stastny said at a charity event in Quebec City recently.

"Both sides want to tweak certain things, but at the same time, the game is growing and it's in a good spot. So why shut down something that's going well?" he said. "But it's the business of the game. As a player you have to take a step back – there's 700 of us – and we need to talk about what's best for the game."

Stastny was drafted into the league immediately after the acrimonious bloodbath that was the 2004-05 full-season lockout and has the first-hand experience of living through the 2012 work stoppage, like Vlasic.

"Some good things came out of it. Some bad things came out of it. But, obviously, the league grew," Stastny said. "Both sides are never 100 percent happy, but a lot of things are going good."

On the league side, Daly said in an email: "Our discussions are ongoing. They have been cordial and constructive. I think both parties recognize that we are in a good place and want to continue the momentum we think the sport has been able to generate. Our talks now are focused on whether we can see if we can accomplish that, understanding certain aspects of our agreement may have to be adjusted."

Multiple club sources indicated the owners see no urgency in departing from the status quo (with some possible exceptions we'll get to in a minute). There is scant appetite for flipping over a smorgasbord that mostly satisfies everyone in the ownership club's tastes.

"It's hard to argue with the current model, frankly; it might not be perfect, but it's making a lot of money for everyone – players included," one Eastern Conference executive said recently.

But since the dawn of the Bettman era 26 years ago, not one CBA renewal has been achieved without a labour disruption.

Could the league really be heading for an amicable agreement on a new deal? It may look that way right now, but as always, the situation is subject to change. And change has a habit of happening quickly.

So what are the elements that will either get this thing across the finish line or set the cat among the pigeons? Let's take a look at a few.

Fixing escrow

Players hate it and the owners aren't interested in taking on the financial burden of unmet revenue projections and currency fluctuations. It's not going anywhere, at least not anytime soon. That doesn't mean there aren't ways to fix it.

For one thing, the league and the players could drop the notion of annual cap-escalator options and agree to set the upper limit of the



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salary cap ahead of time. That would provide certainty and could be set up in such a way as to track more tightly to the growth forecasts.

The risk is it could also trap some teams in cap hell; the players remember what happened in Chicago, where a championship team was quickly broken down and sold for parts. A corollary to that would be more buyouts.

There might be ways to fiddle with the administration of the CBA and allay those concerns; it's also surely possible to make escrow repayments less plodding. As one player pointed out, if the NHL can set the next year's salary range within a few weeks of the season ending, surely they have an idea of what the revenues were.

But based on multiple discussions with team and other sources, it would appear the league's remedy of choice there is simply to increase revenues.

According to one source, the NHL's hope is the new national U.S. television rights deal, which may well be shared among multiple networks, could triple the take it currently receives from NBC Sports Group.

That 10-year deal – negotiated while late Philadelphia Flyers owner Ed Snider was chair of Comcast Spectacor, whose regional sports networks were folded into NBC by its parent company Comcast in 2011 – brings in an estimated \$200 million each year. (Vlasic called the arrangement “a joke.”)

Boosting that number to \$600-\$700 million wouldn't be transformational in the way the NBA's new megabucks broadcast contract was, but it might goose revenues on the margin to a point where the need for escrow is alleviated, if not entirely obviated. (It would help if the Canadian dollar picked up steam at some point, too.)

Bettman is also said to be bullish on eventual revenues from digital streaming deals – akin to what other leagues like MLB and the NFL are doing – and legalized sports betting in the U.S.

“Gary thinks there's a pot of gold there,” a source who is familiar with Bettman's thinking said of the gambling piece of the equation.

Ownership's ask

There is no sense cracks are appearing in the owners' resolve (on the contrary), but that doesn't mean everything is tickety-boo either.

Multiple sources report widespread annoyance at the way the Ottawa Senators will skirt the spirit, if not the letter, of the CBA next season by spending \$15 million on contracts being paid to injured players in order to reach the cap floor. Roughly 80 percent of those salaries are covered by insurance.

It's not a popular tactic, particularly among teams that are paying into revenue sharing – Ottawa has been a regular recipient in recent years.

What if there's a move to try and close those sorts of loopholes? Can it be done without creating problems elsewhere? The PA would surely be willing to sign off on a proposal that will make teams spend more actual money on actual active players, but the association is also a firm believer in the law of unintended consequences.

This is all hypothetical for now. It could become very real, however.

Other teams are unhappy with the current provisions for restricted free agents. The Athletic's Craig Custance tapped into that discontent recently; the main issue from the owners' perspective is to find a way to avoid big-time overpays for players on second and third contracts. The Maple Leafs have been unafraid to use their financial clout to lock up their youngsters; teams with less wherewithal are understandably dischuffed at what they're seeing.

What if, for example, the league wanted to fiddle with the RFA rules or change the requirements for arbitration eligibility as a way to

constrain salary inflation, essentially imposing term limits on second and third contracts by funneling more RFAs towards arbitration?

That possibility is being mooted by some within the industry; it's not on the table as far as I've been able to establish, but what if the idea, or another like it, was dropped in there at some point in the talks?

The players would freak, for one.

There are also carrots for the owners to dangle. There are reports, for instance, that the two sides are haggling over a framework that would see a World Cup staged in 2021; it's not impossible to imagine the league finding a way for NHL players to participate at the 2022 Olympics, although some of the sources canvassed on the players' side view international competitions mostly as a side issue.

Sometimes side issues have a way of sneaking to the centre of the table, however.

NHLPA demography

The league is turning over quickly, and the membership of the PA is skewing younger. This is not news, but the reality might be a little more stark than it first appears.

According to Hockey-Reference.com, of the 906 men who played at least one NHL game in 2018-19 a grand total of 131 were over the age of 30 (28 of them were 35 and older). That's down from 170 out of 839 (60 of whom were 35-plus) when the last lockout ended in 2013.

