



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • Sept. 12, 2017

## THE NEWS & OBSERVER

### Hurricanes set training camp schedule, go on ice Friday

By Chip Alexander

[calexander@newsobserver.com](mailto:calexander@newsobserver.com)

September 11, 2017 6:03 PM

The Carolina Hurricanes on Monday announced their 2017 [preseason training camp schedule](#), with the first on-ice workout set Friday at [PNC Arena](#).

To celebrate the team's 20th anniversary in Raleigh, the two practice groups will be called Team Dineen and Team Kron, honoring former players Kevin Dineen and Robert Kron, who heads the Canes' European amateur scouting. The [rosters](#) will be released later in the week.

The annual Caniac Carnival will be held Sunday, Sept. 17, beginning with a noon [autograph sessions](#) and followed by an on-ice session at 1:30 p.m.

The on-ice sessions Friday and Saturday will be at 8:45 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

Carolina plays its first [preseason](#) exhibition game Monday, Sept. 18, at Buffalo and will be on the road again the next night against Tampa Bay. The first home exhibition game is Wednesday, Sept. 20, against the Lightning.

The [Canes](#) open the regular season Oct. 7 with a home game against the Minnesota Wild.



### Recap: Canes Can't Match Blackhawks

[Carolina will face Minnesota in third-place game on Tuesday](#)

by Michael Smith [@MSmithCanes](#) / CarolinaHurricanes.com

September 11th, 2017

**TRAVERSE CITY, Mich.** - The Carolina Hurricanes' quest for back-to-back championships at the NHL Prospects Tournament in Traverse City came to abrupt end on Monday night after lopsided 9-2 defeat at the hands of the Chicago Blackhawks.

The Canes, still winners of two out of three in the round-robin round, will now square off with the Minnesota Wild for third place on Tuesday night.

The lesson? It's a short tournament, and mistakes and a lack of compete in as little as one game are magnified.

"We didn't get any bounces, but we didn't work for any bounces. We weren't ready to play from the get go from the goaltending to the D to the forwards. Nobody was ready to play. You can't have that happen," head coach Mike Vellucci said. "I talked to them about having a good start and being ready to compete. They came right after us on the first shift, competed harder and took it to us for most of the night."

The Blackhawks were playing on tilted ice seemingly from puck drop, as they scored to take a 1-0 lead in the first

minute of the game. They kept buzzing and tallied twice more, including one shorthanded, in the period.

The Canes finished the first period unable to convert on eight minutes of power play time and down 3-0, a tough hole to dig out of.

"It's tough, but it shouldn't be that tough in this tournament. We have a lot of skill, but we decided that we were a lot better than we really were," Vellucci said. "We started making turnovers and giving them 4-on-2's and 3-on-2's all night. So many odd-man rushes I can't even count. Tomorrow we'll go through all the turnovers and odd-man rushes, and hopefully we can learn from it."

Managing the puck properly was the message in the room in the first intermission of the team's opening game against Detroit, something the Canes promptly corrected en route to a 6-2 victory.

"It's something we've talked about all weekend. Right from the start it was the turnovers and playing hard on pucks," Nick Schilkey said. "We were lazy on pucks [tonight], and that was the difference."

The Canes cut into the Blackhawks' lead in the second period when Schilkey ripped one that found the back of the net and popped right back out, a power-play marker. Chicago then stretched their lead to four goals by the



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period's end with goals from Michael Cramarossa and Luc Snugerud.

The Blackhawks jumped out to a 7-1 advantage in the third period before Noah Carroll's wrist shot from the point found its way through traffic and in. The Blackhawks added a pair of goals, one an empty-netter, in the waning minutes of the game to punch their ticket to the championship match versus Columbus.

The Hurricanes, meanwhile, will take tonight's game and learn from it heading into Tuesday's finale.

"There's a lot to correct. Turnovers, protecting the puck, competing," Vellucci said. "That's simple. If we can compete, the game is a little bit closer than it was. You've got to come ready. When you're pro - and these are guys just turning pro - you have to get up for every game yourself."

"We know we have a really good team in here. We have a lot of skill and a lot of compete," Schilkey said. "We know there are a lot of good players here, too. We know what we can do; we've got to just go out and execute."

Puck drop for the Canes and Wild is set for 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, a chance for Carolina to rebound and finish positively before training camp begins on Friday.

"Just turning the page and having a short memory on tonight, knowing what we're capable of and just getting back to our game," Schilkey said as the keys to Tuesday's tilt.

"You've got to find a way to get motivated yourself and be ready. If not, somebody else is going to take your job," Vellucci said. "It's a learning experience, and hopefully we can learn something from today."

### 2017 NHL Prospects Tournament

DATE	VISITOR	HOME	TIME / RESULT
Friday, Sept. 8	Hurricanes	Red Wings	6-2
Saturday, Sept. 9	Rangers	Hurricanes	0-4
Monday, Sept. 11	Blackhawks	Hurricanes	9-2
Tuesday, Sept. 12	Wild	Hurricanes	6:30 p.m.



## SB NATION CANES COUNTRY

### Meet the New Guys: Scott Darling

The Hurricanes' hope their new goaltender brings a sense of calm confidence to the crease.

by [Peter Dewar@pdewar18](mailto:Peter.Dewar@pdewar18) Sep 11, 2017, 11:00am EDT

The Carolina Hurricanes' history of hindrance by poor goaltending appears to have mercifully taken a turn for the much, much better with the signing of Scott Darling. After three seasons as a fan-favorite backup/depth goalie with the Chicago Blackhawks, Darling's merit as an NHL starter shone too bright for the Hawks' management to keep him a secret any longer, and he'll get his shot with the Canes.

#### Darling in Chicago

Darling signed with Chicago in the summer of 2014 after an incredible journey through the minor leagues (read more about that [here](#)). He was meant to add depth to their roster behind Corey Crawford and Antti Raanta, but an injury to Crawford gave Darling the chance to see NHL time, which he spent overtaking Raanta on the depth chart to earn full-time backup duties behind Crawford.

Darling starred in relief during first round the 2015 Stanley Cup Playoffs, during which he rescued the Hawks from disaster in Nashville and helped guide them to the conference semifinals, where Crawford took the reins once

more. Since then, Darling has been a more than reliable backup, playing 29+ games and posting .915 and .924 save percentages in respective years as a full-season backup.

With Darling's most impressive statistical campaign coinciding with a contract year, Chicago GM Stan Bowman's hands were tied; the Blackhawks' tricky cap situation meant saying goodbye to one of his two solid netminders. Unsurprisingly, Bowman stuck with what has gotten him this far, Carolina got Darling's negotiating rights for a third-round pick, and May 6th saw Darling and the Canes agree to a four-year deal.

#### Darling in Carolina

It's fairly obvious what role Darling looks to fill with the Hurricanes. A lack of consistent goaltending has held this team back for the better part of a decade, and it appears that management and Cam Ward understand that they are better served with someone else in the crease on a nightly basis. Even just decent goaltending would be enough of an improvement to likely see Carolina through to the playoffs; is Darling going to be the guy to provide it?

It's impossible to say. But everything he's shown so far bodes well for Darling's time with the Canes. The unpredictable nature of goaltending aside, there are some



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benchmarks to look at. Our own Brett Finger [did some fine work](#) back in May regarding comparable goaltending situations (i.e. [Cam Talbot](#) from NYR to Edmonton, [Martin Jones](#) from LA to San Jose, etc.) and how the players fared with different teams. Darling's numbers look similar to, if not better than, each of the former backups in their final year before moving, and if their stats as first-time starters are anything to go by, the transition should be quite smooth.

Nobody expects Vezina-quality goaltending from Darling (at least not yet), but he'll shoulder the oh-so-heavy burden of at least beating out Ward's numbers, for starters. It's not unreasonable to expect somewhere around a .918-.920 save %, a 2.50-2.60 GAA, and three or four shutouts from Darling this season, though a hitch in his adjustment to a new team could see his numbers dip further.

Darling's move reminds me of another comparable: [Frederik Andersen](#) of the [Maple Leafs](#). [Andersen](#) was previously a starter with the [Anaheim Ducks](#), but put up similar numbers to what one could expect from Darling (despite a higher GAA), even after early struggles, en route to leading his new team back to the playoffs. Darling could follow a similar path with the Canes; he'll likely hit a few rough patches early on before finding consistency and confidence in his game as a starter.

Despite the unknowns and risks of signing a number-one goalie who has never started for a full NHL season before, Darling is without question the future of the Hurricanes goaltending, even with Ward lingering as his backup. Darling's (and Carolina's) ceiling is high, and though it's hard to say what the floor will be, there isn't much reason not to expect good things from the new number thirty-three.



## Carolina Hurricanes send a truckload to Texas for Harvey relief

Carolina Hurricanes load up supplies at PNC for Harvey relief.

ABC11 Together highlights the strength of the human spirit, good deeds, community needs, and how our viewers can help

By [Stephanie Lopez](#)

Friday, September 08, 2017 06:56PM

RALEIGH, North Carolina (WTVD) --

The Carolina Hurricanes teamed up with the community to help Hurricane Harvey victims in Texas.

The relief drive started a few weeks ago and Friday they loaded up a big rig full of supplies to head west.

PNC Arena staffers were hard at work Friday, prepping and loading the trailer to the brim to go to Beaumont, Texas.

"We always do this," PNC Arena assistant general manager, Larry Perkins, said. "When Sandy came, we had some things to take to New York as well, but people wanted a place to give, and we became the perfect center location for people to give."

And give they did - collecting over 45 [pallets](#) of supplies and more than \$1,600 in gift cards.

The arena plans to send the rest of the supplies that don't fit into the truck to Florida to help Hurricane Irma survivors.

"We're just thankful for everything that everybody participated in, and brought forward and has donated, and we'll continue to raise it until [September 20th](#)," Jerry Mosley, general manager of Capital Ford said.

Those collections will be at Carolina Automotive Group dealerships across the Triangle.

While the effort to gather supplies was a collective one between the automotive group, PNC Arena and Carolina [Collision Center](#) - the donations themselves come from people just like you - to remind hurricane survivors in Texas to "stay hopeful."

