



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 6, 2019

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Canes' newcomers go overtime to bond with teammates

By Chip Alexander

The Carolina Hurricanes traded for center Erik Haula, wanting to add more scoring.

They traded for James Reimer, wanting to add a veteran goaltender.

They signed Jake Gardiner, bringing in a defenseman who could easily fit on the back end and wanting to improve the power play.

But as Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said, the only way to really "bond" with your new teammates is to be in the battles with them. And not just be in the battles, win them.

That all came together Saturday in the Canes' second game of the season. On a night when the Washington Capitals were celebrating their home opener, rolling out the red carpet at Capital One Arena, Haula, Reimer and Gardiner were a vital part of the Canes' 3-2 overtime win.

Reimer, in his first start for the Canes, had 32 saves, six in overtime. Haula, in his second game, scored on a third-period power play to get the Canes on the board.

Finally, Gardiner had the winner, finishing off a two-on-one with Sebastian Aho by ripping a short-side shot past goalie Braden Holtby.

"Obviously it helps us but it's more them feeling a part of the group," Brind'Amour said. "When you can contribute, it's automatic now. You're like OK, you feel like you're a part of the group. I think it's huge for those guys."

Haula scored a career-high 29 goals two years ago for the Vegas Golden Knights and was a part of their sensational run to the 2018 Stanley Cup final in their inaugural season. A severe knee injury limited him to 15 games last season, and the Golden Knights then traded him to Carolina for center prospect Nicolas Roy and a draft pick.

But Haula, in two games, has shown his offensive skills. In the Canes' season opener Thursday against the Montreal Canadiens, he prowled around the slot and crease and finally beat Habs goalie Carey Price for a third-period goal that tied the score 3-3. The Canes went on to win a shootout, 4-3.

Against the Caps, Haula did it on the power play, teaming with Teuvo Teravainen for a score as he knocked the puck past Holtby for the Canes' first goal of the game.

"We've been practicing that in practice a lot," Haula said. "He's making the play and I've just got to finish it off."

It would have been easy for the Canes to be frustrated. Holtby was brilliant in the first period, turning away breakaway attempts by Martin Necas and Aho, and the veteran stopped all 19 shots he faced in the first 40 minutes.

"I thought we played a good first period and maybe we deserved a little better but Holtby made great saves," Haula said. "But it shows a lot about our group that we have good players up and down the lineup and every line can score. We're real dangerous and we're not going to ever quit. I like that."

Goalie Petr Mrazek was in net for the Canes season opener, emerging with the victory in the shootout. It was Mrazek who beat the Caps in Game 7 of their memorable Stanley Cup playoff series last season, in Capital One Arena.

But Reimer, inconsistent last season with the Florida Panthers, was a battler Saturday. He allowed goals to the Caps' Garnet Hathaway and then power forward T.J. Oshie as Washington took a 2-0 lead after two periods, but stopped the last 15 shots, making a lunging save on an Alex Ovechkin shot in overtime.

"He was great," Haula said. "It's great to get both goalies feeling good right away."

Everything changed when Brind'Amour challenged what would have been a second goal by Hathaway that had the arena rumbling and would have given the Caps a 3-0 lead late in the second. The Caps' Brendan Leipsic bumped into Reimer in the crease and Brind'Amour's challenge was upheld on review -- no goal.

"It was in my crease and I felt like it's textbook interference, but at the same time you never know if it's going to get called," Reimer said, smiling. "Thankfully that one went our way."

Haula's goal, then Jaccob Slavin's off the rush at 9:50 of the third -- moments after a nice stop by Reimer on a John Carlson shot from the slot -- tied it 2-2. Reimer kept making saves, it went to overtime, Reimer made more saves and Gardiner ended it.

Gardiner had Aho to his right on the rush and had Holtby guessing: pass or shot? Gardiner shot.

"I had a pretty good angle at it and thought it was the right decision," Gardiner said.

Moments later, the Canes swarmed around Gardiner. They congratulated the winning goalie.

This battle with the Caps was over and they had won, together.



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Canes rally in third, spoil Caps' home opener with OT win

By Chip Alexander

The Carolina Hurricanes have done it to the Washington Capitals again.

In overtime, again.

It wasn't as dramatic as beating the Caps in Game 7 of the Stanley Cup playoff series, in double overtime, last spring. But Carolina's 3-2 victory Saturday, in the Caps' home opener of a new season, again left the Canes celebrating when it over while the Caps slowly, glumly skated off to their locker room.

Jake Gardiner's goal at 4:04 of the overtime decided it, the defenseman ripping a shot past Caps goalie Braden Holtby. That came after the Canes had killed off a Jordan Staal penalty to begin the overtime -- Carolina was six-for-six on the penalty kill in the game -- and after goalie James Reimer had stopped six Washington shots in the OT.

The Caps were inches away from victory after an Alex Ovechkin one-timer late in the OT power play, but a lunging Reimer kept the puck out and in play.

The Canes trailed 2-0 in the third period but tied the score on Erik Haula's power-play goal and then Jaccob Slavin's first goal of the season. Caps fans, in a festive mood much of the night, fell silent. It was total dejection after Gardiner's strike.

"It's good to see our team can battle back from a deficit," Gardiner said. "Obviously, all positive."

And making his first goal as a Hurricane a game-winner, in overtime?

"That was a fun way to do it, for sure," said Gardiner, who signed a free-agent contract with Carolina on Sept. 6.

The Caps (2-0-1), who opened the season with road wins against St. Louis and the New York Islanders, had taken the lead on goals from Garnet Hathaway and T.J. Oshie. But Washington was playing its third game in four days to start the season and the Canes were the fresher team much the third period.

Reimer, in his first start for the Canes (2-0-0), had to make some tough saves in the third to give his team a chance as the Caps gamely kept grinding. Reimer had 32 stops in the game, including one tough stop of a spinning Ovechkin backhand.

"We weren't playing a poor game. We were pretty solid (but) had a couple of bad breaks there," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "But we just hung in there and obviously got some huge (penalty) kills in this game. I think that was the story of the game for me."

Some expected the Caps to come out swinging, literally. There's some bad blood between the teams after last year's

heated Stanley Cup playoff series and there was some war-of-words sniping this past week between Caps coach Todd Reirden and Brind'Amour.

The game was hard-fought but without incident. For the first two periods, it was more about Holtby's goaltending and some timely goals by the Caps. Holtby was at his best in the first period, denying the Canes' Sebastian Aho and Martin Necas on breakaways.

The Canes finally broke through in the third on a power play, Haula going to the front of the crease and getting his stick on a Teuvo Teravainen pass.

Haula has goals in each of the first two games, tying the score 3-3 in Thursday's opener against the Montreal Canadiens as the Canes won 4-3 in a shootout at PNC Arena.

Hathaway scored his first goal with the Caps and Oshie, who had the winner Friday against the Islanders, scored again for the 2-0 lead.

Oshie's goal had to be reviewed. The forward got his stick on a high bounding puck near the crossbar, knocking it down and then backhanding it past Reimer. Brind'Amour had a few words with referee Chris Rooney about the Oshie goal, but was told there was no high-sticking call to be made since Oshie didn't knock the puck down and directly into the net.

Brind'Amour did win a coach's challenge later in the second when Hathaway appeared to score again on a shot from the right wing while Brendan Leipsic crowded Reimer in the crease. Brind'Amour claimed goaltender interference and won the challenge, keeping the score 2-0, a turning point in the game.

Hathaway had given the Caps a 1-0 lead in the first, taking advantage of a Canes turnover in the zone.

The Caps played without forward Evgeny Kuznetsov, who served the final game of a three-game NHL suspension for "inappropriate conduct."

For the Canes, it was a first look at Reimer, who Carolina picked up in a late-June trade with the Florida Panthers, anticipating goalie Curtis McElhinney leaving in free agency on July 1. Petr Mrazek was the winning goalie in that Game 7 showdown against the Caps in April, but Brind'Amour decided to use him Sunday against Tampa Bay at home and go with Reimer on Saturday.

"We have a back-to-back situation and you don't want to overload Petr here early on," Brind'Amour said Saturday morning. "It's early in the season and just felt that extra day of rest might be beneficial for (Mrazek). You've got to pick your poison, right? You've got Washington or you've got Tampa. We need obviously both guys to play all year, so this is kind of the we're going to go, especially early on."



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Gold: Seems like old times in DC

By Adam Gold

What do April 24, 2019 and October 5, 2019 have in common?

This is not a trick question, there is a common thread. On each date, the Carolina Hurricanes trailed the Washington Capitals by a 2-0 score, rallied to tie and won in overtime. The only difference is that there was no handshake line after Saturday night's comeback victory.

Yet, there were major heroics all around tonight as Carolina hung around, in spite of trailing by 2 entering the 3rd period — even as the Caps were finishing off a power play at the start of the frame.

Even though the Canes reached the conference finals a mere five months ago the roster still underwent a fairly significant overhaul. Five players who were not part of the organization a year ago were in the opening night line up for the 4-3, shootout win over Montreal. Saturday in DC, in what has become a legitimate rivalry, three of the newcomers made enormous contributions to the win.

* Erik Haula scored his second goal of the year banging home an incredible one-timer pass from Teuvo Teravainen on the power play to get the Canes on the scoreboard early in the 3rd.

* James Reimer made 32 saves on the night, nine of them came in the 3rd period, and one beautiful stop on Washington defenseman John Carlson from the high slot led to a transition opportunity finished off by Jaccob Slavin that tied the score with a little more than 10 minutes to play in regulation.

* Jake Gardiner sent the partisan DC crowd home unhappy, grabbing a loose puck at his own blue line — after some very good board work from Andrei Svechnikov — skated down the left side and into the Washington zone 2-on-1 with Sebastian Aho, and snapped a shot just off the inside of the near post to beat Braden Holtby with less than a minute to play in overtime.

* Joel Edmundson was also very good again. Sure, his turnover late in the first led to the Capitals opening goal. But, he logged 7 1/2 minutes on the penalty kill — one that held the oh-so dangerous Caps scoreless in a half dozen tries.

The best way to feel at home in new surroundings is to contribute. And, those four guys did exactly that as the Hurricanes moved to 2-0-0 on the season. Ryan Dzingel notched an assist on Haula's tying goal on opening night, so all five newbies have all made positive impacts and great first impressions.

The first trip back to Washington in a game of consequence — preseason really doesn't count — was filled with mostly good memories for a Canes team that eliminated the Caps, in their own building, in Game 7 last spring. But, it was filled with some angst for Warren Foegele, Carolina's second year winger, who tortured Washington on the scoresheet in that series — scoring four times. But, he also recklessly ended the season of Washington's T.J. Oshie with a careless shove-from-behind of the Capitals center who crashed into the boards and out of the playoffs.

Oshie needed offseason shoulder surgery (spoiler alert, he seems to have recovered as he's scored twice and added an assist in three games so far).

Foegele has been peppered with questions about defending himself should Oshie or anyone else with bad intentions choose to try and settle a score with him. It was the best game Foegele's played, including anything he did in the preseason. He assisted on Slavin's game-tying goal with a nice, backhand, saucer pass to Jordan Martinook who dished to Slavin for the goal.

Then there was the case of Dougie Hamilton. In the series with Washington last year, Dougie was essentially demoted to the 3rd defensive pairing as he struggled mightily against the line of Niclas Backstrom, Alex Ovechkin and Tom Wilson. Saturday night, however, Hamilton posted his second straight strong defensive effort, even handling Ovechkin himself, TWICE in the closing minute of the game.

It isn't often that you have a score to settle when yours was the winning team. However, it's hard not to think that Hamilton carried something resembling that mindset onto the ice with him.

Noting...

* Brett Pesce posted a team high 25:37 of time on ice, including more than 8 1/2 minutes shorthanded TOI! He also blocked six shots and was the Canes best defender all night long.

* Teuvo Teravainen's assist on the Haula power play goal was just gorgeous! He took a cross ice feed from Andrei Svechnikov as though he was going to rifle a slap shot on the Washington goal. Instead, Turbo snapped a perfect pass to Haula on the back door behind Holtby for a power play marker that got the Canes going.

* Carolina has scored a power play goal in both games so far this year. They're now two out of seven on the year after going one for four against the Capitals.

* The Hurricanes have won their first two games for the first time since the start of the 2010-11 season — Jeff Skinner's



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rookie year. In that year, Carolina beat the Minnesota Wild on back-to-back nights — in Finland.

* For the third time in the last four years the Canes' first two games have stretched into overtime.

The Hurricanes will host the Tampa Bay Lightning at PNC Arena Sunday afternoon at 5:00. Coverage begins at 4:30 on 99.9 the Fan with Storm Watch starring Alec Campbell.

Camp hosted by Carolina Hurricanes helps girls enjoy sport of hockey

By Zach Francis

Raleigh, N.C. — For 90 girls Saturday morning, it was the chance to experience being a member of the Carolina Hurricanes.

Carolina hosted its first ever all girls camp in conjunction with the International Ice Hockey Federation's girls weekend. Former Hurricane Shane Willis led the day's activities, which were split into two groups. The first, ages five to nine, learned hockey basics including skating, passing and shooting. The second group saw members of the Junior Hurricanes compete in an intrasquad scrimmage to close the day's activities.

"To go on the ice with all these young girls, to help teach them to learn this game, to see them fall in love, is just the same as all the boys," Willis said. "They're so focused and so determined.

"They have such high goals as well. Its great for the Carolina Hurricanes to be a part of this and help them achieve their goals."

It is the second camp Willis hosted, and he said it was a special weekend.

"We wanted to do something really special for the girls," he said. "We're seeing such a growth in the girls game right now. More and more girls playing the sport and we're trying to get them to the next level."



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Recap: Canes Fight Back to Defeat Caps in OT

Gardiner scores game-winning goal in overtime

by Michael Smith

WASHINGTON - It seems the Carolina Hurricanes have a flair for the dramatic early in the 2019-20 season.

The Hurricanes spoiled the Capitals' home opener by erasing a two-goal deficit in the third period and then snagging the extra point in a 3-2 overtime win.

Erik Haula and Jaccob Slavin tallied to tie the score in the third, and Jake Gardiner netted the game-winner in overtime. James Reimer made 32 saves to earn his first victory with the Canes.

Here are five takeaways from Saturday night in DC.

1. Another One

For the second time in as many games, the Hurricanes rallied from a deficit to earn a victory. And this time, they did so down multiple goals, on the road no less.

"Any time you have some adversity like this, whether it's game two or game 82, it's good to come back and battle. I thought we worked hard all game," Reimer said. "It was just a matter of sticking with it for a full 60 or 64-and-a-half. ... It's a good win for us. It shows the character we have in here."

The Hurricanes weren't playing poorly in the first 40 minutes. They caught a couple of tough breaks, took a few too many penalties and couldn't sneak a shot, including a couple of breakaway chances, past Braden Holtby, who was playing like a goaltender who's going to cash in on a new contract this summer.

It was just a matter of sticking with it, getting one and building from there.

"We know we're capable of it," Gardiner said. "Sometimes you're going to go down a few goals, and hopefully you can battle back."

2. Gardiner Wins It

Jake Gardiner's first goal with the Hurricanes is one to remember: a game-winning goal in the final minute of overtime in a hostile environment against a divisional rival.

"That was a fun way to do it, for sure," he smiled.

In the final minute of 3-on-3 overtime, Gardiner corralled the puck at his own blue line and skated off with Sebastian Aho on a 2-on-1 rush. Nicklas Backstrom was the lone man defending for Washington, while Jakub Vrana attempted to

hustle back. As Backstrom faded over to Aho, Gardiner settled the puck and fired a shot that beat Holtby on his blocker side.

"I had to make a decision on whether I was going to pass or shoot," Gardiner said. "I had a pretty good angle at it, and I thought [shooting] was the right decision."

It sure was.

3. Third Period Rally

Down 2-0 in Washington? It wasn't a problem for the Hurricanes in Game 7 in April, and it wasn't a problem in the second game of the 2019-20 regular season, either.

The Hurricanes first killed 51 seconds of carryover penalty time at the start of the third period and then received a power play of their own when Radko Gudas was whistled for interference. As it turned out, the third power play was the charm.

It took some passing wizardry and a quick finish, but the Canes finally got a puck past Holtby. From the point, Dougie Hamilton swung the puck over to Andrei Svechnikov, who went cross ice to Teuvo Teravainen. Teravainen then delivered the mail right on Haula's tape in front for the easy tap in. The goal was Haula's second in as many games, one of the Canes' offseason additions already aiding the power play.

Jaccob Slavin is one of the league's top defenders, and he's sneaky good offensively, as well. He flexed that element of his game to tie the score at two in the third, a little more than seven minutes after the Canes first got on the board. Slavin joined the rush, gloving down an airborne pass from Jordan Martinook. Slavin then went from his backhand to his forehand to chip the puck past Holtby.

"That offense is there in him. Love to see that, jumping up into the play at the right times," Brind'Amour said. "He can score. He can finish. That was a huge goal."

4. Reimer Wins His First

Gardiner wasn't the only newcomer to play a critical role in the Canes' second victory of the year. James Reimer, acquired from Florida at the end of June, made his first start since March 26 and earned his first win of the season with his new team.

Reimer turned away 32 of the 34 shots he faced, which included six in overtime as the Canes had to kill their sixth penalty of the game.



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"We had a couple breakdowns, especially late, where the game could have gone the other way. He made a couple nice saves," Brind'Amour said. "The big kill in overtime. That's the difference maker, for sure."

The Canes certainly flirted with danger against a lethal power play, especially in overtime, but they were able to neutralize the threat of Alex Ovechkin, and Reimer was there to stop anything that got past the defense, including a puck that squibbed right along the goal line at the tail end of the Caps' OT man advantage.

"We got some big blocks, and I managed to get a piece of a few," Reimer said. "You don't want to give that PP that many chances. I think it's proof of how hard we worked. Guys were laying down, blocking shots and battling, especially on that one in OT. It's about sacrifice and the character we have in here to lay it all on the line."

A win makes Reimer's Hurricanes debut even sweeter.

"It's been a while since I played, so to get a start early here and collectively, as a group, to pull out the win is big. It's a long process. This win is nice, but it's one building block," Reimer said. "We're building here, and every day we're trying to be a better team."

5. Challenges

One of the unfortunate bounces that got past Reimer was a goal credited to T.J. Oshie in the second period. Reimer made an initial save, and the puck bounced high in the air. Oshie tracked it, and on its way to the ice, the Caps forward got a piece of the puck with his stick and then tapped it in the

net. Slavin reached to save the puck, but it had already completely crossed the goal line, which a review confirmed.

Confusion surrounded Oshie's initial play on the puck, which appeared to be above the crossbar. That would have been illegal had the puck then gone directly into the net, but since he subsequently played the puck, the determinant of a high stick became his shoulders; it was a close call, but it looked like his stick was indeed below his shoulders. Good (weird) goal.

"Honestly, I don't understand the second goal still," Reimer laughed.

Garnet Hathaway appeared to score his second goal of the game late in the second period, which would have given the Capitals a 3-0 lead, but the Hurricanes challenged for goaltender interference, and rightly so. Brendan Leipsic pushed his way through Reimer in the blue paint as the puck left Hathaway's stick, impairing Reimer's ability to make a save. No goal.

"I felt like I was interfered with," Reimer said. "I felt like he came right through and hit me as the puck was on its way. I was in my crease. I feel like that's textbook goalie interference."

"That was a big break, obviously, but that one was pretty clear for us," Brind'Amour said. "Of all the goaltender interference that happened in the league over the years that you're just not sure, that one for me was automatic."

Up Next

It's a quick turnaround for the Hurricanes, who host the Tampa Bay Lightning at 5 p.m. on Sunday

Preview: Lightning vs. Hurricanes

Canes return home to close out first back-to-back set of season

by Michael Smith

The Carolina Hurricanes, winners of two straight to begin the 2019-20 season, return home to host the Tampa Bay Lightning to close out their first of 16 back-to-back sets.

The Hurricanes spoiled the Washington Capitals' home opener with a 3-2 overtime win on Saturday. Jake Gardiner scored the game-winning goal in the final minute of overtime after the Canes erased a two-goal deficit in the third period, and James Reimer made 32 saves in his debut with Carolina.

"Any time you have some adversity like this, whether it's game two or game 82, it's good to come back and battle. I thought we worked hard all game," Reimer said. "It was just a matter of sticking with it for a full 60 or 64-and-a-half. ... I think it's a good win for us. It shows some of the character we have in here. Games like this just build it."

Rallying to Victory

In the first two games of the 2019-20 regular season, the Hurricanes have erased deficits in the third period and won the game in overtime or a shootout. It's the fifth time in

franchise history that the team has opened with two consecutive overtime games and the first time ever the team has won both of said games.

