

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Canes recall forward Julien Gauthier from Checkers

By Chip Alexander

After playing all six preseason games for the Carolina Hurricanes, forward Julien Gauthier was disappointed to be assigned to the Charlotte Checkers of the American Hockey League when the final roster cut was made for the regular season.

But Gauthier has quickly returned. After scoring two goals in two AHL games for the Checkers, the 6-4, 226-pound winger was recalled Wednesday by the Canes.

Gauthier, a former first-round draft pick by Carolina, scored 27 goals in 75 games for the Checkers last season. He then helped them win the franchise's first Calder Cup with five goals and eight points in the 17 AHL playoff games.

The Canes (4-0-0) have back-to-back home games this week, facing the New York Islanders on Friday and Columbus Blue Jackets on Saturday.

'Worst game of the bunch.' Five observations from the Canes' win over the Panthers.

By Chip Alexander

Five observations from the Carolina Hurricanes' 6-3 road win Tuesday over the Florida Panthers, in a game *not* decided in an overtime or shootout:

1. Dougie's World

For now, it's Dougie's World and we just live in it. Dougie Hamilton, who at times looks like a forward trapped in a defenseman's body, is playing tremendous hockey for the Canes. Long way to go, but he could be headed to a monster season. Hamilton, who scored a goal against Florida, appears loose, happy, fully at ease with his surroundings and teammates and it's showing in his play.

2. James Reimer the battler

The word that keeps coming up with James Reimer is "battler." Good choice. He battled through the Caps game Saturday and won and did the same Tuesday against the Panthers, both on the road. Rod Brind'Amour said Reimer had some "weird-looking" saves against the Caps and had more Tuesday. Fifty shots is a lot of rubber and more than the Canes allowed in any game last season.

The Panthers' Sergei Bobrovsky lasted one period in net Tuesday. Reimer went the distance and should have been named the game's first star (Ryan Dzingel,

even after scoring his first two goals for the Canes, probably would agree).

3. Teuvo Teravainen's consistency

Forgive Florida coach Joel Quenneville if he was standing behind the bench trying to remind himself how Teuvo Teravainen got to Carolina. That's right, the trade with Bryan Bickell when the Chicago Blackhawks needed cap space and sent those two to the Canes. Teravainen has been as consistent as anyone in the lineup through four games and scored his first goal Tuesday.

4. 'Worst game of the bunch'

Coaches always enjoy wins that have "teachable moments" and areas that can be improved in practice. The Canes' first period was airtight and complete: tight structure, power-play goal, 5-on-3 penalty kill, strong play at even-strength and a 4-0 lead. Things got a little loose on the Canes side when the Panthers pushed back -- "We were in our end the whole time," Brind'Amour told the media after the game -- and the Canes had eight penalties in the game.

"I didn't love this game, probably the worst game of the bunch," Brind'Amour said. "Lot to work on, which is great. We're in a good spot and know we can be better."

5. Sebastian Aho scores

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Sebastian Aho has scored. It was an empty netter and it was late but it was what Aho needed. He had a team-high 13 shots in the first three games and had six Tuesday, winging away. "He's been pressing,"

Brind'Amour said. "Hopefully it relaxed him and he can go play his game." Now, if Aho can get his linemate, Nino Niederreiter, going.

THE ATHLETIC

James Reimer proves something to his former team, his current team and himself as the Hurricanes go 4-0-0

By Sara Civian

SUNRISE, Fla. — It would be several levels of absurd to judge a goalie from a two-game sample size, but you can definitely judge a man by his post-game jam.

When Hurricanes head coach Rod Brind'Amour gave James Reimer his second consecutive start against his former Panthers on Tuesday, he responded with 47 saves on 50 shots, a cool demeanor in the face of potential implosion and the all-important win.

"Ahh, the legs were a little tired" he laughed. "Hey, you're just battling."

Then he blasted "Return of the Mack" by Mark Morrison throughout the building he was booed in hours before.

"Yep, that was me," he told The Athletic postgame. "I don't know where that came from, but ..."

Reimer's three-season, 123-game stint with the Panthers obviously didn't end on the warmest terms on June 30, when the Hurricanes traded the now bought-out Scott Darling and a sixth-round pick for Reimer. You can imagine how it would feel to play behind subpar defense then get traded for someone your old team immediately buys out.

And again, you can't make any grand declarations based on two games, but this season he's 2-0 with 79 saves on 84 shots and a .941 save percentage.

"It's a good feeling — anytime you face your old team you want to play well and you want to get two points," he said. "For us, we're just grinding, we're just trying to play our best games and accumulate as many points as possible. Tonight, everyone worked their butts off and sacrificed. It was just another heck of a win for us."

If you've been feeling like the Hurricanes' best start since 1995 is trying to battle last season's Canes for a "most overwhelming hockey experience of all time" banner at PNC Arena, it's not in your head. They followed up three consecutive overtime comeback wins with a four-goal first period in Florida. They

allowed the Lightning zero shots in the second period, then let the Panthers drop 50 on them overall.

"It was nice not going into overtime for once," said Ryan Dzingel, who scored his first two goals as a Hurricane on Tuesday.

After Sebastian Aho's relief of a late-game empty-netter, every single Hurricanes skater except for Joel Edmundson has found the scoresheet. Incidentally, Edmundson's five-on-three play might've been the highlight of a high-scoring game.

I was watching the above clip with an equally impressed Tripp Tracy after the game, and he pointed out that the first half of Edmundson's effort was just as important as the second because of the way he was commanding where the Panthers were allowed to shoot.

On a five-on-three.

"He's been solid, right?" Brind'Amour agreed. "Doing that thing we just talked about on the penalty kill, sacrificing your body. If you want to win, you've gotta have that.

That's why you trade for Edmundson.

"I think it's just everybody, every guy in that lineup is contributing," said Dzingel, who scored one on his former goalie Sergei Bobrovsky before the Panthers pulled him. "That's pretty cool — it doesn't happen with many teams, where you get every single guy producing and playing well, everyone is tugging from the same rope. I think that's the biggest thing, when you can get every guy involved and contributing."

Trending up

Literally everyone.

This started out as a Teuvo Teravainen appreciation post but Reimer had other plans. Anyway, I had already asked Dzingel what it's like to play with a guy who could score five assists a night and still manage to fly under the radar: "Yeah, he's quiet out there, he's not one of those guys who are flashy — I mean, he

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

can be, but he just gets the job done every night," he echoed one of Brind'Amour's Turbo-isms. "Not the loudest guy in the locker room but he gets his talking done on the ice." His talking has been in the form of one goal and four assists in five games, leading the league with four power play points. Most of those power play apples have come from the circle, where I'm convinced the Hurricanes are deploying him to fake defenders into thinking he's going to shoot. He's got a great, "flashy" shot, but as Dzingel said, he'll opt for getting the job done over flexing it any day.

Best game of Haydn Fleury's NHL career? He was key in what Brind'Amour called the best play of the game:

And quality of that play — especially when it'd come right after that Edmundson-as-human-sacrifice five-on-three — aside, Brind'Amour had to be happy at a stat sheet that read "GOAL: Ryan Dzingel ASSISTS: Martin Necas, Haydn Fleury."

You could see Fleury's confidence growing throughout his two-assist (career-high), plus-two night and he was rewarded with 15:05 TOI. That's five minutes more than his previous two games. It's taken a lot for Brind'Amour to trust him and that's reflected in his brief ice time, but if he keeps this up he just might turn into what the team that drafted him seventh overall thought he could become.

The thing about Dougie Hamilton is when he's got the juice, he's generally got it on both sides of the ice (and vice versa for his periods of struggle). Not only is he No. 10 in the league in power play points (two goals, three assists), but, umm ...

You can't see it in the clip, but he wagged his finger at Aleksander Barkov after making that save. When you've got the juice, you've got the juice, but we've

already gone over how Hamilton tends to excel on defense when he's scoring.

People who currently lead the National Hockey League with six assists: Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl (aka the Oilers as a team), Matt Duchene and Andrei Svechnikov.

I was going to call attention to a controversy for the ages, until I realized it's Erik "Bo-Time" Haula, and Ryan "Bo-Berry Biscuit" Dzingel. Both can co-exist peacefully in this kingdom, where the Hurricanes have now scored a power play goal in each of their first four games. The Canes are tied for third in the league with a 33.3 percent power play conversion rate, and they're second with five goals (Buffalo's got six). Trends like that, new guys like the aforementioned, Necas and Jake Gardiner contributing and actual puck movement have me thinking this isn't a fluke.

Aho has been prone to slow starts his entire NHL career, save for last season. You could see his anxiety that it might happen again this season everywhere — he'd do just a little too much on a play, he'd break a stick on the bench in frustration. He's an intense, competitive dude. That's why an empty-netter at the end of a game that was already won actually mattered.

"Even Aho getting an empty-netter at the end, he's been pressing. He was shooting everything from all over trying to get a goal," Brind'Amour said. "Hopefully that relaxes him to go out and play his game."

That the team went undefeated without its best scorer scoring is just another sign that this is all for real.

Bow down to Shayna Goldman for the videos. And check out her stuff, she's incredible.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019



Super 16: Bruins take over No. 1 spot, Hurricanes move into top 10

Lightning, Stars fall; Ducks, Oilers, Sabres among new teams into rankings

by David Satriano

See which one of your favorite teams moved in or out of this week's Super 16 Power Rankings after the opening week of the 2019-20 season

The Boston Bruins tied their best start to a season in 18 years and don't appear worse for the wear after an extended run in the Stanley Cup Playoffs last season.

The Bruins have won each of their first three games as part of a season-opening four-game road trip and have vaulted to the top of the Super 16 rankings from No. 4 last week.

The Tampa Bay Lightning, who were No. 1 last week, fell two spots to No. 3.

The Hurricanes were the biggest gainers, using a 4-0-0 start to jump nine spots from No. 15 to No. 6. The Edmonton Oilers, Anaheim Ducks, Buffalo Sabres and New York Rangers each joined the rankings this week.

The Dallas Stars, who have one win in four games, dropped seven spots from No. 8 to No. 15.

To create the power rankings, each of the 13 staff members puts together his or her version of what they think the Super 16 should look like. Those are submitted and a point total is assigned to each.

The team picked first is given 16 points, second gets 15, third gets 14 and so on down to No. 16, which gets one point.

Here is the latest Super 16:

1. Boston Bruins (3-0-0)

Total points: 186

Last week: No. 4

Hit: The Bruins have 11 skaters with at least one point and do not have a skater with a negative plus/minus rating.

Miss: None

2. St. Louis Blues (2-0-1)

Total points: 173

Last week: No. 2

Hit: St. Louis has points in each of its first three games, each against an opponent that qualified for the playoffs last season (Washington Capitals, Dallas Stars, Toronto Maple Leafs).

Miss: Center Ryan O'Reilly and forwards Vladimir Tarasenko and Jaden Schwartz have combined for no goals this season after they were the Blues' top three scorers in the playoffs last season, combining for 31.

3. Tampa Bay Lightning (1-1-1)

Total points: 167

Last week: No. 1

Hit: Their top three scorers are each defensemen; Mikhail Sergachev has four assists, Kevin Shattenkirk has two goals and one assist and Victor Hedman has three assists.

Miss: The Lightning have been outshot in two of three games and have a shot differential of minus-31 (78-109).

4. Toronto Maple Leafs (2-1-1)

Total points: 158

Last week: No. 3

Hit: Center Auston Matthews has five goals and is one of five Maple Leafs players with at least two goals (forwards Mitchell Marner, William Nylander, Trevor Moore, Frederik Gauthier, two each).

Miss: They have allowed eight regulation goals in their past two games, home losses to the Montreal Canadiens and Blues.

5. Vegas Golden Knights (2-1-0)

Total points: 149

Last week: No. 5

Hit: Vegas leads the League with three shorthanded goals and has killed off 12 of 13 penalties (92.3 percent).

Miss: They rank second-worst in the League winning 44.3 percent of face-offs (77-of-174).

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

6. Carolina Hurricanes (4-0-0)

Total points: 142

Last week: No. 15

Hit: They've won their first four games to match the best start in their history, which included rallying in the third period in each of the first three.

Miss: Petr Mrazek has allowed six goals on 49 shots (2.84 goals-against average, .878 save percentage) in two games.

7. Washington Capitals (2-0-2)

Total points: 126

Last week: No. 9

Hit: Defenseman John Carlson has five points (one goal, four assists) and is among the League leaders in ice time per game (25:44).

Miss: The Capitals have been outscored 6-2 in the third period and overtime this season.

8. Nashville Predators (2-1-0)

Total points: 121

Last week: No. 6

Hit: Center Matt Duchene, who signed a seven-year contract with Nashville on July 1, has six assists in his first three games.

Miss: Of their 13 goals this season, one has come in the first period.

9. Colorado Avalanche (2-0-0)

Total points: 120

Last week: No. 7

Hit: Forward Mikko Rantanen has two straight multipoint games (three goals, one assist) to start the season.

Miss: The penalty kill has struggled; Colorado has allowed three goals on eight shorthanded opportunities (62.5 percent).

10. Calgary Flames (1-1-1)

Total points: 75

Last week: No. 11

Hit: Their big three forwards Johnny Gaudreau and Matthew Tkachuk and center Sean Monahan have 13 points (six goals, seven assists).

Miss: Calgary is tied for the second-most penalties in the League with 19 and tied for third with 16 minor penalties.

11. Edmonton Oilers (3-0-0)

Total points: 66

Last week: NR

Hit: Forward James Neal had four goals in a 5-2 win at the New York Islanders on Tuesday and has six goals in three games. He had seven goals in 63 games with the Flames last season.

Miss: Defenseman Adam Larsson will be out 6-8 weeks because of a fractured right fibula.

12. Anaheim Ducks (3-0-0)

Total points: 57

Last week: NR

Hit: John Gibson has allowed three goals on 101 shots (.970 save percentage) and has won seven straight starts dating to last season.

Miss: The Ducks are 0-for-6 on the power play this season.

13. Buffalo Sabres (3-0-1)

Total points: 37

Last week: NR

Hit: Center Jack Eichel has three goals and four assists in four games. Five of his seven points have come on the power play.

Miss: Forward Conor Sheary, who has three points (two goals, one assist) in three games, is week to week with an upper-body injury.

14. New York Rangers (2-0-0)

Total points: 34

Last week: NR

Hit: Their top line of center Mika Zibanejad and forwards Artemi Panarin and Pavel Buchnevich has 14 points in two games (six goals, eight assists).

Miss: Forward Kaapo Kakko, the No. 2 pick in the 2019 NHL Draft, doesn't have a point and is minus-1.

15. Dallas Stars (1-3-0)

Total points: 32

Last week: No. 8

Hit: Forward Roope Hintz leads the Stars with four goals; he had nine in 58 games last season.

Miss: Forwards Joe Pavelski, signed to a three-year contract on July 1, and Jamie Benn have combined for two assists.

16. Winnipeg Jets (2-2-0)

Total points: 31

Last week: No. 14

Hit: Center Mark Scheifele and forward Patrik Laine have six points (one goal, five assists each), and forward Nikolaj Ehlers has five points (one goal, four assists).

Miss: Special teams have not been good; the Jets are 1-for-9 on the power play (11.1 percent) and 2-for-7 on the penalty kill (71.4 percent).

Others receiving points: Florida Panthers 21; Pittsburgh Penguins 19; Philadelphia Flyers 16; San Jose Sharks 12; Montreal Canadiens 10; New York Islanders 7; Detroit Red Wings 5; Arizona Coyotes 3; Columbus Blue Jackets 1

Dropped out: San Jose Sharks (No. 10), Florida Panthers (No. 12), Pittsburgh Penguins (No. 13), New York Islanders (No. 16)

HERE'S HOW WE RANKED 'EM

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

AMALIE BENJAMIN

1. Toronto Maple Leafs; 2. Boston Bruins; 3. Tampa Bay Lightning; 4. Vegas Golden Knights; 5. Colorado Avalanche; 6. Washington Capitals; 7. St. Louis Blues; 8. Carolina Hurricanes; 9. Nashville Predators; 10. Edmonton Oilers; 11. Anaheim Ducks; 12. Buffalo Sabres; 13. Dallas Stars; 14. Calgary Flames; 15. Winnipeg Jets; 16. New York Islanders

TIM CAMPBELL

1. Tampa Bay Lightning; 2. Toronto Maple Leafs; 3. Calgary Flames; 4. Boston Bruins; 5. Washington Capitals; 6. Nashville Predators; 7. St. Louis Blues; 8. Vegas Golden Knights; 9. Colorado Avalanche; 10. Florida Panthers; 11. New York Islanders; 12. Carolina Hurricanes; 13. Dallas Stars; 14. Buffalo Sabres; 15. Winnipeg Jets; 16. Edmonton Oilers.