"The whole Triangle came together to give, because they look at those folks in Texas and their heart just goes out to them," Perkins said.



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## Atlantic Division Preview: Lehigh Valley

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

Published: September 07, 2017

The 2017-18 season is creeping closer and closer, and the Checkers' move to the Eastern Conference means a whole new slate of opponents. For the new few weeks, we'll take a look at each of Charlotte's new Atlantic Division rivals!

### Overview

With the league's top-ranked offense at their disposal, the Phantoms rolled through the 2016-17 campaign to clinch the second-best record in the Eastern Conference before bowing out to the Hershey Bears in the first round thanks to four losses decided by one goal each. That high-flying attack has lost some high-end talent heading into [this coming](#) season, but Lehigh Valley has retained several key pieces to last year's regular season success. They'll also likely return the same duo between the pipes as both Alex Lyon and Anthony Stolarz have been brought back into the organizational fold.

### Key Departures

#### Mark Zengerle

College product moving on to Sweden after three straight 30-point seasons to start his pro career

#### Andy Miele

29-year-old forward ranked in top 10 in AHL for assists each of the last four seasons, inked deal with [Malmo](#) of Sweden's top league for next year

### Key RETURNING

#### Chris Conner

Veteran journeyman hit career highs in goals (22) and points (56) last year in his 11th pro season, ranking third on the Phantoms in scoring

#### T.J. Brennan

Three-time Eddie Shore Award winner and top scoring [defenseman](#) hit 60-point mark for second straight season in 2016-17

### Key ADDITIONS

#### Derek Hulak

Looking to bounce back from tough year with Utica after consecutive 40-point seasons to start his pro career

#### Phil Varone

Proven AHL scorer led Binghamton in assists (36) and tied for the team scoring lead (51) a season ago

### TODAY'S LINKS

<http://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article172716421.html>

<https://www.nhl.com/hurricanes/news/recap-hurricanes-cannot-match-blackhawks/c-291012214>

<https://www.canescountry.com/2017/9/11/16285726/carolina-hurricanes-scott-darling-chicago-blackhawks-cam-ward-corey-crawford-martin-jones-talbot>

<http://abc11.com/weather/carolina-hurricanes-send-a-truckload-to-texas-for-harvey-relief/2393099/>

<http://gocheckers.com/articles/features/atlantic-division-preview-lehigh-valley>



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## SportScan

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

1073493 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Maple Leafs' Tyler Bozak: Contract talks 'a long way away'

Luke Fox

September 11, 2017, 5:38 PM

MILTON, Ont. – Auston Matthews calls it one of his favourite snapshots from a nothing-to-lose 2017-18 Toronto Maple Leafs campaign splattered with them.

The moment Tyler Bozak tipped in the Game 3 overtime winner in the Leafs' opening-round series versus the top-seeded Washington Capitals, giving the lovable underdogs a 2-1 series jump, belief ricocheted off the blade of an undrafted centreman and rippled through the team and the city.

Bozak is 31 years old. He is coming off the greatest statistical season of his NHL career: 18 goals and 37 assists for 55 points, plus another four points in Toronto's six-game post-season series loss to the Capitals.

On July 1, he is set to become one of the most coveted unrestricted free agents at his position under the age of 33, a small group led by John Tavares and featuring Ottawa's Kyle Turris, St. Louis's Paul Stastny, and Calgary's Mikael Backlund.

Bozak has previously stated his desire to remain with the only pro franchise he's ever known, but with juicy raises due for young star forwards Matthews, William Nylander and Mitchell Marner over the next two summers, the idea of Bozak sticking with the club long-term feels like a cap puzzle difficult to solve.

The Regina native is costing the club a cap hit of \$4.2 million in the final season of his five-year contract. Bozak theoretically could've signed a new deal back on July 1. He revealed Monday at the Leafs & Legends Charity Golf Classic that he has not begun negotiating a contract extension with the team.

"I haven't been talking about any of that. That's a long way away," said Bozak at Rattlesnake Point Golf Club. "I'm focused on the season at hand and just want to play well."

While the pivot's future remains up in the air, his opening night linemates are a safe bet to be a lock. Centering wingers James van Riemsdyk, who's entering a critical contract year of his own, and Marner, Bozak helped each member of his line produce at a career high.

"Chemistry's not an easy thing to find. Whenever you find it, it's a thing that's gonna stay together," said Bozak, who wore an A on his sweater last season.

"It's huge whenever you play with someone for a long time and you learn where each other are going to be on the ice, and throwing Mitch in there [with me and van Riemsdyk] doesn't hurt at all. He's an unbelievable player. We played great as a line, and hopefully we'll be together again."

Big picture, the Leafs are positioning themselves to offer Matthews No. 1 franchise centre money, perhaps as early as next summer. Twenty-six-year-old Nazem Kadri (\$4.5 million cap hit through 2021-22) is playing and getting paid like a solid No. 2 centre.

Eventually shifting Nylander to the middle remains a possibility. Serviceable veterans Ben Smith and Eric Fehr remain on the roster, but neither creates at Bozak's level.

Look down the depth chart at centre younger, cheaper prospects Frederik Gauthier and Adam Brooks, the latter coming off a 130-point junior campaign for the Regina Pats.

Neither Matthews nor Kadri has won the majority of his face-offs, a facet of the game important to Leafs coach Mike Babcock.

Bozak flourishes at the dot. Not only was he the only Leafs regular (minimum 40 games played) to hold a winning face-off percentage last season, his 56.7 per cent success rate ranks him among the league's top 10 centres in the category.

So it was of little surprise to hear Bozak's name floated in (unsubstantiated) trade speculation this summer, most notably to the New York Rangers, who traded away a solid experienced centre in Derek Stepan.

The player, for now, appears unfazed by the uncertainty of his future and is eager to build off Toronto's 2017 playoff appearance.

"Individually, I was really happy with the way I played. I want to take it another step further and lead on and off the ice and produce as well," Bozak said.

"As athletes, we always expect to improve as individuals and as a team. We expect to be better than we were last year."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 09.12.2017

1073494 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Leafs' Matthews adds Pilates to summer training ahead of second season

Sonny Sachdeva

September 2, 2017, 1:30 PM

Auston Matthews is no stranger to the unconventional.

The highest draft pick to ever hail from the desert, the young pivot has been turning heads since his pre-NHL days, when he opted to play his final pre-draft season in Europe rather than the usual setting of junior hockey.

Fresh off posting arguably the most dominant rookie season in Toronto Maple Leafs history, Matthews is shaking things up once again, taking a unique approach to his off-season training as he prepares for his sophomore campaign.

"I focused a lot on body posture this summer," Matthews told Lance Hornby of the Toronto Sun on Friday. "I started doing Pilates, just kind of opening myself up more a bit, being more upright and avoiding other injuries. I think I'm more flexible. ...I feel good and I'm pretty excited to get going."

Just days away from his 20th birthday, Matthews said he was grateful to simply have some time to breathe after last year's hectic summer.

"It was nice not having so much stuff going on around (me)," Matthews said. "Being so hectic with the combine, the draft and everything."

Not to mention the 2016 World Cup of Hockey – which preceded the young centreman's first NHL season – for which Matthews represented the top young guns with Team North America.

"It was more relaxing. It was nice to spend a little more time training."

With that whirlwind of a year wrapped up, Matthews now approaches a second go-round sure to feature some hefty expectations for the young Arizona native. Such is the case when you post the most statistically impressive rookie showing in franchise history and lead your club back to the dance.



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But Year 2 is sure to bring new challenges, according to Matthews.

"Only 16 teams make it and it's not going to be easy," he said. "We surprised some teams last year. That doesn't really matter now. It's a new season, they're going to know that we have some firepower and they're not going to take us so lightly."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 09.12.2017

1073495 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Leafs' Marner hopes to improve defensive game in sophomore season

Sonny Sachdeva

September 1, 2017, 12:49 PM

If there's one thing the Toronto Maple Leafs need to work on in 2017-18, getting strong performances from their young stars likely isn't it.

With Auston Matthews, Mitch Marner and William Nylander each topping the 60-point plateau last season, the Leafs look just fine in the "burgeoning prospects" category. But that doesn't mean Marner and Co. aren't looking to take the next step and round out their games in their sophomore campaigns.

"Defence has always been important to me," Marner told the Toronto Sun's Lance Hornby on Thursday. "It was always taught first. You're always trying to see the guy coming in so they can't back-door us."

While adding to his two-way game is sure to help Marner grow into a more complete player, the 20-year-old is also well aware of the fact that gaining head coach Mike Babcock's trust defensively means getting over the boards when it matters most.

"You want to be out there to get a game tied so you can win it in overtime," Marner said. "You want a bigger role, go out on every shift like it's your last."

Progressing in 2017-18 isn't going to be as easy as it sounds though, even with Toronto's roster brimming with elite offensive talent.

Surprising the opposition with unexpected skill is one thing, but doing it all again, after the rest of the league watched them go toe-to-toe with the heavyweight Washington Capitals in the grind of the post-season, is an entirely different task.

"Now, we have to expect a hard game every night," Marner said. "People will bring their A game against us. We have to be ready."

Boasting a forward corps featuring Marner, Matthews and Nylander one year stronger and wiser, alongside the club's established veterans and a new weapon in Patrick Marleau, it's fair to assume Toronto has what it needs to build on its breakout 2016-17 campaign.

Getting to the dance last season certainly helped, and according to Marner, the young Leafs won't soon forget what they accomplished, nor what potentially lies ahead.

"It will be fun coming in here, believing in each other, believing in the one beside us," Marner said. "We do that and play the way we can, we're going to be better than last year."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 09.12.2017

1073496 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Analyzing five potential trade destinations for Matt Duchene

Rory Boylen

September 11, 2017, 1:58 PM

What are you expecting to get from Matt Duchene if you trade for him?

A Calder Trophy finalist in his rookie season, Duchene's production has been all over the map in his eight-season career. Peaking as nearly a point-per-game player in 2012-13 and 2013-14 (43 points in 47 games and 70 in 71 respectively), his totals have tumbled since. For two years Duchene dipped into the 55-point range, totals that equate to his rookie production — notably he reached 30 goals in one of those seasons. In 2016-17 he put up 41 points for the worst mark of his career over a full schedule. So although the Avalanche probably should be looking to move him for some young assets or at least help on defence while Duchene is still two years away from unrestricted free agency, his value may be at the lowest point of his career.

