



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 7, 2019

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Hurricanes rally for the third time in a row, beat Lightning in overtime

By Chip Alexander

Curtis McElhinney was a 20-game winner for the Carolina Hurricanes last season. On Sunday, the veteran goalie wanted to hand them their first loss of this season.

But the Canes wouldn't oblige. Not this group. Jaccob Slavin's goal at 1:53 of overtime gave the Canes, and goalie Petr Mrazek, a 4-3 comeback win over Tampa Bay and McElhinney.

For the third consecutive game, the Canes trailed in the third period. For the third game in a row, they tied the score, this time on Dougie Hamilton's power-play strike that made it a 3-3 game. For a third straight game, it went to overtime.

The Canes went on a power play with 44.7 seconds left in regulation when Nino Niederreiter drew an interference penalty from Tampa Bay's Kevin Shattenkirk. The power-play time extended into overtime, with the Canes having a four-on-three advantage, but Tampa Bay killed it off.

It was soon back to three-on-three, and Slavin beat McElhinney, who signed as a free agent with the Lightning in July after spending a memorable 2018-19 season with the Canes. Jordan Staal first separated the Lightning's Nikita Kucherov from the puck along the boards, then passed to Slavin on a two-on-one -- Victor Hedman the defender -- for the winner.

"We've got a resilient group in here," Slavin said. "We've got to learn not to put ourselves in those holes and, obviously, play a stronger first two periods so we don't have to rely on that third period and always be coming from behind. But it's definitely a confidence-builder for the group, and we hope we can continue on that path."

Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said the Canes could not have made the playoffs last season without McElhinney, claimed off waivers by Carolina just before the season began after Scott Darling was injured.

"He came at the right time (and) was a huge part of it," Brind'Amour said before the game, adding, "Hopefully, he'll have one of the only bad games I've seen him play."

McElhinney, making his first start for Tampa Bay, was terrific in the first period for the Lightning (1-1-1), which led 3-1. But Tampa Bay did not have a shot on goal in the second period, just two in the third and none in the OT, being outshot 44-13 in the game by the Canes.

"They're playing good hockey," McElhinney said. "I mean, they worked tonight, and they earned that game. They should be the team that's coming away with the two points.

"I think we had some spurts about five to seven minutes for a couple periods that were good, but for the most part it just

seemed to be like we were overwhelmed with Carolina's offense and the way they just kind of hound you with the puck."

The Canes' schedule, from the start, was demanding: Montreal, at Washington, Tampa Bay. That meant facing Habs goalie Carey Price in the opener, taking on the Capitals in their home opener, then returning to Raleigh to take on arguably the best team in hockey.

But the Canes rallied and beat Montreal in a shootout, Hamilton with the only shootout goal. They trailed the Caps 2-0 on Saturday but tied the score in the third on goals by Haula and Slavin and won in overtime on Jake Gardiner's goal. Now they're 3-0.

"It shows that we believe in each other already, which is great, and I think they understand how to play to be successful," Brind'Amour said.

Tyler Johnson, Shattenkirk and Steven Stamkos scored for the Lightning in the first period as Tampa Bay took a 3-1 lead. But Tampa Bay coach Jon Cooper: "Our game went east-west instead of north-south."

Brett Pesce scored for the Canes early in the first period on a shot that hit a Tampa Bay defender, and Erik Haula — that man again — scored on a second-period power play.

Haula now has three goals in his first three games with the Hurricanes. He's the sixth player in franchise history to score in each of his first three games and first since Eric Staal in 2005-06.

The Canes killed off all six penalties in the win over the Caps. But Shattenkirk winged a shot through traffic that got past Mrazek in the first.

Pesce scored 1:14 into the game but McElhinney was rock solid the rest of the period, turning back tough shots by Warren Foegele, Niederreiter and Haula in the second. But the Canes broke through on a power play as Haula again got in front of the crease, banging in the rebound of a Hamilton shot.

Anyone looking at the analytics — but not the score — would have been surprised after the first and second periods. Consider that the Canes had 36 total shot attempts to Tampa Bay's 18 in the first, and 16 scoring chances to the Lightning's eight. The Canes then outshot Tampa Bay 17-0 in the second period, yet trailed 3-2.

It was the first time the Canes had held a team without a shot in the period since February 2004, in a game against Colorado.

Both teams were playing their third game in four days and completing a back-to-back. Tampa Bay had split its first two



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games, both against the Florida Panthers, losing 4-3 on Saturday.

THE ATHLETIC

The Hurricanes are 3-0-0 for the first time since 1995, and they've done it their way

By Sara Civian

Justin Williams returned to PNC Arena in street clothes and a suite instead of a sweater and skates, but of course he clapped along as the Hurricanes carried on his silly, little brainchild.

It was one of his many legacies on display through their first three games, and even if he would've preferred keeping his distance right now, he wouldn't miss youth hockey night. As he was shown play-fighting his daughter, Jade, then lifting her into his arms, a random conversation from months ago came to mind.

"He's one of the most incredible dads I've ever seen," said Nick Gismondi, longtime friend of Williams and rinkside reporter for the Blackhawks. "Like, he's an exceptional father. The way that he is, raising human beings. You can see him doing things like he does as a hockey player and keeping situations in perspective all the time."

The loss of that dad-like perspective was a huge concern for a Canes roster without Williams. So was his constant chip-on-the-shoulder attitude — he'd been drafted as an afterthought in juniors and acted like it ever since.

The Canes went and won three consecutive games in comeback, overtime fashion. They're 3-0-0 for the first time since relocation. That's No. 1 in the league with six points and a .942 PDO for the folks at home.

The post-Williams exhale is real, but as always it's about the way they're winning, not the fact that they're winning — and that's more of a stick tap to Williams than the Storm Surge revival.

Where the heck is that coming from on a team with so many new faces?

"I mean, it's early in the season, I don't even know. I'm not really sure. It's a tough question," Jake Gardiner told me after his game-winner in Washington. "But it's good to see our team can battle back from a deficit, obviously all positive."

How's one more time for good measure?

There was that Washington home opener and a locked-in Braden Holtby spoiled. There was a first period deficit to the Lightning met with no shots allowed in a period for the first time since 2004. There's the newly functioning power play, that Dougie Hamilton has dragged into one of those chambers where rich people preserve their organs and hope to come out alive in, like, 3019.

Somehow it's working.

You always think the good-on-paper additions are going to work, but you're not at ease 'till you see it — and the so-called "new guys" limped out of the preseason with more questions than answers.

Clearly none of the injuries sustained in exhibition ended up too serious, but the Canes still weren't able to get as good a look at Gardiner, Martin Necas, Ryan Dzingel and/or Erik Haula as they would've liked before the first meaningful puck drop.

That would have been less than optimal in any situation, and there Carolina was with Montreal, Washington and Tampa on tap.

"It does seem pretty tough," said Hurricanes head coach Rod Brind'Amour in the thick of it Saturday. "But every game's tough. I know you look and say wow, we're playing Washington then we gotta turn around and play Tampa. But every team is good in this league, and you gotta play them all at some point. That's just part of it."

Maybe Brind'Amour remembers how opponents underestimated the "Candy Canes" last season.

That did not bode well for said opponents.

Or maybe he's trying to avoid a mindset of complacency, one Lightning captain Steven Stamkos brought up after they blew a 3-1 lead to the Canes in overtime.

"We continue to be the free-wheeling team that thinks we can just come into games and win because we're skilled," he said, according to Caley Chelios.

Either way, the Hurricanes are off to their best start in franchise history and they're doing it their way — the hard way. Shooting four million pucks, finding a hero, overcoming a ton of crazy.

The new guys are fitting in just fine.

Trending up

Erik 'Bo Time' Haula

If there's ever a change in your Wikipedia page, you know you've either done something terrible or something amazing.

Erik 'Bo Time' Haula has done something amazing.

By simply having the guts to stand in front of the net on the power play and having the wherewithal to direct the puck



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inside of it, Haula has revived the North Carolina biscuit industry.

He's the first player in Hurricanes/Whalers history to score in each of his first three games with the franchise, with two of those three goals coming on the power play.

As for all the overtime?

"Ehhhh, I'm fine with that," he said. "Sure. It don't matter. That's a point in every game. Right now we're getting two. That adds up to a lot of points."

Can confirm.

The power play

"That might be the difference in the whole game right now. We're getting a special teams goal here and there, and that gets you back in the game," Brind'Amour said. "At the right time, special teams can be huge."

In this economy.

The Hurricanes are currently tied with the Habs at fifth in the league with a 33.3 power play percentage. It has had it's cringey moments, but the perimeter passing amongst Dougie Hamilton, Andrei Svechnikov and Teuvo Teravainen has forced the "second unit" into "first unit" conversation, and it's winning games.

Brind'Amour has finally started deploying it like so.

"I'd be stupid not to," he said. "We built it this way, where we feel like we have two equal groups. And we do. But when

one's hot, you go with it. We'll definitely need both groups going, but it's good to see it working right now.

If you want me to explain this to you like you're 5 years old, basically Hamilton is a man possessed.

We'd talked about this earlier, and he agreed that Justin Faulk's absence is giving him more of an opportunity to unleash his obvious scoring talents. So far, he's racked up one goal and two primary assists on the power play in three games.

'Their game'

The most encouraging sign of all was the zero-shots-allowed second period of the Hurricanes' third game in four days against a top opponent.

That is "zero shots allowed" if I've ever seen it. While other defensemen — including Sunday's overtime hero Jaccob Slavin and Saturday's in Gardiner — have been helping upfront, Pesce has been holding it down in two of the best games he's ever played this back-to-back.

"He's been great, I didn't see any slip in his game," Brind'Amour said. "He played a ton of minutes last night and again tonight."

Lucas Wallmark

Just saying, this is a Lucas Wallmark appreciation safe space.



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NORTH STATE JOURNAL

Hurricanes rally again, erase 2-goal lead to beat Lightning in OT

The Carolina defense scored three times, including Jacob Slavin's game-winner in overtime

By Cory Lavalette

RALEIGH — Rod Brind'Amour entered this season with concerns over whether he could recreate the locker room chemistry that played a big part in the 2018-19 Carolina Hurricanes' success.

While the 2019-20 season is not even a week old, the team's three come-from-behind wins in its first three games — the latest being Sunday's 4-3 overtime win over the juggernaut Tampa Bay Lightning — goes a long way toward getting those good feelings flowing.

"When you have to rely on everyone to have a good game, to kind of dig in and come back, it's not ideal," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "It's not how you want to draw it up. But the fact that ... everyone's contributing, they're giving you what they can. So that's good. It's a good start for us."

The Hurricanes trailed by two goals late in the first period, then allowed just two more shots on goal while rallying past the Lightning in front of 14,125 Sunday at PNC Arena.

The Lightning managed just 13 shots on net while Carolina pelted Curtis McElhinney — making his first start for the Lightning since leaving Raleigh to sign with Tampa Bay as a free agent this summer — with 44 shots.

The barrage was enough to erase Tampa Bay's 3-1 first period lead and win on a Jacob Slavin shot in overtime.

"We have a lot of believe in the locker room," said Erik Haula, who scored on the power play to cut Tampa's lead to one just past the game's midway point. "We know we're good. We just gotta put it together. When we play well, we're a good team."

Dougie Hamilton added another power play goal with under eight minutes left in regulation to tie the game, the Hurricanes were in full flight.

Still, for the third time in three games this season, it took more than regulation for Carolina to earn two points.

After a power play that carried over from the end of the third period faltered, the Hurricanes continued to put on the pressure. Andrei Svechnikov won a puck battle near the boards in the Carolina end, then Staal one-upped him by bulling through reigning Hart Trophy winner Nikita Kucherov to create a 2-on-1 chance.

Staal cruised up the left wing and fed Slavin for a one-timer that beat McElhinney (40 saves), giving the Hurricanes three wins over four days to open the season.

"He's a strong man," Slavin said of Staal pushing his way past Kucherov to create the chance. "I've got to play against him all the time during practice. He manhandled that and, obviously, made a great pass."

Slavin's goal was the third of the night for Carolina's defense, which also contributed the night before when newcomer Jake Gardiner beat Washington with an overtime goal of his own.

"It's a cornerstone for our group, for sure," Brind'Amour said of the team's defense. "It's defense first. Defend, but when they get a chance, they've got the green light. Obviously, tonight was huge, the goals they came up with."