BRIAN COMPTON

1. Carolina Hurricanes; 2. Edmonton Oilers; 3. Anaheim Ducks; 4. Boston Bruins; 5. Colorado Avalanche; 6. St. Louis Blues; 7. Washington Capitals; 8. Buffalo Sabres; 9. New York Rangers; 10. Vegas Golden Knights; 11. Toronto Maple Leafs; 12. Philadelphia Flyers; 13. Nashville Predators; 14. Detroit Red Wings; 15. Tampa Bay Lightning; 16. Calgary Flames

NICHOLAS J. COTSONIKA

1. Tampa Bay Lightning; 2. Vegas Golden Knights; 3. St. Louis Blues; 4. Boston Bruins; 5. Toronto Maple Leafs; 6. Dallas Stars; 7. Colorado Avalanche; 8. Washington Capitals; 9. San Jose Sharks; 10. Nashville Predators; 11. Pittsburgh Penguins; 12. Calgary Flames; 13. Florida Panthers; 14. Arizona Coyotes; 15. Carolina Hurricanes; 16. Columbus Blue Jackets

TOM GULITTI

1. St. Louis Blues; 2. Boston Bruins; 3. Colorado Avalanche; 4. Carolina Hurricanes; 5. Tampa Bay Lightning; 6. Washington Capitals; 7. Toronto Maple Leafs; 8. Nashville Predators; 9. Vegas Golden Knights; 10. Calgary Flames; 11. Anaheim Ducks; 12. Edmonton Oilers; 13. Winnipeg Jets; 14. Pittsburgh Penguins; 15. Buffalo Sabres; 16. New York Rangers

ADAM KIMELMAN

1. Carolina Hurricanes; 2. Tampa Bay Lightning; 3. Boston Bruins; 4. Vegas Golden Knights; 5. St. Louis Blues; 6. Washington Capitals; 7. Colorado Avalanche; 8. Toronto Maple Leafs; 9. Anaheim Ducks; 10. Nashville Predators; 11. Winnipeg Jets; 12. Edmonton Oilers; 13. Buffalo Sabres; 14. Philadelphia Flyers; 15. Calgary Flames; 16. New York Rangers

ROBERT LAFLAMME

1. Boston Bruins; 2. St. Louis Blues; 3. Toronto Maple Leafs; 4. Tampa Bay Lightning; 5. Carolina Hurricanes; 6. Vegas Golden Knights; 7. Washington Capitals; 8. Calgary Flames; 9. Nashville Predators;

10. Colorado Avalanche; 11. Winnipeg Jets; 12. Edmonton Oilers; 13. Anaheim Ducks; 14. New York Rangers; 15. Philadelphia Flyers; 16. Pittsburgh Penguins

MIKE G. MORREALE

1. St. Louis Blues; 2. Boston Bruins; 3. Tampa Bay Lightning; 4. Toronto Maple Leafs; 5. Vegas Golden Knights; 6. Calgary Flames; 7. Carolina Hurricanes; 8. Nashville Predators; 9. Washington Capitals; 10. Colorado Avalanche; 11. New York Rangers; 12. Philadelphia Flyers; 13. Winnipeg Jets; 14. Pittsburgh Penguins; 15. Anaheim Ducks; 16. Montreal Canadiens

TRACEY MYERS

1. St. Louis Blues; 2. Boston Bruins; 3. Carolina Hurricanes; 4. Nashville Predators; 5. Vegas Golden Knights; 6. Edmonton Oilers; 7. Toronto Maple Leafs; 8. Colorado Avalanche; 9. Tampa Bay Lightning; 10. Washington Capitals; 11. Buffalo Sabres; 12. Anaheim Ducks; 13. New York Rangers; 14. Winnipeg Jets; 15. Detroit Red Wings; 16. Montreal Canadiens

BILL PRICE

1. Toronto Maple Leafs; 2. Nashville Predators; 3. St. Louis Blues; 4. Tampa Bay Lightning; 5. Vegas Golden Knights; 6. Boston Bruins; 7. Dallas Stars; 8. Carolina Hurricanes; 9. Washington Capitals; 10. Colorado Avalanche; 11. Calgary Flames; 12. Florida Panthers; 13. Winnipeg Jets; 14. Edmonton Oilers; 15. New York Rangers; 16. Montreal Canadiens

SHAWN P. ROARKE

1. Tampa Bay Lightning; 2. Boston Bruins; 3. Vegas Golden Knights; 4. Toronto Maple Leafs; 5. Nashville Predators; 6. St. Louis Blues; 7. Carolina Hurricanes; 8. Calgary Flames; 9. Washington Capitals; 10. Colorado Avalanche; 11. Pittsburgh Penguins; 12. Florida Panthers; 13. San Jose Sharks; 14. Buffalo Sabres; 15. New York Rangers; 16. Anaheim Ducks

DAN ROSEN

1. Boston Bruins; 2. Carolina Hurricanes; 3. Tampa Bay Lightning; 4. Vegas Golden Knights; 5. St. Louis Blues; 6. Toronto Maple Leafs; 7. Nashville Predators; 8. Washington Capitals; 9. Colorado Avalanche; 10. Edmonton Oilers; 11. Calgary Flames; 12. Anaheim Ducks; 13. Montreal Canadiens; 14. Dallas Stars; 15. New York Rangers; 16. Buffalo Sabres

MIKE ZEISBERGER

1. St. Louis Blues; 2. Boston Bruins; 3. Tampa Bay Lightning; 4. Toronto Maple Leafs; 5. Washington Capitals; 6. Carolina Hurricanes; 7. Vegas Golden Knights; 8. Colorado Avalanche; 9. Nashville Predators; 10. Edmonton Oilers; 11. Anaheim Ducks; 12. New York Rangers; 13. Buffalo Sabres; 14. Montreal Canadiens; 15. Calgary Flames; 16. Philadelphia Flyers

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Facts and Figures: Hurricanes continue fast start by defeating Panthers

Improve to 4-0-0 for first time since move to Carolina; Ducks, Bruins also stay perfect

NHL.com

The Carolina Hurricanes matched their best start since entering the NHL as the Hartford Whalers in 1979 by defeating the Florida Panthers 6-3 at BB&T Center on Tuesday to improve to 4-0-0.

The only other time the Hurricanes/Whalers started 4-0-0 was 1995-96, when Hartford won its first four games. The Whalers moved to Carolina in 1997.

After coming from behind to win each of their first three -- two in overtime and one in a shootout -- the Hurricanes proved they could also win in regulation and by playing with a lead. Carolina led 4-0 after the first period, giving the Hurricanes more than enough of a cushion to survive a 50-shot performance by the Panthers.

It's the third time in their history the Hurricanes scored at least four goals in the first period (also at the Tampa Bay Lightning on April 6, 2010 and at the Pittsburgh Penguins on March 4, 2006). Current coach Rod Brind'Amour had one of the first-period goals in each of those games.

One of Florida's three goals was scored by defenseman Keith Yandle, who became the first United States-born player and fifth player in NHL history to play in 800 consecutive games. Yandle has the longest consecutive-game streak among active players.

Ducks, Bruins remain perfect

The Anaheim Ducks and Boston Bruins each improved to 3-0-0 this season by winning on the road.

The Ducks scored three third-period goals to defeat the Detroit Red Wings 3-1 at Little Caesars Arena, matching their longest season-opening winning streak since entering the NHL in 1993; they also started 3-0-0 in 2006-07, when they went on to win the Stanley Cup. Goalie John Gibson made 21 saves and has allowed one goal in each of the three wins, making 98 saves on 101 shots. Gibson's career save percentage of .922 is tied with Hall of Famers Dominik Hasek, Johnny Bower and Ken Dryden for the highest in NHL history among goalies who have played at least 200 games.

The Bruins spotted the Vegas Golden Knights a two-goal lead before scoring four unanswered goals and holding on for a 4-3 win at T-Mobile Center. Forward Brad Marchand scored two goals and had an assist

for Boston, which has won its first three games of the season on the road for the first time since entering the NHL in 1924.

Neal continues revival, helps Oilers defeat Islanders

Forward James Neal scored four goals to power the unbeaten Edmonton Oilers to their third consecutive win, 5-2 against the New York Islanders at Nassau Coliseum.

Neal has six goals in three games for the Oilers (3-0-0) after scoring seven in 63 games with the Calgary Flames last season; the Oilers acquired him from the Flames in a trade on July 19 that sent forward Milan Lucic to Calgary. The 12-year veteran also became the only active player to have at least one hat trick with four different teams (three with the Penguins, two with the Nashville Predators and one with the Dallas Stars).

It was the second four-goal game in the NHL in three days; forward Anthony Mantha had all of the Detroit Red Wings' goals in a 4-3 win against Dallas on Sunday. It's the fifth time in NHL history that two players have scored at least four goals in a game in the first seven days of the season; the most recent was 1992-93, when Chris Kontos (Lightning) and Pavel Bure (Vancouver Canucks) did it.

Neal's six goals are the most by any player in his first three games with the Oilers, and he's the fourth player in Edmonton history to score four goals in a regular-season road game. The others: Wayne Gretzky (five times), Paul Coffey (at Calgary, Dec. 26, 1984) and Alexander Selivanov (at Chicago, Nov. 14, 1999).

Heinola helps Jets snap drought in Pittsburgh

Rookie Ville Heinola's first NHL goal helped the Winnipeg Jets get the franchise's first victory in Pittsburgh in nearly 13 years. The 18-year-old was one of three defensemen to score for the Jets in a 4-1 win at PPG Paints Arena, ending an 18-game losing streak (0-14-4) by the Jets/Atlanta Thrashers in Pittsburgh since Atlanta's 4-2 win at Mellon Arena on Dec. 27, 2006.

Heinola, the No. 20 pick in the 2019 NHL Draft, became the second 18-year-old defenseman in Jets/Thrashers history to score an NHL goal, joining Zach Bogosian (Jan. 17, 2009). He also became the first player selected in the 2019 Draft to score a goal this season.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019



NHL Power Rankings: 1-31 poll, plus small-sample revelations for every team

Greg Wyshynski/ESPN

The overreactions to the first games in a new NHL season are always quite comical. When there's a four-game losing streak in the middle of December, it's a bump in the road. When it happens at the start of the season, it's like watching a large boulder roll down a snowy hill and expecting the whole season to tumble down after it.

So in keeping with the hyperbolic nature of first impressions, this week's NHL Power Rankings deal with those one-week revelations. Some are obviously trends that will be bucked. Others are perhaps a little more insightful as to how this is all going to pan out.

How we rank: The ESPN hockey editorial staff submits polls ranking teams 1-31, and those results are tabulated to the list featured here. Teams are rated through Tuesday night's games, taking into account overall record, recent success and other factors such as injuries. Previous ranking refers to the team's spot in the offseason edition of our Power Rankings.

1. Boston Bruins

Previous ranking: 2

The Bruins are once again stingy. With the holy trinity of Patrice Bergeron at center, Zdeno Chara on defense and either Tuukka Rask or Jaroslav Halak in goal, the Bruins are going to be good defensively. They were third in goal suppression in the NHL last season, at 2.59 allowed per game. They've gotten off the blocks this season giving up 1.33 per game, including a win over an offensive juggernaut in Vegas.

2. Vegas Golden Knights

Previous ranking: 4

Mark Stone's gonna win the Selke Trophy ... and the Hart. We're optimistic that Stone has gained enough renown that he can win best defensive forward as a winger. But with six points in three games for what's going to be the best team in the West, he could collect a little more hardware, too.

3. Carolina Hurricanes

Previous ranking: 12

It's the Hurricanes' world, we just live in it. The Canes are undefeated, at 4-0-0. They're averaging four goals per game. They're giving up just 2.75 goals per game. They held the Lightning without a shot for an entire period, and a total of two shots through two periods and an overtime. They're still "a bunch of jerks," doing their Storm Surge postgame celebration. But they're also the best team in the NHL in the first week of the season.

4. Toronto Maple Leafs

Previous ranking: 3

The Leafs are going to have win every playoff game 8-7 to win the Cup. Over the past two seasons, it has become apparent that the Leafs are an offensively superior club whose idea of defense is "eh, Freddie will figure it out." Through four games this season, they're averaging four goals scored and three surrendered per game. Frederik Andersen is going to stay busy.

5. Washington Capitals

Previous ranking: 7

Might John Carlson get his Norris? The easiest path to the Norris Trophy, or at least a nomination, is for a defenseman to lead the NHL in scoring. Carlson was tied for the league lead in scoring for a defenseman (five points) through four games. The Capitals' defenseman has finished fifth and fourth in the voting in the past two seasons. So, following that pattern -- at least a finalist?

6. St. Louis Blues

Previous ranking: 6

The Blues might win back-to-back Cups. The champs are here, and they've picked up where they left off (and picked up Justin Faulk, in the process). And by that we mean Ryan O'Reilly playing at a point-per-game pace and Jordan Binnington rocking a .928 save percentage. They're not playing "Gloria," but they're singing the same tune in St. Louis.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

7. Tampa Bay Lightning

Previous ranking: 1

They've learned nothing. The Lightning were swept by the Blue Jackets last postseason because they thought they could skill their way to a win. Captain Steven Stamkos sees the same issues in their stumbling start this season: "[We're a] freewheeling team that thinks we can come into games and win because we're skilled." The Lightning started the season getting 40.4% of the shot attempts at 5-on-5, last in the NHL. They were ninth in shot attempt differential last season (51.59). Of course, it doesn't help when one goes two periods and an overtime generating two shots on goal, as the Bolts did against Carolina.

8. Colorado Avalanche

Previous ranking: 10

Cale Makar is going to devour power-play points. The rookie sensation has been tasked with orchestrating one of the most talented power plays in the NHL, and has two points on the man advantage in two games. This is like graduating from UMass and immediately getting hired as a CEO.

9. Nashville Predators

Previous ranking: 5

Matt Duchene equals flexibility. The idea of breaking up one of the best lines in hockey -- Filip Forsberg, Ryan Johansen and Viktor Arvidsson -- used to be as blasphemous in Nashville as getting your hot chicken cooked mild. But after acquiring Duchene as a free agent, coach Peter Laviolette has felt comfortable enough to drop Forsberg down to Duchene's line and move Craig Smith up to the top line. So far, so good: They're averaging 4.33 goals per game as a team.

10. Calgary Flames

Previous ranking: 9

Johnny Gaudreau hasn't fallen off. The Flames star has followed his 1.21 points per game last season with six points in his first three games, including two goals on five shots. A shooting percentage of 40 is sustainable, right?

11. New York Rangers

Previous ranking: 14

Mika Zibanejad is going to win the Art Ross. The Rangers' center went from good to great in 2018-19, hitting 30 goals and 74 points last season. With Artemi Panarin now on his wing, through two games Zibanejad is on pace for ... 320 points. Is that good?

12. Winnipeg Jets

Previous ranking: 11

Maybe NHL-level defensemen are overrated? The Jets saw Tyler Myers, Jacob Trouba and Ben Chiarot move on in the offseason. They saw Dustin Byfuglien and Dmitry Kulikov take leaves of absence. Josh Morrissey has been injured. Their defense has been reduced to Neal Pionk and "who?" And yet, they're 2-2 with a minus-2 goal differential. Not great, but not the disaster they appeared to be on paper.

13. Florida Panthers

Previous ranking: 16

Sergei Bobrovsky's mobility is hindered by the weight of his contract. The free-agent prize has given up 11 goals in three games, to the tune of an .859 save percentage and a 4.77 goals-against average. Not great, Bob!

14. Pittsburgh Penguins

Previous ranking: 15

Is the window closed? It happened to the Blackhawks. It happened to the Kings. It happens to nearly every team that goes on a multiple-season run of Stanley Cup success; eventually, the returns diminish even if the core remains intact. The Penguins are still the team of Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and Kris Letang (when healthy). But the supporting cast is the weakest they've had in a decade, and the team has looked far too uninspired and underwhelming thus far this season. Is it the injuries? Or is it the end?

15. Montreal Canadiens

Previous ranking: 17

Jeff Petry's going to play more than Shea Weber. Through two games, Petry (26:56) has more average ice time than Weber (25:31), and has quietly become their go-to defenseman.

16. Buffalo Sabres

Previous ranking: 27

Ralph Krueger has this all figured out. The Sabres are scoring at will and with considerably more depth than they have on paper. They're a top-7 possession team at 5-on-5, and the fifth-best defensive team through three games. Is this for real? Obviously. It's not as if Buffalo has ever gotten off to a torrid start and then had it all come crashing down by December, right?

17. Dallas Stars

Previous ranking: 13

Roope Hintz has arrived. Playing with offensive import Joe Pavelski, the 22-year-old center has four goals in four games after scoring nine in 58 games last

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

season. Congrats to you fantasy owners who took the Hintz and roped in Roope.

18. Philadelphia Flyers

Previous ranking: 20

Alain Vigneault is a great Year 1 coach. It's the smallest of small sample sizes, but the Flyers immediately look more cohesive and effective than last season. Vigneault has made the playoffs in his first season in each previous NHL stop: Montreal, Vancouver and the Rangers. Will the trend continue?

19. New York Islanders

Previous ranking: 18

Picking Semyon Varlamov over Robin Lehner is terrible karma. Varlamov is 0-2-0 with an .872 save percentage and a 4.11 goals-against average, obviously for the sole reason that Lou Lamoriello did Robin Lehner dirty during free agency.

20. Edmonton Oilers

Previous ranking: 26

James Neal will take the Rocket Richard to Calgary and spike it. With six goals in three games, Neal is leading the NHL in that category. He has rediscovered his offense, he plays with Connor McDavid and he's fueled by the disrespect from his season in Calgary. The "Real Deal," indeed.

21. San Jose Sharks

Previous ranking: 8

Is Peter DeBoer the next change to be fired? The Sharks are off to a nightmarish start, going 0-4-0 and scoring five goals in four games. GM Doug Wilson already pushed one panic button, signing Patrick Marleau to bolster his lineup of not-exactly-ready-for-prime-time youngsters and underperforming vets. Martin Jones, who has an .854 save percentage in three games, is signed through 2024 with a \$5.75 million cap hit and a no-trade clause. DeBoer is in the first year of a new contract. But if things spiral, is he safe?

22. Chicago Blackhawks

Previous ranking: 21

Alexander Nylander is the next Stan Bowman reclamation. How's this for a hasty reaction? With a goal on opening night, obviously the Sabres' castoff will become the next Dylan Strome/Drake Caggiula type for Bowman's Blackhawks.

23. Anaheim Ducks

Previous ranking: 28

John Gibson is the best player on the team. He's 3-0-0 in three games and has stopped 98 of 101 shots on

goal. Just like last season, he's carrying the Ducks to wins they might not otherwise deserve.

24. Detroit Red Wings

Previous ranking: 29

The top line is straight fire. The Wings have themselves something with Tyler Bertuzzi, Anthony Mantha and Dylan Larkin as their No. 1 forward unit. No, Mantha's five goals in three games isn't exactly what you'd call a sustainable pace. But no matter where the numbers end up, GM Steve Yzerman has to be thrilled with the way this trio plays.

25. Arizona Coyotes

Previous ranking: 19

They're still offense challenged. The Coyotes have scored one goal in two games, which wouldn't be a concern if Arizona wasn't 28th in the NHL last season in offense (2.55). But no worries: Our dear sweet Phil Kessel simply hasn't gotten it going yet.

26. Columbus Blue Jackets

Previous ranking: 22

The goaltending will be the end of them. Joonas Korpisalo (.851) and Elvis Merzlikins (.825) are both among the bottom four netminders in the NHL at the start of the season. GM Jarmo Kekalainen indicated there might be an early-season audition before he figures out if the position needs to be addressed. He might want to reach out to some new actors.

27. Vancouver Canucks

Previous ranking: 24

Quinn Hughes might get more Calder love than Jack. Hughes looked as if he belonged in the NHL the moment he stepped on the ice, and the Canucks' rookie looks as if he's ready to establish himself as an essential piece of their young core. He looks as adjusted to the big leagues as brother Jack has looked a little baffled at times with the Devils.

28. New Jersey Devils

Previous ranking: 23

Can this team ever figure itself out? Even when the Devils were up 4-0 over the Jets -- a lead and a game they'd blow on opening night at home -- Taylor Hall lamented that they weren't playing the game the right way. Is this a symptom of a young team struggling, or something more systemic?