On Opening Night in Raleigh, the Canes climbed out of a 3-2 hole in the third period with Erik Haula's first goal of the season before claiming the extra point in the shootout.

Two nights later, the Canes expunged a two-goal deficit in the final period of regulation before Gardiner's first mark of the season lifted them to victory in the final minute of overtime.

"We know we're capable of it," Gardiner said. "Sometimes you're going to go down a few goals, and hopefully you can battle back."

"It's a long process. This win is nice, but it's one building block," Reimer said. "We're building here, and every day we're trying to be a better team."

New Guys Making an Impact

Haula has two goals in as many games with the Hurricanes, his second coming on the power play to get the Canes on the board in Washington on Saturday. Reimer stopped 32 of 34 shots in his first start and win with the Canes. Gardiner's first goal as a Hurricane was his sixth game-winner of his



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career, four of which have been scored in overtime (the last coming in February 2017).

The new faces are quickly making a difference for the Canes.

"When you contribute, it's automatic now. You feel like you're part of the group," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "It's huge for those guys."

The Opposition

The Lightning, who were also in action on the road on Saturday night, bring a 1-1-0 record to Raleigh. Tampa Bay mounted a comeback in South Florida on Saturday, but the Panthers, spurred by three straight goals in less than three

minutes in the second and a hat trick from Mike Hoffman, fended off the Bolts in a 4-3 final.

AT THE RINK

It's Youth Hockey Night, as we celebrate the future of the game. A special ticket offer is available for youth hockey players and their families.

Giveaway alert! The first 5,000 fans in attendance will receive a 2019-20 schedule magnet.

Sunday afternoon's festivities begin outside PNC Arena with a South Plaza Party at 3 p.m. The weather looks beautiful, too, with highs in the upper 70s.



Gardiner, Hurricanes rally past Capitals in OT

Scores with 56 seconds left after Carolina trailed by two in third

by Harvey Valentine

WASHINGTON -- Jake Gardiner scored with 56 seconds remaining in overtime to give the Carolina Hurricanes a 3-2 win against the Washington Capitals at Capital One Arena on Saturday.

Gardiner picked up a loose puck near center ice, entered the Washington zone on a 2-on-1 with Sebastian Aho and beat Braden Holtby from the left face-off circle.

Carolina trailed 2-0 entering the third period.

"I thought originally that (Washington center Nicklas) Backstrom was kind of fading towards Sebastian there, and usually I would pass that probably," Gardiner said of his first goal with the Hurricanes. "But since I saw that, I decided to shoot."

Erik Haula and Jaccob Slavin scored, and Andrei Svechnikov had two assists for the Hurricanes, who have won their first two games of the season despite trailing after two periods in each. They defeated the Montreal Canadiens 4-3 in overtime on Thursday.

James Reimer made 33 saves in his Carolina debut.

Garnet Hathaway and T.J. Oshie scored, and Holtby made 25 saves for the Capitals in their home opener. Washington

was playing the second of back-to-back games and lost for the first time in three games to start the season.

"We're tired in this game," Capitals coach Todd Reirden said. "They're fresh, and we're just trying to hang on to the lead. Despite that fact, we didn't change our style. They just had a little extra jump in the third period there."

Carolina eliminated Washington with a 4-3 double-overtime win in Game 7 of the Eastern Conference First Round here in April. The Hurricanes trailed 2-0 and 3-1 in that game.

They tied it 2-2 on Saturday when Slavin scored off a pass from Jordan Martinook at 9:50 of the third period.

"Anytime you have a lead, you want to keep pushing, but you don't want to push and not have support coming back," Holtby said. "We just got caught there a little bit, especially against a team that transitions so fast."

Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said, "We weren't playing a poor game. We were pretty solid. We had a couple, I thought, bad breaks there and the guys just hung in there, and then obviously some huge penalty [kills] in this game. I think that was the story of the game for me."

Carolina was 1-for-4 on the power play. Washington was 0-for-6.

"We just didn't execute what we wanted to do," Oshie said of the power play. "When you don't do that, and you're not winning too many battles down low, the other team's PK is



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going to send a lot of pucks down the ice, and that's a lot of skating for a power-play unit."

The Capitals made it 1-0 with 2:37 left in the first period when Hathaway controlled a loose puck in the left circle and shot over Reimer's left shoulder.

Oshie backhanded the puck across the goal line during a scramble in front at 11:40 of the second to make it 2-0.

Hathaway appeared to score his second goal of the game at 16:07 of the second period, but it was overturned because of goaltender interference by Brendan Leipsic.

"That was a big break, obviously," Brind'Amour said. "That one was pretty obvious that [Reimer] got bumped into as the puck was on the way to the net. So of all the goalie interferences that happen in the League and over the years where you're just not sure, that was for me automatic."

Carolina pulled within 2-1 at 2:36 of the third on the power play when Haula redirected a centering pass from Teuvo Teravainen.

"Yeah, we've been practicing that in practice a lot, and if it's there, he's making the play," Haula said. "I've just got to finish it off, and that's good."

THEY SAID IT

"Anytime you get some adversity like this, whether it's Game 2 or Game 82, it's good. We had to come back and battle, and I thought we worked hard all game." -- Hurricanes goalie James Reimer

"Five out of six [points] if you were looking at it to start the year is something that would be above average of what we're looking for, and I think we did some good things in these three games and some stuff to grow on." -- Capitals coach Todd Reirden

NEED TO KNOW

Hurricanes defenseman Trevor van Riemsdyk (shoulder) missed his second game. ... Capitals forward Evgeny Kuznetsov served the final game of a three-game suspension for inappropriate conduct during the offseason. ... Washington defenseman Michal Kempny (hamstring) missed his third game. ... The Capitals are 15-1-2 in their past 18 home openers.

WHAT'S NEXT

Hurricanes: Host the Tampa Bay Lightning on Sunday (5 p.m. ET; ESPN+, FS-CR, SUN, NHL.TV)

Capitals: Host the Dallas Stars on Tuesday (7 p.m. ET; ESPN+, NBCSWA, FS-SW, NHL.TV)



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Gardiner scores OT winner, Carolina beats Caps 3-2

By Ian Quillen

WASHINGTON (AP) — Three new players helped the Carolina Hurricanes beat an old nemesis on Saturday night.

Jake Gardiner scored his first goal for his new team in the last minute of overtime, James Reimer debuted by making 33 stops and the Hurricanes rallied from a two-goal deficit in the third period for a 3-2 win over the Washington Capitals.

Fellow newcomer Erik Haula added his second goal early in the third to begin the Hurricanes' second comeback in as many games. In their home opener, Carolina tied it in the third before beating Montreal in a shootout.

Gardiner and Reimer signed free agent deals with Carolina during the offseason, while Haula arrived in a trade from Las Vegas.

"It obviously helps us," said Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour of the trio's contributions. "But it's more them, feeling part of the group. When you can contribute, it's automatic now. You feel like you're part of the group. So I think it's huge for those guys."

Jacob Slavin scored Carolina's game-tying with just over 10 minutes left.

T.J. Oshie scored his second goal of the season for the Capitals. Garnet Hathaway, himself a new arrival to Washington, added his first goal and Braden Holtby made 25 stops.

But the Capitals went 0 for 6 on the power play, including a 4-on-3 advantage in overtime after Jordan Staal was called for hooking Nicklas Backstrom. The end result was another loss to the team that knocked them out of last season's playoffs in a seven-game, first-round series.

"You can't go 0 for 6 and then expect to have the outcome you want," Capitals coach Todd Reirden said. "So then it comes down to looking at why it was happening. I thought their penalty kill worked extremely hard and were able to come out with more puck battles than we were."

Washington struggled to find a clear look in the overtime power play, coming closest to scoring when a pass deflected off Carolina defender Joel Edmundson's left skate and struck the post.

Instead, it was Gardiner who ended the game a couple minutes later. He picked up the puck in his own end and skated down the left into a 2-on-1. As Backstrom defended the cross-ice pass, Gardiner rifled a shot that found its way between Holtby and the left post.

"I saw there was a guy trailing, and I had to make a decision whether I was going to pass or shoot," Gardiner said. "I thought I had a pretty good angle at it."

Haula made it 2-1 with 17:24 to play on Carolina's third power play of the game, finding a spot just in front of Holtby's crease and redirecting Teuvo Teravainen's feed beneath his pads.

Slavin evened the game just over seven minutes later, as the Hurricanes converted on a 4-on-2 break. From right to left, Warren Foegele found Jordan Martinook, who then picked out Slavin, who used his hand to help control a bouncing puck before squeezing a low shot past Holtby.

"We're just a resilient group, and I think that showed in the first game as well," Slavin said. "It wasn't pretty, but at the end of the night, we got the two points, and that's what we wanted to do."

NOTES: Saturday's game marked the last in a three-game suspension for "inappropriate conduct" for Capitals C Evgeny Kuznetsov. In August, the IIHF announced the 27-year-old Russian was suspended four years from international competition after violating the world anti-doping code with a positive test for cocaine. ... Alex Ovechkin will throw out the first pitch at Game 4 of the National League Division Series between the Washington Nationals and Los Angeles Dodgers on Monday. ... Washington was 15-1-1 in its previous 17 home openers. ... After Reimer's debut for Carolina, Petr Mrazek is expected to make his second start in goal for the Hurricanes on Sunday. ... Carolina has scored power-play goals in each of its first two games.

UP NEXT

Hurricanes: Return home to host Tampa Bay on Sunday.

Capitals: Face Dallas at home Tuesday



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 6, 2019

Hurricanes host the Lightning following overtime victory

Tampa Bay Lightning (1-1-0, sixth in the Atlantic Division) vs. Carolina Hurricanes (2-0-0, third in the Metropolitan Division)

BOTTOM LINE: Carolina hosts Tampa Bay after the Hurricanes knocked off Washington 3-2 in overtime.

Carolina finished 46-29-7 overall a season ago while going 24-13-4 at home. Goalies for the Hurricanes compiled a .906 save percentage while giving up 2.6 goals on 28.4 shots per game last season.

Tampa Bay went 62-16-4 overall with a 30-9-2 record on the road a season ago. The Lightning scored 319 total goals last season while collecting 547 assists.

The matchup Sunday is the first meeting of the season between the two teams.

Hurricanes Injuries: None listed.

Lightning Injuries: Brayden Point: day to day (lower body).



Recap: Hurricanes Kick off Back-to-Back with a 3-2 Overtime Win

The Canes clawed back from a two-goal deficit to stun the Caps on Jake Gardiner's overtime winner.

By Zeke Lukow

WASHINGTON — The Carolina Hurricanes headed to the road for the first time this season to kick off a back-to-back and open the Capital One Arena for the 2019-2020 season on Saturday. The Canes won in overtime by a score of 3-2 in James Reimer's first start in a Canes sweater. The Canes went down by a score of 0-2 before clawing their way back with two third period goals, then killing an overtime penalty before coming out on top.

Despite all of the bad blood in the preseason and the words between the teams in the media, the game was surprisingly tame. It was apparent early that the Canes were the more rested team. With the Caps finishing a back-to-back of their own, they let up multiple breakaways in the first period including one from Sebastian Aho as a Canes PK was ending.

The Canes did a good job of shutting down the Caps early chances and defending in transition. When the Caps entered the zone the defense stayed structured and forced shots from sharp angles.

The Caps were able to break the ice when Joel Edmundson turned the puck over at the goal line. Brendan Leipsic was able to grab the puck and feed it to Garnet Hathaway who had snuck behind the defense and buried it over Reimer's shoulder.

The Caps were able to extend their lead midway through the second period on a strange goal from T.J. Oshie. The puck bounced off of Reimer and went straight into the air, but Oshie was able to gather the puck in the crease and score

on Reimer who made the save but was too deep in the net allowing the puck to cross the goal line.

The Caps appeared to make it 3-0 late in the second. when Hathaway redirected a puck out front. However, a successful challenge by Rod Brind'Amour kept the game 2-0 after it was determined that Reimer was interfered with by Leipsic.

Despite starting the final period on the penalty kill, the Hurricanes didn't wait long to respond. Radko Gudas took an interference penalty two minutes into the period and Erik Haula converted on the ensuing power play. The goal was set up with crisp cross ice passing from Teuvo Teravainen and Andrei Svechnikov who found Haula out front unguarded.

The Canes continued their efforts and evened the game up eight minutes later with a highlight-reel goal from Jaccob Slavin who caught the puck out of the air put it down and beat Holtby stick side.

The teams both took home at least a point heading into overtime. The Caps wasted no time off of the opening faceoff to create chances. Their quick start led to Jordan Staal taking a hooking penalty to set up an always dangerous 4-on-3.

The Caps came inches from winning at the end of the powerplay when Alex Ovechkin partially misfired on a one-timer from his usual spot, but Reimer kept the puck out of the net by diving through the crease. The missed chance also led to some rare 4-on-4 overtime play for a couple of minutes before Jake Gardiner ended things on the Canes' first shot of overtime, surprising Holtby with a quick shot to the short side.



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Special Teams Success

Despite coach Rod Brind'Amour pleading for his players to stay out of the box, the Canes tempted fate with the Caps power play unit throughout the night. The Canes took five penalties in the first two periods. The penalty kill unit of Sebastian Aho and Teravainen picked up right where the left off last season. They were effective at killing penalties and continue to create chances even when down a man.

Carolina's special teams were the only reason the Canes were in the game. They killed off every penalty against the most dangerous power play team in the league and converted one of their own power play chances, going 1-4 on the night. The first goal was massive in breaking the ice and showing that Holtby could be beaten.

Reimer Debut

Reimer looked good in his first outing for the Canes, stopping 26 out of the Caps 28 total shots including a highlight reel save in the third. Reimer is very comfortable playing the puck away from the net. However he does show some tendencies to over react on initial shots leaving a tougher follow-up shot. He also had multiple high soft rebounds come off of his shoulders, one of which led directly to the Caps second goal. That will be something to keep an eye on moving forward.

They Said It

Rod Brind'Amour:

We weren't playing a poor game, we had what I thought were a couple of bad breaks and the guys hung in there. All the penalty kills are big, we had six or seven penalties which is way too many against this team. If they score in the third that's it its over, but we got some momentum from it.

[Goaltender Interference] was pretty clear for us, it was obvious that he was bumped into as the puck was on the way into the net. Of all the goalie interferences around the league that you aren't sure about but for me that was automatic.

Chris, the ref, did a great job explaining the [Oshie] goal. He told me it was over the crossbar when he touched it but since

it came down and he touched it again it was a goal. I thought it was in directly from the high stick but that's one where he came over and educated me. Once I knew that I wasn't going to challenge it

James Reimer:

[Ovechkin's shot] is the best shot in the league and you just try to get over there to see it come off of his stick and hope that it hits you. Tonight, we were lucky, and we got some big blocks and I managed to get a piece of a few. Its one of the best so its always fun facing him.

[On Penalties] Its not a recipe for success, you don't want to give that PP that many chances. I think its proof of how hard we work. Guys were laying down blocking shots, it's about sacrifice and having the character to lay it all on the line.

Honestly, I don't understand the second goal still, even with the description that was given to me by the ref. He said that because he didn't bat the puck in directly it wasn't high sticking. Maybe there is a funny rule in there like that, but I trust him he knows his job, luckily it didn't cost us. The last one I knew I was interfered with he came through and hit me and I was in my crease. I thought it was textbook goalie interference, but you never know what will get called.

Jake Gardiner:

[On the GWG] I thought originally that Nicklas Backstrom was fading towards Sebastian. Usually I would pass that, but since I saw that I decided to shoot.

Jacob Slavin:

We like to say that the third period is our best period. We are a resilient group and that showed in the first game as well. It wasn't pretty, but at the end of the day we got two points. Hopefully we can continue to be a third period team but we need to work on periods one and two as well.

[On his goal] I just tried to get it up the ice and I saw that we had good numbers so I jumped up on the rush. Marty threw one up the middle and I was able to get in my hand, get it down, and some how in the net.



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Checkers Start Season with 5-3 Loss in Hartford

By Nicholas Niedzielski

The Checkers had a tough go in their 2019-20 season opener, surrendering five straight goals to fall in Hartford 5-3.

After missing the back half of last season due to injury, Janne Kuokkanen wasted no time getting back into the swing of things, keeping the puck on an odd-man rush and burying a low shot just 78 seconds in.

Hartford would answer back shortly after, however, and then build off that momentum for a slew of goals. After taking a lead midway through the first, the Wolf Pack converted on an early power play in the second and then tacked on another later in the frame to carry a three-goal lead into the second intermission. They weren't done there, as Matt Beleskey struck just 24 seconds into the third – his second tally of the night – to put Hartford comfortably ahead.

Charlotte's offense was creating chances throughout the contest, and in the third period things started to bounce their way again. Dave Gust sniped a shot from the left circle on a man advantage early on in the frame, then Julien Gauthier banged home a loose puck out front to make things interesting with less than 10 to play.

Hartford netminder Igor Shesterkin would continue to shine

after that, though, shutting down Charlotte's charged-up rally attempt and carrying the Wolf Pack to a 5-3 victory.

NOTES

The Checkers fell to 5-4-1 in season openers since joining the AHL. All 10 games took place on the road ... Prior to tonight, each of the last seven Calder Cup champions had won the first game of the following season ... Of the 19 players who suited up for the Checkers tonight, 10 made their Checkers debut and just six played in last season's Calder Cup clinching game ... Kuokkanen was playing his first game since March 2, having missed the remainder of last season due to injury. He has points in eight of his last 10 games (2g, 6a) ... Gust (1g), Brian Gibbons (1a), Hunter Shinkaruk (1a) and Chase Priskie (1a) each recorded their first Checkers point. Priskie was making his professional debut ... The Checkers won seven of eight games against Hartford last season ... Forwards Ryan Horvat, Cedric Lacroix, Stelio Mattheos, Max McCormick and Spencer Smallman, and defensemen Cavan Fitzgerald, Reid McNeill, Derek Sheppard and Kyle Wood were all scratched.

UP NEXT

The Checkers travel to Springfield Sunday for a 3:05 p.m. puck drop against the Thunderbirds.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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The Washington Post

In painful case of deja vu, Capitals go up two but fall at home to Hurricanes

By Samantha Pell

As the Washington Capitals watched their two-goal lead against the Carolina Hurricanes dissipate in their home opener, flashes of last season's first-round playoff exit danced in the minds of the Capital One Arena crowd.

Here the Capitals were, again facing a pesky Hurricanes team that failed to go away in April's series after Washington opened with two wins before falling in double-overtime of Game 7. The Capitals managed to take that seven-game misery and concentrate it into 60-plus minutes, losing, 3-2, in overtime when Carolina's Jake Gardiner beat Braden Holtby for the game-winner.

Gardiner's wrist past the right shoulder of Holtby clanged off the cage twice before settling into the back of the net. It didn't hurt as much as Brock McGinn's deflection that beat Holtby last spring, but it certainly stung.

"Anytime you have a lead, you want to keep pushing, but you don't want to push and not have support coming back," Holtby said. "We just got caught there a little bit, especially against a team that transitions so fast. That's why it's hard to protect a lead. You've got to learn from it and get better."

The Capitals got an early power-play chance when Jordan Staal was called for hooking 19 seconds into overtime but failed to take advantage. Washington was 0 for 6 with the man advantage. The Capitals (2-0-1) have converted 18.2 percent of their power plays (2 for 11) through three games.

"We just weren't sharp," forward T.J. Oshie said of the team's work with the man advantage Saturday night. "We didn't execute many plays. They did a good job of pressuring. We knew they were going to pressure; we've seen these guys a lot. Each side is probably comfortable with the other's units, and we just didn't execute what we wanted to do."

After offseason addition Garnet Hathaway and Oshie gave the Capitals a two-goal lead entering the third period, Carolina came roaring back with goals from forward Erik Haula and defenseman Jaccob Slavin, who knotted it with 10:10 remaining.

Holtby was tested early, stopping 10 shots in the first 13 minutes and 25 of 28 overall. He faced multiple high-danger chances, including two early breakaways. One was against Sebastian Aho, who stole the puck from Alex Ovechkin at the blue line for a nifty shot that Holtby turned aside.

The Capitals have held their own without center Evgeny Kuznetsov, who was suspended for three games by the NHL for "inappropriate conduct," and defenseman Michal Kempny, who is still coming back from a torn hamstring from

April. Kuznetsov is expected to make his debut Tuesday at home against the Dallas Stars.

After Saturday's game, Capitals Coach Todd Reirden acknowledged what's missing from the power play with Kuznetsov out and emphasized the need to be better once he returns.

"Always disappointed to be ahead in a game like that and see us let them back in and ultimately get the extra point," Reirden said. "... We did some good things in these three games and some stuff to grow on."

There is still no timetable on Kempny's return, and Reirden said Saturday that he wants to see Kempny do five-on-five work before making that decision.