That included the first, which came in the opening minutes.

Shortly after Carolina's Brock McGinn hit the post just 68 seconds in, Brett Pesce took a point shot through traffic that hit a Tampa Bay player and got past McElhinney to make it 1-0 at 1:14 of the first.

Tampa Bay, the league's highest-scoring team a season ago, got the goal back just over a minute later when Tyler Johnson's slap shot from the high slot found its way through a maze of players to beat Petr Mrazek (10 saves) at 2:22 of the first for his 13th goal in 21 career games against Carolina to tie the game.

Then, the Lightning's lethal power play — also tops in the NHL last year — needed just five seconds to score on their first attempt, with new Tampa Bay defenseman Kevin Shattenkirk's point shot fluttering through a sea of traffic for a 2-1 lead for the visiting team at the 9:53 mark of the first.

The high-powered Lightning weren't done.

Tampa Bay's Steven Stamkos bolted into the Carolina zone on a line change, picked up a loose puck at full speed and fired a shot that beat Mrazek stick side to give the visitors a 3-1 lead at 17:44 of the opening period.

Stunningly, the Lightning wouldn't register another shot on Mrazek for 26 minutes and managed just two shots the rest of the way, both in succession in the third minute of the third period.

Meanwhile, Carolina was building a game.



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With Lightning standout defenseman Victor Hedman in the box for the hooking, the Hurricanes' second power play unit set up shop in the Tampa end.

After more than a minute of zone time, Teuvo Teravainen fed Hamilton for a one-timer that Haula deflected down into his feet in front of the net. Haula whacked at the loose puck and scored his third goal in as many games this season to cut the Lightning's lead to one at 13:49 of the second.

The same group struck again in the third, and this time Hamilton's point blast didn't need any help getting in. With Tampa defenseman Braydon Coburn in the box for tying up Warren Foegele on a scramble in front of McElhinney, Hamilton teed up a shot that found the net and tied the game with 7:12 left in regulation.

"Hopefully we can start better and we don't have to try to come back in games," said Hamilton, who is tied with

Svechnikov for the team lead with four points. "But yeah, our team doesn't quit. We just keep going."

While the power play didn't convert in overtime, the momentum carried through to the end — right until Slavin roofed his shot to trigger another Storm Surge.

"Two points, find a way to win," Haula said. "It doesn't matter how you get it. It's a great start, but there's a lot of hockey left."

Notes: Four Hurricanes defensemen have scored this season, while only three forwards have scored through three games. ... Kucherov was held without a shot and had only two shot attempts. ... Eleven Hurricanes logged at least a minute shorthanded, including five of the team's six defensemen. ... Haula won 15 of 19 faceoffs. ... Shot attempts for the game favored Carolina 86-29.



Recap: Canes Rally Again to Top Lightning in OT

Slavin delivers third straight win with overtime goal

by Michael Smith

Just call them the Cardiac Canes.

Three games. Three comebacks. Three wins. The Carolina Hurricanes negated a third-period deficit to force extra hockey for the third straight game and defeated the Tampa Bay Lightning in overtime by a score of 4-3.

A power-play goal in each of the second and third periods nullified Tampa Bay's two-goal advantage, and Jaccob Slavin netted the game-winning goal in overtime.

Here are five takeaways from Sunday evening's match in Raleigh.

1. Another One

I wrote after Saturday night's overtime victory in Washington that it seemed the 2019-20 Canes have a flair for the dramatic.

I am pleased to report that, less than 24 hours later, that statement remains valid.

The Canes scored three unanswered goals and climbed out of another two-goal hole to down the defending Presidents' Trophy winners in the second half of a back-to-back.

"Our team doesn't quit," said Dougie Hamilton, who earned first-star honors with the game-tying goal and an assist. "We just keep going."

The Canes are now 3-0-0, their record unblemished even when trailing after two periods in all three of those games. As a comparison, the team was just 3-20-3 last season when trailing after two. The Canes are the 13th team in NHL history to come from behind to win each of their first three games in a season.

"I think it just shows that the guys believe in each other already, which is great, and I think they understand how to play to be successful. Our game, they trust it," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Still some things to shore up, but I like the effort. You can't fault that. It's been right there from the get-go."

2. Slavin Rips Home the Game-Winner

Jordan Staal is a big, strong man, a fact Nikita Kucherov learned the hard way in overtime. Staal bullied the reigning scoring champ along the far wall to take control of the puck and skate it down the ice on a two-on-one with Jaccob Slavin.

"I've got to play against him all the time during practice," Slavin laughed. "He man-handled that and made a great pass."

Sure enough. Once across the blue line, Slavin opened up for the pass, which Staal put right on the defenseman's tape. From there, it was bombs away.

"Honestly, I just tried to hit the net," Slavin said. "I let it rip as hard as I could. I don't think it was that hard, but I'll take it."



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Another overtime win, another surge. Slavin, the latest overtime hero, led the clap at center ice with his teammates circled around him. They then fanned out and leapt into the boards, another nod to a classic.

3. The Comeback, Part III

Coming into this season, it had been 11 months since Erik Haula last played a regular-season hockey game.

He's clearly making up for lost time.

With the Canes trailing by two in the second period, Haula notched a timely power-play goal, his third marker in as many games and second on the man advantage. Haula is the sixth player in franchise history to score in each of the team's first three games of the season and the first to do so in his first year with the team.

On a power play in the third period, the same unit struck again. This time it was Hamilton with a one-timer blast from the point and Haula providing the screen in front of former Canes netminder Curtis McElhinney.

"That might be the difference in the whole game right now. We're getting a special teams goal here and there, and that gets you back in the game," Brind'Amour said. "At the right time, special teams can be huge."

"We've got a resilient group in here. We've got to learn how to not put ourselves in those holes," Slavin said. "It's definitely a confidence builder for the group. Hopefully we can continue on that path."

4. That First Period

Both the Hurricanes and Lightning were playing their second game in as many nights after each being in different cities the night prior, and both teams scored on their first shots of the game.

Brock McGinn rang a shot off the goal post just over a minute into the game and seconds later, Brett Pesce sent a shot toward the net that bounced off a Tampa Bay defender in front and beat McElhinney.

A little more than a minute later, Tyler Johnson took advantage of a failed zone clear and tied the game at one. The Lightning would add a pair of goals later in the period - Kevin Shattenkirk on the power play and Steven Stamkos late - to take a 3-1 lead into the intermission.

"In the first period, we had too many turnovers. That's their game, feeding off those," Slavin said.

"It was a pretty complete game. We had a couple gaffes, and that team kills you when you do that, almost like clockwork," Brind'Amour said. "I just give the guys credit. They dug in and dug themselves out of it."

5. Neutralizing the Opposition

After Stamkos' goal, the Hurricanes limited the Lightning, a team that possesses one of the league's most potent offensive attacks, to just two shots on goal in the remaining 44:09 of game time - fewer shots on goal than the Canes had in 1:53 of overtime alone (3).

It was a remarkable team defensive effort, especially since the two shots were separated by just two seconds, and it figured to only be a matter of time before the Canes tied the game with that sort of puck dominance.

"You can't do much better than that," Brind'Amour said. "It was a great effort. That was our third in four days, and it didn't look like it."

Up Next

The Hurricanes will face off with another old Southeast Division opponent, the Florida Panthers, in Sunrise on Tuesday.



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Hurricanes rally again, top Lightning in OT

Slavin wins it at 1:53 for Carolina, which starts season 3-0-0 for first time in its history

by Kurt Dusterberg

RALEIGH, N.C. -- Jacob Slavin scored at 1:53 of overtime, and the Carolina Hurricanes rallied again for a 4-3 win against the Tampa Bay Lightning at PNC Arena on Sunday.

Slavin scored on a one-timer off a pass from Jordan Staal on a 2-on-1 after Dougie Hamilton tied it 3-3 at 12:48 of the third period with a slap shot from just inside the blue line on the power play.

"We got a pretty clean 2-on-1," Slavin said. "Honestly, I just tried to hit the net. I let it rip as hard as I can."

Erik Haula and Brett Pesce also scored, Andrei Svechnikov had two assists, and Petr Mrazek made 10 saves for the Hurricanes, who are 3-0-0 to start the season for the second time in team history (4-0-0 as the Hartford Whalers in 1995-96), rallying in the third period before winning in overtime or a shootout in each.

"When you have to rely on everyone to have a good game, to dig in and come back, it's not ideal," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "But everyone's contributing and they're giving you what they can. It's a good start for us."

Curtis McElhinney made 40 saves against his former team in his debut for the Lightning (1-1-1), who have lost two straight after winning their opener.

"It was the Curtis McElhinney show," Tampa Bay coach Jon Cooper said. "He was the one guy who really showed up in the last two-thirds of the game. It's too bad we didn't play better in front of him."

McElhinney signed a two-year contract with Tampa Bay on July 1 after playing last season with Carolina, where he set an NHL career high in wins (20) in his one season.

"It was a fun atmosphere in there tonight," McElhinney said. "They're off to a great start and playing really well. They're fun to watch. It's unfortunate to be on the wrong side of it tonight. But it's nice to get my first game out of the way."

Pesce gave Carolina a 1-0 lead 1:14 into the first period when his shot from the point redirected in off the skate of Lightning forward Luke Witkowski.

Tyler Johnson tied it 1-1 at 2:22 on a slap shot from the high slot following a turnover by Hurricanes forward Martin Necas.

Kevin Shattenkirk gave the Lightning a 2-1 lead at 9:53, scoring five seconds into a power play on a shot from the blue line. Steven Stamkos pushed the lead to 3-1 at 17:44 with a wrist shot from between the circles after intercepting a clearing attempt by Sebastian Aho.

"We just gave up too many easy ones," Brind'Amour said. "It felt like the rest of the game, we took that part out of it."

Carolina outshout Tampa Bay 27-2 over the final two periods and overtime, including 16-0 in the second period, the first time the Hurricanes have held a team without a shot in a period since Feb. 3, 2004, against the Colorado Avalanche.

Haula scored for the third straight game to cut it to 3-2 at 13:49 of the second period, getting a rebound at the top of the crease on the power play.

"Today was a [terrible] game for us," Stamkos said. "Unless we change things, it's going to be a really, really long year. We rely so much on our goaltending and our power play and the passing. It's three games into the season, that's the good news. There's lots of times to correct these things. I don't want to get too down, but it's frustrating knowing the group we have in here and we keep continuing to do the same thing and expecting different results."

THEY SAID IT

"They played the right way. They played a vertical game, they were skating and moving. I thought we played too slow. Our decision making was slow, we were turning the puck over. It's too bad because [McElhinney] had a heck of a game. It was just awful by us." -- Lightning forward Tyler Johnson

"We don't quit. It's the same mentality we had last year. We didn't play it for 60 minutes (tonight), so we had to come back. But if you can play that way consistently through the whole game, it's pretty hard to beat us." -- Hurricanes defenseman Dougie Hamilton

NEED TO KNOW

Carolina is the 13th team in NHL history to come back to win its first three games of the season. The Los Angeles Kings (1988-89) and Nashville Predators (2005-06) are the only teams to do it in their first four. ... Mrazek's 10 saves were



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the fewest by a goalie who played the entire game and won since Jaroslav Halak made eight for the New York Islanders against the Buffalo Sabres on Feb. 8, 2015.

WHAT'S NEXT

Lightning: At the Toronto Maple Leafs on Thursday (7 p.m. ET; TVAS, SNO, SUN, NHL.TV)

Hurricanes: At the Florida Panthers on Tuesday (7 p.m. ET; FS-F, FS-CR, NHL.TV)



Hurricanes rally to beat Lightning in overtime

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — The Carolina Hurricanes fall behind in the first two periods, then figure out a way to win after regulation.

The unconventional formula worked again Sunday night, with Jacob Slavin scoring at 1:53 of overtime to give the Hurricanes a 4-3 victory over the Tampa Bay Lightning.

The Hurricanes improved to 3-0, for only the second time in franchise history, overcoming third-period deficits and winning after regulation in each. Carolina won its opener over Montreal in a shootout on Thursday night, then beat Washington in overtime on Saturday night.

It was Slavin's turn Sunday to provide the overtime theatrics. He beat Curtis McElhinney on a shot from the right slot to give Carolina just its fifth win in 24 tries against the Lightning.