In fairness, the number of teenagers who played in the league last season (22) is not exactly an order of magnitude larger than in 2013 (it was 18 that year); it is also well short of the high-water mark of the past decade, which was 33 in 2016-17.

But take a look at the top-30 scorers from last year and you'll find a majority (16) were 25 and younger, and nine were 23 or younger. Not only are players, in general, getting younger, but a growing share of the NHL's upper-echelon players are still on entry-level deals or second contracts.

As one agent highlighted, the maximum base salary for a rookie is \$925,000 for 2019-20; to a young player playing a prominent role on his team, that figure won't feel like a massive premium over the league minimum, which is set at \$700,000.

The PA's membership demographic is shifting, which presumably will mean a commensurate shift in priorities at some point.

“The young guys don't give a shit – they're just trying to figure out how to stay in the league and hit their bonuses,” said a source who works with multiple NHL players on entry-level deals.

To hear agents tell it, younger players are woefully undereducated when it comes to labour squabbles past. (This was corroborated in my discussions with members of the under-22 crowd.)

It's trickier to whip troops into a fighting frenzy for the latest chapter of the greater conflict when they haven't read the previous ones.

If there is one aspect of contract negotiations that Fehr knows a thing or two about, it's building and consolidating support for the cause. His illustrious track record speaks for itself. But how is that cause going to be defined, exactly? What might the rallying cry sound like?

Maybe there will be an unforeseen flashpoint.

For instance, last week's news that Washington Capitals centre Evgeny Kuznetsov will serve a four-year ban from international hockey for a positive cocaine test at the most recent World Championships may stir unhappy memories of the 20-game penalty handed down to Golden Knights defenceman Nate Schmidt last year for violating the league's performance-enhancing drug policy by testing positive for a trace amount of a banned substance.



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The circumstances are completely different, of course, but the automatic nature of the sanction doled out to Schmidt rankled many within the PA rank and file. It seems unlikely at this point Kuznetsov will face further punishment from the league, which appears to be treating the affair as a behavioural health matter.

As for the mechanics of what happens next, it appears at this point the decision to opt-out (or not) from the CBA will belong to the NHLPA's executive board. That body includes the player representatives from all 31 teams and their alternates; Fehr also has a seat but does not get a vote. It's at least notionally possible the executive will decide to consult the full membership in the next few weeks as players finish filtering back to their NHL homes.

The opt-out was a topic of summer conversation in some player circles. Well, the crowd Boston Bruins forward Brad Marchand runs with, at any rate.

"We do (talk about it), for sure, more now than ever because we need to make a decision," Marchand said. "But it's a lot tougher because guys are spread out in different time zones. Obviously now we need to talk about it more and look at it a lot more closely."

As to the central concern, Marchand said: "(Escrow) is probably the biggest point. But there's a lot of things that go into escrow. (The league) may have different views. There's a lot of different stuff we need to talk about."

Those conversations are ongoing. So are talks between the league and PA, which are expected to continue this week. It's safe to assume that if the situation were either tense or irreconcilable, there would be public-relations jockeying underway to seize the high ground; there is no such maneuvering.

Perhaps the parties will succeed in sticking to the path of labour peace, but given the structural issues involved and the incentives at play, they're seldom far from straying off it.

Summer's not yet over. It can be hard to see through the haze.

The Athletic LOADED: 08.27.2019

1151321 Websites

The Athletic / Which NHLers have the hardest slap shots and how much does it matter in today's game?

By Justin Bourne Aug 26, 2019

On Thursday, we looked at the NHLers who possess skills that make other players envious. We went a bit deeper on the very ones you'd suspect – Sid's backhand, Ovi's bomb and a few others – then looked at the guys around the league who do other very specific things very well. Mark Stone, for example, has an excellent defensive stick (Seriously, watch for it the next time you turn on a Vegas game).

That was the opener for an end-of-summer series here on the best raw attributes among NHL players because it can be fun to look at specific little oddities like that. It can also be fun to debate the minutia of how certain players are going to mesh with certain linemates, or how teams operate from a systematic perspective, or sometimes it's fun to postulate on the nuances of ... JUST KIDDING, TODAY WE'RE GONNA WATCH GUYS SMASH THE PUCK REALLY HARD.

DINGERS! DINGERS!

Seriously, people. It's still OK to just enjoy the raw force, speed and talent among athletes outside of the Olympic cycle sometimes. And since slap shots can be wow-awesome, let's take a look at the players in possession of the biggest guns amidst the league's collective arsenal.

If you've played hockey, you've undoubtedly attempted a max-power slap shot. And then you've probably fished that puck out of the net and vowed to try again while thinking something like "OK, I've gotta at least get this one airborne." For me to catch a slap shot at peak force, I need to be shooting a bit across my body, like a pull hitter in baseball. I'd ideally like a very slow pass drifting on clean ice somewhere higher and to the right of where they shoot it from in the All-Star Game hardest shot contest.

I'm looking to hit the ice a couple of inches behind the puck to flex and load the shaft, but at a fairly shallow depth (I'm using a golf term there, just meaning I don't want to get steep which leads to a metaphorical divot – that's wasted energy in hockey), with some sort of a mid-flex stick. I never had the chance to figure out how to use one of those whippy things ala Ovechkin, given none of Bauer, Warrior or Easton were beating down my door with demos during my playing days. (Though if one of them were to provide some, *cough cough,* we could surely shoot some video and laud them with praise, ahem, analyze them.)

Even with my perfect stick and a running start, my past radar gun results have been disheartening, and that was when I was a functional player. I could get it up into the 80s, but the 90s were out of my reach. I have what I'd call quarter-net accuracy with a slapper (pick a quarter of the net and I'll hit it pretty regularly), but that's about as good as it gets for me.

I always took solace that the information above was (and remains) completely, utterly irrelevant, just as it is for most players. I can clearly remember scoring a total of one slap shot goal that wasn't gifted by pathetically bad goaltending throughout my playing days.