Washington will have to make some roster moves to get under the salary cap with the return of Kuznetsov. On Saturday, the Capitals continued to use the same lineup and got a strong performance from their fourth line. Hathaway, Brendan Leipsic and Nic Dowd were the team's best unit Friday night in a 2-1 win over the New York Islanders and continued that impressive play Saturday.

Hathaway opened the scoring by beating Hurricanes goalie James Reimer top shelf at the 17:53 mark of the first period. It was Hathaway's first goal as a Capital, and he was assisted by Leipsic, who also recorded his first point with Washington. Hathaway said the group continues to mesh but needs to work on communication, considering the three have never played together before.

"We are getting a lot of chemistry right now," Hathaway said. "You could see the last few games we are building on. We are getting some momentum. It is just sticking with it, and, you know, every day you are picking up a different aspect of how the other guy plays, and I think we are just going to get better."

The Capitals signed both Hathaway and Richard Panik to four-year deals this offseason, moves that already have paid dividends.

Panik slid into the third-line gap left by Brett Connolly and is contributing on both the power play and the penalty kill. Hathaway's aggressiveness and ability to create on the ice have him contributing early. Hathaway almost scored twice Saturday, but his would-be tally in the second period was waved off after a replay review determined Leipsic interfered with Reimer.

"We've got some good material of mistakes that I think we can learn from," Oshie said. "That's a big thing early in the year, that you make those mistakes early and you can kind of nail it in and eliminate those. You never know where you'd be if a couple of those mistakes in the third didn't happen."



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SportScan

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

1155977

Carolina Hurricanes

Canes rally in third, spoil Caps' home opener with OT win

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

OCTOBER 05, 2019 10:05 PM

WASHINGTON

The Carolina Hurricanes have done it to the Washington Capitals again.

In overtime, again.

It wasn't as dramatic as beating the Caps in Game 7 of the Stanley Cup playoff series, in double overtime, last spring. But Carolina's 3-2 victory Saturday, in the Caps' home opener of a new season, again left the Canes celebrating when it over while the Caps slowly, glumly skated off to their locker room.

Jake Gardiner's goal at 4:04 of the overtime decided it, the defenseman ripping a shot past Caps goalie Braden Holtby. That came after the Canes had killed off a Jordan Staal penalty to begin the overtime -- Carolina was six-for-six on the penalty kill in the game -- and after goalie James Reimer had stopped six Washington shots in the OT.

The Caps were inches away from victory after an Alex Ovechkin one-timer late in the OT power play, but a lunging Reimer kept the puck out and in play.

The Canes trailed 2-0 in the third period but tied the score on Erik Haula's power-play goal and then Jaccob Slavin's first goal of the

season. Caps fans, in a festive mood much of the night, fell silent. It was total dejection after Gardiner's strike.

"It's good to see our team can battle back from a deficit," Gardiner said. "Obviously, all positive."

And making his first goal as a Hurricane a game-winner, in overtime?

"That was a fun way to do it, for sure," said Gardiner, who signed a free-agent contract with Carolina on Sept. 6.

The Caps (2-0-1), who opened the season with road wins against St. Louis and the New York Islanders, had taken the lead on goals from Garnet Hathaway and T.J. Oshie. But Washington was playing its third game in four days to start the season and the Canes were the fresher team much the third period.

Reimer, in his first start for the Canes (2-0-0), had to make some tough saves in the third to give his team a chance as the Caps gamely kept grinding. Reimer had 32 stops in the game, including one tough stop of a spinning Ovechkin backhand.

"We weren't playing a poor game. We were pretty solid (but) had a couple of bad breaks there," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "But we just hung in there and obviously got some huge (penalty) kills in this game. I think that was the story of the game for me."

Some expected the Caps to come out swinging, literally. There's some bad blood between the teams after last year's heated Stanley Cup playoff series and there was some war-of-words sniping this past week between Caps coach Todd Reirden and Brind'Amour.

The game was hard-fought but without incident. For the first two periods, it was more about Holtby's goaltending and some timely goals by the Caps. Holtby was at his best in the first period, denying the Canes' Sebastian Aho and Martin Necas on breakaways.



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The Canes finally broke through in the third on a power play, Haula going to the front of the crease and getting his stick on a Teuvo Teravainen pass.

Haula has goals in each of the first two games, tying the score 3-3 in Thursday's opener against the Montreal Canadiens as the Canes won 4-3 in a shootout at PNC Arena.

Hathaway scored his first goal with the Caps and Oshie, who had the winner Friday against the Islanders, scored again for the 2-0 lead.

Oshie's goal had to be reviewed. The forward got his stick on a high bounding puck near the crossbar, knocking it down and then backhanding it past Reimer. Brind'Amour had a few words with referee Chris Rooney about the Oshie goal, but was told there was no high-sticking call to be made since Oshie didn't knock the puck down and directly into the net.

Brind'Amour did win a coach's challenge later in the second when Hathaway appeared to score again on a shot from the right wing while Brendan Leipsic crowded Reimer in the crease. Brind'Amour claimed goaltender interference and won the challenge, keeping the score 2-0, a turning point in the game.

Hathaway had given the Caps a 1-0 lead in the first, taking advantage of a turnover by Canes defenseman Joel Edmundson to beat Reimer

The Caps played without forward Evgeny Kuznetsov, who served the final game of a three-game NHL suspension for "inappropriate conduct."

For the Canes, it was a first look at Reimer, who Carolina picked up in a late-June trade with the Florida Panthers, anticipating goalie Curtis McElhinney leaving in free agency on July 1. Petr Mrazek was the winning goalie in that Game 7 showdown against the Caps in April, but Brind'Amour decided to use him Sunday against Tampa Bay at home and go with Reimer.

"We have a back-to-back situation and you don't want to overload Petr here early on," Brind'Amour said Saturday morning. "It's early in the season and just felt that extra day of rest might be beneficial for (Mrazek). You've got to pick your poison, right? You've got Washington or you've got Tampa. We need obviously both guys to play all year, so this is kind of the we're going to go, especially early on."

News Observer LOADED: 10.06.2019

1156099 Tampa Bay Lightning

Lightning just a bit out of sorts in 4-3 loss to Panthers

By Diana C. Nearhos

Published Earlier today

Updated Earlier today

SUNRISE — The Lightning knew there would be mistakes early in the season. Jon Cooper said as much before Saturday's game against the Panthers.

"You just hope the mistakes you make in Games 1 and 2 are not as glaring as Games 25 and 30, and Games 45 and 50," he said before a 4-3 loss at BB&T Center. "It's going to be expected early on. You just have to work through it."

The key is what kinds of mistakes are made. For the Lightning, their too many miscues Saturday weren't severe, just costly.

"The mistakes aren't effort mistakes," defenseman Kevin Shattenkirk said after the game. "They aren't lazy plays or anything like that. It's maybe miscommunication, guys being on the same page. That takes time."

Cooper's view is right. Game 2 is too early to panic, but Saturday wasn't a good look for the Lightning.

After talking in training camp about limiting penalties, the Lightning went more than a period without one against the Panthers. Then they took three in a little more than five minutes and gave up two power-play goals to Mike Hoffman, putting Florida up 2-0. Then they gave up a third goal to Noel Acciari less than 10 seconds after the third penalty expired.

In that short span, the game changed.

The Lightning have a way of never being out of a game, and Mathieu Joseph pulled them within a goal with 4:31 to play after they went down 4-1 17 seconds into the third when Hoffman completed his hat trick.

Steven Stamkos was left all alone in his favorite spot and scored one of his patented one-timers from the left circle 6:40 into the period to make it 4-2.

After Joseph scored his first of the season, the Lightning kept pressuring and had chances with an empty net. But the Panthers kept finding ways to clear the zone, keeping the Lightning from sustaining that pressure.

"What I really liked was our pushback," Cooper said after the game. "It was tough giving up that goal early in the third, but I thought we took over the game, even down 4-1."

Gemel Smith put the Lightning on the board with less than four minutes left in the second, scoring his first goal with the Lightning to make it 3-1. Goalie Sergei Bobrovsky made a save on Pat Maroon's initial shot. Luke Witkowski jumped on the rebound, and the puck was on its way in when Smith tapped it to make sure it got there.

"It was exciting, especially to get one when we were down to kind of bring back momentum," Smith said. "It was good to get the goal."

The spurt of penalties in the second period felt worse because the Lightning had started the game playing just the way they wanted to. They hadn't scored, but they had their chances.

The Panthers had elevated their game as well from their loss in the teams' season opener Thursday night, so the Lightning weren't dominating, but the matchup had the makings of a good one.

A too-many-men penalty, a hook and a high stick caught the Lightning in the second. And their special teams, which had been strong Thursday, couldn't bail them out.

Even the two power plays they did have didn't look smooth. The Lightning failed to sustain pressure the way they do so well.

"It came down to we needed to kill one more of those penalties, and we couldn't do it," Cooper said.

Tampa Bay Times LOADED: 10.06.2019

1156100 Tampa Bay Lightning

Lightning's Andrei Vasilevskiy makes 200th career start

By Diana C. Nearhos

Published Yesterday

Updated Yesterday



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 6, 2019

SUNRISE — Jon Cooper stopped Andrei Vasilevskiy on his way into the dressing room before the game.

"Hey, 200th start tonight," he said. When the goaltender expressed confusion, the coach repeated it. Vasilevskiy pointed to himself. "Yeah, you," Cooper said. Vasilevskiy gave a little nod and bigger smile.

In truth, neither one had known until a reporter asked Cooper about it. The milestone sneaked up on them. He's only the second Lightning goalie to reach that mark, and the youngest. Ben Bishop did it in his seventh season, at age 29.

"That's a lot of starts for someone at a young age," Cooper said. "You see a little bit later development for some of these players as they mature at an older age."

He pointed out you can hide a forward, less so a defenseman and definitely not a goalie, as why goalies tend to develop later. Cooper credited Vasilevskiy's talent and work ethic. He'd would know, he's coached Vasilevskiy his whole career, starting as a callup, then a backup, then the secondary in a split-crease and finally the full-time starter.

"There's a reason they call him the Big Cat," Cooper said. "He moves like a cat and he has the reflexes and he has the size. It's a lethal combination."

Tampa Bay Times LOADED: 10.06.2019

1156101 Tampa Bay Lightning

Lightning hit the right notes on opening celebration

By Diana C. Nearhos

Published Yesterday

Updated Yesterday

Jon Cooper figures the season opener is matched by only one game in terms of excitement, and that's the opening night of the playoffs.

He might be on to something.

The home opener is a chance for teams to put on a show in a way most teams don't do outside the playoffs (unless we're talking about Vegas, but that's another conversation). The Lightning found a good balance of theatrics without going overboard in Thursday's opener against the Panthers at Amalie Arena.

They showed a couple of videos while fans streamed into the stands before warmups (including their overdramatic Steven Stamkos commercial) but didn't blow them out. There was a countdown on the video board (but not over the public-address system) to players coming out for warmups.

One video about overcoming the playoff failure of last season was shown before the team was introduced (the video also was a little overdramatic, but there's something to be said for the Lightning owning their collapse), then the players took over. They skated onto the ice through a video-board portal with some light effects. It wasn't too much, and most of the volume was natural from fans.

There were just enough effects while still making the players the focus and the fans the ones adding the celebratory feel.

Favorite comfort food: When in doubt, Johnson goes for pizza. He doesn't have a go-to topping, but there's usually meat involved, maybe pepperoni or sausage.

Favorite video game right now: Among sports games, Johnson likes FIFA. He picks a team in the fourth English league and tries to get it promoted to the Premier League. Outside of sports games, Johnson is on board with the Fortnite craze.

Dream job: Johnson always wanted to be a hockey player as a kid. When he got older, he realized that dream doesn't come true for everyone, and he studied anesthesiology. He doesn't the backup plan yet.

Random observations

- Golden Knights goalie Marc-Andre Fleury continues to amuse. He played his 800th NHL game Friday, but the highlight had nothing to do with his goaltending. During a line brawl with the Sharks, Fleury picked up one of the Sharks' sticks and stuck it through a hole in the glass to give it to some fans. San Jose defenseman Brent Burns tried to retrieve it, but the fans declined to give it back. Fleury is a great goaltender, but his amusing antics — another is building a snow wall in front of the net before heading to the bench — are gold.

- Ondrej Palat looks sharp early. There was a consensus during training camp that Palat appeared stronger, faster and better, and that carried over into the opener.

- The Lightning named two defensemen as alternate captains for captain Stamkos. Victor Hedman and Ryan McDonagh seem obvious choices, sure, though teams usually like to split the honor between positions. Teams also often pass the "A" around, so this might not be a set thing.

Three-on-three

Top goalies by opening-night saves: 3. Penguins' Matt Murray, 38 2. Canadiens' Carey Price, 40 1. Rangers' Henrik Lundqvist, 43

Top Lightning rookie debuts: 3. Anthony Cirelli scored in his first game. 2. Steven Stamkos debuted in Prague. 1. Nikita Kucherov scored on his first shot.

Top road-trip cities: 3. Boston 2. Vancouver 1. Montreal

Questions facing the Lightning

Did they give up too many chances opening night?

Cooper says no. There's a but, though. The Lightning gave up 37 shots, and Cooper insists the scoring chances they allowed weren't nearly as high. In fact, he says, they were where the team wants them to be.

Here's the but: The grade-A chances allowed were too high.

"When we gave up a scoring chance, it was a doozy," Cooper said. "We're taking steps forward, but there's so much room for improvement."

That was one of the goals at the start of training camp, so we'll call it a work in progress.

When will Brayden Point play?

Cooper expressed frustration in watching Point skate well in practice, looking like he can play, only to be told Point isn't ready as he comes back from offseason hip surgery. It's a matter of clearance from the doctors, which could come this week.

Why is Steven Stamkos playing wing?

Six words: Steven Stamkos-Brayden Point-Nikita Kucherov. Now that's a top line. Cooper said the coaches just like having options with players in different places. But that trio has practiced together, and it's worth a heart-eyes emoji.

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1156102 Tampa Bay Lightning



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Lightning's Carter Verhaeghe on NHL debut: 'I'm glad it's over with'

By Diana C. Nearhos

Published Yesterday

Updated Yesterday

TAMPA — Carter Verhaeghe figures he shook off the nerves of his first NHL game sometime Friday morning, the day after the game.

"I was pretty nervous," the Lightning forward, 24, said. "After a couple shifts, you kind of get going. ... I'm glad it's over with, and now get the next one."

He said it was pretty crazy to skate out of the tunnel for warmups to the cheers of a sellout crowd at Amalie Arena for the game against the Panthers.

Verhaeghe had skated in preseason games, and the first one was exciting, but it was nothing like his NHL debut.

When he got word he'd be in the opening-night lineup, his parents made plans to fly to Tampa from Waterdown, Ontario. Thomas and Karen Verhaeghe brought with them a group of 10 that included Verhaeghe's girlfriend, an aunt, an uncle, cousins and friends. Verhaeghe's fan club was continuing on to Sunrise for his second game, tonight against the Panthers.

"They were pretty ecstatic to see my first NHL game," Verhaeghe said. "It's something else."

Verhaeghe got one scoring chance in the game — "We're going to try to get a couple more next game," he said — in 10:55 of ice time, third lowest among forwards, but he did what was needed of him.

"He did his job," coach Jon Cooper said. "It wasn't like he played 20 minutes, but his line contributed. They got offensive-zone time. He kept his shifts short, which is understandable. And he did his job."

In some ways, Verhaeghe just needed to get the first game out of the way. It's special but maybe too monumental.

He hopes to make a bigger impact tonight. His first game was for the experience.

"I think I'll remember all of it," he said. "It was a big win. I am happy we won. I just tried to take everything in. I'll remember it for a very long time."

A player's NHL debut is one of the biggest moments of his career. What do other Lightning players remember from theirs?

Anthony Cirelli

He can recite the starting lineup from his first game, March 1, 2018, at Dallas. Cirelli started against the Stars, taking the opening faceoff opposite Tyler Seguin. The Stars started a stacked lineup of Seguin, Jamie Benn and Alexander Radulov at forward.

Yanni Gourde

He remembers stepping out on the ice in Toronto, then taking a penalty 30 seconds into his first shift. It wasn't a bad penalty, though, the kind that results from a 50-50 battle for the puck.

Tyler Johnson

The best part of the night was when warmups started. "That's when it's real, 'This is the NHL,'" he said.

Mathieu Joseph

He was the somewhat surprise rookie to make it out of training camp last year. The team gave him a rookie lap, when the rookie comes out first for

warmups and does a lap alone. That moment, with the crowd cheering, was special.

Alex Killorn

He remembers the leadup to the game. He got called up a couple of days before, and his parents canceled an international vacation they had planned in case he got in the lineup. Ryan Malone got hurt, and Killorn made it in ... at Madison Square Garden.

Brayden Point

He started on opening night of the 2016-17 season against the Red Wings in Tampa. The moment hit him as he stood on the bench during the national anthem, staring at the floor.

Luke Witkowski

He tried to take his usual pregame nap and couldn't sleep. Witkowski tossed and turned as his brain buzzed with excitement. He remembers getting the win and having his parents and now-wife there.

Jon Cooper

Killorn scored with less than 30 seconds to play against the Devils and the Lightning won in a shootout on March 29, 2013 in Tampa. "I can still remember walking through the tunnel for the first time and being as jacked up as any player," he said. Coaching against Martin Brodeur, one of the best goalies to play the game, made it all the more special.

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Tampa Bay Lightning

Lightning take on former teammate Anton Strålman

By Diana C. Nearhos

Published Earlier today

Updated Earlier today

SUNRISE — Jon Cooper watched Anton Stralman go into a corner, hunting the puck, and said to himself, "C'mon, Strals, come out with that."

Then he remembered Stralman is no longer on the Lightning.

"Oh, wait a sec, don't."

It's weird for him to see a player he coached for five of his six years full seasons with the Lightning on the other team now.

Stralman welcomed the Lightning to his new home Saturday with a 4-3 Panthers win. Well, more accurately, the new Panther welcomed them back. The Lightning visited Stralman for the first time 10 days ago in the preseason, but this time it was for real.

They exchanged pleasantries in the hallway outside the dressing room after that preseason game. Handshakes, good to see you passed around as they caught up.

"Anton Stralman is a wonderful human being," Cooper said. "He meant so much to our team. There's no coincidence that we did a whole lot of winning when he was playing for us."

It was a little weird for Stralman, too, being back at Amalie Arena on Thursday for the teams' season opener. He wasn't sure he'd been in the visiting dressing room since it had old blue metal stalls, back when he played for the Rangers in 2014.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 6, 2019

"It's special coming back and you see a lot of familiar faces on and off the ice," said Stralman, who signed with the Panthers as a free agent in the offseason. "It brings back a lot of memories."

Returning to former teams is old hat for him. This was his fourth first game back in a building he had previously called home, and he called himself "weathered in that situation."

Stralman's only Lightning regret is that he never won the Stanley Cup with them. The 2018 Eastern Conference final loss to the Capitals stings the most, more than last year's loss in a sweep to the Blue Jackets in the first round.

In the 2015 playoffs, the Lightning lost to a more experienced Blackhawks team in the Cup final. In the 2016 playoffs they lost to a better Penguins team in the conference final. In the 2016-17 season, they couldn't get it together and missed the playoffs. Last season was tough, but if the Lightning had won in the first round, who knows what would have happened after that.

But 2018 hurt. Stralman figures the Lightning could have won it all if they'd met their standards against the Capitals.

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1156104 Tampa Bay Lightning

Lightning's Pat Maroon flashes his talent in Bolts' season opener

By Diana C. Nearhos

Published Yesterday

Updated Yesterday

TAMPA — Jon Cooper knows Pat Maroon, and not just in the sense that coaches know veteran players around the league.

Maroon and Cooper started their careers together in Texarkana, Texas about 15 years ago. Cooper coached Maroon in the North American Hockey League when the winger was 17.

"He barely had hair on his face and now he has a full man beard," Cooper said. "We've found our way back to each other."

Maroon, whose third-period goal gave the Lightning a two-goal advantage in its 5-2 season-opening victory over Florida Thursday night, joined the Lightning this offseason as the player who has previously won the Stanley Cup.

No team has won without a previous winner in 25 years, a state Cooper cites adding it may or may not be coincidence.

The path from the NAHL was not a smooth one for Maroon.

"It's been a heck of a run," he said. "I would say I took the long route to get to where I am now, but it worked out in the end."

That long route involved being dismissed from a team for which he was the leading scorer. Maroon had scored five of the Adirondack Phantom's 19 goals when he got a call from then-Flyers general manager Paul Holmgren saying he'd been dismissed.

It was worse than being cut, because Maroon couldn't find his own next step. He was stuck staying with family and looking for ice to work out on.