29. Minnesota Wild

Previous ranking: 25

Mats Zuccarello might have a rough season. The free-agent signee, on former GM Paul Fenton's watch, said he's "been terrible" to start the season

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

with the Wild. "It's simple plays that I normally do that right now are difficult for me. Just think positive and have confidence and make the play when it's there," he told TwinCities.com. The confidence should return. The question is if there's enough offense on this roster for it to make a difference.

30. Los Angeles Kings

Previous ranking: 30

At least Drew Doughty is having fun. The Kings probably aren't going to be a factor this season, but

between Doughty's four points in two games and shenanigans with Matthew Tkachuk -- not to mention a game-winner in overtime against Calgary -- Doughty looks like his difference-making self again.

31. Ottawa Senators

Previous ranking: 31

Yeah, it's a long, long season. The Senators are 0-2-0 with a minus-5 goal differential and an offense that lacks pop. They're going to be bad. They should be bad. They will be bad.



NHL Power Rankings: Hurricanes, Golden Knights and Bruins open season as the league's elite teams

It's the Carolina Hurricanes and everyone else right now. And then the Sharks

by Pete Blackburn

We're officially one week into a new NHL season and you know what that means... it's time for overreactions! Your favorite team is undefeated out of the gate? Oh boy, better block off your first half of June because Stanley Cup Final here we come. Your team has gotten off to a slow start and lost a couple of games? BLOW. IT. UP.

In all seriousness, hockey is a very dumb and unpredictable sport sometimes. I mean, the St. Louis Blues were in dead-last place at the turn of the calendar year last season and they raised a Stanley Cup banner to kick off this one. The pure unreliability of the sport is part of what makes it so beautiful.

But it's also part of what makes early season takeaways so tough. Every year there seems to be a few teams that sputter out of the gate, leaving everyone worried before they finally start putting it together. Conversely, there are some teams that catch us by surprise with strong play before we find out it wasn't quite sustainable.

There's plenty of hockey left for things to go right, or go wrong. Your favorite team will be okay... unless of course they won't be. After one week, we can only assess based on our own pre-existing expectations and an insanely small sample size. It's difficult!

So, basically, what I'm saying is this: Thank you for visiting the first CBS Sports NHL Power Rankings

post of the season, but this is all so very meaningless right now. Enjoy!

Biggest Movers

20 Sabres

17 Sharks

Rk Teams Chg Rcrd

1	Hurricanes	If anyone expected Carolina to be one-and-one after last year, this hot start should plant serious doubts. Not only are the Hurricanes 4-0-0, but they've completed dominated play for long stretches. I mean, they held the Lightning (the Lightning!) to two shots in 40+ minutes of play.	11	4-0
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2	Golden Knights	Vegas came out of the gate and punched the Sharks in the mouth mercilessly in back-to-back games. Their lone loss came against a very strong effort from the Bruins, but the Knights have looked good across the board. Mark Stone	3	2-1
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CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Rk	Teams	Chg	Rcrrd	Rk	Teams	Chg	Rcrrd
15	Panthers		3 1-2				
	We all knew the Sergei Bobrovsky deal wouldn't age well but YIKES!				defense sputter around like a car with mayonnaise in its gas tank might just convince him he's better off without hockey.		
16	Penguins		10 1-2	23	Canucks	3	1-2
	Evgeni Malkin and Nick Bjugstad are on the Penguins' lengthy injured list already. They've looked shaky on the back end and in net. And if you thought Sidney Crosby had to do too much last year, well... hold onto your butts.				Their season-opening trip to Alberta didn't go so well. Two goals in two games isn't usually going to get the job done.		
17	Red Wings		7 2-1	24	Coyotes	5	0-2
	Anthony Mantha might score 50 goals, but they're probably going to want some other guys to score too.				They still can't score goals. I know we all love Phil Kessel for being one-of-a-kind, but the Coyotes could use about six more of him.		
18	Islanders		11 1-2	25	Blackhawks	3	0-1
	Life is a bit tougher when you don't get lights out goaltending. There should still be major concerns about their goal scoring... hanging four on the Jets isn't impressing anyone.				Lost in Europe and haven't been heard from since. Better call Liam Neeson.		
19	Flyers		2 2-0	26	Sharks	17	0-4
	Undefeated, baby!				You could say it's been a rough start to the season for the Sharks. They've lost each of their first four games, including getting run over by Vegas twice to kick off the year. They've gone 1-for-17 on the power play and gave up three shorthanded goals in their first two games. For reference, four teams gave up three shorties or fewer through ALL OF LAST SEASON.		
20	Ducks		5 3-0				
	They're 3-0-0 under Dallas Eakins and John Gibson has a .970 save percentage. Surely that's sustainable.						
21	Stars		4 1-3	27	Devils	1	0-2
	Roope Hintz has looked great but he's going to need a little bit of help around him.				The Devils blew a four-goal lead to the Jets in the opener, then let up seven to the Sabres the next day. Cory Schneider is dealing with health issues already. Too early to talk about their chances of winning the 2020 offseason?		
22	Jets		9 2-2	28	Kings	1	1-2
	Turns out losing almost every important member of your defense and not replacing them is bad. Throw in some bad luck with injuries and it's UGLY. If Dustin Byfuglien was on the fence about returning, watching this				They had an exciting win over the Flames, but only		

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Rk	Teams	Chg	Rcrd	Rk	Teams	Chg	Rcrd
29	Wild		6 0-2	31	Senators	--	0-2
30	Blue Jackets		16 1-2				

The Hockey News

The Carolina Hurricanes haven't been as good as advertised – they've been better

Carolina entered the season projected to earn another playoff berth, but the early results are starting to make one wonder if the Hurricanes can go one step further and capture a division title.

By Jared Clinton

Look, we don't want to go getting ahead of ourselves. After all, as of Wednesday, we're only officially one week into the 2019-20 campaign. As such, it's difficult to draw much of a conclusion about anything given what we've seen thus far. Small sample sizes skew statistics, some teams have played far fewer contests than others and it's generally not a great idea to make bold proclamations about the state of one team or another until at least a few weeks into the season.

With that said, we can safely say the Carolina Hurricanes are about to embark the NHL's first perfect season, followed by a 16-game sweep of the post-season en route to the franchise's second Stanley Cup. Of that we can be certain after seven days of NHL action. Yep. Might as well end the season now and crown 'em.

We jest, of course, but it's not hard to understand the tongue-in-cheek prognostication of Carolina's future. After four games, the Hurricanes hype train isn't simply rolling or speeding along. No, the darn thing is clipping at such a rate that it's threatening to fly off the tracks. And not at all without reason. Simply put, Carolina has been spectacular.

On opening night, the Hurricanes constructed a come-from-behind shootout victory over the Montreal Canadiens. In their first road outing of the season, Carolina again clawed back from a deficit to defeat the Washington Capitals in overtime. This past Sunday, coach Rod Brind'Amour's group put on a stunning display to stun the Tampa Bay Lightning in an extra frame. And faced with a supposed-to-be up-and-coming Florida Panthers squad Tuesday, the Hurricanes thoroughly dismantled the Cats, scoring early and often to pick up a 6-3 victory and remain perfect after Week 1.

Granted, the Hurricanes' success isn't altogether surprising. Following an inspiring run to the post-season and a run all the way to the Eastern Conference final, the perception of Carolina entering the campaign was that they would be a contender in the Metropolitan Division. In The Hockey News' Yearbook, the Hurricanes were projected to finish second in the division and we gave Carolina 25/1 odds to stand atop the league as Stanley Cup champions, which was the 12th-highest probability of any club. We weren't alone in being bullish on the Hurricanes, however. Take a look at any pundit's predictions and you're likely to find Carolina high on the list in the Eastern Conference. Even oddsmakers had high hopes for the Hurricanes.

But maybe what is surprising, even this early, is just how good Carolina has looked. While true that they've

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

had some semblance of luck on their side – three consecutive comeback victories isn't exactly how they would have drawn it up if you would have told the Hurricanes they'd be 4-0 after the opening week of the season – the Hurricanes have looked equal parts fast, possession heavy, offensively dangerous and defensively sound. The numbers, albeit early, back that up, too. In terms of percentages at five-a-side, Carolina ranks ninth in Corsi (53.2), seventh in shots (53.8), fourth in scoring chances (56.3), fourth in high-danger chances (60) and tied for third in expected goals (57.5).

And while we should maybe hesitate to focus too much on one or two outings, the Hurricanes' performances in their two most recent outings, specifically, have been something to behold. Against the mighty Lightning, expected by many to again win the Presidents' Trophy, Carolina managed to hold Tampa Bay to two shots – two! – across the final 40-plus minutes of the contest. That's a lineup that contains some of the top offensive talents in the world, including Steven Stamkos, Nikita Kucherov and Victor Hedman, yet they were rendered almost completely ineffective through the final two periods and the entirety of overtime. And against the Panthers on Wednesday, the Hurricanes showcased the kind of killer offensive instinct that gives them legitimate potential to stand apart from the pack this season. Carolina leapt out to a 5-0 lead before Florida began to show any signs of life.

It's in that regard that the Hurricanes have been better than expected, too. Offensively, it sure seems as though the summer spent fine-tuning has paid dividends. Again, four games and all that, but off-season acquisition Erik Haula already has three

goals. Ryan Dzingel scored twice Tuesday to net his third and fourth points of the season. And Jake Gardiner, a late addition to an already arguably league-best blueline, has two points in two games. The result? An attack that has netted four goals per game. That's tied (with the Toronto Maple Leafs, no less) for the fifth-highest rate among the handful of teams that have played at least three games, for what it's worth.

What's promising, as well, is that a good chunk of the Hurricanes' offense has come on what appears to be a much-improved power play. After a mere 17.8 success rate with the man advantage last season, Carolina has struck five times on 15 power play opportunities through four games. And underlying numbers through four games suggest the success could be sustainable. Yes, small sample, but the Hurricanes' shots on goal rate is equivalent to 71.7 per 60 minutes of power play ice time. That's sure to regress, but even if it dips by 10 or so shots per hour spent on the man advantage, it would still put Carolina among the class of the league by season's end.

If there is one area to be cautious when it comes to the Hurricanes, it's in goal. Petr Mrazek has been mediocre in his two outings, outplayed by a wide margin thus far by James Reimer, who was tabbed as the 1B of the two-goaltender system Carolina appeared set to run this season. Right now, though, it hardly feels as though goaltending has the potential to be the Achilles heel it has been in the past for the Hurricanes. Because by all accounts, this Carolina team is good, and they might be even better than anyone expected.



**SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY**

Minors Roundup: Hurricanes recall Julien Gauthier, Checkers split opening games

The Checkers return home this weekend to add a banner to the Bojangles' rafters.

By Justin Lape

Checkers Roundup

The Charlotte Checkers split their first two games of the season and return to Charlotte this weekend for

their Calder Cup banner raising ceremony and an opening series against the Bridgeport Sound Tigers.

In their first game of the week, the Checkers dropped a 5-3 decision against the Hartford Wolf Pack. Janne Kuokkanen's return from injury was immediately felt as he got the scoring going just over a minute into the game. Then...it all went downhill. Hartford rambled off five goals in a row until they Checkers finally

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

answered back with a pair of their own including a goal from Julien Gauthier. Alex Nedeljkovic stopped just 18 of 23 shots in a rough opening night performance.

In their second and final game of the week, the Checkers earned a 4-2 win over the Springfield Thunderbirds. Special teams earned Charlotte the victory with the penalty kill standing tall and stopping all seven Thunderbirds power play opportunities. Morgan Geekie earned his first goal of the season and Gauthier found the back of the net for the second time in as many games.

Speaking of Gauthier, the Canes recalled the rookie forward on Wednesday. Gauthier has taken strides in his game since his rookie season in Charlotte and impressed in the preseason and training camp this year. The Hurricanes press release on the move is at the end of the article.

Swamp Rabbits Roundup

The Swamp Rabbits season gets underway on October 12th against the Jacksonville Icemen (Winnipeg Jets affiliate) and the team is holding a watch party for fans in Greenville, SC at Dave & Busters.

In transaction news, the team received forward Cedric Lacroix and goaltenders Callum Booth and Jeremy Helvig in roster trims from Charlotte. Lacroix was acquired in August from the Wheeling Nailers in exchange for future considerations. The team also released defenseman Ryan Polin and forward Lincoln Griffin from training camp.

About Last Night: A Perfect Start

After Carolina raced out to a 5-0 lead, James Reimer closed out the game with an impressive performance.

By Cody Hagan

For the first time all season, last night the Carolina Hurricanes won a game in which they did not trail at any point. The first period against the Florida Panthers was the best overall period of hockey the Canes have played this season and the results reflected it as they quickly jumped out to a 4-0 lead. From that point forward James Reimer stayed resilient and the Hurricanes are now 4-0-0 for the first time since the move and the second time in franchise history thanks to their 6-3 victory over the Panthers.

The Good - James Reimer

Returning to Florida for the first time since he was traded to Carolina, James Reimer was bound to be emotional. He struggled mightily in his time with the Panthers, but to be fair he played with some bad defenses and never could catch a break. To put in to

The Swamp Rabbits are also part of a nationally-recognized sports market. According to metrics that included average attendance, each team's tenure, as well as each city's economic standing, Greenville, South Carolina was named the second-best minor league market in the United States by Sports Business Journal.

CANES RECALL GAUTHIER FROM CHARLOTTE

Forward registered 41 points in 75 AHL games with the Checkers last season

Don Waddell, President and General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today announced that the team has recalled forward Julien Gauthier from the Charlotte Checkers of the American Hockey League (AHL).

Gauthier, 22, is looking to make his NHL debut after skating in all six preseason games for Carolina in 2019. The 6'4", 226-pound forward has scored a pair of goals in two AHL regular season games with the Checkers this season, after posting 41 points (27g, 14a) in 75 games with Charlotte in 2018-19. He added eight points (5g, 3a) in 17 AHL playoff games last season as the Checkers captured their first-ever Calder Cup championship. Gauthier has registered 68 points (45g, 23a) in 142 career AHL games with Charlotte. The Pointe-aux-Trembles, Que., native represented his home country at the 2016 and 2017 IIHF World Junior Championships, winning silver in 2017. Gauthier was drafted by the Hurricanes in the first round, 21st overall, of the 2016 NHL Draft.

perspective how poorly things were going for Reimer last year with the Panthers, before his start on Saturday against the Capitals he had not completed a 60-minute game since early February.

While his first period versus Washington wasn't his best, he settled down and went in to lockdown mode from there, allowing his team to come back and win in overtime.

Fast forward to last night and Reimer was just as good if not better than he was on Saturday. Once the Canes roared out to a 5-0 lead, the guys in front of Reimer got complacent. The defense became sloppy and there were a multitude of power plays for the Panthers. But through it all Reimer stood tall, facing 50 shots and stopping 47 of them.

There were many questions as to whether Reimer would even make the opening night roster this season and, once he did, whether the Canes had made the right choice in picking him over Anton Forsberg.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Through two games, Reimer has more proved his worth. While he and Petr Mrazek both have two wins, Reimer has looked more confident and been able to make more big saves than Mrazek, which means we could be seeing a 1A/1B goaltending situation once again unless one of these guys takes full control of the starter's crease. It worked well last year, so why not try it again?

The Bad - Penalty Trouble

For as great as the first four games of the season have been for the Hurricanes, one common thing has been a major issue - the penalties. Through four games the Canes have the sixth most minor penalties in the league, which has resulted in the penalty killers being overworked. The issues really arose starting in the Capitals game when they gave Washington six power play chances, and has continued since then with four for the Lightning and six more for the Panthers.

No one player is standing out as having taken more penalties than others, as eleven different players have taken a minor penalty and only three of those have made two trips to the box. But that may be more concerning than one single player taking a bunch of penalties like Andrei Svechnikov did last season because at least with that you can isolate said player and work with him to correct his issues. This is a total team issue and something Rod Brind'Amour is surely not happy about.

The penalties were the sole reason that the Panthers were able to climb back in to the game last night ,as they scored two power play goals in the third period to make it a 5-3 game. It was an amazing feat to keep the Capitals off the score sheet on the power play, but otherwise the Canes have given up a power play goal in every other game and that is a long term recipe for disaster. This team-wide issue is something that Brind'Amour and the coaching staff must figure out soon. It will begin to cost the Hurricanes games if it is not rectified.

The Great - Hot Start

For the first time since relocating to Raleigh, the Hurricanes are off to a 4-0-0 start. That's a remarkable feat — and they finally got a victory

without needing extra hockey, which is an improvement over their first three contests. The NHL has been put on notice by the Canes' start and they have done it all without Sebastian Aho contributing anything more than an empty net goal. Once he and Svechnikov get going, this team can be one of the best in the entire league.

Last night was quite different than the other three wins as the Hurricanes came out and took control early. Scoring four goals in the first and killing a very long 5-on-3 penalty, Carolina had all the momentum in their favor.

The overall most impressive goal of the six from a team standpoint was the Hamilton tally. Svechnikov skated in on a breakaway but was shut down by Sergei Bobrovsky. Svechnikov had the wherewithal to gather the rebound and in one spinning motion pass the puck across ice to Hamilton who didn't miss. The impressive part of this goal isn't the finish, it's the setup by Svechnikov.

Despite not having a goal yet, Svechnikov leads the team — and is tied for the league lead — with six assists, and his passing is noticeably better than last season. Many figured he would elevate his scoring game, but most thought it would be with over 30 goals, not with his play-making. The dynamic young Russian will light the lamp numerous times this year, but the assists show he's developing as a team player and once Aho gets going the two of them could be up there near the top of the league as a one-two punch.

We have officially entered uncharted territory for the Carolina Hurricanes with their 4-0-0 start and they are only going to improve from here. Once Brind'Amour gets the penalty issues leveled out and Aho starts producing points, this dangerous team will become deadly. They have proven they can play with, and beat, the best in the league with their victories over the Capitals and Lightning and now they have proven they can win in different ways as well.

Reimer has been fantastic in his two appearances and for now any goaltending worries seem to have been put to rest. With the Islanders and Blue Jackets coming to Raleigh over the weekend, it's conceivable to see a scenario where the Canes head out West at 6-0-0. After that, only 76 more to go!

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019



Canes Recall Julien Gauthier

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

Julien Gauthier is heading to the NHL, as the Hurricanes have recalled the forward from Charlotte.

Coming off of a 27-goal sophomore campaign, Gauthier picked up where he left off this season and

lit the lamp in each of Charlotte's first two games.

One of the last cuts from Carolina's training camp, Gauthier – the 21st overall pick in 2016 – now returns to Raleigh and awaits his NHL debut. The third-year pro has amassed 68 points (45g, 23) in 142 AHL games thus far.