"We've got a resilient group in here," Slavin said. "We've got to learn not to put ourselves in those holes and obviously play a stronger first two periods so we don't have to rely on that third period and always be coming from behind. But it's definitely a confidence-builder for the group and we hope we can continue on that path."

Dougie Hamilton, Brett Pesce and Erik Haula also scored for Carolina, and the Hurricanes held the Lightning to just two shots after the first period. Petr Mrazek only had to make 10 saves for Carolina.

Haula, acquired by Carolina from Vegas in a draft-day trade, has scored in each of his first three games with the Hurricanes. He has quickly adapted to his role with his new team.

"You find a way to win," Haula said. "It doesn't matter how you get it. It's a great start but there's a lot of hockey left."

Tyler Johnson, Kevin Shattenkirk and Steven Stamkos scored in the first period for Tampa Bay, and McElhinney, who helped the Hurricanes reach the Eastern Conference final last season, made 40 saves.

McElhinney won 20 games during the regular-season and then three more in the playoffs for Carolina last season. He signed a free-agent deal with the Lightning in the offseason and got his first start with his new team against his old team.

"It was a fun atmosphere," McElhinney said. "They're off to a great start and are playing really well. It's unfortunate to be on the wrong side of it but you know, it's nice to get my first game out of the way."

Tampa Bay, which dropped its second straight game to open a six-game trip, led 3-1 after the first period. After Pesce's goal just 1:14 into the game, McElhinney settled in and had a couple of point-blank stops on Haula and Brock McGinn to limit the Hurricanes to one goal in the first 20 minutes.

Shattenkirk only needed 5 seconds with the man-advantage to give the Lightning a 2-1 at 9:53 in the first. Stamkos made it 3-1 on an unassisted goal at 17:44. Then Tampa Bay's offense dried up. The Lightning had 11 shots in the first period and then two for the rest of the game.

Haula's power-play goal, off a Hamilton rebound, cut it to 3-2 with 6:11 left in the second. Hamilton tied it on a power play with 7:12 left in the third period.

Second-year Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour doesn't want to make a habit of falling behind but does appreciate his team's determination in its first 3-0-0 start since the 1995-96 season, when the franchise was the Hartford Whalers.

"It's not ideal," Brind'Amour said. "It's not how you want to draw up but the fact that everyone is contributing and they're giving you what they can, that's good. It's a good start for us."

Notes:

The Lightning swept the Hurricanes last season and had gone 19-4 against their former Southeast Division rivals since the start of the 2012-13 season. ... Tampa Bay didn't have a shot on goal in the second period. It was the fourth time in franchise history the Lightning have gone a full period without a shot on goal. It was the first the Hurricanes had not allowed a shot in a period since the 2003-04 season. ... Johnson has 21 points (13 goals, 8 assists) in 21 career games against the Hurricanes. ... Former Carolina captain Justin Williams watched the game in a luxury suite with North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper.

UP NEXT



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 7, 2019

Hurricanes: At Florida on Tuesday night.

Lightning: At Toronto on Thursday night.



Thoughts on surging Hurricanes' OT win vs. Lightning

By James O'Brien

Early on in the 2019-20 season, it's proven difficult to protect leads against the Carolina Hurricanes. Probably because they always have the puck.

Sunday's eventual 4-3 overtime win against the Tampa Bay Lightning began in a way that feels fitting to a Hurricanes team that's been haunted by a good news/bad news situation for a while now. The good news is, again, Carolina hogs the biscuit with overflowing greed. The bad news is that their goalies maybe fall asleep a bit as a result. When Sunday's game was 1-1, the Hurricanes had fired seven shots on goal, while Tyler Johnson beat Petr Mrazek for Tampa Bay's goal on what was, to that point, the Bolts' first SOG.

Speaking of shots on goal, the Lightning couldn't muster a single one during the second period. Overall, Carolina generated 44-13 SOG advantage on Sunday.

Maybe you shouldn't sit on leads against Carolina?

The difference between the 2018-19 Hurricanes (plus, so far, the 2019-20 version) and the teams that suffered through an interminable playoff drought is that the latest, Rod Brind'Amour-led rendition "finds ways to win games."

One wouldn't fault the Hurricanes if they were a little frustrated after the first period of Sunday's game. Despite generating a 17-11 SOG advantage (and more than doubling Tampa Bay in stats like Corsi For at 35-17) during the first period, the Lightning finished the first 20 minutes with a 3-1 lead.

Carolina kept at it, though, getting a power-play goal in each of the second period (via Erik Haula) and third (Dougie Hamilton) before Jaccob Slavin fired home the overtime game-winner:

The Hurricanes are now 3-0-0 despite falling behind in all of their first three games ...

- Again, Carolina was down 3-1 in the first period, only to roar back against Tampa Bay to win 4-3 in OT on Sunday.
- The Hurricanes entered the third period of Saturday's game against the Capitals down 2-0, yet Carolina ended up winning 3-2 in overtime thanks to Jake Gardiner's game-winner.
- During Thursday's season-opener, Carolina saw a 2-0 lead devolve into a 3-2 deficit against the Habs through the first 40 minutes. A Haula goal sent that contest to overtime, and then Dougie Hamilton potted the shootout-winner.

Much like in that opener, the Hurricanes broke out the "Storm Surge." At this pace, they might need to pay Justin Williams to be a consultant on celebrations, because they can only lean on the classic cele for so long ...

That defense is getting it done

Defensemen have scored the decisive goals in Carolina's three wins so far: Hamilton for the shootout victory, Gardiner's sneaky OT goal on Saturday, and Slavin on Sunday night.

That production extends beyond the most clutch moments, too. Hamilton is tied with Andrei Svechnikov and Teuvo Teravainen for the team lead with four points. Slavin has scored two goals so far in this young season, while Hamilton, Gardiner, and Brett Pesce all have one apiece.

Naturally, they're doing great work in suppressing chances against, as they've doubled opponents in the high-danger scoring chances category at even-strength so far at 38-19 (according to Natural Stat Trick).

A great Haula

Gardiner isn't the only Hurricanes addition who is paying early dividends.

Haula has three goals in as many games, and big ones at that. Ryan Dzingel got his first assist of the season on



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Sunday. If James Reimer finds his game this season the way Mrazek and Curtis McElhinney did in the nurturing cocoon that is the Hurricanes' system, then that would make for another shrewd move. Considering how unrelenting Carolina can be at times, would anyone be that surprised if Reimer ends up rejuvenated?

Hogging that puck

Even Jackson Pollock might think that the Hurricanes are heavy on the paint:



Hurricanes Come Back, Defeat Lightning in Overtime to Remain Undefeated

The Hurricanes improved to 3-0-0 thanks to another come-from-behind victory against the Lightning.

By Brett Finger

RALEIGH — On night two of their first back-to-back of the 2019-20 season, the Carolina Hurricanes found themselves in a very familiar situation - down by two goals.

Yet, for the third consecutive game to kick off the campaign, Carolina battled back and managed to win in extra time. This time, by a final score of 4-3.

The opening 2:30 saw a quick burst of offense. At 1:14 of the first period, Brett Pesce's point wrist shot was deflected in the slot (potentially by Andrei Svechnikov) and found its way by former Hurricane Curtis McElhinney to make it an early 1-0 game.

All of 1:08 later, the Bolts got the goal back in the form of a long-range shot from Tyler Johnson that ricocheted off of Petr Mrazek's blocker-side post and into the net. It was placed perfectly through traffic in front, but it's a goal Mrazek would want back.

From there, Carolina largely dominated the offensive tempo of the game, making McElhinney work hard in the early going. They got eight of the game's first nine shots and very few of them were cheapies from low-damage areas.

The tides turned quickly, though, halfway through the period when Tampa started building their game and pinning the Hurricanes in their own end. A long shift in Carolina's zone ended in an interference penalty on Joel Edmundson and Tampa got the game's first power play. Then, they capitalized on it. Kevin Shattenkirk's long-range shot found its way through a maze of players in front of Mrazek and ended up in the back of the Carolina net to flip the script and make it a 2-1 Tampa lead.

Carolina got a power play of their own later in the first, but they failed to do much of anything, and the Bolts rode that momentum to the game's fourth goal - a high-slot snipe from

Steven Stamkos (again, through traffic) to extend Carolina's deficit to 3-1 through 20 minutes.

The second period was much slower in terms of tempo, especially for the Lightning as they managed a modest zero shots on goal in the middle frame. That's not easy to do against the Bolts.

On the other side, the Canes got 17 shots on net (the same number as the first period) and got one of them by McElhinney.

Erik Haula came through with a hugely important power play goal at 13:49 of the period. A point shot from Dougie Hamilton led to a rebound in front and Haula deposited his third goal in as many games as a Hurricane to cut the Tampa lead to 3-2.

Just like games one and two of the season, the third period was absolutely owned by the Hurricanes. After a slower start, Carolina gained steam throughout the period and drew a penalty with 7:34 to go in regulation time. On that crucial power play, a great series of passing led to another goal from what was formerly known as the second power play unit (now known as the first power play unit, in my book) led to a Dougie Hamilton one-time blast from the top of the point. That rocket went right by McElhinney and capped off yet another two-goal comeback from the Hurricanes.

A lot of action late in the third period resulted in a number of scoring chances for Carolina, but Tampa managed to hold them at bay and force a 3-on-3 overtime.

After not cashing in on a power play that bled over into the extra frame, the two teams returned to 5-on-5 action, but just a matter of moments later, the game-deciding goal was scored off of the stick of Jaccob Slavin.

Jordan Staal did away with Nikita Kucherov at the Carolina blue line, took the puck up ice, and fed Slavin for a one-time bomb from his off-side. The missile of a shot beat McElhinney up stairs.



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With Sunday's win, the Hurricanes are 3-0-0 for the first time since relocation in 1997. In each of their first three games, Carolina managed to overcome third-period deficits and pull through in overtime/shootout.

Up next for Carolina is a trip to South Florida to take on the Florida Panthers on Tuesday night, followed by a two-day layoff before returning home to face the New York Islanders on Friday.

Post Game Quotes

Rod Brind'Amour

[On how meaningful it is for this team to pull through and win these kinds of games] I think it just shows that the guys believe in each other already. And I think they understand how to play to be successful at our game. They trust it. There are still some things to sure up, but I liked the effort - you can't fault that. It's there right from the get-go. Tonight was a pretty complete game - we had a couple of gaffs and that team (Tampa) will kill you with those, almost like clockwork - but I just give the guys credit. They dug in there and dug themselves out.

I thought our first period was great. We had a tremendous amount of opportunities, but we just gave up too many easy ones. The rest of the game, we took that part out.

[On how their special teams came through in a big way] That's the key. That might be the difference in the whole game, right now. We're getting out special teams going here and there, and that just gets you back in the game. Special teams can be huge. They had a chance to go up 4-1, and we killed that penalty - it keeps you in the game, and obviously, scoring the power play goal gets you right back in the game. It's a big part of today's game, especially with all of the weird penalties. You never know when you're going to call one, so it's become so, so important.

[On how he rolled with the second power play unit again] I would've been stupid not to (make the Hamilton power play unit the first unit). We've built in a way where we feel like we have two equal groups - and we do, we spread it out. When one is hot, you roll with it. We'll definitely need both units going, and we might tinker as we get going, but it's nice to see it working right now.



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Canes rally to shock Bolts for third straight extra-time victory

By Ryan Henkel

Carolina Hurricanes defenseman Dougie Hamilton celebrates his goal in the third period to tie the game versus the Tampa Bay Lightning on Sunday, Oct. 6, 2019 in PNC Arena. Hamilton also had one assist against Tampa Bay. The Canes beat the Lightning 4-3 during overtime.

The Carolina Hurricanes won yet another comeback game in extra time as they defeated the Tampa Bay Lightning by a final score of 4-3.

The Canes (3-0-0) rallied from an early 3-1 deficit after the conclusion of the first period, to win the game 4-3 in overtime. Timely goals by Erik Haula and Dougie Hamilton on the power play helped push the Hurricanes to overtime where defenseman Jaccob Slavin won it.

"I think it just shows that the guys believe in each other already which is great," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "I think they understand how to play to be successful, they get our game and they trust it. Still, some things to shore up, but I like the effort, you just can't fault that."

Seeing a familiar face, the Hurricanes were matched up against former teammate goalie Curtis McElhinney who had helped guide Carolina back to the playoffs last season alongside current starting goaltender Petr Mrazek.