"You kinda look in the mirror and you call your family and ask them what is going on," Maroon said. "But you really don't have the answers."

Why he was dismissed was never entirely clear and was a combination of things: conditioning, talk of nights out, sending a message to an undisciplined team.

"When you hear things and different things go on, and your team's losing down there you get frustrated and you kinda pick on a player," Maroon said, "and I was the guy."

Maroon's dismissal reverberated around the AHL team for its remaining three years in upstate New York. He is now its most successful alum, along with Blues teammate Brayden Schenn. They are the only two to establish consistent NHL careers after leaving the Adirondack Phantoms and the only two to win the Stanley Cup.

Of course, it didn't feel that way at the time. Sitting at a relative's home in New Jersey, Maroon thought his career was over. Why would a team take a risk on him, now?

But a team did. Maroon was traded to Anaheim and sent to Syracuse (then the Ducks' affiliate, while the Lightning's team was in Norfolk, Va.). He made his NHL debut with two games at the start of the next season. He scored in his first game against his old team, making a statement with a little extra celebration.

That was nine years ago, though. After eight full seasons in the NHL, Maroon says while the memories of his departure from the Phantoms aren't good ones, there are no hard feelings. There's neither bitterness, nor an edge in his voice as he says it.

This is a part of his story, but it's in his past. His present is very different.

"Anaheim took a chance on me and it worked out well," Maroon said. "I've certainly come a long way from being sent home to the Stanley Cup."

Maroon knows what it's like to come close to the Cup; Anaheim lost in the 2015 Western Conference Finals. Now, he knows what it's like to win the Cup. That's what he brings to the Lightning.

It might be coincidence that no team has won the Cup without a previous winner (St. Louis' previous winner was Oskar Sundqvist, who played a game in each of the first two rounds on Pittsburgh's 2016 Cup run). But Cooper believes experience helps.

"There are a few guys in that room that have played in a Stanley Cup Final but have never been able to get across the finish line," he said. "Pat's one of those guys that did get across the finish line and was a big contributor."

So what did Maroon learn about the difference between being close and winning?

That it's mostly mental. Winning the Stanley Cup is physically exhausting. Every series is exhausting and they just keep coming.

"It's the mental part of it where you go into Game 7s and it's who's hungry," Maroon said. "The skill is not going to take over, it's the heart, it's what's inside you, believing in yourself."

Each step gets harder and the antidote to the grind is also mental.

"Just believe in yourself, believe in the guys in here," Maroon said. "Make sure you're still having fun, relaxing, enjoying the game you love playing."

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1156105 Tampa Bay Lightning

Mike Hoffman gets hat trick and Sergei Bobrovsky shines as Panthers hold off Lightning in home opener



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 6, 2019

By George Richards

Oct 5, 2019

SUNRISE, Fla. — For their home opener Saturday night, the Florida Panthers handed out schedule magnets to all fans entering the building, with LED bracelets sitting on each seat in the arena.

Good thing they didn't give out anything easier to throw.

Well, actually, Saturday night would have been a great time to give out baseball caps. Or fedoras. Whatever.

Mike Hoffman was celebrated with ball caps, rubber rats and, yes, those silicon wrist bands early in the third period when he knocked down a shot from Aaron Ekblad and deflected it past Tampa Bay goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy to give the Panthers a three-goal lead.

The third-period goal, combined with the two Hoffman scored in the second period, gave him his second career hat trick.

When Hoffman got his first NHL hat trick in 2016 while with Ottawa, he said afterward that while he was happy to notch his goals, he could not really celebrate with the Senators losing to Buffalo and all that.

On Saturday, however, Hoffman could feel free to party into the South Florida night.

His third goal served as the game-winner as Sergei Bobrovsky had to do everything in his power to hold off the Lightning in the final period of the Panthers' 4-3 victory.

Bobrovsky got his first win as a member of the Panthers after giving up four goals in a season-opening loss at Tampa Bay on Thursday. Two days later, he stopped 32 shots as the Lightning threw everything they had at Bob and the Panthers.

"Bob saved us tonight," Sasha Barkov said.

Hoffman was named first star of the win Saturday in an obvious selection.

"Hoff," coach Joel Quenneville said, "is on a roll."

Florida and Tampa Bay were scoreless after the first period before Hoffman got things going in the second.

The Panthers' power play — which went 0-for-4 in the opener — pushed Vasilevskiy on their first chance with the advantage. Then Hoffman got the puck in his favorite spot.

On Florida's second power play, Hoffman slid into the right circle. Jonathan Huberdeau saw him all alone, slid the puck to him and watched as Hoffman rifled a shot that buzzed past the Tampa goalie and into the back of the net.

The Panthers not only had their first power play goal of the young season but also their first lead as well.

Less than a minute after Hoffman made it 1-0, Anthony Cirelli was whistled for a high stick. Hoffman and his power play party skated back onto the ice.

As was the case before, Huberdeau saw Hoffman get into his comfort spot and slid a crisp pass from one circle to the other. By the time Vasilevskiy could turn to look, it was 2-0.

Same place, same look, same result.

Panthers left wing Mike Hoffman fires a shot past Andrei Vasilevskiy in the second period. (Sam Navarro / USA Today)

"You have to look for him when he's on the ice," said Sasha Barkov, who watched Hoffman score 17 power play goals last season. Hoffman's 36 total goals were also a career-high.

"I mean, he's a goal scorer, that is what he does. If we get him the puck, there's a pretty good chance it is going in."

Said Bobrovsky: "This team really has so much offensive skill, so much talent. It is fun to watch them, they make smart plays and that gives them a real edge. (Hoffman) has a great release and he's very accurate with his shot. He has a good one-timer as well and that's always tough on a goalie."

Hoffman came to the Panthers in 2018 not long after a personal issue with Ottawa teammate Erik Karlsson became public.

One had to go — actually, both eventually did — and the Sens sent Hoffman to San Jose, which quickly flipped him to the Panthers for a couple of draft picks.

The Panthers knew Hoffman could score but may not have realized how lethal his shot is.

They know all about it now — and could not love it any more.

"We knew when we played him that you had to keep an eye on him," Barkov said. "When we got him two summers ago, we knew he was going to be a big addition."

Hoffman claimed the problems in Ottawa were blown out of proportion, and Florida GM Dale Tallon did plenty of due diligence in finding out who Hoffman was as a man and a teammate.

Tallon already knew what kind of player Hoffman was and that his shot would be a difference-maker for the Panthers on the power play.

"You can talk about how hard (his shot) is, but there's a deceptiveness and a quickness to it," Quenneville said. "He gets it through. He has a unique ability to get it away and get it off. He had a great tip as well. He is off to a hot start and had a great camp for us. I think you can use Hoff in a lot of different situations."

Since joining the Panthers, no one has had a negative word to say about Hoffman. He comes to practice every day ready to work and gets along great with his teammates.

"Huberdeau made some great passes — and it's up to me to put them in the net," Hoffman said. "(Saturday) everything seemed to be working. It's fun to play when things are going your way.

"You lick your chops when you get those opportunities. Obviously, we have some good players on our power play who can find me on open ice. I try to get open as much as I can."

The Panthers are going to have to make a decision on Hoffman's future soon. It was thought that had Florida been able to lure Artemi Panarin south during the summer, Hoffman would already have been traded because of the salary cap.

Hoffman came into this season a pending free agent, so when this season ends, he is free to go elsewhere.

The Panthers have two of their top forwards becoming free agents and probably can afford to keep only one.

Will it be Hoffman or Evgenii Dadonov?

Right now, Hoffman is setting himself up for a nice payday come July 1. His three goals Saturday give him four already. Hoffman scored Florida's first goal of the season Thursday in Tampa.

"It has been great ever since I got here. I have loved every second of it," Hoffman said Saturday. "The guys here are great, ownership is great. It is definitely a fun place to play and we were able to pick up some key acquisitions over the summer. That's a positive thing and I'm looking forward to the future.

"I am going to do the best I can for this hockey club this year and I will let everything else kind of sort itself out."



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 6, 2019

Tampa Bay and Florida had the two best power play success rates in the league last season, and the Lightning got off to a great start in the opener, scoring once while on the power play but also adding two goals either in the seconds after a penalty expired or during a delayed penalty call.

On Saturday it was Florida's turn. The Lightning were 1-3 with the advantage Thursday and 0-1 in the loss. The Panthers ended up 0-4 on Thursday and 2 of 3 on Saturday courtesy of Hoffman's big shots.

"We have been working on it and know we need our power play going if we're going to win," Barkov said. "We had a huge addition in net and can play a four-line game, but the power play is crucial. We have to contribute every game."

The Panthers did not get much going on the power play in the opener as they struggled to hold possession or win initial face-offs.

Saturday, the Panthers were able to keep the puck in deep and Hoffman teed off on two passes. Florida was patient with the puck — until Hoffman pounced.

"I thought our QB (Keith Yandle) showed great poise," Hoffman said. "We had good puck retrieval off of the faceoff and working through their kill. When the opportunities opened up, that's when we were able to capitalize."

Some of the loudest cheers of the night came during the pregame ceremony when Bobrovsky came out a side tunnel through a cloud of smoke and fans chanted his name as he skated onto the ice.

The Panthers signed Bobrovsky to a seven-year, \$70 million contract in July after seven seasons in Columbus. While with the Blue Jackets, Bobrovsky was in the playoffs four times and won the Vezina Trophy for the league's top goalie twice.

"Bob getting his first win was huge for us," said Quenneville, who also won his first game as coach of the Panthers. "He made some unbelievable saves. ... He had a couple that were just spectacular. It looked like there was an empty net and he comes up with it."

Said Bobrovsky: "It was a huge win for us and we can enjoy it tonight, but we have to be ready to come right back to work. Fans always give you energy, give you a boost. There was an excitement out there."

Barkov will have more fans than usual in the stands at home games this season as he is joining forces with the Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood.

Not only will Barkov donate \$1,600 for each goal he scores this season to the hospital, but he is donating a suite at all 41 home games so children and their families can come to a game and watch some hockey.

"This summer I thought maybe I should do something, something good for the community I have been living in for a long time," Barkov said. "Everything I have been through here has been amazing and it feels like I have been adopted here."

"Now I have a chance to do something good for the community, so why not do something for the kids? Bring them to the game and score goals for them. I think it is a good thing for everyone."

Forward Jayce Hawryluk was the lone forward to be scratched by the Panthers in the opener Thursday (Florida is only carrying one extra), but he was in the lineup Saturday.

He says he does not want to be scratched again.

Hawryluk replaced Denis Malgin on the third line Saturday and played 9:46 on 15 shifts.

"Watching games from up top (in the press box), you can pick things up a little because it looks slower," Hawryluk said. "You learn a few things here and there. ... But it was a coach's decision and whatever they think is the best lineup for a given night, that's who goes on the ice."

"For me, I'm just going to keep working, try to get better every day and work back into the lineup. I (was there Saturday) and now my goal is to not come out again."

The Panthers and Lightning finished off their odd five-game set, and the two cross-state rivals will not see one another again until December.

After playing three exhibitions to end the preseason, the teams opened the regular season against each other. Florida and Tampa Bay have opened the season the past three years with the home-and-home double set in two of those seasons. The teams split both times.

They'll play again Dec. 10 in Sunrise and conclude the season series Dec. 23 in Tampa.

"It's early, but now we don't have to play Tampa for some time," Quenneville said with a laugh. "Now, we'll go on to start thinking about what our strategy will be against another team. ... We get Carolina now."

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1156106 Tampa Bay Lightning

Five minutes, special teams sink Lightning in loss to rival Panthers

By Erin Brown

Oct 5, 2019

SUNRISE, Fla. — Outside of five minutes on Saturday, the Tampa Bay Lightning have played near-perfect hockey through the first two games of the season.

Unfortunately, the flawed stretch was enough to sway momentum so drastically it resulted in their first loss, 4-3, to the Florida Panthers.

"That's the thing about games 1 through 10 — everybody's constantly dissecting their game," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. "There's going to be mistakes, and you just hope the mistakes you make in games 1 and 2 are not as glaring in games 25 and 30 and 45 and 50. It's going to be expected early on, and you just gotta work through it."

Midway through the second period, the Bolts found themselves skating to the penalty box three times in just under five minutes.

Florida's Mike Hoffman scored two power-play goals 86 seconds apart on near-identical one-timers from the right circle. Noel Acciari put the Panthers ahead by three just under a minute and a half later.

"Three power plays and scored on two of them," Cooper said. "So we lost the special-teams battle and it cost us the game."

"It's all part of the game," said Gemel Smith, whose second-period goal pulled Tampa Bay within two. "You just have to kind of respond. Obviously, penalties kind of drain you. I think we've just got to do a better job staying out of the box."

Hoffman completed his hat trick 17 seconds into the third period, which ended up ultimately putting the game out of reach for Tampa Bay.

"We just came unhinged a little bit," defenseman Kevin Shattenkirk said. "We stopped playing as a five-man unit, and that's a natural thing to do when you're down a couple goals. Guys want to be the hero and we have a lot of good players on this team that are capable of doing that, obviously. But we play better as a five-man group. Everyone knows that. All the guys in there know that, and we've just got to make sure in those tough times that we stick together and make sure that we oversimplify and do those things — even more little, simple things — and we'll get back to our game quicker."



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Following the Hoffman tally, the Bolts did exactly that. They sustained pressure enough to outshoot Florida 17-6 during the final 20 minutes. Steven Stamkos and Mathieu Joseph scored to pull Tampa Bay within a goal.

In the final four seconds, Tampa fired on three shots. Florida's Sergei Bobrovsky and a mob of Panthers piled up in the crease to keep it out.

"What I really liked was our pushback," Cooper said. "It's tough giving up that goal early in the third, but I thought we took over the game, even down 4-1, and had our chance at the end and unfortunately couldn't do it."

Thank you, next

Saturday marked the last of five straight games — three in the preseason, two in the regular season — in which the intra-state rivals faced each other.

"I think the only two common things are (Panthers coach Joel Quenneville) and I have been on the bench," Cooper said. "Other than that, the teams changed. But it'll be good to play someone else here."

In games that counted, the Cats and Bolts split 1-1. Tampa Bay took the edge in goals scored 8-6.

Saturday's loss ended a seven-game win streak by the Lightning against the Panthers, which dated back to the 2017-18 season.

"This is the fifth time playing them the last two weeks, so we kind of knew what to expect," Cirelli said. "Obviously, emotions are high. We've played them a lot now. ... It was a battle all game long, and we've just got to be a little bit better."

Tampa Bay plays Carolina on Sunday night in Raleigh.

The Panthers and Lightning face each other again Dec. 10 in Sunrise before wrapping up the season series 13 days later in Tampa.

Big Cat's 200th

Andrei Vasilevskiy made his 200th NHL start Saturday, and upon learning of the milestone, Cooper acted like a proud parent.

"Hey, 200th start tonight," Cooper called out when the goalie walked past.

It didn't quite register with Vasilevskiy.

"Two. Hundredth. Start. You," Cooper said and mimed, trying to make it easier for his goaltender to understand. The coach finally stuck out a fist and the goalie bumped it in acknowledgment.

"To play that many games like that (at a) young age, it just goes to his talent," Cooper said. "We've kind of grown together. As a player, he was a call-up. Then he was a backup. Then he was a kind of a 1A, 1B and now he's the 1A. It's been a lot of fun to watch, and he's deserved it."

Despite being only 25, Vasilevskiy is within reach of a few Bolts goaltending records. He is 23 starts, 28 appearances and seven wins from overtaking Ben Bishop for the franchise marks. There's little reason to believe he won't surpass all of them this season.

Cooper credited the Vezina Trophy winner's work ethic and skill for the success.

"His offseason workouts, he's a machine," Cooper said. "He's constantly working. He's working on his game, both on and off the ice. And that's how come he's playing 200 games at such a young age."

"There's a reason they call him 'the Big Cat' — because he moves like a cat. He's got reflexes and size, a pretty lethal combination."

Cross-state gratitude

Prior to Saturday's contest, former Lightning defenseman Anton Stralman acknowledged the warm "thank you" he received during the season opener in Tampa.

Stralman spent five seasons with the Bolts before signing with the Panthers as a free agent in July.

"You kind of wish you had more time to take it all in and enjoy it more," Stralman said. "But obviously it was very humbling being there. I felt like over the course of the five years I was there, I had a good bond with the fans, and they gave me way more than I could ever give back."

Ice chips

— Tampa Bay controlled the faceoff circle for the second straight game, winning 55 percent of the draws. Tyler Johnson led the Bolts with a 65 percent mark, winning 7 of 11.

— Shattenkirk led the Lightning in shots for the second straight game with five.

— Tampa Bay dropped to 6-11-1 in Game No. 2 following a season-opening win.

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1156014 Florida Panthers

Mike Hoffman's hat trick leads 'no more excuses' Florida Panthers to win in home opener

BY JORDAN MCPHERSON

OCTOBER 05, 2019 09:47 PM

The pre-game message could not have been clearer as a minute-long video montage flashed on the scoreboard above center ice Saturday ahead of the Florida Panthers' home opener against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

A nearly full BB&T Center received a crash course on the Panthers' busy offseason.

Coach Joel Quenneville's hire. The new coach's message to his new players to feel the sting of missing the playoffs yet again — and a stern reminder that it shouldn't happen again. The Panthers' offseason signings, headlined by goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky. The Panthers' big picture unfolding.

And then, nine words stamped on a black background.

"No more excuses. We're not going to need them."

Well, if the Panthers play like they did on Saturday, excuses won't be necessary.

Mike Hoffman recorded a hat trick — including two power-play goals as part of a three-goal second period — to lift the Panthers to a 4-3 win over the Lightning for the first win of the Quenneville era.

The win also avenges Thursday's 5-2 season-opening loss to the Lightning in Tampa and snaps a seven-game winless streak against their in-state rival that dated back to the 2017 season.

Rats and hats trickled onto the ice 17 seconds into the third period after Hoffman scored his third goal of the night, a quick strike that sent the announced BB&T Center crowd of 17,424 into a frenzy. It was Hoffman's second career hat trick, the first coming back in 2016 when he was with the Ottawa Senators.

"We wanted to come out and have a strong presence on our home ice," Hoffman said. "The fans were into the game right from the start. It was a fun building to play in, and we wanted to put on a good performance for them. Throughout the whole lineup, everyone was there ready to go."



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But a sloppy third period — one in which the Lightning scored twice and had their share of chances to tie it in the final minute — made the win too close for comfort.

Bobrovsky, the two-time Vezina Trophy winner who signed a 7-year, \$70 million deal with the Panthers this offseason, saved a flurry right in front of the net over the final 10 seconds, falling on the puck with 0.6 seconds left to force a final faceoff that sealed the win.

"I just tried to find the puck and stop the puck," said Bobrovsky, who saved 32 of 35 shots that came his way. "I didn't think much. It's all instinct. We all know the score. ... We have to get it done."

Hoffman certainly got it done, too, with his first two second-period goals giving the Panthers the momentum after a scoreless opening period.

Hoffman's power play goals came 1 minute and 26 seconds apart midway through the second period and had nearly identical setups. Jonathan Huberdeau fed his fellow forward a pass across the ice. Hoffman's strikes from the right circle made it over the shoulder of reigning Vezina Trophy winner Andrei Vasilevskiy to give the Panthers (1-1-0) the lead.

"Our power play was nice to get going," Hoffman said. "Obviously last game wasn't up to our standards [0 for 4]. Huberdeau made some great passes over to me, and it's on myself to put those in the net."

"Tonight, everything seemed to be working."

Defenseman Keith Yandle earned the secondary assist on both goals.

Hoffman now has four goals through two games after leading the Panthers with 36 last season.

Noel Acciari, one of the Panthers' offseason acquisitions, added the third goal in the period about a minute later.

Gemel Smith, Steven Stamkos and Mathieu Joseph scored goals for the Lightning (1-1-0).

"We had some really good stretches in the game," Quenneville said. "I thought we had some good possessions at times. I thought at the end, it was a good lesson to have some composure in that situation."

The Panthers return to the BB&T Center on Tuesday to face the Carolina Hurricanes.

Miami Herald LOADED: 10.06.2019

1156015 Florida Panthers

He was a scratch in the Panthers' season opener. He's ready to make his debut at home

BY JORDAN MCPHERSON

OCTOBER 05, 2019 01:33 PM

Jayce Hawryluk impressed the Florida Panthers coaching staff enough in the preseason to crack the Opening Night roster for the first time in his young NHL career.

His season debut? That had to wait a couple days.

After being a healthy scratch in the Panthers' 5-2 road loss against the Tampa Bay Lightning on Thursday to open the 2019-20 season, Hawryluk will be in the lineup for the Cats' home opener — also against the Lightning — on Saturday night at the BB&T Center.