Today's Links:

<https://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/canes-now/article235973337.html>

<https://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/canes-now/article235946227.html>

<https://theathletic.com/1278504/2019/10/09/james-reimer-proves-something-to-his-former-team-his-current-team-and-himself-as-the-hurricanes-go-4-0-0/>

<https://www.nhl.com/news/nhl-power-rankings-super-16-october-10/c-309926346>

<https://www.nhl.com/news/carolina-continues-fast-start-by-defeating-florida-facts-and-figures/c-309911570>

https://www.espn.com/nhl/story/_/id/27807432/nhl-power-rankings-1-31-poll-plus-small-sample-revelations-every-team

<https://www.cbssports.com/nhl/news/nhl-power-rankings-hurricanes-golden-knights-and-bruins-open-season-as-the-leagues-elite-teams/>

<https://thehockeynews.com/news/article/the-carolina-hurricanes-havent-been-as-good-as-advertised-theyve-been-better>

<https://www.canescountry.com/2019/10/9/20907150/carolina-hurricanes-minor-league-roundup-charlotte-checkers-julien-gauthier-recalled>

<https://www.canescountry.com/2019/10/9/20905891/about-last-night-a-perfect-start-carolina-hurricanes-florida-panthers-four-wins-five-goals-bobrovsky>

<http://gocheckers.com/articles/transactions/canes-recall-julien-gauthier>

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

SportScan

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

1108829 Carolina Hurricanes

Canes recall forward Julien Gauthier from Checkers

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

OCTOBER 09, 2019 06:26 PM

After playing all six preseason games for the Carolina Hurricanes, forward Julien Gauthier was disappointed to be assigned to the Charlotte Checkers of the American Hockey League when the final roster cut was made for the regular season..

But Gauthier has quickly returned. After scoring two goals in two AHL games for the Checkers, the 6-4, 226-pound winger was recalled Wednesday by the Canes.

Gauthier, a former first-round draft pick by Carolina, scored 27 goals in 75 games for the Checkers last season. He then helped them win the franchise's first Calder Cup with five goals and eight points in the 17 AHL playoff games.

The Canes (4-0-0) have back-to-back home games this week, facing the New York Islanders on Friday and Columbus Blue Jackets on Saturday.

News Observer LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108830 Carolina Hurricanes

'Worst game of the bunch.' Five observations from the Canes' win over the Panthers.

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

OCTOBER 09, 2019 10:34 AM

Five observations from the Carolina Hurricanes' 6-3 road win Tuesday over the Florida Panthers, in a game not decided in an overtime or shootout:

1. DOUGIE'S WORLD

For now, it's Dougie's World and we just live in it. Dougie Hamilton, who at times looks like a forward trapped in a defenseman's body, is playing tremendous hockey for the Canes. Long way to go, but he could be headed to a monster season. Hamilton, who scored a goal against Florida, appears loose, happy, fully at ease with his surroundings and teammates and it's showing in his play.

2. JAMES REIMER THE BATTLER

The word that keeps coming up with James Reimer is "battler." Good choice. He battled through the Caps game Saturday and won and did the same Tuesday against the Panthers, both on the road. Rod Brind'Amour said Reimer had some "weird-looking" saves against the Caps and had more Tuesday. Fifty shots is a lot of rubber and more than the Canes allowed in any game last season.

The Panthers' Sergei Bobrovsky lasted one period in net Tuesday. Reimer went the distance and should have been named the game's first star (Ryan Dzingel, even after scoring his first two goals for the Canes, probably would agree).

3. TEUVO TERAVAINEN'S CONSISTENCY

Forgive Florida coach Joel Quenneville if he was standing behind the bench trying to remind himself how Teuvo Teravainen got to Carolina. That's right, the trade with Bryan Bickell when the Chicago Blackhawks needed cap space and sent those two to the Canes. Teravainen has been as consistent as anyone in the lineup through four games and scored his first goal Tuesday.

4. 'WORST GAME OF THE BUNCH'

Coaches always enjoy wins that have "teachable moments" and areas that can be improved in practice. The Canes' first period was airtight and complete: tight structure, power-play goal, 5-on-3 penalty kill, strong play at even-strength and a 4-0 lead. Things got a little loose on the Canes side when the Panthers pushed back -- "We were in our end the whole time," Brind'Amour told the media after the game -- and the Canes had eight penalties in the game.

"I didn't love this game, probably the worst game of the bunch," Brind'Amour said. "Lot to work on, which is great. We're in a good spot and know we can be better."

5. SEBASTIAN AHO SCORES

Sebastian Aho has scored. It was an empty netter and it was late but it was what Aho needed. He had a team-high 13 shots in the first three games and had six Tuesday, winging away. "He's been pressing," Brind'Amour said. "Hopefully it

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

relaxed him and he can go play his game." Now, if Aho can get his linemate, Nino Niederreiter, going.

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1108831 Carolina Hurricanes

James Reimer proves something to his former team, his current team and himself as the Hurricanes go 4-0-0

By Sara Civian

Oct 9, 2019

SUNRISE, Fla. — It would be several levels of absurd to judge a goalie from a two-game sample size, but you can definitely judge a man by his post-game jam.

When Hurricanes head coach Rod Brind'Amour gave James Reimer his second consecutive start against his former Panthers on Tuesday, he responded with 47 saves on 50 shots, a cool demeanor in the face of potential implosion and the all-important win.

"Ahh, the legs were a little tired" he laughed. "Hey, you're just battling."

Then he blasted "Return of the Mack" by Mark Morrison throughout the building he was booed in hours before.

"Yep, that was me," he told The Athletic postgame. "I don't know where that came from, but ..."

Reimer's three-season, 123-game stint with the Panthers obviously didn't end on the warmest terms on June 30, when the Hurricanes traded the now bought-out Scott Darling and a sixth-round pick for Reimer. You can imagine how it would feel to play behind subpar defense then get traded for someone your old team immediately buys out.

And again, you can't make any grand declarations based on two games, but this season he's 2-0 with 79 saves on 84 shots and a .941 save percentage.

"It's a good feeling — anytime you face your old team you want to play well and you want to get two points," he said. "For us, we're just grinding, we're just trying to play our best games and accumulate as many points as possible. Tonight, everyone worked their butts off and sacrificed. It was just another heck of a win for us."

If you've been feeling like the Hurricanes' best start since 1995 is trying to battle last season's Canes for a "most overwhelming hockey experience of all time" banner at PNC Arena, it's not in your head. They followed up three consecutive overtime comeback wins with a four-goal first period in Florida. They allowed the Lightning zero shots in the second period, then let the Panthers drop 50 on them overall.

"It was nice not going into overtime for once," said Ryan Dzingel, who scored his first two goals as a Hurricane on Tuesday.

After Sebastian Aho's relief of a late-game empty-netter, every single Hurricanes skater except for Joel Edmundson has found the scoresheet. Incidentally, Edmundson's five-on-three play might've been the highlight of a high-scoring game.

I was watching the above clip with an equally impressed Tripp Tracy after the game, and he pointed out that the first half of Edmundson's effort was just as important as the second because of the way he was commanding where the Panthers were allowed to shoot.

On a five-on-three.

"He's been solid, right?" Brind'Amour agreed. "Doing that thing we just talked about on the penalty kill, sacrificing your body. If you want to win, you've gotta have that.

That's why you trade for Edmundson.

"I think it's just everybody, every guy in that lineup is contributing," said Dzingel, who scored one on his former goalie Sergei Bobrovsky before the Panthers pulled him. "That's pretty cool — it doesn't happen with many teams, where you get every single guy producing and playing well, everyone is tugging from the same rope. I think that's the biggest thing, when you can get every guy involved and contributing."

Trending up

Literally everyone.

This started out as a Teuvo Teravainen appreciation post but Reimer had other plans. Anyway, I had already asked Dzingel what it's like to play with a guy who could score five assists a night and still manage to fly under the radar: "Yeah, he's quiet out there, he's not one of those guys who are flashy — I mean, he can be, but he just gets the job done every night," he echoed one of Brind'Amour's Turbo-isms. "Not the loudest guy in the locker room but he gets his talking done on the ice." His talking has been in the form of one goal and four assists in five games, leading the league with four power play points. Most of those power play apples have come from the circle, where I'm convinced the Hurricanes are deploying him to fake defenders into thinking he's going to shoot. He's got a great, "flashy" shot, but as Dzingel said, he'll opt for getting the job done over flexing it any day.

Best game of Haydn Fleury's NHL career? He was key in what Brind'Amour called the best play of the game:

And quality of that play — especially when it'd come right after that Edmundson-as-human-sacrifice five-on-three — aside, Brind'Amour had to be happy at a stat sheet that read "GOAL: Ryan Dzingel ASSISTS: Martin Necas, Haydn Fleury."

You could see Fleury's confidence growing throughout his two-assist (career-high), plus-two night and he was rewarded with 15:05 TOI. That's five minutes more than his previous two games. It's taken a lot for Brind'Amour to trust him and that's reflected in his brief ice time, but if he keeps this up he just might turn into what the team that drafted him seventh overall thought he could become.

The thing about Dougie Hamilton is when he's got the juice, he's generally got it on both sides of the ice (and vice versa for his periods of struggle). Not only is he No. 10 in the

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

league in power play points (two goals, three assists), but, umm ...

You can't see it in the clip, but he wagged his finger at Aleksander Barkov after making that save. When you've got the juice, you've got the juice, but we've already gone over how Hamilton tends to excel on defense when he's scoring.

People who currently lead the National Hockey League with six assists: Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl (aka the Oilers as a team), Matt Duchene and Andrei Svechnikov.

I was going to call attention to a controversy for the ages, until I realized it's Erik "Bo-Time" Haula, and Ryan "Bo-Berry Biscuit" Dzingel. Both can co-exist peacefully in this kingdom, where the Hurricanes have now scored a power play goal in each of their first four games. The Canes are tied for third in the league with a 33.3 percent power play conversion rate, and they're second with five goals (Buffalo's got six). Trends like that, new guys like the aforementioned, Necas and Jake Gardiner contributing and actual puck movement have me thinking this isn't a fluke.

Aho has been prone to slow starts his entire NHL career, save for last season. You could see his anxiety that it might happen again this season everywhere — he'd do just a little too much on a play, he'd break a stick on the bench in frustration. He's an intense, competitive dude. That's why an empty-netter at the end of a game that was already won actually mattered.

"Even Aho getting an empty-netter at the end, he's been pressing. He was shooting everything from all over trying to get a goal," Brind'Amour said. "Hopefully that relaxes him to go out and play his game."

That the team went undefeated without its best scorer scoring is just another sign that this is all for real.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108888 New York Islanders

Barry Trotz ponders lineup changes after Islanders' soft start

By Andrew Gross

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Updated October 9, 2019 5:03 PM

There was no practice for the Islanders on Wednesday — a Collective Bargaining Agreement-mandated day off — but there was plenty of work for Barry Trotz as he sifted through the rubble of Tuesday night's lazy 5-2 loss to the Oilers.

The Islanders coach acknowledged he has some lineup decisions to make before Friday night's playoff-rematch game at Carolina after his team went an uninspiring 1-2-0 on its season-opening homestand.

"Right now, I'm considering a lot of changes with guys that aren't working hard," Trotz said minutes after Tuesday's loss. "The first three games, our starts have not been good.

You can't come out slow and rely on your goaltending to keep you in it until you get going. We've got to be better."

The Islanders have only been outscored 3-2 in the first periods but have consistently lost puck battles, struggled to complete passes and enter the offensive zone. Bad penalties have also been an issue, particularly by usually reliable second-line center Brock Nelson, who has taken five minors so far.

That's surely not what Trotz was hoping to see or feel about his team after three games, not after it finished second in the Metropolitan Division last season with 103 points before being swept in the second round by the Hurricanes.

The Hurricanes outscored the Islanders, 13-5, in their sweep and are leading the Metropolitan Division with a 4-0-0 mark.

One lopsided playoff series loss aside, the Islanders' fueled their success last season with a relentless work ethic.

"I don't think that was a very good representation of who we really are," captain Anders Lee said of Tuesday's loss. "We weren't heavy at all."

So where does Trotz turn? Much will become evident at Thursday's practice in East Meadow.

He shook up his lines starting in the second period on Tuesday, benching Nelson for a stretch, double-shifting Mathew Barzal at times and finally winding up with Barzal in between Anthony Beauvillier and Michael Dal Colle, Nelson centering Josh Bailey and Leo Komarov and Derick Brassard on a line with Lee and Jordan Eberle in the third period.

Tom Kuhnhackl, praised by Trotz throughout training camp for his "Swiss Army knife" versatility and work ethic, is a likely candidate to enter the lineup after being a healthy scratch the first three games. Dal Colle's spot is in danger as he's gone without a point in three games and looked ineffectual. Burly Ross Johnston has also been a healthy scratch for three games and Trotz might look to his grit for the lineup.

Trotz must also decide whether to stick with his usual top line of Barzal between Lee and Eberle. The trio has combined for two points with Barzal notching a secondary assist on Lee's goal in Sunday's 5-2 win over the Jets.

"I thought they weren't supporting the puck," Trotz said. "Barzy will do some of his things on the outside but you've got to have someone at the net so if you throw it there you can create some chaos. We had guys lining up for one-timers in the corner but nobody at the net."

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1108889 New York Islanders

As Noah Dobson gains Barry Trotz's trust, other Islanders' spots could be in jeopardy

By Arthur Staple

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Oct 9, 2019

Noah Dobson had a couple of cool moments in his NHL debut — the solo lap for warmups, the first NHL point off a good feed for Matt Martin. But the coolest aspect of the 19-year-old getting into his first game for the Islanders may simply be the reminder to the rest of the team that no one's spot is assured.

"You're going to have to make a decision," Trotz said on Tuesday morning, before he'd even confirmed that Dobson was getting in over a healthy Johnny Boychuk. "We've got 23 players I think can play. It's good and it's problematic, too. The plan is to filter guys in and out a bit, maybe more than last year. There's a comfort level with those guys. Noah will be part of that."

After Tuesday's 5-2 thumping by the Oilers, Trotz's words ring a little stronger in the ears of a few Islanders who have not looked sharp yet. Boychuk's metrics weren't great from his first two games, but Scott Mayfield, another of the right-handed defensemen who started ahead of Dobson the first two games, has the lowest expected goals-for percentage (39.8) of any Islander through three games, courtesy of Natural Stat Trick.

The Devon Toews-Mayfield pair has struggled. Up front, where Tom Kuhnhackl and Ross Johnston have been waiting their turns — not exactly two high-end prospects like Dobson, but still options — Michael Dal Colle has been decent but not terribly effective, and Brock Nelson sat for most of the second period on Tuesday after taking three minors in the first.

"We let everybody else play for a while," Trotz said of Nelson.

After that kind of soft stinker, when the Islanders got the expected effort from Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl, but also got outworked by the likes of Jujhar Khaira and Patrick Russell, Trotz hinted at changes. He never seemed quite so disgusted with his crew in the first six weeks of 2018-19, when the system and details he was teaching needed time to sink in.

Now, just three games in, he's expecting more.

"I want guys who are playing hard," he said, singling out Anthony Beauvillier. The 22-year-old and Leo Komarov have been the Isles' two best forwards.

Back to Dobson. After he made the team a week ago, it seemed that keeping a 19-year-old just to have him in street clothes was a bit of a folly. But Dobson didn't play the first two games as Trotz went with his veterans.

"The main thing just was to stay patient," Dobson said. "Obviously I want to play. At the same time, I understand we have six veteran D, just trying to wait for my opportunity. Getting those NHL touches in practice, just growing makes me better, so when I get the opportunity I want to run with it."

He built up some equity with Trotz through practice and got his chance Tuesday. There were some first-period jitters, which were harder to notice since his fellow Isles played their third-straight listless first period, but Dobson showed his good stride and high IQ from then on. Trotz gave him extra minutes once the game was out of hand, and he not only

produced that first point in the third, he was in the right spot plenty of times.

"For a first game against a team that was wheeling around and getting a little free rein, I thought he did really well," Trotz said. "Made a great play on Marty's goal, he jumped in. Even on the last couple shifts he was all alone, we just didn't get him the puck. He's got great instincts, the hockey IQ, the poise, all that. It's outstanding."

The Isles have Wednesday off and then one practice before visiting the 4-0-0 Hurricanes and receiving the revamped Panthers and Cup champion Blues at the Coliseum. There is no panic, but the edge in Trotz's voice after Tuesday's loss said volumes. He clearly felt his team was past games like the one Tuesday, when it lost the majority of the puck battles and barely generated anything at even strength.

"We know what we need to do," Komarov said. "It's nothing surprising to us anymore. But we don't do it for 15 or 20 minutes. Has to be the whole game, something we all know."

They still haven't had one of those. And with a kid like Dobson in the mix now and gaining his coach's trust, the changes could come faster than any of the Islanders would have thought.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108846 Columbus Blue Jackets

Cam Atkinson gives Columbus Blue Jackets a needed scoring lift early on

Henry Palattella The Columbus Dispatch @hellapalattella

Oct 9, 2019 at 6:11 PM

At the start of training camp, coach John Tortorella said the Blue Jackets needed more out of Cam Atkinson. Through three games, Atkinson appears to be ready to step up to Tortorella's challenge.

The veteran right winger leads the Blue Jackets with two goals, both on the power play.

"Every year is a little different," Atkinson said. "I think this year we have a little different personnel where I have the puck a little more and can shoot more. I take a lot of pride in my game on the power play."

Atkinson's goal scoring has come at a time while he's still adjusting to a new linemate in Gustav Nyquist, who joined the Jackets in the offseason.

"We're trying to learn each other's tendencies," he said. "I think it's been pretty good so far."

Atkinson's penchant for scoring on the power play was on display Monday when he found the net off a pass from Alexander Wennberg 10 seconds into a man advantage in the first period. The goal was the 40th of his career on the power play, tying him with R.J. Umberger for second in Blue Jackets history (Rick Nash had 83).

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Atkinson acknowledge that the milestone was “cool,” but he’s not focusing on individual accolades.

“I don’t really think about those records,” he said. “If I’m scoring goals, that means I’m making things happen.”

For the Blue Jackets to make the playoffs for a fourth consecutive season, Atkinson will need to continue to score. He said he feels up to the task.

“I’ve been in this league a long time; I don’t have to switch my game up,” he said. “I’ve been able to score goals; I love scoring goals. If I’m scoring goals, I’m helping the team win. That’s my best attribute.”

Lilja, Nyquist impress

While Jakob Lilja is second-to-last on the Blue Jackets in ice time, Tortorella still likes what he’s seen out of the rookie from Sweden.

“I like his versatility and all the different spots I can put him in,” the coach said. “I still haven’t given him the ice time I’d like to.”