The Avalanche had the worst season of any NHL team in the salary cap era, so the pressure is on to win any Duchene trade. The whiffed on the return for Ryan O'Reilly in 2015 and can't afford a similar result here. The reported asking price is high, which hasn't squared with how interested teams view Duchene fitting into their lineup.

"People look at him as a complementary No. 2 as opposed to a No. 1 cornerstone," Elliott Friedman said on Prime Time Sports this summer.

Last week, trade rumours around Duchene ramped up again when he was absent from the team's pre-training camp, an informal skate that was in no way mandatory.

Nonetheless, since he was only one of two who wasn't there — and Nathan MacKinnon had a league media obligation in New York to attend — there has been follow-up speculation about whether or not Duchene will attend formal camp which opens on Thursday. BSN Denver reporter Adrian Dater asked the question to Duchene's agent Pat Brisson, who simply said "I don't have much to say at this point."

For Sakic's part, the Avalanche GM expects Duchene at camp since he's a player under contract.

"He's under contract and I expect him to be here on the 14th," Sakic said. "He doesn't have to be here until the 14th. Not everybody always come to camp early. It's not for me to (say), but I assume on the 14th, he'll be here."

Throwing his trade value further into question is Duchene's contract, which doesn't come with an unreasonable cap hit at \$6 million, but the issue is term. The 26-year-old would head to any acquiring team just two years away from unrestricted free agency so he's not a very controllable asset.

So here we have a player who has under-performed with a short-term contract, and a team that has to come out of any trade as a no-doubt winner. There is no clear and easy path to a resolution here.

Who are the teams Duchene could still end up on? We take a crack and break down five of them:

New York Islanders

The Islanders may not exactly fall into the category of "contender" but they are a team that needs to have more of an interest in improving in the short-term. John Tavares is entering the final season of his contract before he'll become UFA eligible, and he'll want to see the team make positive strides before re-upping for the long haul. The Isles have made three playoff appearances and have won one series in his eight years with the team.

GM Garth Snow has already brought in Jordan Eberle, presumably to play on Tavares' wing. Ideally, the team would have done more over the summer, and after Snow picked up first- and second-round picks in the Travis Hamonic trade he has a couple valuable assets to move to help the right now. In this sense, Duchene could be a nice fit as a complementary piece on the Islanders playing No. 2 centre behind Tavares.

What could the Islanders offer: Remember, they already offered Hamonic and a first-rounder and were turned down.

Mathew Barzal is the easiest name to connect in a potential trade since he's the Islanders' best prospect. That, however, could be too rich for Snow considering the prolific junior scorer could crack the NHL roster this season. A more palatable trade option from Snow's side might be Brock Nelson, who filled the No. 2 centre role last season, scoring 20 goals and



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45 points. Neither of these players fills Colorado's biggest need for a defenceman, though.

The last time the Islanders drafted a blueliner in the first round was Ryan Pullock 15th overall in 2013. Pullock will be 23 when the 2017-18 season starts and although he hasn't stuck in the NHL yet, he was eighth in AHL scoring at his position with 46 points in just 55 games. Still, Pullock isn't a home run pick up, so the first-rounders or more may have to come into play.

### Los Angeles Kings

With a new GM in Rob Blake and a new coach (promoted from an assistant) in John Stevens, the Kings are trying to figure out why their dominant possession team has been in the bottom half of the league in goals two of the past three seasons.

While Duchene only had 18 goals in 2016-17, his 11.3 shooting percentage would have been behind only Jeff Carter and Tanner Pearson, the Kings' two highest goal scorers. On a team that has the puck more often than the Avs, Duchene could theoretically shoot the puck more and in turn, put more goals on the board.

The Kings would also do well to add more speed to the lineup and turn a little away from their heavy hockey style. Put Duchene with Tyler Toffoli, another player coming off a down season, and both players could work off each other to raise their totals.

And of course, Los Angeles is another destination where Duchene slides in as a No. 2, this time behind Anze Kopitar.

What could the Kings offer: As far as defencemen go, Los Angeles doesn't have a home run pickup for the Avs either. Derek Forbort was the last defenceman they took in Round 1 and that was all the way back in 2010. Forbort, 25, is just now coming off his first full season.

As far as 'D' prospects go, Kale Clague, a 2016 second-rounder, may be the best and certainly the most long-term play. Paul LaDue, 24, also got 22 games of NHL action in his first year out of NCAA hockey, but that's a low-end return for Duchene and would require some other significant parts.

The 11th overall pick from this year's draft, Gabe Vilardi, might have to be on the table for the Avs, and considering skating is the biggest knock on him and the Kings need to focus a bit more on speed right now, it's not inconceivable. The biggest issue in any Kings deal is who the defenceman (men?) going to Colorado is.

If you wonder whether or not the Kings would be motivated to make a bold move for an instant boost instead of slowing down and guarding the future, consider Drew Doughty's recent comment about chasing Stanley Cups. He's two years out from unrestricted free agency.

The Blue Jackets surprised everyone with their 108-point season and they are now in a frame of mind where adding to win now is a priority. Soon enough, Cam Atkinson and Zach Werenski will be looking for big raises.

They were in the Ilya Kovalchuk sweepstakes before he decided to stay in Russia, and swapped 200-foot player Brandon Saad for the offensive upside of Artemi Panarin. Duchene is a target they're chasing as well.

"I think Columbus has been pretty aggressive," Friedman said on The Fan 960 in Calgary. "I think they're a team that would really like to do this. Columbus is all-in this year. But Colorado is saying, 'If we don't get our price, we're not going to do it.'"

The difference here is Duchene wouldn't be such a clear No. 2 in Columbus, where he'd be a more key player. Alexander Wennberg broke out with 59 points last season and was rewarded with a six-year extension, but it's not clear who's ceiling would be higher in a premium role.

Between Atkinson, Panarin, Josh Anderson, Nick Foligno, Boone Jenner and a fast-charging 22-year-old Oliver Bjorkstrand, there is a good amount of scoring punch on Columbus' wings — if they can add another top-six centre it would lock in a pretty quick lineup with lots of potential to keep the flow from 2016-17.

Early in the summer, all indications had the Blue Jackets pushing hard for Duchene, but more recently that interest may have cooled.

To last RT ...

Was told in late August that 3-4 teams had circled back with #Avs in talks for Duchene, but #CBJ were not then among them.

— Aaron Portzline (@Aportzline) September 6, 2017

What could the Blue Jackets offer: Here's a case of a team that could give the Avalanche back an NHL defenceman in Ryan Murray. As poor as Colorado was last season, there is interesting talent still there such as Nathan MacKinnon, Gabriel Landeskog and Tyson Barrie. There is some interest to try and get better now.

Murray, 23, was the second overall pick from 2012 and might be a nice complement to the smaller, more offensively inclined Barrie on the back end. Murray is on the last year of his contract after which he'll become an RFA and is still three seasons away from being UFA eligible.

Based on the asking price buzz, the Avs wouldn't likely do a one-for-one here, so Columbus would have to be open for more. Maybe Colorado would be after one of those aforementioned wingers, with Bjorkstrand the youngest of them all and someone who could be a top-six winger as soon as this season. It really comes down to how aggressive the Blue Jackets will be versus how content they are with the pieces and development curves already in place.

### Carolina Hurricanes

With a fully-stocked cupboard of defencemen, one of the most-connected teams to Duchene is the Carolina Hurricanes, who themselves have a need for scoring up front they've tried to address with depth pickups Marcus Kruger and Justin Williams this summer. They still don't have that game-breaker though.

The Canes figure to have the defencemen to offer up to the Avs and on this roster he would be a No. 1 pivot, which may not be the ideal place for him right now. Victor Rask had another pretty good 45-point season, but is not a lead guy — if the Hurricanes pick up Duchene, they'd be expecting him to get up to at least 60 again. Acquiring Duchene would either move Jordan Staal to the third line, Rask to the wing, or perhaps Rask is involved in the trade going the other way.

What could the Hurricanes offer: Jaccob Slavin and Brett Pesce are likely out of the question with their big extensions. What's interesting is that Noah Hanifin will get his post-ELC contract after this season, so would Carolina be open to moving him, or maybe even long-time leader Justin Faulk? If Carolina extends Hanifin, they might be just fine moving forward with the young blue line corps they have, and confident it gives them the leeway to move Faulk.

But, especially if they land Duchene, the Canes are going to be a team looking at making some progress right now, so a better fit in a trade here could be 19-year-old Jake Bean, who Carolina drafted 13th overall in 2016. Bean posted more than a point per game in the WHL last season in 43 games and is the kind of player Colorado could use in the pipeline. The Canes also have 2014 seventh overall pick Haydn Fleury coming off his first pro season in the AHL.

There's a lot to choose from here for the Avs, but the bigger question is how Duchene fits into Carolina's roster and what he'll bring for the price being asked. The fact he's two years away from being a UFA could also freak out a team that's already paying Staal \$6 million per for the long term, has committed big dollars to its prized defence corps, and also has Jeff Skinner hitting UFA status after 2018-19.

The Canadiens could still use a top line centre, although it seems as though Jonathan Drouin will be given a shot there. Alex Galchenyuk could still work his way back towards that role, but it seems less likely than ever he'll get there.

Enter Duchene, who would immediately fill the top job and add considerable speed and upside. There is some risk here, though, in that if Duchene doesn't recapture his 70-point ceiling ever, the Habs would have gone all-in for an underwhelming player.

After last season, former Avs assistant coach Tim Army said that Duchene just needed to "forget about hockey for a little while" following the nightmare season. But as a Montreal Canadien, that would be especially hard to do so any pressure Duchene would feel after a sub-par season would be magnified even more.

What could the Canadiens offer: It's not clear whether Montreal holds the necessary package anymore. Mikhail Sergachev was their blue chip defender, but he was used to land Drouin. Noah Juulsen may be the next



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up, but he's in a tier or two below Sergachev and not the can't-miss kind of player Colorado really needs to get in return.