"He's a great goalie," said defenseman Dougie Hamilton on McElhinney. "We just got lucky to put a couple by him."

The Canes and McElhinney failed to agree to mutual terms on a new contract for the 36-year-old journeyman netminder and, instead, McElhinney decided to sign a two-year contract with the Tampa Bay Lightning worth an average annual value of \$1.2 million.

Now, the former touted tandem faced off against one another as each tried to secure the big two points for their teams, but despite a great effort from McElhinney, who made 40 saves, it was Mrazek's team that triumphed.

The Hurricanes started off great early in the first period. After ringing a shot off of the goal post, Carolina maintained control of the puck in the offensive zone resulting in a Brett Pesce shot from the blueline being redirected by Andrei Svechnikov past McElhinney.

The lead didn't last long, however, as Tampa was swift on the response. Tyler Johnson skated the puck to the top of the right circle and let go of a slapshot that cleanly beat Mrazek, while also being the first shot he faced, through no traffic.

Despite the Canes buzzing all around the net, a sudden shift in momentum brought on by the Lightning's top line turned

the tide of the game. Drawing an early penalty, Tampa Bay scored just seconds into its ensuing power play as a wrister from the point by Kevin Shattenkirk beat Mrazek after ping-ponging through traffic.

Carolina got a chance on the power play, but after generating no shots on goal, the Lightning promptly skated down into the Hurricanes zone. After trapping the puck in the zone for an extended period, Lightning captain Steven Stamkos caught a clearing attempt at the blue line, skated it down to the right circle and released a heavy wrister that found the back of the net.

The second period was a showcase for the Hurricanes resilience that had already completed two comeback victories on the season. Despite Tampa controlling a large portion of the neutral zone time and possession, they failed to register a shot in the entire period.

"In the first period we had too many turnovers and obviously that's their game, feeding off of those," said alternate captain Jaccob Slavin. "In the neutral zone or at our blue line, we had too many of those and once we eliminated those and started getting pucks in deep and behind their 'D' we let our forwards go to work and we put on our grind game."

Carolina took advantage of the Lightning's inability to get a shot off late in the period as they were awarded another power play after captain Jordan Staal attempted a power move to the net and was impeded by Bolt's defender Victor Hedman.

The power play came up big and the hero was none other than Erik Haula who scored his third goal in as many games for the Canes, jamming home the rebound left by Hamilton's slapshot.

Carolina came calling once again on the power play, this one in the third period and the hero this time was a member of the same power-play unit. On a blast from the point, Hamilton put his all into the slapper that cleanly found its way past two Tampa players and past McElhinney for the game-tying goal with around seven minutes left in the third period.

"We have good players out there in good spots, trying to get good chemistry," Hamilton said. "We practice a lot and it's hard to score in practice, but we've done well lately in the last couple of games so we just got to keep going and making sure we are doing the right thing."

The Lightning only managed to put up two shots in the third period after having none in the second and barely weathered the Hurricanes storm as the team kept pounding.

To make matters worse for the Bolts, they were assessed a penalty in the final minute of the third period which the



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Hurricanes did not score on in the 44 seconds remaining in regulation.

Heading to overtime, the Hurricanes had 1:16 of carryover power-play time that they could not capitalize on. However, the Canes didn't need the man advantage as Staal forced Nikita Kucherov off the puck in the Hurricanes zone, raced with the puck up the ice and fed Jaccob Slavin on the other side for the one-timer finish.

"[Assistant Coach Dean Chynoweth] has us working on our shot after practice," Slavin said on how the defensemen have been contributing offensively already this season.

"Obviously, we have a pretty skilled group of defensemen back there from top to bottom and all of us can skate so we are just trying to contribute anyway we can."

The victory marked the third straight extra-time comeback victory for the Canes, having beaten the Montreal Canadiens 4-3 in the shootout, the Washington Capitals 3-2 in overtime and now the Tampa Bay Lightning 4-3 in overtime.

"When you have to rely on everyone to have a good game to kind of dig in and come back, I mean it's not ideal," Brind'Amour said. "It's not how you want to draw it up, but the fact that everyone is contributing and giving it what they can, it's a good starter for us."

The Hurricanes' next opponent will be the Florida Panthers, as the team heads down south to see if they can win extend their winning streak to four games and maybe this time without going to extra time. The game is set for Tuesday, Oct. 8, with puck drop at 7 p.m.

TriangleSportsNetwork

Hurricanes outlast Lightning, Slavin snipes OT goal for 4-3 win

Carolina undefeated after first 3 games of the season

By Peter Koutroumpis

RALEIGH, N.C. – If you ask Rod Brind'Amour, the power play has been a difference-maker in vaulting the Carolina Hurricanes to an impressive three-game start.

While it was Jaccob Slavin's one-timer into the top corner that finished off the Tampa Bay Lightning 4-3 in overtime at PNC Arena on Sunday, it was the Hurricanes' man-up unit that put them into a position to succeed.

Trailing 3-1 after the first period, subsequent power play goals from Eric Haula and Dougie Hamilton pulled the teams even with 7:12 remaining in regulation time.

A turnover caused by captain Jordan Staal eventually delivered the assist that won the game in extra time.

"That might be the difference in the game right now, is we're gettin' a special teams goal here and there," Brind'Amour said.

"It gets you back in the game, right? That's the right time. Special teams can be huge. Kill a penalty at the right time – they had a chance to go up 4-1 and we killed that penalty and keeps you in the game. Obviously, gettin' the power play goal gets you right back in the game."

Haula on fire

Since recovering from a knee injury and missing 67 games last season, newly acquired forward Eric Haula has fit in nicely and ignited Carolina's offense, scoring in each of the team's first three games.

He was asked what it was about the attitude of this team that's gotten it off to such a good start.

"Resiliency – a lot of belief in the locker room," was how Haula described the Hurricanes ability to come from behind and claim a shootout win and back-to-back overtime wins.

"We know we're good. We just gotta put it together. When we play well, we're a good team."

Mrazek continues to shut it down

While not looking sharp on sniped goals from Tampa Bay's Tyler Myers, Kevin Shattenkirk, and Steven Stamkos on 11 shots to start the game, goaltender Petr Mrazek and the Canes defense shut the Lightning out in the second period and allowed only two more, 13 shots total for the game.

How did they do it?

"It starts with everybody battling in the faceoff dot, getting the puck and going from there," Haula stated.

"It's going good, we just gotta keep on grinding."

Defense wins games – at both ends

Usually keeping the puck out of your net leads to opportunity to score goals.

Against former Hurricanes keeper Curtis McElhinney who faced 44 shots, it was the defense that also scored as Brett Pesce, Dougie Hamilton, and Slavin all tallied markers on the night.

It made up for falling behind early.

"We gotta learn not to put ourselves in those holes," Slavin said.

"Play a stronger first two periods, so we don't have to rely on the third period to always be coming from behind. Definitely a confidence builder for our group and hopefully we continue on that path."



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Cautious optimism

As much as remaining undefeated and getting off to a good start is exhilarating, there are 79 games to go.

A sold out crowd on Thursday and 14,125 in attendance on Sunday have really enjoyed the enhanced game experience and seeing such closely contested match-ups only heightens expectations.

A word of caution.

"It's only three games – there's a lot of hockey left," Haula pointed out.

"I think the take out of this is that we've got a good team. We know how we should play and set that standard for each other, hold each other accountable up to that standard, and we'll be fine."

Notables: Carolina finished 2-5 on the power play, 4-23 (33.3%) overall...On the PK, the Hurricanes went 3-4, 11-13 (84.6%) overall...The Hurricanes have scored a power play goal in all three games so far and forward Teuvo Teravainen has assisted on all four extra-man markers...Haula is the sixth player in franchise history to score in each of the team's first three games and first to do so in his first year with the club.



Special Teams Success Snags Charlotte's First Win Of Season

By Nicholas Niedzielski

After a season-opening loss the night before in Hartford, the Checkers righted the ship in Springfield with a convincing 4-2 victory over the Thunderbirds.

As they did last night, the Checkers opened the scoring thanks to a power-play snipe from Morgan Geekie. Unlike last night, they were able to build off that early momentum, as Steven Lorentz launched a one-timer from the right circle later in the frame to give the visitors a 2-0 lead heading into the first intermission.

Newcomer Anthony Louis extended the Charlotte lead early on in the middle frame, redirecting a slick feed from Janne Kuokkanen past an outstretched Thunderbirds netminder. The home side answer late in the period to show some life and head into the final frame down by two.

Springfield pushed hard in the third, outshooting Charlotte 16-7, and finally broke through in the waning minutes of regulation to pull within one with less than three to play. Their comeback attempt would be hampered by a penalty shortly after, however, and a nice move from Julien Gauthier provided the final nail in Springfield's coffin, sealing the Checkers' first win of the new season.

NOTES

Anton Forsberg made his Charlotte debut and stopped 33 of the 35 shots he faced en route to a win ... Roland McKeown set a career high with three assists on the night ... Gauthier has now lit the lamp in two straight games ... Brian Gibbons notched an assist for the second straight game ... Morgan Geekie and Dave Gust each extended their point streaks to two games ... Louis scored his first goal in a Charlotte sweater ... Jake Bean recorded his first multi-assist game of the season ... The Checkers recorded a power-play goal for the second straight game and are now 3-for-6 on the season ... The Checkers were perfect of the penalty kill and have now killed nine straight penalties dating back to Saturday in Hartford ... Kyle Wood made his Checkers debut ... Stelio Mattheos, Spencer Smallman and Max McCormick all missed the game due to injury ... Ryan Horvat, Cedric Lacroix, Alex Lintuniemi, Reid McNeill, Cavan Fitzgerald and Derek Sheppard were all healthy extras

UP NEXT

The Checkers now return to Charlotte to prepare for their home opener on Friday against Bridgeport, which will include a Calder Cup Champs banner raising and a free replica banner giveaway.



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Girl gets prosthetic leg signed by Carolina Hurricanes' James Reimer

Rosie, a 9-year-old sled hockey player, met her favorite goaltender Sunday night after the Hurricanes big win against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

By Bridget Condon

RALEIGH, N.C. (WTVD) -- Sunday night after the Carolina Hurricanes' 4-3 overtime victory against the Tampa Bay Lightning, a group of fans waited outside the hallway to meet some of the players.

One of those fans, Rosie, is a 9-year-old sled hockey player herself.

When meeting Hurricanes' new goaltender, James Reimer, Rosie showed no fear.

"Where can I sign for you?" Reimer asked Rosie.

"Maybe my leg?" she replied.

Rosie lifted her pants leg up to reveal her new prosthetic leg and show off her supergirl hip where Reimer signed.

The prosthetic leg sure doesn't stop Rosie, her confidence quickly overtook the conversation and even Reimer himself was taken back by the bravery of the young fan.

Tampa Bay Times

tampabay.com

Steven Stamkos rips Lightning after OT loss to Hurricanes

"Unless we change things, it's going to be a really, really, really long year," the captain says.

By Diana C. Nearhos

RALEIGH, N.C. — The Lightning couldn't find the net. That's not a euphemism to say they couldn't score. The Lightning couldn't get a shot.

This wasn't just for a few minutes, either. Tampa Bay did not put a shot on net for the entire second period of a 4-3 overtime loss to the Hurricanes on Sunday.

To be exact, the Lightning went 25 minutes, 52 seconds between Steven Stamkos' goal at 17:44 of the first period and a shot by him early in the third. That's not a winning recipe.

Stamkos, with an eye on last season's playoff exit, ripped into the team for habits it can't seem to break.

"We just continue to be the freewheeling team that thinks we can just come into games and win because we're skilled," Stamkos said. "We keep falling back into the same old bad

habits that we've been doing, that cost us the season we had last year.

"Unless we change things, it's going to be a really, really, really long year."

Tampa Bay (1-1-1) started training camp talking about the need to be more responsible defensively and to rely less on its goaltending. They did neither of those things Sunday.

Why couldn't the Lightning put shots on net? Because they didn't have the puck. The Hurricanes dominated possession so much that on their way to putting 44 shots on goal in the game, they missed more shots (21) than the Lightning put on net, 13.

The Lightning didn't exactly light up the net in the first period, but they were productive, with three goals on 11 shots. Then in their shotless span, they went from being in relative control of the game leading 3-1 to leading 3-2 and being caught in an offensive spiral.

