



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • September 17, 2018

## NORTH STATE JOURNAL

### Hamilton, Ferland already proving themselves at Hurricanes camp

Defenseman shows off his shootout prowess, power forward shakes off scary collision with boards

By Cory Lavalette

RALEIGH — It will probably be two or three years before we know who won the blockbuster trade between Calgary and Carolina at June's NHL Draft. But Sunday, the Hurricanes learned a little about two of the three players they received from the Flames.

Forward Micheal Ferland and defenseman Dougie Hamilton represent two-thirds of the package Carolina received — along with defensive prospect Adam Fox — in sending former fifth overall picks Noah Hanifin and Elias Lindholm to western Canada to play with former coach Bill Peters — a swap the team hopes will lead to more goals and added toughness.

The duo brought a little of both on the third day of training camp.

Skating with the second of two groups of players, Hamilton showed off the scoring touch that helped him total 52 goals over the past four seasons.

Called on by coach Rod Brind'Amour to take a shootout attempt, Hamilton slid the puck under new goalie Petr Mrazek. The skaters celebrated, while the three goalies on the ice — Mrazek is sharing time in this grouping with prospects Callum Booth and Jeremy Helvig — took a lap.

When it came time for a second such contest, Brind'Amour, going with a make-it-you-take-it philosophy, again sent Hamilton out to face Mrazek. Same matchup, same result.

On a final attempt, Hamilton changed it up a bit — rather than sliding the puck under Mrazek, he snapped a wrist shot into the net on the blocker side.

"Oh man, you're going to make use him now," Brind'Amour said of Hamilton's shootout prowess. "Yeah, that was pretty good. That was fun."

Ferland, meanwhile, was brought to Carolina as much for his board-rattling checks as his ability to score in the dirty areas.

He did both Sunday on one sequence — perhaps not the way the Hurricanes would like him to.

On a drill that saw him score while driving the net, Ferland lost his edge and crashed into the boards at top speed, a collision that had team staff rushing to attend to the 26-year-old winger.

Ferland went to the bench under his own power and returned to the ice in short order, only to head back to the locker room from a brief time before he returned again.

After the on-ice practice, Ferland — whose build resembles a linebacker as much as a hockey player — said he just had the wind knocked out of him, and he then went to work out in the weight room with his teammates.

"I don't like seeing that on anybody, but especially him, a guy we're counting on a lot," Brind'Amour said. "We don't need to see more guys go down."

"He's also tough. So you ask him right away, 'You all right?' and he said, 'Yeah, yeah.' Some guys you just never know. He seems to be OK. ... I think we dodged one there."

The Hurricanes didn't avoid a long-term injury to Victor Rask, who the team announced Thursday would be out indefinitely after he cut his right hand slicing food in his kitchen. The wound to Rask's fourth and fifth fingers, which Brind'Amour said included damage to the tendons on the center's hand, required surgery and will keep Rask — who was seen bandaged from finger to forearm in the locker room — out indefinitely.

Brind'Amour gave more of a timetable on Rask's return following the practice.

"It's not going to be quick. It will be months, for sure," Brind'Amour said in clarifying Rask's status. "It's too bad. ... Everything said, it was a good surgery, so (he) should be healthy and ready to go at some point during the season, who knows (when)," Brind'Amour added. "It was a major surgery. That's why the recovery is what it is. It's going to be long."

Meanwhile, the team made its first roster moves in camp, sending forwards Luke Henman and Stelio Mattheos, and defenseman Brendan De Jong back to their junior clubs for the 2018-19 season.

The Hurricanes split squads will practice again Monday starting at 8:45 a.m.



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## Hurricanes organization will activate initiatives to assist those affected by storm

RALEIGH, N.C. — The Carolina Hurricanes will issue announcements "in the near future," that explain the organization's plans to support the immediate and long-term needs of those affected by Hurricane Florence, the NHL team said Friday in a statement.

"We are heartbroken watching the scenes of destruction caused by Hurricane Florence," said General Manager and President Don Waddell in the statement. "As an organization, the Hurricanes have always felt a special responsibility to assist those affected by devastation from

tropical storms, from Katrina and Sandy to Harvey and Matthew. As Florence passes, we will activate our resources to identify areas where we can best help to assist our neighbors in getting back on their feet and rebuilding.

In the meantime, we are keeping our friends in Wilmington, New Bern and all areas in Florence's path in our thoughts and prayers."

The Carolina Hurricanes moved their first practice up a day because of the storm Thursday.



## Canes Add Layers on Third Day of Camp

Canes work on 3-on-3, special teams before first cuts

by Michael Smith

Following a weather-induced day off on Saturday, the Carolina Hurricanes resumed training camp at PNC Arena early Sunday morning.

Here are five takeaways from the third day of Hurricanes training camp.

### Adding Layers

The Hurricanes introduced a few new wrinkles to practice today, including 3-on-3 and special teams work with assistant coach Dean Chynoweth. The Canes will continue to build on these concepts as they grow their foundation in the first days of training camp.

The exhibition season - more on that later - is the time when the coaching staff and front office will be looking for the players to execute on these concepts introduced.

Some players, like Sebastian Aho at one point today, have helped to reiterate to teammates what the coaching staff is looking for out of certain drills.

"He's been great. We stuck him with Andrei (Svechnikov) out there. Andrei needs a lot of guidance right now with the systems and stuff. We expected that," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Sebastian has been really good about being vocal, and you can tell he's real comfortable with it too, so that's good."

Through it all, Brind'Amour has been preaching speed and pace, something we noted on the first day of camp. Today, Team Grit was a bit slow getting to the boards after a whistle ended a drill, and Brind'Amour ensured his group was hustling: "That's inches! We need that."

### Hamilton Hot

Dougie Hamilton ranked tied for first in goals (17) among league defensemen just a season ago. Perhaps shootout specialist is next? Hamilton went a perfect 3-for-3 in shootouts between drills today.

"You're going to make me use him now," Brind'Amour joked. "That was pretty good."

Then, in 3-on-3 action - which didn't feature many goals in either session - Hamilton finished off a pass from Martin Necas for a goal. No. 19 had the hot stick today, and the Hurricanes will be hoping to see more of that in the regular season.

### Ferland Gives a Scare

Micheal Ferland took a spill into the end boards that both looked and sounded nasty. He was face down on the ice for a few seconds before getting to his feet under his own power and being evaluated on the bench. He was back on the ice for the following drill, but did spend a few moments in the room before reemerging for special teams work at the end of the session.

"Yeah, I don't like seeing that with anybody, but especially him, a guy we're counting on. We don't need to see more



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guys go down," Brind'Amour said. "He's also tough. You ask him right away, 'You all right?' He's like, 'Yeah, yeah.' Some guys you just never know. He seems to be OK. He's in there working out. I think we dodged one there."

Speaking of injuries, Brind'Amour touched a bit more on Victor Rask's right hand injury today, elaborating that the surgery was "major" and involved repairing tendons. The Swedish center is out indefinitely with an extended recovery ahead.

"It's not going to be quick. It will be months, for sure. It's too bad. I talked to him the other night after his surgery. It is what it is. It's tough, but he'll be back," Brind'Amour said. "He'll be healthy and ready to go at some point during the season."

## First Cuts of Camp

The Hurricanes made their first cuts of training camp on Sunday afternoon, assigning forwards Luke Henman and

## Canes Continue to Build Foundation in Camp

Day two of camp much like the first

by Michael Smith

Just 16 hours after hitting the ice for the first day of training camp, the Carolina Hurricanes were back at PNC Arena for two group skates on Friday morning.

Here are five takeaways from the second day of Hurricanes training camp.

### Picking Up Where They Left Off

The second day was much like the first. Team Grit was on the ice first, followed by Team Grind. Each group spent a hard-working hour moving through various drills, interspersed by shootouts and brief instruction. A skate wrapped up each session.

"I liked it. I kind of thought we'd have a little bit of a letdown, but we tried to make sure we emphasized that right away that we don't want to do that," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "I thought the guys were good and receptive to everything we were trying to do."

"It's been good so far. Good pace to both the skates. A little adjustment to the schedule, but it's been good," defenseman Trevor van Riemsdyk said. "Roddy has brought a ton of energy, and I think everybody just follows suit. All things considered, it's been a pretty good first couple of days."

The new head coach now has two practices under his belt, and the response from the room has been positive.

"Whenever he's speaking, he commands the room. Everyone is quiet, all eyes on him. He commands that type of respect. He's earned that over and over and over again," van Riemsdyk said. "He does a great job. He brings that energy and makes it fun to come to the rink. The skates have been great so far."

### Laying the Foundation

The early days of training camp are about building a foundation for the season to come. Brind'Amour and his

Stelio Mattheos and defenseman Brendan De Jong to their respective junior clubs. The team's training camp roster is now at 47 players.

The Canes will remain split into Team Grit and Team Grind, while game groups and non-game groups are coming soon ...

### Preseason Begins Soonordan Martinook

The Hurricanes will be back on the ice Monday morning beginning at 8:45 a.m. Then, it's a preseason gameday. The Canes will travel to Tampa Bay on Tuesday before hosting the Lightning on Wednesday in the first two match-ups of the six-game exhibition slate.

"You don't want to get too excited one way or another, good or bad, about practice," Brind'Amour said. "We'll see when we get into games. That's when it matters. That's when we'll decide who's making the team, their roles and everything."

coaching staff are layering various concepts they want to integrate in team's style of play.

There are questions. There are teaching moments. That's all a part of the process.

"They pick it up pretty quick. What I like is everyone is really receptive to what's going on. We don't expect everybody to get this stuff. Once we get into games, we're going to have way more mistakes. That's when you can really start teaching stuff because you'll have video," Brind'Amour said. "Right now, we're really just trying to throw our stuff out there. ... We're not too strict on anything. We'll build as we go."

Second-overall pick Andrei Svechnikov is one of those that isn't afraid to seek clarification. At one point during the skate today, alternate captain Justin Faulk helped to illustrate what Svechnikov's responsibility was on the ice.

"It's hard to really say what we've seen. We're not really putting them in situations ... you're certainly not making the team based on what we've done so far, but I do like their attitude about everything," Brind'Amour said of Svechnikov and Martin Necas. "Andrei after practice today just coming to me, [saying] I don't get this, or whatever. I appreciate that he's willing to admit that. A lot of guys will sit there and nod their head like they know what's going on, but they don't have a clue."

It's too early in training camp to categorize individual performances or identifying standouts; you can only glean so much from the first two days of practice drills. What is noticeable is the structure, pace and energy of the skates. That's going to be a common thread this season.

"That's the style we want to play, that aggressive style. You've got to be in good shape for that. [Brind'Amour] has brought that," van Riemsdyk said. "He wants to make them efficient practices where you're using your time smartly and wisely. When you're out there, you're hustling and moving. We've done a good job of taking those instructions and putting them on the ice."



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Line Combinations?

It's too early to read into potential line combinations, right?

"Yeah, 100 percent," Brind'Amour said.

There might be a couple forwards here or a defensive pair there that intrigues Brind'Amour and his coaching staff, but what's been utilized on the ice thus far in camp isn't exactly an indication of what we'll see on the Opening Night roster come Oct. 4. Plus, now there are even more question marks with the absence of Victor Rask.

"With the way the preseason games are set up, you have to play so many players, so it's tough to put lines together that you really want," Brind'Amour said. "Right now, it's just about getting the systems in and understanding that. The line combos, as we move on, will start to solidify a little bit."

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More Thoughts on Captain Williams

The Canes named Justin Williams team captain for the 2018-19 season, and I wrote about it at length on Thursday evening.

Today, we got some additional reaction. Firstly, be sure to listen to the latest episode of CanesCast, in which Hurricanes play-by-play man John Forslund gives his insights on the Williams' captaincy, plus more, such as the evolution of Brind'Amour from player to captain to head

coach. It's always great to chat with Forslund, and this interview (and entire podcast, really) is well worth your time.

And, here's van Riemsdyk on what Williams brings to the room as captain: "He's just a great guy. Last year, even though he didn't have a C on his jersey, he was a great leader. I think it's just something that comes naturally to him. I don't think he's going to necessarily change too much about himself. He's just a good guy. When he speaks, everyone listens. He's got an unbelievable resume of knowing how to get things done in big moments. That's something we all, I'm sure, admire, as well as his success and work ethic. We have a great locker room and great leaders from top to bottom. I think we've got an exciting group."

Off on Saturday

With Hurricane Florence making landfall and moving westward inland on Friday - the PNC Arena lights flickered a few times in the first group's skate - the Canes made the decision to cancel Saturday's training camp sessions in order to ensure the safety of players, coaches and staff.

"We told everyone that the number one priority is to be safe," Brind'Amour said on Thursday. "We want to make sure everyone is safe. That's first and foremost."

And, after two hard-working days on the ice, a day off isn't necessarily a bad thing.

"Actually, I'm looking forward to it. I've got a little more respect for the guys who have done this because of the mental thing," the first-year head coach said with a smile Friday. "I think it's good. We went hard for a couple of days, and now the guys get a little break. Then we'll crank up again."

## TriangleSportsNetwork

### Hamilton gives first impressions from Hurricanes training camp

Top-pairing defenseman knows situation he's in to help Carolina move forward

By Peter Koutroumpis

RALEIGH, N.C. – As part of the Carolina Hurricanes' first significant player-for-player deal in recent years, defenseman Dougie Hamilton has taken it all in and is ready to start anew.

As a player in a new city, finding the rink, the right door to go in, the little things to establish a comfortable routine, are details he has gotten out of the way.

Along with forward Micheal Ferland and prospect defenseman Adam Fox, Hamilton arrived in the Triangle from the Calgary Flames, all three part of a trade back in June that sent forward Elias Lindholm and defenseman Noah Hanifin out to Western Canada.

"Just trying to get comfortable as quick as you can," he said.

"The guys have been great. I knew a couple of guys coming in. Living in the same building as other guys (also) makes things a lot easier."

After putting in a week-plus of pre-camp conditioning at Raleigh Center Ice (RCI), Hamilton looked forward to a good first day of training camp on Thursday.

"It was great. I've been skating here informally for a week or so – it's great to get out there with the coaches and see how they are," Hamilton continued.

"It's good to get out with all the guys and get goin'. It's been great so far and I'm looking forward to a good camp."

Not only faced with new teammates, but also a new coaching staff led by first-year head coach Rod Brind'Amour, the 25-year-old blueliner had nothing but positives to say about making the transition onto the ice at PNC Arena a smooth one.

"The first thing you obviously notice when you look at him and his resume is he's been through everything," Hamilton said of Brind'Amour.



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"The respect level that the players have (for him) is through the roof, and hard not to really respect a guy like that – a Stanley Cup champion, a really good player. So, it's fun to be able to learn from a guy like that. Obviously, he works hard off the ice too. We're gonna follow him. He's going to set the tone, it's going to be a good tone, and we're gonna be there following."

Last season with the Flames, Hamilton scored a career-high 17 goals, tied for the most in the National Hockey League (NHL) by a defenseman.

To add to that, he ranked second among D-men in shots (270) and a career high in time-on-ice (TOI), logging an average of 21:32 minutes per game.

Respecting not only the coaching staff, but the organization that sought to get him to lead the back end offensively and defensively, Hamilton understands he'll be expected to carry a large load and hopes to enhance what he considers a talented young defensive corps of players.

"We're really deep. You look at all the D and every guy can play, play well, and play a lot," he pointed out.

However, as a six-year veteran playing on his third team since being drafted ninth overall in the 2011 NHL Draft by the Boston Bruins, Hamilton knows all too well that first appearances are great – but following through in becoming a successful team is the true litmus test.

He's a realist and knows that perception doesn't always translate into reality.

"As a comparison, we kinda had that in Calgary when I got traded there – a good D corps," Hamilton said.

"They were supposed to be one of the best. It didn't really work for us; we didn't turn out so good that year."

It's a situation he hopes will produce different results in Carolina.

"We're gonna have to make it work," he concluded.

"Right now, we're good on paper, and we gotta make it work on the ice."



## Williams Is the Hurricanes New Captain

By Mark Shiver

In what is a move that many expected last season, and viewed by many as a given this season, the Carolina Hurricanes and head coach Rod Brind'Amour have named Justin Williams as the team captain for the 2018-19 season. The team made the announcement mid-afternoon on Thursday. It was also announced that last year's co-captains Jordan Staal and Justin Faulk would serve as alternate captains.

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Justin Williams – Winner, Champion

Williams is a player who is much-loved by Hurricanes fans. He was a significant part of their 2006 Stanley Cup Finals victory, along with then-teammate Brind'Amour. Williams has shown himself to be a winner, even more, a champion on more than one occasion.

When he re-signed with the Hurricanes in mid-2017, the team's announcement recorded some of Williams' career: "He has added 94 points (36g, 58a) in 140 career playoff games, winning the Stanley Cup three times – 2006 with Carolina, and 2012 and 2014 with Los Angeles. Williams won the Conn Smythe Trophy as the most valuable player of the 2014 Stanley Cup playoffs, registering nine goals, 16 assists (25 points) and a league-leading plus-13 rating in 26 games for the Kings."

Of his three Stanley Cup wins, for Hurricanes fans, his first in 2006 is the most important. The team announced reminded

fans, "Williams played 265 regular-season games with the Hurricanes from 2004-2009 and ranks 10th in the team's North Carolina history in scoring with 201 points (81g, 120a). He scored seven goals and added 11 assists (18 points) in 25 games for the Hurricanes during the 2006 Stanley Cup playoffs, as the Hurricanes captured the first championship in franchise history."

Williams has earned the nickname "Mr. Game Seven" for game-seven heroics in the playoffs throughout his career. His goal in game seven of the Stanley Cup Finals in 2006 sealed the Hurricanes' win.

Justin Williams Ends Co-Captain Debacle

When the Hurricanes signed Williams last year it was assumed that he would be the team's captain. In the News & Observer, Luke DeCock wrote, "Williams was the obvious choice last season, only to be kneecapped by Peters' dopey co-captaincy, an idea so bad that the ostensibly demoted co-captains both agreed Thursday that it was a bad idea and they thought so all along." (from "Brind'Amour, on First Day, Sets Different tone — With Different Captain" – News & Observer – 9/12/18).

One of the criticisms former head coach Bill Peters received last season was for naming Staal and Faulk as co-captains of the Hurricanes. It was a lesson of what not to do to a team. It defies the natural order of leadership to have a two-headed captaincy. Of course, in the season prior to last season, Peters named four alternate captains and no captain so perhaps having two was better than having none. But, last



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season, Williams was everyone's obvious choice, except for Peters.

Did Staal and Faulk Like Being Co-Captains?

It is clear that the Peters regime will not be remembered fondly going forward. This is Brind'Amour's team and the past is in the rearview mirror. For example, in the DeCock quoted Staal and Faulk saying they were not thrilled with the co-captaincy. "I didn't love it," Jordan Staal said, and Justin Faulk said much the same thing.

However, I wrote in April that Staal told me at the end of season interviews with the team, "I think it worked fine this year. I don't think there were any issues. I think Faulker did a great job and hopefully, I did an okay job, too. It was no real issue, I guess."

Also, during those interviews, Faulk told me, "I think Jordan and I are comfortable with each other. I think obviously it's a weird situation. You don't really see it. The last guys to do it were Briere and Drury, I think in Buffalo. It's different, it's weird. I don't know if maybe you'll have to ask other guys what they think of it. Between the two of us, we get along obviously really well. We understand each other really well. We know what to expect from each other and what each other brings. I don't think that's taken away anything from us or changed our approach our day and how we carry ourselves in here."

Perhaps Staal and Faulk were being diplomatic in their answers in April as Peters was still the coach. They might feel a freedom to be more honest at this time in how they felt about the co-captaincy. All of which is moot. Williams is the captain and Staal and Faulk are the alternates.

Interestingly, Faulk being named an alternate might be a tacit signal that he is no longer being actively made available for a trade. Perhaps the team sees him as a longer-term asset — at least for this season — and has confirmed that by naming him an alternate.