If the Habs did get Duchene, you wonder if Galchenyuk would go the other way. Since the team seems intent on using him at wing instead of his natural centre, Montreal may have more of a use and interest in Duchene. Galchenyuk is signed for just one year longer than Duchene before he becomes UFA eligible, so the window wouldn't necessarily shorten for Montreal.

The Habs are clearly making a push for the Cup over the next couple years and if they feel Duchene gives them enough of a boost and is that much better of a fit than Galchenyuk, it could be worth considering. But we come back to Colorado's real need for a defenceman. The Habs' lack of depth in that position may preclude them from getting into this.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 09.12.2017

1073497 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canucks' Thatcher Demko heads to camp with near-impossible goal

Iain MacIntyre

September 11, 2017, 9:42 PM

PENTICTON, B.C. — Despite what Nuke Laloosh and just about every athlete who has ever been interviewed says, it is a challenge to take things one day at a time when your development schedule has been set in years.

Monday wasn't Thatcher Demko's day. Just like the Young Stars Classic wasn't the Vancouver Canucks' tournament.

The National Hockey League team's goalie of the future was beaten three times on 13 shots before leaving in the second intermission of what turned out to be a 5-4 overtime loss to the Edmonton Oilers' prospects.

But, really, Demko could have posted a 50-save shutout and it wouldn't have mattered to his development curve in an organization where management believes he should spend at least two years and, possibly, three developing in the American Hockey League before challenging for an NHL job.

Demko is unique among the elite Canucks prospects going to training camp today in Vancouver in that, barring injuries, it is virtually impossible for the 21-year-old to make the NHL roster this fall.

In July, general manager Jim Benning signed promising Buffalo Sabres free agent Anders Nilsson to a two-year contract to compete for the Canucks starting job with Jacob Markstrom, who is beginning a three-year, \$11-million extension. Each is 27 years old.

So Demko, a second-round pick who played last season for the Utica Comets after an outstanding three years at Boston College, must wait. And wait. And probably wait some more.

"You have to have the mindset that you're making the team," he insisted. "If I was going in knowing that I'm not going to make the team, then why even go? I'm realistic about what they have in mind for me, but that doesn't mean I don't do everything I can to show them what I can do.

"I had a really good summer this year. I put on some strength, matured a little bit. I'm just really excited to get to camp and have them compare me to Markstrom and Nilsson as well."

Asked how he would cope if management told him he won't get his NHL chance until the 2019-20 season, Demko said: "My first response would be to tell them they're wrong. It doesn't matter what people say. There are 1,000 guys on the internet telling me I'm not very good and I'm probably going to be a flop. Everyone has their opinion."

"I think everything is a time of opportunity. (Montreal Canadiens star) Carey Price could be traded tomorrow. It's a crazy game; you never know. Every year I want to go to camp. I want to do well. I want to get to

the NHL as quickly as possible. I see every camp as an opportunity to try to prove myself a little bit."

He wasn't able to prove much in Penticton, although he did win his Friday start, making 18 saves in a 4-2 win against the Winnipeg Jets.

On Monday, Michael Garteig of the East Coast League was the sharpest Canucks goaltender. He was beaten twice on 13 shots in relief of Demko, but made a handful of difficult saves while the Canucks rallied from a two-goal, third-period deficit to force overtime.

Interestingly, it was 18-year-old, third-round draft pick Michael DiPietro who was given the start ahead of Garteig on Sunday, when the Canucks were dumped 6-2 by the Calgary Flames.

Just as the Canucks like the idea of having Demko pushing up from the AHL to put some pressure on Markstrom and Nilsson, Benning drafted DiPietro in June so the organization would have another top goaltending prospect in the pipeline behind Demko.

Granted, there are three and a half years between the double-Ds, so Demko and DiPietro are not exactly competing with each other. DiPietro, an athletic but slightly undersized goalie who won the Memorial Cup with the Windsor Spitfires, will soon return to the Ontario League and is expected to compete in December for a spot on Canada's world junior team.

The last time the Canucks had a goaltending prospect as sparkling as Demko, Cory Schneider spent three full seasons in the AHL before making the Canucks.

Two years later, Schneider dislodged Roberto Luongo as starter, prompting Luongo's trade request and one of the great melodramas in Canuck history. Oddly, the saga ended not with the trade of Luongo but the earlier and still unexplained 2013 draft-day dealing of Schneider to the New Jersey Devils for Bo Horvat.

A year later, after Benning replaced Mike Gillis as general manager, the Canucks selected Demko 36th overall and have been grooming him since.

This is only Year 2 of the Demko Project in the AHL. He salvaged an erratic rookie season last February, allowing seven goals during a seven-game stretch while posting a .965 save percentage. The turnaround came after a late-night call from Canucks goaltending coach Dan Cloutier to encourage him.

Demko had lost four straight starts and was floundering for the first time since he went to the United States Hockey League as a 15-year-old backup. He finished his Utica season with a 2.68 goals-against average and .907 save percentage in 45 games.

"I would say that was definitely the lowest I've been (in hockey)," Demko recalled. "Honestly, it was all mental. Clouts just called me and said: 'You're good enough to play at this level. You've just got to stop thinking about certain things.' I was just overthinking a ton. I wanted to play a perfect game.

"It was a really unrealistic mindset to have."

So, too, is the idea that Demko could make the Canucks opening-night lineup in October. But for him, the alternatives are unbearable. This is the only mindset he can live with. And he may need to co-exist with it for a while.

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1073498 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Green on Virtanen: Time in AHL a 'great learning situation'

Josh Beneteau

September 12, 2017, 12:15 AM

There are few prospects more polarizing in the NHL than Vancouver's Jake Virtanen.



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Whatever your opinion, what'll matter to Virtanen is that of his coach. And Travis Green sounds pretty confident that Virtanen can still grow into a solid NHL player.

"Some people think being sent down to the AHL is a big demotion but I think it was a great learning situation for him," Green said in an appearance on The Playbook on Sportsnet 650. "I thought the year was good for him."

Virtanen, the sixth-overall pick in 2014, appeared in 55 games for the Canucks during in the 2015-16 season as an 19-year-old. But after only 10 games last year, he was demoted to the Comets. He finished the year in the AHL, scoring nine goals and 19 points in 65 games while unknowingly auditioning for the new Canucks head coach, who was the boss in Utica at the time.

While the points don't jump off the page, Green says he thought Virtanen was "snake bit" and could have scored 20 goals in the AHL.

"But for me it wasn't about whether he was going to score or not score," Green added. "It was about what he learned about himself and how he had to play the game."

Green says the pressure that comes with being demoted gave Virtanen a chance to learn more about himself as a player.

"A lot of young guys have it easy and at some point in your career you always go through adversity," Green said. "And to go through adversity, which I thought he did down there a little bit, it's good for players."

Still, if Virtanen does begin the season with the Canucks, it will be because he earned the spot. Green doesn't believe in slotting guys into a particular position. Instead, Green has told Virtanen that his goal should simply be to become a regular NHL player, whether it's as a scorer or a checker.

"For me it's just make the NHL and be a part of a team that wins. Make yourself into an everyday NHL player that has a long career," Green said. "I think that should be his goal right now. I don't think we need to predict whether he's going to be in the top six or bottom six."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 09.12.2017

1073499 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Undersized NHL prospects face uphill, yet conquerable battle

Mark Spector

September 11, 2017, 4:59 PM

PENTICTON, B.C. — There wasn't only a time when a National Hockey League general manager would never have considered drafting a Kailer Yamamoto, Matthew Phillips or Skyler McKenzie, but it was even worse than that. Any scout who suggested the possibility might be looking for work.

"If you brought a kid that size to camp, you'd better have your resume ready," one scout said Monday. "It would be, 'Who brought this kid?' And every scout would say, 'Not me!'"

Yamamoto is five-foot-eight and 155 pounds. He was drafted 22nd overall by Edmonton last spring.

The Winnipeg Jets spent a seventh-round pick on McKenzie, an 84-point WHLer who is listed as the same size as Yamamoto. Calgary spent a sixth-rounder on pint-sized Matthew Phillips, who goes at five-foot-six, 141 pounds.

Ten years ago, "We wouldn't even have considered it," said Flames vice president of hockey operations Don Maloney, a former GM of the Year who has run teams in Arizona and New York (Islanders).

"It's partly the rule change, the speed of the game... and Phillips may be diminutive, but his skill and compete level, his skating, is excellent," Maloney said prior to the Flames' final game at the Penticton Young Stars tournament. "He's an accomplished player in junior. We've got to

give him a chance at the next level. Yamamoto is 155 pounds soaking wet, but talk about dynamic, quickness and hockey sense. There is room for those players now."

Maloney's Flames slumbered through their final game here at the Young Stars Rookie Tournament, losing 4-1 to the Jets while being outshot 35-10. Both teams finished the annual tourney at 1-2.

While former Flame Theoren Fleury was once the template against which every tiny player was judged, today that player is Calgary's Johnny Gaudreau. On the sliding scale that exists between size and skill, Gaudreau is very small yet mega-skilled.

As for Yamamoto, "He might even be smaller than Gaudreau," said Oilers GM Peter Chiarelli. "But his speed testing was the best on this team in a while."

One thing Chiarelli knows: Small and "perimeter players" don't work for him. They have to be able to get the puck by themselves, not just wait for others to do the dirty work. Another of Chiarelli's tenets: He can house a small player or (maybe) two on his roster, but the team has to have enough size elsewhere to afford that option.

"Yes, it does," he said. "For me, when you look at a small player, with Kailer, he's a sturdy player. He's an aggressive player who uses the body. He's not a peripheral player. That has to enter the equation, if these (smaller players) are to succeed."

What changed to allow teams to dabble in the diminutive?

"The rule changes," said Flames president of hockey operations Brian Burke, a guy who never would have drafted small when he was building "truculent" teams in Anaheim and Toronto. "Eliminating the (obstruction) has given the small player some room now, and they've eliminated some of the big hits that we wanted out of the game. They've cut fighting back substantially, and they're not the liability they once were."

"The evolution," Chiarelli agreed, "has allowed us to open our eyes to these kind of players."