"That was the coaches' decision," Hawryluk, 23, said of sitting out Thursday's game. "They decide what's the best lineup for each night. ... I'm in there tonight, and my goal is to never come out."

It might not be the only change to come as the Panthers continue to see which combination of players work best together as the season progresses.

"It's tough to forecast," Panthers coach Joel Quenneville said. "Sometimes you make decisions and sometimes you have lineups you don't like to mess around with or mix up. When you get a chance to make an adjustment or change, you look at it with everyone involved."

Hawryluk, the Panthers' second-round pick in 2014, scored seven goals and added five assists in 42 games last season — his first in the NHL. He made the opening roster after a strong preseason in which he scored one goal and added three blocks, seven hits and a takeaway in five games.

"He's an energy type of guy," Quenneville said. "We're looking for that from him."

He served as the right wing on the Panthers' third line during Saturday's morning skate, playing alongside left wing Frank Vatrano and center Henrik Borgstrom. He replaced Denis Malgin, who held that spot in Thursday's season opener.

"We play with a lot of grit," Hawryluk, the Panthers' second round pick in 2014, said. "It should be an exciting night for us."

'A NEW CHANCE'

The Panthers (0-1-0) hope it's a winning night, too. They entered the season with expected hype following the hire of Quenneville and goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky to add to their talent young core of offensive firepower. Back-to-back losses to start the year — albeit against one of the league's top teams in the Lightning (1-0-0) — would damper some of those early expectations.

"We've been waiting for this for a long time," center and team captain Aleksander Barkov said. "It's a new day. We get a new chance, and there's no better way to do it than on home ice."

They struggled with that to start last season. They lost their first four games at the BB&T Center to begin the 2018-19 season — including once in overtime — and went 20-13-8 overall at home.

"A lot of teams will say that if you're .500 on the road and have a higher winning percentage at home, that's what you're looking for," Quenneville said. "We want to make sure that we're one of those teams that takes advantage of the crowd, the building and one another here."

They only have so many chances to make an impression at home early in the year, too. Eleven of the Panthers' 16 games after Saturday's home opener are on the road.

"We want to get people excited about hockey here as soon as possible and make them want to buy another ticket for the next game," defenseman Aaron Ekblad said. "We're excited as players. We want to get our first win."

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1156016 Florida Panthers

Panthers get Hoffman hat trick, stave off Lightning rally in home opener

By PAUL GEREFFI

ASSOCIATED PRESS |

OCT 05, 2019 | 10:01 PM

The Panthers beat their Florida rivals for the first time in nearly two years.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Mike Hoffman had his second career hat trick to help Florida beat Tampa Bay 4-3 on Saturday night to split an opening home-and-home series.

Noel Acciari also scored and Sergei Bobrovsky made 29 saves for his first victory with the Panthers. Joel Quenneville also won for first time as coach of the Panthers. On Thursday night in Tampa, the Lightning beat the Panthers 5-2.

The win was the first for the Panthers in eight games against the Lightning since a 5-4 victory on Oct. 7, 2017.

"This one was big tonight," Hoffman said. "Obviously, you didn't want to lose both to Tampa right off the start."

Jonathan Huberdeau and Keith Yandle each had assists on Hoffman's first two goals, both on the power play.

"Our power play was nice to get going," Hoffman said. "You lick your chops when you get those opportunities."

Steven Stamkos, Mathieu Joseph and Gemel Smith scored for the Lightning. Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 24 shots.

"We took three [penalties] in a row there and they capitalized on two of them, obviously swung the momentum of the game," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said.

Hoffman's third goal came when he redirected a shot from Aaron Ekblad into the net 17 seconds into the third period to give the Panthers a 4-1 lead. Hoffman's last hat trick was on Nov. 29, 2016, against Buffalo.

The Lightning made a surge in the third period.

Stamkos closed the Lightning to 4-2 on a one-timer from the left circle that beat Bobrovsky at 6:40 of the third. Joseph made the score 4-3 on his goal with 4:19 left in the third.

"We had the ice tilted. It's tough to get three," Cooper said. "We got two; we couldn't get three."

The Panthers avoided the slow start that plagued them last season, when they went 0-2-2 in their first four games.

"We did some good things and had some really good stretches in the game," Quenneville said. "At the end, was a good lesson for us to have some composure in that situation."

The Panthers scored three goals in the second period, including two power-play goals by Hoffman.

He gave the Panthers a 1-0 lead on his first goal at 9:39. Hoffman's wrist shot from the right circle beat Vasilevskiy in the left corner. Hoffman's second goal came 1:26 later when his shot from almost the same spot in the right circle got in at 11:05 to make the score 2-0.

The Panthers stretched their lead to 3-0 on Acciari's goal, his first with the Panthers. Acciari corralled the puck in front of the crease and backhanded it in at 12:32.

Trailing 3-0, the Lightning closed to 3-1 on the goal by Smith, who nudged in a puck sliding loose in the crease at 16:23 of the second.

NOTES: Panthers defenseman MacKenzie Weegar returned after leaving Thursday's game midway through the third period with an upper-body injury. ... The game was the first of a six-game road trip for the Lightning.

UP NEXT:

Panthers: Host the Carolina Hurricanes on Tuesday.

Sun Sentinel LOADED: 10.06.2019

1156017 Florida Panthers

Florida Panthers looking to set the tone at home

By WELLS DUSENBURY

OCT 05, 2019 | 8:05 PM

If the Florida Panthers want to turn the corner and return to the playoffs, it's going to have to start at home.

After falling to the Tampa Bay Lightning, 5-2, in Thursday's season opener, the Panthers began their home slate Saturday night at the BB&T Center against their in-state foes once again. With just two playoff appearances in the past 18 seasons, taking advantage at home is critical for the Panthers — and the team knows it.

"We want to establish that we're going to be a good team — predictable at home ice, that we're going to be hard to play against," new Panthers coach Joel Quenneville said prior to Saturday's home opener.

"You want to make sure you play and have a good winning record at home. A lot of teams will say that if you're .500 on the road and have a higher winning percentage at home — that's what you're looking for. We want to make sure that we're one of those teams that takes advantage of the crowd, the building.

Last season, the Panthers finished the regular season 20-13-8 at home, but struggled on the road, accumulating a 16-19-6 record. Starting off hot with be a key task for Florida after years of early-season struggles have doomed Florida's playoff chances. Last year, the Panthers finished October with a 2-4-3 mark and never recovered.

"This is the time of year when our building's full and bumping," Panthers defenseman Aaron Ekblad said. "We want to get people excited about hockey as soon as possible and make them want to buy another ticket for the next game."

While the Panthers haven't won a playoff series since 1996, expectations for the team are high entering the year. In the offseason, Florida landed the second-winningest coach of all time in Quenneville and signed the top free agent goalie in Sergei Bobrovsky. Pairing the summer additions with their talented returning core featuring Aleksander Barkov, Vincent Trocheck, Jonathan Huberdeau and Ekblad, the Panthers are hoping the pieces are finally in place for a playoff run.

With the Dolphins, Hurricanes and Marlins all struggling mightily and the Heat looking to replace legend Dwyane Wade after missing the playoffs, the Panthers have an opportunity to seize the market if they live up to expectations.

Hawryluk moves to third line

Ahead of the home opener, Quenneville made a minor switch in his forward lines, bumping up Jayce Hawryluk to third-line winger. The forward, who didn't play in Thursday's game versus Tampa Bay, takes Denis Malgin's spot on that unit. Last season, Hawryluk, 23, played in 42 games, posting 12 points (seven goals, five assists).

After making his NHL debut last season, Hawryluk is ready for the opportunity at hand.

[The plan is] just go out there and play hard every shift," Hawryluk said. "If I work hard and follow the systems that are in place, I think things will turn out well for myself."

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1156018 Florida Panthers

Mike Hoffman gets hat trick and Sergei Bobrovsky shines as Panthers hold off Lightning in home opener



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 6, 2019

By George Richards Oct 5, 2019

SUNRISE, Fla. — For their home opener Saturday night, the Florida Panthers handed out schedule magnets to all fans entering the building, with LED bracelets sitting on each seat in the arena.

Good thing they didn't give out anything easier to throw.

Well, actually, Saturday night would have been a great time to give out baseball caps. Or fedoras. Whatever.

Mike Hoffman was celebrated with ball caps, rubber rats and, yes, those silicon wrist bands early in the third period when he knocked down a shot from Aaron Ekblad and deflected it past Tampa Bay goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy to give the Panthers a three-goal lead.

The third-period goal, combined with the two Hoffman scored in the second period, gave him his second career hat trick.

When Hoffman got his first NHL hat trick in 2016 while with Ottawa, he said afterward that while he was happy to notch his goals, he could not really celebrate with the Senators losing to Buffalo and all that.

On Saturday, however, Hoffman could feel free to party into the South Florida night.

His third goal served as the game-winner as Sergei Bobrovsky had to do everything in his power to hold off the Lightning in the final period of the Panthers' 4-3 victory.

Bobrovsky got his first win as a member of the Panthers after giving up four goals in a season-opening loss at Tampa Bay on Thursday. Two days later, he stopped 32 shots as the Lightning threw everything they had at Bob and the Panthers.

"Bob saved us tonight," Sasha Barkov said.

Hoffman was named first star of the win Saturday in an obvious selection.

"Hoff," coach Joel Quenneville said, "is on a roll."

Florida and Tampa Bay were scoreless after the first period before Hoffman got things going in the second.

The Panthers' power play — which went 0-for-4 in the opener — pushed Vasilevskiy on their first chance with the advantage. Then Hoffman got the puck in his favorite spot.

On Florida's second power play, Hoffman slid into the right circle. Jonathan Huberdeau saw him all alone, slid the puck to him and watched as Hoffman rifled a shot that buzzed past the Tampa goalie and into the back of the net.

The Panthers not only had their first power play goal of the young season but also their first lead as well.

Less than a minute after Hoffman made it 1-0, Anthony Cirelli was whistled for a high stick. Hoffman and his power play party skated back onto the ice.

As was the case before, Huberdeau saw Hoffman get into his comfort spot and slid a crisp pass from one circle to the other. By the time Vasilevskiy could turn to look, it was 2-0.

Same place, same look, same result.

Panthers left wing Mike Hoffman fires a shot past Andrei Vasilevskiy in the second period. (Sam Navarro / USA Today)

"You have to look for him when he's on the ice," said Sasha Barkov, who watched Hoffman score 17 power play goals last season. Hoffman's 36 total goals were also a career-high.

"I mean, he's a goal scorer, that is what he does. If we get him the puck, there's a pretty good chance it is going in."

Said Bobrovsky: "This team really has so much offensive skill, so much talent. It is fun to watch them, they make smart plays and that gives them a real edge. (Hoffman) has a great release and he's very accurate with his shot. He has a good one-timer as well and that's always tough on a goalie."

Hoffman came to the Panthers in 2018 not long after a personal issue with Ottawa teammate Erik Karlsson became public.

One had to go — actually, both eventually did — and the Sens sent Hoffman to San Jose, which quickly flipped him to the Panthers for a couple of draft picks.

The Panthers knew Hoffman could score but may not have realized how lethal his shot is.

They know all about it now — and could not love it any more.

"We knew when we played him that you had to keep an eye on him," Barkov said. "When we got him two summers ago, we knew he was going to be a big addition."

Hoffman claimed the problems in Ottawa were blown out of proportion, and Florida GM Dale Tallon did plenty of due diligence in finding out who Hoffman was as a man and a teammate.

Tallon already knew what kind of player Hoffman was and that his shot would be a difference-maker for the Panthers on the power play.

"You can talk about how hard (his shot) is, but there's a deceptiveness and a quickness to it," Quenneville said. "He gets it through. He has a unique ability to get it away and get it off. He had a great tip as well. He is off to a hot start and had a great camp for us. I think you can use Hoff in a lot of different situations."

Since joining the Panthers, no one has had a negative word to say about Hoffman. He comes to practice every day ready to work and gets along great with his teammates.

"Huberdeau made some great passes — and it's up to me to put them in the net," Hoffman said. "(Saturday) everything seemed to be working. It's fun to play when things are going your way."

"You lick your chops when you get those opportunities. Obviously, we have some good players on our power play who can find me on open ice. I try to get open as much as I can."

The Panthers are going to have to make a decision on Hoffman's future soon. It was thought that had Florida been able to lure Artemi Panarin south during the summer, Hoffman would already have been traded because of the salary cap.

Hoffman came into this season a pending free agent, so when this season ends, he is free to go elsewhere.

The Panthers have two of their top forwards becoming free agents and probably can afford to keep only one.

Will it be Hoffman or Evgenii Dadonov?

Right now, Hoffman is setting himself up for a nice payday come July 1. His three goals Saturday give him four already. Hoffman scored Florida's first goal of the season Thursday in Tampa.

"It has been great ever since I got here. I have loved every second of it," Hoffman said Saturday. "The guys here are great, ownership is great. It is definitely a fun place to play and we were able to pick up some key acquisitions over the summer. That's a positive thing and I'm looking forward to the future."

"I am going to do the best I can for this hockey club this year and I will let everything else kind of sort itself out."

Special teams the difference again

Tampa Bay and Florida had the two best power play success rates in the league last season, and the Lightning got off to a great start in the



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opener, scoring once while on the power play but also adding two goals either in the seconds after a penalty expired or during a delayed penalty call.

On Saturday it was Florida's turn. The Lightning were 1-3 with the advantage Thursday and 0-1 in the loss. The Panthers ended up 0-4 on Thursday and 2 of 3 on Saturday courtesy of Hoffman's big shots.

"We have been working on it and know we need our power play going if we're going to win," Barkov said. "We had a huge addition in net and can play a four-line game, but the power play is crucial. We have to contribute every game."

The Panthers did not get much going on the power play in the opener as they struggled to hold possession or win initial face-offs.

Saturday, the Panthers were able to keep the puck in deep and Hoffman teed off on two passes. Florida was patient with the puck — until Hoffman pounced.

"I thought our QB (Keith Yandle) showed great poise," Hoffman said. "We had good puck retrieval off of the faceoff and working through their kill. When the opportunities opened up, that's when we were able to capitalize."

Bob's opening act

Some of the loudest cheers of the night came during the pregame ceremony when Bobrovsky came out a side tunnel through a cloud of smoke and fans chanted his name as he skated onto the ice.

The Panthers signed Bobrovsky to a seven-year, \$70 million contract in July after seven seasons in Columbus. While with the Blue Jackets, Bobrovsky was in the playoffs four times and won the Vezina Trophy for the league's top goalie twice.

"Bob getting his first win was huge for us," said Quenneville, who also won his first game as coach of the Panthers. "He made some unbelievable saves. ... He had a couple that were just spectacular. It looked like there was an empty net and he comes up with it."

Said Bobrovsky: "It was a huge win for us and we can enjoy it tonight, but we have to be ready to come right back to work. Fans always give you energy, give you a boost. There was an excitement out there."

Barkov gives back to "adopted" home

Barkov will have more fans than usual in the stands at home games this season as he is joining forces with the Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood.

Not only will Barkov donate \$1,600 for each goal he scores this season to the hospital, but he is donating a suite at all 41 home games so children and their families can come to a game and watch some hockey.

"This summer I thought maybe I should do something, something good for the community I have been living in for a long time," Barkov said. "Everything I have been through here has been amazing and it feels like I have been adopted here."

"Now I have a chance to do something good for the community, so why not do something for the kids? Bring them to the game and score goals for them. I think it is a good thing for everyone."

Hawryluk does not want to sit again

Forward Jayce Hawryluk was the lone forward to be scratched by the Panthers in the opener Thursday (Florida is only carrying one extra), but he was in the lineup Saturday.

He says he does not want to be scratched again.

Hawryluk replaced Denis Malgin on the third line Saturday and played 9:46 on 15 shifts.

"Watching games from up top (in the press box), you can pick things up a little because it looks slower," Hawryluk said. "You learn a few things

here and there. ... But it was a coach's decision and whatever they think is the best lineup for a given night, that's who goes on the ice.

"For me, I'm just going to keep working, try to get better every day and work back into the lineup. I (was there Saturday) and now my goal is to not come out again."

No more Tampa — for a while

The Panthers and Lightning finished off their odd five-game set, and the two cross-state rivals will not see one another again until December.

After playing three exhibitions to end the preseason, the teams opened the regular season against each other. Florida and Tampa Bay have opened the season the past three years with the home-and-home double set in two of those seasons. The teams split both times.

They'll play again Dec. 10 in Sunrise and conclude the season series Dec. 23 in Tampa.

"It's early, but now we don't have to play Tampa for some time," Quenneville said with a laugh. "Now, we'll go on to start thinking about what our strategy will be against another team. ... We get Carolina now."

The Athletic LOADED: 10.06.2019

1156019 Florida Panthers

Five minutes, special teams sink Lightning in loss to rival Panthers

By Erin Brown Oct 5, 2019

SUNRISE, Fla. — Outside of five minutes on Saturday, the Tampa Bay Lightning have played near-perfect hockey through the first two games of the season.

Unfortunately, the flawed stretch was enough to sway momentum so drastically it resulted in their first loss, 4-3, to the Florida Panthers.

"That's the thing about games 1 through 10 — everybody's constantly dissecting their game," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. "There's going to be mistakes, and you just hope the mistakes you make in games 1 and 2 are not as glaring in games 25 and 30 and 45 and 50. It's going to be expected early on, and you just gotta work through it."

Midway through the second period, the Bolts found themselves skating to the penalty box three times in just under five minutes.

Florida's Mike Hoffman scored two power-play goals 86 seconds apart on near-identical one-timers from the right circle. Noel Acciari put the Panthers ahead by three just under a minute and a half later.

"Three power plays and scored on two of them," Cooper said. "So we lost the special-teams battle and it cost us the game."

"It's all part of the game," said Gemel Smith, whose second-period goal pulled Tampa Bay within two. "You just have to kind of respond. Obviously, penalties kind of drain you. I think we've just got to do a better job staying out of the box."

Hoffman completed his hat trick 17 seconds into the third period, which ended up ultimately putting the game out of reach for Tampa Bay.

"We just came unhinged a little bit," defenseman Kevin Shattenkirk said. "We stopped playing as a five-man unit, and that's a natural thing to do when you're down a couple goals. Guys want to be the hero and we have a lot of good players on this team that are capable of doing that, obviously. But we play better as a five-man group. Everyone knows that. All the guys in there know that, and we've just got to make sure in those tough times that we stick together and make sure that we oversimplify



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and do those things — even more little, simple things — and we'll get back to our game quicker.”

Following the Hoffman tally, the Bolts did exactly that. They sustained pressure enough to outshoot Florida 17-6 during the final 20 minutes. Steven Stamkos and Mathieu Joseph scored to pull Tampa Bay within a goal.

In the final four seconds, Tampa fired on three shots. Florida's Sergei Bobrovsky and a mob of Panthers piled up in the crease to keep it out.

“What I really liked was our pushback,” Cooper said. “It's tough giving up that goal early in the third, but I thought we took over the game, even down 4-1, and had our chance at the end and unfortunately couldn't do it.”

Thank you, next

Saturday marked the last of five straight games — three in the preseason, two in the regular season — in which the intra-state rivals faced each other.

“I think the only two common things are (Panthers coach Joel Quenneville) and I have been on the bench,” Cooper said. “Other than that, the teams changed. But it'll be good to play someone else here.”

In games that counted, the Cats and Bolts split 1-1. Tampa Bay took the edge in goals scored 8-6.

Saturday's loss ended a seven-game win streak by the Lightning against the Panthers, which dated back to the 2017-18 season.

“This is the fifth time playing them the last two weeks, so we kind of knew what to expect,” Cirelli said. “Obviously, emotions are high. We've played them a lot now. ... It was a battle all game long, and we've just got to be a little bit better.”

Tampa Bay plays Carolina on Sunday night in Raleigh.

The Panthers and Lightning face each other again Dec. 10 in Sunrise before wrapping up the season series 13 days later in Tampa.

Big Cat's 200th

Andrei Vasilevskiy made his 200th NHL start Saturday, and upon learning of the milestone, Cooper acted like a proud parent.

“Hey, 200th start tonight,” Cooper called out when the goalie walked past.

It didn't quite register with Vasilevskiy.

“Two. Hundredth. Start. You,” Cooper said and mimed, trying to make it easier for his goaltender to understand. The coach finally stuck out a fist and the goalie bumped it in acknowledgment.

“To play that many games like that (at a) young age, it just goes to his talent,” Cooper said. “We've kind of grown together. As a player, he was a call-up. Then he was a backup. Then he was a kind of a 1A, 1B and now he's the 1A. It's been a lot of fun to watch, and he's deserved it.”

Despite being only 25, Vasilevskiy is within reach of a few Bolts goaltending records. He is 23 starts, 28 appearances and seven wins from overtaking Ben Bishop for the franchise marks. There's little reason to believe he won't surpass all of them this season.