Captain Williams' Impact

Brind'Amour and Williams are a lot alike. They are intense and fiercely competitive. His wearing of the "C" seems natural and feels right. A friend said to me, "Williams being the captain ought to be worth a few extra points." His fire showed last season as he held no punches after a loss to the Boston Bruins and declared that what he felt was "beyond anger." Maybe that fire will translate into a few more points in the standings.

At 36, Williams has already been to the pinnacle of his sport three times. He ultimately wants to lead these Hurricanes back to the Stanley Cup Finals, but first will have to get this group to share his passion. Brind'Amour will have to also inspire his team to reach higher and dig deeper than they have over the past nine years.



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## Hurricanes return three players to junior teams

Henman, De Jong and Mattheos will head back to their respective teams.

By Justin Lape

The first cuts have been made at Canes Camp. The Hurricanes announced Sunday that they have returned three players to their respective junior league teams. Luke Henman, Stelio Mattheos and Brendan De Jong will be returning to their junior clubs and the camp roster has now been trimmed to 47 players.

Henman was selected in the 4th round of the 2018 NHL Entry Draft. He'll return to Blainville of the QMJHL. Mattheos will be returning to Brandon of the OHL and De Jong will return to Portland of the Western Hockey League. None of

the three players returned was expected to make the roster in Raleigh or in Charlotte this year.

The Hurricanes press release is below:

RALEIGH, NC – Don Waddell, President and General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today announced that the team has assigned forwards Luke Henman (Blainville-Boisbriand – Quebec Major Junior Hockey League) and Stelio Mattheos (Brandon – Western Hockey League) as well as defenseman Brendan De Jong (Portland – Western Hockey League) to their respective junior teams.

The Hurricanes training camp roster now stands at 47 players.



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## Ranking all 31 NHL prospect pipelines

By Chris Peters

The beauty -- and perhaps the curse -- of ranking NHL prospect systems is the massive amount of fluctuation even just one year can cause. It has a lot to do with players reaching the NHL very quickly more regularly, with the rising talent and the affordable cap hits making too easy a combination for NHL teams to pass up.

When ranking teams' systems, there are a number of things I look at. First is the number of potential A-level prospects they have -- players with the best chance to play a significant role, be it as a top-six forward, top-four defenseman or starting goaltender. Next I look at that second tier, thinking of players who have at least a good shot of becoming everyday NHLers but project less comfortably as a major-impact prospect. Lastly, on teams that I view as close in the first two categories, overall prospect depth plays a big role.

Along with the rankings below, be sure to check out of the division-by-division pipeline reports for further team breakdowns.

### 1. Buffalo Sabres

Top prospect: Rasmus Dahlin, D

Having the No. 1 prospect in hockey with Dahlin and another top-five talent in Casey Mittelstadt gives the Sabres a head start on most other franchises, but there is also decent depth with potential NHL talent at every position. When a team goes into rebuild mode, this is the kind of prospect pool it'd hope to have.

### 2. Vancouver Canucks

Top prospect: Elias Pettersson, C/RW

The Canucks boast depth in their prospect pool, but it's also remarkable how many of those players are high-end talents. Pettersson and Quinn Hughes are potential cornerstone players for the post-Sedin Canucks, but then there's also some high-end upside in the second tier of their system.

### 3. Carolina Hurricanes

Top prospect: Andrei Svechnikov, RW

The strength of this system rests in the top two prospects with both Svechnikov and Martin Necas possessing the ability to transform Carolina's forward group. Throw in another "A" prospect in the form of recently acquired Adam Fox and a cadre of players who took big steps in the AHL last season, and you have a nice foundation to start this new era for Carolina.

### 4. St. Louis Blues

Top prospect: Robert Thomas, C

The Blues have been able to draft extremely well all while remaining competitive at the NHL level. The system is pulled up due to how well Thomas and Jordan Kyrkou have developed over the past season, with higher-end prospects such as Dominik Bokk, Klim Kostin and goaltender Ville Husso also near the top of a pretty deep group.

### 5. Detroit Red Wings

Top prospect: Filip Zadina, RW

A strong 2018 draft that saw Zadina, Joseph Veleno and Jonatan Berggren fall into Detroit's lap bolstered a prospect core that has taken dramatic steps forward in recent years. Michael Rasmussen is another forward the club can be excited about, while defenseman Filip Hronek may be ready to take the next step. This system is starting to look more like that of a team committed to rebuilding.

### 6. Ottawa Senators

Top prospect: Brady Tkachuk, LW

Adding the hard-nosed Tkachuk to a system that has a lot of higher-upside talents bolstered a deep forward pool that also includes Alex Formenton, Drake Batherson, Colin White and Logan Brown. Adding Josh Norris and Rudolfs Balcers in the Erik Karlsson trade didn't move the needle a ton, but there's no question the Sens have one of the deeper groups of prospects in the league right now.

### 7. Montreal Canadiens

Top prospect: Jesperi Kotkaniemi, C

The Canadiens have a lot riding on Kotkaniemi being their future No. 1 center. He's a quality prospect who could make a major impact if he reaches his full potential. The Habs made 11 picks in 2018 and recently landed former Vegas Golden Knights draft pick Nick Suzuki in a trade that made a significant impact on their system, which was previously led by quality prospects Ryan Poehling and Noah Juulsen.

### 8. New York Islanders

Top prospect: Oliver Wahlstrom, RW

The 2018 draft landed the Islanders a potential top-line scoring winger in Wahlstrom and defenseman Noah Dobson, who could be a top-pairing blueliner if he reaches his ceiling. The entire 2018 draft was pretty strong for the Isles, adding to already-established prospects such as sniper Kieffer Bellows and top goalie prospect Ilya Sorokin.

### 9. Philadelphia Flyers

Top prospect: Morgan Frost, C

With a deep group of prospects, the Flyers have quality at just about every position, including goaltender, where they



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boast No. 1 goalie prospect Carter Hart. Meanwhile, there are many quality forwards highlighted by Frost and Joel Farabee, who both could figure into the team's top six a little further down the line.

## 10. Vegas Golden Knights

Top prospect: Cody Glass, C

For only having two entry drafts and trading away one of their top prospects in Suzuki, the Golden Knights still have a system that most teams would covet. Glass has top-six center potential, Erik Brannstrom is an exciting offensive defenseman, and 2017 second-rounder Nicolas Hague scored 35 goals in the OHL from the blue line. Meanwhile, early returns on their mid-round picks over the past few years suggest they've done very well in building a prospect system from scratch.

## 11. Florida Panthers

Top prospect: Henrik Borgstrom, RW

The Panthers' system is not terribly deep at this point, but its top end is a major separating factor from other systems. Borgstrom is an exceptional talent, with Owen Tippett looking like a high-end goal scorer. Grigori Denisenko, Serron Noel and Aleks Heponiemi each possess big potential to grow into key contributors down the line.

## 12. New York Rangers

Top prospect: Filip Chytil, C

The Rangers have made it known they're in a transitional phase that looks more like a reset than a full-on rebuild, but they've been collecting draft picks and prospects over the past few years, and things are starting to really shape up for the team. Having Chytil, Lias Andersson and Vitali Kravtsov at the top of the pipeline is a huge plus, but there's also a lot of upside in K'Andre Miller, Nils Lundkvist, Brett Howden and Libor Hajek, plus a top goalie prospect in Igor Shestyorkin.

## 13. Los Angeles Kings

Top prospect: Gabriel Vilardi, C

The Kings have managed to pad their system well with highly-skilled playmaking centers Vilardi and Rasmus Kupari over the past two years, making a big push. Meanwhile, Los Angeles also has added prospects by other means, like signing Daniel Brickley and goalie Cal Petersen to bolster a prospect system that was awfully shallow just two years ago.

## 14. Dallas Stars

Top prospect: Miro Heiskanen, D

Having one of the very best young defense prospects goes a long way, as I think Heiskanen will be a long-term difference-maker for Dallas. Aside from him, the team has two quality goalie prospects in Colton Point and Jake Oettinger, along with some high-upside forwards in Ty Dellandrea and Jason Robertson.

## 15. Anaheim Ducks

Top prospect: Sam Steel, C

The Ducks rarely trade away first-round picks and they've had particularly solid drafts over the past three years. There's a lot of depth, particularly at the forward position with the likes of Steel, Isac Lundestrom and Troy Terry leading the way. The only thing holding them back a bit is a lack of diversity in talent with a somewhat shallow prospect pool on the blue line.

## 16. Chicago Blackhawks

Top prospect: Adam Boqvist, D

The Blackhawks have done a particularly nice job restocking their blue line depth in the past two drafts, netting Boqvist, Henri Jokiharju, Ian Mitchell and Nicolas Beaudin over the first two rounds. While their forward depth leaves a little more to be desired, there are some good long-term options they'll have to be patient with. For a system that turns around top prospects quickly, Chicago has done nicely to replenish.

## 17. Colorado Avalanche

Top prospect: Cale Makar, D

The Avs' system has been improving these past few years, and they have two very strong defense prospects in Makar and Conor Timmins, who each have top-four potential. They also helped themselves last season by acquiring Vladislav Kamenev and Shane Bowers in the Matt Duchene trade, and added some intriguing wingers in the last draft with first-rounder Martin Kaut and speedy third-rounder Sampo Ranta.

## 18. Arizona Coyotes

Top prospect: Dylan Strome, RW

The Coyotes have an interesting system with a lot of uncertainty. There is a lot riding on Strome taking the next step soon, and Barrett Hayton was a riskier pick at No. 5 but has enough talent to potentially live up to it. The Coyotes also have some other intriguing options who spent last season in the AHL as they look to support their core group in the NHL.

## 19. Minnesota Wild

Top prospect: Kirill Kaprizov, RW

The uncertainty surrounding Kaprizov's future weighs heavily, but he's still a Wild prospect until further notice, and he's one of the best players outside of the NHL. Assuming he reports one day, the Wild could have a future star on their hands. Outside of Kaprizov, Jordan Greenway and Luke Kunin look like the prospects with the best chance to make an NHL impact in this team's system.

## 20. Toronto Maple Leafs

Top prospect: Timothy Liljegren, D

The Leafs have a pair of Swedish defensemen with a lot of talent. Liljegren played for the defending Calder Cup champion Toronto Marlies last season, and the team just drafted Rasmus Sandin out of the OHL. Both anchor a prospect pool that has quite a few older players who could make their way to the NHL roster at various points this season, including Andreas Johnsson, Carl Grundstrom, Calle Rosen and goalie Garret Sparks.



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## 21. Boston Bruins

Top prospect: Ryan Donato, LW

Donato looks like the only true star prospect in this system right now, but it's loaded with a lot of players who should figure into the NHL plans in the not-so-distant future. Urho Vaakanainen, Jack Studnicka, Trent Frederic and Jakob Forsbacka Karlsson are among those in the team's second tier who have shown quite a bit of promise over the past year-plus.

## 22. Winnipeg Jets

Top prospect: Kristian Vesalainen, LW

The Jets have been one of the best-drafting teams in the NHL since the move to Winnipeg. They have lost a lot of their top-end talent to immediate NHL graduation, but there is still a lot of intrigue in the prospect pool starting with 2017 first-rounder Vesalainen. The team has been solid in developing talent in the AHL with Mason Appleton and Sami Niku among the biggest standouts who could make the NHL jump sooner than later.

## 23. Edmonton Oilers

Top prospect: Evan Bouchard, D

For a team that's still finding its way, the Oilers don't have a particularly deep prospect system. They do, however, have a pair of top-end talents in potential future power-play quarterback Bouchard and the tenacious Kailer Yamamoto. The system also got a nice boost with the team's second-round choice in 2018, the explosive-skating Ryan McLeod.

## 24. Columbus Blue Jackets

Top prospect: Liam Foudy, LW

The Jackets are a legit playoff contender at the NHL level, and while their prospect system lacks a bona fide A-level prospect, they have a lot of B-level guys trending in the right direction, including 2018 picks Foudy and Kirill Marchenko, along with especially skilled forwards Vitaly Abramov and Alexandre Texier.

## 25. Nashville Predators

Top prospect: Eeli Tolvanen, LW

The Predators didn't have any picks until the fourth round in last year's draft, making it hard to replenish a system being thinned out by NHL graduations, trades and a focus on winning now. That said, they still have two very strong prospects to anchor their system for now. Super sniper Tolvanen could be a major producer at the next level. Dante Fabbro has been slowed a bit by injuries, but he still has impressive upside as a potential top-four defender one day.

## 26. New Jersey Devils

Top prospect: Ty Smith, D

Landing skilled defenseman Smith in the 2019 draft helps bolster a prospect pool that was diminished by early graduations of Nico Hischier and Jesper Bratt. Otherwise,

the Devils' system is a bit on the shallower side with former first-rounder Michael McLeod still needing to take a bigger step forward to reach the higher expectations placed on him.

## 27. Calgary Flames

Top prospect: Juuso Valimaki, D

The Flames' system has been in a bit of a holding pattern, especially with so few draft picks in 2018. That said, Valimaki remains a potential top-four blueliner, and defenseman Rasmus Andersson and goalie Jon Gillies could graduate to the next level soon. There remains some high-upside players still grabbing at their ultimate potential in Dillon Dube and Oliver Kyllington.

## 28. Tampa Bay Lightning

Top prospect: Boris Katchouk, C

The lack of a true A-level prospect hurts the Lightning's ranking, but they have a series of players who could develop into role players. Anthony Cirelli and Mathieu Joseph have been developing well in the AHL, and both Katchouk and Taylor Raddysh still showcase some offensive upside. Cal Foote continues to trend in the right direction to play a more substantial role on the team's blue line in the future.

## 29. Washington Capitals

Top prospect: Ilya Samsonov, G

The Caps just won a Stanley Cup with a core of players who were drafted by the team, showing that they've had tremendous success over the years. The fact that they're this low is largely due to their top talent making it to the NHL quickly. They have one of the two best goalie prospects in hockey in Samsonov but carry an otherwise shallow pool of options.

## 30. Pittsburgh Penguins

Top prospect: Daniel Sprong, RW

Another season without a first-round draft pick keeps the Penguins running in place near the bottom a bit. I really liked their second round, landing Calen Addison and Filip Hallander, two players who could provide great value down the line. Meanwhile, the system is still led by Sprong, who is still waiting on a chance to fully prove himself at the NHL level. He seems about as close as he's ever been to being ready.

## 31. San Jose Sharks

Top prospect: Ryan Merkley, D

The Sharks' took a big bet in the first round on exceptionally skilled defenseman Merkley. The team typically drafts late in the first round, and they want to take more shots. If Merkley pans out, they'll look really smart. Having just traded away Norris and Balcors in the trade to get Erik Karlsson, there isn't much depth to speak of. In fact, that bumped them down a couple of spots. But hey, they have Karlsson now and everyone else doesn't.



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## 2018-19 NHL prospect pipeline report: Metropolitan Division

By Chris Peters

With the NHL season around the corner, NHL teams are evaluating what they have from a prospect standpoint. Here's a look at each Metropolitan Division team's prospect pool heading into the 2018-19 NHL season, including the top players in each system.

Some ground rules:

- Players listed as "A" prospects project more comfortably into impact roles -- that is, players who will fit into top scoring lines or top-four defenses and goalies with starter potential. "B" prospects are players who project comfortably as everyday NHL players but don't project as comfortably to make a big impact. That's not to say the B prospects can't develop into larger roles in the future; it's just what I see for them for right now.
- Players not listed simply didn't meet the very high threshold set by the A and B parameters. That doesn't mean I don't think they'll make it or that they can't develop into better prospects. I just set a high bar for the players included in this section.
- Players are considered prospects until they've lost rookie status (using the Calder Trophy eligibility threshold).
- I also have listed one prospect for each team who I think is most likely to help the NHL roster this season, along with one "breakout prospect" who I think could take the biggest step forward this season in his development.

Let's roll through the Metropolitan teams.

Carolina Hurricanes

A prospects: Andrei Svechnikov, Martin Necas and Adam Fox

B prospects: Jake Bean, Warren Foegele, Aleks Saarela, Valentin Zykov, Stelio Mattheos, Julien Gauthier and Nicolas Roy

With one of the more exciting prospect pools in the NHL right now, the Hurricanes could start seeing an impact from some of these players out of the gates. They have one of the best prospects in the game right now in Svechnikov, the 2018 No. 2 pick. He provides immediate scoring help to the NHL roster and might be one of the biggest impact rookies of the 2018-19 season. The team picked up top prospect Fox in the trade that also netted them Dougie Hamilton. Fox is a high-end offensive defenseman whose game has taken off in a major way the past two seasons.

Beyond the players they picked up this summer, the Hurricanes have reason to be excited about Necas, who nearly made the team last season. After a year of seasoning, he should be more prepared to make an impact in North America this year. He can do a little bit of everything.

On top of one of the better top ends among NHL farm systems, there's depth thanks to a strong year of AHL development from players such as Foegele, Zykov and Saarela. The Isles should expect bigger seasons for Roy and Gauthier, who need a little more seasoning. The AHL should

also do former top defensive prospect Bean some good, as he needs to continue rounding out his game.

There's no telling where the Hurricanes are going to go next as an organization, but they're definitely building a remarkably strong farm system.

2018-19 NHL-level impact prospect: Andrei Svechnikov

2018-19 breakout prospect: Nicolas Roy

Columbus Blue Jackets

A prospects: None

B prospects: Liam Foudy, Vitali Abramov, Kirill Marchenko, Alexandre Texier, Marcus Karlberg, Vladislav Gavrikov, Gabriel Carlsson and Elvis Merzlikins

The Blue Jackets don't have a ton of star power in the pipeline, if any. Foudy, last year's first-round pick, looks like he has the best potential of the group, and Abramov boasts a lot of exciting skill. However, there are enough questions about both to prevent me from planting an "A" prospect designation on either of them. That could very well change by the end of this season.

There are some intriguing prospects in this mix beyond Foudy and Abramov. Carlsson got an extended taste of the NHL last season and is pretty young for a defenseman. There's still some solid upside there. Latvian netminder Merzlikins had a star turn at the 2018 World Championship and was the top goalie in the Swiss league last season, putting the 24-year-old more firmly on the map. Then there's Gavrikov, who won Olympic gold earlier this year and might have a shot to eat some minutes for the Blue Jackets when he comes over.

There are some other prospects who have some significant upside, with reason to expect bigger things from them in the future. Marchenko, for one, boasts skill and size. The Blue Jackets are a rising team, but they don't have a ton by way of immediate reinforcements from within. That said, the prospects they have come with intriguing potential and could prove fruitful just a little further down the line.

2018-19 NHL-level impact prospect: Gabriel Carlsson

2018-19 breakout prospect: Kirill Marchenko

New Jersey Devils

A prospect: Ty Smith

B prospects: Michael McLeod, Joey Anderson, Fabian Zetterlund and Mikhail Maltsev

The Devils are in a bit of an interesting spot with their prospect pool. Having graduated Nico Hischier and Jesper Bratt last season, two of the most promising cogs in the system are making an NHL impact. Smith, the 2018 first-round pick for the club, still has some development and growth ahead of him before he can do the same, but he's a pretty intriguing talent with massive potential. Beyond him, however, there isn't a ton of star power in this group.

McLeod, selected in the first round in 2016, is a highly intelligent center who has a good all-around game but might not bring the offensive pop the team was expecting over the long term. He still looks like a solid bet to make the NHL



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roster in the near future and contribute reasonably well in a depth role. The rest of the team's system doesn't have much pop, but there remains promise, such as two-way winger Anderson and budding talent Zetterlund. The club also has some solid Russian prospects, but it's unclear when or if players such as Maltsev and Yegor Zaitsev will hop to North America.

Considering where the Devils are going at the NHL level right now, they have enough talent in the pipeline to filter in some new players over the next few years. There just isn't a ton of depth at this point, especially when it comes to high-end talent.