And then it got worse. The Lightning put only two shots on net in the third period while giving up that narrow lead on Carolina's second power-play goal of the game at 12:48.



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The Lightning didn't put on shot on net in overtime while Carolina added three to its total, including the goal to win it all, by Jacob Slavin 1:53 in.

The Lightning ended up leaving Curtis McElhinney out to dry against his former team. McElhinney, making his Lightning debut, made save after save, doing his best to keep them in it.

The four goals he gave up don't seem like that many given the shot total he faced. The Lightning never gave him a chance to catch his breath by not sustaining pressure in the other end. Coach Jon Cooper said McElhinney was the only player to "show up" in the latter two periods.

"Our goaltender was outstanding," Stamkos said, "and I feel bad for him that he had that effort and we had the effort we had."

Tyler Johnson agreed with Stamkos that this is a mental issue for the Lightning.

"We have skill, but you don't always need to use that skill," he said. "We try to make those cute plays. We try to make almost Globetrotter plays. In reality, that doesn't win games."

He said the solution is for the Lightning to simplify their game. They have gotten away from basics and the Hurricanes beat them playing a simple game.

"We do it to ourselves," Stamkos said.

As Stamkos continued on about the Lightning's issues, he stopped himself and said the good news is this was only the third game of the season. There's plenty of time for the Lightning to change things.

Cooper said a team has two or three dud games a year and maybe the lesson for the Lightning is something about taking one step backward to take two steps forward.

Stamkos is about ready to be done learning these lessons, though.

"Everyone is sick of talking about it and not doing it," he said. "Let's go do it."

TODAY'S LINKS

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SportScan

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

1156159 Carolina Hurricanes

Hurricanes rally for the third time in a row, beat Lightning in overtime

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

RALEIGH—Curtis McElhinney was a 20-game winner for the Carolina Hurricanes last season. On Sunday, the veteran goalie wanted to hand them their first loss of this season.

But the Canes wouldn't oblige. Not this group. Jaccob Slavin's goal at 1:53 of overtime gave the Canes, and goalie Petr Mrazek, a 4-3 comeback win over Tampa Bay and McElhinney.

For the third consecutive game, the Canes trailed in the third period. For the third game in a row, they tied the score, this time on Dougie Hamilton's power-play strike that made it a 3-3 game. For a third straight game, it went to overtime.

The Canes went on a power play with 44.7 seconds left in regulation when Nino Niederreiter drew an interference penalty from Tampa Bay's Kevin Shattenkirk. The power-play time extended into overtime, with the Canes having a four-on-three advantage, but Tampa Bay killed it off.

It was soon back to three-on-three, and Slavin beat McElhinney, who signed as a free agent with the Lightning in July after spending a memorable 2018-19 season with the Canes. Jordan Staal first separated the Lightning's Nikita Kucherov from the puck along the boards, then passed to Slavin on a two-on-one -- Victor Hedman the defender -- for the winner.

"We've got a resilient group in here," Slavin said. "We've got to learn not to put ourselves in those holes and, obviously, play a stronger first two periods so we don't have to rely on that third period and always be coming from behind. But it's definitely a confidence-builder for the group, and we hope we can continue on that path."

Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour said the Canes could not have made the playoffs last season without McElhinney, claimed off waivers by Carolina just before the season began after Scott Darling was injured.

"He came at the right time (and) was a huge part of it," Brind'Amour said before the game, adding, "Hopefully, he'll have one of the only bad games I've seen him play."

McElhinney, making his first start for Tampa Bay, was terrific in the first period for the Lightning (1-1-1), which led 3-1. But Tampa Bay did not have a shot on goal in the second period, just two in the third and none in the OT, being outshot 44-13 in the game by the Canes.

"They're playing good hockey," McElhinney said. "I mean, they worked tonight, and they earned that game. They should be the team that's coming away with the two points.

"I think we had some spurts about five to seven minutes for a couple periods that were good, but for the most part it just seemed to be like we

were overwhelmed with Carolina's offense and the way they just kind of hound you with the puck."

The Canes' schedule, from the start, was demanding: Montreal, at Washington, Tampa Bay. That meant facing Habs goalie Carey Price in the opener, taking on the Capitals in their home opener, then returning to Raleigh to take on arguably the best team in hockey.

But the Canes rallied and beat Montreal in a shootout, Hamilton with the only shootout goal. They trailed the Caps 2-0 on Saturday but tied the score in the third on goals by Haula and Slavin and won in overtime on Jake Gardiner's goal. Now they're 3-0.

"It shows that we believe in each other already, which is great, and I think they understand how to play to be successful," Brind'Amour said.

Tyler Johnson, Shattenkirk and Steven Stamkos scored for the Lightning in the first period as Tampa Bay took a 3-1 lead. But Tampa Bay coach Jon Cooper: "Our game went east-west instead of north-south."

Brett Pesce scored for the Canes early in the first period on a shot that hit a Tampa Bay defender, and Erik Haula — that man again — scored on a second-period power play.

Haula now has three goals in his first three games with the Hurricanes. He's the sixth player in franchise history to score in each of his first three games and first since Eric Staal in 2005-06.

The Canes killed off all six penalties in the win over the Caps. But Shattenkirk winged a shot through traffic that got past Mrazek in the first.

Pesce scored 1:14 into the game but McElhinney was rock solid the rest of the period, turning back tough shots by Warren Foegele, Niederreiter and Haula in the second. But the Canes broke through on a power play as Haula again got in front of the crease, banging in the rebound of a Hamilton shot.

Anyone looking at the analytics — but not the score — would have been surprised after the first and second periods. Consider that the Canes had 36 total shot attempts to Tampa Bay's 18 in the first, and 16 scoring chances to the Lightning's eight. The Canes then outshot Tampa Bay 17-0 in the second period, yet trailed 3-2.

It was the first time the Canes had held a team without a shot in the period since February 2004, in a game against Colorado.

Both teams were playing their third game in four days and completing a back-to-back. Tampa Bay had split its first two games, both against the Florida Panthers, losing 4-3 on Saturday.

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1156160 Carolina Hurricanes

Canes' newcomers go overtime to bond with teammates

BY CHIP ALEXANDER



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 7, 2019

WASHINGTON-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.

News Observer LOADED: 10.07.2019

1156193 New York Islanders

Thomas Greiss makes 35 saves to lead Islanders past the Winnipeg Jets

By ALLAN KREDA

ASSOCIATED PRESS |

OCT 07, 2019 | 1:28 AM

UNIONDALE, N.Y. — The New York Islanders relied heavily on Thomas Greiss last season, and their invariably calm netminder picked up right he where he left off.

Greiss made 35 saves and Josh Bailey, Brock Nelson and Anders Lee scored second-period goals to the lead the Islanders past the Winnipeg Jets 4-1 Sunday night.

It was the first win of the season for the Islanders, who lost their home opener 2-1 to Washington on Friday.

"It's always good to get the first win out of the way," said the 33-year-old Greiss, who won 23 games last season with a career-best 2.27 goals against average while splitting time with Robin Lehner. "The guys did their part and I did mine."

New York Islanders goaltender Thomas Greiss warms up for the team's NHL hockey game against the Winnipeg Jets.

The Jets lost for the second time in three games in the New York area to start their season. Winnipeg lost 6-4 to the Rangers in their season opener Thursday, and beat the New Jersey Devils 5-4 in a shootout Friday. The Jets are opening the season on a four-game trip that wraps up Tuesday in Pittsburgh.

After a scoreless first period, Bailey put the Islanders on the board, tipping in a power-play goal at 1:51 of the second. Anthony Beauvillier and Devon Toews picked up assists.

It was the third straight game the Jets had allowed the opening goal.

Nelson made it 2-0 at 4:38, sending a shot past goaltender Laurent Brossoit, who started his second straight game and finished with 29 saves. Bailey and defenseman Ryan Pulock assisted on the goal.

Lee stretched the Islanders' lead to 3-0 at 15:55 with his first goal of the season, assisted by Scott Mayfield and Jordan Eberle.



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"It was a good rebound game for us," said Lee, the team captain who signed a new seven-year \$49 million contract in July. "We were more crisp and Greiss played a great game for us."

[More Sports] Islanders season opener spoiled by Capitals »

The game before a crowd of 9,923 was originally scheduled to be played at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, but was moved to Nassau Coliseum last month. It was the first time in the building's history — which dates to 1972 — the Islanders played a Sunday night home game at the Coliseum. They only twice had played Sunday afternoon games on Long Island.

Patrik Laine put the Jets on the board at 17:06 of the second, snapping a shot past Greiss for his first goal of the season. The Islanders were one of two teams the 21-year-old Laine hadn't scored against. Columbus remains the other.

Blake Wheeler and defenseman Anthony Bitetto, a Long Island native, were credited with assists on Laine's goal.

Beauvillier scored for the Islanders at 1:25 of the third, with assists going to Leo Komarov and Derrick Brassard, his first point as a member of the Islanders.

The Jets outshot the Islanders 15-9 in the opening period. The Islanders dominated the second period with a 19-9 advantage in shots.

"They've got a lot of guys who can shoot. They are a good team," Islanders coach Barry Trotz said of the Jets. "Greiss was really solid."

Brossoit played well despite the loss. His best early save came when he stopped Komarov on a short-handed breakaway at 13:10 of the first. Brossoit also made two short-handed saves on Nelson in the same sequence midway through the second.

"He was fantastic. When you play as well as he played, you deserve a better number," Jets coach Paul Maurice said. "He's been like that all through camp. He made some great saves and gave us a chance to hang around."

The Islanders started Greiss in goal after newcomer Semyon Varlamov played in the opening loss to Washington on Friday.

Greiss shared the William M. Jennings Trophy with Lehner last season when the Islanders allowed the fewest goals in the league.

"We didn't give them too much room," added Greiss, who stopped all 12 shots he faced in the third period to cement the victory. "We played hard."

NOTES

The Islanders scratched forwards Tom Kuhnhackl and Ross Johnston and rookie defenseman Noah Dobson, who has yet to make his NHL debut. ... The teams meet again Oct. 17 in Winnipeg. ... Winnipeg scratched forwards Bryan Little and David Gustafsson and defenseman Josh Morrissey, who sustained an upper body injury during warmups. ... Islanders coach Barry Trotz passed Hall of Famer Al Arbour on the all-time games-coached list with 1,608, third-most in league history.

New York Daily News LOADED: 10.07.2019

1156194 New York Islanders

Islanders use balanced attack to roll past Jets

By Associated Press October 6, 2019 | 10:41PM

The Islanders relied heavily on Thomas Greiss last season, and their invariably calm netminder picked up right where he left off.

Greiss made 35 saves and Josh Bailey, Brock Nelson and Anders Lee scored second-period goals to lead the Islanders past the Jets 4-1 Sunday night at Nassau Coliseum.

It was the first win of the season for the Islanders, who lost their home opener 2-1 to Washington on Friday.

"It's always good to get the first win out of the way," said the 33-year-old Greiss, who won 23 games last season with a career-best 2.27 goals-against average while splitting time with Robin Lehner. "The guys did their part and I did mine."

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After a scoreless first period, Bailey put the Islanders on the board, tipping in a power-play goal at 1:51 of the second. It was the third straight game the Jets had allowed the opening goal.

Nelson made it 2-0 at 4:38, sending a shot past goaltender Laurent Brossoit, who started his second straight game and finished with 29 saves.

Lee stretched the Islanders' lead to 3-0 at 15:55 with his first goal of the season.

"It was a good rebound game for us," said Lee, the team captain who signed a new seven-year \$49 million contract in July. "We were more crisp and Greiss played a great game for us."

The game before a crowd of 9,923 was originally scheduled to be played at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, but was moved to Nassau Coliseum last month. It was the first time in the building's history — which dates to 1972 — the Islanders played a Sunday night home game at the Coliseum. They only twice had played Sunday afternoon games on Long Island.

New York Post LOADED: 10.07.2019

1156195 New York Islanders

Islanders bounce back with 4-1 win over Winnipeg at Nassau Coliseum

By Andrew Gross

Updated October 7, 2019 2:18 AM

The sound defensive structure and the solid goaltending are familiar to the Islanders under Barry Trotz. What the team needs consistently this season is more of a dangerous, quick-strike offense.

"Everyone talks about scoring for us, but we have a lot of weapons on the team," center Brock Nelson said. "When we're moving, playing good systems, playing tight defense, we're going to get chances. It's just up to us to capitalize on them."