The distance from the goal line to the blue line is 64 feet and the width of the ice is 85. You can lop off a lot of ice there as areas you'd never really shoot from and imagine what's left as useable shooting ice. Then add in 10 hockey players that are usually jammed into that area and take into account that players are bigger and faster than ever. There's just not a ton of room and when you do get the puck, you're not alone for long. You essentially need breakdowns to ever have room to take a slap shot, but the bad news: the only thing coaches really focus on these days is essentially breakdown reduction and damage control when one happens. Slap shot time and space is rare.

As I noted in the intro piece to this series, because of all that, the slap shot has been in perilous decline:

Now, buckle in here: Last year just 14.5 percent of shots recorded by the NHL were deemed slap shots. That's a massive year-over-year drop, and a staggering big picture decline, down to nearly half of what it was a decade ago.

I've got a few more fun tidbits for you before we get to the guys who still take them and take them well. Below is a chart that highlights which teams take a lot of slap shots, purely for the purpose of comparing teams stylistically – I'm not saying taking lots or taking few is good or bad. In fact, I've highlighted the playoff teams to show there seems to be zero correlation between team slap shots and success.

The necessary caveat here is that off-ice officials – the guys who decide what type of shot each attempt gets recorded as – differ in every building, so there's gonna be some scorer bias (though, slap shots would be FAR easier to classify than wristers versus snapshots). I think, as usual, that the extremes still tell us something here. The Leafs, well, they simply do not take slap shots. Florida kinda does!



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The columns are shots, slap shots and the percentage of the team's total shots that were of the slapped variety.

That's 2.6 slap shots per game for Toronto, 7.2 for Florida. Toronto shows up as having scored a league-least 10 times via slap shot last year (six individual players had as many or more), but I'm told by those with the capability to easily look into that sort of thing that many of those definitely weren't slap shots. By contrast, the Capitals and Lightning both had 43 slapper goals on the books in 2018-19. (No word on their authenticity, unfortunately.)

What's big picture crazy is that as the team that's taken both the most and the highest percentage of slap shots, Florida would've still been below league average just a few seasons ago. The game, she's a-changin' and she's changin' fast.

What we're doing here today, though, is looking at the guys who still wield this apparently old-fashioned weapon effectively. It's somewhat ironic (or maybe just very apropos?) that we refer to guys with having hard slappers as having "cannons," because that's what they've become in hockey battle context – a means of brute force that is rarely quick enough to be used effectively. (Meanwhile, other combatants on offense have the type of weaponry with which Q might set up James Bond.)

Still, when you do have time to load one, light the fuse and fire, they're often extremely effective at generating rebounds, as any puck that comes up on a goaltender faster than he's comfortable with is bound to do. Those players who know they have a special shot and look for ways to deploy that weapon can still find ways to use it dangerously.

Below is a look at the players who most leaned on the slap shot last year, as well as a few players who used it extremely effectively. The table is arranged simply by slap shots on net last season: first we have the league's top 10, followed by some hand-picked names who actually scored on a high rate of their slap shots (the number in brackets is their league-rank in total slap shots), followed by two players who ... well, just made me laugh. Brent Seabrook's inefficiency made me laugh because of Duncan Keith's, Nick Leddy because of Johnny Boychuk's. Sorry to Blackhawks and Islanders fans there. (One more reminder that there's subjectivity in what gets deemed a slap shot, so there's one last grain of salt.)

If your takeaway wasn't – "Wait, how many goals did Erik Gustafsson score last year? *Google* 17!?! Really??" – then we're significantly different people.

Now that we've delved into some of the numbers, let's have some fun and talk about straight heat. If you could pick one guy to shoot the puck through the actual netting of the goal on one shot attempt, or, I dunno, you're forced to goaltend an NHL game with no equipment, which player do you choose? Remember, this isn't a slapper taken during a game. You can create that player's dream heater scenario and let them try to put one through the twine.

I have the list of the best five picks you could make as ...

Zdeno Chara

Obvi.

Chara won the NHL's hardest shot contest five All-Star Games in a row from 2007-2012, and has had, I think objectively, one of the two hardest shots in the NHL for at least a dozen seasons now.

With Chara, it's simple science. He's an athletic guy with a strong core who's also a giant that happens to use a hyper-long stick made essentially of rebar that only he can bend. From there, I mean ...

Science. That's all.

Shea Weber

I mean, take your pick on Weber videos. Since we're discussing shooting the puck through the net, you have to like the odds of a guy who's done it in an Olympic hockey game, no?

He's pulled it off during an NHL game too.

Or maybe you'd just prefer to see the three-time hardest shot champion take his crack at shooting it over 108 miles per hour?

Or MAYBE, just maybe, you're not fully right in the head (or you're just fascinated by this) and you'd like to watch a 4.5-minute compilation of his slap shot doing bodily harm to his opponents?

Maybe don't. But it sure is noteworthy that enough content exists to even make a video like this.

Ryan Pulock

In order to showcase your slap shot in the All-Star Game's hardest shot contest – and thus give us video of said shot – you need to make the NHL All-Star Game. Pulock hasn't done that yet, at least not at the NHL level. He HAS, however, made the All-Star game in the AHL, which leads us to the video below. Fun fact: it was filmed on a Motorola RAZR through a telescope.

The point is, he's been documented shooting it 102, and his slapshot has seemingly gotten heavier since his AHL days. It's definitely on the "get the hell outta the way of" list.

Word of advice: when guys have shots like this, don't let them shoot from here in OT.

I'm sure nobody in Leafs Nation noticed that was Tyson Barrie "covering" him. Nope. Not a soul.

Steven Stamkos

This isn't quarter-net accuracy, not at all.

It's just a bit better.