2018-19 NHL-level impact prospect: Joey Anderson  
2018-19 breakout prospect: Fabian Zetterlund

## New York Islanders

A prospects: Oliver Wahlstrom and Noah Dobson  
B prospects: Kieffer Bellows, Ruslan Iskhakov, Bode Wilde, Sebastian Aho, Josh Ho-Sang, Ilya Sorokin and Devon Toews

The 2018 first-round coup for the Islanders netted them two players who I think have star potential in the NHL. Wahlstrom could be the natural goal-scoring winger to add to the team's new core driven by Mathew Barzal. Meanwhile, defenseman Dobson has top-pairing potential with excellent two-way skills and advanced hockey IQ. Should both reach their lofty ceilings, there's going to be a lot more to be excited about for the Isles.

Besides those top two players, there's high-scoring left wing Bellows, who improved quite a bit last season and renewed some faith in his ability to grow into a top-six offensive threat. Sorokin has become a top goaltending prospect and could one day address a position of perpetual need for the Isles. There are also some question marks, such as if Ho-Sang will ever break through on a permanent basis or if former top-five pick Michael Dal Colle will avoid the bust tag. But the positives outweigh the negatives at this point, and the new management still has time to put its stamp on the organization.

The Isles might have some pain in the near future at the NHL level, but there's at least reason for optimism, with a couple of future high-end talents to get them back on track not too far down the road.

2018-19 NHL-level impact prospect: Sebastian Aho  
2018-19 breakout prospect: Ruslan Iskhakov

## New York Rangers

A prospects: Filip Chytil, Lias Andersson and Vitali Kravtsov  
B prospects: Igor Shestyorin, K'Andre Miller, Brett Howden, Libor Hajek and Nils Lundkvist

The Rangers have a pretty decent rebuild starter pack going with their prospect system as constructed. They have a pair of strong center prospects selected in the first round in 2017 in Chytil and Andersson, who each could see some meaningful NHL time this season. The Blueshirts scored a trio of first-round draft picks this year, which brought a little more variety to their system. High-upside winger Kravtsov could turn that potential into being a higher-end scorer down

the line. Miller is another player I took a liking to last season, and I believe he's only beginning to scratch the surface of his talent. Lundkvist is a defenseman who has a lot of different skills at his disposal and could one day become a reliable top-four defender. After years of going without first-round picks, the Rangers got five pretty good ones in a two-draft span.

They also got some outside help, bringing in Howden and Hajek in the Ryan McDonagh trade with the Tampa Bay Lightning. Both should provide some long-term depth options, with Howden showcasing strong two-way skills and Hajek taking a big step forward in his development last season. To cap that off, Shestyorin has grown into a top-five goaltending prospect with potential to be a future No. 1 for this team.

That's just the top of the Rangers' system. There is some good depth that will help them build an even more reliable pipeline from the AHL over the next few seasons. Additionally, the number of prospects they're collecting gives some added flexibility on the trade market, in terms of both NHL talent they could ship out and options from within their prospect pool to help sweeten some deals. This system has grown a lot over the past two years.

2018-19 NHL-level impact prospect: Filip Chytil  
2018-19 breakout prospect: Joey Keane

## Philadelphia Flyers

A prospects: Morgan Frost, Joel Farabee and Carter Hart  
B prospects: Philippe Myers, German Rubtsov, Jay O'Brien, Adam Ginning, Tanner Laczynski, Isaac Ratcliffe and Wade Allison

With one of the deepest systems in the NHL, the Flyers have quality players at just about every position and a variety of players who can fit into roles both large and small. Drafting has been one of the organization's biggest strengths under Ron Hextall's leadership. The Flyers have identified some diamonds in the rough in the middle rounds, and they haven't had many misses with their first-round picks.

Frost had a breakout year after being selected in the first round in 2017, leading one of the best junior teams in Canada in the Soo Greyhounds. Farabee, the team's 2018 top pick, is a very good stylistic fit for the franchise, mixing skill and speed with some grit. Then there's Hart, who is looking like one of the very best goaltending prospects in the game right now, following yet another stellar year in the WHL. He should be moving to the AHL this season to get some pro reps and take the next step in his development.

After that, there's a lot of pieces that provide value. Myers continues to develop and could be a solid bottom-four defenseman for the Flyers down the line. O'Brien, the team's second first-rounder in 2018, had a great showing at the World Junior Summer Showcase and goes to Providence College with some larger expectations.

2018-19 NHL-level impact prospect: Philippe Myers  
2018-19 breakout prospect: Jay O'Brien

## Pittsburgh Penguins



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A prospects: None

B prospects: Calen Addison, Daniel Sprong, Filip Hallander, Jordy Bellerive, Sam Miletic and Zach Aston-Reese

There isn't a lot to sugarcoat here. Years of trading away first-round draft picks for the sake of contending has stripped the Pens' prospect pool almost bare. They still have some nice pieces below the NHL level, especially Sprong, who has been on a bit of a roller coaster as a prospect. I also thought the Pens did extremely well to land both Addison and Hallander in the 2018 NHL draft, providing some high-upside players with a fair amount of development left ahead of them.

Pittsburgh has had a pretty reliable AHL pipeline, as showcased in recent years by the growth and development of players such as Jake Guentzel and Bryan Rust. Some teams are able to keep stocking their prospect pools while chasing Stanley Cups, but the Pens don't have a lot of options in the cupboard. However, it won't catch up to them for a while, and those back-to-back Cups make any sacrifices for the future worth it.

2018-19 NHL-level impact prospect: Daniel Sprong

2018-19 breakout prospect: Kasper Bjorkqvist

Washington Capitals

A prospect: Ilya Samsonov

B prospects: Alexander Alexeyev, Martin Fehervary and Axel Jonsson-Fjallby

The Stanley Cup glow should be blinding enough for Caps fans to not feel too worried about the future of the franchise.

That might be a good thing because there isn't a ton of depth to the Caps' system. That said, they still have one of the two best goaltending prospects in Samsonov, who will be playing his first season in North America in 2018-19. He's the crown jewel of the prospect system for now, but it might be a few years before he manages to make much of an impact. Braden Holtby has two years left on his current contract and still has plenty of good hockey left in him.

The Caps have some options beneath the NHL roster for help when they need it. Australian Nathan Walker pitched in a bit last season, as did Shane Gersich following his strong collegiate career at North Dakota. Others such as Riley Barber and Lucas Johansen remain in the mix long-term but might be more helpful in depth roles should any become available. Besides that, the Caps have a promising, big defender in 2018 first-rounder Alexeyev, a mature blueliner in Fehervary and an energetic two-way winger in Jonsson-Fjallby, one of my personal favorites in their system, who will be playing for the Hershey Bears in 2018-19.

When you look at all of the players who were drafted by this organization and played a role in the Stanley Cup run, there isn't much need to get wrapped up in the state of the prospect system. It might have taken them longer than they would have liked, but the Capitals' Stanley Cup was won through the draft.

2018-19 NHL-level impact prospect: Nathan Walker

2018-19 breakout prospect: Axel Jonsson-Fjallby

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## SportScan

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

1104980 Tampa Bay Lightning

Lightning journal: Center prospect Alex Barre-Boulet shows his scoring chops

By Nick Kelly

Published: September 16, 2018

BRANDON — C Alex Barre-Boulet did not want to try a complicated move. Not with Vezina Trophy finalist Andrei Vasilevskiy between him and the net.

So Barre-Boulet went with old reliable as he drew close to the Lightning goalie.

"It is a move I use pretty often," he said. "Back on my junior team, I was using it a lot. It worked pretty often."

And it worked Sunday. Barre-Boulet scored the only goal in the shootout period after a scrimmage at the Ice Sports Forum in which both teams scored once.

"I was looking if there was a hole or something like that," Barre-Boulet said. "It saw it, and as soon as I saw it, I shot it."

Vasilevskiy might not have stopped this shot, but without his heroics late in the scrimmage, there would not have been a shootout. Vasilevskiy stopped multiple shots in a short time in the final minutes of the period.

Barre-Boulet, an undrafted free agent, was the player of the year in the junior Canadian Hockey League last season. In 65 games for Blainville-Boisbriand of the CHL's Quebec Major Junior League, he scored 53 goals and had 63 assists. He also finished with 27 points in 19 playoff games.

It can be difficult for the coaching staff to gauge where prospects are at right now because it has seen them skate and play only a handful of times a couple of days into training camp. Barre-Boulet, 21, has already made an impression on coach Jon Cooper, though.

"When he is around the net, he knows how to put it in the back of the net," Cooper said. "That is what we have kind of witnessed so far."

Barre-Boulet is expected to spend time with AHL Syracuse this season.

It would not have been possible for Barre-Boulet to showcase his shootout abilities without a goal from C Ross Colton.

Colton scored the first goal of the scrimmage, his second over the past two scrimmages. Sunday he scored off a rebound. Saturday, the 2016 fourth-round draft pick flew down the ice as a defenseman failed to keep up.

"Ross showed one heck of a burst of speed (Saturday) in the scrimmage," Cooper said. "He makes plays like that and you make a good impression on the coaching staff."

Colton played for the University of Vermont the past two seasons. In 69 games, he scored 28 goals and added 22 assists.

RW Nikita Kucherov stepped onto the ice before any other player minutes before the scrimmage. Several fans who lined the outside of the ice noticed. They respond with a "KUUUCH," but it was much more of a murmur than a chant. Good thing the regular season is a few weeks away. The "Kuch" chant needs work.

Tampa Bay Times LOADED: 09.17.2018

1104994 Washington Capitals

To win 'back-to-back' Stanley Cups, Capitals know slow start could be costly

By Isabelle Khurshudyan

BOSTON — The Capitals have heard all about the potential pitfalls for the defending Stanley Cup champions: a slow start to the season, fatigue from such a long playoff run and greater injury risk because of a short summer to both recover and train. Defenseman Brooks Orpik, the only Washington player who'd actually won a championship before this past one, would advise his teammates to largely ignore those warnings.

"You hear a lot of people trying to tell you that you should feel a lot more tired than you actually are, so I think if you let that creep in, you can trick yourself into feeling it," said Orpik, who also won the Cup in 2009 with the Pittsburgh Penguins.

The Capitals opened their preseason schedule Sunday afternoon in Boston, just three days into the on-ice portion of training camp. Washington traveled just five players who played in the Stanley Cup finals series against the Vegas Golden Knights, and half of the Bruins' roster was in China for an exhibition series against Calgary. The Capitals lost in a shootout, 2-1, with winger Brett Connolly scoring Washington's lone goal. Phoenix Copley, who has the inside track to be Washington's backup goaltender this season, played the first 32:05 of the game and had a good showing with 21 saves on 22 shots, including several point-blank chances.

Training camp and preseason action is a harsh comedown after hoisting the Stanley Cup on the ice just three months ago, but the Capitals are already wary of the traps into which past defending champions have fallen as they begin their bid to repeat.

[Svruga: This time, the Capitals' heaviest burden might be an actual hangover]

"It's no secret that that sometimes happens — you go from playing on the biggest stage, you play the biggest game in your life and then you have an offseason and then it's Game 1 again," forward Tom Wilson said. "We're all human, that's normal. But I think with our group, no matter what, whether it's the last game of the Stanley Cup, or Game 1, we love to win. That's what separates us. We've had that mentality the last



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couple of years, super fun group. I'm expecting us to get out there and pick up where we left off."

After winning back-to-back titles, the Penguins struggled during the first half of last season and were one point out of the playoff picture through 41 games. They recovered with a strong second half, but the postseason isn't always a given for the defending Stanley Cup champion. The Los Angeles Kings won in 2014 and then missed the playoffs the next year. Pittsburgh's recent repeat made them the first team to pull off that feat in 20 years. Part of the difficulty is that opponents will use games against the reigning Cup-winner as a sort of measuring stick.

"I was thinking to myself a couple weeks ago that we've got to realize that everything is going to be tougher to start and all the games are going to be tougher against us," center Nicklas Backstrom said. "We better play our best hockey to start, that's reality. But at the same time you feel like a whole season, 82-game season, you have your ups and downs. But it's always important to have a good start so you don't fall back too far behind."

[Evgeny Kuznetsov could be part of the Capitals' new penalty-killing plan]

Orpik returned to Washington for informal skates ahead of training camp on Labor Day and was "pleasantly surprised" that so many of his teammates were already back and in "pretty good" conditioning. "I thought coming off this summer that everybody would be coming in kind of last second, but guys got genuinely excited to get back it," he said.

"For me, it's the exact same [as any other season]," Orpik continued. "If you treat it any different, then I think you get exposed a little bit. If you treat it differently, you probably don't start on time, and if you do that, you dig yourself a hole. In the past there's been really good teams that just had a bad start and then they're playing catch up all year, and it's really tough to make up that ground. That's something that'll be crucial for us."

Though the Capitals are returning all but two players from their Stanley Cup finals lineup and the systems are expected to stay largely the same under new Coach Todd Reirden, Orpik said the attention to detail within that team structure was emphasized in day one of training camp video sessions. Washington wants to start the season playing very much the same way it ended the last one.

"I'm not going to speak for everyone, but my feeling is we set a new standard for how we play," forward T.J. Oshie said. "And so whether it's Game 1, Game 82 or we're into the playoffs, I feel like our standard is set and if we drop below that, I don't think we're going to be happy with ourselves. We'll just keep playing the way we play and we'll go from there. You don't know how things are going to start, you don't know what lulls are going to be — if you're going to start hot, if you're not. We'll just roll with the punches and make adjustments and go from there."

Washington Post LOADED: 09.17.2018

1104995 Washington Capitals

'Here we go again': Capitals return to ice with target on their backs

By Adam Zielonka - The Washington Times - Sunday, September 16, 2018

Who knew that one of the biggest draws at the Washington Redskins' home opener would be a hockey player?

Alex Ovechkin spent Sunday afternoon at FedEx Field to cheer on the Redskins and help with the pregame coin toss.

The positive response he received from fans was another reminder of which Washington team has delivered the city's biggest championship in 25 years — not the Redskins, but the Capitals.

When they opened training camp at MedStar Capitals Iceplex on Friday, the discussion was a mixture of how the Capitals will stay motivated now that they've won a Stanley Cup and how the short summer will affect their conditioning before the regular season opens Oct. 3.

"I was talking to Nick (Backstrom) on the ice, and it kind of feels like we're onto the next series after Vegas. Like, 'Here we go again,'" T.J. Oshie said.

The Capitals are coming off short rest, compared to most NHL teams, because they were playing meaningful hockey games as recently as June. But to Oshie, that only meant the Capitals were in game shape for a longer amount of time, even though the playoffs made the summer shorter.

And what a summer it was. The Capitals partied so hard with the Cup that its keeper, Philip Pritchard, had to begin asking them not to do more keg stands with it. But players took the opportunity Friday to say that social media exaggerated how much they actually celebrated.

Now that they've tasted a championship — the franchise's first in 43 years — the Capitals don't want for motivation to repeat.

"It's such an amazing feeling that you can't describe, but the only way to get there again is to continue playing good hockey," Tom Wilson said.

The forward went on to offer a surprising compliment to the Capitals' rival — and a team with a particular distaste for Wilson — the Pittsburgh Penguins, who won back-to-back Stanley Cups in 2016 and 2017.

"I don't know why I'm saying this, but you respect a team like Pittsburgh," Tom Wilson said. "When you see a team repeat like that, you know, it's so hard to win, let alone to do it twice. It's a huge achievement. That's one that we're ready for."

New coach Todd Reirden said he consulted with people who have coached defending champions across other teams and sports, including football, seeking advice for how to approach the unique situation of coaching a defending champ.

"Some teams that haven't had as much success in the years following a Cup win, they eased into training camp and they ended up kind of chasing it from the beginning of the year," Reirden said Friday. "For me, it's really important that I set that tone today. I don't think there's any question that our guys came to work today and it wasn't an easy day, and that was by design and it's going to be that way to start the season."

Reirden's promotion from associate coach to head coach in the wake of Barry Trotz's resignation provides a new element in the locker room. There's also Ovechkin's new situation — his place in NHL history no longer risks questioning from fans who discounted him before he hoisted a Cup.

Ovechkin echoed his teammates in saying the toughest part about going back-to-back will be that "every team is going to try to beat us."

"But, for us, we just have to play the same way, at the same pace and try to win every game — especially at the beginning of the year, because if you don't win those game in the end you're probably going to miss a couple points and you're going to go, 'Oh, Jesus, why did we have a bad start?'" Ovechkin said.

Ovechkin and several other veterans did not make the trip Sunday as the Capitals opened their preseason at the Boston Bruins. Brett Connolly scored, but the Capitals lost 2-1 after a shootout. They will host the Bruins at Capital One Arena for another game Tuesday.

Washington Times LOADED: 09.17.2018

1104996 Washington Capitals



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • September 17, 2018

Football fan Ovechkin: 'I hope the Redskins are going to win the Super Bowl'

By Matthew Paras - The Washington Times - Sunday, September 16, 2018

LANDOVER — There was a new No. 8 on the sideline Sunday at FedEx Field before the Redskins' game against the Indianapolis Colts: Capitals star Alex Ovechkin.

Ovechkin — donning his own customized Redskins jersey — was in attendance for the Redskins' home-opener and was on the sidelines roughly 40 minutes before kickoff, greeting Redskins owner Dan Snyder, former quarterback Joe Theismann and cornerback Josh Norman.

The Capitals make their preseason debut Sunday in Boston, but Ovechkin and a number of other veterans stayed home. Fresh off a championship season, the Capitals winger did not have the Stanley Cup with him.

Ovechkin said he's a Redskins fan.

"They made some changes in their lineups," Ovechkin said. "I hope it's going to work. The city [felt] the Caps win the Cup and I hope the Redskins are going to win the Super Bowl."

Washington Times LOADED: 09.17.2018

1104997 Washington Capitals

Caps fan moons Ovi to show off tattoo at Redskins game

By Caroline Brandt September 16, 2018 5:07 PM

At the Washington Redskins' home opener Sunday, Alex Ovechkin, the honorary captain for the day, was met by Capitals fans all trying to snap a picture with the Stanley Cup champion. What he wasn't prepared for was to get mooned by a super-fan.

Following the Capitals' first-ever Stanley Cup championship, fans and players alike took to local tattoo parlors to get some ink to celebrate. Many of the tattoos on social media have featured the Stanley Cup with the Capitals' logo on it, but we have yet to see a butt-tat shown off to the Captain himself.

dude mooned Ovi at the Redskins game to show off his Stanley Cup butt tattoo 😊

y'all are WILD and we LOVE IT. [pic.twitter.com/gLo9Gad45B](https://pic.twitter.com/gLo9Gad45B)

— NBC Sports Capitals (@NBCSCapitals) September 16, 2018

Ovi didn't seem to mind the moon, however, yelling back, "Yeah! That's what I'm talking about! My man!" He even put it on his Instagram story.

Even though the tattoo is admirable, please do not spam us with your Stanley Cup butt-tats.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 09.17.2018

1104998 Washington Capitals

3 players who impressed in the Caps' preseason loss to Boston

By J.J. Regan September 16, 2018 4:01 PM

Just two days after reconvening for training camp, the Capitals took to the ice in Boston for the first preseason game on Sunday, a game they would ultimately lose 2-1 in a shootout to the Bruins.

With a significant portion of the Bruins' roster in China, neither team skated anything close to an NHL lineup. The rosters were made up primarily of prospects with a few veterans peppered in. Because of that, you have to take performances on the day with a grain of salt.

Brett Connolly was the Caps' best skater, but he should have been playing against a lot of non-NHL players.

Still, there were other players and performances that did impress.

Phoenix Copley

With Philipp Grubauer gone, Copley looks like he will be the backup for Braden Holtby this season. Even if the team is committed to having Copley as the backup, his performance Sunday will have the coaches breathing a little easier. Copley was tremendous in net even when the defense in front of him was struggling.

Copley looked particularly strong down low. The six-foot-four netminder used every inch of the pads to turn aside every low shot he faced.

Copley's best save of the day came in the second period when a miscommunication between Jonas Siegenthaler and Christian Djoo led to a breakaway for Boston. Marcel Noebels was in all alone on Copley, but Copley was able to stretch the pad to deny the opportunity.