Another new face who has impressed Tortorella is Nyquist, who quickly appears to be making a home for himself on the top line with Atkinson and Pierre-Luc Dubois.

“When we were protecting the lead, I put him out there. I trust him that way away from the puck,” Tortorella said. “He’s a really good player.”

Defensive shifting

The Blue Jackets have had a different defensive lineup in each of their three games, and if Wednesday’s practice is any indication, the pairings for Friday’s game against Anaheim will probably be different, as well.

Seth Jones and Zach Werenski skated together at practice, as they did Monday night against Buffalo, but the other pairs were shuffled. Markus Nutivaara was paired with Ryan Murray, Vladislav Gavrikov with David Savard and Scott Harrington with Dean Kukan.

“I need to rotate those guys a little bit,” Tortorella said. “I’m not sure what it’s going to be (on Friday). None of them deserve to sit out, but there are only six spots.”

Josh Anderson was the only skater absent at practice Wednesday. He’s day-to-day with an upper-body injury.

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1108847 Columbus Blue Jackets

Joonas Korpisalo happy to get postgame hug after Columbus Blue Jackets’ victory

Henry Palattella The Columbus Dispatch @hellapalattella
Oct 9, 2019 at 6:10 PM

Right after the Blue Jackets’ overtime win over the Buffalo Sabres on Monday night, goaltender Joonas Korpisalo found himself in an unfamiliar place — in Nick Foligno’s arms.

In the years prior, Foligno and Korpisalo’s rituals after wins would vary, ranging from handshakes to headbutts. The hug, however, was almost always reserved for Foligno and starting goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky.

Bobrovsky’s offseason departure left Korpisalo and Elvis Merzlikins as the Jackets’ goaltenders, and the two combined to give up 11 goals in the first two games.

Korpisalo flipped that script Monday, stopping 15 of 18 shots in a 4-3 win, the first overtime victory of his career.

“It feels good,” Korpisalo said. “It feels good for the whole team.”

Korpisalo came into Monday’s game winless in nine career overtime games.

“My game doesn’t change too much (in overtime),” he said. “You can see the game get a little bit slower, especially if they’re circling around the zone.”

“I think overtime is fun. It has a lot of scoring chances, and you get a chance to either make a big save or give up a big goal. There are two sides to that one. It’s a different feeling.”

The Jackets’ took their first lead of the season Monday on first-period goals by Oliver Bjorkstrand and Cam Atkinson. That lead evaporated in the second period, however, as Buffalo’s Marcus Johansson and Jeff Skinner got shots past Korpisalo to tie the score at 2. The only other goal he allowed was on a 6-on-4 Buffalo advantage in the final minutes of regulation.

“Things change fast in a hockey game,” Korpisalo said. “It doesn’t matter if you’re up 10-0 or down 10-0. ... My job doesn’t change — I stop the puck; it doesn’t matter how the team plays in front of me.”

In addition to giving the Jackets their first win of the season, Monday’s victory also helped Korpisalo move past his rough season debut against Toronto, a showing he said was due in part to the nerves that come with starting a season.

“You’ve been waiting the whole summer for that first game,” he said. “I think once I got in, I was trying too much. It was a little hard to control my body a little bit. You want to be a little relaxed, but you also don’t want to be trying too much.”

That outing seemed like a distant memory Monday during his embrace with Foligno as the two jumped and met in midair. While it wasn’t perfect — Korpisalo joked Wednesday that his chest still hurts — it put the finishing touches on his first win as the Blue Jackets’ primary goaltender.

Korpisalo said he and Foligno are still trying to figure out what they want their official post-win ritual to be.

Whatever they choose, Blue Jackets fans are hoping to see a lot of it.

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1108848 Columbus Blue Jackets

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Seth Jones, Zach Werenski made the Blue Jackets' top pair again

Brian Hedger The Columbus Dispatch @BrianHedger

Oct 9, 2019 at 8:10 AM

After starting on different defense pairings, Zach Werenski and Seth Jones were reunited Monday as the Blue Jackets' top duo.

Each assisted on the Jackets' first goal in a 4-3 overtime victory over the Buffalo Sabres at Nationwide Arena, and both finished with positive plus/minus ratings (plus-2 for Werenski, plus-1 for Jones).

"We were only two games in ... so I think they're still trying to figure some stuff out," said Werenski, who skated with David Savard in the first two games. "Whoever I'm paired with, I just go out there and play."

The possession numbers for Werenski and Jones were slightly below average at even strength, but the Blue Jackets put more shots on goal than Buffalo when they were playing (7-6), and they were on the ice for goals during 5-on-5 and a power play.

The reconfigured second pairing was Ryan Murray and Savard, who have played together quite a bit the past few years.

The Jackets' top minor-league affiliate, the Cleveland Monsters, started their season in the American Hockey League with an impressive sweep of back-to-back road games.

The Monsters downed Laval Rocket, the affiliate of the Montreal Canadiens, 3-2 on Friday and 4-1 on Saturday.

Three rookies stood out, including forward Trey Fix-Wolansky scoring the winner in the first game with 1:40 left in the third period — a beautiful backhand under the crossbar. Rookie defenseman Andrew Peeke made an impression on the game's first goal, sending a great backhand feed through traffic to forward Calvin Thurkauf.

Matiss Kivlenieks made 27 saves on 29 shots for the win, and rookie goalie Veini Vehvilainen followed that with 30 saves on 31 shots on Saturday.

Veteran Zac Dalpe had two goals in the second game, and Eric Robinson and Markus Hannikainen also scored.

The "Russian Bear" is prowling for points again in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League.

Egor Sokolov, a 19-year-old power forward for Cape Breton who is 6 feet 4 and 240 pounds, continues to put up points after impressing last month with the Blue Jackets at the Traverse City prospects tournament and NHL training camp in Columbus.

Sokolov, who has 15 points on seven goals and eight assists in his first seven games with Cape Breton, went through two NHL drafts without being selected. The Jackets made him a late addition to the roster for the prospects tournament, and

he earned an invitation to camp by scoring four goals, tying for the team lead with rookie Alexandre Texier.

Sokolov, who's from Yekaterinburg, Russia, got into a preseason game against Buffalo before he was released from camp, assisting on Dalpe's empty-netter in a win. Now he is the QMJHL's third-leading scorer — four points behind Rimouski center Alexis Lafreniere, who is considered by many to be the top prospect in a talent-rich 2020 draft.

The Blue Jackets had exclusive signing rights with Sokolov after extending him a tryout offer for camp but passed on extending an entry-level contract. That doesn't mean they aren't interested. Sokolov, who is not eligible to sign as a free agent again until after the draft in June, has likely put himself solidly on the Jackets' radar.

Columbus Dispatch LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108849 Columbus Blue Jackets

Blue Jackets learning they must play their way to win

Brian Hedger The Columbus Dispatch @BrianHedger

Oct 9, 2019 at 7:27 AM

He could've blown up, ranting and raving about undisciplined play and a blowout loss.

Instead, Blue Jackets coach John Tortorella calmly told reporters Saturday in Pittsburgh that a 7-2 loss to the Penguins — a team neither he nor his players particularly like all that much — was a teachable moment.

"We knew there were going to be lessons like this for us," he said. "The most important thing now is how we handle it. 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."

The Blue Jackets did just two days later, keeping their focus and poise in a 4-3 overtime win Monday over the Buffalo Sabres. It was their first win, but also a shining example of what Tortorella has preached since the start of training camp.

When the Jackets "stay above the puck" — keeping more players between their own net and attacking players — they can make life difficult for opposing teams. When they press too hard to score, getting too many guys caught behind the puck, they can really make life difficult for their own goalies.

In the season opener Friday against the Toronto Maple Leafs, a 4-1 loss in which the Jackets allowed two power-play goals, they did a solid job of playing their style and limiting odd-man rushes. According to naturalstatstrick.com, they had more 5-on-5 shot attempts (41-40), generated more scoring chances (18-12) and had two more high-danger chances (6-4).

The Jackets just didn't convert enough of them into goals.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

It was similar in Pittsburgh for nearly half the game, before the Penguins built a 3-1 lead and pulled the Jackets out of their disciplined approach in the neutral zone. They got caught out of position, creating waves of odd-man rushes against rookie goalie Elvis Merzlikins — making his NHL debut — and paid a humbling price.

Pittsburgh dominated in shots (40-30), even-strength attempts (58-41), scoring chances (31-17) and high-danger chances (11-8).

“You look at the scores and you think we laid a couple of eggs in our first two games,” Tortorella said. “I don’t think we did that at all. I think we played really well for a lot of the games, but our composure against Pittsburgh, it just blew up on us.”

The Jackets fixed it against Buffalo, controlling the game by staying disciplined. It wound up being a tight game thanks to four more Columbus penalties and two more power-play goals allowed, but the Jackets were the better team overall. They took 53.3 percent of the even-strength shot attempts, outshot the Sabres 44-18 and generated 10 more scoring chances (23-13).

“It’s not like we’re going to put ourselves in a cocoon here and just circle ourselves around the goalie,” Tortorella said in the preseason. “We are attacking offensively, but we have to be smart ... and I think our guys saw it, especially in that Tampa (Bay playoff) series (last season). If you play good defense, you end up with the puck more.”

Columbus Dispatch LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108850 Columbus Blue Jackets

Out with the old, in with a new-look power play for the Blue Jackets

By Aaron Portzline

Oct 9, 2019

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Blue Jackets are tired of talking about the players who left last summer as free agents, and the fans are (mostly) done reading about them, too.

But it’s impossible to explore the Blue Jackets’ new-look power play without noting that Artemi Panarin is no longer a permanent resident of the left faceoff circle, and that late-season addition Matt Duchene is no longer taking the faceoffs and working the wheel.

It might be a stretch to say the Blue Jackets have completely disassembled and rebuilt their much-maligned power play over the summer, but they did install — by necessity — some new parts.

“(Early in training camp), if you were trying to figure out who was on the power play, you would have been thoroughly confused,” said Blue Jackets assistant coach Brad Larsen, who has come under significant criticism during the past two

years as the unit has tumbled from 12th in the NHL (in 2016-17) to 25th (2017-18) and 28th last season.

“With some guys exiting, it allows new guys opportunity,” Larsen said. “You add (Gustav) Nyquist and some of the young guys (Alexandre Texier and Emil Bemstrom). It could be a blend of old and young. It could be just veteran guys.

“Nobody’s set in stone in where they’ll be, or which unit they’re going to be on. We’re going to wait and see who has chemistry and see how this plays out.”

The Blue Jackets are off to a 3-for-9 (33 percent) start in the first three games, and — true to Larsen’s word — they’ve shown some different looks within the familiar 1-3-1 set-up.

Defenseman Seth Jones is still mans the point on the first unit, and defenseman Zach Werenski still runs the second unit. Cam Atkinson gets the right half-wall on the first unit.

Otherwise ...

Rookie Emil Bemstrom earned first dibs on Panarin’s old spot on the first unit’s left half-wall, but the veteran Nyquist has taken over there since the latter stages of the season-opening loss to Toronto.

Joining Nyquist and Jones on the first unit have been Pierre-Luc Dubois in the middle, Atkinson (of course) on the right side, and Alexander Wennberg at net-front.

The second unit, of late, has had Werenski on the point, Bemstrom, Nick Foligno and Oliver Bjorkstrand across the circles, and the rookie Texier at net-front.

The idea of Wennberg or Texier playing net-front probably deserves some explanation. Ten years ago, the ice immediately in front of the goaltender was a violent terrain, policed by crease-clearing defensemen who used both hands on their stick to clear a path for the goaltender.

It’s not like that anymore. Players who excel with the puck in tight spaces, thrive making plays from behind the net and are adept at redirections and deflections can survive there now.

But don’t be surprised to see Wennberg or Texier slide into different roles, perhaps allowing Foligno or Josh Anderson (day-to-day with an upper-body injury) to go in front of the net.

“We have a lot of guys who can play in different spots,” Foligno said. “Sometimes when you have such a polarizing figure (as Panarin), who has to play a certain spot, it kind of handcuffs you.

“We have so much fluidity in our power-play lineup now, and that can make us more dangerous. We’re not stuck in spots. It felt like we were too stationary last year.”

Atkinson led the Blue Jackets with eight power play goals last season, but he went the last 20 regular-season games in 2018-19 without a power-play goal and didn’t score in 10 playoff games, either. He has two already this season.

“Panarin had a good one-timer,” Atkinson said. “But I don’t know how many times he scored a one-time goal here.

“We’re going to be a little more dangerous. Guys are fighting for jobs and for spots, and I think it’s going to be that way all season. If you’re not getting the job done, there’s another guy waiting.”

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

The Blue Jackets expect Bemstrom to make a significant impact on the power play once he gets up to speed. His game comes to life on the man-advantage, not just his blistering shot but his ability to split the zone with passes across the top of the circles.

"That ... " Atkinson said, nodding, "... that's an NHL shot."

Bemstrom is on the second unit, which scored a clutch, third-period goal against Buffalo on Monday in the Blue Jackets' first win of the season. Foligno finished it, with assists to the rookies, Texier and Bemstrom.

Out with the old ...

"You can tell (the power play) is a place where Bemmer thrives," Foligno said. "It adds another weapon for us. It's great to see a young guy like that be comfortable in those situations.

"It seems like he knows how to find those little openings. He has a shot to make you pay, too."

The Athletic LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108862 Los Angeles Kings

Canucks take advantage of shaky goalie Jonathan Quick to rout the Kings

Staff Report

OCT. 9, 2019 11:16 PM

VANCOUVER, Canada — Adrian Kempe's stick stood no chance. With a mighty hack, the Kings' center smashed his fiberglass twig across the iron post of the Kings' goal. The metal pipe won, sending the stick's blade fluttering into a net that the Canucks breached seemingly at will Wednesday night.

The Kings didn't go empty-handed in their first road trip under new coach Todd McLellan, but they did end their three-game swing through Western Canada on the flattest of notes. In an 8-2 loss to the Canucks at Rogers Arena, they quickly fell behind in the first, faded after a brief second-period surge and were buried by four-straight Canucks goals in the third.

Kempe shattered his stick after the fifth tally, one of several odd-man rushes the Canucks put in the back of the net. He skated back to the bench with just a severed stick, a snapshot of the Kings' first truly frustrating night of the season.

What parts of Wednesday's loss did McLellan dislike?

"All 60 minutes," he said. "I think it's pretty obvious."

Less than six minutes had elapsed by the time the Kings fell behind. During an early Canucks power play, defenseman Quinn Hughes beat Kings goalie Jonathan Quick high on the glove side with a blast from the point. Forty-two seconds

later, Canucks forward Brandon Sutter fired a one-timer past Quick in a similar spot.

"Right off the bat, we got ourselves in trouble," McLellan said. "We weren't under control. We took penalties, we weren't able to kill it. Turned the puck over."

As the Kings' last line of defense, Quick couldn't bail them out either. In two games this season, the 33-year-old goalie has stopped just 42 of 56 shots. Though he was left on an island at times Wednesday, with many of the Canucks' 25 shots coming from dangerous areas, his eight goals allowed still represented a career high.

Entering the year, McLellan had been encouraged by Quick's preseason play, hopeful the player who once vied annually for Vezina trophies could rediscover a similar form. Instead, after just the season's first week, he was already being asked his evaluation of Quick's shaky start.

"We'll look at it," he said. "He's part of the group. ... He, as well as everybody else, has to be better."

Kings goalie Jonathan Quick makes a save against Vancouver forward Elias Pettersson during an 8-2 loss to the Canucks on Wednesday.

The Kings were down 3-0, after Canucks forward Elias Pettersson beat Quick from close range early in the second, by the time they finally got on the board. A Ben Hutton breakout pass and Carl Grunstrom centering feed sprang Kings forward Tyler Toffoli on a minibreakaway midway through the second period. He deked Canucks goalie Jacob Markstrom for his second goal in as many nights.

Early in the third, with the Kings again trailing by three after Canucks forward JT Miller banked a pass off Kings forward Ilya Kovalchuk and into the goal, Kings defenseman Sean Walker patiently stickhandled into the slot before rifling a wrist shot by Markstrom as well.

Those were the only blemishes on Markstrom's masterful night. He turned away 37 of 39 shots, including all 10 the Kings generated during four unsuccessful power plays.

Meanwhile, the Kings fell apart in their own end. Over the final 13 minutes, the Canucks scored four times. On a night that began with a grandiose celebration of the Canucks' 50th anniversary season, their fans chanted "Beat LA!" as they ran up the score.

"We didn't stick to our systems," Hutton said. "We were trying to be too cute sometimes, making some hope plays. When they were given an opportunity, they were capitalizing. We shot ourselves in the foot, and every time we did, they buried [us]."

LA Times: LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108863 Los Angeles Kings

Drew Doughty gets last laugh over Flames fans obsessed with Matthew Tkachuk feud

By JACK HARRIS STAFF WRITER

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

OCT. 9, 2019 11:33 AM

CALGARY, Canada — Drew Doughty would have been just fine without any extra attention this week.

Without being asked over and over and over again about his long-standing feud with Calgary Flames forward Matthew Tkachuk. Without seeing his face beaming back at him when he turned on his hotel TV. Without getting booed every time he touched the puck Tuesday night.

But that was never likely to happen during the Kings' trip to Calgary. The defenseman is too good a quote, too charismatic a character, and embroiled in too rich a personal battle with Tkachuk to have flown under the radar. So rather than hiding from the spotlight, he harnessed the hype. After stirring the pot, he remained emotionally steady. And 50 seconds into overtime Tuesday night, he scored a game-winning goal to lift the Kings to their first win of the season.

"I feel like the media gives him a perception, but I don't think anybody would trade that guy for anybody in the league to have on their team," Kings' goalie Jack Campbell said. "He's just the ultimate competitor. What a leader he is."

In a sport that often spits out stock answers, Doughty is a rare breed. He's brash, yet beloved by his teammates. He can sound outspoken without acting overzealous. Pushing the envelope has become his specialty. Yet, he rarely crosses the line.

"Drew's a colorful guy," Kings coach Todd McLellan said. "The star players in the league now, they're personalities, they're entities, if you will. Drew is that."

Doughty knew what to expect Monday afternoon when reporters swarmed his locker after the Kings' practice in Calgary. His contentious past with Tkachuk — a saga that began two years ago, when the Flames forward hit him with a high elbow, and has continued through a heated exchange of words both on the ice and in the press — remains a provocative storyline, especially north of the border.

After several minutes of downplaying the duel, he finally gave in to the repeated line of questioning.

"I think we both know who the better player is," Doughty said, dousing the melodrama with gasoline once again. "So if he wants to compliment me first, I'll give him one back."