Cooper credited the Vezina Trophy winner's work ethic and skill for the success.

“His offseason workouts, he's a machine,” Cooper said. “He's constantly working. He's working on his game, both on and off the ice. And that's how come he's playing 200 games at such a young age.

“There's a reason they call him 'the Big Cat' — because he moves like a cat. He's got reflexes and size, a pretty lethal combination.”

Cross-state gratitude

Prior to Saturday's contest, former Lightning defenseman Anton Stralman acknowledged the warm “thank you” he received during the season opener in Tampa.

Stralman spent five seasons with the Bolts before signing with the Panthers as a free agent in July.

“You kind of wish you had more time to take it all in and enjoy it more,” Stralman said. “But obviously it was very humbling being there. I felt like over the course of the five years I was there, I had a good bond with the fans, and they gave me way more than I could ever give back.”

Ice chips

— Tampa Bay controlled the faceoff circle for the second straight game, winning 55 percent of the draws. Tyler Johnson led the Bolts with a 65 percent mark, winning 7 of 11.

— Shattenkirk led the Lightning in shots for the second straight game with five.

— Tampa Bay dropped to 6-11-1 in Game No. 2 following a season-opening win.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.06.2019

1156020 Florida Panthers

Florida Panthers get to work fixing flaws after season-opening loss in Tampa Bay

By Erin Brown Oct 5, 2019

CORAL SPRINGS, Fla. — The Florida Panthers landed in Fort Lauderdale around midnight, still stung by their season-opening loss to the Tampa Bay Lightning a few hours before.

By 11 a.m. Friday, they were already working on fixing the issues that contributed to the 5-2 defeat.

After a video session in which coach Joel Quenneville broke down the good and bad, players were on the ice working through drills focused on all the areas that came up short on Thursday.

“You can come in today and mull over those mistakes, or you can just work on them,” defenseman Mike Matheson said. “Work on them and be ready to be better at them next game. That mentality is the best one to have going into another game.”

The Panthers went through repetitions of cleaning up rebounds, smoother transitions from defense to offense (and vice-versa) in the neutral zone and creating traffic in front of the net.

Players spent a quarter of their time on special teams, with units constantly rotating in and out for a sustained 15-minute session.

Although Tampa Bay was only credited with one power-play goal Thursday, another tally came on a delayed penalty and another one second after a penalty expired. Florida's power play, which ranked second in the NHL last season, went 0 for 4.

“You see the score. They scored, we didn't,” Evgenii Dadonov said of special teams. “They won the game, so they're really important.”

Florida also fired 60 shots against Tampa Bay, putting 37 of them on Lightning goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy. Still, a number of Panthers players said they made the reigning Vezina Trophy winner's night too easy.

As a result, Quenneville decided to run a drill in which a forward line would go through an up-ice rush, then park all three players at the front of the crease, creating traffic for the next group to come through.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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"You look at most goals throughout the league on a consistent night, probably seven, eight of 10 are scored from right around the hash-mark area or right around the crease," said Hoffman, who scored on Thursday from the low slot. "The more traffic we can get there, the more bodies we can get there, the more opportunities we're going to have and better chances to capitalize on them."

The one thing Florida won't have an idea about until Saturday night is how this team overcomes adversity.

The Panthers were not always quick to rebound from losses last season. Florida endured six skids of at least three games and went on two stretches without a win in six.

But Quenneville has kept the focus positive, and players are building off that.

"We did a lot of good things last night and, you know, a couple things we can clean up a little bit," Hoffman said. "It's a new day. You look at the film and try and get better and learn from the areas where we weren't up to par and go from there."

"I think it's all about staying calm and trusting that we played well," Matheson said, "not hit the panic button just because they beat us and responding tomorrow night with another good game. Odds are we'll be on the good side of bounces tomorrow night."

Quenneville says there's still room for the Cats to improve their predictability, but he already sees progress.

"We feel there's some progress in that area and all zones," Quenneville said. "Let's make sure that we're aware of how we need to check. Managing the pucks, we've got to be better at it. But start to finish, let's take pride in being a great team at home and establish that right off the bat. And let's look forward to starting our home season on a real positive note."

Lightning forward Gemel Smith (46) and Panthers defenseman Mackenzie Weegar fight to control the puck in the corner during Thursday's season opener in Tampa. (Kim Klement / USA Today)

Home sweet home

Florida opens its home schedule in a rematch against Tampa Bay at 7 p.m. The Panthers anticipate a large crowd, but tickets are still available.

"It's always fun getting on home ice," Vatrano said. "You feel comfortable with the bounces and just the overall feel of the game. We're excited to get on our home ice for the first time."

One trend in Florida's favor is it has not lost back-to-back home openers since 2002. Last season, the Panthers dropped their opener at BB&T Center 5-4 to the Columbus Blue Jackets.

The Panthers are 14-7-2-2 all time in home openers.

New-look Monty

Montembeault arrived at practice to find a couple of surprises in his locker: a new mask and pads.

"It's like Christmas," Montembeault said, his arms wrapped around the helmet in a hug. "I actually look like a Panthers goalie now."

The mask's design was created by Sylvie Marsolais, a Quebec-based airbrush artist whose work appears in creases across North America. She also created the design Montembeault wore last year in the minors.

"She's really good," the Panthers' backup netminder said. "Every year she gets better and better. She came up with a bunch of really good ideas."

At the top of the mask is a life-like Panther with red eyes faded into the blue. Just below the chin is Montembeault's No. 33, stylized as if a claw had swiped and shredded it. Montembeault said an early design would have included the paw, but that was dropped in favor of a version without it.

On each side is a stalking panther similar to the shoulder patch on Florida's jerseys. Above that is a landscape of palm trees silhouetted by the sun. Stretching across the entire front is the red saltire from the state flag.

Elements carried over from previous masks were on the back. On the right, there is stenciled text reading "NO EXCUSES" outlined in red; in the middle, an "M" for his name; and on the left, a set of angel's wings. The latter serves as the logo for Fondation Alecchange, a charity run by Montembeault's aunt.

"That's her foundation," Montembeault said. "My cousin died from a brain tumor when he was young, and she started a foundation after that. It helps to raise money for families who have children who have cancer."

Give it away no more

If there is one positive the Panthers can focus on from opening night, it is giveaways.

Last season, the Panthers led the league in giveaways with 1,234 — 45 more than second-place Calgary — and averaged 15 a game. Mike Matheson, Aaron Ekblad and Keith Yandle all ranked among the top 10 players in the league in the category.

Thursday night against Tampa Bay, Florida limited its turnovers to just eight.

"That's great," Matheson said. "I think it's in the way we play in our D-zone. I think last year we were all running around the place. So even if you did turn it over, you didn't necessarily have someone close to you. I think now we support each other a lot better in the system we play."

Weegar OK

Mackenzie Weegar fully participated in practice on Friday, showing no ill effects from a check to the head on Thursday.

"Weegs is fine," Quenneville said.

Tampa Bay's Gemel Smith checked the Panthers defenseman into the end boards 11:03 into the third period of Thursday's game and received a minor penalty. Weegar left the game and did not return.

As of Friday evening, there was no indication Smith's penalty would be reviewed by the NHL Department for Player Safety for further discipline.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.06.2019

1156056 New York Islanders

Ex-Rangers trio finally paying price for beloved style

By Larry Brooks October 5, 2019 | 8:18PM

Thirteen seasons after making staggered debuts on Broadway, the three players at the heart of the Black-and-Blueshirt identity who returned the franchise to prominence are nowhere to be found on the ice.

That would be staggering, except for the fact you knew even way back then in 2006-07 that Ryan Callahan, Dan Girardi and Brandon Dubinsky would one day pay the price for the relentless and sacrificial way they approached each shift, never mind each game.

So, at age 34, Callahan was forced to retire this summer because of a degenerative back disease. Girardi, 35, retired before the season with hockey battle scars all over his legs, knees and ankles forming a roadmap of his career. And Dubinsky, 33, could not start the season for the Blue Jackets, instead on IR with wrist issues that have plagued him for years.



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They were something, they honestly were, carrying a selfless attitude onto the ice, establishing a work ethic baseline as the Bluebloods transitioned from professorial Tom Renney to rabid John Tortorella behind the bench. They were not alone, of course, for Marc Staal was a linchpin and Henrik Lundqvist formed the backbone of the organization.

But those three set the template. It seemed as if Callahan, Girardi and Dubinsky would be Rangers forever, just as it seemed a little later that Derek Stepan and Ryan McDonagh would be forever wrapped in Blue. But time marched on, the Rangers just never quite got there, and all five were sent away.

Girardi came next, promoted during the 2006-07 All-Star break at age 22, when everyone thought the Rangers would instead put in a call to AHL Hartford for Dubinsky. Girardi made his debut on Jan. 27, 2007, in Philadelphia. He wore No. 46 and partnered with Fedor Tyutin to form a pair that remained intact through the 2007-08 season.

Then there was Dubinsky, who played six games for the Blueshirts that season following his recall for the March 19 Garden match against the Penguins in which he wore No. 54 and skated between Petr Prucha and Jed Ortmeyer.

Once they were young and so were the Rangers. Everything old becomes new again, but these three special Rangers became old before their time because of what they left out on the ice every game they pulled on the uniform. Hey, did you hear the one about when I told Callahan that I would kick his butt if I ever saw him dive to block another shot from the point in an exhibition game? It was, I believe in 2011. He didn't listen to me.

So, Callahan, who became captain and wore that letter with as much pride as anyone who has come before or since, who epitomized the meaning of leading by example. And Girardi, who somehow never won the Steven McDonald Extra Effort Award even though he could have won it every year. Plus Dubinsky, who wore his heart on his sleeve and was the first to jump to Brian Boyle's defense when Big 22 was attacked in the 2012 playoffs by Matt Carkner.

"Time it was, and what a time it was," as Paul Simon wrote a long time ago. "It was a time of innocence, a time of confidences.

"Long ago it must be I have a photograph. Preserve your memories, they're all that's left you."

The photograph is of the 2006-07 Rangers. The memories are of Callahan, Girardi and Dubinsky. Black-and-Blueshirt Bluebloods then and forever.

Hey, that line out in Minnesota — with Zach Parise on the left, Eric Staal in the middle and Mats Zuccarello on the right — that's a unit the Rangers would have constructed in around 2015-16, right?

Cap space is precious, so when you can save a million on a player, it is important to do so. And maybe the Maple Leafs did overpay by a slight degree in giving Mitch Marner \$10.893 million per on a six-year deal.

But there is value, and most certainly in Toronto, to being done with contract talk surrounding Marner for the next five years. Had he signed for the same three years that fellow restricted free agents Matthew Tkachuk, Brayden Point, Brock Boeser and Charlie McAvoy received from their respective teams, the drumbeat of speculation around the Leafs winger would have reignited by the middle of next season, if not earlier.

Each team has its own market concerns to address. The Maple Leafs addressed theirs.

By the way, pretending the Auston Matthews disorderly conduct charge is just a "Boys being boys" thing gives a bad name to all men.

In recognition of Kaapo Kakko switching to the number he wore in Finland, a ranking of our teams' No. 24s: 1. Callahan, Rangers; 2. Gord Lane, Islanders; 3. Bryce Salvador, Devils; 4. Niklas Sundstrom, Rangers; 5. Doug Brown, Devils; Honorable Mention, Pierre Larouche,

Rangers (wore it for 28 games in 1985-86 season, scoring 20 goals); Mention: Walt Ledingham, Islanders.

Finally, is Josh Ho-Sang's reputation so tainted that not a team in the league would take a shot at the talented 23-year-old winger when he was placed on waivers by the Islanders prior to setting their opening roster?

I mean, the Rangers once took a shot at Alexandre Daigle, for goodness sakes.

Um.

Asked and answered.

New York Post LOADED: 10.06.2019

1156057 New York Islanders

Barry Trotz needs Islanders to be better with their faceoffs

By Andrew Gross

Updated October 5, 2019 8:46 PM

Barry Trotz dropped puck after puck at center ice after the formal portion of the Islanders' practice on Saturday in East Meadow. It's been like this all week as the coach works with his centers, as well as several other forwards, to improve the team's faceoff percentage.

It's just one game into the season, but the Islanders' 2-1 loss to the Capitals on Friday night at NYCB Live's Nassau Coliseum continued the team's deficiencies in the faceoff circle from last season.

"It's all over the ice," Trotz said. "You want to start with the puck as much as possible."

The Islanders will continue their three-game homestand against the Jets on Sunday night at the Coliseum. Winnipeg rallied from a four-goal deficit to spoil the Devils' home opener on Friday night with a 5-4 shootout win.

On paper, the Islanders weren't awful on faceoffs, winning 24 of 50 (48.0 percent) against the Capitals. During a first-period stretch, though, they lost six straight faceoffs in the defensive zone.

Overall, the Islanders were 4-for-15 on faceoffs in the offensive zone and 11-for-21 in the defensive zone.

"We couldn't get any [offensive-zone] time and you're starting without the puck, you're trying to block shots," Trotz said. "It's a hard way to live."

In their first season under Trotz, the Islanders reduced their goals against from an NHL-worst 293 in 2017-18 to an NHL-best 191. That defensive structure that served them so well last season was mostly evident on Friday night.

"Last year, we focused on 'we've got to correct something,' " Trotz said. "Our defensive play, our consistency, our structure and all of that. So we fixed that. But some outlying areas — special teams, faceoffs — those are areas we have to get better at individually so we can be better collectively.

"Faceoffs, they help you keep the goals against down," he added. "If you can't win faceoffs, a player will lose ice time. If you can win faceoffs, you're going to get extra faceoffs."

The Islanders ranked 29th in the NHL last season with a 47.4 faceoff win percentage. They were 23rd with a 48.5 offensive-zone faceoff win percentage and 28th with a 47.1 defensive-zone faceoff win percentage.

"There's a big emphasis on that," said Brock Nelson, who was 7-for-12 (58.3 percent) against the Capitals and, along with Casey Cizikas, are the centers Trotz relies on most for defensive-zone faceoffs. "[Trotz] is



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breaking everything down and going over everything. We've got Marty Reasoner helping out, too. That's just the way Barry is. He's so detailed in every area of the game that he's trying to help us get better and try to help us win games."

Nelson, Cizikas and Derick Brassard are all lefthanders, leaving Mathew Barzal as the lone righthanded-shooting Islanders center.

The NHL altered its rules for this season after an icing or starting a power play to allow the team in the offensive zone to choose which side of the ice the faceoff will be.

"They're trying to improve the offense to try and get more scoring chances," said Brassard, who was 4-for-10 (40.0 percent) in his Islanders debut. "I don't think it's a bad thing. But it's been like that for 100 years, why change it now? If a guy ices the puck on the left side, the faceoff should be on that same side."

As a result, Brassard said he believes coaches eventually will start using two centers, a lefty and a righty, together more on lines.

Notes & quotes: Andrew Ladd, who suffered injuries to each knee last season and was limited to 26 games, rejoined the Islanders for Saturday's practice — albeit in an orange, non-contact jersey. He's not expected back until late November. President and general manager Lou Lamoriello has said Ladd is not expected to be ready until late November. "He will practice with us in a non-contact jersey for a while so he'll be a little bit limited," Trotz said. "But just being around the guys will be mentally good for him." Based on Saturday's practice, it appears Trotz will not alter his defense pairs, meaning Noah Dobson, the 12th overall pick in 2018, likely again will be a healthy scratch.

Newsday LOADED: LOADED: 10.06.20191156138Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Kapanen's lapse in composure critical in Maple Leafs' collapse to Canadiens

Luke Fox | @lukefoxjukebox

October 5, 2019, 10:32 PM

TORONTO — Mike Babcock sees no use in talking to Kasperii Kapanen tonight.

Not after the infuriated winger blew his composure and committed a mental gaffe significant enough to cost the Toronto Maple Leafs a perfect record and what could become a valuable standings point against an Atlantic Division rival.

"He's going to have enough people talking to him," said Babcock, after watching his club get bucked by an unhinged seesaw of a game. "He'll probably get the message pretty good, I'd imagine."

To his credit, Kapanen faced the music in those gutting moments after the Leafs' 6-5 shootout loss to the better-rested Montreal Canadiens, who deserve full marks for not folding when falling behind 4-1 to an offensive juggernaut with less than 15 minutes to go.

It sure looked like hockey's most explosive offence had everything under control Saturday. Until suddenly, bizarrely, it all detonated into shards.

Quick strikes by Jonathan Drouin and Brendan Gallagher sparked a Habs' late rally, chopping Toronto's lead to just one.

Then, killing a critical penalty, Kapanen drifted out the point when a Jeff Petry blast snapped his stick in half. The fiery Finn lost his cool and whipped his busted graphite shaft at the blade of Petry, who had regained control of the puck at the Leafs' blue line.

"I was getting a little tired, a little aggravated and I broke my stick, which isn't going to help us on the PK, so I threw it that way," explained Kapanen, humbled. "I just kinda threw my stick that way and it hit him, and I guess you get a penalty shot for that. I take full responsibility for my actions."

Petry, a defenceman, was awarded just the second penalty shot of his career — and he beat backup goalie Michael Hutchinson to tie the game.

"I feel bad about it. Everybody knows it's a big mistake on my part. If I knew that rule existed," Kapanen said, "I wouldn't have done that. I've never seen that situation before.

"That's my fault."

"It definitely turned into an interesting third period," Hutchinson understated.

Things got more interesting when a certain mustachioed franchise player gave Toronto (and, by association, Kapanen) a chance at redemption, beating Carey Price with a mere 75 ticks on the clock.

Auston Matthews—part Harlem Globetrotter, part marksman—tied the thriller with his second on the night and his 12th in 12 career contests versus Montreal. (If you count back to his spectacular pre-season, Matthews will carry a seven-game goal streak into Monday's date with the Blues.)

"I really don't know anyone who has that type of shot," John Tavares said. "I don't know what goalie is going to stop it."

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Matthews' NHL-leading fifth snipe on the season treated the sold-out barn to an edge-of-your-seat overtime that featured a Max Domi crossbar and a Tavares breakaway.

Paul Byron potted the shootout winner, while Price shut the door, sucking out whatever air remained in Scotiabank Arena.

"That's a game we've got to put away for sure," Tavares said. "It's going to leave a sour taste."

Surely, the familiar questions about Toronto's undisciplined defensive-zone play and goaltending depth will bubble up, with the Leafs getting outshot 21-11 after the second period.

"Actually, I felt bad for Hutch because, to me, we hung him out to dry, and I thought Hutch had done a good enough job," Babcock said. "The way I look at it is, we had three games in four nights, and we knew going in this was going to be a grind. We got five out of six points."

And an ugly, jagged reminder that you just don't throw a broken stick—no matter how fatigued or infuriated.

"I've never seen it by anybody, ever," Babcock said. "I'm sure he feels bad and would like to have it back. The thing about it, you can't get it back. We've all got to learn from it.

"Lessons are important during the year, and we got one."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.06.2019

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Sportsnet.ca / Coach's Corner: Maple Leafs aren't tough enough to win Stanley Cup

Sportsnet Staff | @Sportsnet



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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October 5, 2019, 8:43 PM

The Toronto Maple Leafs have kicked off their 2019-20 campaign with an absurd display of their offensive prowess, posting nine goals through their first two games and three tallies through the first half of their tilt with the Montreal Canadiens on Saturday night.

But offensive wizardry won't be enough to bring a Stanley Cup back to Toronto, according to Don Cherry.

"The Leafs, [they're a] highly-skilled team, I will say. A highly-skilled team, but ... you cannot win unless you're tough in the playoffs," Cherry said Saturday during Hockey Night in Canada's 'Coach's Corner' segment.

Cherry cited the St. Louis Blues' run to the Cup as the clearest evidence of this formula for success, with the rough-and-tumble Blues getting there playing a far more physical game than the Leafs.

Toronto was ousted from the post-season in the first round by the Boston Bruins, who fell short against St. Louis in that 2019 Cup Final.

"You cannot win unless you're tough," Cherry continued. "They might get by the second round but they'll never win the Stanley Cup, I'm sorry to say, because they're not tough enough."

Toronto was out-hit 44-17 in their season-opener against Ottawa (a 5-3 Leafs win) and 20-18 in their second game of the year, against Columbus (a 4-1 Leafs win).

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Sportsnet.ca / Price's otherworldly performance vital in Canadiens' win over Maple Leafs

Eric Engels

October 6, 2019, 12:31 AM

TORONTO — It was theatre of the absurd on Saturday night at Scotiabank Arena, a comedy featuring two teams who spent more than three periods essentially gifting each other chances to win.

And if the Montreal Canadiens were the ones raising their arms in celebration at the end of it, it was because their best player did exactly what was expected of him when it mattered most.