Sunday night's 4-1 win over the Winnipeg Jets before 9,923 at NYCB Live's Nassau Coliseum showed how effective the Islanders can be if they get all three, which they did in the last two periods.

Josh Bailey and Anthony Beauvillier each had a goal and an assist, and 10 Islanders had at least one point.

The Islanders were 21st in the NHL last season with 228 goals and their power play ranked 29th, but they finished second in the Metropolitan Division with 103 points and reached the second round of the playoffs.

"We had success last year just grinding it out, putting pucks deep and using our forecheckers' speed," said Beauvillier, whose second-effort



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goal at the crease, backhanding a loose puck under the crossbar, restored the Islanders' three-goal lead at 1:25 of the third period. "We just have to bear down on our chances and use our speed to get pucks deep. That's how we're going to have success."

Thomas Greiss made 35 saves after Semyon Varlamov started Friday's 2-1 loss to the Capitals at the Coliseum in the season opener. Laurent Brossoit (29 saves) kept the Jets in the game despite the Islanders' three-goal second period. It easily was their best so far, and it could have yielded more.

"I thought the whole second period, we looked good, we looked fast, we made good line changes," Trotz said. "You're getting production throughout the lineup. Everybody feels they've got a role. I'm not afraid to play one through four against anybody."

The Islanders' attack again looked rusty in the first period, as in much of Friday's loss. Few dangerous chances were created in the offensive zone and the Isles often had trouble getting the puck past the red line.

But the Islanders started the second period on the power play after defenseman Carl Dahlstrom interfered with Beauvillier at 19:57 of the first period. Beauvillier's feed set up Bailey's redirection in the low slot for a 1-0 lead at 1:51 of the second period and Bailey found Nelson in the right circle at 4:38 as Nelson snapped a shot under the crossbar to make it 2-0. Defenseman Scott Mayfield's blue-line shot went in off Anders Lee's skate as the Isles went up 3-0 at 15:55. Brossoit did make back-to-back pad saves on Nelson's shorthanded breakaway at 11:15.

Patrik Laine beat Greiss high to the short side from the right circle off the rush to bring the Jets — who rallied from a four-goal deficit in Friday's 5-4 shootout win over the Devils — within 3-1 at 17:06 of the second.

Notes & quotes: Trotz was recognized during a first-period stoppage for passing Islanders Hall of Famer Al Arbour by coaching his 1,608th game, moving him into third place on the NHL's all-time list behind Scotty Bowman (2,141) and the Panthers' Joel Quenneville (1,638). "It's sort of cool I did it with the Islanders," said Trotz, who also has coached the Predators and Capitals. "I have so much respect for Al." . . . Defenseman Josh Morrissey was a late scratch for the Jets after suffering an upper-body injury in warm-ups . . . Island Park's Anthony Bitetto had an assist on Laine's goal.

Newsday LOADED: LOADED: 10.07.2019

1156167 Columbus Blue Jackets

Columbus Blue Jackets 3-2-1 breakdown vs. Penguins

Brian Hedger The Columbus Dispatch

PITTSBURGH — It was fine starting out.

The Blue Jackets took a couple of more ill-advised penalties in the first period Saturday night at PPG Paints Arena, but they were locked in a 0-0 tie with the Pittsburgh Penguins after 20 minutes.

Then?

Well, let's allow rookie goalie Elvis Merzlikins to begin the explanation of what happened next.

"I think in the first period, I played well," he said, referring to his impressive 10-for-10 performance in the opening period. "I just had ... blackout in the second."

He wasn't the only one.

As Merzlikins struggled to stop pucks in the period, allowing five of the seven goals he was charged with in the Jackets' 7-2 loss, the Blue Jackets didn't do him many favors — losing their composure and

allowing a talented team to pick them apart with a series of odd-man rushes.

"When you open yourselves up, that's what happens against a team like that," captain Nick Foligno said. "We got a lot of good minutes in there. It's weird to say that, but we did some good things. It's just the patience I'm talking about. It's understanding how we need to play and being OK with a 1-0 game or a 0-0 game for 59 minutes, if it has to be that, and sticking with it."

They didn't stick with it, got pasted because of it and now have their backs to the wall with an 0-2-0 record with the Buffalo Sabres (2-0-0) dropping by for a visit Monday.

There is no time for the Blue Jackets to wallow in this, but there is enough time to take a closer look at what happened here with a 3-2-1 breakdown ... three takeaways, two questions and one more thing for good measure.

Three takeaways

1) Growing pains

It was apparent from the first goal he allowed in the Traverse City Prospects Tournament prior to the start of training camp. Merzlikins has a long way to go to make the full adjustment to not only playing in smaller rinks but against much better shooters.

The Blue Jackets went out of their way to say the blowout loss to the Penguins wasn't pinned on their rookie goalie, and they're right to an extent, but Merzlikins — who allowed 10 goals in three preseason appearances (two starts) — allowed a number of goals that could've been stopped.

The biggest problem areas, especially in this game, appear to be shots aimed over the glove and at the spaces between his arms and torso. Merzlikins talked openly about his rough night and said he will continue to put in hard work to improve.

Coach John Tortorella, meanwhile, had a tough choice to make after the five-goal second period — give the rookie a mercy pull or let him keep fighting in the third.

"I thought about it all through the intermission, but I think I'm beginning to understand him," Tortorella said. "He's a great competitor. He's a really good kid. He wants to do well. I didn't talk to him. I just thought the best decision was to let him keep on trying to play ... it's a lesson for him, which I think is going to help him in the long run."

2) Teachable moments

After a 7-2 blowout loss, there were surely those who expected Tortorella to be fuming in his postgame news conference. He was just the opposite, though, keeping a calm demeanor while explaining that games like this are teaching opportunities for teams like his — which have a lot of youth and inexperience on the roster.

"We knew there were going to be lessons like this for us, and the most important thing now is how we handle it," he said. "It's an opportunity for us, right away at the beginning of this year, to teach about patience, to teach about how we have to play — and hopefully we'll go about it the right way."

3) The challenge within

The guy who was seething afterward was Pierre-Luc Dubois, who uttered some insightful words through gritted teeth in his postgame interview.

He is tired of talking about former teammates Sergei Bobrovsky and Artemi Panarin leaving as free agents, tired of hearing there isn't enough talent left behind to win games and tired of what he sees as a team that needs a shot of self-esteem.

"I mean, it's not a shock," Dubois said of the Jackets' meltdown in the second. "We just have to have that mindset that we're a good team. We talk about, every day, we talk about ... losing Bob, losing Bread. We're a



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(expletive) good team. We've just got to believe in it, you know? It's frustrating getting out there and, it's kind of like, those are the words that we tell ourselves, but we have a good team. We have good players."

He wasn't finished.

"I think it's enough talking about who we lost," he said. "It happened. Who cares? We're a team here. We have good players. I mean, we lose some guys ... everybody lose(s) some guys at some point. We've just got to believe in our team, you know?"

Two questions

1) What's with the penalties?

The Blue Jackets were only short-handed 200 times last season, which was the lowest number in the NHL. This season, they have already been penalized 11 times in the first two games combined and have been short-handed nine times — allowing three power-play goals.

That's a 66.7 percent success rate killing penalties, which is one reason the first two games turned out the way they did. Aside from the goals, taking that many penalties against teams like the Maple Leafs and Penguins is asking for trouble.

That's a situation that needs to be addressed and it's fair to wonder why the Jackets are parading to the penalty box so much now.

2) Did anything good happen?

Captain Nick Foligno even surprised himself when the words came out of his mouth after the game, but nonetheless he backed them up.

"We got a lot of good minutes in there," he said. "It's weird to say that, but we did some good things."

Tortorella agreed.

"I thought our first 25 to 30 minutes or so, I thought we were fast," he said. "I thought we were right there."

Then, the wheels came off. All of them. All at the same time, followed by the hood, the doors and even the windshield wipers.

Lost in the spiral downward, there were a few positives for the Blue Jackets to take back to Columbus. Zach Werenski, for instance, scored his first goal of the season by putting himself in a good spot to score off a rebound from the right circle — and Gus Nyquist scored his first goal in a Blue Jackets uniform, after the game was a washout.

There was also David Savard's desperation save on a loose puck in the crease, along with another one by Seth Jones to prevent a goal. There were some good things in this game, but you had to look a lot closer than the night before against Toronto.

One more thing to know

Dubois, who gave Sidney Crosby a tap with a crosscheck, was asked what led to his fight with the Penguins captain — whom he admired as a kid while Crosby starred in the Quebec Major Junior League.

"I don't know," Dubois said. "He was a hockey player. He just asked me if I wanted to go and nothing was going on in the game, so I figured why not."

Columbus Dispatch LOADED: 10.07.2019

1156231 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Beyond Headlines: Jets not rushing Byfuglien into decision on future

Chris Johnston | October 6, 2019, 2:05 PM

'Beyond Headlines' is a deeper dive into some of the stories — and even some that weren't — discussed each week on Hockey Night in Canada's 'Headlines' segment.

We are not expecting a quick resolution to the uncertain Dustin Byfuglien situation.

That's important to keep in mind as the focus on his status heightens with each day the Winnipeg Jets go without knowing whether he'll continue his NHL career or not.

Predicting what Byfuglien will do is a fool's errand, as my colleague Elliotte Friedman discussed on "Headlines." The decision is entirely his and there's no way to know exactly what is running through his mind at any given moment.

Or even if seeing the Jets start playing meaningful games might compel Byfuglien to return to the ice.

This is a unique situation.

The 34-year-old defenceman is officially considered "suspended without pay" while he ponders his future and is forfeiting more than \$43,000 in salary for every day he's off the roster.

But there's much more to life than money and Byfuglien has been well-compensated while playing more than 900 NHL games between the regular season and playoffs. He's also dealt with a fair share of ailments over the years, including a bothersome ankle issue that cost him 30 games last season.

The Jets have been supportive and patient while Big Buff decides what to do. They'd obviously love to have him back, but are willing to let him work through his own process. And technically he can wait until the Feb. 24 trade deadline before being activated and still remain eligible for the playoffs.

This is how Winnipeg's depleted blue line has looked without Byfuglien and the injured Sami Niku:

Morrissey-Kulikov

Heinola-Pionk

Bitetto-Poolman

They still have a talented group of forwards and managed a thrilling four-goal comeback victory over the New Jersey Devils on Friday night.

It was the kind of win that could build some confidence and identity in a team. Consider this: There was only one four-goal comeback in the NHL all of last season, according to Sportsnet Stats.

FANTASY POOL ALERT!

Play the Sportsnet Fantasy Hockey Pool presented by RAM for your chance to drive away with a 2020 RAM 1500 Sport or win cash prizes! It's FREE and easy to play!

KATHRYN KRAFT IN KANATA

We live in dangerous times.

There is not much to be gained from trying to explore every rumour floating around social media, but the one that purported to connect New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft to the Ottawa Senators on Saturday afternoon was simply too juicy to ignore.

This tweet containing a snapchat post from "Kathryn Kraft" generated immediate buzz:

Kathryn Kraft (Robert Kraft's granddaughter) posted this on Snapchat today....Take a look at the emojis. Please buy the team. @ian_mendes @creecher1200 @TSNSimmer pic.twitter.com/IBV7gScZm4

— #SensArmy (@SensDiehardz) October 5, 2019



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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The NHL's reaction was one of complete surprise. Think something along the lines of: This has never even been whispered about in our offices, let alone explored, considered or pursued.

That was the information we used to debunk the Kraft connection on "Headlines."

Then a response for comment from the New England Patriots public relations department made Saturday was returned on Sunday morning: Robert Kraft doesn't even have a granddaughter named Kathryn, according to a spokesperson with the NFL team.

Cringe emoji.

CBA UPDATE

First, the encouraging news: The NHL and NHL Players' Association have continued regular CBA bargaining talks with a series of conference calls since the union declined its option to bring an early termination to the current agreement on Sept. 16.

Some wondered if a locked-in September 2022 expiry date might cool talks following a busy summer. Not so.

Still, it's not yet clear where this is headed.

There are some shared business reasons why the sides would love to hammer out an early extension in the coming months — giving Seattle a clean runway to enter the league, determining how the windfall from a new U.S. national TV deal will impact the salary cap/player escrow payments and establishing a clear international calendar of events, among them.