Phoenix Copley stretches the pad to deny the breakaway chance for Boston. [pic.twitter.com/u18FTbyGax](https://pic.twitter.com/u18FTbyGax)

— NBC Sports Capitals (@NBCSCapitals) September 16, 2018

Copley's game ended midway through the second period after stopping 21 of the 22 shots he faced on the day.

Tyler Lewington

Lewington made sure to show the Caps his biggest asset very early on in the game: his fists. Lewington dropped the gloves very early in the game with Zach Senyshyn in a short bout.

The pipeline is full of high-level blue line prospects with player like Lucas Johansen, Jonas Siegenthaler and Alex Alexeyev, but Lewington's willingness to drop the gloves helps him stand out from the crowd.

While the Caps' defense looks set for now, Lewington's physical prowess could put him in line for a call-up or two if Washington needs a No. 7 or if they need to plug in a player on a limited basis.

Jayson Megna

Megna was one of the team's top penalty killers in the game. One of the changes expected this season under head coach Todd Reirden is a more aggressive penalty kill and Megna was very effective at that role and even created a breakaway for a shorthanded opportunity.

In an interview with NHL.com's Tom Gulitti, Reirden spoke of Megna as a possible candidate to replace Jay Beagle at fourth line center. To most, that competition looks like it is between Nic Dowd and Travis Boyd, but Megna is clearly on Reirden's radar and it was easy to see why on Sunday.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 09.17.2018

1104999 Washington Capitals



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • September 17, 2018

Alex Ovechkin supports Redskins at home opener

By J.J. Regan September 16, 2018 12:54 PM

There's plenty of love between the Caps and Redskins going on Sunday for the Redskins home opener. When Alex Ovechkin met Josh Norman on Tuesday, he promised he would be at Sunday's game. Ovechkin kept his word and arrived at FedEx Field in his Redskins Ovechkin jersey.

Heading to the home opener! @Redskins | @ovi8 #HTTR #ALLCAPS pic.twitter.com/S5EF1ypWzr

— Washington Capitals (@Capitals) September 16, 2018

That's some dedication from the Great 8 considering the Capitals are playing their first preseason game in Boston at 1 p.m. Sunday as well, same time as the Redskins game. Obviously Ovechkin was not among the players brought to Boston for that game.

The Redskins also showed some love for the Caps as well as line backer Preston Smith arrived for the game in a customized Capitals jersey.

When you bring a city its first championship in 26 years, you deserve a shout out.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 09.17.2018

1105000 Washington Capitals

Nic Dowd's dog has an Instagram account

By J.J. Regan September 16, 2018 10:57 AM

Move over Alex Ovechkin, there's a new hockey celebrity in town.

There are not many new faces at Capitals training camp this season, but Nic Dowd is one of the few. Signed as a free agent in July, Dowd will compete to take over the fourth line center role vacated by Jay Beagle.

More importantly, with Dowd comes his dog, Arlo and Arlo is big time.

"He's a man," Dowd said. "He definitely runs the household."

Arlo, a golden retriever, is such a celebrity that he has his own Instagram account.

Yes, Arlo the dog has an Instagram account. He's more internet savvy than most of your relatives.

"I think he kind of just took off in LA," Dowd said. "He won some little competition which wasn't the best for me, the guys gave me a lot of grief for that."

I can't imagine why.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 09.17.2018

1104944 Nashville Predators

In more ways than one, P.K. Subban in 'midseason form' during Predators' first practice

Paul Skrbina,

Published 7:00 a.m. CT Sept. 16, 2018

P.K. Subban posed for a selfie with a giddy fan Saturday morning before making his way toward the Predators' locker room inside Centennial Sportsplex.

Three sticks in hand as he walked, the defenseman had one question: "How'd I look out there?"

He asked reporters on his way to the dressing room. He asked teammate Roman Josi when he got there.

If Subban's game was in "midseason form," as he joked it was after the team's first practice of training camp, his talking game looked postseason-ready.

P.K. Subban talks about his summer and the upcoming season Nashville Tennessean

"That's the fun part you miss, interacting with your teammates and having fun," Subban said. "But the pace was fast. Everybody looked good. There was nobody who looked out of place. ... It's a good sign."

Subban said he spent the summer decompressing, which included taking a class at Harvard, appearing on a video game cover and meeting LeBron James.

"Everybody does it differently," he said.

Even though now is time to "recompress," and put his fun summer behind him, Subban won't completely abandon enjoyment.

"When it's time to be serious, be serious," he said. "When it's time to have fun, have fun. Nothing new. That's life.

"We find good balance with that."

Subban lost his balance a few times during drills Saturday, including one of the last ones when he and forward Colton Sissons traded knock-down shoves of the competitive variety.

While Subban appeared at ease, he said he doesn't feel that way going into training camp — and warned his teammates shouldn't either.

Predators' Roman Josi signs an autograph for a fan at Centennial Sportsplex Saturday, Sept. 15, 2018, in Nashville, Tenn.

"You've got to come in uncomfortable," Subban said. "Everybody's spots are up for grabs. I don't care if you're on a long-term contract or a short-term contract, that's got to be your attitude coming in. That's how you hold yourself accountable."

Predators coach Peter Laviolette praised Subban's philosophy and stressed that success is impossible without such a mindset.

"You're not going to be successful unless you compete," he said. "You have to fight for your ice. You have to fight for your puck. You have to fight for positioning.

"The quicker we get into that mindset, the better chances we have of starting the season the right way."

But that's still a little ways away.

"Right now we're just looking forward to the start of the season, everybody getting back into the swing of things," Subban said. "And we'll go from there."

Predators players skate during training camp at Centennial Sportsplex Saturday, Sept. 15, 2018, in Nashville, Tenn.

Let the (exhibition) games begin

Before the Predators open 2018-19 on Oct. 4 in Madison Square Garden against the Rangers, they have some other things to square away.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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That will begin Sunday when the team holds a "Blue and Gold" scrimmage at 2 p.m. at Ford Ice Center before traveling to Florida for Monday's split-squad exhibition against the Panthers.

Lavolette said many veterans won't participate in Sunday's scrimmage, which is open to the public, allowing them to work on the power play and giving some younger players a chance to see some game time.

"Filip Forsberg said it best — we haven't done anything," Lavolette said. "At the end it's about winning that last game. ... We haven't done that yet. These guys left focused and came back focused."

Tennessean LOADED: 09.17.2018

1105011 Websites

The Athletic / Even as the NHL gets younger, Evgeni Malkin wants to dominate 'for the next five, six years'

By Seth Rorabaugh Sep 17, 2018

After 12 seasons in the NHL, Evgeni Malkin has accumulated plenty of wear and tear on his body.

He estimates he has lost 10 teeth just from high sticks.

That total was inflated by two on just the second day of his 13th training camp when 20-year veteran Matt Cullen clipped him off the opening faceoff in a scrimmage Saturday.

"He broke a couple of my (teeth)," Malkin said. "But it's all fake. (It was) fixed yesterday. It's easy, like one hour. It's hockey, you know? He said sorry. ... We're good friends. I understand it's bad luck.

"A couple of high sticks on my face. It's OK. I have fun. Good to be here and excited for a new season."

On the dawn of the 2018-19 campaign, Malkin understands at 32, he has to adapt to competition that is becoming increasingly fresh-faced.

"It's young guys," said Malkin. "It's (Oilers center Connor) McDavid, it's (Devils left winger Taylor) Hall or (Avalanche center Nathan) MacKinnon. They try to show the best game and they dominate this league right now."

McDavid, 21, won the Art Ross Trophy last season while Hall, 26, claimed the Hart Memorial Trophy as MVP. MacKinnon, 23, finished second in voting for that award.

That doesn't mean Malkin, a winner of each of those accolades all the way back during his 20s, is in the autumn of his nonpareil career. He suggested he could play at an exemplary level for another half-decade.

"I don't want to be a guy who wins three Cups and stops playing, just be a nice guy," Malkin said. "I want to be a good player for the next five years, the next six years. I try to do my best and try to dominate every game. ... I want to be what a leader should be, a top center for the next five, six years for sure."

Having been eliminated by the rival Capitals in the second round of last season's playoffs, Malkin had an extra month to train compared to the previous two offseasons that followed lengthy runs to a Stanley Cup title. He took advantage of that surplus downtime.

"I changed a little bit in the summer," he said. "I skated a little bit more this year. I started to skate like probably in the middle of July. I start at three times a week. (Then) four times a week. Then the last two weeks, I

skated probably every day. I feel so much better this year and I have more confidence right now. I feel unbelievable.

"I feel it doesn't matter what you do in (the) gym or track. When you step on the ice, it's so much different. You do different work. You feel great when you skate hard. Insane workout if you skate five laps after practice. Unbelievable workout for your conditioning, for your legs. And more fun because this summer we skated with good players like (Kings left winger Ilya) Kovalchuk, (Stars right winger Alexander) Radulov, (Stars right winger Valeri) Nichushkin. We skated together. We had so much fun with a couple games, we (had) competition. It was more fun this year."

The notion of Malkin skating so abundantly came in contrast to the fears he faced after sustaining a potentially gruesome left knee injury when Flyers center Jori Lehtera fell on him during the first round of last spring's postseason.

Malkin missed three games due to the ailment and returned for the final four games of the ensuing series with the Capitals but struggled.

"All (four) games (against the Capitals) I feel so much pain to my knee," said Malkin. "It's never fun to play with injuries. It's not a crazy injury but I (couldn't) push my leg. It looked scary against Philadelphia. My knee (went) a little bit back. After the season, a couple weeks I (did) rehab with my knee. I (went) to the gym and I worked with a trainer. ... I can't say right now I played bad but I tried my best. Of course I (did) not play my game because I (couldn't) skate so hard."

If the early days of this training camp are any indication, Malkin will skate alongside Phil Kessel once again. Malkin enjoys playing with the all-star right winger but admitted they have some shortcomings to address.

"I like playing with him for sure," Malkin said. "We understand each other. We need to just change a little bit, maybe the (defensive) zone, we need to play better because I think (Mike Sullivan) is a little bit upset when we play together. We understand we're great offensive players but sometimes we need to play better in the (defensive) zone for sure. We need to stop in the zone, finish checks, play a little bit harder in the (defensive) zone for sure. Even if we start trying new things. We have (a) great line (with) me and Phil, maybe (Bryan Rust) or maybe (somebody) else. I feel I can play with anybody but I like to play with (Kessel) for sure."

Regardless of who flanks him, Malkin realizes a substantial amount of the Penguins' success rests on his experienced shoulders.

"I know everybody looks to me right now," he said. "Last year in the regular season, I showed a good game but I'm not happy with what I did in the playoffs against (Philadelphia). I can play better for sure in the playoffs."

The Athletic LOADED: 09.17.2018

1105012 Websites

The Athletic / 2018-19 NHL Season Preview: Vegas Golden Knights

By Dom Luszczyszyn Sep 16, 2018

Read this to learn more about how these projections work and this to understand the uncertainty each projection carries.

You're not supposed to be any good in your inaugural season. You have to earn your lumps. No one mentioned that to the Vegas Golden Knights, who smashed even the most optimistic forecasts last season by posting a 109-point season, the fifth-best mark in the league, en route to a berth in the Stanley Cup final.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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It was an unprecedented success story for an expansion team, one that no one could've predicted. Now comes the challenge in the team's second season: living up to new expectations as a contender.

That's the mindset the team has going into this season, going big game hunting for Erik Karlsson before settling on Mac Paoiretty. That the team gave up Nick Suzuki, a player they selected 13th overall in 2017, in that pursuit signifies they're going all in and that they believe in the roster they've assembled.

I'm still a little bit more dubious.

It's not that the team and players weren't impressive last year, I'm mostly just concerned whether the team can repeat the feat. Priors are important when forecasting hockey as one season isn't enough data to properly assess a player's ability. My models use three, so a player (and by extension all the players on a team) have to be very impressive for a reasonable amount of time to convince me of where their true talent level lies. For some, the transition is quick. For others, there's deeper skepticism.

I still believe the Golden Knights are a likely playoff team, but I wouldn't call them a contender at this stage. I'd hesitate to call them a Dark Horse either. Their chances of being a 100-point team are under one-in-four and their chances of eclipsing last season's extremely high point total is even lower at just three percent. Getting back to the Stanley Cup final will be just as challenging at six percent.

There are just so many question marks surrounding the roster, more-so than most other teams, of whether players can repeat what they did last season, that it's difficult to expect a lot of things to go their way again.

Here are five that are on my mind most.

Can Marc-Andre Fleury keep playing at the level he's shown in Vegas?

This is perhaps the biggest one as goaltending can singlehandedly propel a franchise or be its demise. Fleury was clearly energized by the opportunity in Vegas (as well as the humbling slight of being relegated to expensive backup that got him there), but anytime anyone has a career year at age 33 it gives me pause. Even more so for a goalie as their stats are more fickle to the whims of the hockey gods. It's unlikely Fleury will be a .927 goalie again, even if he was even better in the playoffs. My model figures he's more likely to be around .918, which is still one of the league's better projected save percentages, but much closer to average than the elite numbers he posted last season. That's the biggest reason to expect regression for Vegas this season.

There is a possibility that Fleury's surge last season is systems driven, but that theory doesn't bear out using public data. His expected save percentage was around average last year and was in line with other seasons he's had in Pittsburgh.

Can Jonathan Marchessault, William Karlsson and Reilly Smith continue to be one of the league's best lines?

Yes. But also no.

Last season this trio was nearly unstoppable, mowing through other team's best in the regular season and the playoffs. Anze Kopitar and co? Easy. Joe Pavelski? Never stood a chance. Mark Scheifele and Blake Wheeler? No problem. Last season, this top line had a 55 percent shot rate, an impressive mark that few other teams could stack up against and they continued that into the playoffs. If they can continue possessing the puck at that rate, and I don't have much doubt they can, then they can very well be one of the league's best lines. The chemistry is real here and very few other lines can control the flow of the game at such a high rate.

Where I'm more skeptical is this line's ability to convert chances into goals. All three were in the league's top 25 for points-per-60 at 5-on-5 on the strength of a collective 3.98 goals for per 60. For reference, the Oilers were at 3.62 with Connor McDavid on the ice. That's a troubling sign for this season as it's unlikely the trio will see an on-ice shooting percentage of 11.4 percent going forward. Without any past pedigree, especially in

William Karlsson's case, it's difficult to say "well, they have the talent to do so" because that's still a huge unknown.

Because of that, it's difficult to see another close-to-point-per-game season from Karlsson or Marchessault, with something closer to 70 much more likely. Even that may be overselling it as Karlsson obviously won't score on 23.4 percent of his shots again, but at the very least the duo should get more power play time to offset 5-on-5 regression. Smith has a history of yoyo-ing every other season, and after a huge spike last year I wouldn't be surprised to see him come back down to earth to the 55 point range.

A pair of 70 point forwards, one of whom is very much an elite winger in this league, and one closer to 55 isn't too shabby and ranks above average, but it's not nearly at the level they played at last season creating the second biggest area to expect regression from Vegas.

Are Max Paoiretty and Paul Stastny enough to offset the losses of James Neal and David Perron?

This is a tricky one, as on a true talent basis there should be little doubt that they are. According to GSWA, it's a 1.3 win difference in favour of the new guys in town, who have longer histories of being more effective players. That the two also have a history of playing together when suiting up for their country is reason to believe they can find instant chemistry for the Golden Knights, further bolstering their projection. Paoiretty himself is the one to watch as he's never played with a centre as talented as Stastny in his NHL career. He's projected to bounce back into a 30-30 guy by my model, but he could push further with a much more capable centre than he's used to.

The trouble lies in replicating what Neal and Perron did last season to stave off regression, not replacing who they are on a true talent level – we can already surmise the new guys are upgrades. Neal was one of the few players that did what was expected of him, no more than that, playing at a 29-goal and 51-point pace and contributed an average Game Score of 0.69, which is worth roughly 1.6 wins in value. Perron's output was similar (due to lesser possession stats and being a passer not a shooter) at 0.73 despite being at a near point-per-game pace, putting him at roughly 1.8 wins in value.

That's 3.4 total wins per 82 games, 0.3 wins shy of Paoiretty's and Stastny's collective output, and that's without the assumption that the two can improve each other's numbers. Corsica has the combined value at 1.9 (per 82) while Evolving Hockey is at 4.9 – putting Game Score right in the middle of that range.

By my math, the additions should at the very least be as good as what Vegas got from its second line last season, and could reasonably be even better too. With few players shooting more than Paoiretty and few passing more than Stastny, the two are a perfect fit. That could offset likely regression from the top line and Fleury, though likely not enough.

Will the defence be able to survive a 20-game suspension to Nate Schmidt?

Last year it felt unlikely that Vegas could survive with its defence, period, but the team prevailed with its rag-tag group. As it turns out, you don't necessarily need a true No. 1 when you have six No. 3/4s at your disposal.

What helped though was the play of Schmidt, who thrived in a top pairing role a year after being one of the league's most sheltered defenders. His absence after a PED violation in the season's first 20 games, will mean someone else will have to step up and that might mean more minutes for Vegas' own Schmidt (def: a sheltered third pairing defender who could thrive in a bigger role), Colin Miller.

I'm a big fan of Miller's game and he was easily Vegas' most impactful defenceman by shot rates last year, while also being effective on the team's top power play. With Schmidt gone, he'll be asked to sink or swim against other team's best (unless the team opts to use Deryk Engelland...) and it'll likely make for yet another fascinating case study in quality of competition.



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Vegas was an interesting testing ground for that last season and that likely continues this season, at least in the opening quarter. Schmidt's numbers did drop from season-to-season, but his baseline was high enough to offset it. Miller looks like he's built in a similar vein.

After Miller the right side looks barren, especially if Engelland can't repeat a surprising resurgent season. I doubt he can score over one point-per-60 again, but while his relative Corsi was as bad as usual, his raw numbers were right around break-even and he looked surprisingly respectable in the transition game. I'm not sure who slides in on the bottom pair with Schmidt gone (Vegas was the one team I didn't have beat writer access to), but I guessed Brad Hunt who is someone who plays hockey for Vegas sometimes.

The left side top four remains untouched with Brayden McNabb and Shea Theodore looking like solid defenders. McNabb doesn't provide much personal offence and has a burdensome penalty differential, but can drive play, while Theodore looks to be the exact opposite, with much better puck skills in the transition game. Holden isn't much of anything, but at least shouldn't be a huge detriment on the bottom pairing.

Overall, it's a bottom 10 group without Schmidt, so the first 20 games will be a struggle, but one the team can still survive from. With him in the lineup Vegas ranks 15th – perfectly average – so it should be pretty smooth sailing once he returns.

Can the team's bottom six be as strong as it was last season?

One of the biggest surprises last season, for me anyway, was the team's forward depth. Much was made early on (before anyone knew they were actually good) about how the Golden Knights players at the bottom of the lineup could offset its deficiencies at the top with strength at the bottom – at least enough to be competitive. I didn't buy it because I wasn't a particularly big fan of the players they chose to fill those roles.

One of those players was Pierre-Edouard Bellemare, who went from one of the league's least productive and worst possession players to a seemingly elite fourth-line centre overnight. He was projected to be one of the least valuable players in the league before last season, but played nothing like it, scoring at a decent 1.27 points-per-60 rate and putting up a 53 percent Corsi. On the fourth line! That's a huge turnaround from the roughly 0.70 points-per-60 and 46-47 per cent Corsi range he was in before. I still don't understand it, but it happened. Whether it can happen again is what I'm unsure about, clearly, from him being below replacement level still despite the breakout season. Cody Eakin was the other, and while I'm still not sold on him as a play-driver on the fourth line at least his scoring rates bounced back.

Those two centres give me pause when assessing the strength of the Golden Knights bottom six as I'm still uncertain of what they bring the table, but if they can do it again then Vegas is in okay shape. Having Erik Haula slide down to the third line should help Eakin immensely, while Daniel Carr isn't a bad gamble on the fourth line either if that's where he ends up.