Stamkos, as noted in the table above, fired 78 slapshots on net last season, and scored a staggering 15 slapshot goals (again, Toronto as a team had 10) for a success rate of 19.2 percent among shots he landed on net. That means if you're rooting for the opposing team and he winds up, that scent you just picked up is your own fear.

He's not just accurate either, having topped out at 103.9 miles per hour on the gun in the NHL's hardest shot contest in 2016. That number would've won every NHL Hardest Shot contest in league history by people not named Chara or Weber, save for one. Which, by the way, makes Al Iafrate's 105.2 mph bomb in 1993, with a stick presumably hand-crafted from only the densest black ironwood, the greatest slapshot ever taken.

(Yes, I just googled "heavy woods" to make that joke. What a fun rabbit hole that created. "Click here for the 10 best woods you've never heard of!" I see you, macacauba.)

Colin Miller

Like Pulock, the only time we really have Miller publicly on the gun is in an AHL All-Star contest, where he shot the puck – wait for it now – a colossal 105.5 mph. That's the hardest ever recorded shot at the AHL level, so like Stamkos, he's shot the puck harder than all non-Weber/Chara NHL winners, only Miller eclipsed Iafrate too.

Guys who shoot the puck that hard tend to score those "Huh, the goalie probably shoulda had that" goals, because those thinking that have little context for what a 105 mph shot actually looks like when it's coming at you (versus like a 90 mph one). Watching from a distance, whether in the stands or on TV, can have that effect.

If Holtby's has another quarter second he might get a piece of this one:

With some canvassing around the league, these are the other names we've pulled together to make up our honorable mentions



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below. As with any list of this nature, it is all very subjective, especially when we're talking about the difference between being in the top 5 or being at the top of the Honorable Mentions. Should Ryan Ellis be in the four or five spot? Darnell Nurse? Maybe. Anyway, those guys make the list below, at least: Feel free to add any we may have missed in the comments.

Brent Seabrook

Darnell Nurse

Tyler Seguin

Anthony Mantha

Zack Kassian

Tage Thompson

Ryan Ellis

Brent Burns

Justin Faulk

Patrik Laine

P.K. Subban

Evgeni Malkin

Thomas Chabot

Nikita Zadorov

Brad Hunt

Colton Parayko

Mike Hoffman

Elias Pettersson

Rasmus Andersson

Seth Jones

Mika Zibanejad

John Carlson

Alex Ovechkin

Slap shots. Still pretty darn awesome when you can find the time and space.

The Athletic LOADED: 08.27.2019

1151322 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Oilers' McDavid says he's making progress but questions remain

Luke Fox | August 26, 2019, 2:09 PM

TORONTO — The last meaningless game of Connor McDavid's hockey career injected all the meaning in the world to another long summer that, frustratingly, might not be long enough.

In the early days after the long-eliminated Edmonton Oilers captain-slash-wizard drove hard to the net and crashed shin-first into the Calgary Flames' post, the club announced McDavid would not require surgery for his left PCL tear and that he would be ready for training camp.

Now? Four-and-a-half months later? McDavid says he's "progressing well," but there is no guarantee.

Still rehabbing, with the aid of a team of doctors and specialists and second opinions, from the first significant lower-body injury of his life, McDavid is unable to participate alongside Leon Draisaitl, Darnell Nurse and the other NHLers at Toronto's BioSteel Camp, his annual pre-training-camp ritual. He had to skip the PowerEdge Pro Camp this summer as well.

Meeting with reporters Monday at Varsity Arena to talk hockey for the first time in months, McDavid kept details of his rehabilitation tight to the vest. He said he has not suffered any setbacks and is lucky to have support from some of the best in the business.

McDavid, 22, did skate Monday morning with his usual off-season trainer, Gary Roberts, and has been hitting the ice, trying to push himself for a couple months.

"Just working hard to get to camp and focused on that," said McDavid, withholding a timeline on a return to contact. "It's been different. I've obviously just been focusing on that. It's been taking a lot of time, but it's been good."

Later adding: "It's mentally tough. It's challenging."

So with sun shining and the St. Louis Blues proving how quick a struggling NHL team can flip its fortunes and the Oilers shoring up its GM and head coach seats with some of the best candidates available, McDavid sounds like a man hesitant to embrace October's clean slate — at least until his knee is 100 per cent.

He's chatted with new GM Ken Holland, of course, and sat down to dinner a couple weeks ago with new bench boss Dave Tippett, who plans to cut McDavid's penalty-kill usage in order to keep his most potent weapon fresher for even-strength and power-play shifts.

But over everything looms the damaged ligament behind his kneecap and the strength of the muscles that surround it.

"Just focusing on my rehab and the injury itself. It's tough to focus on anything else," McDavid said. "It's coming back together and everything like that, but ultimately you don't want to come back too early, and make sure it's fully healed and you're not going to get hurt again. But I'm not too worried about that."

McDavid did, however, touch on a number of topics, both Oilers- and league-related:

- On the Milan Lucic-for-James Neal trade: "It's obviously disappointing to see a good friend in Looch go. He's someone I got close with on the team. Great guy. Great family as well. I'm definitely going to miss them. Nealer's got a lot of upside. He's a guy who's won a lot in this league, he's scored a lot in this league. A down year last year, but he's training up at Gary's and he's working as hard as I've ever seen him work. So it's good to see."

- On watching the Blues' championship run: "They go from last to winning the Cup. It says a lot about them — it says a lot about our league. Turnarounds can happen quick, so that's what we're hoping for."

- On his generation of players speaking up during the next round of collective bargaining: "It's very important. We're the guys that it's going to affect the most. We're the players who are going to be here throughout the next CBA, so we've got to step up and come to an agreement that works for both sides. I'm sure we'll get a deal."

- On the Oilers' hiring of Holland: "My initial reaction was excitement. He's a guy who's been in the league a long time. He's put together some great teams, those Detroit dynasties, so I was definitely excited by it."