At this rookie tournament, Yamamoto has been a cut above his peers, as a No. 22-overall pick should be. He's quick, makes plays, and much happens when he's on the ice. McKenzie and Phillips were less impressive, according to scouts we canvassed, but the journey has only begun.

There are certain things that these bantamweights will have bring to the table if they are to make the next step. Some are non-negotiable.

"When their skating is average, they have no chance," Maloney said. "And their instincts for the game have to be not good, but to an elite level for the smaller player to advance. You have to have elite hockey sense."

"In the NHL, everyone can skate. That'll be Phillips' big challenge: Can he be effective when everyone is big and strong, and can skate close to the way he can skate?"

"You have to be an elite skater, or be elite elusiveness-wise," Burke agreed. "You've got to have elite puck-handling skills. You don't necessarily have to have breakaway speed, but you'd better have elusiveness if you don't."

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Sportsnet.ca / Players' Tribune article doesn't extinguish Sedins' NHL future questions

Iain MacIntyre

September 11, 2017, 2:01 PM

For once, Daniel and Henrik Sedin have failed. Their heartfelt love letter to Vancouver and the Canucks in The Players' Tribune won't fully extinguish questions about their National Hockey League future.



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At least as long ago as the 2012 lockout, the Sedins have been telling me and others who asked that they intended to finish their careers as Canucks. They understood the life-cycle of a team and knew what was coming: losses, criticism and a difficult phase of rebuilding that they are only now experiencing as players after entering the NHL in 2000.

They were comfortable with themselves and their team. They were — and are — eager to mentor and set the example for players coming into the organization. They have even said, repeatedly, that they don't fear the time they are no longer front-line players on the Canucks because when they are usurped it will mean younger players have developed well enough under their watch to inherit the Sedins' coveted duties.

Canucks hockey-operations president Trevor Linden, who along with Markus Naslund, mentored and encouraged the Sedins early in their careers when a permanent return to Sweden was a definite possibility after the twins' rocky transition to the NHL was met not only with criticism but unvarnished disparagement.

Few star players in NHL history — remember, the Sedins each won a scoring title, Henrik won the Hart Trophy in 2010, Daniel the Ted Lindsay Award in 2011 — have been belittled on a personal level as much as the Sedins were and, occasionally, still are.

These guys are among the most honest, dedicated and genuine players that have ever cashed million-dollar paycheques. And despite the worst, low-brow, Euro-phobic disparagement of their character and nature, they are also among the toughest Canucks in history. Because for more than a decade they have willingly led their team night after night by going to the net undeterred by opponents' whose top priority is to batter and try to intimidate them.

If you stopped the Sedins, you stopped the Canucks. And for a 12-season span that ended in 2015, the Canucks won as much as any team in hockey, but not, as the Sedins readily admit and own, the Stanley Cup. They will live with that failure, and 2011 will haunt them forever.

Linden has been emphatic since replacing Mike Gillis in 2014 that the Sedins will not be traded.

So within the organization, there has never been much doubt about the Sedins finishing their NHL careers as Canucks.

The question has been only about timing and when the end will come for them as players.

The Sedins turn 37 on Sept. 26 and are in the final year of contracts paying them each \$7 million. Bo Horvat, the 22-year-old who just signed his own \$33-million, six-year contract, has surpassed the Sedins as the Canucks' best player.

This kind of natural attrition should continue this season. It's the nature of things.

Wingers Sven Baertschi and Markus Granlund continue to evolve, and whether they, too, pass the Sedins this season, the twins are likely to see less ice time and lesser roles.

But there is little argument that the Sedins remain, even after 17 years in the best hockey league in the world, NHL-calibre scorers. Their aggregate sum of 30 goals and 94 points last season — fewer points combined than each had when he won his Art Ross Trophy a few years ago — may have alarmed some, but still represents more single-season production individually than the majority of NHL players will ever generate.

News flash: the Sedins are declining with age. Aren't we all? But they can still play.

The tricky question is at what cost — both financially and in terms of diminished opportunity for younger players that the Sedins' presence in the lineup creates.

The Sedins' presence in the dressing room, the example in professionalism and character they've set for every player who has walked through the sliding front doors since the 2005 lockout, continues to be invaluable. That's what many who aren't around the team fail to understand.

But the hockey people, whether it's Linden and general manager Jim Benning or former GMs Gillis and Dave Nonis, get it. Managers and coaches cling to the Sedins because these players embody everything a professional hockey player should be.

So is this their final season? The Sedins' play will determine that. If they put up another 40-50 points apiece and re-sign for another year at, say, \$3 million each, they'll be bargain second-line scorers. And they'll still help the Canucks.

As they re-iterated in The Players' Tribune, they love the Canucks and Vancouver.

The place should just love them back as long as they are here, because there will never be others like them when they Sedins are gone.

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1073501 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Maple Leafs' Ron Hainsey breaks down new NHL rules

Luke Fox

September 11, 2017, 12:12 PM

Ron Hainsey is one of the five players serving on the NHL-NHLPA Competition Committee who pushed for a few minor rule changes to the game for 2017-18.

First and foremost was an adjustment to the much-derided offside challenge. In 2016-17, the first season in which the NHL instituted a poorly received offside challenge, coaches called for an offside review 117 times in the regular season. On 78 occasions, or 66.6 per cent of the time, the official's original call was upheld.

We asked the veteran Toronto Maple Leafs defenceman to give his take on the impact the new rules could have on the upcoming season.

• A failed offside challenge will now result in a two-minute minor penalty to the challenging bench and not just a lost timeout.

HAINSEY: "That's interesting. We always talk about it over the years on the Competition Committee. Before we went to the replay rule, everybody was like, 'Why wouldn't you do a replay? Do a replay right!' We kinda punted it two years in a row. Everybody in the media was calling for a better replay: 'Why wouldn't you do a replay?'"

"Well, sometimes you don't know what's going to happen once you install a rule. No one would've predicted that every quarter-inch blade off the ice at the blue line would [result in an offside challenge]. We kinda thought coaches would just throw it at the wall late in a game: 'Screw it. Let's just challenge it because it's worth it.'"

"Still, late in a game if you're losing, you're probably not going to worry about the two minutes [for a failed offside challenge]. I think this will ease the super-close offside, which wasn't the intent of the rule. The intent of the rule was the five-foot offside where everyone in the stands was like, 'Holy cow! How'd they miss that?' That penalty is going in to satisfy what was an unintended consequence."

• The punishment for a failed goaltender interference challenge, however, will remain the same — a lost timeout. There will be no penalty for delaying the game.

HAINSEY: "Goaltender interference is just tougher. It's such a judgment call. If you have it, it's never going to be perfect: Hey, looks like the goalie faked it! Did he or did he not? Is this a bump or is that a bump? It's a hard one. If you have a penalty for goalie interference, there are going to be calls you don't agree on. It's like balls and strikes—a judgment call."

• No time-out shall be granted following an icing for the team that committed the icing infraction.

HAINSEY: "It doesn't happen that often. Now you can't take a timeout after a five-on-five icing. I usually was of the mind to not take a timeout anyway; I'd rather win the faceoff and ice it again. There's ways to burn time. I mean, if you lose the draw dead-right to the guy on the blue line, then it can be a problem. That one, we'll see."

• Although not an official change to the rulebook, the Competition Committee also urged on-ice officials to be more diligent with calling



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slashes to the hands. Calgary's Johnny Gaudreau and Ottawa's Marc Methot were seriously injured by this nasty trend.

HAINSEY: "The increased focus on guys slashing on the hands is only really going to benefit the best players, which is probably what you want to do. You want them to have more freedom to carry the puck and not have to worry about their fingertips breaking in half.

"Get the refs to pay attention to that, call it early, and that tends to take things out of the game. You won't have guys slashed in the hands, hopefully."

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Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens' expectations still high despite depth issues

Eric Engels

September 11, 2017, 2:30 PM

LAVAL, Que. — The sun was shining and optimism was in the air for the Montreal Canadiens at the beautiful Laval-sur-le-lac golf course on Monday.

And then the questions came—about the team's need to fill the considerable void veteran defenceman Andrei Markov's departure created, about the roughly \$8 million in cap space general manager Marc Bergevin has available to him, and certainly about the team's lack of depth at the centre position.

For the sixth time in his tenure, the GM stepped to the podium at the team's annual golf tournament and was peppered in both of Quebec's official languages—particularly about that last item.

His answer was a familiar refrain.

"I'm aware of the reality of an NHL general manager; what's out there, what's available," said Bergevin. "Nobody will give you a top centreman. Nobody. Why would they do that? If ever it would happen, it would cost an arm and a leg, and everybody knows those are the toughest guys to get."

Montreal Canadiens general manager Marc Bergevin speaks to the media before the team's annual charity golf tournament. (Ryan Remiorz/CP)

And so, barring the unforeseeable, he stated that his intention is to have the Canadiens venture into the 2017-18 NHL season with what they have up the middle. There's Jonathan Drouin, a prolific offensive player who will be moved to the position after playing exclusively on the wing in his previous seasons at this level. There's Phillip Danault, who managed a career-best output at centre last season, scoring 40 points and proving to be quite reliable in his own end. There's Tomas Plekanec, who turns 35 in October and is coming off a career-low 28-point season. And there's Torrey Mitchell, who's never had more than 23 points in any of his 12 NHL seasons.

If you were hoping 23-year-old Alex Galchenyuk might get another crack at it after putting up 23 points in his first 24 games at the position last year before a knee injury derailed his season, you might be a little bit miffed at what Bergevin had to say about that possibility.

"Until further notice Alex will be playing wing," the GM said. "I've been here for six years, I've seen Alex every day, and at this time centreman is a tough position. It's demanding. I'm sure as we speak today Alex is not able to play that position every day. And I don't need 10 more tries, I know he's not."

It's nearly impossible to find another player on the team's depth chart who can step into the middle slot of one of the top two lines and have an impact, and it's almost just as difficult to find one who can bring what Markov brought to the team's blue line over the last 16 seasons.