What puts a wrench in all that is the team's insistence on putting Ryan Reaves in the lineup. It somehow worked fine in last year's playoffs, but I don't think that'll be the case for a full 82 games. He's one of the league's lowest valued players by my model and could singlehandedly drag Bellemare right back to where he was going into last season. Bellemare was effective last season until Reaves came along, with the two killing any semblance of offence whatsoever whenever they were on the ice together. It went about as poorly as you'd expect. Vegas was a staggering 18 shots attempts worse on offence in the duo's 98 spectacular minutes of hockey together last season, putting up a Corsi percentage of 41.7 per cent.

If that's your fourth line, your team is in for a rude awakening, and because it is, the Golden Knights look to have the league's fifth worst bottom six going into next season. So much for that depth advantage.

That's a decent idea of what to expect from the many questions surrounding this team going into next season, but they won't be

answered until the team actually hits the ice. Right now, things don't look as optimistic as fans might hope as there's plenty of reason to believe this team won't be playing at nearly the same level it did last season, despite some savvy additions. A suspension to the team's best defenceman doesn't help matters either.

If last season was a casino, the Knights rolled in with money burning a hole in their pockets, called double-zero in roulette, got blackjack multiple times, walked over to a hot craps table, and then found a royal flush on the river – all in the same night. It was an unbelievable run that is hard to envision ever happening again for another team. It was special, but it also came from a lot of things going their way, things that look unlikely to repeat.

Last season rightfully changed the opinions on many players on the Golden Knights, they're obviously much better than anyone gave them credit for then, but some caution needs to be exercised as to how far that group can go again this season now that no one will be taken by surprise. This is a good team, but for now I have a hard time calling it a great team. Go ahead and hit triple 7s one more time, Vegas.

What Other Models Say

Emmanuel Perry, Corsica: 101.5 points, 7th

Rob Pizzola, Semi-Professional Sports Bettor: 97.1 points, 8th

Andy MacNeil, Vegas Stats & Information Network: 98.7 points, 7th

Over/Under Point Total, Bodog (Opening Line): 96.5 points, T-11th

Over/Under Point Total, Pinnacle (Current): 97.5 points, T-9th

After being the most optimistic model last season, my projections have done an about-face on Vegas' chances in its second season. Many others now see the Golden Knights as a top 10 team, while I think they're just on the outside and still much closer to a mushy middle than the other clear-cut contenders. I would guess that the difference there is my model likely using a longer prior (three seasons) than the others listed. Maybe that's better for regression, maybe it's too safe and doesn't account for how good the team was together. Time will tell.

It's worth noting too that Pizzola's and MacNeil's numbers are without Pacioretty so there may be some improvement there too, though it may not be by much. Perry's projections didn't move significantly, nor did the betting line since the trade was made.

What Fans Expect

Public Sample: 1,956

Fan Sample: 43

That's a very different distribution than the one I collected last season, that's for sure. It's clear that after a surprise inaugural season that no one expected, no one really has any idea what to expect in the team's second season either. So many things went right last year and while it's possible it happens again, it's also possible that the team sees a reversal of fortunes. Having said that, these surveys were conducted before Vegas acquired Pacioretty meaning it's likely the public is a fair bit higher now. Vegas' own fans, all 43 that I was able to round up, were already much higher, expecting the team to repeat the magic again this season, with some slight regression towards the 95-to-100 point range. That's more likely with Pacioretty in the fold, but I'm still hesitant.

The Athletic LOADED: 09.17.2018

1105013 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Clay Riddell's passing leaves gaping hole in Calgary



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • September 17, 2018

Eric Francis | September 16, 2018, 10:48 PM

Sitting in a quiet Calgary restaurant nestled in the heart of a city he gave endlessly to, Clay Riddell looked out the window and smiled.

"It was a stupid decision," said the then 80-year-old billionaire, facetiously, before breaking into a laugh over how he came to be a Calgary Flames owner.

"I don't think anybody bought into the Flames as a business. Certainly when I bought in it wasn't a good business. It was to keep hockey here. That's why Harley (Hotchkiss) and Doc (Seaman) brought it here – to have hockey here. Not to make money.

"When I joined the Flames ownership group in 2003 they had lost money for 10 years and they were starting to lose \$10 million a year and they just needed help. The only reason I joined the group was to keep the Flames in Calgary because I thought we needed an NHL team and there was no reason we shouldn't have one."

His family revealed Sunday that Riddell had passed away on Saturday, with his family by his side, following a brief illness.

He was 81.

An oil baron, a restaurateur, a golf fanatic, a family man and one of the nation's richest men, Riddell was best known for his philanthropy, which earned him the Order of Canada in 2008.

Massive donations to the University of Manitoba, Carleton University, Mount Royal and the Alberta Children's Hospital earned his public kudos over the years, but many believe they paled in comparison to the donations the geologist grad made quietly.

It was Riddell who came up with the idea to bring the Shaw Charity Classic to Calgary, which raised \$22 million in five years for more than 180 charities affecting half a million kids in Alberta. Tourney officials will soon announce this year's total, which is expected to be another \$10 million.

Quite a legacy for the man pegged as having a net worth of \$1.1 billion in 2018 by Forbes Magazine.

"He said, 'We should all just do what we can,'" said close friend Ken King, CEO of the Calgary Flames' parent company. "He said, 'Some can do things with time and some can do things with money.'

"What he did for the Flames came at a critical time but he wasn't about making an investment in sports – it was about supporting sports. He did that with the Shaw Classic and so many things – it was about, 'What good can we do for this city?' Not only all over the city, but this country."

Another noted Calgary philanthropist, W. Brett Wilson, met and started doing business with Riddell in 1993 as part of a relationship he forever treasured.

"I looked at him more as a mentor than a client and friend," said Wilson, who owns a piece of the Nashville Predators.

"He was someone everyone would want to emulate. In terms of character traits – he was all about integrity. You didn't need paperwork with Clay Riddell – you just needed a handshake."

I enjoyed the privilege of knowing Clay (and his incredible family) for most of the last 3 decades.

A partner. A client. A mentor and role model.

Canada lost one of our truly iconic, caring, compassionate leaders in business and community today. <https://t.co/2hOKp18Jhs>

— \* W. Brett Wilson \* (@WBrettWilson) September 16, 2018

Riddell founded many oil and gas companies during his career, including Paramount Resources, which he ran from 1974 until 2015 when he handed the reins to son Jim.

His daughter, Sue Riddell Rose, runs Perpetual Energy and she is a subject in one of his favourite golf stories.

A former eight handicap who played endlessly at Canyon Meadows, Riddell was thrilled when his wife, Vi, got a hole in one on the 14th hole at Radium Springs. A couple years later so did Sue on the very same hole.

As pressure mounted to replicate their feat, Clay eventually jugged one from the exact same tee box.

Problem was, he did so while simply testing a pal's 9-wood out after hitting his original tee shot.

Not surprisingly, he eventually notched a true ace. You guessed it – on the very same hole.

"I don't think he ever missed a fairway," smiled King. "He played golf the way he lived – just steady. When it came time to pay the bets he did more collecting than giving."

Apparently the golf course is the only place he rarely gave.

"Golf is the greatest way in the world to spend four hours," he once told me during a round at the Calgary Golf and Country Club, which overlooks a camp for disabled kids he supported for decades.

A leader in every sense of the word, Riddell was lauded by Gary Bettman and many across the country as news spread of his passing.

"He was a titan of our community — in industry, philanthropy, education, and sport," said Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi in a statement about a man who never sought the spotlight.

"Calgarians feel his legacy now, and we will feel it for many years to come. My heart goes out to his family and friends in this difficult time. Know that we all mourn with you today."

His death leaves Alvin Libin, Murray Edwards, Jeffrey McCaig and Allan Markin as surviving owners of the Flames.

And leaves a gaping hole in a city and province that could use more Clay Riddells now, more than ever.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 09.17.2018

1105014 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Matthews, Marleau hoping unique friendship translates to on-ice success

Chris Johnston | September 16, 2018, 5:43 PM

NIAGARA FALLS, Ont. — You won't find too many people celebrating their 39th birthday by getting serenaded from a pair of friends whose ages add up to 41.

It's a testament to Patrick Marleau's longevity at the highest level of professional hockey that he found himself in that very situation on Saturday night — looking like he'd rather be diving in front of a Shea Weber slapshot than sitting on a packed restaurant patio while Auston Matthews and Mitch Marner sang him 'Happy Birthday' with cellphone cameras rolling.



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Most NHLers are long retired by the time there are 39 candles on the cake. They don't get a chance to strike up a unique friendship like the one that exists between the Toronto Maple Leafs teammates.

Marleau is equal parts mentor and marvel inside the dressing room. He's grown extremely close with Matthews and Marnier, in particular, despite not always understanding the slang used in their group text conversations.

The way the 21-year pro carries himself, and the high level he still plays at, has provided him all the cachet needed to break down the generational barriers between them.

"It's unbelievable. We give it to him all the time," Matthews said during a break in training camp. "It's kind of crazy to think about — that he was playing his first year in the league and myself, Mitch, were just a couple months old. I think that's a [testament] to him and the way he's treated his body. He's stayed in shape and it helps when you skate like the wind because that's kind of today's game, right?"

Consider that Marleau was the youngest player in the NHL when he made his debut on Oct. 1, 1997 and is now its fourth-oldest — trailing Matt Cullen (41), Zdeno Chara (41) and good buddy Joe Thornton (39).

Incredibly, he's missed just one game since turning 30 and could climb as high as fifth on the NHL's all-time games-played list by the end of this season. It's within the realm of possibility that he may eventually pass Gordie Howe for top spot.

You need a sprinkle of good luck to play every regular-season game for nine years running. He's obviously found a formula to keep himself in top shape, as well, with plyometrics, physio work and ice baths at the second intermission of each game among the routines he most swears by.

"I better get on his workout program," said Matthews. "It's like he's not even breathing out there [on the ice]. Nothing fazes him."

"Genetically, he's just got it," added teammate Nazem Kadri. "He's just one of those guys with super loose hips. ... It seems like he comes back every summer in even better shape. I'm not quite sure how he does it, but if I'm able to do it that long, I'll be more than happy. He's certainly a role model."

The main reason the Leafs were able to land Marleau in free agency last summer was their willingness to go to three years on a contract carrying a \$6.25-million cap hit. It was a risk, given what we know about aging curves and how valuable cap space is, but he lived up to his end of the bargain with a 27-goal season in Year 1.

Marleau is due to occupy prime roster real estate alongside Matthews and William Nylander in 2018-19. Even with Tyler Ennis place-holding for Nylander early in training camp because of a contract stalemate, that trio looked dangerous throughout the scrimmages at Gale Centre over the weekend.

It's a line that Marleau really wants to see work. He figures he needs to put himself in positions to finish — something that could help towards Matthews's stated goal of producing more assists.

"They command the puck and they play the right way," said Marleau. "They go to the right areas, they're both highly skilled. To play with high-end skill players like that, you know you're going to get your looks, so you've just got to be ready."

He also understands better than most how long the season can be and how important it is to find outlets that provided a break from the rigours of job.

That often means spending free time on the road with Matthews and Marnier, who have tried to educate him on the latest trends. It's certainly helped Marleau with his four sons at home.

"He's getting better. I think he's learned a lot, [but] he's got a long way to go," said Matthews. "I think he's catching up to his kids and all the stuff

that they're learning at school with their friends. He's got the language down, he's like a kid again.

"He's a great guy. I mean, he's so fun to be around. He's so nice to everybody. I'm excited to play with him this year. I think we'll do well."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 09.17.2018

1105015 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canucks' Horvat knows what's ahead for Boeser in sophomore season

Iain MacIntyre | September 16, 2018, 5:54 PM

WHISTLER, B.C. — Before his second National Hockey League season when so much was expected of him, Bo Horvat not only refused to believe in the sophomore jinx but didn't even want to discuss it.

Then in the fall of 2015, the Vancouver Canucks centre went 27 games without scoring and felt like he'd never celebrate another goal. Horvat's epic slump ended a short time after captain Henrik Sedin sidled up to him before a morning skate in Philadelphia and reassured his despondent 20-year-old teammate that he was a good player, had not forgotten how to play, and simply needed to stop pushing so hard and stay positive.

So now Bo knows about the NHL's sophomore slump, but he hopes linemate Brock Boeser never will.

Horvat reported to training camp this weekend lighter and leaner than last season, his weight of 214 pounds down at least 15 from the heaviest time of his first four NHL seasons. Boeser, however, added about 10 pounds of a muscle and is a bulkier 208 going into his sophomore year.

Will they be strong enough to carry the Canucks attack on their shoulders?

Horvat and Boeser are not NHL superstars. Not yet, at least. But on a low-scoring, rebuilding Canucks team, they carry the superstar's burden of offensive expectations. And this season, Hank and Danny Sedin, who combined for 105 points last season before they retired, are not around to provide counsel and secondary scoring.

"Honestly, out of these first four years of my career, the second year was when I learned the most," Horvat said Sunday. "That was a big learning year for me and to go through that adversity early in my career, I think, just made me mentally stronger."

It may have made him a future captain, too. Horvat scored 14 goals in the second half of 2015-16 to salvage his sophomore season. But it was how he conducted himself in the first half, the character and attitude he displayed, that convinced the Sedins of Horvat's leadership ability.

"I just tried to do a little bit too much," Horvat said. "I was trying to be that goal-scorer, trying to be a difference-maker, and I think I was just forcing the issue. Once I sat back and played both ends of the rink, just got my confidence back, then things started to take off."

"Just don't get too ahead of yourself. That's the biggest problem. It really humbled me that year. I thought I was going to go into my second year and it was going to be easy after the way I finished my first year. (But) the second year is that much harder because you have to prove to yourself and everybody that you can still do it. I had to perform. It wasn't an easy year."

Really, neither was last year. A first-liner for the first time, Horvat had 22 goals and 44 points while missing 18 games due to a fractured ankle. Boeser, his rookie linemate, scored 29 goals and tied Danny Sedin for



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the team scoring title at 55 points despite missing 20 games, the last 16 of them with a fracture in his lower back.

Even with the injury, Boeser was a Calder Trophy finalist. If he plays the full season this year, anything less than 35 goals will be viewed as a disappointment. He's 21 years old.

"I think I don't need to change my game at all," Boeser said. "I think if I play the way I did last year and come to the rink every day with the same mindset ... I think I can have the same season I did last year and hopefully build off that."

Unlike Horvat three years ago, Boeser didn't try to deflect questions about a sophomore slump. That's because he has already experienced one, struggling through a second season at the University of North Dakota two years ago after winning a national championship (and amassing 60 points in 42 games) as a freshman.

"I think back to my second year in college," Boeser said. "I think that's why I stayed; I knew it would be harder my second year there. It's the same thing here. (But) at North Dakota, I think I changed the way I played, just trying to do too much. I need to make sure I come to the rink every day and find ways to improve, but I can't stray away from the type of game I play."

It sounds like he learned in college what Horvat did in the NHL: try to do too much and you'll sink like a flailing man in quicksand.

"It kind of sucks that he has all that pressure on him," Horvat said. "But at the same time, he's a pretty level-headed kid. He doesn't let things faze him too much. He's confident, but he's humble about it. He's not bragging about how he's going to go out and score 40 goals. He knows he has to work for it."

"A lot of it is mental, how you come in. Some guys, (the sophomore jinx) doesn't affect them at all. They play on great teams, play with great players, whatever it is. But it is something to be aware of. You have to come in and not take it lightly."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 09.17.2018

1105016 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens' Lehtonen hoping for good health, bounces this season

Eric Engels September 16, 2018, 4:22 PM

MONTREAL — You could see Montreal Canadiens forward Artturi Lehtonen's eyes light up from a kilometre away.

The Finnish winger hopped off the bench early in Sunday's intra-squad scrimmage, after all the hard work had already been done by his teammates, and then he drifted to the top of the right faceoff dot, prepared himself for the one-timer pass from David Schlemko, and ended up unleashing a laser that beat Carey Price high over the blocker.

"That was an absolute bomb," said goaltender Charlie Lindgren, who watched from 180 feet away as the puck ricocheted out of the net as fast as it went in.

It was just about the easiest goal Lehtonen had scored in a calendar year, and he's hoping there are many more of them on the way.

For Canadiens fans wondering where the goals are going to come from this season, with former 30-goal scorer Alex Galchenyuk and perennial 30-goal scorer Max Pacioretty now plying their trades for other teams, the hope has to be that Lehtonen can help pick up some of the slack.

Of course, expectations were reasonably high after Lehtonen authored an 18-goal rookie campaign in 2016-17. Consensus was that he was ready to lock down a top-six spot and contribute much more regularly on the scoreboard.

But a confluence of bad luck and a bad injury limited the 55th overall draft pick in 2013 to just 12 goals in 66 games last season.

"Obviously I have to be a lot better for our team," Lehtonen said after standing out as one of the best players on the Bell Centre ice on Sunday. "Last year was a huge disappointment for me and our team and I've got to be better."

Being in good health should help the 23-year-old with that challenge.

It was just days before arriving at Canadiens training camp last year that Lehtonen suffered the back injury that threw his start to the season off-kilter. He did whatever he could to play through the pain before it inevitably stopped him in his tracks.

"You just try not to think about it," Lehtonen said. "It's in the back of your head. But it is what it is, you can't really do anything about it. And it couldn't get any worse."

The injury was grueling and it played its part in limiting him to just two goals in his first 18 games, eventually pushing him to the sidelines for 16 games between November and December.

The thing is, though, it hadn't stopped him from being one of Montreal's most dangerous players.

Luck, on the other hand, had. According to naturalstattd.com, Lehtonen had produced more high-danger scoring chances than any other player on the Canadiens through those first 18 games. But it just seemed like no matter what he tried, the puck just wouldn't go in for him.

"If I had the chance at a one-timer like I had [on Sunday], it was going at least two meters wide last year," he said. "It was fun to score today, for sure. I got to tee it off in my own time. Schlemmer made a really flat pass to me and I had all the time in the world to take that one-timer and see where I wanted to put it."

The execution was flawless.

Now Lehtonen is hoping a summer's worth of work on his core strength and balance is going to ensure his back remains healthy, and he's praying that luck will continue to be on his side as training camp moves along.

"I want to help the team more scoring-wise," said Lehtonen, who skated on a line on Sunday with Nicolas Deslauriers and Jesperi Kotkaniemi. "I know I can do that, I just have to hit the net."

It's something he did with more frequency from February through to the end of last season, a period over which he scored 10 goals and appeared every bit as lethal as he had in Montreal's six-game loss to the New York Rangers in the 2017 Stanley Cup Playoffs. And it's something the Canadiens need him to do starting from Day 1 of their season.

"I feel great. I had a great summer and I'm ready to go," said Lehtonen.

That's good news for him — and for the Canadiens.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 09.17.2018

1105017 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Penguins' Malkin: I don't want to be a guy who wins 3 Cups and coasts

Sonny Sachdeva



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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A couple months removed from his 32nd birthday, no one would fault Evgeni Malkin for taking a slight step back at this stage in his career.

The Russian phenom has given everything he's had to Pittsburgh for 12 seasons, amassing three Stanley Cups, two scoring titles, and a trio of MVP nods split between the regular and post-season. But heading into his 13th campaign, the Penguins veteran says he has no intention of fading into the background as a new crop of marquee talents take centre stage.

"It's the young guys like (Connor) McDavid, (Taylor) Hall, (Nathan) MacKinnon — they try to show their best game, and they dominate this league right now," Malkin told reporters following a training camp practice Sunday. "But I don't want to be a guy who wins three Cups and stops playing, just [known as] a nice guy. I want to be a good player for the next five years, next six years. I try to do my best, try to dominate every game.

"I want to be a top centre in this league for the next five, six years, for sure."

His 2017-18 effort suggests that goal isn't so far-fetched.

Coming off four years of watching his regular seasons limited by injury, and his point production capped in the 70s, Malkin broke through with a dominant 42-goal, 98-point effort in 2017-18 — his third-highest annual goal total and fourth-highest point total.

The return to form was also good enough to vault the 2004 second-overall pick back into the league's elite — both totals ranked fourth-highest league-wide — and into the No. 3 spot on our 2018-19 Top 100 rankings.