Yes, Carey Price allowed five goals on the first 33 Toronto Maple Leafs shots on net. But no, he couldn't be faulted on any of them, and the saves he made — with the game on the line in overtime and in the shootout — were otherworldly.

"He's unbelievable," said Canadiens centre Max Domi, who scored his team's first goal and assisted on the second in the 6-5 win. "I've said it so many times; he's the best goalie in the world for a reason and he just keeps showing it every night and it's crazy how good he is. He kept us in it. Obviously we left him hanging a little bit in the first two (periods). We owed him, we told him that, and we kind of delivered and he obviously held his ground and was his own self and you can't score on that guy when he's dialled in like that."

About what was owed to Price: The rested Canadiens — who last played on Thursday and then took Friday off while the Maple Leafs had to travel to Columbus and play a taxing game against the Blue Jackets before

landing back in Toronto in the early hours of Saturday morning — played like their skates were untied through the first 40 minutes of the game.

Several errors allowed Auston Matthews to tie the game at 1-1 in the sixth minute of the first period. Just under 10 minutes later, Canadiens rookie Nick Suzuki tried to dribble the puck out of trouble behind his own net and was stripped of it by Trevor Moore, who fed Alex Kerfoot an easy goal to make it 2-1 Toronto.

Moore made it 3-1 Maple Leafs on the fifth odd-man rush the Canadiens had allowed, and the game wasn't even 22 minutes old at that point.

Things didn't get much better for the players in bleu, blanc et rouge as they approached the second intermission. They struggled to string two passes together, they put the deadly Toronto power play to work twice on penalties taken over 190 feet away from their own net, and they only managed six shots on net until a last-minute flurry saw them get to 10.

"We definitely weren't happy with the first two periods," said Canadiens coach Claude Julien after the game. "We were a fresh team and yet we were sloppy. We weren't making good decisions, and after two periods we were an extremely frustrated team."

So Julien put his lines in a blender and the Canadiens came out in the third period determined to turn momentum their way.

Their chances of doing it appeared bleak after William Nylander scored on the power play to give Toronto a 4-1 lead at the 5:16 mark of the frame. But Canadiens forward Jonathan Drouin kept his team within reach when he banked a puck off Maple Leafs defenceman Morgan Rielly for his first goal of the season on the very next shift. And then teammate Brendan Gallagher made it 4-3 a little over a minute later.

It was at 13:02 that Toronto's Kasperii Kapanen made the most egregious mistake of the night, throwing the top end of his broken stick at Canadiens defenceman Jeff Petry while his team was killing a penalty.

"I've never seen anything like that," Petry said afterwards.

He also said he couldn't remember a time in his hockey career where he was given a chance to take a penalty shot.

Petry took advantage of the opportunity, swooping in and tying the game with a shot that beat goaltender Michael Hutchinson low on the glove side.

And it was after Montreal's Danault scored, and Matthews found the back of the net for his second of the game, that the real fun began.

It started with the first shot Price faced in overtime — a wrister from 11 feet out on a breakaway from \$10.89-million shooter Mitch Marner. The 32-year-old goaltender trapped it.

Then it was \$11-million shooter and Maple Leafs captain John Tavares with a backhand on the breakaway.

"He pulled it across and just tried to elevate it and I think he was a little bit under pressure, so he didn't get up as high as he wanted to and I was able to glove it down," said Price about the save he came up with.

And with six seconds left in overtime, Tavares broke in again, swept the puck from his backhand to his forehand and Price stuffed him with the top side of his right pad.

It was Matthews, the highest-paid Maple Leaf (\$11.63 million per season), who got the first crack at Price in the shootout. He was denied by the goaltender's left pad.

Marner got shut down by the blocker. And then Tavares had a chance to tie things up, with Paul Byron scoring Montreal's only goal at the other end.

Tavares came down slowly towards Price's net and tried to out-wait him, but was ultimately undone by Price's blocker.

"Everybody's so good at slowing the pace down and slowing it down," Price said. "But you just try to be patient and get a good read on it."



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Easier said than done.

But that's Price, the \$10.5-million man who gives the Canadiens a chance to win almost every time he takes to the net. On this night, he made the difference. He's the main reason they're going back to Montreal with three-out-of-four points earned in the standings following tough games in Carolina and Toronto.

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Sportsnet.ca / Canucks need more from their best after seeing Oilers, Flames duos dominate

Iain MacIntyre | @imacSportsnet

October 6, 2019, 2:33 AM

CALGARY — In their first two games, the Vancouver Canucks have been beaten primarily by Edmonton Oilers Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl, and Calgary Flames Johnny Gaudreau and Sean Monahan.

If you're the Flames and Oilers, that's what you'd expect from your best players. The Canucks need more from their best after Vancouver was shut out 3-0 Saturday by the Flames to fall to 0-2 for the National Hockey League season.

In two games, Vancouver's first line of Elias Pettersson, Brock Boeser and Micheal Ferlund doesn't have a goal. Through 40 minutes on Saturday, they'd combined for three shots. Bo Horvat's second line generated one goal in Wednesday's 3-2 loss to the Oilers.

With several new players this season, most of them offensive-drivers to some degree, scoring was not expected to be the problem that it has been in recent years for the Canucks. But they've got two goals in two hours and the rebuilt, rebalanced power play is 0-for-10.

"We had way too many opportunities tonight not to capitalize," Horvat said after the Canucks' 18-shot third period that included a passive, failed 61-second five-on-three power play. "Their goaltender makes great saves, but us getting in his eyes a little bit more (would help), maybe moving the puck a little quicker to try to get around their players.

"You count on your top guys, you count on your goal-scorers, to produce for you. The last two games, their gunners have been. We've got to find ways to do that ourselves."

Gaudreau scored an empty-netter for the Flames after setting up the first two goals at even-strength for linemates Elias Lindholm and Monahan.

By contrast, the Canucks managed only three shots on net during Pettersson's 14:25 of five-on-five ice time.

"Obviously, we haven't been good at all," Ferland said of the struggling top line. "I don't know, we need to be better. We haven't been good the last two games. It's frustrating. I need to be better myself. I need to be hard on the forecheck. I thought we had a good first period. I thought we were making plays. But... second period, we had a couple of penalties and momentum shifted a bit and it was tough after that."

Pettersson, Boeser and Ferland — signed in July by the Canucks specifically to play alongside Vancouver's two brightest young stars — are trying to catch up to everyone else after their disjointed pre-season.

Boeser missed training camp without a contract and was restricted by a concussion to just two pre-season games. Ferland also played just two warm-up games due to a viral infection. None of their games overlapped.

"Ferland got sick and Brock got a concussion," Pettersson said Saturday. "But it's hockey, and we've just got to deal with it. The first two games haven't been good for us. We've got to be better. We can't hide here — we've got to be better."

"Obviously, (Ferland) is a new guy, (but) we know our systems," Boeser said. "Pre-season, it's nice if you get to play some games with your linemates and build that chemistry. We've only played six periods... so far. We're still learning as a line."

Fortunately, the Canucks have practice time in their favour. After two games in four nights in Alberta, they play just two home games in the next nine days.

"I liked (our power play) but I don't like that we haven't scored," coach Travis Green said. "I thought we've had some good looks, but you've still got to get results."

Asked about Pettersson's line, Green said: "I think their shift length for starters is a little long. It causes them to play at the end of their shifts a little bit tired. When you're tired, sometimes you're not as good with the puck. They're trying to find some chemistry — they haven't played together a lot. I'm not too worried about it, though. They're going to be fine."

A day after Green explained to reporters that almost every scoring chance is due to someone's mistake, Vancouver's errors were not hard to trace as the Flames went up 2-0 in the first 21 minutes.

With the game scoreless and the Canucks mostly carrying play, defenceman Tyler Myers bobbled and hesitated with the puck long enough that time and space evaporated and his pass across the defensive zone was slowed by Gaudreau's stick. Lindholm was first to the wounded puck and rattled it through Canucks goalie Jacob Markstrom to make it 1-0 at 13:50 of the first period.

Needing a good start to the second, the Canucks instead got penned in their own zone. Chris Tanev's clearance went straight to Flames defenceman Mark Giordano. And when Tanev followed the puck to the point because no one else was closing down Giordano, the veteran defenceman was beaten back to the slot by Monahan, who converted Gaudreau's centring pass at 1:10.

The Canucks, so quick and lively for most of the loss in Edmonton, then seemed to be skating in tile grout the rest of the middle period.

They struggled to generate shots, let alone scoring chances, and their power play failed on two chances to get Vancouver out of jail. A pair of obvious too-many-men penalties by the Canucks were indicative of their sloppiness.

The Canucks outshot the Flames 18-6 in the final period but couldn't get a puck past Calgary goalie David Rittich. Markstrom was the second-best goalie again.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.06.2019

1156142 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Flames' Rittich proving summer of sacrifice was worth the effort

Eric Francis | @EricFrancis

October 6, 2019, 2:16 AM



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 6, 2019

CALGARY — Standing in front of the Flames media wall for a prolonged discussion on his three-point night, Johnny Gaudreau was suddenly the recipient of a pretty good shove.

The man administering the jolt, David Rittich, had just delivered his second career NHL shutout and playfully suggested it was his turn to take the spotlight.

Indeed it was.

Posting a 34-save goose egg to give the Flames a 3-0 win over Vancouver in their season opener, Rittich officially started his quest to prove a summer of sacrifice would pay off as the team's new go-to guy.

A playful sort whose dedication to his craft included cutting down his Coca Cola intake, Rittich chuckled when asked whose idea it was to work out four hours a day.

"It wasn't my idea," laughed the 27-year-old Czech whose broken English endears him to teammates and fans alike.

"It was for conditioning to be strong, and mentally strong. You're going to be tired in a game but you keep battling. It's for now. I'm guarantee it's going to be all year."

The two biggest questions facing the Calgary Flames this season revolve around playoff redemption and goaltending.

The first can't be addressed for a while. Rittich has been working on the second with a dedication that saw him dominate in the preseason and start the season well.

His spectacular 12-save performance in the first period of Thursday's season-opening loss in Denver gave the Flames a fighting chance they didn't deserve.

In Saturday's Dome-lifter he was once again sharp early, steering aside dangerous forays with ease, controlling rebounds and always looking in control.

The man who has been known to kiss goalposts following iron-clangers saw a Jake Virtanen shot ring off the cross-bar midway through an evening in which the Flames got up 2-0 early in the second, thanks to Elias Lindholm and Sean Monahan.

Two dangerous one-timers by Calder winner Elias Pettersen were also fortuitously diffused, once with a broken twig and another with a rocket sent wide.

Perhaps the biggest save came early in the third when he snared a Brock Boeser bomb with his glove while his club killed a two-man disadvantage.

Travis Hamonic rained endless praise on his netminder after the game, but it was he too who deserved plenty of love after a dangerous blocked shot hit him in the knee, hobbling him for the duration of the shift.

It was the type of dedication the team exhibited throughout the night, especially in the third when the bulk of an astounding 19 blocked shots on the night helped kill three consecutive penalties that threatened to ruin his shutout and change the game's momentum.

"You can see guys blocking shots and jumping head first — it's a great thing from them," said the man who has promised to limit his soft drinks to game days alone.

"(Hamonic) is always saying to me he has more saves than me in a game. It's probably true. It's fantastic to be behind him because he's going to try to block shots and help you and he's a good guy. I'm glad I got those D-men in front of me."

Including Noah Hanifin.

"I told Hani if he can grab (the puck at the end of the game) for me and he did it," said Rittich, before breaking into a grin that often means he's about to crack wise.

"He's a nice guy... sometimes."

Rittich's 26 saves were one of the lone bright spots in their 10th-straight season-opening loss, which included six power play gifts from the Flames to the Avs. Their promise to clean that up rang hollow Saturday as the Flames gave the Canucks five power plays, making Rittich's job even harder.

Earlier in the night, Don Cherry wondered aloud how the Flames could let Mike Smith go, given his legendary stickhandling. The answer revolves largely around the Flames' desire to give the 27-year-old Rittich a run at being the alpha dog, grabbing the reins on the No. 1 job that's now clearly his to lose.

Given his start there's a good chance we won't see Cam Talbot until Game 6, which comes in San Jose next Sunday, one night after visiting Vegas.

Rittich figured a big part of the win came courtesy of Lindholm's early conversion of a Gaudreau interception of a Tyler Myers clearing pass.

Monahan converted a slick centering pass from Gaudreau one minute into the second before No. 13 capped his night with an empty-netter.

Gaudreau, who had 99 points last year, now has five points in his first two games.

The Flames host Los Angeles Tuesday, which should be a whole lot more interesting after Matthew Tkachuk served up a touch more disrespect to Drew Doughty in his post-game After Hours appearance.

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1156143 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Oilers, Kings battle through wild one with both clubs finding identity

Mark Spector | @sportsnetspec

October 6, 2019, 2:01 AM

Todd McLellan knows the feeling of riding Connor McDavid on a 24-minute night like this one. And the funny thing is, the spectacle didn't look much different from behind the visitor's bench.

"It was the same as when you're riding him," McLellan said. "You're kind of in awe."

Drew Doughty, meanwhile, has forged quite a personal rivalry with McDavid, as a No. 1 defenceman on a Pacific Division foe who draws the toughest matchup in hockey four times a season.

"I love it," the Los Angeles Kings defenceman said, before diving into a self-deprecating monologue about his Saturday evening exploits in a wild, 6-5 loss to the Edmonton Oilers. "It's almost impossible sometimes, honestly."

Upon McLellan's return to Edmonton, fittingly, this was anything but a coach's special. Instead, we saw a game that had almost as many mistakes as it did entertainment, as the Kings dropped their season opener and Edmonton moved to 2-0.

The Kings blew four leads, while new Oilers goalie Mike Smith — lauded as a puck-handling wizard — literally handed the Kings a pair of freebies, then battled to the dying seconds as the Kings pressed for the equalizer with the goalie pulled and two-goal man James Neal serving a tripping penalty incurred about 180 feet from the Oilers goal.



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One second Neal was rushing up the right-wing boards, about to ice the game with an empty-net goal. The next he was deep in prayer, watching the final seconds from the sin bin.

"I was trying to get the puck over (to Draisaitl)," began Neal. "Oh my God, it was bouncing like hell. And then I get a penalty after. Oh my God, what a sequence that was! I was saying prayers in the box.

"I'm like, 'How is this possible? I went from (nearly) getting a hat trick and being a hero to being the worst person in the building.'"

This was, to be honest, a sloppily played game played between two teams figuring out their identity under a pair of new head coaches. But man, was it fun to watch.

The two captains were the two best players on the ice, as Anze Kopitar (goal, two assists) dominated with his smarts and power game, while McDavid (goal, three assists) simply blazed around the Kings defence all night, logging 24:07 in ice time to Kopitar's 23:55.

"Some people say he's the best player in the league, some people say that other guys are," Doughty said of McDavid. "I love playing against guys who have that vision, and they compete hard. But, if they don't have that speed they're not as intimidating as a Connor McDavid, who has all those tools WITH that speed.

"I took that penalty... He was literally gliding by me, and I was bagging myself to get there," Doughty shrugged. "I love playing against Connor, but I realize a lot of the times he's going to make me look foolish."

Neal popped his first two goals as an Oiler, both assisted by McDavid on the power play. With the opportunity he appears to be getting here in Edmonton, it seems impossible to think that he won't at least double the seven tucks he had as a Flame last season — if not triple it.

But perhaps the best news on the night for the Oilers was some production from the bottom of the lineup. Joakim Nygard scored his first NHL goal on an assist from Swiss import Gaetan Haas, while Darnell Nurse rifled home the 5-5 goal after a deft rush by Slovak Tomas Jurco.

"It just shows that we're willing to do anything to win," said Neal, after his first multi-goal game since October of 2017. "We made mistakes and kind of shot ourselves in the foot a few times but we did the right things to get ourselves back in the game and give ourselves a chance to win. We got the two points and we're going to move on with two wins."

Next stop, New York state, where the Oilers roll through the three New York-area teams next week, a four-game trip that ends in Chicago.

This one wasn't pretty, but the standings won't reflect that. They never do.

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1156144 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Senators sloppy on special teams as Zibanejad dominates in Ottawa

Wayne Scanlan

October 5, 2019, 11:22 PM

Two games, two losses.

But lots of teaching moments!

The Ottawa Senators opened their home season on Saturday against the New York Rangers, and were humbled, 4-1, much as they were in Wednesday's 5-3 loss in Toronto to the Maple Leafs.

Once again, Ottawa's rebuilding team took it on the chin, this time giving up three goals on special teams while getting dominated in the faceoff circle (33 per cent), giving up multiple grade-A chances on goaltender Craig Anderson.

Head coach D. J. Smith was especially disappointed by the lack of energy in a team trying to establish something on home ice, even in a rebuilding year.

"We didn't come out and hit them," Smith said. "Our team has got to forecheck and be aggressive. I didn't think we were that. We swung off hits, and we didn't put their D in any kind of trouble.

"They were hard on us ... and we didn't make it hard enough.

"We're going to have to compete harder, especially in our building. It's just not acceptable to come out here and go through the motions — some guys."

Changes to the roster will be made, Smith implied, based on performance.

The Rangers were two-for-three on the power play and added a short-handed goal by Mika Zibanejad. Ottawa was 0-5 with the extra man.

"Our special teams certainly have to get better," said Smith. "Their big dogs certainly took it to us."

Those big dogs include Zibanejad, who had three goals and a helper for the Rangers. Artemi Panarin had a goal and two assists and Pavel Buchnevich had three assists.

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The Senators had their chances, including a Thomas Chabot goal-post late. But they were schooled when it counted. Ottawa outshot New York 32-30.

"We're making little mistakes in the O-zone, on where guys should be and where we should not be," Chabot said of the power-play struggles. "It's a big part of my game, I take pride in the power play and it's disappointing right now we're not doing it the right way. We're going to have to take a hard look at it."

A crowd of 15,135 took in a pretty entertaining game. The hope is that many of them return when there is less of an occasion than the home opener.

The Senators also need some of the young players they have drafted recently, and will draft next summer, to blossom into stars.

Unfortunately, one of their previous draft picks, Zibanejad, did a number on them in this return engagement with the Rangers. Zibanejad, who was Ottawa's sixth-overall pick in 2011, was dealt to the Rangers in 2016 and emerged as a team leader and 30-goal scorer last season.

He already has four this season, after scoring a hat-trick against his former teammates.

"Everybody gets it at different stages of their career," Anderson said of Zibanejad. "When he was drafted here, we expected a lot of him, from an early stage, and he wasn't ready for that.

"Sometimes a change of scenery is what it takes to wake a player up. It woke me up, woke a few other guys up. Maybe he's changed his off-ice training, who knows what he's changed. But he's become a truly elite player and showing the reason we drafted him so high."

This game could be summed up in three words: Too Much Mika.

Zibanejad joined a short list — a hat trick of former Senators — who have scored three times in a game against Ottawa. Antoine Vermette and Joe Corvo are the others. Zibanejad also owed the faceoff dot, going a blistering 18-4.



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The Kids are... playing at the Bay of Quinte

As part of the opening night hullabaloo, local musicians Elijah Woods and Jamie Fine performed an original song designed to be anthem for this Senators season: The Kids Are Alright.

Fans would settle for a year that's just Fine, and hope the franchise is one day out of the Woods, but the song title might be a better fit for Ottawa's AHL franchise.

The Kids are in Belleville actually works, considering players like Logan Brown, Alex Lajoie, Aex Formenton, Vitaly Abramov, Jonathan Davidsson, Josh Norris, Filip Gustavsson and Kelly Parker are all between 20-22 and playing for the B-Sens.

While the senior Sens do have Erik Brannstrom, Drake Batherson, Colin White and Brady Tkachuk, they are not a young team by NHL standards, nor really any younger than last year.

As a roster, the Senators average age on the opening night roster in Toronto was 26.7 years of age. With veteran Mikkel Boedker switched in for Filip Chlapik, the age increased to 27.05 for the home opener. At last year's Opening Night, the Senators collective age was 26.9.

We understand the sentiment. As an organization, the Senators are skewing younger in this rebuild, but the bulk of the prospects remain at the AHL level for now.

Takes a family to raise an NHL player

Watching the morning skate intently was Niklas Brannstrom, father of Senators rookie Erik Brannstrom.

The elder Brannstrom played 17 seasons in Europe and is currently a coach in the Swedish Hockey League. He had no bigger thrill in his career than watching for the first time as his son played an NHL game. Brannstrom made his NHL debut in Toronto Wednesday and was in the lineup for Ottawa's home opener.

Senators head coach D. J. Smith appreciated the significance.

"It's such a proud moment," Smith said. "You work your whole life to get the best league in the world and here he is. And for his dad to be able to watch him go out there ... and it's not just the kid putting in the time.