"It's a big hole," said Bergevin. "Andrei was a very good player for us, but we added Mark Streit, which I think fills some of that role. We added

David Schlemko. I think by committee we should be able to fill that gap. Let's keep in mind we didn't lose a 25-year-old defenceman. All respect to Andrei, he's going to turn 39 in December. At some point we have to move forward."

The Canadiens will have to do so without puck-mover Nathan Beaulieu, who was traded to Buffalo in the summer. They'll have to manage without Alexei Emelin, who was exposed at the expansion draft and selected by the Vegas Golden Knights. And they'll move forward without stud prospect Mikhail Sergachev, who was traded to Tampa Bay to acquire Drouin.

Montreal Canadiens forward Jonathan Drouin speaks to the media before the team's annual charity golf tournament. (Ryan Remiorz/CP)

One player the Canadiens are banking on to help overcome Markov's loss is Karl Alzner, who signed a five-year, \$23.1 million contract on July 1. But it would be a dramatic stretch to think he'd be able to fill in adequately on the power play or drive the play offensively. He's only managed 117 points in 591 NHL games.

"We're such completely different players," said Alzner on Monday. "What I'd like to try to do is a bit of leadership. That's something that I can maybe help with. But in terms of ability of play, you get something different with me than you do with [Markov]."

You also get something different with the 39-year-old Streit, who couldn't crack Pittsburgh's lineup while three of the team's best defencemen were sidelined by injury en route to their second consecutive Stanley Cup win last spring. You surely get something different with Schlemko, who was acquired from Vegas in June and has never really sustained a role as a top-four defenceman in previous seasons with the San Jose Sharks, Calgary Flames, Dallas Stars, New Jersey Devils and Arizona Coyotes. Ditto for Joe Morrow, who signed as an unrestricted free agent over the summer after getting his feet wet in the league with the Boston Bruins.

Offensive defenceman Jakub Jerabek, who signed with Montreal out of the KHL, will have a chance to show what he can do in training camp. So will 26-year-old Eric Gelinas, who's arriving on a tryout after two disappointing seasons in Colorado. But it's hard to imagine either player can jump right in and play at the level Markov provided.

Tape II Tape

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

In spite of the issues at centre and on defence, the bar remains in the same place.

"The expectations are to make the playoffs and to go as far as we can once we do," said team owner Geoff Molson.

You get the sense meeting those expectations is going to depend a lot on how Molson's money gets spent between now and the trade deadline in late February.

"It's a nice asset to have," said Bergevin of the remaining cap space, which he admitted he's inclined to hold onto if nothing changes between now and the beginning of the season.

"At this point there's not much available," he said.

Nonetheless, Bergevin and the Canadiens are excited about what they currently have in place.

"Internally we have a healthy competition and we have a lot of NHL defencemen and we have some young forwards who are trying to establish themselves as NHL players," the GM said. "We have eight preseason games and [head coach] Claude [Julien] will make a lot of experiments."

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1073503 Websites

TSN.CA / Young Stars: Parting thoughts from Penticton



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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By Jeff Paterson

PENTICTON, BC – With their third game in less than 72 hours, the Vancouver Canucks wrapped up the 2017 Young Stars tournament here on Monday afternoon. It's a whirlwind weekend with players at different stages of their development thrown together with just one practice and the end result is predictable. The hockey isn't great and ultimately very little is determined about the futures of the prospects on display. Sure, there were some solid individual efforts in the team's 4-2 win over Winnipeg to start the proceedings on Friday night, but that was the best the team looked. The Canucks finished the weekend with losses to both Calgary and Edmonton and on an individual level no one in the prospect pool blew the doors off the South Okanagan Events Centre.

Griffen Molino was probably the best of the Canucks bunch. And that shouldn't come as a huge surprise. I wrote about Molino prior to the tournament. With five National Hockey League games under his belt late last season, he came to Penticton as the oldest skater on the Canucks roster and with expectations that he should stand out. His exceptional speed sets him apart and it was on display in each of the games he dressed for. He showed finish, too, scoring a power play goal in Friday's 4-2 victory over Winnipeg. On Sunday afternoon used his acceleration to beat his man wide, cut hard to the net and nearly deposit a puck behind the Calgary goaltender. Monday was not his best game of the three he dressed for.

Jonah Gadjovich led the team in scoring with two goals and two assists over the three games and the big second rounder came very much as advertised. He used his size effectively and was involved physically. He had a great chance to score the overtime winner on Monday afternoon, but couldn't pull the trigger. The fact he was around the puck and around the net for much of the weekend provided a glimpse of what caught the attention of scouts. His goal came on Monday came from in tight on a 5-on-3 power play a spot from which he can likely make a pretty good living as a professional hockey player.

Brock Boeser was among the better Canucks here this weekend. No, the goal scorer didn't score any goals. But he came close, ringing pucks off the post in each of the two games he dressed for (he sat out Monday's finale). His big-league shot and release was on full display Friday when he held onto the puck on a two-on-one and from 20 feet out snapped one past the netminder and rattled the puck off the crossbar. Known primarily as a finisher, Boeser also showed playmaking skills at this level on a number of occasions, drawing defenders to him and creating space which he used effectively to set up teammates. As one of the leaders of the young Canucks, Boeser was used in all situations including as a penalty killer. There were no issues with Boeser's performance in his two outings this weekend. And now it's on to main camp where he will have the chance to flourish with better players.

Olli Juolevi saved his best for last – granted the bar had been lowered with his first two outings. The 2016 fifth-overall pick had a decent tournament on the offensive side of centre, but the concern came in his own zone where he looked tentative and was caught flat footed more than you would like to see from a prized prospect. Monday, he was reunited with Jalen Chatfield, who sat out Sunday's loss to Calgary, and together they formed a solid pairing that rarely ran into problems in their own zone. Juolevi needs to continue to improve and the hope is he can use Monday's solid performance as a springboard to a successful main camp.

For the most part, Thatcher Demko did what was expected of him. He stopped 18 of 20 shots in his tournament opener on Friday night and returned to the net Monday afternoon by stopping 12 of 15 shots in 40 minutes of work. He's a big goalie who looks the part of a future NHL'er. He exudes confidence and performed reasonably well in a tournament where getting a read on opponents can be difficult and the play isn't nearly as crisp as the action he will see in the weeks ahead as he moves on to main camp and then into the NHL exhibition season. With the Canucks expected to take just two goalies (Jacob Markstrom and Anders Nilsson) to China, Demko should get plenty of split-squad opportunities in games while the traveling party is overseas. Penticton was a chance to get some game action under his belt, so in that sense it was mission accomplished here and he looks ready for the next step in the process.

After a reasonably strong tournament opener against Winnipeg in which Guillaume Brisebois wore an alternate captain's 'A', the 2015 third-round draft pick struggled mightily on Saturday afternoon against Calgary. He took a double-minor for high sticking and watched as the Flames cashed

in while he was in the box. When he was on the ice, he seemed to struggle with reads and reactions for much of the afternoon. Although singled out by Canucks assistant General Manager John Weisbrod as a standout here this weekend, Brisebois will need to show more at main camp.

Along with Gadjovich, fellow second-round selection Kole Lind showed well as an 18-year-old. The Kelowna Rocket winger impressed with a goal and two assists in Friday's victory over the Jets. He admitted to being nervous prior to pulling on a Canucks jersey in game action for the first time, but those nerves quickly subsided and he didn't look out of place at this level although he was quieter as the tournament progressed. Still there were plenty of examples of his hockey smarts on display and he didn't seem to shy away from high traffic areas.

Jalen Chatfield had a strong start to the weekend, partnering with Juolevi on the Canucks' defence. He scored early in Friday's tournament opener, but later was forced to leave the game for a short while after taking a high, hard hit on the end boards. He did not dress for the second game on Sunday and was fairly quiet in his return to the line-up on Monday afternoon. Still, he was among the Canucks' better defencemen over the course of the weekend. The free agent from the Memorial Cup champion Windsor Spitfires played a controlled game here and is an intriguing prospect as he launches his pro career. He is likely to see game action in the pre-season and that will provide a better read on his readiness to play at the next level.

Odds and ends: Zack MacEwen, before being injured against Calgary, was starting to assert himself in this tournament. The big centre signed as a free agent out of Gatineau late last season was noticeable on almost every shift. He is listed as day-to-day with an upper body injury and will have to wait for medical clearance to join the group at main camp.

Brett McKenzie excelled in the face-off circle, winning draws that led directly to goals in each of the Canucks' first two games. The seventh-round pick in 2016 saw his offensive numbers increase in each of his four years in North Bay and looks ready to test himself at the next level. He had three helpers in three games here.

Michael Carcone scored both Canucks goals on Monday afternoon – his second likely the goal of the tournament as he went coast to coast down the right wing boards and cut hard to the slot using the traffic in front as a screen before depositing the puck in the net. The 21-year-old also got into a scrap in Friday's tournament opener. He played 61 games in Utica last season – his first as a professional. His performance in Penticton likely left an impression on Comets new head coach Trent Cull who worked the Canucks bench here this weekend.

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1073504 Websites

TSN.CA / Griffen Molino: The Forgotten Prospect

By Jeff Paterson

PENTICTON -- When it comes to the hierarchy of Vancouver Canucks prospects in Penticton for this weekend's Young Stars tournament, there are the big three – Brock Boeser, Olli Juolevi and Thatcher Demko – and everyone else falls into place behind them. Griffen Molino plans to do everything in his power to expand that group to four by the time Monday evening rolls around and the Canucks move on to main camp.

The speedy winger got into five National Hockey League games late last season after signing with the Canucks as a free agent following his second season at Western Michigan University. Like Boeser, he joins a select group that has skated in the NHL before making his Young Stars debut. At 23, Molino is the oldest skater on the Canucks Young Stars roster (only goalie Michael Garteig is older) and the Trenton, Michigan native hopes that experience combined with his above-average mobility helps set him apart from the crowd in a tournament like this one.

"I know it's going to be competitive, but I worked hard in the summer to come in here to be one of the best players in this room and in this showcase," the personable Molino said after Thursday's first on-ice



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session. "It's something I've been looking forward to. As far as expectations go, I don't think it's anything specific but I want to leave every game and leave the weekend knowing that I put my best foot forward going into training camp."