That's a good sign for the Penguins faithful, who hope their club still has some more championships under its belt before the Steel City's starring duo calls it a career.

"I hope a couple more. We try every year," Malkin said. "Sid's an unbelievable player — he's won everything. I look to him every day, and he's still hungry. He works hard every day, he's our [leader]. I'm trying to be the same, show my best level."

As Pittsburgh came up short in its three-peat bid, Malkin watched fellow countryman Alex Ovechkin finally break through and claim his first Stanley Cup ring — a long-awaited role reversal after Washington bowed out to the eventual champion Penguins in each of the two years prior. Pittsburgh's alternate captain said, though he was happy to hear his good friend finally climbed that championship summit, he didn't watch the moment himself.

"I'm glad finally Washington won. They have great team, for sure," Malkin said of his longtime rival. "Of course, I'm upset, you know. I feel like if we had beat Washington, we have a chance to win [the Cup]. I always think about it this way. But it doesn't matter who plays in the Final, Washington or Tampa, I never watch. ... Last year or five years ago, it doesn't matter. It's not fun to watch."

Nor was it likely a treat to battle through the grind of the post-season on a faulty knee. The big-bodied centreman said he had significant pain in his knee throughout last year's playoff run, barring him from pushing off with his right leg and skating at his usual level.

Malkin said the obvious, he wasn't 100 percent in the playoffs. Now? "One-thousand percent."

— Jason Mackey (@JMackeyPG) September 16, 2018

A few weeks of rehab after the conclusion of the season, and a summer with a heavier focus on skating, has him feeling healthy heading into 2018-19, however.

How exactly the lineup around him shakes out remains a question mark. But all eyes are sure to be on the potential combination of him and star

winger Phil Kessel, after reports surfaced early in the summer about the American sniper's discontent with his lack of minutes on Malkin's wing.

For his part, No. 71 said he'd enjoy suiting up with Kessel, though some adjustment is needed if the two are to play together regularly.

"I like playing with him, for sure. I think we understand each other," Malkin said. "We need to just change little bit — in the D-zone, we need to play better. I think coach is little bit upset when we play together — he understands we're great offensive players but sometimes we need to play better D-zone, for sure. ... I feel I can play with anybody, but I like playing with Phil."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 09.17.2018

1105018 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Why Senators' Bobby Ryan flew 'off the grid' as trade talks swirled

Luke Fox | September 16, 2018, 12:56 PM

Ottawa Senators owner Eugene Melnyk wanted to get him off the payroll, and Bobby Ryan simply wanted off the grid.

As far as players are concerned, the injury-troubled Senators winger represents the cost-cutting club's heftiest financial commitment, by a long shot: four more seasons at a \$7.2-million cap hit, with Ryan's actual salary jumping to a team-high \$7.5 million and remaining at that rate through 2022.

Ryan has been traded once before and emerged intact after allowing himself to ride the emotional roller coaster of hockey's deafening rumour mill. He knows which way the wind blows.

So Ryan is well aware that, if GM Pierre Dorion had his druthers, he would've been packed up as Erik Karlsson's carry-on for a one-way flight west.

"I thought a couple points this summer I was gone, through very small conversations I'd had," says Ryan, somewhat surprised to be here, in Ottawa, sitting down for a chat with Sportsnet at the opening of training camp. "When you're least ready for it, it happens. Having been prepared for it all summer, I said there's no way it's going to happen — and here I am."

Once Ryan learned the Senators posted a two-for-one sale sign on he and Karlsson, he reached out to the Norris winner with questions.

"Even though he knows I'm not going to go anywhere with it, he kinda played it close to the chest," Ryan says.

"I understand it. I just said, 'Listen, if there's something I need to know, please give me a heads up,' and he's always going to be gracious enough to do that."

Ryan can chuckle now, a little. He can sound confidently optimistic when discussing Ottawa's Grade A prospects, the Thomas Chabots, Colin Whites and Brady Tkachuks. And it feels genuine.

This doesn't feel like that memorable deadline day in Vancouver, when an emotional Roberto Luongo said, "My contract sucks," and you felt for the guy.

The richest human beings, we sometimes forget, are still human beings.

Being constantly portrayed as a financial anchor, a blockbuster buster, does that eat at Ryan?



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"People are free to say it. I didn't ask for the contract. That's why you pay an agent, and that's why they negotiate with people across the hall," says Ryan, who rounded the bases back in Oct. 2014 to the tune of \$50.75 million.

Much too much, critics scream, for a four-time 30-goal winger who managed just 11 goals last season and hit a career-worst minus-12. For a guy who has missed 20 games in each of the past two campaigns because his fingers keep blocking pucks.

But Ryan — a man who has dealt with much realer issues over his 31 years — refuses to walk around Canadian Tire Centre wearing his paycheck like an albatross.

"A lot of people probably feel that way. I don't. My contract is alright with me," he smiles.

"I understand the ramifications of it, but that's the business side. I get to be pretty isolated. I go home. I turn my phone off and enjoy my time away.

"I just learned a long time ago to control what you can control."

Ryan can control where he spends his off-season.

So he and his young family — wife Danielle, two-year-old daughter Riley, and newborn son Chase — moved to the last North American city you'd run into an NHL autograph hound: Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

"Honest to God, I wanted to throw a dart at the map and be off the grid as much as I could. Somewhere remote so nobody wanted to visit," Ryan explains. "There's no people. I need to get away from hockey for a couple months. I need to recharge."

Strange as it seems, Idaho is quietly gaining steam as a hipster summertime hangout for pros. Ryan trained with Tampa's Tyler Johnson, Calgary's Derek Ryan, plus a cluster of AHL and junior players.

"[Wayne] Gretzky was the first one out there years ago, and some guys followed him. It's kinda been a trickle effect," Ryan says. "Tyler and I moved in this year, and now we're recruiting guys from all over to move in as well."

Ryan has also had success controlling when his babies are born. He considers himself lucky to be in the delivery room to welcome both children in June — playoff proof.

"If you sat in on a birth, especially if it's your child, I don't think you can describe it," Dad says. Ryan woke up at 4 a.m. on June 25, 10 minutes before Chase came into the world. "Pure elation."

Obscured by the smoke billowing from Ottawa's tire fire is the fact a healthy Ryan should still be a difference-maker. Exploding for 15 points in 19 playoff games in 2017, Ryan was essential to the Sens' remarkable run that spring. He's been labeled fragile, but cold rubber smashing into his gloves are "just freak injuries," he says.

He spent the entire first month of the off-season just rehabbing his broken index finger through rubber band work and resistance exercises. Now, he says, it feels good, stronger than it has in two years — and he'll never take his hands for granted.

"All of a sudden you don't have them, and it's hard to pick your kid up," Ryan says. "I can't tell people that I'm 10 times more frustrated than you are that I'm not playing. People don't understand. They just think: He did it again. They don't understand it's a lot harder to be out than it is to play: getting bag-skated every day, getting bike-ridden every day, lifting.

"Because I can do everything except for play hockey, I'm essentially going back to a summer program, which is not a lot of fun to do. You don't even feel like you're part of the team. You're on different schedules. You say hello in and out the door, and that's it. It's depressing being out, especially when you know it's Day 1 of six weeks."

Like Ryan, the Senators are determined to leave the hurt and drama and losing streaks behind. Stylistically, coach Guy Boucher — of whom Ryan

is an ardent supporter — will implement a renewed focus on speed. The attack will be belligerent, the legs younger, the identity... less boring.

"We've been guilty of sitting back, especially when we do have the lead. It seems we allow the other team to come at us in waves, then we're tied and then we give the lead up," Ryan says. "I like that we'll be aggressive, that the forecheck is going to change. I thought it was too passive at times. You felt like you were on an island at times, especially when you're waiting.

"I'm really encouraged. I had a couple meetings with Coach, and he showed me what's going to change, where we're going from here. It's stuff I think our team will relate to and get. It's going to be very simple and it's going to work."

A recharged Bobby Ryan survived the summer, the baby is healthy and happy, and he's back on the grid, controlling the things he can.

Ryan stops a beat and flashes a grin.

"I just hope I don't take a puck early, and we're good to go."

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Sportsnet.ca / Can Maple Leafs' Auston Matthews get more assists than goals?

Andrew Berkshire September 16, 2018, 9:27 AM

Earlier this offseason, Toronto Maple Leafs superstar Auston Matthews put it out there that he wanted to record more assists than goals this upcoming season. It doesn't seem very unreasonable on the surface, but might be difficult when you consider that he was on pace for 45 goals last year over an 82 game season, and that would put his career average at 42.5 goals per 82 games.

Looking only at forwards, 35 players recorded 45 or more assists last season, so considering Matthews' status as one of the NHL's premier offensive talents, to be amongst the top-35 playmaking forwards may not be that big of a challenge, but the question is how much does his game need to change in order to meet or exceed that threshold?

Including all situations, it might be a little tricky, so let's cut things down to 5-vs-5 play only which brings Matthews down to an average of 31 goals per 82 games. According to Corsica.Hockey only 10 forwards in the NHL hit 31 or more assists at 5-vs-5 last season. How does Matthews' playmaking chops compare to the average of those players?

Looking at the passing tendencies of only the 10 players to hit 31 5-vs-5 assists last season, we can see that overall, they passed the puck in the offensive zone more often than Matthews did, about 3.1 more passes per 20 minutes in total, but Matthews was actually slightly above average in the most important and dangerous pass type; passes to the slot.

A good portion of the scoring chances that Matthews generates for his teammates don't come from direct passes, as with most shooters, they come from creating rebounds that linemates pounce on which is a rich source of assists. Even including those, he still generated fewer scoring chances than the average top-10 playmaker did last season.

While Matthews passed the puck less often than his peer group, it should be noted that he preferred to make passes that were more difficult, focusing on penetrating the slot and keeping the puck low in the zone with north cycle passes. The top playmakers in the league almost universally like to defer to the point with south cycle passes quite often to make more space for themselves and spread out opposing coverage while Matthews seems to almost prefer to draw opponents towards him



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and overpower them with his unique combination of stickhandling and physicality.

Sportsnet insiders ranked the 100 best players in the NHL for the 2018–19 season, from Alex Radulov to Connor McDavid. Check out the list, then create your own top 10.

There's more than one way to bake a cake, and although Matthews completes fewer offensive zone passes per 20 minutes than anyone in the top-10 assist leaders, he's spitting distance from Dylan Larkin, and his passes are of a higher quality on average.

In order to improve his chances of surpassing the 30 assist plateau, Matthews should probably try to use his defencemen a bit more, but a more important focus for him, in particular, might be completing more East-West passes, moving the puck through but not into the slot, for wingers that can make quick one-timers that force a goaltender to react quickly.

When Mike Babcock was asked about Matthews' intent to record more assists than goals, he mentioned that William Nylander would need to be a better goal-scorer for him, and it's true that despite Nylander's far above average shot, his 5-vs-5 goal scoring has been underwhelming, scoring 11 and 12 goals the last two seasons, and scoring on just 7.97% and 9.09% of his shots on goal.

Matthews' other consistent linemate has been Zach Hyman, who has scored six and 13 goals at 5-vs-5 the last two seasons, scoring on 4.48% and 9.7% of his shots on goal. Last year Hyman likely scored at a rate higher than his talent level, so to expect him to be the one to bring the goals is probably unfair. The expected swap to Patrick Marleau in that spot though, could be enough to push Matthews' assists way up without changing his game much.

Marleau is an above average 5-vs-5 goal scorer and hasn't been the beneficiary of passes of the caliber Matthews is making since he played with Joe Thornton. Therein lies the problem for Matthews though, even if he does change his game, playmakers are always reliant on their linemates to ultimately put the puck in the net, and thus far in his career, he hasn't had linemates capable of doing that regularly at 5-vs-5.

Sportsnet insiders ranked the 100 best players in the NHL for the 2018–19 season, from Alex Radulov to Connor McDavid. Check out the list, then create your own top 10.

It's also worth mentioning that of the top 5-vs-5 assist producers, only Connor McDavid was able to top the 30 5-vs-5 goal mark last season, with Nikita Kucherov the next closest at 27. In fact, according to Corsica, Connor McDavid last season is the only player in the last five seasons to hit 30 goals and 30 or more assists at 5-vs-5, so Matthews would be looking to join a very exclusive club.

All this aside, Matthews could easily have a dynamite year on the powerplay setting up someone like John Tavares for example, and see his assist numbers explode, but I'm truly interested to see if he can sharpen his playmaking ability without sacrificing his goal scoring. If adding more passing to his game comes at the expense of goals though, I'm not sure it's a change he should make.

Through his first two seasons, Matthews has already established himself as one of the most impressive 5-vs-5 goal scorers of the era, and it would be a shame to mess with that for an arbitrary reason.

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Sportsnet.ca / Long-term Karlsson contract the next challenge for Sharks GM

Mike Johnston | September 16, 2018, 6:02 PM

The San Jose Sharks acquired Erik Karlsson without having to give up any of their top prospects. Doug Wilson's next challenge as the team's general manager will be to lock up the two-time Norris Trophy winner to a long-term extension.

Wilson is no stranger to awarding lengthy deals as the Sharks currently have five players (Brent Burns, Marc-Edouard Vlasic, Logan Couture, Evander Kane, Tomas Hertl, Martin Jones) locked up through at least 2021-22 and it's something he's confident he'll be able to accomplish with Karlsson too.

"We wouldn't have done this deal if we weren't very comfortable of that opportunity, and that's why I was able to have discussions with their agents and with Erik," Wilson told Curtis Pashelka in a Q&A with The Mercury News.

Karlsson has one year remaining on his current contract but he's eligible to re-sign with San Jose for up to eight years. His \$6.5-million salary cap hit will be among the top bargains in the NHL in 2017-18 before he presumably gets a significant raise on his next deal.

It's no secret Drew Doughty's eight-year, \$88-million extension will be in the ballpark of what Karlsson could seek.

"Top players are going to get paid well, they are. And they deserve to get paid well," Wilson said. "It's just the distribution of your cap and when you're trying to build a team trying to win a Stanley Cup, it's a team-building concept. Joe Thornton (who took a \$3-million pay this summer), I can't even put into words what he does for this organization when it comes to that. My job and my owner's job is to make this a place players want to play and then once players get here, they'll do whatever to take care of each other."

Team captain Joe Pavelski is also entering a contract year and should garner a new long-term deal. It's unclear what Pavelski's next cap hit might be, but considering Kane is making \$7 million per season and Couture's cap hit jumps to \$8 million starting in 2019, re-signing Pavelski won't come cheap.

The Sharks already have more than \$53.7 million committed for the 2019-20 season and that's not factoring in what Karlsson and Pavelski might make. Joonas Donskoi is also a pending UFA, while Timo Meier is among the team's restricted free agents in need of a new deal and pay bump.

In addition to managing a complicated cap situation, Wilson must also consider Karlsson's injury history during contract negotiations.

The smooth-skating Swede bounced back from an Achilles tear in his fourth season with no lingering issues, and missed the beginning of last season after recovering from off-season ankle surgery, but Wilson said he isn't concerned about Karlsson's health or durability going forward.

"We did our research," Wilson explained. "This guy, he's tough as nails. ... Honestly, I really believe he's just coming into his prime."

If Karlsson really is "just coming into his prime" then it certainly bodes well for a rather stacked Sharks team. Karlsson also happens to be joining a contender after a depressing season with the Ottawa Senators.

"Great athletes need to have chances to win," Wilson added. "Whether they're going through a rebuilding mode or whatever, it's one of the reasons why — it's not judging other people — I would have a very difficult time as a GM going through a rebuilding mode. When you've signed high-end players to long-term contracts, and then you're telling them, 'Oh, by the way, we don't have a chance to win.' It's just a personal belief. Not having a chance to win would be difficult."

A freshly motivated Karlsson? That's a scary thought for teams around the league to ponder.

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Sportsnet.ca / 31 Thoughts: Examining Erik Karlsson trade fallout

Elliotte Friedman September 14, 2018, 12:05 PM

- What does Karlsson trade mean for Duchene, Stone?
- William Nylander, Maple Leafs still far apart?
- Laine Unleashed: Expect more ice time for Jets sniper

There is knowing Ottawa was going to trade Erik Karlsson, and there is seeing Ottawa trade Erik Karlsson.

You don't know what it means until it actually happens. Now, the reality hits and we're left to examine the fallout.

First, Karlsson himself. Considering how divorce became inevitable over the last 10 months, it was really something to see the emotion on his face. There was always a sense that the captain preferred to stay, but lack of confidence in ownership made it impossible. The shock on his face proved that to be true.

He and wife Melinda have been through an awful lot over the past year. All he's known is the Senators. She's Ottawa to the bone. His preference was Tampa Bay, but there were times he considered the possibility of Dallas and Vegas. The Sharks and Senators spoke on-and-off throughout the process, but it is believed things ramped up during the past two-to-three weeks. It's not a huge surprise there's no immediate extension — Karlsson didn't have a ton of time to process the idea.

San Jose's Western Conference rivals were extremely unhappy. The Sharks, already a force, are even better. They like to bet on themselves. Just like with Evander Kane, with Martin Jones, with Brent Burns, with Joe Thornton. All of those players were traded to Silicon Valley. None of them left. It's a great place to live, work and play.

As one exec said, "If you're interested in signing him next summer, it's a lot tougher. Especially coming from a fishbowl."

As for the Senators, there are multiple angles. First, their primary upcoming UFAs: Mark Stone and Matt Duchene. Like Karlsson, they now move from an idea of the future to really understanding the future. Duchene said last week that there weren't any serious talks to that point. There were conversations last summer with Stone, who is not eligible for a new contract until Jan. 1 (although they can talk beforehand). This is going to be a long process. Does this change their thinking?

Locally, there is an enormous crisis of confidence in Eugene Melnyk's ownership. There's just no goodwill, no buy-in from the fanbase. A few executives who watched their prospects last weekend in Montreal came away impressed with how good their top guys were. A couple said Rudolfs Balcers has a chance to be much more than what's expected for a fifth-round draft pick. But their fans are so upset right now, they don't want to hear it.

According to multiple sources, the closest Karlsson came to being traded prior to Thursday was to the Golden Knights at last year's deadline. From what I was told, that was "a better business deal, but not a great hockey deal." That means Bobby Ryan was included, with Vegas saying, "If you want us to do that, you're not getting our best."

At the time, Melnyk's mandate was a great business deal AND a great hockey deal. A time machine doesn't exist, but if he was willing to drop Ryan from the trade seven months ago, where would the Senators be? Instead, no matter what GM Pierre Dorion did to drive up the price over the summer, potential partners held back their best.

Dallas, for example, was never willing to do Miro Heiskanen. (I'd heard from a few places in the hours before the trade that Ottawa loved what it saw from Roope Hintz at last week's Traverse City tournament and made a pitch, but that was disputed.) And it's clear from the "Hoffman clause" in this trade that Eastern Conference teams were going to have to pay more.

Interesting condition on Karlsson trade: If he appears on the reserve list of any Eastern Conference team this season, SJ must send another first-round pick to OTT by 2022.

Call that the Mike Hoffman Clause. <https://t.co/f2q4c5MTHG>

— Chris Johnston (@reporterchris) September 13, 2018

If the time comes that Duchene and/or Stone are to be traded, the good news for the Senators is that interested teams will have extra motivation. They'll either be struggling and searching for a boost, a contender who sees one as the final piece, or someone who wants them long-term.

Clearly, Ottawa wanted this saga to end. I wondered if the Senators were worried about Karlsson re-injuring his ankle, but that fear was downplayed. The best thing they can do now is take a deep breath, declare themselves (temporarily) closed for business, and wait for the pressure to rise for someone else.

### 31 THOUGHTS

1. Ottawa's interviews for its vacant assistant GM position have included Chris O'Hearn (formerly Arizona), Claude Loiselle (formerly Islanders and Toronto), Brad Holland (formerly Toronto), internal candidates (Jim Clark and Tim Pattyson believed to be among them) and local TSN Radio host Shawn Simpson. Dorion indicated a hire is coming.