- On why he didn't push his RFA negotiations past contract expiry, the way so many stars are doing this summer: "Because I didn't want to be sitting here not going to training camp. That was my



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biggest fear. I didn't want to be in that situation. And ultimately it was a pretty easy deal. Peter [Chiarelli], at the time, was great to work with, and my agent did a great job as well. It was a quick process. It wasn't anything we needed to wait over."

McDavid, who has ripped off three consecutive 100-point seasons, each more dominant than the last, prefers to let his play do the talking for him.

Which is why McDavid finds it so disappointing that he's not out there with his teammates and his peers already. Despite his best efforts.

"I've known Connor for a long time, and he's a very quiet, hardworking, passionate kid," Max Domi said.

"He's one of the best hockey players in the world for a reason — and I know for a fact he's been working his ass off all summer. He's going to have an unbelievable year."

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1151323 Websites

TSN.CA / McDavid says knee injury progressing

Kristen Shilton

Connor McDavid is still healing from a knee injury suffered during the Edmonton Oilers' regular-season finale last April, but the club's captain is optimistic about being ready for Oilers' training camp in mid-September.

"[I'm] progressing well. Making progress every day," McDavid said Monday from BioSteel's annual summer camp at the University of Toronto in his first extended remarks about the injury since the spring. "Just working hard to get to camp and focus on that. [This off-season] has been different, just focusing on that [rehab]. It's taking a lot of time, but it's been good."

McDavid said Monday that he started skating again "a couple of months ago" and has suffered no setbacks, but still opted not to participate in the on-ice portion of the BioSteel camp this week. The 22-year-old is continuing on his own program, working out with former NHLer Gary Roberts and doing the "usual" things he would at this point in the summer.

"I'm doing my own thing," McDavid shrugged. "And [I] just need to focus on that right now...on my rehab and on the injury itself. It's tough to focus on anything else."

The star centre had been having a terrific season before the injury happened, amassing the second-most points in the NHL with 116 (41 goals, 75 assists). While McDavid's goal of being a full participant in Oilers' training camp is paramount, he's cognizant of not pushing too hard before he's fully healthy.

"It's coming back together and everything like that, but ultimately you don't want to come back too early," he said. "Make sure it's fully healed and you're not going to get hurt again. But I'm not too worried about that either."

When McDavid and the Oilers do reconvene next month, there will be plenty of new faces. General manager Peter Chiarelli was fired in January and in May the team announced first-year head coach Ken Hitchcock would not return for another campaign. Ken Holland was eventually hired to replace Chiarelli, and he immediately lured Dave Tippett behind the Oilers' bench.

McDavid said he and Tippett had dinner a couple weeks ago ("It was good, nothing too serious") and shared his initial reaction to Holland joining the organization was "just excitement."

"He's a guy who's been in the league for a long time and put together those great teams, those Detroit dynasties," McDavid said, referencing Holland's 36 years in the Red Wings' fold over which the team won three Stanley Cups while he was GM. "I was definitely excited about it."

The Richmond Hill, Ont., native was less enthused to see Holland trade his good friend Milan Lucic to the Calgary Flames in July, acquiring James Neal in a swap of struggling veteran players trying to reignite their games with a change of scenery.

Lucic had previously signed a seven-year, \$42 million contract with Edmonton in 2016 but never lived up to the deal, posting just six goals and 14 assists in 79 games during his final season with the Oilers. Neal signed a five-year, \$28 million pact with the Flames in 2018, only to post the lowest goal total of his 11-year career (seven) in 2018-19.

"[It's] obviously disappointing to see a good friend in Luc go," McDavid said of the trade. "He's someone I got close with on the team, a great guy, great family as well. Neal has a lot of upside. He's a guy who's won a lot in this league, he's scored a lot in this league and obviously a down year last year but he's training up at Gary's and he's working as hard as I've ever seen him work. So it's good."

McDavid anticipates they'll be plenty of competition for roster spots when Oilers' camp opens, where newcomers Neal, Tomas Jurco, Markus Granlund and Mike Smith could all be part of the potential puzzle turning the team around.

"It's going to be whoever steps up and takes a job," McDavid said. "I don't know who it will be and it doesn't matter, as long as they can play and are good to go. I'm looking forward to it. I'm excited about the new additions and where the young guys are at."

TSN.CA LOADED: 08.27.2019

1151324 Websites

TSN.CA / The workhorse goalie is disappearing from the NHL

Travis Yost

Minnesota Wild goalie Devan Dubnyk led National Hockey League goalies in games played (67) last season, and finished second to Montreal's Carey Price in usage, playing just 25 fewer minutes.

Dubnyk and Price were absolute workhorses for their respective teams, but that term has certainly become more of a relative one in the NHL over the years. As frequently as we saw both of these netminders in the crease last season, their workload pales in comparison to the burden placed on the position just a decade ago.

For context, consider Dubnyk and Price's usage relative to their peers in the 2007-08 season. Playing nearly 3,900 minutes in a season is a tremendous amount nowadays, but it would have only been good enough for eighth and ninth 12 seasons ago. Goaltenders like Martin Brodeur (Devils), Evgeni Nabokov (Sharks), and Ryan Miller (Sabres) started nearly every single game for their respective teams, and were pulled only in the most extreme of circumstances.

The position has changed. Teams are still on the hunt for superstar goaltenders, but teams are also becoming increasingly conscious about workload, burnout rates and the heightened risk of injuries for



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their primary puck stoppers. Add that to an increased understanding that goaltenders struggle when playing in back-to-back situations – the NHL schedule still sees a dozen or more of these per team each year – and you have a real incentive for strategic rest.