"Everyone knows for these kids to make the NHL it's a sacrifice the parents make, not only financially but the amount of time they put in for these kids and now these tournaments, summer tournaments, it's a full family commitment to get somebody to the NHL I would say today."

The Sabourin family was also well-represented as Scott Sabourin of Orleans, Ont., made his home ice debut. Sabourin told Sportsnet.ca that he would have a large contingent of family and friends scattered throughout the CTC.

Sabourin, 27, was the surprise of camp, making the team on a pro tryout.

Smith said he appreciated the opportunity seized by Sabourin after seven years in the minors, mostly in the AHL.

"I'm sure it crossed his mind at some point, he's 27 and was without a contract in August," Smith said. "And here is playing. I'm sure his family gave up a ton for him as well. It's good to see. Now, the hard part is staying here."

Phillips to have his No. 4 retired

Dropping the ceremonial faceoff between two of his former teammates, Mark Borowiecki and Zibanejad was Chris Phillips, who has a big night coming up in the New Year. The team announced that Phillips will have his No. 4 retired on Feb. 18, joining Daniel Alfredsson (11) and Frank Finnigan (8), whose numbers are also in the rafters.

Phillips, Ottawa's first-overall draft pick in 1996, was part of the Senators' initial trip to a Stanley Cup playoff the very next spring.

Phillips played 1,179 games for the Senators — the most in team history — between 1997-2015, scoring 71 goals and adding 217 assists. He is 24th on the all-time list of NHL games played for a single team. Beyond the numbers, Phillips was a fixture on the Ottawa blue line, developing into a shutdown defenceman who helped lead the Senators through their best seasons in franchise history, including a trip to the Stanley Cup Final in 2007.

"I'm very excited, honoured," Phillips said during the first intermission. "When I got the phone call from the GM they were going to retire my jersey, I'd be lying if I said it was something I wasn't hoping for. But I wasn't expecting it. To get that phone call was a special moment."

Though word was all over town about about the jersey retirement, Phillips managed to keep the news from his mother, Carol, who only learned of it when she watched the video screen during the pre-game announcement.

The last image on the screen: a framed No. 4.

"To be there among the best that ever played for this team, and be in the same sentence (as Alfredsson), feels very special," Phillips said.

Earlier this year, Phillips was inducted into the Ottawa Sports Hall of Fame. He and his wife, Erin, and their family are mainstays in the community, and are involved in numerous charities.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.06.2019

1156145 Websites

Kapanen's mistake one of many that cost Leafs in loss

By Kristen Shilton

TORONTO — When Kasper Kapanen tossed his broken stick away in frustration, he had no idea how much damage it would do.

The Maple Leafs winger was killing a penalty midway through the third period against Montreal on Saturday when a blocked shot snapped his stick in half, and reflexively discarding the pieces back towards Jeff Petry earned the Habs' defenceman a penalty shot that he scored on to tie the game 4-4.

Toronto had led Montreal 4-1 less than six minutes into the final frame, and Kapanen's ill-timed miscue was one maddening nail in the coffin of the Leafs' eventual 6-5 shootout loss.

"Everybody knows it's a big mistake on my part," a deflated Kapanen said after the defeat. "If I knew that rule existed, or if I thought I was actually going to hit his stick, I wouldn't have done that. I take full responsibility."

Their first loss of the season was a collective effort by Toronto, with Kapanen's mistake one of many that cost the Leafs an extra point. But that didn't lessen the burden Kapanen felt for putting his team in such a compromising position.

"I was out there for a bit and I was pretty tired," he explained. "I honestly didn't think [the pieces were] going to even hit him, but I threw my stick that way and I hit him. I was...a little aggravated and I broke my stick, which isn't going to help us on the PK so I just kind of threw it that way. That's my fault. I take full responsibility for my actions. I feel bad about it."

Leafs head coach Mike Babcock said he'd "never seen [that penalty taken] by anybody" and knew immediately it would be a cautionary tale for his whole team moving ahead.

"I'm sure he feels bad and would like to have it back. Can't get it back, so we all have to learn from it," Babcock said. "I'll talk to him, but I'm not



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talking to him now. He's going to have enough people talking to him. He'll get the message."

In the wake of blowing a three-goal, third period lead, there was more than enough messaging to go around. Toronto started the game in an early deficit, when Max Domi capitalized on sloppy defensive zone play to score 1:08 into the first.

Auston Matthews responded with an equalizer to tie the game 1-1, and Alexander Kerfoot's first of the season, and first as a Leaf, gave Toronto a 2-1 lead going into the second. Trevor Moore added another goal, his second of the season, in the middle frame, and by the time William Nylander's first of the year got past Carey Price on a third period power play, the Leafs felt confident they had the game well in hand.

That's when the trouble really started. Just 11 seconds after Nylander's goal, Jonathan Drouin beat Michael Hutchinson to cut the Leafs lead by two, and 62 seconds after that, Brendan Gallagher's score had Montreal within a goal.

Playing on the second night of a back-to-back, and for the third time in four nights, against a rested Canadiens team, the Leafs suddenly looked alarmingly fatigued and ineffective. And Montreal kept coming, with Petry's penalty shot, and Phillip Danault's go-ahead goal two minutes later, to put Toronto on the ropes.

"It's no secret we're going to be [tired] but we can't let that [force us] into boneheaded mistakes and costing us opportunities at the other end that they're capitalizing on," Matthews said.

"We can put a lot of pressure on the opposition. I don't think we did that tonight," added Babcock. "I don't think we had the same kind of juice, for whatever reason. And in the end, it showed."

Matthews' second goal of the game with 1:15 left in the regulation secured Toronto a point on the night, but that was the last bit of offence the Leafs could muster. They spent nearly half of the five-minute overtime killing a slashing penalty to John Tavares, and not one skater got a shot past Price in the shootout, while Paul Byron potted the Habs' shootout winner on Hutchinson.

Toronto's back-up goalie made his season debut with 37 saves on 42 shots, and Babcock said Hutchinson deserved better than the outcome he got.

"I felt bad for Hutch, because in the end we hung him out to dry," Babcock said. "I thought Hutch had done a good enough job, when we were up early he had made some real good saves. They were skating by us, and he made some good saves. It's unfortunate."

Add it to the list of things Toronto would like to change about Saturday night, starting with how quickly they went from being on top to being buried under.

"That's a game we have to put away for sure. It's disappointing; it's going to leave a sour taste," Tavares said. "Have to re-group here. It's been a lot of hockey this week. We fought back, got the point, should have had two, we had our opportunities but we'll learn from it and be ready for next week."

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1156146 Websites

TSN.CA / Habs erase three-goal deficit to complete comeback against Leafs

Staff Report

The Canadian Press

TORONTO — Jeff Petry was chatting with teammates about penalty shots Saturday morning.

Hours later, he found himself in just that scenario — and under strange circumstances.

The veteran defenceman tied the game on a penalty shot after Toronto winger Kasperii Kapanen threw his broken stick at Petry, then Paul Byron buried the only goal of the shootout as the Montreal Canadiens fought back from 4-1 down to beat the Maple Leafs 6-5 for their first win of the season.

Carey Price made 32 saves, including a couple huge ones in overtime and the shootout, to secure the victory.

Montreal trailed 4-1 just over five minutes into the third period, but scored twice in quick succession to set up Petry's penalty shot. With the Canadiens on a power play, Petry saw his slapshot blocked by Kapanen, who broke his stick on the play and inexplicably threw it at the blue-liner.

"I've seen guys throw a stick at the puck, but never at somebody," Petry said. "No one knew the ruling on it. I saw the ref's arm go up. They originally said anybody can take it, and then they changed it and said anybody on the ice.

"And then they said it had to be me, so it was a weird way it played out."

Petry, who had never taken a penalty shot in the NHL and failed to score on his only shootout attempt, beat Leafs goalie Michael Hutchinson low to the glove side for his first of the season to make it 4-4.

Montreal winger Brendan Gallagher said he'd seen his teammate take a couple of penalty shots in practice and was confident he'd deliver.

"That was pretty silly," he said of the stick throw. "Petey made him pay."

Kapanen said fatigue played a factor in his brain cramp.

"I guess you get a penalty shot for that," he said. "I take full responsibility."

"I've never seen that play by anybody ever," Toronto head coach Mike Babcock said. "We've all got to learn from it."

Gallagher had a goal and two assists for Montreal (1-0-1), while Phillip Danault and Max Domi, with a goal and an assist each, and Jonathan Drouin also scored. Shea Weber added two assists.

Auston Matthews had two goals — his fourth and fifth of the season — while Alexander Kerfoot had a goal and two assists for his first three points with Toronto (2-0-1). Trevor Moore added a goal and an assist. William Nylander also scored for the Leafs, who got 37 saves from Hutchinson. Tyson Barrie had two assists.

After that wild third period that saw Toronto blow that 4-1 lead before tying the game 5-5 late, Price robbed Marner on a breakaway in overtime before the Canadiens came close at the other end on a scramble that resulted in a slashing penalty to John Tavares.

The Leafs managed to kill that one off and Tavares had a chance on another partial break coming out of the box, but Price snagged his effort.

Domi then hit the crossbar on a 2-on-1 rush and Price denied Tavares again late to cap a frantic extra session.

"He's unbelievable," Domi said. "He's the best goalie in the world for a reason."

Byron beat Hutchinson on the Canadiens' first shootout attempt, while Price denied Matthews and Marner before Tavares shot wide to end it.

"Things were looking a little bleak going into the second intermission, but we were able to stay positive, rally the troops and have a big third," Price said. "I think that was fun to watch."



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Toronto appeared to have the game in hand when Nylander made it 4-1 at 5:16 of the third on a power play, but Montreal scored 11 seconds later when Drouin's pass in front went in off Leafs defenceman Morgan Rielly.

Gallagher then made it 4-3 at 6:29 after an icing, banging home a Weber rebound.

And after Petry's successful penalty shot, Danault put Montreal ahead by burying another rebound with 4:40 left as the Canadiens scored four times in less than 10 minutes.

But Matthews tied the game with 75 seconds remaining and Hutchinson on the bench to send Scotiabank Arena into a frenzy. The 22-year-old now has 12 goals in 12 career games against Montreal.

The Leafs came in off Friday's 4-1 road victory in Columbus over the Blue Jackets following their 5-3 defeat of the Ottawa Senators in Wednesday's curtain-raiser on the 2019-20 NHL campaign. The Canadiens dropped their season opener 4-3 to the Carolina Hurricanes in a shootout on Thursday.

Montreal got on the board just 68 seconds into the first when Domi took a feed from Artturi Lehkonen on a 2-on-1 and beat Hutchinson.

Toronto tied things up at 5:57 on sequence that started when Nylander created a turnover at the Canadiens' blue line. The puck eventually found its way to Matthews, who ripped his fourth on bullet a one-timer.

The home side grabbed the lead at 15:54 when Moore stripped Canadiens rookie winger Nick Suzuki behind Price's goal and fed Kerfoot, who snapped his first in blue and white after coming over with Barrie from the Colorado Avalanche in the Nazem Kadri trade this summer.

Moore scored his second at 1:29 of the middle period and Nylander got on the board himself on the power play early in the third before Montreal woke up to spur on the chaotic finish.

"After the first two periods we were an extremely frustrated team," Canadiens head coach Claude Julien said. "It was a matter of refocusing and trying to get our game back on track."

TSN.CA LOADED: 10.06.2019

1156147 Websites

Hutchinson has a lot to prove as Leafs' backup goalie

By Mark Masters

TSN Toronto reporter Mark Masters checks in daily with news and notes on the Maple Leafs. The Leafs' scratches skated this morning while select players met with the media in afternoon at Scotiabank Arena.

What growth has Mike Babcock seen in Michael Hutchinson?

"How many games did Hutch play for us last year?"

Five.

"So, let's watch."

Hutchinson, who starts tonight against Montreal, played well in the pre-season, but ultimately only claimed Toronto's back-up job by default when Michal Neuvirth couldn't stay healthy and was released from his pro tryout. So, Hutchinson still has a lot to prove and October will be crucial. Unlike last season when Garret Sparks started twice in the opening month, Toronto has four back-to-back sets in the first four weeks this year.

"He's got four big games," said Babcock, "and so we need to be in a situation where we have a guy we can count on and a guy we can know goes in there and we can help him win so that's a priority for him."

The next five projected starts for Hutchinson after tonight will come on the road so this is a rare chance for the Barrie, Ont. native to make a statement in front of friends and family.

"It's one of those games that, as a kid growing up watching Saturday night Leaf games, was definitely special in our household," the 29-year-old said, "so to be a part of that is definitely something special."

"Nothing like Saturday night at home against Montreal, good for him," said Babcock.

Hutchinson shut out the Canadiens in the pre-season and is projected to face Montreal again later in the month (Oct. 26) at the Bell Centre. Sandwiched in between will be tough tests in Washington (Oct. 16) and Boston (Oct. 22).

The Leafs, ideally, would like to rest workhorse Frederik Andersen more after he started 66, 66 and 60 games in his first three seasons in Toronto, but the plan only works if the No. 2 guy can hold his own. And the leash could be short for Hutchinson. Back in the 2016-17 season, Jhonas Enroth only got four starts before being jettisoned. One thing Hutchinson has going for him is he's fitting in well with goalie coach Steve Briere and the team off the ice.

"He's a real good person," said Babcock. "Freddie likes him, Stevie likes him, he's got good work habits. People with good work habits continue to get better, it doesn't matter how old they are, they continue to get better so he has that."

"We have a lot of confidence in Hutch," said defenceman Morgan Rielly. "He's played well for us in the past so he's looking forward to tonight. It's a big role for him."

Briere sent Hutchinson, who played only nine games in the NHL last season, video clips throughout the summer to help him improve certain aspects of his game. But the biggest improvement he's made is on the mental side of the game.

"For me the biggest thing is coming into the season mentally refreshed and very positive."

Hutchinson became a father last April welcoming daughter Lilah into the world.

"It really centres you a bit," he said. "You realize you can't get too high or too low or too frustrated so you learn a lot of patience and every single day you wake up and you're excited, you know, you get to see your daughter and see her smile and that makes you excited for every single day."

If Hutchinson ever feels like the pressure is getting to him, all he has to do is look down at the inside of his right wrist for inspiration.

"We ended up getting an ink-pad and getting a handprint of her when she was 12 days old and I thought it would be a cool tattoo to get," he explained. "It's my first and only one, but it's in a spot where I can see it pretty easily and every single time you see it it brings a smile to your face so something I'm definitely glad I did."

Hutchinson got the idea from former Jets teammate Blake Wheeler, who also has a tattoo of his child's handprint.

Lilah and Hutchinson's wife Jenna will be on the glass tonight during warm-ups to offer one last boost.

"It's definitely a cool feeling when you're skating around there and you look in the corner and you see your wife and your daughter," he said with a wide smile, "it just makes you that much more excited for the game. For some reason it just has that calming effect on you too so that's always a good thing."



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Inspired by daughter, Leafs' Hutchinson remains calm in face of big moment

The Leafs want to rest Frederik Andersen more this season, but can't do it unless the No. 2 option is steady. So, tonight is a big chance for Michael Hutchinson to make a statement. He became a dad for the first time during the playoffs last April and says that's made him more calm and centred. He has a tattoo on his wrist of his daughter's hand print, which he'll often look at to put him at ease. Mark Masters has more.

Jason Spezza made a good impression on Babcock during his Leafs debut Friday drawing a penalty and playing 10:36 of responsible hockey, including shifts on the power play and penalty kill.

"I was impressed with him," Babcock said after the game. "He was happy to do what we needed him to do."

But Spezza, Nic Petan and Justin Holl will all come out of the line-up tonight so that Nick Shore, Dmytro Timashov and Martin Marincin can get another chance. That trio played on Wednesday.

"What we're trying to do is give everyone a fair opportunity and if we had the right answer we wouldn't be doing this," Babcock explained. "We'll figure it out in the first 10 games."

Spezza, Petan and Holl are expected to play Monday against the Blues.

Babcock also indicated players with the Marlies are still on the radar and could potentially work their way back into the equation.

Auston Matthews sealed Toronto's win in Columbus with a howitzer goal Friday night.

"That was very accurate," said Andersen afterwards. "That was crazy. His shot is second to none."

"It's pretty electric," said Mitch Marner, who signalled goal after the puck zipped in and out of the net at lightning speed.

"It's just amazing," said new Leaf Cody Ceci. "You see it day after day and it's pretty amazing. Usually you see it on SportsCentre, but now I get to see it every single day. It's pretty cool and nice to see how fast he can get it off."

"I really don't know anyone that has that type of shot," said John Tavares. "It's very unique and if he gets enough time to corral and shoot it like he did last night I don't know what goalie is going to stop it."

"It's just amazing," said linemate Andreas Johnsson. "Just wow."

"It's pretty fun to watch," said Spezza with a smile. "It's a special shot that he's got and maybe a little bit by osmosis we can all get a little better at our wrist shots by watching him."

But Spezza, who has scored 332 goals in his 1,066 NHL games, understands how much effort it takes create a weapon like that.

"He works hard at it," Spezza observed. "It's not just something that comes to him. He works at his game. I see him every day, he's out there shooting pucks and I've been impressed with his approach and demeanour and how seriously he takes his game."

The Canadiens were watching from Toronto as the Leafs tangled with the Blue Jackets last night, but even before seeing the Matthews blast, the Habs were well aware of what the big centre can do. Matthews has scored 10 goals in 11 games against the Canadiens. The only team he has scored on more is Ottawa.

Auston Matthews scored another goal with his unreal release that seems to fool goalies and his teammates are starting to run out of ways to describe his shot.

Wearing a Raptors pullover this morning, Babcock noted the Leafs are trying to use Toronto's championship-winning NBA team as an inspiration.

"We're hoping to learn how to play right like they did," he explained. "They played an unbelievably, stifling defence and were able to win a championship. They had some hard knocks for years and were able to get it done."

The Raptors loaned the Leafs a basketball from the final series against Golden State, which will be used as a player-of-the game award.

"It's definitely cool," said Marner. "I mean, watching that win, watching what happened there was pretty electrifying for our city ... it kind of shows what we want to do at the end of the year."

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Canucks, Flames set for Pacific-Division clash

By Jeff Paterson

CALGARY – The Vancouver Canucks (0-1) and Calgary Flames (0-1) both look to get into the win column for the first time in this season when the two Pacific Division rivals square off at Scotiabank Saddledome on Saturday night.

After a brief two-day team retreat in Banff, the Canucks look to bounce back from Wednesday's 3-2 loss in Edmonton. Despite the outcome, the Canucks liked the 70 shot attempts they had and the fact they held the Oilers to just 22 shots on goal. Alex Edler and Tanner Pearson scored the Vancouver goals while Jacob Markstrom made 19 saves in net.

On his own, Pearson had 11 shots on goal – just two off the Canucks franchise record for shots in a single game. With his goal on Wednesday, Pearson has now scored 10 goals in 20 games in a Vancouver uniform since being acquired from Pittsburgh at last season's trade deadline.

The Canucks will make one line-up change from Wednesday. Adam Gaudette, who led all Canucks forwards in preseason scoring with four goals and two assists, will make his season debut, while veteran Loui Eriksson will sit this one out. Gaudette will centre a line with Josh Leivo and Jake Virtanen while Brandon Sutter slides from the middle to right wing to skate with Jay Beagle and Tim Schaller. That leaves Loui Eriksson as a healthy scratch. The veteran winger was scratched once last season – March 13th – in Game 70 against the New York Rangers.

Former Flame Micheal Ferland returns to his old stomping grounds for just the second time in his career as a visitor. He played 250 games for the Flames and then returned to the Stampede City as a member of the Carolina Hurricanes last January. Ferland had two shots and a pair of hits in 17:36 in his Canuck debut in Edmonton.

Bo Horvat enters play two goals shy of 100 for his NHL career. Elias Pettersson scored his first NHL goal against Calgary and scored a pair in his first visit to the Saddledome. The Swede led the Canucks with four goals and five assists in five games against the Flames last season.

Calgary is back in action after a 5-3 loss in its season opener in Colorado on Thursday night. Johnny Gaudreau and Sean Monahan each had a goal and an assist while captain Mark Giordano had the other Flames goal on his 36th birthday. David Rittich stopped 27 of the 31 shots he faced in goal.

The Gaudreau and Monahan goals both came on the power play as the Flames went 2-for-4 with the man-advantage on the night. While they scored a pair on the power play, they surrendered a pair as well killing off 4-of-6 short-handed opportunities.



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The Canucks and Flames won't see each other again until Dec. 29th when Vancouver returns to town. Calgary doesn't make its first West Coast appearance until Feb. 8th. The Canucks won three of the five meetings between the teams last year with two of the victories requiring more than 60 minutes to settle things.

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