There was, at some point in the summer, contact between Eugene Melnyk and former Vancouver GM Mike Gillis. A couple of sources indicated they heard Gillis and Melnyk discussed a job, but couldn't come to an agreement. (Gillis declined to comment.) Thursday night, via email, Melnyk denied it, saying "no chance" it went that far.

2. Duchene took a deep dive into his overall game during the summer. He said he returned to the curve he used for the first five seasons of his career, one that he changed at the request of a Hall of Fame GM. "Joe Sakic got me to use his curve, he wanted me to try it and I really liked it," Duchene said.

After four years, though, he tinkered and went back to his roots. That means less of a wedge and more of a toe-curve. Not going to the World Championship meant getting back to training in May, skating twice a week by June and three times a week after. Any particular areas of focus? "Slowing the game down. Do things fast, but don't hurry."

3. Prior to the Karlsson trade, Duchene said Ottawa's veterans had some conversation during the summer about how to fix what ailed their room. "We've got to do more things together as a group," he said. "We've got to be tighter." They also discussed better practice habits.

4. As training camps open, there's no clarity on Rick Nash's future. There were plenty of teams who checked in (Las Vegas and Toronto believed to be among them), and a GM indicated he heard one club was willing to offer \$16 million over three years. Wife Jessica recently gave birth to their third child, and Nash's injury history (including multiple concussions) had him seriously considering retirement. Agent Joe Resnick: "Nothing has changed since July 1. Status quo."

5. Like Carey Price one year ago, Tyler Seguin and agent Ian Pulver made sure that their no-move protection is effective immediately, even though his extension does not take effect until next summer. The way Seguin got talks moving did not go unnoticed.

Two weeks ago, at the BioSteel camp in Toronto, he used the word "disappointing" four times in his media availability to describe the lack of progress. No screaming, no rhetoric, polite, but firm. But there's a lot of frustration everywhere with the unusually large number of unsigned restricted free agents.



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6. Let's look at some cases: The gap between Toronto and William Nylander sounds wide. The player doesn't want a bridge deal. Neither Maple Leafs GM Kyle Dubas nor agent Lewis Gross are talking, but the rumour is the player ask is near Leon Draisaitl territory (\$8.5 million AAV). I can see that being true for three reasons.

First, a player/agent ask is always high – Draisaitl's contract is a bit of an outlier compared to his peers, with Aleksander Barkov, Nik Ehlers and Nathan MacKinnon all in the \$6 million range. Second, in the two years before he signed, Draisaitl had 128 points. Nylander had 122. (Draisaitl also had an awesome 2017 playoffs with 16 points in 13 games.) Third, Connor McDavid's (deserved) contract pushed Draisaitl's number to a higher level.

You can see how Nylander's camp would strive to stay close to Mitch Marner, Auston Matthews and John Tavares. The surest predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour and Gross has not been afraid to sit clients (Johnny Gaudreau, Torey Krug). I suspect Toronto will point out that Tavares, Nazem Kadri and Morgan Rielly have all taken less to make it work. Because Dubas is new to his position, it's harder to judge his reaction. But, he's not afraid to stand up for himself and is a different thinker. You should not expect him to follow conventional wisdom, whatever that might be.

7. I don't have a specific idea of where things stand between Nick Ritchie and Anaheim, but have heard that's been a tough negotiation. My guess is Sam Reinhart and Buffalo do a bridge.

8. The defencemen — Josh Morrissey, Darnell Nurse and Shea Theodore — are interesting. A GM pointed out last week that it's been a couple of years since their comparables did bridge deals.

In 2016, four signed two-year contracts: Matt Dumba (\$5.1 million), Cody Ceci (\$5.6 million), Ryan Murray (\$5.65 million) and Jacob Trouba (\$6 million). Since then, it is five years for Colton Parayko, six for Shayne Gostisbehere, Noah Hanifin, Damon Severson and Brady Skjei, seven for Jaccob Slavin, eight for Michael Matheson.

Morrissey prefers a bridge, Nurse prefers a bridge, and Theodore is apparently wide open. Some of the trouble stems from teams saying those contracts are based on what happened two years ago, while players/agents respond with, "Have you heard of inflation?"

9. Eligible for an extension on July 1, 2019, Nashville's Roman Josi has new representation, Wasserman/Orr Hockey.

10. There's no reason not to take Steve Yzerman at his word, that family concerns were the reason he stepped down as Tampa Bay GM. Say he signed a five-year extension. That would mean almost 15 years with the Lightning, with his family in Detroit. It's a big ask. One of the other theories is that the organization was concerned about losing both Yzerman and Julien BriseBois, promoted to replace him. The latter's time in the No. 1 chair was coming, whether in Tampa or elsewhere. (He was interviewed by Pittsburgh when the Penguins hired Jim Rutherford.)

Yzerman's uncertainty made it important to keep/elevate BriseBois. As usual, Yzerman kept it in the vault. His GM brethren reacted with shock, with one texting, "Are you drunk?" when asked if he'd heard anything about the potential move. Whether discussing moves or in casual conversation, Yzerman gave little indication anything was coming. His typical (and generally appreciated) bluntness set off a storm of speculation, however. Instead of saying he has no future plans other than going home, he left open the door for something else in one year's time. We'll see.

11. Columbus goalie Sergei Bobrovsky had some blunt commentary as training camp opened for the Blue Jackets. GM Jarmo Kekalainen declined to comment when asked by local reporters. It's not an optimistic situation. While Artemi Panarin did get together with the team during the summer, Bobrovsky did not show for at least one meeting. Kekalainen and agent Paul Theofanous did not respond to requests for comment.

#CBJ Bobrovsky: "After the last season, I told the situation to the management of the Blue Jackets, so they know everything. They know

my plans for the season. They know my plans for the future. They know everything."

Asked what those plans are, Bobrovsky: "You have to ask them."

— Aaron Portzline (@Aportzline) September 13, 2018

12. One Blue Jacket excited to get going: Alexander Wennberg. He slumped from 59 points to 35 after signing a six-year extension. Many players do struggle with the pressure in the immediate aftermath of a new deal, but Wennberg didn't think that was the problem.

"I like it there (Columbus)," he said. "I want to be there. But I did stress about points. (Coach John Tortorella told me), 'Don't change. Do the little things right, don't get caught up in worrying and change how you play.'" He was very interesting talking about watching Washington finally bust through and win. "I think we are good, too. We must be doing things right because the best teams beat us. We are young, still gaining experience."

13. Wennberg is pretty funny. Asked who the best Swedish NHL golfer is, he thought about it before answering, "Erik Gustafsson." Then, he added, "I'm saying that to be modest. I already beat him."

14. You'll remember that Washington traded defenceman Brooks Orpik to Colorado at the draft. The Avalanche bought out Orpik from the one season remaining on his contract, and he went back to the Capitals one month later. Savings for Washington: \$4 million in cap space. A couple of weeks ago, the league notified the individual clubs that it reviewed the situation, and explained its concerns. Teams viewed the memo as a warning, that if the NHL could make an example of someone, it would.

15. Winnipeg's Patrik Laine, asked what the Jets' coaches told him at the end of last season: "Nothing specific," he answered. "Just be ready for more minutes." Laine had 44 goals in 2017-18, averaging 16:29 per night. Since the NHL's ice-time data went public, no one's scored as much in so few minutes. According to hockey-reference.com, only two 50-goal men averaged less than 20 minutes a game: Jonathan Cheechoo (56 in 2005-06) and Milan Hejduk (50 in 2002-03). They were close, though. Will be fun to watch Laine Unleashed.

16. The Jets begin the 2018-19 season as a serious Stanley Cup contender. Both Laine and Mark Scheifele said they had no idea how hard the playoffs were going to be. "You win a round," Laine said. "You feel so good about yourself. Then you start the next series, and the other team feels good about itself, too." Added Scheifele: "You need a short memory. The only time you can relax is when you have the Stanley Cup in your hands."

Boston's Charlie McAvoy, whose team won one fewer round than the Jets, said he understood what they were talking about. "The feeling in the building and the feeling in the locker room of winning a playoff series, winning a Game 7 versus Toronto, is so emotional," he said. "You're so happy, so tired, but get a feeling as if you've won the whole thing. And then you realize it is only one round. You have to rein it in, because it is only one round."

17. Nashville's Filip Forsberg, asked who will stand up in the Predators' room and say, no matter what happened last year, we are still good enough to win this: "That will be me. That will be me this year. Because I really believe it."

18. Per NHL.com, one of Connor McDavid's 87 career goals is via slapshot. The greats always find something to perfect, and McDavid's one-timer was a focal point in the off-season. "It's an area that I really struggled (with) before," he said. "A little bit is my stick, I use a short little blade, not very tall. So it's hard to take one-timers."

Edmonton's power play was dead last in 2017-18. More than one opposing coach said the day McDavid figures out his shot and becomes a little more selfish, everyone else is in trouble. He admitted the man advantage was a major factor. "I play on the flank and I need to be able to shoot from there. We stumbled on the power play last year...a lot of it runs through my hands, I have to find a way to get better at it."



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Training alongside Steven Stamkos helped. "Watching this guy take one-timers is something like art." What advice did he give? "Be more patient. Let it come to you. I was going out and getting it. You almost get too excited, you just want to hit it. So be patient and let it slide into the perfect spot." McDavid also got serious about golf for the first time in his life. How do you shoot? "Around 90. You've got to break 90 and go from there."

19. What would make McDavid happy? Are we talking 50 goals and 150 points? "If anyone could do that," Draisaitl said, "he can. But 90 points and the playoffs will make him much happier." What would you target? "I don't like to say 30 goals and 50 assists, because if I don't get that, I'll be frustrated as hell."

Asked if he preferred to play with McDavid or Draisaitl, newly signed Oiler Tobias Rieder said, "I will take either." ("He should have picked me," Draisaitl replied.) Rieder is gambling on himself, taking a one-year deal in Edmonton. "I was not satisfied with last season." Bothered by an injury at the start of 2017-18, he simply didn't get going. "You have to produce to get paid."

20. Speaking of one-timers, has Matthews told Tavares he likes them in a certain spot? "Yeah, I told him front foot," Matthews replied. You sure you can get it there? "Yeah, I hope so," Tavares laughed.

21. Another improved shooter? Florida's Vincent Trocheck. "I flirted with a few different techniques watching the playoffs. Auston Matthews' toe-drag shot. I saw Panarin go down the wing, pull it tight and go far side. It made me go insane."

The Panthers' centre also studied one of the NHL's best two-way centres, teammate Aleksander Barkov. "He's a good role model. So much patience, calm demeanor, doesn't show a lot of emotion. I'm a bit too eager sometimes, jump on a puck when not the smartest move. He waits until he's 100 per cent to get the puck before he goes on offence and it's still the same outcome."

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.

22. Bo Horvat's gone from 16 to 20 to 22 goals, but feels there are too many missed opportunities. "I could have been a better finisher around the net. I think I had 10-15 breakaways last year, and I was probably one-for-15," he winced. How do you fix that? "I worked on my hands around the net. Visualizing yourself scoring is a huge part of it. Watching Brock (Boeser) in practice and how he scores all the time...his confidence around the net, I can learn from that."

23. During the summer, a couple of players and coaches raved about T.J. Oshie's play in the Stanley Cup final — pointing out that as the series progressed, the Golden Knights couldn't budge him. "They bounced right off," one said. "They couldn't do anything to him."

At last week's NHL media tour, Oshie said he recognized early in the series the Vegas players were coming hard, so he made an adjustment to his skates. He normally keeps them loose, with some extra padding, for added flexibility. He removed the padding and tied them tighter, going instead for stability. It is a little thing, but it paid off in a big way for Oshie and the Capitals.

24. He didn't want to go into specifics, but Vegas's Marc-Andre Fleury said he's trying to change the way he plays around the posts. "It's still a work in progress," he said.

25. Asked teammate Pierre-Edouard Bellemare if, looking back at it, there was anyone on last year's Knights who surprised him in a positive way. Someone who he wasn't sure about upon first meeting them.

"I'm not a hockey nerd like some other players," Bellemare replied. "I had to Google some of the guys. I would say James Neal. I saw him, saw how he carries himself like a superstar, and I was not sure. But the more I got to know him, the more important I realized he was. In the playoffs,

the way he talked, most of us had never gone that far. He told us what to expect and how good we could be."

Bellemare added that he thought the Golden Knights were going to find a way to come back in the Stanley Cup final until the final few seconds of Game 5.

26. If the NHL ever does a "Most Interesting Man in the World" takeoff, Bellemare would be a good choice. This past summer was the first in four he didn't buy a house and personally renovate it. "We don't do the plumbing, but everything else. Walls, floors. I love it."

27. Other good lines from the NHL Media Tours: Asked if he hoped to get one final big hit out of his career, Detroit's Niklas Kronwall replied, "No, I'm too slow to catch anyone." San Jose's Evander Kane, who briefly lived with Joe Thornton upon his trade to the Sharks, said he saw no evidence Thornton's home even contains a razor.

28. Mentioned this last season, but, again, there is a sense Montreal is going to get more involved in Russian free agency. Not sure if these players are particular targets of theirs, but two names to keep an eye on are forward Ilya Mikheyev (Omsk) and defenceman Artem Zub (St. Petersburg).

29. Impressed that Toronto's top four goalies — Frederik Andersen, Curtis McElhinney, Calvin Pickard and Garret Sparks — showed up together for the premiere of Making Coco: The Grant Fuhr Story.

What a great film this was. Fuhr was always so reserved as a player/person, those of us on the outside didn't get to know him well. This shows a different side and it's really good to see

— Elliotte Friedman (@FriedgeHNIC) September 12, 2018

30. Thing that stuck with me most this summer was from James Andrew Miller's Origins podcast on Nick Saban. ESPN's Tom Rinaldi said, "(Saban's) definition of discipline? He demonstrates with two hands. He holds up his left hand, and he says, 'On this hand is something you really want to do, but you know you shouldn't do. Can you keep yourself from doing it?' On the other hand — and he holds out the hand — is something that you really don't want to do, but you know you need to do. Can you make yourself do it? That's discipline."

31. First broadcast Tuesday. Kraft Hockeyville. Ottawa/Toronto in Lucan, Ont. Drop the puck already.

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1105022 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / McDavid even faster, ready to carry Oilers to redemption in 2018-19

Mark Spector | September 15, 2018, 7:58 AM

EDMONTON — Bad news, hockey world. In a season where Connor McDavid opened by stating he is focused on scoring more goals in 2018-19, something else happened over the summer.

McDavid got even faster.

"He has literally elevated his game to another level. From here, to here," said Edmonton centre Ryan Strome, holding out his hand at about hip height, then raising it a foot-and-a-half. "I don't even know how he does it. The way he worked in the summer? It's crazy."

How crazy?

"He's going to absolutely torch this league," Strome predicted. "I thought I was lucky playing with John Tavares (in New York), and I was. He's one



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of my best friends. And then I got to experience it on another level with Connor.”

Said defenceman Oscar Klefbom: “You think he’s reached his limit. Then he gets even faster.”

There is a nagging responsibility here in Edmonton, of which the rest of the hockey world is well aware. When this generational player landed in the laps of the Edmonton Oilers, it became incumbent upon this organization to furnish him with success.

To build a winner around McDavid, and give the rest of the National Hockey League a chance to watch him play games that matter, in May and June.

Or, as one pundit recently stated, “It is a mortal sin to miss the playoffs with Connor McDavid.”

General manager Peter Chiarelli, then, becomes the keeper of this rare jewel. It’s a true honour, unless you fail. Then you become the organization that couldn’t win — even with McDavid.

“There’s added pressure, yeah. He’s in the limelight all the time, and consequently, our team is,” Chiarelli allowed. “You want to maximize what you can do when Connor is here and performing at the level we all expect. So, sure, there is pressure. We have to make sure we meet those expectations.”

A back-to-back Art Ross winner, McDavid spent a summer listening to what everyone employed by this organization heard. Some variation on the theme of, “What the heck happened to you guys last season?”

Of course, the Oilers rebuild started so long ago. If it were a child, it would be in Pee Wee hockey. Maybe even Bantam. But McDavid has only been here for three years. He doesn’t own all that previous grief, just the fall-on-their-faces season that was 2017-18.

“We definitely get a sense from the fans and the media, and we’re just as eager as (they) are, inside the room. We want to get this thing going, get moving in the right direction,” McDavid said. “Put last year to rest and stop having to talk about it. Having to answer questions about it.”

Ask McDavid about being faster or better this season, and you don’t get much: “My fitness is right where it’s always been. I’m not a guy who will blow the bench press out of the water, but I’m a fit guy.”

But, during the week prior to the opening of camp, word was filtering back from players and coaches. McDavid, for the first time starting an NHL season able to buy a beer in the United States, is getting even better at age 21.

“It is fascinating,” marveled Klefbom. “You look at those players: Sidney Crosby, (Evgeni) Malkin, Patrick Kane, Jonathan Toews... When you have those players, it feels like it’s only a matter of time before you win a Cup. They have so much influence on the game, and all (their teammates), they have so much respect for them. They do so much for the game. That’s what I feel when I’m on the ice with Connor.”

Here is where that responsibility kicks in. That feeling that, ‘Okay, so I’m lucky enough to be playing with a generational superstar. Now I’d better do my part so he finds the success he deserves.’

A group of players, including Strome and Matthew Benning, were discussing just that Friday morning before practice. The opportunity they’ve been presented with here in Edmonton.

“We were just saying, a small group of us, at one point or another he’s going to do something special. We’ve got to pull our rope and be part of that,” said Strome, Edmonton’s third-line centre. “It’s like if you get to play with a Crosby or a Malkin. We’ve got to pull our rope and do our part in getting us all there.”

How good is this team? There are holes, and we don’t know which players will bounce back, and which will not.

But what we do know about this dressing room is that it is inhabited by a bunch of proud athletes who failed a season ago. Who spent the season, and then the ensuing summer, hearing about that failure, and who return as a group that will play with impatience.

Unlike last season, there will be no waiting for things to come around. There are no laurels to rest on this October, no Stanley Cup press clippings to believe.

And now their captain arrives, his mercurial game somehow, impossibly, even better than it was. There is no better motivation in sport than a great player who leads by example.

“He looks like he’s got a different speed that no one thought he had,” Strome said, shaking his head. “I knew he was a winner, and I knew he cared. But last year, I really saw how much it stung him.

“If we can remember that feeling and grasp it, I think it’s going to be a special year.”

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Sportsnet.ca / John Tavares takes first steps toward getting comfortable with Leafs

Chris Johnston September 15, 2018, 7:36 PM

NIAGARA FALLS, Ont. – This is the new normal for John Tavares.

Fans lined up along one side of an arena complex and around the other, stretching all the way back into an adjacent street. Some brought sleeping bags and camped overnight just to gain access to a Toronto Maple Leafs training camp that has taken hype to an even higher level than usual this weekend thanks to the presence of No. 91.

“I think it’s just nice that it’s finally real,” Tavares said, echoing the thoughts of many in these parts. “Let’s get into it, let’s get comfortable, let’s push ourselves to get better.”

There has been a lot to soak in for a routine-oriented individual. Different schedules and a different way of doing things. Plus new coaches, new teammates and a push to find comfort with wingers Mitch Marner and Zach Hyman as soon as possible.

There is also the matter of what he left behind by spurning an aggressive push from the New York Islanders to sign a \$77-million, seven-year contract with the Leafs in free agency. Lou Lamoriello – the general manager who made the opposite move, from Toronto to the Island, this off-season – has since said there’s “no aftermath” for his organization to deal with because of the Tavares departure.

“Players come and go,” Lamoriello told the New York Post earlier this week. “It’s different if they had won championships. It’s different if they had had a lot of success. They haven’t done much — and I don’t say that with any disrespect. Haven’t been to the playoffs the last couple years. Things haven’t worked out the way everybody would have liked them to, from what my understanding is.”

Those were biting comments that featured an interesting interpretation of history. Absent was any mention of how incapable Islanders ownership and management consistently showed itself of building a contender around a two-time Hart Trophy finalist.