Behaviourally, we've seen teams start to shift some of the minutes onto their second goaltender. Last season, the average NHL team used their No. 1 goalie in about 60 per cent of the total minutes – down almost 10 per cent from where it was a decade or so ago:

Analyzing this type of data year-over-year doesn't lend itself well to perfectly linear trends – a random run of injuries for starting goaltenders (or backup goaltenders) can create plenty of in-season volatility. But there was an obvious shift coming out of the shortened 2012-13 NHL season, and the 2018-19 season was a new 'low point' in the number of minutes we saw from starters.

At any rate, it's fair to conclude that usage for starting goaltenders is down about eight percentage points, which is roughly the equivalent of six or seven games. That's not insignificant.

We know that the NHL – like most major sports leagues – has become acutely aware of how fatigue and overwork can drive performance degradation and injuries. But there may be other drivers that are giving NHL coaching staffs more confidence in their depth options.

League wide, save percentages for starters and platoon options or backups have trended closely over the last decade-plus, but not perfectly. The delta between these two groups has been cut in half over time:

It seems likely that an increase in talent at the position has narrowed the gap, among other possible explainer variables (including more strategic 'rest' situations).

The talent argument is an interesting one, and backed by at least one critical point. The position, which was overwhelmingly North American for decades, has been impacted recently by an influx of European goaltenders. This newer recruiting market has certainly been a boon for the NHL – six of the last eight Vezina Trophies have been won by European goalies. More than anything, it has helped create an incredible level of competition for the small number of goaltender roster slots available. Through this competition comes natural displacement and, more generally, improved performance.

It's hard to know where this carousel will stop – identifying a truly optimal number of starts for a given goaltender is quite difficult, and different variables may affect one team more than another – but the change in strategy is likely to stick for some time.

Knowing that rest can aid performance and help mitigate significant injury from manifesting is one thing. Being comfortable in backup options to absorb some of those minutes is another animal entirely.

TSN.CA LOADED: 08.27.2019

1151325 Websites

USA TODAY / Four-time Stanley Cup winner Darren McCarty joins marijuana company, says pot saved his life

Kathleen Gray, Detroit Free Press Published 12:54 p.m. ET Aug. 26, 2019

Former Red Wings hockey star Darren McCarty has four Stanley Cups under his belt, but that's not enough.

He wants a fifth cup with a new team that won't require him to lace up his skates.

McCarty has formed a collaboration with Pincanna, a cannabis company that is building a massive medical marijuana grow and processing operation along I-75 in Pinconning, Michigan. And McCarty hopes one day to win a Cannabis Cup — a marijuana competition that is held all over the United States to rate different pot products — with his own strains of legal weed.

By working with the company, McCarty wants to broaden the advocacy he already has been doing since he kicked his addiction to alcohol in 2015 with the help of pot. While he has grown his own pot outdoors, he's leaving the cultivating, processing and retail sales to the experts and will lend his name instead to products ranging from a CBD rub and gummy, to a mellowing strain of marijuana and a high-potency, marijuana-infused chocolate peanut-butter candy bar that will "crush" those who choose to indulge.

"I have a couple of ideas for the names (of the marijuana strains). Something to do with four cups, maybe sweet revenge," McCarty said, referring to his now infamous fight with Colorado Avalanche forward Claude Lemieux, whom he pummeled in 1997 in retaliation for Lemieux's brutal attack on Red Wings' teammate Kris Draper in 1996. "The names will come from some pretty big moments that I've had."

Referring to Pincanna, he said, "I'm a four-time Stanley Cup winner, they're a 45-time Cannabis Cup winner. I'm going to be the first athlete with a Stanley Cup and a Cannabis Cup."

McCarty met with the Free Press last week before taping his podcast, "Grind Time with Darren McCarty."

The former Red Wing certainly had success in his 13 seasons with the team as an on-ice enforcer and member of the Grind Line — along with Kris Draper, Joe Kocur and Kirk Maltby — that thwarted the offensive threats from other teams and protected the Red Wings' scoring stars. McCarty quickly became a fan favorite, known more for his epic brawls on the ice. But he was an offensive threat too, scoring 127 goals, 161 assists and 288 points during his 13 seasons with the Red Wings and two with the Calgary Flames.

And since becoming a leading voice on marijuana, claiming the plant saved his life from certain death because of alcoholism and drug addiction, he hopes to translate his athletic success to the cannabis industry.

It was Nov. 11, 2015, when his blood pressure was spiking and he said his liver was about to explode after decades of abusing alcohol, with Jack Daniels and beer his drinks of choice, that McCarty had his come-to-Jesus moment. The battle with the bottle led to four stints in rehab, a variety of court battles and the end of two marriages.

"For me, growing up, you were either a jock or stoner, so I never smoked pot growing up, but I've been drinking since I was 12 or 13 years old. That was acceptable in the hockey circles, it's just culturally what was accepted," McCarty said. "So I would always say no to pot, until after my first surgery in 1999. I was on all these pills, and it was driving me crazy. And I'm an insomniac, so I can't sleep, and that had a lot to do with all the drinking."

A friend suggested he try some weed and "something went off in my head and it was like my body said yes."

But it didn't stop him from drinking to the point of collapse and several buddies, including the medical marijuana caregiver who supplied him with pot, isolated him, and for seven days, gave him "gram after gram" of Rick Simpson Oil, a potent marijuana concentrate created by Canadian Rick Simpson in 2003 to treat his skin cancer.

"I was in a coma and when I woke up after seven days, I didn't have a physical addiction," McCarty said. "I dropped to my knees and said, 'Thank God.'"



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He hasn't had a drink since, has lost 60 pounds, is off most of his prescription medications and has quit smoking cigarettes.

"If you've seen my progress over the past 10 years, you've seen me go through different stages from the alcoholism, which led me to this plant saving my life," said the 47-year-old Madison Heights resident. "I feel like I'm 35. I'm not lying. I feel like Benjamin Button."