The six footer who weighed in at 185 pounds prior to camp gets his first chance to shine tonight against Winnipeg's prospects. The Canuck hopefuls play Calgary on Sunday afternoon and finish the event with a matinee Monday against Edmonton.

But when speed is your calling card, what better way to test yourself than by opening against a team called the Jets?

"It's easy to get caught up and try to do things that aren't part of your game and I think sticking to what I'm best at and what got me there in the first place is probably going to be my best route to success," Molino says of playing an up tempo game. "I know the season was winding down by the time I got there (to the NHL), but I think it was evident that the intensity and the speed and the pace of play was something I can handle and something I can keep up with. It was great to get a little taste because I know that I can make it. And that was a big thing for me."

It was also important for the Canucks organization to see Molino test himself in the NHL after scoring 15 goals and registering 33 points in 40 NCAA games last season. Ryan Johnson, the Canucks Director of Player Development who added the title of General Manager of the American Hockey League's Utica Comets to his job description in July, believes strongly that Molino has a great chance to shine this weekend.

With more than 700 NHL games on his resume, Johnson has been around the game long enough to recognize when he sees something exceptional. He believes Molino's skating falls into that category.

"With his speed, it's a game changer," Johnson said after Thursday's practice. "He not only can skate, he's at another level. I think for Griffen, it's the little details – the stops and starting – that you can maybe get away with at college. And the down low compete that is such a part of the NHL. It's not that he's not willing to compete; these are just things that through experience you have to learn as defensemen and players are bigger and stronger. He's such a smart kid and a dialed-in kid, he's going to get it quick. He's got the north-south figured out, now it's just about learning those small-area skills."

Johnson wants to see Molino challenge defensemen with his speed this weekend. In full flight, he has the ability to back defenders off which should create space for him to create plays offensively. He also wants to see Molino get involved physically.

"I'd rather a guy be over-aggressive and make mistakes and learn from it than what you see from a lot of players who struggle in this tournament and that's they start thinking and stop moving their feet and then they go through three games just coasting around watching things around them," he explains. "I've encouraged all of our players to be aggressive, to put themselves in battle situations and I know Griffen is going to do that. I've seen a lot of very, very good hockey players come to this tournament and be average. We want players to learn from Game 1 to Game 3 here and improve as they go on and figure out some of the little things at this level that they'll carry on through main camp."

So the hockey season begins tonight for Molino and this weekend's tournament is the first step along the path to his first full campaign as a professional. He's had a glimpse of the good life in the NHL and wants more of that, but also must realize with the depth moves the Canucks made over the summer, that he'll be in tough to earn a roster spot.

It doesn't change his focus at Young Stars or beyond, but he's also realistic about where this season is likely to start.

"I put a lot of work in this summer with one goal in mind and that was to make the big club," he says. "Obviously there are other options on the table for me and it's not every time that someone jumps right from NCAA to the big league, but that's what I've had my mind on. If I need to spend some time in the minors or get some seasoning under my belt, that's what has to happen and I'm going to make the most of that opportunity to get back on the big club."

That may take a while to happen. Then again, Griffen Molino is all about speed so perhaps it shouldn't come as a surprise he believes he'll back with the Canucks sooner than some might anticipate.

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1073505 Websites

TSN.CA / Sedins committed, but are they still effective?

By Matt Sekeres

By all rights, this should be the Sedin twins' final season as Vancouver Canucks.

There were tones of that in a sincere letter the twins co-authored in The Players' Tribune, but there were also several references to a unclear future beyond this season, including this joke (?) from Daniel Sedin:

"Who knows, we might have a few more years left in us. Maybe we need to speak with Jagr."

The Sedins, who turn 37 on Sept. 26, are famously the two best conditioned Canucks year-in, year-out, and the letter shed light on their regiment.

A YVR-to-North-Vancouver bike ride before the Grouse Grind? Ridiculous. That's the stuff of Ironman triathletes.

But here's the rub, as much as their commitment remains as strong as ever, their effectiveness does not.

That was painfully evident last year when the twins did not have the puck, particularly when it was a transition opportunity for the other guys. Speed has never been their game, but they simply didn't have the wheels to catch up. In three-on-three overtime, it was even more pronounced.

Heck, even puck retrieval in small areas was a problem, and that is going to affect their linemate and new head coach Travis Green's lineup options this season. More on that later.

But for now, Henrik and Daniel enter the 2017-18 season gobbling up \$14 million (all figures U.S.) in cap space, and presumably second-line minutes behind Bo Horvat's trio.

They won't be trade-deadline fodder, a point they've made crystal clear no matter how many mistaken Canucks fans think a Sedins trade could jumpstart the club's rebuild. They will only play for the Canucks, and by season's end, assuming he stays healthy, Daniel will join his brother as the only 1,000-point player in franchise history.

Going forward, the questions are: whether they want to continue their careers beyond this season? And whether Canucks management succumbs to sentimentality?

Because while no two players deserve an ending of their choosing more than the twins, the Canucks cannot afford to muddle their rebuild for the sake of two aging players.

President Trevor Linden and general manager Jim Benning bowed their collective necks in contract negotiations this summer, agreeing to extend restricted free-agent defenceman Erik Gudbranson by just one season; and taking most of the summer to get Horvat done, while refusing to go to the maximum eight-year extension. They should keep that up with the Sedins, even if the twins aren't ready to say this is their swan song.

"We'll see," Daniel said Monday about their future. "We're going to have a good season this year, work extremely hard, and then we'll see what happens after that."

Canucks management cannot cave to giving the twins an ending beyond this season. They've earned roughly \$140 million combined from the Canucks in their careers, and while the organization owes them thanks, praise and two banners in the rafters with Nos. 33 and 22, it does not owe them another year in blue and green.

Already this season, keeping the twins will complicate the job of Green. Because of their defensive deficiencies, the new coach can't use just any right winger by the twins side. And that will have a trickle down effect to the rest of the lineup.

Markus Granlund, with whom they had some success last year, and fellow Swede Loui Eriksson make the most sense. Both can take care of their own end and win back pucks.



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But what does that mean for the rest of the lineup? Does it preclude Granlund from taking some turns at centre? Does it prevent Thomas Vanek and rookie Brock Boeser, two natural goal-scorers, from playing with the twins at even strength and boosting their point potential? And, of course, only being able to use certain kinds of right wingers with the twins will determine who plays on the other three lines.

Henrik Sedin had 50 points last year. Daniel had 44. They can still be strong power-play performers, and they might just be able to improve on that this season with good health and better luck. They are future Hall-of-Fame inductees.

But it behooves the Canucks to make a painful decision sooner rather than later, while still doing right by the twins. They wouldn't want to repeat the mistake the Arizona Coyotes made with franchise legend Shane Doan, by not being clear, and waiting too long.

The Canucks should let the twins know that they can no longer commit big dollars or minutes beyond this season. That the rebuild has to go forward without them, giving that this is the third successive year of the bring-the-kids-along thing. That's enough.

And they should give their fans the same clarity, letting them know — unequivocally — that the forthcoming season is a farewell tour for the two best players (and citizens) the franchise has ever known. It might just help sagging attendance at Rogers Arena as a happy byproduct. It might just give a difficult season meaning.

For two guys who have always put team before individual, here's betting the twins can get behind that. Difficult as it might be hear, or say.

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1073506 Websites

TSN.CA / Karlsson might not return until November

By Ian Mendes

Erik Karlsson stood in front of reporters on Monday afternoon wearing a pair of sandals that gave everyone a clear view of his surgically repaired left foot.

The Senators captain admitted he's currently forced to wear the open-toed footwear because the scar on his foot keeps opening up when he wears shoes. That means Karlsson isn't anywhere close to putting on a pair of skates and hitting the ice with his teammates when training camp opens later this week.

While Karlsson left the hockey world in awe when he returned months ahead of schedule from a serious Achilles injury in 2013, he says this time around he's going to take a more cautious approach with his rehabilitation. The perennial Norris Trophy candidate admitted he might have to miss the first month of the season to make sure he's fully healthy.

"I'm going to make sure this is something that is not going to affect me moving forward in my career," Karlsson said. "Whenever I'm 100 per cent I'm going to come back and play — whether that is in October or November. For me, it's not going to make a difference. When I do decide to come back it's going to be 100 per cent and it's not going to be an injury I'm going to have to battle with for the next two or three years."

Expectations for Sens higher after 'major step forward'

The Senators were a goal away from knocking off the defending Stanley Cup champions and moving on to the Stanley Cup finals, but ultimately fell in double overtime. While the memories are still fresh, Bobby Ryan and Craig Anderson know it's nothing to dwell on, but to use as motivation.

If Karlsson does not return until early November, there is a chance he could miss close to 15 regular-season games. The Senators play 12 games in October and then have a long break in early November leading into a home-and-home series against the Colorado Avalanche in Stockholm. Those two contests represent the club's 15th and 16th games of the campaign and because they are being staged in his home country, they would clearly be a target for Karlsson's return.

Senators general manager Pierre Dorion had a phone conversation with Karlsson on Monday morning and the captain informed him that he likely wouldn't be ready to skate for another two or three weeks.

"That obviously puts the start of the season in jeopardy for him," admitted Dorion. But we all know Erik is special. We have the assets on the back end — and no one can replace Erik — but if he's out for a week or two or three, we'll be fine."

Karlsson underwent surgery to repair torn tendons in his left foot on June 14 in Charlotte. He required crutches to move around following the procedure and was told to stay away from most activities for a period of three months to allow his new tendon to settle.

Because of the surgeon's original prognosis — that Karlsson would be able to return to physical activities by mid-September — the star defenceman isn't too concerned that he could miss the first few weeks of the season.

"It's progressing. Overall I'm not too worried with where I'm at or how it's looking right now," said Karlsson. "Everything is going as expected."

Karlsson said that once he starts skating — ideally later this month — it will still take him some time to get adjusted to the sensation of having an artificial tendon in his foot.

"It's a weird feeling. It's never going to feel like it did before. That's going to be my new normal," said Karlsson.

Karlsson later joked, "I can safely say my basketball career is over."