Olympic participation remains a massive roadblock. That was reinforced by this quote from deputy commissioner Bill Daly to NHL.com on Friday: "I'll say, because I think I need to say, from the NHL owners' perspective, Olympic participation is not seen as something that's either essential or even useful to our business. It's highly disruptive to our season, puts our players in jeopardy of injury with no financial benefit to the NHL or the clubs."

The players' interest in best-on-best competition remains strong. However, they are only believed to want another World Cup if it is part of a larger plan that includes an Olympic tournament.

That's going to be tricky. It would require the NHL not only to change its stance, but also conduct separate negotiations with the IOC on travel, insurance and hospitality payments.

There's not much time to sort through these issues.

The 2022 Beijing Games are closer than they may appear.

LOYAL JACKETS

The Columbus Blue Jackets are carrying around a chip on their shoulders bigger than the combined size of Sergei Bobrovsky and Artemi Panarin's new contracts.

It was certainly no coincidence that they splashed the word "LOYALTY" across the Nationwide Arena scoreboard before Friday's home opener while backing their hype video with Kendrick Lamar's song "DNA."

"I got, I got, I got, I got

Loyalty, got royalty..."

Not only did Bobrovsky and Panarin depart in free agency, they saw trade deadline acquisition Matt Duchene and former president John Davidson jump ship as well.

That's left behind some question marks in Columbus, particularly with the unproven goaltending duo of Joonas Korpisalo and Elvis Merzlikins, who've been burned for 11 goals against in two games.

But it would be unwise to overlook the Jackets entirely.

The "us against the world" mentality would seem to play right into coach John Tortorella's hands. This a group with talented players and plenty of motivation.

PITCHING PANARIN

Officially, the New York Rangers started selling Panarin on the idea of calling Madison Square Garden home in the days leading up to free agency.

Unofficially, Mika Zibanejad planted the bug a little sooner than that.

"I was talking to him on the ice our last home game against Columbus last year," Zibanejad told Sportsnet. "I told him 'You know you're always welcome next year.' I'm like 'I'll see next year.'"

"I was just trying to get to him a little bit and he was just laughing."

Even if the playful chiding was long forgotten by the time Panarin signed an \$81.5-million, seven-year deal with the Rangers, it looks prescient now. Zibanejad is skating between Panarin and Pavel Buchnevich on New York's top line and has amassed a league-best eight points through two games.

And Zibanejad, coming off a career-best season, is a big fan of his new left-winger.

"He's so slippery. He doesn't have a pattern to him," said Zibanejad. "You think he's going to do something and he wants you to think that and then he does something completely different that you haven't really counted on."

"He's so dangerous with the puck. I want to check his heart rate when he has the puck and he's in a stressful situation because it feels like it doesn't go up at all."

The Swede didn't get any advanced heads-up on July 1 that Panarin chose the Rangers from a group of suitors that included the Islanders, Blue Jackets and Panthers.

"I was just updating my phone the whole time and then saw that we signed him. I'm like 'Thank God, we got him,'" said Zibanejad. "Not only because he's a great player and we want him on our team, the teams that were rumoured [to be chasing him] we play against them four times a year and I don't want that."

"I've had enough of playing against him."

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

Iain MacIntyre | 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.



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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 Canuck 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.

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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



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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 Kasper 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."

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

Luke Fox | October 5, 2019, 10:32 PM

TORONTO — Mike Babcock sees no use in talking to Kasper 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 seasaw 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.

In a testament to how rare this punishment is, the officials needed to convene quite a while, uncertain if any Canadian could take the penalty shot or if it had to be Petry. The delay threw Hutchinson for a bit of a loop.

"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."

#Habs defeat the Leafs after facing a 3-goal deficit for the first time since January 27, 1990

— Sportsnet Stats (@SNstats) October 6, 2019

The unravelling continued. Phillip Danault scored next to give the visitors a lead.

For the Habs, four unanswered goals in under 10 minutes.

For the Leafs, a crack in composure, a failure to stomp the throat.

"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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FANTASY POOL ALERT!

Play the Sportsnet Fantasy Hockey Pool presented by RAM for your chance to drive away with a 2020 RAM 1500 Sport or win cash prizes! It's FREE and easy to play!

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."

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Sportsnet.ca / What would Morgan Rielly do?: How to become a Maple Leafs leader

by Chris Johnston

Labour Day was just 96 hours off and Morgan Rielly was putting in his last weight-room session of the summer in Burnaby, B.C. He had arrived at Fortius Sports not long after dawn and before other NHL and minor-league clientele checked in. "Normally I come a little later but I wanted to beat traffic coming from West Van," he said. "And to get it over with. I've got a flight this afternoon."

Before his scheduled exertions, he stretched out in the gym next to the weight room. A basketball was sitting at courtside but he didn't pick it up. Occasionally he has this summer. His trainer, Molly O'Brien, had the video right on an iPhone: Rielly picking up a ball and gliding in for an uncontested layup — or at least what looked at first like it would be a lay-up. With seemingly no strain, the Leafs defenceman had the ball above the rim and threw it down for an authoritative dunk. Some who get up as high are shorter, and some who flush it are thicker, but no one listed at six-foot-one and 220 pounds, should make it look that easy, especially if he gave up the game in grade school. Says O'Brien: "Morgan could probably have played almost any game he chose. He has amazing sprint speed for his size. I've always thought he could have switched over to football and been a star."

Over the next 75 minutes, Rielly worked his way through a schedule of rapid-fire reps with just the barest of pauses between sets. Trainers and assistants gave him a few prompts but no cheerleading was really necessary — it would only waste precious oxygen.

When Rielly emerged from the dressing room, he looked more refreshed than stressed. If you arrived late, you would have thought that he was

just arriving, not already done for the day and the summer. He said goodbye to the staff in the gym and the trainers he'd worked with. He'd be flying east on Labour Day, to Toronto.

This afternoon, though, he was going to fly in a different direction, up to Savary Island — a 40-minute helicopter ride; no time for the ferry. There he'd join his parents, Andy and Shirley, who had already checked into a friend's place.

The schedule meant a lot of packing and unpacking and repacking and time in the air would take up the last days of Rielly's summer, but he wasn't about to leave for Toronto a few days early. Every year it's the same, squeezing out as much time as he can in his hometown. "I guess there are a lot of places I could go in the off-season," Rielly said over a plate of eggs and sausage in the gym's cafeteria. "I just want to decompress and I feel the difference when I'm back here, literally when the plane touches down. That's one of the best feelings I know. I'm not stressed here. It's my comfort zone. I act differently between the two places, Toronto and Vancouver. The pace of life is different here — maybe it has something to do with the Leafs' season but that's only one of the things in the mix."

"The main reason I come back here, though, is family. We're close. I spend a lot of time with my parents. We're a small family but we're really close and I think it's important to spend time together."

In fact, Rielly's parents had dinner at his house two nights before. When he became a home-owner after signing his second contract, he bought a place just 10 minutes from where he grew up and from his brother Connor's place. He likes the simplicity and continuity. He's single, has no obligations over the summer beyond preparations for the winter. He can determine what he wants to do and when and where he wants to do it. He's going to put in the work at the gym, going to skate with a regular cast that comes out, going to see some friends who go back all the way to grade school, going to rinse and repeat as he resets. The irony is plain: He had to go away to become a player at all; has had to adapt to another city far from his comfort zone to become an elite player; and it seems likely that pattern will hold over the course of his adult life — someone who, at a glance anyway, passes for a homebody will always find himself pulled from home.

The cycles of life move fast in sports. Morgan Rielly, not even remotely venerable at 25, is the Toronto Maple Leafs' longest-standing figure. Not the oldest in the lineup — Rielly was going into Grade 2 when Jason Spezza first went to an NHL training camp in Ottawa; he was wondering where he'd get picked in the WHL draft when John Tavares was anointed as the saviour of the New York Islanders. Both Spezza and Tavares grew up in the GTA and know the market. Still, Rielly has seen more of it and the league from the vantage point of the Leafs dressing room. He grew up with the team. He went from boy to man in the crucible on Bay Street.

Conversations among fans often focus on whose team the Leafs are these days. The likely candidates are, in no certain order, Auston Matthews, John Tavares, Mike Babcock, Mitch Marner, Kyle Dubas and MLSE. Rielly predates the players, the coach and the exec as well as ownership — yes, when Rielly was drafted, the team was still owned by the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan.

Coming into training camp, chatter centred around the captain's 'C' — who should wear the history-freighted letter. Would it raise Matthews's sublime game or would the team be best served in messaging by Tavares, the respected veteran with an unsurpassed work ethic? Contrarians threw Rielly's name into the mix, making the case that leadership is driven by more than skills or stats or dollar figures. Rielly did wear an 'A' last year and in recent seasons when reporters went looking after a tough loss, he always stepped in front of the cameras and mics and notepads, and never took refuge in the trainer's room. "Some guys don't like it and sometimes I don't know why anyone would be interested in what I have to say, but I accept it as part of the job," he says.

The Leafs' decision to name Tavares captain caught no one by surprise. "When John came last year, the chemistry in the room changed," Rielly



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says. "No one works harder and when you see that, you feel like you have to raise your commitment, too. There are some things he can do with the puck that are amazing — working as hard as him doesn't mean you're going to be able to do that stuff. But no one wants to be seen as giving anything less on or off the ice when you're next to him."

Rielly recognizes that while captaincy is limited to one per team, there's no limit on leadership; with championship teams and those who reasonably aspire, it's leaders, plural. And Rielly can better understand the lives of others in the room than Tavares and Matthews — those who were first-overall picks, who were always destined for the elite, who were designated as phenoms by the time they reached the peewee ranks and franchise players in the best league in the world before they were out of their teens. The star centres were ever centres of attention and only know secondhand the adversities faced by the rank-and-file. Rielly never enjoyed that sort of status, nothing like a preferred berth. Like the vast majority of players in the league, he suffered growing pains and sucked it up during awful downs when it looked like there'd never be ups to redeem them.

Morgan Rielly will tell anyone who asks that he takes after his mother more than his father in temperament. "That sounds about right," says Andy, a lumber salesman. Shirley will agree, grudgingly, though she'll also point out that many would strain to see parallels between her famous son's career in the NHL and hers as a cancer researcher, now retired. "I am by nature a detail person," she says. "If you give me something to look at, I have to peel it away until I get to the very, very, very core ... It's a real dog-with-a-bone kind of mentality and that's just my personality, so research appealed to me.

"Morgan is much the same way, the dog with a bone. He attacked one thing — playing hockey — and he won't let go. There's also patience that's required in the lab and the arena, and the ability to work on a team ... to do your job to the best of your ability and trust others to do theirs."

Shirley worked as a nurse before returning to school to become a researcher, and Morgan also chose a more challenging path than a status quo that many would have settled for. "Morgan was your average kid in almost every way — a happy kid," Shirley says. "He did well in school and had a nice group of friends. He wasn't above the curve in that regard. The difference was that he wanted so desperately to play competitive hockey."

Though Vancouver might seem like it could offer great opportunities to a young player, circumstances in prosperous West Van, an object of neighbourhood envy, worked against Rielly — yes, he grew up comfortable but the local program, despite boasting a few good players, lacked the depth to be successful. And because of residency requirements, he couldn't jump to other stronger programs. "Up to bantam, I enjoyed just playing in West Van with my friends from school and staying close to home," he says. "But I knew I needed more challenges. In the hockey world, Vancouver players, players from B.C., have a reputation for being soft ..." Here he takes a dramatic pause. "... ish. I hated that. I wanted to get past that. I didn't want that reputation."

Shirley recalls his motivation to walk away from the West Van program as more emotional: "When Morgan's team went to some tournaments and didn't have great success, the losses would be devastating to him but he'd also be upset because the losses didn't seem to bother some of his teammates. He wanted to be in an environment where everybody felt the same as he did about winning."

After his minor bantam year, Rielly attended a hockey camp on the campus of Notre Dame in Wilcox, Sask. When he got back to West Van, he told his parents he wanted to go to school at the historic hockey hothouse. "It had blown my mind," he says. "I knew it was going to be an adjustment, going away, but at that age I wanted to be my own person. I always thought I'd figure it out and make my way no matter where I was. I wanted to be outside the Vancouver bubble."