But he's also smoking a lot of pot every day. From getting up in the morning and taking 100 milligrams of CBD, the nonintoxicating element of the cannabis plant, to smoking a few joints to get him going "because that's like a glass of orange juice," he said, and then a few more to relax and ultimately to go to sleep at night.

"So I smoked this morning and then I smoked on the way to the golf course and I smoked one on the golf course," he said, recounting his day. "And I'll probably smoke when we're done with this interview. And I was at High Times (a cannabis competition in Detroit) all weekend, so my system's pretty rockin' anyways."

He bristles at the suggestion that he might have just traded one substance — alcohol — for another — marijuana.

"No, because it's a plant," he said. "I live my life by the principles, the 12 steps. But you know what? There's a friggin' garden in my program."

"And the bottom line is, I'm not drinking. I'm not doing coke. I'm not doing pills. I'm not smoking cigarettes. In my book, what you think about me is none of my business because I know I'm right. The big fella told me so," McCarty said, pointing skyward.

Now, alcohol "repulses" him because he knows how the story ends if he goes back to the bottle. He instead wants to write the new chapter.

"Yeah, I'm a stoner, but I'm a sophisticated stoner."

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YAHOO SPORTS / Mitch Marner donates customized 'bite suit' to local police K-9 unit

Andrew Zuber

August 27, 2019

As we continue to crawl closer to the start of NHL training camps, the need to find some news — any news — about Mitch Marner has become somewhat of a daily ritual.

No, we're no closer to him signing a deal that we were yesterday, according to all useable resources, but that doesn't mean the Toronto Maple Leafs star hasn't been keeping busy.

The 22-year-old made a donation to the Durham Regional Police K-9 unit recently, and today they showed off the specially designed "apprehension suit" — colloquially know as a "bite suit" — donated by Marner's charity Marner Assist.

The specially designed suit is made up to look like a blue-and-white Maple Leafs uniform, complete with the "Marner 16" nameplate and number on the back.

"That's pretty cool what Mitch did for us," said Det. const. Wes King told Global News. "Let's do something for him in our little world, and let's make our suit look like a Mitch Marner jersey."

These padded training suits are a part of police dog training, letting the dogs go on the attack without the risk of hurting the person getting paid to throw on the pads. According to officers, Durham Regional Police go through about two suits per year, each costing roughly \$3,000.

The video of a police dog attacking someone dressed like Marner was easy fodder for twitter jokes, but the reality behind the scene is just a young player making a thoughtful donation to a local police department.

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YAHOO SPORTS / Mikko Rantanen skating with Norwegian team as he awaits new deal with Avalanche

Chase Kelly Yahoo Sports Canada August 26, 2019

Less than a week after the hilariously predictable Mitch Marner-to-Europe reports began to make news, it looks like fellow RFA Mikko Rantanen is working on his own backup plan overseas.

As he awaits a new NHL contract, the Colorado Avalanche winger is apparently skating with the Storhamar Dragons of the GET-ligaen, the highest level of professional hockey in Norway. The Dragons recently tweeted a photo of the young Finn skating with the team, using the opportunity to light-heartedly troll the Avs in the process.

Colorado, however, made it clear that the team prefers to see its star player in blue and burgundy.

Rantanen is one of many big-name RFAs still awaiting a new NHL contract as training camps are set to begin in September — Marner, Brock Boeser, Brayden Point, Matthew Tkachuk and Zach Werenski round out the star-studded list.

Many expect the Marner domino to fall first in order to set the market, and it looks like his negotiations with the Maple Leafs have potential to spill into the 2019-20 regular season, similar to what happened last season with William Nylander.

Marner's camp reportedly reached out to the Zurich Lions in Switzerland last week to discuss the star potentially practicing with the team.

With Rantanen and the Avalanche patiently waiting for Marner to set the market, a resolution appears to be far from imminent. The Avalanche have approximately \$15.6 million in available cap space for next season, but with Tyson Jost, Vladislav Kamenev and Nikita Zadorov set to become RFAs next summer, there's pressure on general manager Joe Sakic to get Rantanen's deal right.

Rantanen, who was drafted 10th overall in 2015, is coming off of a career year in which he posted 87 points in 74 games, adding 14 more in 12 postseason contests.

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YAHOO SPORTS / Former NHLer Donald Brashear arrested for cocaine possession



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Ailish Forfar

August 26, 2019

Former NHL enforcer Donald Brashear was arrested by Quebec City police on charges of mischief and possession of narcotics, and will appear in court on Sept. 4, as reported by CBC Radio Canada.

According to the translated report, Brashear was arrested on June 5 for breaking a window in an apartment building and then was found to have cocaine in his possession.

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This isn't Brashear's first incident with the law. He was also found guilty of assault in 2012 and was sentenced to 18 months' probation after the attack that followed a playoff game, according to the Toronto Sun.

CBC Radio Canada also reported that Brashear was forced to bankrupt his company 'Brash Properties 87' in November 2018 and had to pay nearly \$200,000 in mortgages that had not been repaid.

On the ice, the 47-year-old faced plenty of suspensions to go with 2,634 career penalty minutes while playing in the NHL. Brashear played over 1,000 NHL games split between the Montreal Canadiens, Vancouver Canucks, Philadelphia Flyers, Washington Capitals, and New York Rangers in a career spanning from 1993-2010.

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YAHOO SPORTS / Former NHL enforcer Darren McCarty credits weed for saving his life

Kyle CantlonYahoo Sports CanadaAugust 26, 2019

On the ice, Darren McCarty was known as one of the toughest, most selfless, run-through-a-wall-for-his-teammates type of guy that's ever played.

Off of it, he was an alcoholic, insomniac and pill addict. Until he found cannabis.

McCarty's well-documented spiral came to a head in November of 2015, when his blood pressure was spiking and his liver "was about to explode" after multiple decades of alcohol abuse — Jack Daniels and beer his wet weapons of choice. Years and years of self-medication with the bottle led to the end of two marriages and four trips to rehab. It nearly killed him.