Thus set the stage for Tuesday's theatrics. In the hours before the game, Doughty said he had to turn off his TV and ignore his phone as his renewed rivalry with Tkachuk made its rounds through the media.

"I'm like, just, this is enough," he said. "I'm just sick of it."

At the rink, he was heckled almost every time he touched the puck, and repeatedly bumped by Tkachuk well after it was already off his stick.

"He's going to run me, that's his job," Doughty said. "He's going to hit me as many times per game. I'm just going to not talk back and just let it be."

Late in the third period, Tkachuk whacked a game-tying goal out of the air, erasing a Kings' lead once as large as three. Doughty responded minutes later, delivering a sudden-death dagger with a one-timer that deflected off the stick of a Flames penalty killer and into the net, and bidding the

Calgary crowd farewell by banging on the glass and shouting at the stands.

"I don't even know what I did," he said. "I just started yelling at the crowd because they were booing me all the time."

Then, back at his locker, he tried to put the Tkachuk tension to rest once and for all. Though he doesn't care if he makes headlines, he doesn't crave them either.

"That's over," Doughty said. "We both thrive under emotional games."

This latest high-wire act epitomized what makes Doughty unique. Given all the pregame antics, his game on Tuesday could have easily gone awry. Instead, he provided an early jolt to a team coming off a second-to-last-place finish last season.

This is what McLellan hoped to see from the former Norris Trophy winner and five-time All-Star. Back in the preseason, the new Kings' coach said managing Doughty was unnecessary. He trusted the defenseman to not put himself in a bad spot. On Tuesday night, McLellan reiterated that stance. To some extent, he enjoyed the Doughty-Tkachuk tussle. He liked even more that Doughty got the last laugh.

"We want him to be respectful of the Kings, of his teammates and of our community, and certainly the league as well, and he's been that every time he talks," McLellan said. "He speaks from the heart. But he goes out and he backs it up."

LA Times: LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108864 Los Angeles Kings

Kings carry momentum into Vancouver for finale of season-opening trip

By ANDREW KNOLL

PUBLISHED: October 9, 2019 at 8:26 am | UPDATED: October 9, 2019 at 8:26 am

Fresh off a dramatic victory over the Calgary Flames, their first of the season, the Kings will get right back to work in Vancouver in the second game of a back-to-back set as they take on the Canucks tonight at 7.

The Kings won 4-3 just 50 seconds into overtime on Drew Doughty's kneeling one-timer during a power play, a redemptive moment for Doughty and the Kings alike. They had led 3-0, largely off the strength of a relentless first period in which they out-shot the Flames 20-3. Flames forward Matthew Tkachuk described the period as "almost like men against boys."

The Flames scored twice in the second period and with just more than a minute left in the game, Tkachuk, Doughty's nemesis, scored his second goal of the game on his second shot as part of a three-point night. The tying goal was keyed by a Doughty turnover on a weak clearing attempt.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Doughty's sense of relief, or perhaps vengeance, was felt as he crashed into the glass above the left wing boards and shouted a profane message at least twice at some Flames fans. That capped a three-point night of his own; he assisted on two goals as well.

"We're so pumped, but at the same time, we can't let a team come back like that. We're so excited we got that win," Doughty told reporters.

Though it was a see-saw contest, the Kings showed competitive effort throughout the lineup. Winger Ilya Kovalchuk, 36, was engaged throughout the game and now has four points in two games. Forward Blake Lizotte, 21, continued to bring tenacity to the lineup, while defenseman Sean Walker, 24, impressed again. The two connected on the Kings' second goal with Lizotte feeding Walker. McLellan has praised both players early in the season. He said that even players who had tepid moments in the season opener, a loss to Edmonton, improved against Calgary.

"We started the season by saying that everybody has to grow," McLellan told reporters. "Whether you're 35 years old or whether you're 20 years old, you have to find a way to grow."

The Kings look to keep it rolling in the final game of their three-game trip through Western Canada against the Canucks, who dropped their first two games of the season. Still, in the midst of a rebuild, Vancouver boasts last season's Calder Trophy winner as the NHL's top rookie, center Elias Pettersson, and a Calder candidate for this season, offensive-minded defenseman Quinn Hughes.

Orange County Register: LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108865 Los Angeles Kings

Kings handed lopsided defeat at Vancouver

Staff Report

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS |

PUBLISHED: October 10, 2019 at 12:18 am | UPDATED:
October 10, 2019 at 12:18 am

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The Vancouver Canucks got the victory they sorely needed.

J.T. Miller had a goal and three assists to lead the Canucks to an 8-2 win over the Los Angeles Kings on Wednesday night.

Miller finished Vancouver's home opener with a career-high four points, while Brandon Sutter had two goals and an assist and Chris Tanev added a goal and an assist.

The Kings were left with the disappointment of allowing eight goals to a team that had lost its first two games of the season.

"A team like that should not be beating a team like ours 8-2," Kings defenseman Drew Doughty said. "There's absolutely no way."

Kings coach Todd McLellan said there wasn't anything he liked about the Kings' game on Wednesday.

"Right off the bat we got ourselves in trouble, we weren't under control, we took penalties we weren't able to kill, turned the puck over," he said.

Elias Pettersson, Josh Leivo and Alex Edler also scored for Vancouver. Rookie defenseman Quinn Hughes scored his first NHL goal.

"We needed a win," coach Travis Green said. "Not necessarily because it was two losses. You just want to get a win. And when you have a new group as well you're not expecting to score eight goals. We'll take it."

Tyler Toffoli and Sean Walker scored for the Kings. Jacob Markstrom made 37 saves in the win. Jonathan Quick stopped 17 of 25 shots.

Vancouver opened the scoring on a power play 5:26 into the first period after Walker was called for tripping.

Hughes wound up and sent a slap shot from the point that soared past Quick for the rookie's first NHL goal.

"It's something I have been thinking about for a long time, just to get that one under my belt," said the 19-year-old Hughes said.

"I've told everyone from the start I'm going to try to get better every game and from game 30 I will be a different player. I feel really good right now."

Sutter added a goal 42 seconds later after the Kings failed to clear the puck. Sutter beat Quick on the glove side with a wrist shot.

A bit of patient play by Sutter early in the second period set up Vancouver's next goal.

After getting the puck in the slot, he waited for help and found Pettersson, who scored on a wrist shot for a three-goal advantage.

The Kings responded 7:28 into the second. Carl Grundstrom sent a crisp pass to a wide-open Toffoli, who slipped a shot past Markstrom on a breakthrough.

The Kings' Ilya Kovalchuk helped on the Canucks' fourth goal of the night.

Miller sent a backhanded pass into traffic from down low and the puck bounced off Kovalchuk and in.

The goal was Miller's first with the Canucks. He was traded to Vancouver from Tampa Bay last June.

"We continue to do a lot of good things. I don't want people thinking that we lost the first two games, it's a bad start," Miller said. "I think we felt really comfortable and confident after those games coming into this one. It's nice to see the pucks finally start to go in."

The Kings kept pressing in the third period, and added a second goal 6:51 in after Anze Kopitar left a drop pass for Walker along the boards. Walker beat Markstrom with a shot high on the glove side to make it 4-2.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

The Canucks added to their two-goal lead.

Just 40 seconds after the Kings' goal, Brock Boeser connected with Hughes, whose shot was tipped in by Tanev tipped it in for his first goal of the season and 100th NHL point.

Miller set up the next goal, getting the puck to Edler, who scored on a slap shot to make it 6-2 with 10 minutes remaining.

Less than two minutes later, Bo Horvat sent a pass across the top of the Kings' crease and Leivo tipped it in.

Sutter finished the scoring 16:03 into the final period with a long backhanded shot.

Doughty dug the puck out of the net and play continued for a few moments before the horn was blown. The play was reviewed and officials deemed it was a good goal.

"A team like that should not be beating a team like ours 8-2," Kings defenseman Drew Doughty said. "There's absolutely no way."

Coach Todd McLellan said there wasn't anything he liked about the Kings' game on Wednesday.

"Right off the bat we got ourselves in trouble, we weren't under control, we took penalties we weren't able to kill, turned the puck over," he said.

Orange County Register: LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108866 Los Angeles Kings

OCTOBER 9 RAPID REACTION (FEAT. DAN MURPHY):
CANUCKS 8, KINGS 2

JON ROSEN

OCTOBER 9, 2019

Rapid Reaction, feat. Dan Murphy of Sportsnet:

Postgame Quotes

Todd McLellan, on what he didn't like about the loss:

Well, all 60 minutes, I think it's pretty obvious. I didn't like any of our game. Right off the bat we got ourselves in trouble. We weren't under control, we took penalties, we weren't able to kill it, turned the puck over. So, that question's pretty easy to answer. You can probably write anything you want, and it'd be correct. I think you find out something about every individual each day, and they reveal themselves in certain situations, and we found something out about our group that has to be fixed, and we'll work towards fixing it.

McLellan, on the particulars from the loss that stick out:

There are a lot of things that go into the game. There's the mind and then there's the skill set and there's the systematic play and the ability to get involved in the right position, and I

thought as the game wore on and it got away on us, that just crumbled. So, it tells me that our group's got a long, long way to go. Some of the players we've counted on or we need to count on have to play a lot better or they don't belong in the league, and we'll have to look at some individuals.

McLellan, on how he evaluates Jonathan Quick's performance:

Well, we'll look at it. He's part of the group. Goaltenders have a tough job. They fit in with the other 19 players that dress and the coaches that stand behind the bench, and we're all in it together. But he, as well as everybody else, has to be better.

Drew Doughty, on whether it was hard to "park" Tuesday's game and emotion:

I mean, I ain't going to park it. It's just embarrassing. I mean, a team like that should not be beating a team like ours 8-2. There's actually no way. I know they had a lot of energy right off the bat because it's their home opener and they had their whole ordeal with the captain and whatever. But we had chances to come back, and then we just gave up a goal right after we scored a goal. It was a bad team effort by everyone on this team, I thought.

Doughty, on whether he looks at the back-to-back as an influence on the lopsided loss:

No, you can't. We play lots of back-to-backs throughout the season. We're expected to win back-to-backs. It doesn't matter. I know we went into overtime last night, but honestly it doesn't matter. You expect to win back-to-backs. It's a poor team effort. We've got to get back home and regroup and get better.

Ben Hutton, on the challenges in the loss:

There were a lot of things that went wrong. They popped in a lot of goals against us. We didn't stick to our systems. We were trying to be too cute sometimes and making some hope plays and when they were getting an opportunity, they were capitalizing on it. So, we kind of shot ourselves in the foot, and every time we did, they buried. So, that one stings.

Hutton, on any positives from the game:

Yeah, I feel like every game me and partner Walker are getting better and better. We're building more and more chemistry. We said at the start of the game every chance we get, throw it on net. Walks scored, which was nice, but as a team, it doesn't matter if you get pucks on net if the score's that at the end of the night.

Hutton, on his return to Vancouver:

This is where I started my NHL career. Obviously, it's always going to have a special place in my heart, so it was fun coming back. But, that game wasn't fun, that's for sure. So, that one hurt.

Hutton, on Vancouver awarding the captaincy to Bo Horvat:

Everyone in the league didn't know who the captain was, and the guys in the locker room here were asking me who was going to be the captain. I didn't know who it was, but I put all my chips in on Bo Horvat. The moment I got there, he's been a great leader. I feel like he's the one that deserved the captaincy the most, and I'm happy that they

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

chose him. He's a great leader on, off the ice. He's just a good all-around person and obviously a great player.

Hutton, on the Kings' 1-2-0 trip to start the season:

I feel like when we stick to our game, we stick to our systems, we're a tough team. What were the shots in the first period against Calgary? Like, they had one shot, maybe? I thought we were sticking to our system, everyone was in the right spot at the right time and when we're playing our game, we're a hard team to play against.

Postgame Notes

— With the loss, Los Angeles fell to 111-106-38 all-time against Vancouver, a record that includes a road mark of 44-63-19. These teams have three games remaining: October 30 and March 21 at Staples Center and December 28 at Rogers Arena.

— With the loss, the Kings fell to 1-2-0 against the Western Conference and Pacific Division, 0-1 in games decided by three or more goals, 0-1-0 when trailing after the first period, 0-1-0 when trailing after the second period and 1-2-0 when outshooting their opponent.

— Vancouver scored eight goals at home for the first time since February 25, 2003, an 8-0 win over Atlanta.

— Dating back to the end of last season, Los Angeles has allowed at least seven goals in three of Jonathan Quick's last six starts (3/26/19 @ EDM, 4/1/19 vs CGY, 10/9/19 @ VAN).

— In 17:57 of ice time, Sean Walker scored a goal, registered a plus-two rating, took four shots on goal, blocked two shots, and was not credited with a giveaway.

— Drew Doughty has registered a point in all three games this season (2-3=5).

— The Kings attempted 72 shots (39 on goal, 17 blocked, 16 missed). The Canucks attempted 59 shots (25 on goal, 16 blocked, 18 missed). Michael Amadio and Alex Iafallo led all skaters with five shots on goal.

— Los Angeles won 39-of-64 faceoffs (61%). Adrian Kempe won 3-of-4, Michael Amadio won 5-of-9, Anze Kopitar won 9-of-17, Trevor Lewis won 1-of-1, Blake Lizotte won 11-of-13 and Jeff Carter won 10-of-20.

The team's schedule for Thursday, October 9 will be posted upon arrival in Los Angeles.

LA Kings Insider: LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108867 Los Angeles Kings

GAME 3: LOS ANGELES AT VANCOUVER

JON ROSEN

OCTOBER 9, 2019

Vancouver Canucks 8, Los Angeles Kings 2

Final

Preview

Box Score

Ice Tracker

NBC Live Stream (requires subscription)

SOG: LAK – 39; VAN – 25

PP: LAK – 0/4; VAN – 1/2

First Period

1) VAN PPG – Quinn Hughes (1) (Tanner Pearson, Adam Gaudette), 5:26

2) VAN – Brandon Sutter (1) (Jake Virtanen, J.T. Miller), 6:08

Second Period

3) VAN – Elias Pettersson (1) (Brandon Sutter, J.T. Miller), 2:34

4) LAK – Tyler Toffoli (2) (Carl Grundstrom, Blake Lizotte), 7:28

5) VAN – J.T. Miller (1) (unassisted), 14:44

Third Period

6) LAK – Sean Walker (2) (Anze Kopitar), 6:51

7) VAN – Chris Tanev (1) (Quinn Hughes, Brock Boeser), 7:31

8) VAN – Alex Edler (2) (J.T. Miller), 10:00

9) VAN – Josh Leivo (1) (Bo Horvat, Tanner Pearson) 11:26

10) VAN – Brandon Sutter (20) (Micheal Ferland, Jordie Benn), 16:03

Los Angeles Kings (1-1-0) at Vancouver Canucks (0-2-0)

Wednesday, October 9, 2019, 7:00 p.m. PT

Rogers Arena, Vancouver, BC

Referees: #27 Eric Furlatt, #38 Peter MacDougall

Linesmen: #51 Andrew Smith, #89 Steve Miller

NBCSN, NBC Sports App, LA Kings Audio Network

LAK starters: G Jonathan Quick, D Ben Hutton, D Sean Walker, LW Kyle Clifford, C Michael Amadio, RW Trevor Lewis

LAK scratches: D Joakim Ryan, F Austin Wagner, RW Kurtis MacDermid

VAN starters: G Jacob Markstrom, D Troy Stecher, D Jordie Benn, LW Jay Beagle, C Tim Schaller, RW Jake Virtanen

VAN scratches: D Oscar Fantenberg, F Loui Eriksson, F Tyler Motte

LA Kings Insider: LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108868 Los Angeles Kings

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

REIGN DEFENSIVE UPDATE – BRICKLEY & DURZI
INJURED, REDDEKOPP & PHILLIPS READY

ZACH DOOLEY

OCTOBER 9, 2019

What once seemed like a crowded Ontario Reign blueline suddenly became much needed depth, after a pair of defensive injuries knocked a nine-man unit down to seven in advance of this weekend's games.

Per Reign Head Coach Mike Stothers, Ontario defensemen Sean Durzi and Daniel Brickley will both miss this weekend's home games, which is expected to push either Chaz Reddekopp or Markus Phillips into action on the backend. The Reign dressed seven defensemen on Opening Night, down to six for Saturday after Durzi's injury and now sit in need of a season-debut for the weekend ahead.

Enter Reddekopp and Phillips, who are more than worthy in their own right – the Reign opened the season with nine, AHL-caliber blueliners with only six or seven spots in the lineup depending on the alignment that the Reign choose to use. Stothers feels that both Reddekopp and Phillips have put in the work during practice to be fully ready to step in as needed.

"Chaz always makes sure he's ready to go whenever his name is called and you know what, Markus is the same," Stothers said. "This depth that we were kind of concerned about having too many, has kind of taken care of itself in a two-game set this past weekend. Playing back-to-back, it would be nice to get the big man [Reddekopp] into some game action and then we won't forget about Markus either, he's been working extremely hard, he's one of the hardest working guys in practice. The good thing is, they're doing everything they can to be ready and when their name is called, they'll do a great job for us."

Practice alignment this week has moved Reddekopp alongside defenseman Paul LaDue on a pairing, with Phillips skating as the seventh defenseman. Other pairings today were holdovers from Saturday in Bakersfield, with Mikey Anderson and Kale Clague together, and Ryan Stanton alongside Austin Strand. Reddekopp's experience, with a pro season under his belt, gives him the initial leg up to enter the lineup, though Phillips will get his opportunity too. For his part, while Reddekopp obviously wishes that it came under different circumstances, the second-year defenseman is ready to make his season debut, whether or not it comes this Friday.

"I think that's what it's all about, seizing the opportunity when it presents itself," Reddekopp said. "Being one of the lower D to start the year...obviously you don't want to see guys get hurt ever, but it could be big for me and I'm really excited to get the opportunity to play."

Reddekopp made some massive strides in his game from where he began at training camp as a rookie last season to where he stands now, thought the talent around him has done the same.

The former Victoria Royal finds himself in a situation similar to his rookie campaign, on the outside of the Top 6 looking in. Reddekopp made his season-debut last season in late-October but got into just three AHL games during October and November, with a short stint in the ECHL with Manchester included in there as well.

The 6-4 rearguard perhaps wasn't ready for a full-time role to begin last season, but showed growth and development in his play as he earned a regular spot in the lineup during the second half of the season, earning praise from Stothers during last season's exit interviews. His situation now is more a result of increased depth around him than any indictment of his current play, though he's determined to make an impact when he does get an opportunity.