Senators' fans, of course, are more interested in Karlsson resuming his hockey career and picking up where he left off last spring as he led the Senators to the Eastern Conference Final. Karlsson's individual performance was so impressive that he garnered a vote for the Conn Smythe trophy — even though the Senators didn't reach the Stanley Cup Final.

The fear for most Senators fans is that Karlsson will be a watered-down version of himself when he returns to game action this fall. Following the Achilles injury in 2013, it took a good 18 months for Karlsson to really find his old skating stride and his Norris Trophy form.

But the 27-year-old cautions against making any comparisons to his previous catastrophic injury.

"It probably took me a few years to feel really good from the Achilles injury and this is something completely different," he said. "It doesn't really have any comparisons."

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1073507 Websites

TSN.CA / Canucks' power play struggles persist

By Travis Yost

One of the areas that really plagued the Vancouver Canucks last season — and will surely be a targeted improvement area for new head coach Travis Green — was their power play.

In 2011, the last year Vancouver pushed to the Stanley Cup Final, the Canucks boasted one of the deadliest 5-on-4 units in the entire league — good enough that it was fair to compare it to other elite power-play units in Washington and San Jose. It was in large part driven by the magic of Daniel Sedin and Henrik Sedin, but the team also had a number of other specialists or supplemental types — think Ryan Kesler or Alex Burrows — who could shoulder some of the scoring burden.

But Vancouver has been on a rapid decline since then. We're talking about a unit that went from comfortably top-five to consistently in the cellar of the National Hockey League in goal production. The 2016-17 season was a particular low point as the Canucks generated just 4.45 goals per-60 minutes, which was 28th best in the league. Only the Islanders (4.41) and Avalanche (3.71) were worse. Median goal rates on



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the power play, as a point of reference, was about 6.6 goals per-60 minutes last year.

It's even more dire when you consider that power-play scoring is up a bit recently. Here's Vancouver's year-by-year results since 2010-11:

Last year was a disaster, but, outside of a brief run in 2014-15, it has been the norm in Vancouver. The Canucks have struggled to generate goals with the man advantage across hundreds of games. The 2016-17 campaign was just an exclamation point on a consistent downward trend.

The 2016-17 units were interesting. Vancouver was stretched thin on goal-scoring talent and so, after the Sedin twins, then head coach Willie Desjardins tried a lot of different things at both the forward and defence positions. Some of the names who earned extensive power-play minutes last year are particularly noteworthy.

Below, I've broken out Vancouver's regular power-play skaters from 2016-17, along with their production in those intervals (min. 50 minutes):

The goal-scoring numbers are obviously appalling. No individual skater on Vancouver had more than five goals on the power play. When you have goal-scoring rates this low, the usual suspect is that the team simply isn't generating a high enough volume of shots. Whether that's because they have issues with offensive zone entries, or over-passing, or poor zonal structure, or a combination of all of these is an important question to answer. But, the end result is still the same – not enough rubber on net.

The cool thing is we can prove this out. Below are the shot rates generated by Vancouver with each of these regular players on the ice, along with each individual player's rank against other league regulars on the power play. The rates, again, are pretty dire:

An average skater generates about 97 shots per 60 minutes on the power play, and high-end power-play types – think Wayne Simmonds, Ryan Getzlaf, Tyler Seguin, et al. – can comfortably clear 120 shots per-60 minutes. That's an important frame of reference here. Vancouver's two best playmakers in the Sedin twins only generated shots better than about 35 per cent of the players around the league. And only two guys – the defence-oriented Brandon Sutter, and the rarely used Phillip Larsen – were able to break the 50-per-cent mark. Multiple Canucks players, including Loui Eriksson, Markus Granlund, and Jayson Megna, were quite literally at the bottom of the league ranks.

If that weren't scary enough, look at how the Sedins have trended over time. They are on a consistent downward trend, not dissimilar to Vancouver's aggregated goal-scoring rates. When your best players are seeing such significant degradation in production, it becomes a very real concern:

The Sedins are being hampered by the fact they don't have the quality of help they once had. Talent around them is a substantial concern. But there's also a harsh reality of Vancouver's two best distributors turning 37 years of age this September.

The 2012-13 season kind of looks like an aberration based on the lockout-shortened season. If you smooth the data over the last seven years, it then looks like a duo that's consistently generated less every single year. Maybe that's age degradation. Maybe that's the fact that Vancouver hasn't done a great job of assembling talent around them. It's quite possibly both.

Whatever the case, the Vancouver power-play story remains something to keep an eye on for Green. This is a unit that sorely needs to start scoring goals, and last year's abysmal performance was one of the bigger reasons why the Canucks finished with just 69 points.

Expect to see a lot more of the minutes distributed to some of Vancouver's younger attackers, and expect to see Green experiment with a number of different lineups and looks.

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1073508 Websites

USA TODAY / NHL players survey: 21 of 31 say Quebec City should be next for expansion

Kevin Allen, USA TODAY Sports Published 3:39 p.m. ET Sept. 11, 2017 | Updated 8:20 p.m. ET Sept. 11, 2017

If the NHL decides to add a 32nd team, players would want it to be located in Quebec City, Quebec.

USA TODAY Sports polled 31 high-profile players at the NHL/NHL Players' Association media tour and 21 (67.7%) chose Quebec as the venue the league should next embrace.

Seattle finished second in the survey with nine votes, and Houston totaled one vote.

Previously Quebec had been the home to the NHL's Quebec Nordiques (1979-95) before the franchise was sold and moved to Colorado. The NHL economic scheme is far different today, and it is presumed a new Quebec franchise would have a much easier time being a financial success.

The lure of Seattle is that it would be a natural fit in a Western Conference that currently only has 15 teams after the addition of the expansion Vegas Golden Knights, who are set to play their first season. The Eastern Conference has 16 teams.

Other survey results:

► More than 90% of players polled said they believe that NHL players' right to compete in the Olympics should be included in the next collective bargaining agreement (CBA).

Twenty-eight of the 31 players vote "yes" on that question. One voted "no," and two were undecided. One of the undecideds said it would be dependent upon what players would have to give up to achieve Olympic participation.

► With NHL players unable to compete in the 2018 Olympics, players involved in the survey made Russia the slight favorite to win the gold in South Korea.

But our tally suggests players believe it is a wide open tournament. Only 12 (38.7%) chose Russia, 10 picked Canada and seven took the United States. Finland and Switzerland also received a vote.

► Players also made it clear that they believe there is parity in the NHL. They were asked to pick a team flying under the radar that could win the Stanley Cup, and they voted for 14 different teams.

The Stars were the top choice with five votes. The Columbus Blue Jackets, Edmonton Oilers and Toronto Maple Leafs had four votes each and Nashville Predators had three. The Carolina Hurricanes and Tampa Bay Lightning received two votes apiece, while the Boston Bruins, Ottawa Senators, Los Angeles Kings, San Jose Sharks, Minnesota Wild, Calgary Flames and Winnipeg Jets had vote each.

Players were not allowed to select their own team as the answer to this question.

The 31 players polled came from 28 different NHL teams.

USA TODAY LOADED: 09.12.2017

1073509 Websites

USA TODAY / Hurricane Irma: U.S. women's hockey team hunkers down, embraces 'team-bonding experience'

Kevin Allen, USA TODAY Sports Published 5:13 p.m. ET Sept. 11, 2017 | Updated 5:32 p.m. ET Sept. 11, 2017

The new motto of the U.S. women's national hockey squad could be that the team that rides out a hurricane together stays together.

U.S. forward Brianna Decker said after spending 22 1/2 hours hunkered down together in Wesley Chapel, Fla., to avoid Hurricane Irma, the Americans have a fresh understanding of the team concept.



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"Indirectly, it ended up being a great team-bonding experience," Decker said. "Hanging out together for that long, we still all got along and it showed a lot about our team."

The Americans, training in Florida for the 2018 Olympics, entered a secure area of Saddlebrook Resort at 10:30 a.m. Sunday and came out at 9 a.m. Monday with everyone safe.

Wesley Chapel is located 20 miles north of Tampa. Many from the Tampa area evacuated, including members of the Tampa Bay Lightning.

"I think unknown (aspect) of it made it daunting at the beginning of the week," USA forward Meghan Duggan said. "But it turned out to us having a giant sleepover in a very secure area."

USA Hockey director of women's hockey Reagan Carey said she was confident of the decision to keep the team sheltered in place because local authorities were recommending that people use Saddlebrook as an option for evacuees.

"We knew every detail of the building including how many steel trusses there were in the building and whether it was poured concrete," Carey said. "We were confident we were in a safe, secure area."

Duggan said she had no reservations about remaining in Florida. "As players, within our team culture, we talk about trusting in everything we do," Duggan said. "Trusting the process with regard to how we play. It's the same motto we followed in this. Reagan and the rest of our staff worked hard to communicate that we had a proper plan and that everyone was feeling good and that we were safe. We put a trust in that, and we were (safe). It all worked it as good as it could under the circumstances."

Carey said once she walked players through the plan to stay in the resort, and the safeguards that were in place, "they were ready to stick together."

"It wasn't scary at all," Decker said. "We had full protection where we were at. Most of us were pretty calm and relaxed. We played a lot of board games. It turned out well."

Decker estimated there were more than 450 other people with the U.S. team and staff members in a set-up that she described as a "building within a building."

Winds howled outside, in excess of 80 mph, according to weather reports, but Decker said the players couldn't hear anything inside the building.

"We were oblivious to it," Decker said. "Some of us took a peak (outside) every once in a while. We did try to check it out."

Decker said all they saw was rain and "aggressive winds."

"The biggest thing for us was that it was unknown to us," Decker said. "None of us had ever been through anything like this kind of weather. That was the only thing we were nervous about."

Players passed the time by playing board games, card games and cribbage.

"It turned out to be a time to get to know one another better, to bond, to have some friendly competition, just not in the same way we normally would," Carey said.

Carey said the Florida Hospital Center Ice, where the Americans train, suffered no damage. They will be practicing Tuesday morning.

Duggan said she was proud of how the U.S. players handled the situation. "It wasn't a great night of sleep for anyone," Duggan said. "We played a lot of games and had a lot of laughs. We made the best out of a situation that wasn't great."

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