Battling multiple major surgeries and concussions, while trying to deal with the day-to-day onslaught of physical and mental issues that arise from boasting an enforcer role such as the one McCarty played so well throughout his career, the four-time Stanley Cup champion turned to booze and prescription painkillers to deal with the pain.

It wasn't until much later in his career that McCarty was introduced to the plant he would eventually credit for saving his life.

"For me, growing up, you were either a jock or stoner, so I never smoked pot growing up, but I've been drinking since I was 12 or 13 years old. That was acceptable in the hockey circles, it's just culturally what was accepted," McCarty told Kathleen Gray of the Detroit Free Press.

"So I would always say no to pot, until after my first surgery in 1999. I was on all these pills, and it was driving me crazy. And I'm an insomniac, so I can't sleep, and that had a lot to do with all the drinking."

A friend suggested he try cannabis for his multitude of issues, and McCarty says "something went off in my head and it was like my body said yes."

Though that was the moment he was first introduced to cannabis as a therapeutic compound, his drinking continued heavily until the point of near-collapse for another 16 years. In 2015, a medical marijuana caregiver and several of McCarty's close friends isolated him for a full week and gave him "gram after gram" of Rick Simpson Oil, an extra-potent cannabis oil concentrate that has shown almost miraculous results in some cancer patients, epileptics, and addicts.

"I was in a coma and when I woke up after seven days, I didn't have a physical addiction," he said. "I dropped to my knees and said, 'Thank God.'"

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McCarty claims he hasn't had a drink since. He's lost around 60 pounds, quit smoking cigarettes, and is off most of his prescription medications, according to the Free Press.

"If you've seen my progress over the past 10 years, you've seen me go through different stages from the alcoholism, which led me to this plant saving my life," he said. "I feel like I'm 35. I'm not lying. I feel like Benjamin Button."

McCarty, now a leading advocate on marijuana in sport and pursuing his own legal cannabis business ventures in Michigan, doesn't buy for one second the notion that he's simply "trading one substance for another" in regards to his regular, daily weed use.

"No, because it's a plant," he said. "I live my life by the principles, the 12 steps. But you know what? There's a friggin' garden in my program."

"And the bottom line is, I'm not drinking. I'm not doing coke. I'm not doing pills. I'm not smoking cigarettes. In my book, what you think about me is none of my business because I know I'm right. The big fella told me so."

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1151330 Websites

YAHOO SPORTS / 31 Takes: Lightning's Maroon signing shows why good teams always look smart

Ryan LambertYahoo Sports CanadaAugust 26, 2019

First it was the Detroit Red Wings of the early and mid-2000s. Then, several years ago, when Chicago was still Capital-C Chicago and there was plenty of under-30 talent to go around, it seemed like you could always count on Stan Bowman to reel in one or two players a summer on extremely favourable terms.

Whether it was by trade or via free agency, there was always someone who met his team's unique problem that summer, coming in on the cheap and ensuring the dynasty would roll for at least another year. That is, right up until that stopped happening. The big names here were guys like Brian Campbell, who went back to Chicago after a years-long, semi-self-imposed exile in Florida, or Brad Richards, who got picked up off the discard pile and looked like a really good No. 2 centre for a year.



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Then there were the multiple reunions with former mainstays (Patrick Sharp, for instance) who cashed in elsewhere and ended up going back for a year here and there to lend a hand at a low price.

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The seat of such bargaining power seems to have shifted as Chicago's strength faded. Now it seems to reside in Tampa, where the Lightning have made two low-cost, shrewd pickups that give them exactly what they were missing.

Patrick Maroon signed a one-year deal with the Lightning this weekend for just \$900,000 — well below what should have been market value. There, he will undoubtedly provide some size, muscle and all that in a third-line role. And because of the strength of the roster, they will likely also afford him ample opportunity to improve on the 10 goals and 28 points he put up last season. At the very least, it seems like Adam Erne was more than replaced for a lower price than Detroit ended up giving him. You have to think there's a strong possibility Tampa gets more for less from Maroon than Detroit gets out of Erne.

You can apply that same logic to the Kevin Shattenkirk deal from earlier this summer. Sure, things didn't work out on Broadway and he didn't end up being worth the money, but for \$1.75 million against the cap, you're far more likely to get value on that deal, especially if you put him in a position to succeed. The Rangers couldn't — for a lot of reasons, not the least of which were PR-related — so they had to move on. The Bolts have plenty of options to do just that, and even if he's a third-pairing guy and that's it, well, there are far more expensive third-pairing guys in the league.

Simply because of who's already locked in with that team, Julien BriseBois will spend the next few years (at least) in a position where

he can be very selective about reclamation projects, and often get more value with that player than any other team would have. And much like Bowman got to take credit for simply being the guy who picked up the phone and expressed interest in these kinds of players before, so too will BriseBois continue to make a lot of hay with these acquisitions.

31 Takes

Anaheim Ducks: All I'm saying is, this should be 31 teams and it should be Summer League. Why have like four of these smaller tournaments with five or six teams each when you could have one and make it an event? Make it U-23 or something. Pretty easy.

Arizona Coyotes: Asking who the real Clayton Keller is — the 65-point rookie or 47-point sophomore who was considerably worse — really matters for the Coyotes going forward.

Boston Bruins: Bruce Cassidy just seems like a nice guy. Prettitttty good coach, too. I was skeptical when he replaced Claude Julien but man, what a great job he's done.

Buffalo Sabres: I honestly don't think Casey Mittelstadt was as bad as everyone acted like he was last season. Not to say he was good or anything, but this is a classic case where a guy got hyped to the moon and then didn't live up to the hype that should have never been put on him in the first place. He's not even 21 and it's not like he was this incredible player in his one year of college. I think he'll be a fine NHLer, and everyone else will think that's a huge disappointment.

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