"I think that's the main goal going forward," Reddekopp said. "When you do get in the lineup, I think that's what you've got to do, you've got to shot the team, the coaching staff, that you really want to be in the lineup and that you can be a good asset to the team and help the team win. Whenever I get in, whenever that may be, I'm just going to do whatever I can help the team win and do what I can to pump up the boys."

What the hard work of Reddekopp and Phillips, while not in the game day lineup thus far, has done is create a healthy competition on the blueline for the places during games. For those not playing, making that impression during practice is a must to make Stothers and his staff's decisions difficult, something that the Reign bench boss has praised both Reddekopp and Phillips for over the first couple weeks of the season.

"For their benefit, they have to, because when they do get that opportunity, usually you're evaluation is not lenient, that's just the nature of the business right?," Stothers said. "Their job is to make my job extremely hard. When you feel like you have nine D that are capable of playing, and probably should be playing, then they're doing what they're supposed to be doing and it's out of their hands that they're not playing and it makes it harder for the coaching staff. Should that level of work and preparedness drop off, for any one of the nine, then it makes it an easier decision to say 'okay, we can only dress six out of these nine guys, who's going in, or it's easier to go the other way and say he's an easy guy to take out.' Chaz is a great person, we know that, he's a great teammate and Markus is certainly showing early indications of that as well. We're going to try and get those guys in as soon as possible."

Things will officially shake out as we move towards the weekend and with a back-to-back set, there could conceivably be changes as well between the two games. The Reign are back on the ice tomorrow at 10 AM in El Segundo, before they begin their weekend at home against Colorado on Friday at 7 PM.

LA Kings Insider: LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108869 Los Angeles Kings

WAKING UP WITH THE KINGS: OCTOBER 9

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

JON ROSEN

OCTOBER 9, 2019

GAME STORY

Whether or not we want to admit it or breathe extra life into a personal rivalry fueled by the players' dislike as well as regular prodding from the media, the Doughty-Tkachuk storyline has provided for some tremendous theatre during its occasional flare-ups. Tuesday's game, a 4-3 overtime win at Scotiabank Saddledome, may not have elicited the same visceral reaction as seeing Jarome Iginla in an LA Kings jersey spattered with Deryk Engelland's blood, but that speaks to the allure summoned by this resuscitated rivalry. Last night's game was a tremendous hockey game, Game 2 of the regular season, and both of the primary actors involved were at their emotional and dynamic best. Kings fans should watch the After Hours interview. Tkachuk comes off well. He's got things to say, he sounds intelligent, he exudes personality. And even when the inevitable Doughty questions surfaced, he got in a sly dig. Not something overboard or emotional, but something appropriately subtle and with a sharpened edge. Doughty and subtlety are rarely used in the same sentence, but his "we all know who the better player is" retort, while similar to some of his other expressive comments directed towards Tkachuk, was as much of an exasperated response to the repetitive questioning as it was a shot across the Saddledome hallway. Even if we weren't predicting a gong show, it did seem as though Tuesday's affair would supply ample drama.

Brett Holmes/NHLI

Executing the structural blueprint instilled in training camp and with the raised emotions of having lost a difficult premiere in which they scored five times, Los Angeles opened the game with a tremendous first period that ended with a 2-0 lead and a 20-3 shots advantage. They streaked out of the gate on the backs of those looking to rebound from Saturday's outing, and McLellan acknowledged challenging Ilya Kovalchuk, Jeff Carter and Adrian Kempe. They were up for the challenge, "so, we quickly recognized they were in the game and got them a lot of ice time," he said. Kovalchuk was the most visible of the bunch, and even before winning a loose puck to the left of David Rittich to spark Tyler Toffoli's first goal, he'd also won another puck behind the net earlier on the shift before issuing it to Toffoli in the slot. His first three-point night in 11 months, it was easy to see why Kovalchuk was often the choice to double-shift alongside Blake Lizotte and Toffoli, given the decision to go with 11 forwards and seven defensemen. Kovalchuk is at his best when he's getting that regular shift and regular chances to make an impact in the game, which was part of last season's Catch-22. It helped Lizotte, whose energy was palpable and decision-making sound; the Kings almost scored a third time in the first period when he intuitively shot far-pad on a rush, forcing a dangerous rebound that just missed connecting with a net-driving Kempe.

Gerry Thomas/NHLI

After two games, Ben Hutton is fitting in well. He's a very good skater and appears capable of reading the play well while skating the puck up-ice. His patience early in the game navigated the Kings out of a tough spot after an icing kept several role players on while Bill Peters switched to the

Mikael Backlund line, and after Anze Kopitar (staying on with Kyle Clifford and Trevor Lewis) won the draw, Hutton held the puck long enough to skate it out of the zone and flip it (after a deflection?) into the Calgary bench. And though it was Walker's icing that led to the faceoff, he had another strong night and scored a goal in his nearly 20 minutes of work, at one point sprinting to beat Johnny Gaudreau to a 50/50 puck that he sent up-ice to Hutton, who deposited it into the attacking end and generated an offensive zone faceoff moments later. Speaking of Kopitar, though he was pick-pocketed on Tkachuk's first goal, that was a good play by Andrew Mangiapane to tie up Kopitar's stick, and the L.A. captain was at his hard-skating, stick-lifting, pass-intercepting, two-time Selke Trophy-winning best without the puck.

Gerry Thomas/NHLI

We've all been asked about the lack of review at the end of the game. All of your answers are here. These are my interpretations, which are assumptions and not based on particular conversations with the coaching staff. Importantly, remember there's extended review this season to include plays resulting in goals that should have been blown dead. Also important: Had these events happened anywhere from four-to-seven seconds later, review would have been initiated by the league. There are two plays many of us have been asked about. The first was the puck glancing of Johnny Gaudreau's glove towards Rasmus Andersson, whose shot popped into the air for Tkachuk to juggle and score (!) (!!!). The Kings could have reviewed that for a hand pass, but in my mind, that's a judgement call that's difficult to overturn. Rule 79.1, Hand Pass, states that "... play shall not be stopped unless, in the opinion of the on-ice officials, he has directed the puck to a teammate, or has allowed his team to gain an advantage, and subsequently possession and control of the puck is obtained by a player of the offending team, either directly or deflected off any player or official." Gaudreau inadvertently touched the puck, so it's arguable that he didn't direct it to his teammate. There's wiggle room for interpretation there, and if the Kings lost the challenge, not only would the goal have stood, but L.A. would have then had to kill a penalty for an unsuccessful challenge with 1:04 remaining in a tied game. I would assume a similar interpretation applies to the Tkachuk volley – that it'd be difficult to overturn the on-ice call of a goal, and that an unsuccessful challenge would've afforded the Flames a prime opportunity to win the game in regulation. I thought the volley to be above shoulder-height, but keep in mind depth and distance is distorted by parallax, there's little data at the moment on the success rate of challenging plays determined by newly expanded review, and there are a number of video coaches downstairs and Bill Ranford upstairs communicating. I'll see if I can get a little bit more on this conversation over the next few days.

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1108972 Websites

The Athletic / NHL rookie rankings to start the 2019-20 season

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

By Corey Pronman Oct 9, 2019 184

Today's column is a look at the top projected rookies of the 2019-20 NHL season, players who I think can play significant roles for their NHL clubs this season. I waited to post this column until a week into the season to see who made their respective teams and to get an early indicator of usage, although both those variables can change quickly.

Players must still have Calder Trophy eligibility, which excludes all players who have played more than 25 games in any single preceding season or in six or more games in each of any two preceding seasons. Also, it excludes any player who was at least 26 years of age by Sept. 15, 2019.

Inevitably someone will glaze over this part, but this is not a prospect ranking, merely this is projecting who will have the biggest single-season impact in 2019-20.

Cale Makar, D, Colorado

Makar starts the season as the favorite to win the Calder trophy. That is due to a combination of his elite skating and offensive ability, being one of the older players among the top rookies, how well he showed in the playoffs, and the fact that he's on the first power play alongside some very talented players in Colorado. If he can handle his own defensive responsibilities to earn top-tier minutes, he should put up a ton of points and be a big part of Colorado's team.

Jack Hughes, C, New Jersey

The first overall pick from this past draft is a player who should step in and be one of the best pure skaters in the league. The physicality of the league may be an adjustment as an 18-year-old at his size, but he should still make an impact offensively. I could see 50 points, if not more, from Hughes this season as someone who drives possession.

Kaapo Kakko, LW, New York Rangers

Kakko showed last season that he could be a top player versus men at the Liiga and World Championship levels, and I fully expect him to be a quality top-six forward for the Rangers. Even with his strong 2018-19, he is still 18 years old, and it's not fair – like with Hughes – to expect Kakko to be a star right away. I still see 20 goals as doable and someone who will be an important player for the Rangers.

Quinn Hughes, D, Vancouver

Quinn Hughes is one of the top prospects entering the league and should be a top-four defenseman for the Canucks right away. His dynamic skating, skill and IQ will allow him to make so many plays. I don't see him initially getting the kind of role Makar is likely to get, as Quinn Hughes is one year younger, but he's talented enough to force the issue as the season goes on.

Martin Necas, RW, Carolina

Necas has shown very well versus men for the last few seasons and is ready to take that next step. On a deep Carolina team he won't be asked to play a large role and thus may not put up huge numbers. I do still think he could help them make a run this season and be a driver of offense, even as one of their younger players, because of his high-end speed, skill and hockey sense.

Cody Glass, C, Vegas

Glass' game looked NHL-ready through camp and early into the season, and he was rewarded with an assignment playing the middle between Max Pacioretty and Mark Stone. Glass is an elite playmaker whose skating and pace – which was my one concern watching him in junior – have looked fine at the NHL level. His ice time could fluctuate once Vegas gets healthy, but I think he could force his way into being a relevant player in that lineup even when they're full.

Victor Olofsson, LW, Buffalo

The 24-year-old Olofsson took the long route to the league, but he's started the season very well playing on a line with Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart. Olofsson may not have the elite speed and skill to be a driver in the NHL at his size, but he's very smart and has a shot that can go up with some of the best in the NHL. He's in a position to succeed in Buffalo, and he could put up some numbers.

Alexandre Texier, LW, Columbus

Texier impressed toward the end of last season and opened this season in a significant role with Columbus. He is a highly skilled and intelligent player who has shown he can make plays versus men. I don't think he's an Artemi Panarin replacement, but Texier's a good player who could be a top-six-caliber forward this season.

Sam Steel, C, Anaheim

Steel started the season injured, but when he gets back on the ice, expectations are that he should be a quality NHL forward for the Ducks this season. He was good between the AHL and NHL as a rookie pro in 2018-19. He's a very talented playmaker who, if he can play at an NHL pace, should be a guy who creates a lot of chances.

Nick Suzuki, RW, Montreal

Suzuki had a very impressive camp for Montreal, following up a great OHL career, and opened the season playing in a scoring role for the Habs. Seeing how he handles the pace and physicality will be tests for Suzuki, but he has elite skill and offensive IQ, and he could produce offense right away.

Taro Hirose, LW, Detroit

In talking to scouts about rookies who could surprise, Hirose is a name that came up consistently. He's a highly skilled player with great vision who will get a lot of opportunity with Detroit. His skating has continued to improve, and I feel he's shown he can absolutely play at the NHL pace. If he stays up on the first power play unit and gets to feed Anthony Mantha all season, Hirose could turn heads.

Alexander Nylander, LW, Chicago

Nylander played on a line with Jonathan Toews and Patrick Kane through camp, which certainly doesn't put the pressure on him to be a driver for that line. After a disappointing season in 2018-19, this is a big opportunity for Nylander to show that he can be not just a good pro, but a good NHL scoring forward. I believe in the prospect and think he can get it done, but that is not a universal opinion in the scouting industry.

Other names to know (alphabetical order):

Emil Bemstrom, RW, Columbus

Erik Brannstrom, D, Ottawa

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Thatcher Demko, G, Vancouver

Dante Fabbro, D, Nashville

Adam Fox, D, New York Rangers

Barrett Hayton, C, Arizona

Ville Heinola, D, Winnipeg

Dominik Kubalik, RW, Chicago

Ilya Samsonov, G, Washington

The Athletic LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108973 Websites

The Athletic / Down Goes Brown: A brief history of NHL teams getting off to terrible starts that ultimately didn't matter at all

By Sean McIndoe Oct 9, 2019 42

We're one week into the NHL season. How's your team doing?

If you're a fan of someone like the Hurricanes, Blues or Bruins you're probably in a pretty good mood. Even fans of supposedly bad teams like the Oilers, Ducks and Sabres are feeling OK so far. All those teams are off to strong starts, the kind that inspire plenty of confidence and maybe even generate a little self-fulfilling "we can do this" momentum. At the very least, those October points count just as much as the ones in March and April and it's nice to get a few in the bank.

But what if your team is off to a rough start? They might still be winless, or already a few points out of a playoff spot. Maybe they've already had a loss that was so bad, so embarrassing, that it made you start asking tough questions. Maybe they're the Sharks and it's all of the above. What happens when the season has just started and every warning light on the dashboard is already flashing?

Are you screwed?

Well ... yeah, maybe. You definitely could be. Recent history is filled with teams that came into a season with high expectations, stumbled out of the gate and never recovered. Heck, the Coyotes do it pretty much every year. In this age of parity, where three-quarters of the league finishes over .500 and the mushy middle accounts for roughly 20 teams, even a bad week or two can make the difference between the playoffs and the lottery. Mix in the sort of bad vibes and occasional panic decisions that a slow start can generate and there's every reason to be worried.

So yeah, if your team has looked bad, they might absolutely be screwed. But maybe not, because while we've seen plenty of teams start poorly and never recover, that's hardly a guarantee. Remember, last year opened with the Bruins losing 7-0 and the Blues dropping five of six and eight months later they were playing for the Stanley Cup. Sometimes a good team just starts slow, shrugs it off and

gets back to playing at a high level. And in those cases, we often don't even remember how the first few weeks went.

So today, let's offer up some optimism for those fans who are watching their teams flatline early, by looking back through history at a half-dozen examples of terrible starts that turned out not to matter at all. Whether it was an embarrassing early performance, an immediate losing streak or even a rotten October start-to-finish, these teams gave us plenty of reason to worry. Then they figured it out, rolled through the rest of the year, and all was forgiven.

Could your struggling team enjoy the same sort of turnaround, or at least flip their seasons into something positive? Maybe. And at this point, for some teams, "maybe" will have to do. Let's crack open those history books ...

The 2015-16 Anaheim Ducks

The team: The Ducks were entering their fourth full season with Bruce Boudreau behind the bench and had already won three straight Pacific titles. They were the heavy favorites to capture another, coming off a 109-point season and a trip to the conference final. With a strong mix of youth and veterans and a top-tier goaltending tandem of John Gibson and Frederik Andersen, the bigger question was whether they could go further and maybe even win the franchise's second Stanley Cup.

The bad start: Their first four games were a nightmare, as the Ducks only scored one goal on the way to four straight losses. They snapped the streak with a home win over the Wild, but then lost five more. Ten games into the season, they had one win, just 10 goals, and had already been shutout five times. And on top of all that, an appendectomy had just taken Ryan Getzlaf out of the lineup.

The easy narrative: The window had closed, Boudreau had lost the room and it was time to fire everyone and tear down the roster.

Sample reaction: "While the Ducks are off to a horrendous 1-7-2 start as they prepare to face the Nashville Predators Sunday, many around the league are starting to wonder if (GM Bob) Murray himself will take the fall for this awful first month because, after all, he's the architect of this mess." – From the Ottawa Sun on Oct. 31, 2015.

But then: Despite the rumor mill, Murray didn't end up doing much of anything at all. The Ducks eased the pressure by rolling off four straight wins, starting on the road back to respectability. It was a slow climb, and they went into the Christmas break having won just 12 of 33 games. But they caught fire the rest of the way and eventually passed the Kings to take yet another division title by a single point on the season's final night.

How it all ended: The Ducks didn't exactly get the happy ending their second half seemed to be building to. That first-place finish earned them an opening-round matchup with the Predators, who pulled off a seven-game upset that cost Boudreau his job. Still, based on where they were at the end of October, even being in a position to be upset in the first round was pretty amazing.

They could be inspiration for: The Sharks. Just like those Ducks, this year's Sharks went from Pacific favorites to looking old and washed up almost overnight. They're not a perfect team, and they certainly don't have that Ducks team's elite goaltending. But it's a long season, and talent

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

tends to win out over time. That's worth remembering if you're a Stars fan too.

1979-80 New York Islanders

The team: By 1979, the Islanders had established themselves as one of the best regular-season teams in the league, racking up four straight 100-plus point seasons including a dominant 116-point year in 1978-79. But they'd never been able to get over the playoff hump, stalling out in the semifinal most years. On paper, they seemed like the team that should challenge the ongoing Montreal dynasty. But maybe it just wasn't meant to be.

The bad start: The Islanders limped out of the gate with identical 5-2 losses to a pair of fellow powerhouses in the Flyers and Sabres and were 1-3-0 through four games. They found their footing somewhat but played inconsistent hockey through the first few weeks. And those weeks turned into months; at the end of November, the Islanders were sporting an embarrassing 6-11-4 record and had only won back-to-back games once all year.

The easy narrative: Scratch that team off the contenders list. If anyone's going to take out the Habs dynasty, it will have to be someone like the Sabres, Bruins or a Flyers' team in the middle of a record-setting unbeaten streak. As for the Islanders, maybe it's time to move on from that Al Arbour guy behind the bench?

Sample reaction: "The Islanders return home tomorrow night for a contest with the Philadelphia Flyers, who lead the division with 21 points, 8 more than the Islanders. Then they play the Rangers at home on Tuesday. 'Unless somebody on our team cares,' said Arbour, 'it's going to be a very long year'." – From the New York Times, Nov. 10, 1979.

But then: The team heated up in December, although they didn't cross the .500 mark until mid-January. They won seven straight that month, all but locking down a playoff spot and allowing management to turn their attention to bolstering the roster. That came at the trade deadline, with a deal that saw the Islanders add Butch Goring from the Kings. That one worked out OK.

How it all ended: The Islanders never did get that showdown with the Canadiens, who were shocked in the quarterfinals by the North Stars. But they beat everyone else they came across for years to come. They'd win four straight Stanley Cups and wouldn't lose a playoff round until the 1984 final, a streak of 19 straight series wins that will never be touched. I guess they did care after all.

They could be inspiration for: Can I still say the Jets, even though they earned their second win last night? I think I probably can if we count training camp as part of their start; even at .500, everyone seems to want to dump on their chances. Nobody's suggesting that Winnipeg was ever going to become the next Islanders-like multi-Cup dynasty, but it wasn't that long ago that they seemed like they were on the verge of an extended run as elite contenders. Now, they're icing an AHL blueline and it feels like the window may already be closed. Maybe it is. But even one of the greatest teams of all-time looked the same way right before it all clicked back into place.