Yet, following his second day of practice and scrimmages with his new team, Tavares elected to take the high road when asked about Lamoriello’s comments.



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"Well, I mean, you look at my time there and in the nine years we made the playoffs three times and we got past the first round once," Tavares said Saturday. "We obviously fell short of where we wanted to get to and we didn't have as much consistent success as we'd like and being the captain there as long as I was, I should shoulder a lot of that responsibility in not doing a good enough job and leading that team.

"It's always something that I wish I could have done a better job, but I know I gave it everything I had. Looking back, I have no regrets in the way I performed or the way I prepared and the way I approached each and every day."

Sportsnet Today

His best should be more than good enough to help a burgeoning Leafs team keep striding forward.

There's been plenty of talk behind the scenes in the organization about the need to control the puck more in the offensive zone. The Leafs were the NHL's third-highest scoring outfit last season but felt they relied a little too much on rush attacks rather than establishing a presence along the boards and wearing down opponents.

In pairing Tavares with a workhorse like Hyman and an elusive offensive artist like Marner, they hope to create an antidote to that tendency. What the veteran centre does better than most is control the puck down low – how many players not named Sidney Crosby could do this? – and a noticeably beefed-up Marner said he spent the summer working on his release in anticipation of the scoring opportunities that should create.

"I need to just become more of a shooter, I think," said Marner.

The early training camp scrimmages are a long way from what we'll see in real games, but you could see the trio finding a little more comfort together on Saturday. Marner and Tavares kept an active dialogue after each shift. They also connected on a goal by J.T.

Mike Babcock is planning to find those two some extra ice time in penalty-killing situations. The Islanders deployed Tavares at 4-on-5 the last two seasons, but Marner hasn't done it regularly since junior. The coach envisions them finishing off kills behind the forward tandems of Hyman/Connor Brown and Kasperii Kapanen/Par Lindholm.

"But they've got to be good killers. It's not just 'it's a good theory and it's good for their ice time,'" said Babcock. "I don't care about that. I like winning."

You're hearing more talk about winning than usual at the outset of this camp. Adding Tavares to a team that matched the eventual Stanley Cup champions in the regular-season standings last year has raised the bar. (Not to mention sweater sales, judging by all of the crisp No. 91s walking around Gale Centre these last few days).

Prior to Tavares hitting free agency, there were some in the industry who felt he'd be reluctant to come to Toronto because of the hoopla that comes with it. He grew up in the fishbowl as a phenom granted exceptional status into the Ontario Hockey League at age 15 and had settled into a little more anonymity with the Islanders.

But those people overlooked a fiercely competitive streak and his desire to chase greatness.

"I think there's a lot to prove," said Tavares, with a new Leafs cap pulled low over his forehead. "I think resting on what you've already done is where you can kind of get caught, especially as your career goes on. I think every day, each season, you have to go out and prove yourself again and prove what type of player you are."

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1105024 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Senators' Duchene & Stone talk contracts, Karlsson, Tavares

Luke Fox | September 15, 2018, 11:11 AM

KANATA, Ont. – Upon trading Erik Karlsson and infuriating an Ottawa Senators fan base already on edge, general manager Pierre Dorion was presented with a chance during his press conference to throw his support by the best two hockey players remaining after culling his roster over the past seven months.

Both Matt Duchene, the top-line centre Dorion traded a boatload to acquire in November, and Mark Stone, the best bet to succeed Karlsson as team captain, are impending unrestricted free agents.

Instead of raving about their value to the franchise and expressing a desire to lock up two of the best impending UFAs in their prime, Dorion said this:

"All I can tell you is both Matt Duchene and Mark Stone care a lot about this organization, and we know they want to the Ottawa Senators to win. They love it both in Ottawa, and we'll just let nature take its course to see what happens in the future."

Hockey fans should be accustomed to what happens when you let nature take its course.

Cody Ceci, another core member on an expiring contract, agrees there is concern regarding all the long-term commitments not being made in this town.

"Yeah, they'll need some sort of core to build around if they plan on doing a full rebuild. I'm curious to see what will happen," Ceci told Sportsnet.

"After January, will they start talking extensions and see what players they want to keep as the core? We'll have to wait and see. Coming to the deadline, they'll pick and choose the guys they want and probably end up chipping some guys out and getting some more younger guys and draft picks and stuff to continue the rebuild."

Duchene and Stone would make enticing rentals, to be certain, but neither is ready to write off the Sens' season before it begins. That's not in their nature.

In separate one-on-one conversations, we sat down with Ottawa's best two players standing — solid members of the club's leadership group on thin ice contractually — to chat free agency, rebuilds, dressing-room culture and life without Karlsson.

Ironically, these interviews took place in the same building at the same time Dorion was crossing the Ts and dotting the Is on what "the most significant trade" in the rebuild.

Suffice it to say, it won't be the last.

MATT DUCHENE, UFA 2019

SPORTSNET: When you arrived, the Sens had come within a goal of the Stanley Cup Final. I would think you believed you were joining a winning team. Now, this week, the word rebuild is getting tossed around. How does that make you feel?

DUCHENE: I've been part of a few rebuilds and the roster has looked very different than this. I don't know if this is a full-on rebuild, just looking at the guys we have in that locker room. We have a lot of talented guys who are ready to take a big step right now. I think we're further ahead than the usual term "rebuild." We haven't stripped it down to bare bones. We have a lot of really big pieces. The key going forward is being able to keep those pieces together that are kinda core, and then surround them with already-established guys and young guys. It takes both. You can't win with all old guys; you can't win with all young guys. Hopefully we go in that direction.



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What about Erik Karlsson?

That's a little different, and we're going to react accordingly. You're never going to replace a guy like that. You can go in a different direction and shore up other parts of your hockey club, but that's a piece you're not going to replace that way. The biggest part now is the other guys that we need to be here long term, we gotta make sure that's able to happen.

For yourself, how far did conversations toward an extension get?

There was none.

Do you wish there were negotiations?

I'm OK. I'm good with it. I just want to play hockey again. I felt so good at the end of last year in terms of my game. Obviously, the season was a disappointment for us as a group, and I was upset to not be in the playoffs and competing the way I thought our team would compete when I got here, but I felt all summer that I couldn't wait to get back on the ice and pick up where I left off. That's my main objective, and the rest will take care of itself.

When you watch John Tavares getting multiple offers and July 1 ending in a big paycheck, does your mind start churning about what it might be like to turn UFA?

You definitely pay attention. It's a situation of constant information-gathering whenever you're in a contract year. Johnny's a good friend of mine. We've come up together: same agent, same trainer, same equipment company, same draft, same everything. It's a guy I'm very familiar with and have a really good relationship with. I thought he handled the situation with extreme class and respect for everyone involved. I definitely took notes.

By talking to him or just observing?

Just observing. I left him alone. He probably had a thousand people trying to message him. I'm not looking into a crystal ball. I'm looking at [Friday] is our first day on the ice. Everything will fall where it may, and my biggest thing is being the best player I can be to help this hockey team. I'm happy to be in Ottawa right now. I want to help this team win and get back to where we believe it can be.

senators-matt-duchene-takes-part-in-training-camp

Ottawa Senators' Matt Duchene takes part in training camp in Ottawa on Friday, Sept. 14, 2018. (Sean Kilpatrick/CP)

You've said the team needs to do more activities together off the ice in order to gel and prevent cliques from forming. What does that look like?

It's important. Dinners on the road. Get-togethers, parties, whatever — when it's the right time for that stuff. It's old school, but that's where teams become teams. I learned that at a young age from some older guys. I didn't get it then, but I get it now. Group dinners with the wives and the girlfriends are important because they're an extension of our family in the locker room. We can do a better job. When I said we're a quiet group, I meant that we don't have enough guys taking initiative and wanting to get together and do things in big groups. There's nothing wrong with that, but we can be better in that aspect. The more we get together, the closer we are, the more you want to go battle for your guys.

Attendance is a concern.

I've heard that.

How do you get fans rallying behind this team again?

There's tons of them around the city. Attendance is something that's a head-scratcher, but the ones that come out, we want to make sure we put on a great show for them and, yeah, hopefully attract more. I know [Kanata's Canadian Tire Centre] is far from the city and it's tough to get this way after work for a lot of people, but we appreciate all the season ticket holders and people who support us on a daily basis. We want to be a good team this year. We don't want this thing to be a complete teardown. It doesn't matter what language is being thrown around and by

who. Us in that locker room want to win. We want to be the best team we can be.

MARK STONE, UFA 2019

What comes to mind when you hear the word rebuild from management?

They're going to bring in new faces, bring in young guys. For a guy like me, it's what I make of it. I still feel we have good players on this team. We have some superstar talent. From the young-guys perspective, we have some high-end talent coming. Rebuilds can be two months, they can be six months, they can be years. It's what the team in that locker room makes of it, and we're going to gel as a 22-man group.

Does the plan surprise you considering how close you came in 2017?

Last year still surprises me that we were as bad as we were. I still don't understand, looking at the talent and the group that was in that locker room, how we were able to do that. At the same time, when you have years like [2017-18], you just can't deny it. You need to make change — and that's what looks like is going to happen.

What did go wrong?

A string of things. We didn't play well on the road trip after the Sweden trip. Things spiralled out of control and we just couldn't get it back.

A couple of players mentioned that things got cliquy in the room. As one of the leaders on this team, how do you guard against that and bring everyone together?

There were things that happened, but I don't think there are bad people in our room. There really isn't. I don't think anyone's had a problem with each other. Going into this season, it's about forming a group. You have to form a bond where 22 guys enjoying coming to the rink and being with each other. You're with each other every single day, and if you don't enjoy coming to the rink, then you're not going to succeed.

Have you come to terms with the idea of Erik Karlsson not being here when the puck drops?

You read, you listen, and you live it. Whether he's here or not, it doesn't change the way this team has to play. Yes, we'd love to have him on our team. He's a superstar player. He's our best player. He's our captain. But if he's not, then we'll have to move on with the group we have.

Describe how you felt during the countdown to arbitration this summer.

I understood the process going into it. I understand where they're coming from and where I'm coming from, so I think it was to be expected. We worked hard, long hours for all of July trying to get something done. I didn't, but Pierre and my agent, Craig Oster, worked long hours. We didn't come to agreement on a long-term deal, which is fine. Lucky for me, we were able to get something done before the hearing. We'll look forward to January to see if we can get something else.

Are you heavily involved in the process, or do you prefer to keep it at arm's length?

If I was going into the hearing, I'd want to know absolutely everything. As far as the [negotiations], I let the people I pay money to handle that. I trust Newport Sports and the staff they have. You kinda sit back and relax. Ultimately, it's my decision, but I'm glad I have the people in place to steer me in the right direction.

Sportsnet insiders ranked the 100 best players in the NHL for the 2018–19 season, from Alex Radulov to Connor McDavid. Check out the list, then create your own top 10.

When you see Tavares take his time and knock it out the park with a big payday and have all that attention from contending teams, do you consider the possibilities for yourself next summer?

Every player on July 1 wonders what it'd be like to be a free agent. All the stars aligned for him. Toronto's an up-and-coming team, they had cap space, so it worked well in that situation. I don't think it'll be the same for



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every player every year, but you'd be crazy to say that on July 1 every year you don't wonder what it'd be like to go through that. I don't think about it during the season by any means.

How much will the fates of Karlsson and Duchene affect your own decision-making?

I don't think it does. I just want to see the team go in the right direction, and I want to be on a competitive team. We have lots of players here who are very competitive people, who can help teams win hockey games, and now we're going to incorporate a lot of youth that looks like they're going to help us win hockey games, so that's all I can really ask for.

What would be your message to fans discouraged by Karlsson's situation and the fact you only signed for one year?

I've said all along that I wanted to stay here. I don't think they understand that we tried to get a long-term deal done, and just because we weren't able to this summer. ... I mean, we had a deadline. We were either going to arbitration or we were going to try to do something. All doors are open for me. As far as the team goes, we're young, we're excited and we're hungry. We want to rebuild on a positive structure. Obviously, last year was negative. There's going to be no excuses from our side this year. We're gonna play hard, we're gonna play fast, and there's not going to be one night when we're going to roll over and die.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 09.17.2018

1105025 Websites

TSN.CA / Day 3: Green sees increased depth, skill in second camp as head coach

Jeff Paterson

WHISTLER – For four years, Travis Green attended Vancouver Canucks training camp as the head coach of the Utica Comets. He remembers those years well because there wasn't a lot of talent on the big club roster and the trickle-down effect was that he didn't have much to work with at the minor league level. But times have changed and so has Green's job. Now in his second year behind the Canucks' bench, the head coach has the challenge of trying to formulate a lineup he'll work with this season in the National Hockey League, but he also sees a bigger picture at play.

With an eight-game National Hockey League pre-season beginning Tuesday, Green will have some difficult decisions to make about who will be on his opening night roster. But in so doing, he'll make life easier for Trent Cull, who now runs the show in Utica. Through drafting and developing players, the Canucks now have depth in their system that just didn't exist when Green was at the helm of the minor league club not that long ago.

"We were talking about that last night that I remember having some years in Utica where we had some young guys that had some skill but we wanted to surround them with skill, too," Green recalled after Sunday's on-ice sessions at Meadow Park Recreation Centre.

"And that's not always easy. You can see coming down the pipe that we're going to have some players that can make plays down there. Yet it's a real tough league. And they're going to need good leadership from some of the guys that we have already down there. But it's nice to see the depth that Jim (Benning) has put together."

Young draft picks like Kole Lind, Jonah Gadjovich and Petrus Palmu are all destined to start the season in the American Hockey League, adding to the talent pool in Utica. And depending on pre-season performances of

some young veterans with NHL experience – some of whom may require waivers to get sent down – the Comets should have a strong hockey club this season.

Palmu was among the standouts in Sunday's scrimmage, scoring one of his team's three goals in a 3-1 victory. The 5-foot-6 Finn had a strong showing at the organization's summer showcase, looked good at Young Stars in Penticton last weekend and hasn't looked out of place with the veterans at main camp. Green was impressed by Palmu, but the coach quickly added he has been pleased with his entire group through the first three days of on-ice sessions.

"We've done a lot of structure stuff, but yet kept the pace really high in practice," he says. "I thought today I might see a bit of a drop-off. But the guys were skating hard again today and there was no letdown and they pushed through. Tomorrow we're going to have a full scrimmage with two-thirds of the camp and then probably do some special teams with some of the older guys."

As Green eyes the final day in Whistler on Monday, he's already formulating a game plan for three pre-season games in three nights starting Tuesday at home against Edmonton. Canucks fans can expect to see a strong dose of veterans for the first outing with a less-experienced crew taking the ice against Calgary on Wednesday night.

"We'll try to keep two groups," Green says when asked about possible roster reductions with a busy week ahead. "We'll probably play a younger group against Calgary because they've got their main group over in China."

At this time last year, it was the Canucks who were taking part in the China Games. While it was an experience he'll never forget, Green had his hands full in his first go-round as an NHL head coach trying to conduct a quick training camp before taking his team overseas.

There is a sense of normalcy to the proceedings this time around and Green's looking forward to being able to devote more attention to many of the young players looking to impress the coaching staff in the pre-season.

"It's been two different camps really," he explains comparing last year to this one. "Last year we had the one group skate for three days and take off and personally I didn't get to see a lot of the other guys play. So it'll be nice to have the whole training camp to work things through."

Green still hasn't seen free agent acquisition Antoine Roussel skate with the main group. The veteran forward has skated on his own all three days in Whistler as he recovers from a concussion suffered in an off-season workout last month. The club says there is no update on his condition, nor is there any indication when Roussel will be ready to take part in team drills. It's hard to imagine Roussel seeing any game action in the first week of the pre-season without a training camp or any formal skates with his new teammates.

TSN.CA LOADED: 09.17.2018

1105026 Websites

TSN.CA / After atypical offseason, Leafs looking to find new normal

Kristen Shilton

NIAGARA FALLS, Ont. – "Typical" isn't something that applies to these last three months for the Toronto Maple Leafs.

First, there was John Tavares signing a blockbuster seven-year, \$77 million free-agent contract in July that immediately changed the complexion of the team's offence. Then William Nylander's ongoing



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contract negotiations turned into a holdout from training camp that has no end in sight, and the Leafs' adjusted accordingly once again.

There are still weeks to go before Toronto will play its first regular-season game on Oct. 3. But over three days of on-ice camp sessions at Gale Centre Arena this weekend, the Leafs set out to start discovering what exactly typical might look like for them this season.

"We were talking about it in the room [today], saying how we were starting to get going towards the end of the [scrimmage] yesterday and again today," winger Tyler Ennis shared on Sunday. "The more we play together, the more the chemistry starts to build and we start to gel."

Building familiarity is part of what makes camp so valuable, especially in new combinations. Ennis, for instance, didn't anticipate when he inked a one-year, \$650,000 contract with the Leafs in July he'd be at the centre of the Leafs' changes. Until Nylander is under contract, Ennis has taken over his spot on Auston Matthews' wing, with their line rounded out by Patrick Marleau.

It's a significant departure for Matthews, who has had Zach Hyman super-glued to his side for the last two seasons. Hyman has been moved over to Tavares's line, with Mitch Marner on the other side. Head coach Mike Babcock had stubbornly refused to separate Matthews from Hyman in the past, but last week admitted that "sometimes, things get old" and tasked Hyman with maximizing his skill set beside another elite centreman.

"I've been asked a lot [about] when I heard the news [I'd be playing with Tavares], what was I going to do?" Hyman said. "And I've been telling people, you don't really change the way you play. You just try to be the best version of yourself, and that's what I've been trying to do. [just] get better and doing the things that make me successful."

Establishing chemistry with Tavares still stands to be a taller task for Hyman than it will be for Marleau with Matthews. The two became close friends off the ice last season, and Marleau said he recognizes Matthews' tendencies not only from playing with him on the power play but watching him closely at 5-on-5.

Well before they were brought together, Matthews was open about wanting to skate on a line with the 39-year-old Marleau, and their on-ice rapport has been evident.

"He's had an unbelievable career and he knows how to score, so it speaks for itself," Matthews said. "He can still fly. It seems like he's even getting faster. I'm excited to play with him; I think we can do well. We have a great relationship off the ice so hopefully it translates onto the ice, too."

That line will have to wait to make its debut against an actual opponent, although likely not for long. Toronto has back-to-back pre-season games against the Ottawa Senators on Tuesday and Wednesday this week, first in Lucan, Ont., and then in Ottawa. It will be Tavares's group that travels to small-town Lucan, as well as Nazem Kadri's line with Josh Leivo and Connor Brown.

After putting on a show at both training camp scrimmages with their speed and passing creativity, the play of Marner and Tavares together will be the centre of attention as Toronto's exhibition schedule begins.

"He's obviously extremely quick and he sees the ice very, very well," Tavares said of Marner. "He's in and out of holes very quickly. [I'm] just getting used to how he uses that. His down-low strength, how smart he is with the puck when he gets it down low, how he can make plays out of nothing and just how deceptive he is with the puck [is great]."

That game may also showcase how well Tavares and Marner work on a penalty-kill unit. Head coach Mike Babcock said he's considering that duo for shorthanded work, which isn't unfamiliar to either. Tavares began playing minutes on the PK back in 2016-17 with the New York Islanders and averaged 1:34 per game there last season, while Marner has killed penalties with the OHL's London Knights, but has rarely done the same in the NHL.

The 21-year-old wouldn't mind seeing that change.

"I think if you [kill penalties] you know how to take away the angles better," Marner said. "So it helps you at even strength as much as on the penalty kill."

With the Leafs cutting their training camp roster from 73 to 46 immediately after Sunday's on-ice workouts ended, Babcock will have only two teams of players to evaluate now into the coming days. While he praised individual players (including Matthews and Marner) for their off-season improvements, it's too soon to anoint permanent linemates just yet.

"We tried to accomplish something [here], tried to get a foundation built and establish some work ethic," Babcock said. "It's about learning how to work again, it's about doing things right, it's about details. All those things, you've got to be ready to go Oct. 3 and we understand that."

TSN.CA LOADED: 09.17.2018