Rielly wasn't walking into any guarantees. Given his background playing in a not-always-competitive program in West Van, he had no idea where he'd stand. "When I got there, I didn't even know if I was going to make

the top AAA team," he says. "If I didn't make it, then the other team was like house league. It could have been difficult if you don't make [the AAA team] in your draft year for the Dub."

The decision to go to Notre Dame worked out better than Rielly could have imagined. He made the AAA team that season and was called up to the midget squad for a handful of games during the winter. Andy Rielly says his son had a lot of support from upperclassmen, most notably future first-round pick Jaden Schwartz. "It's up to older players to show the way for the younger kids," says Schwartz, who raised the Stanley Cup with St. Louis last June. "Morgan was always going to be alright. He always had a smile on his face and stayed out of trouble. His ability on the ice was never in question, though."

By the spring, Rielly had a comfort level at the school. "I don't think I was crying when I left West Van but I felt like it when it was time to go home," he says. "It was harder to leave than to go there. It was a great fit."

After his first year away from home, the Moose Jaw Warriors drafted him second overall. "Maybe Moose Jaw wasn't my first choice but I wasn't going to ask for a trade or anything like that," Rielly says. "My father told me that I should go wherever I'm drafted and just make the best of it."

Because its draft is based on the bantam class, Rielly went back for a second year at Notre Dame and captained the AAA team that went on to win the Telus Cup, the national midget championship. In not even two calendar years, he had gone from a kid who worried he was going to get overtaken or lost in the crowd to maybe the top prospect heading to major junior. His was a steep and quick ascent, but one that would soon hit some unexpected turbulence.

Rielly's NHL draft year was unlike any other elite prospect's in recent memory and the story of it has been oft told: Going into the season, he was a certain NHL first-round pick based on his play as an underager; before winter hit, though, he tore an ACL and listened as the specialists told him he was done until the summer. In the same situation, the vast majority of young prospects, on the advice of parents and agents, opt for a long, thorough rehab to minimize risks. Instead, Rielly listened to the gloomy prognosis and then set his mind to getting back into the lineup with the dog-with-a-bone dedication. He didn't travel to away games but was around the rink as well as the weight room on a daily basis. When he made it back into the Moose Jaw lineup for a handful of games in the third round of the playoffs, Maple Leafs scouts saw enough to take him with the fifth-overall pick in the draft. Said then-Leafs GM Brian Burke: "We had this kid rated one. Wouldn't say that if it wasn't true just to build up the pick, but this is a guy [who] had we had the first pick in the draft, we would've taken him."

Rielly's first NHL training camp came the following January — the beginning of the season was scuttled by the lockout — and it was marked by missteps. "I came to the Leafs' camp from the world juniors in Russia and I got lost on the way to the rink," Rielly says. "Then I ended up at a captains' skate, which I wasn't supposed to be at so they told me to get off the ice. I didn't know my way around. All I knew about Toronto was the Leafs, the Raptors, the Blue Jays and the CN Tower. I didn't know what hit me."

Rielly was packed off back to Moose Jaw after a week of tumult. He did return, however, when the Warriors' season ended and a spot on the Marlies blue line opened up. Just as training camp had been an unsparing introduction to life in the Leafs fish bowl, — the GM who'd drafted him was gassed in what was understood to be a purge of the organization's player ops — so was his stint with the Marlies an eye-opener about the cold business of the game. The lineup was filled with cautionary tales, holdovers from the previous management: Defenceman Mike Komisarek was in the fourth year of a five-year \$21.5-million deal and had been undone by expectations raised by the price point; Tim Connolly, the fifth-overall pick in 1999, was in the second season of a two-year, \$10-million deal; and winger Tyler Biggs, a first-round pick of the Leafs the year before Rielly, would go on to spend more time in the ECHL than AHL before heading to Europe. The only teammate whose history and future really lined up with Rielly's was defenceman Jake



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Gardiner, a former first-rounder of Anaheim. "We were knocked out in the first round but I wound up making a best friend and finding a teammate," Rielly says.

When Rielly made the big club's lineup the next season, he skated into what seemed like a potentially toxic situation — though he didn't recognize it in the beginning. "I didn't know the league," he says. "I just saw all these really talented guys and I thought we could really compete and contend."

The record books show that the Leafs missed out on the playoffs, but that only tells a small part of the story. Dave Nonis was a lame-duck GM, basically a temp in all but title, and his free-agent signing of David Clarkson was blowing up like a joke-shop cigar. Randy Carlyle was coaching with one eye over his shoulder. Phil Kessel was ever the fans' whipping boy. Rielly went minus-13 in limited play — a number and performance that would shake the confidence of a lot of 10-year veterans. But he came out mostly unscathed. "I wasn't consumed by it because we weren't any good," he says. "If I had a bad game it was okay because I was a 19-year-old rookie and we had a lot of other things going on ... a lot of other guys were making a lot of money and losing a lot of games. I don't know if that helped me but it didn't hurt me. I learned a lot, but [coming into a struggling organization] protected me and other people were taking the heat. I think I've always been pretty good at being aware of the situation I'm in. I appreciated [the veterans] helping me out and I knew things were going to change — that at the trade deadline, players were going to get moved and I was going to get more ice time."

Rielly learned lessons that only hardship can teach, and when the franchise was at its nadir, hardship seemingly was all it had to offer. Suffice it to say that Auston Matthews, Mitch Marner and William Nylander benefited from walking into a more stable, functional organization. And if the Islanders were comparable to the circa 2013 Leafs back in John Tavares's rookie season, their struggles played out in Uniondale and they were spared the searing spotlight that shone in Toronto before the turnaround.

"It could have been a lot more difficult to be a teenager in that situation if I had been alone," Rielly says. "Dion, Phil and Joffrey and other guys didn't let me feel alone. They took me out to eat and showed me around and introduced me to what it meant to be a player with the Leafs — the tough stuff but also the good stuff ... I was looked after by the players, like I had been at Notre Dame."

Over the course of his six seasons, Rielly has shared the Leafs dressing room with 115 players. And while he's played for just the one franchise, he's suited up for very different teams: This includes, at the low ebb, a last-place club that was being stripped for parts in an unveiled tank job, and, last season, a group that had designs on playing for the Stanley Cup. You'd think that Rielly would have needed no lessons about impermanence, but last spring and over the summer came the graduate work.

"Last season was the first when the window opened for us and it was a missed opportunity," he says. "We were up three games to two at home for Game 6 against Boston and at that point Tampa Bay had already been knocked out by Columbus. The window was opened a little wider for us. Then that Game 6 was really strange — a Sunday afternoon game, everything felt a little off-kilter. It got away from us and I still can't tell you how or why. And we knew going to Boston for Game 7 that the Bruins were going to be really up."

They were, and topped the Leafs by a 5–1 margin. The loss — the idea that the group couldn't stay together — took a few days to settle in for Rielly. "When you have a shot, you don't really think about it being your only shot, but that group last year just had one chance to play together. Things change. It sank in that I played my last game with Jake [Gardiner]. Later on it was clear that other guys I started out in the organization with — Connor [Brown] and Naz [Kadri] were gone. I'm back in Toronto again in a few days for my seventh season, but it's a different team."

Predictably, Rielly is more comfortable talking about this season in the abstract than last year in the shattered concrete. The corps of forwards shares the spotlight and three — Tavares, Matthews and Marner — represent massive financial commitments against the team's capped payroll. Those three figure to be around for a long time, while, with the exception of Rielly, impermanence seems baked in the cake on the Leafs blue line.

"We have three guys who are in the last years of their deals, so they'll be motivated to have great seasons," he says. "I think Jake [Muzzin] is going to have a great season — he was in a really tough spot, coming in late, going from one coast to another, going from a home to a hotel room with his wife pregnant. He'll know the other guys so much better having the full season in Toronto. And Tyson [Barrie] I know a bit and he's such a smart player. And if you put them together and me with Cody [Cecij] I think that's a solid top four ... When Travis Dermott [who's out with an injury to start the season] comes back, that's a blue line you can win a lot of games with and hopefully our window opens a little wider this year."

There's a better chance of that, it seems, than the top-four unit in Game 1's 5–3 win over Ottawa coming back to Toronto in a year's time. By then, Dermott figures to have a bigger role and maybe one of the recent draftees, Rasmus Sandin or Timothy Liljegren, will have stepped up into the mix for the top four. And almost certainly by then market forces will further complicate the Leafs roster. With 20 goals last season, Rielly isn't anyone's idea of a stay-at-home defenceman, but he's the only blue-liner in the lineup certain to stay, a matter of talent, contract and character. He didn't miss a game last season and finished fifth in league all-star voting, missing the Second Team by just a handful of votes that went to Washington's John Carlson and Tampa Bay's Victor Hedman, both making \$8-million a season to Rielly's \$5-million. In fact, more than 50 NHL defencemen will make more than Rielly this year. Argue amongst yourselves about the identity of the best player in the Leafs' lineup but you can't dispute the fact that Rielly gives the best value, dollar for dollar. Canvass the league to find who's better on that count.

Morgan Rielly was over at his parents' home a few days before they headed off to Savery Island and he mentioned that he was going out on a friend's boat the next day.

"Make sure you wear a life jacket," Shirley told him.

"Mom, I'm 25," he said.

It wasn't a lesson in safety so much as the emotional climate in the family home. Until Morgan went away, he sat down with his parents and his brother every night for dinner, and every night they talked about what they'd done that day and what was going to happen tomorrow.

Says Shirley: "There's a certain well of parenting, and that has to run dry before you give it up. Mine has not run dry yet. I tell Morgan that all the time, I say, 'I missed out on parenting those years you were in Notre Dame and Moose Jaw and even Toronto. Just because you might be done with it doesn't mean I'm done.'"

Says Morgan: "I appreciate what my parents did for me, letting me go to Notre Dame when I was so young. I owe Notre Dame so much for everything I have now, where I am. But it wouldn't have been possible without my parents backing me. Those are debts that can't really be repaid any other way than being there."

When Morgan Rielly says he goes back to Vancouver for the summer because of "family," it's shorthand. More is in play than that. Somehow in the fish bowl of professional hockey, he's managed to see the big picture and keep things in perspective. When he's on a helicopter heading to a remote island to see his parents — who sat down for dinner with him two nights before, who came over and sat by his pool the night before that, who'll fly across the country to see him play more than a few times during the year — he's trying to do right by them. Given that he spends most of his year in a business with not just highs and lows but comings and goings, maybe it shouldn't surprise that he's drawn to the constants in his life.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Andy Rielly says his younger son possesses a quality little discussed in scouting reports or on game broadcasts: empathy. At 25, he has figured out that the most valuable thing he can give someone is time. It was, his father says, a lesson he learned a long time ago. "Morgan does the right things without having to be told. He has a good moral compass that way. I was in Saskatoon, getting a bite to eat after a game, and someone working in the bar came up to me and asked if I was one of the Notre Dame parents. I told her that I was Morgan's dad and she said he'd been a huge help to her son who was a couple of years behind Morgan. He was looking after someone just like Jaden [Schwartz] helped him out. He's a quick study on that stuff and he figures out what's the important stuff to take away."

Morgan Rielly's career hasn't always been charmed in his time with the Leafs, even if through the worst seasons he felt "protected," which is a form of luck, you'd suppose. He doesn't need to tell you he gets it; he shows that he gets it. He doesn't need the spotlight or the captaincy to do the right things. He's not the franchise player, not the face of the franchise. He might already be something more important than that: its foundation.

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YAHOO SPORTS / Red Wings' Anthony Mantha enters record books with 4-goal night

Arun Srinivasan

It's supposed to be a bleak, rebuilding year for the Detroit Red Wings but Anthony Mantha did not get the memo.

Mantha went off on Sunday night against the Dallas Stars, scoring all four goals in a 4-3 victory.

The 25-year-old put on a show in every sense and his second goal will certainly be in heavy rotation on 'best of the month' highlight packs everywhere.

Mantha receives the puck, cuts outside and breezes past Stars defenceman Esa Lindell. Lindell, in turn, makes a weak attempt at trying to dislodge the puck, then Mantha bursts inside, skating around goaltender Anton Khudobin and deposits the puck to complete the jaw-dropping goal.

He is now among some elite company, joining Hall of Fame forward Brendan Shanahan and two-time Stanley Cup champion John Sorrell as the only players to score a natural hat trick for the Red Wings in their home opener.

Mantha is coming off two consecutive 20-goal plus seasons and perhaps grander heights are in store for the 2013 first-round pick.

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