2017-18 Pittsburgh Penguins

The team: After becoming the first back-to-back champions since the cap arrived, the Penguins were firmly established

as the NHL's top team. But were they the best of their era? It was down to them and the Blackhawks, who they just happened to be facing in the second game of the season.

The bad start: That opening night didn't go so well, with the Penguins getting crushed 10-1 in one of the most embarrassing nights of the Sidney Crosby era.

The easy narrative: Welp, that answers that question about which team owns the cap era. One of these two teams is still a contender and the other is headed out to pasture.

Sample reaction: "It's early, but it's disturbing. When you lose a game like that, it's disturbing. I don't care when it is in the season. We've got to do some soul searching." – Head coach Mike Sullivan, from the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, Oct. 5, 2017

But then: The Pens bounced back immediately, posting a 4-0 win over the Predators in a rematch of the 2017 final. They'd win six of their next eight, and while goaltending remained an issue – they had a pair of 7-1 losses in October – they slowly but surely started looking like the Penguins again.

How it all ended: Pittsburgh would ultimately cruise to 100 points, and while they didn't win the Cup that year, they've been contenders ever since.

But as it turns out, that narrative about one of the teams being headed in the wrong direction turned out to be true; the blowout over Pittsburgh was pretty much the highlight of the Blackhawks season, as they finished dead last in the Central and haven't been back to the playoffs.

They could be inspiration for: Losing 7-2 isn't quite as bad as 10-1, but the winless Devils could probably use a reminder that an embarrassing score in the second game of the season doesn't mean all that much in the grand scheme of things. Even if it does come against the Sabres.

1995-96 Detroit Red Wings

The team: The Wings were coming off a sweep at the hands of the Devils in the 1995 Stanley Cup final. That was disappointing – the Wings had won the Presidents' Trophy and were considered heavy favorites – but the season still represented progress. After years of looking like contenders during the regular season only to crash and burn in the first round, the Red Wings had finally shown that they could win in the postseason. Now it was time to take the next step and clearly establish themselves as the league's best team.

The bad start: The Wings actually started off fine, winning three out of four. But then they floundered for the rest of the month and were sitting at a pedestrian 5-5-2 after a dozen games.

The easy narrative: Maybe last year was the fluke and this team really doesn't know how to win after all.

Sample reaction: "We need character players who know how to win the big one, so we should trade Steve Yzerman for Alexei Yashin." No, really, that was a thing for a while.

But then: The Wings headed into Boston on Nov. 2 having won just two of their last eight. But Yzerman came through win an overtime winner, launching a seven-game win streak. The Wings wouldn't lose back-to-back games the rest of the way, going a ridiculous 57-8-5 over their last 70 games and

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

finishing with 62 wins and 131 points, quite possibly the greatest regular season in NHL history.

How it all ended: The Red Wings didn't win the Cup that year, although their playoff run produced the most memorable goal of Yzerman's career and the greatest rivalry in modern NHL history. They would win the next two and added another in 2002 with most of the same core. Sometimes, even quasi-dynasties can start slow.

They could be inspiration for: The Lightning. Tampa hasn't looked awful, but they're sitting at just one win, got outclassed by the Hurricanes and their captain already sounds worried. Star-studded teams get judged based on the big picture and what they do in the playoffs, but even the very best can have a bad week or even a bad month here and there.

1983-84 Washington Capitals

The team: After entering the NHL in 1974 and spending the better part of the next eight seasons as the league laughingstock, the Capitals had finally put together a respectable season in 1982-83, finishing over .500 and making the playoffs for the first time in franchise history. But could they keep the momentum going? They'd have to do it without their leading scorer, Dennis Maruk, who'd been traded to the North Stars in the offseason for a draft pick.

The bad start: They lost their first seven games. Give them credit for variety, though – they were shutout twice but also lost an 8-7 game in overtime. (Historical note: That was the first sudden-death game in the regular season since 1942, leading to Bob Nystrom's immortal quote that "I forgot about the overtime thing".)

The easy narrative: Same old Capitals.

Sample reaction: "If excuses were goals, the Washington Capitals would be the highest-scoring team in the National Hockey League." – From the Washington Post, Oct. 17, 1983.

But then: The Caps finally snapped the losing streak with a win over the Flyers, after which they broke out the champagne. That would be the first of five straight wins, pushing the team back into the playoff picture. The addition of Larry Murphy in a mid-October trade helped too.

The Capitals wouldn't top the .500 mark until January but followed that with a 10-game win streak that propelled them to their first-ever 100-point season. From there, they'd win the first postseason series in franchise history.

How it all ended: They lost in the second round because this was still the pre-Barry Trotz Capitals. Still, not bad for a team that looked hopeless through two weeks.

They could be inspiration for: The '83 Caps almost work too perfectly with the Blue Jackets, right? A franchise that's always been an also-ran or worse, coming off its most successful season ever, but missing their top scorer from the year before and everyone already lining up to count them out ... it fits. The Jackets haven't looked great so far, but they at least have a win in the bank after Monday, so they're ahead of where the Caps were. That doesn't mean they're going to get to 100 points, of course, but there's no need to write them off quite yet.

1993-94 San Jose Sharks

The team: Heading into their third season, you could forgive the Sharks if they were just focused on not embarrassing themselves. They'd put up a pathetic 39 points in their inaugural season, then somehow got even worse to the tune of just 24 points in Year 2. Yes, 24 points. To put that in context, last year's Lightning had more points than that in February, and it wasn't even their best month of the year. The Sharks did it in a full season. Even with a new coach and some new blood on the roster, they were clearly hopeless.

The bad start: To nobody's surprise, the Sharks opened the season with four straight losses. They snapped that streak, sort of, with a 1-1 tie against Boston, then dropped four more. Through the season's first nine games, they had zero wins and had been outscored 35-17.

The easy narrative: This might be the worst team that's even theoretically possible.

Sample reaction: "Ducks Fall to New Low: They lose to Sharks" – That was the headline on an LA Times article after San Jose beat Anaheim in late October. As a reminder, the Mighty Ducks had existed for one month at that point. But even as a brand new team, it was considered humiliating to lose a game to the Sharks.

But then: That win over the Ducks was actually the Sharks' second straight. They wouldn't win consecutive games again until late November and they'd close out December with a nine-game winless streak. But they heated up in the second half, including a seven-game win streak late in the season, and snuck into the last Western playoff spot with 82 points.

How it all ended: That playoff spot earned them a meeting with the top-seeded Red Wings, and we all made jokes about whether it was possible to get swept in three games. Then the Sharks pulled off one of the greatest upsets in playoff history, knocking off the Wings on home ice in the dying minutes of Game 7.

They very nearly did it to the Leafs too, coming one crossbar away from going to the conference final. The Sharks won a round in 1995 too, before slipping back and missing the playoffs. They still haven't won a Cup, but they haven't actually been embarrassing since that October way back in 1993.

Um, maybe until this year. To be determined.

They could be inspiration for: The Senators. The age of parity ensures we'll never see a team be as bad as those early Sharks, but the Sens might be the cap-era equivalent. Sometimes, a team is so bad that it starts to feel like they're destined to stay that way forever. Usually, the road back is a long one. But not always, and if those Sharks can turn it around in one year, maybe anyone can. Even Ottawa.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108974 Websites

The Athletic / Sizing up the NHL: 2019-20 NHL teams by age, height, weight and nationality

By James Mirtle Oct 9, 2019 126

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

This marks Year 3 for the ol' NHL demographics post here at The Athletic.

This piece is meant to be an annual snapshot of what the best players in hockey look like in several basic biographical metrics. You can find the data from the last two years here and here, although be warned that the methodology was slightly different in 2017-18.

The 632 players in my sample here include every skater and goalie who appeared in a minute (or more) of action as of last weekend.

My thanks to Natural Stat Trick for the data and Dom Luszczyszyn for the graphical wizardry. If there are other breakdowns like this you'd like to see in the future, let me know in the comments.

NHL average age this season: 27.3

After years of a general trend of the league getting younger, the NHL seems to have found its equilibrium around 27 years old. In fact, the players who have played in the league so far this year are slightly older than last year's group (which had an average age of 27.1).

The Avalanche take over top spot thanks in part to Cale Makar (20) and Conor Timmins (21) making the team out of camp. Colorado has just two players over 30 (Erik Johnson and Pierre-Edouard Bellemare) and a remarkable 11 skaters who are 24 years old or younger.

The Blue Jackets, Rangers and Hurricanes are all right there, too. The Rangers have had the biggest shift of that group, dropping a full year off their average age, as they subtracted Mats Zuccarello (and a few other 30-plus types) and added Kaapo Kakko, whose 2001 birth year stands out. (He's the third-youngest player in the NHL after Jack Hughes and LA's Tobias Bjornfot.)

Henrik Lundqvist, 37, helps skew the Rangers up a bit.

The "old" teams here are all now under 29 years on average. Other than Detroit, they're all win-now franchises, too. A huge share of Nashville's core is now 28-plus, for example: Pekka Rinne, Kyle Turris, Mattias Ekholm, Roman Josi, Ryan Ellis and Matt Duchene, among others.

The Red Wings, meanwhile, get the award for most 30-plus players, as they incredibly have nine on the roster, including four who are 35-plus. That's hard to do given there are only 26 across the entire NHL. Steve Yzerman has a lot of work to do getting that group younger and more competitive.

The team that went the youngest, year over year, was actually Pittsburgh. No more Phil Kessel, Matt Cullen and others. The Rangers, Panthers and Leafs also got notably younger from a year ago.

The team that got the oldest, year over year, was surprisingly the Oilers, as they added 1.6 years to their average age. Mike Smith and James Neal being two reasons, although they didn't add much else to the roster, either, and everyone who returns, obviously, is a year older.

NHL average height this season: 73.1 inches (6-foot-1)

The Canucks are tall and skinny, just like their young superstar, Elias Pettersson. Tyler Myers helped move them

to first here, although what also helps is they have just two players listed under 6 feet: Troy Stecher and Quinn Hughes.

It's notable that they're both defencemen, as that's a continuing trend. Fifteen percent of all defencemen to skate in a game so far are under 6-feet tall. On average, blueliners are still taller than forwards, but that gap appears to be narrowing.

Goalies continue to grow, to the point that they're now averaging nearly 6-foot-2.5 and more than 200 pounds. That's been happening for a while.

The Canadiens have dominated the short list for years and years, but they at least have some company in the Preds.

The Habs have six players listed at 5-foot-9 or 5-foot-10. Nashville has 5-foot-6 Rocco Grimaldi, the shortest player in the NHL, and seven others under 6-feet tall.

NHL average weight this season: 199.3

The Islanders are, yet again, the heaviest team in the NHL. This time by a lot.

Having a goalie in Thomas Greiss, who weighs in at 232, helps, as does Anders Lee at 231. The Isles have only five players listed under 202 pounds.

Dellow's Devils, meanwhile, have 14 players under that mark. And only goalie MacKenzie Blackwood weighs more than 215. Nikita Gusev's 163 pounds make him one of the lightest players in the NHL, too.

Some of those Devils-Islanders rivalry nights could be interesting.

I won't put this in a chart here because it's frankly an absurd list and a ridiculous calculation, but every NHL team is considered overweight using BMI. The Islanders top out at 27.4 and the Penguins are the leanest team at 25.5. (Full list available here for the curious.)

There doesn't appear to be a ton of correlation between team ability and size, although the Blues, Capitals, Golden Knights, Lightning and Leafs are all heavier than average clubs and should finish in the top 10 this season. And you tend to get some rebuilding teams on the low end here given they often have young players playing key roles.

NHL average draft position: 59.6

Not sure how much this one means, but it gives you a general sense of how pedigreed team's rosters are.

The Avs have 10 first-round picks in their lineup right now and only one undrafted player. San Jose, meanwhile, has eight undrafted players and five more taken in the fifth round or later.

Both are pretty good teams, so there you go. Doesn't always take a ton of high picks to get there.

I haven't counted undrafted players in this calculation at all so that throws things off a little for some teams.

There are fewer Canadians in the NHL than last season, down from 43.7 percent (which is roughly seven players). That's a number that's been falling throughout league history, as even as recently as the mid-1990s, the NHL was roughly 75 percent Canadian-born.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Even a decade ago, Canada was healthily above 50 percent of the league, but large increases in Americans and Swedes have eroded that number continuously in the salary-cap era.

The reasons are different for each country. In the U.S., much of hockey's growth has been coming in areas where the NHL teams are successful. There are way, way more kids playing in places like Pittsburgh, Chicago and the D.C. area than ever before. California, too. You can draw a direct line between the NHL being in Arizona, for example, and Auston Matthews' unique rise to prominence.

Sweden, meanwhile, has worked hard to perfect their player development model. I've written about this when it comes to goaltenders and defencemen in recent years (here and here), after visiting the Swedish Ice Hockey Association in Stockholm. It's very impressive what they're doing, and it's resulted in a country of just 10 million residents producing 73 players in the NHL this season.

On a per-capita basis, Sweden is incredibly now producing more players than Canada. I believe for the first time ever.

That's not a trend that appears to be slowing down, either, given Sweden's share of NHL players has jumped substantially from last season at this time. NHL teams are scouting (and drafting) Swedish players more than ever, as they seem to consistently outperform their draft position.

The fact those players are more and more willing to play in the AHL at young ages helps, too, as they're not bound by CHL rules keeping them out of the minors before age 20. That creates an environment where there's a longer development tail for some European players, either in leagues at home or by joining the AHL younger than most Canadians and Americans.

That's an advantage, to the team and the player.

Even with that decline for Canadian players, Ontario is king, with nearly 20 percent of all NHL players coming from the one province. The Greater Toronto Area alone has produced more than 50 current NHL players, or nearly 10 percent of the entire league.

Alberta and B.C. have passed Quebec in recent years, as more and more money has flowed into minor hockey out west. The depth of talent in the Lower Mainland in and around Vancouver, for example, has increased dramatically over the last 20 years. My sense is the money involved has made it harder to come from smaller centres, which may be why there are only five players from Atlantic Canada and they're all concentrated around Crosby country.

In the U.S., the Three M states still produce the most players, but it's not as overwhelming as it used to be. Upstate New York and Buffalo have become hotbeds, as has Wisconsin (Kessel country) and the Greater Chicago Area.

The "other" figure is also much larger than ever here, with players born in Missouri, New Jersey, Washington State, Ohio, Pennsylvania and other various spots on the rise.

Again, that is likely a trend that will only continue as newer NHL franchises establish deeper roots, more rinks get built and minor hockey is invested in thanks to the league's growth initiatives at the youth level.

This is a new chart this year, thanks to Don Cherry pointing to the Blues' Canadian-ness as the reason they won last June.

This year, the most Canadian team in the NHL is actually Montreal, by my count, followed by St. Louis, Vegas and the Islanders.

Alas, the 2018 champion Capitals are the least-Canadian team with just 20 percent of their roster from hockey's motherland, so I suppose they're doomed (or something).

It's incredible the variety of roster makeups highlighted here. There are now three NHL teams that are majority European, which is a very new phenomenon in the league. Then there's Arizona with nearly 60 percent of the roster coming from the U.S., and Edmonton, which lacks an American player altogether.

As for the Leafs, who Cherry admonished for being not Canadian enough to win? They're actually well above the average, with almost half a roster full of "locals," including stars John Tavares, Mitch Marner, Morgan Rielly and Frederik Gauthier.

I don't think all this means a whole lot, but it could help you win trivia night at the local bowling alley.

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1108975 Websites

The Athletic / 'Never-ending nightmare': Former NHL star Don Edwards' three-decade battle for justice and peace

By Dan Robson 79

Editor's note: This story contains graphic descriptions of a violent crime.

Don Edwards stood an arm's length away from the man who murdered his mother and father. His hands shook and his voice trembled as he recounted the horror of their savage deaths nearly 30 years ago.

"Imagine," he said. "Entering my parents' home ... shards of glass were everywhere, bullet holes riddled the kitchen, on the floor was a large pool of curdled blood ... the very spot where my father had fought — was stabbed slowly to death and died. Down the hall a large pool of blood soaked the carpet ... where my mother had been shot twice and died."

The killer scanned the printed victim statement on the table in front of him, at his parole hearing in August. He wore reading glasses, and slipped headphones over his short grey hair, an aid to his poor hearing. George Harding Lovie didn't react as Edwards described the "never-ending nightmare" that has haunted him and his family.

"Imagine," Edwards said. "Listening to a 17-minute 911 call ... listening to the panic and terror unfolding in your childhood home, hearing the last words from a father's voice 'Leave my family alone' — and the murderer saying, 'Do you like me now? How do you like me now?'"

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

The former All-Star NHL goalie shared the story of the lives Lovie took that March morning in 1991.

Donna Edwards was 59. Arnold Edwards was 63. Their four children sat behind Lovie in a boardroom at a minimum-security institution in Ontario's wooded Muskoka cottage country. The convicted murderer was seeking to be released to a half-way house with daily freedom. They each read statements pleading for his request to be denied by the two-person panel.

Edward's wife, Tannis, rubbed his back as he described his constant fight to face the psychological torment of his parents' murder.

"I will forever battle an incurable disease," he said.

At the parole hearing, Don Edwards was the same age as his father was when he was killed.

He has short, neatly parted sandy blonde hair. He wears a white dress shirt and a thin gold chain beneath a dark Bethpage Black golf jacket. He looks like you might imagine a retired NHL player in his 60s should. But so much of Edwards remains in the past, unable to escape the violence that took his parents' lives and left him with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, a debilitating psychological condition that causes severe stress and anxiety.

Edwards' life is divided by a dream and a nightmare — with the terror shaping the memory of everything that came before.

He thinks of one memory often, because it's the last happy one he holds.

It was March 15, 1991. Edwards was 35 years old and recently retired from a 10-year career with the Buffalo Sabres, Calgary Flames, and Toronto Maple Leafs. He was embarking on a promising future as a sports broadcaster.

That night, he brought his father to a Sabres game against the Chicago Blackhawks at the Auditorium in Buffalo.

Arnold had recently retired, too, after 38 years of shift work at the Dofasco steel mill in Hamilton, Ont.

Edwards was excited for the chance to spend some time with his father in the stands, where Arnold had spent so much time watching his son chase his NHL dream.

Edwards knew that his parents had dedicated much of their lives to helping him make the most of his. With the closest rink at least a half-hour away, Arnold or Donna made it to every early-morning practice and weeknight game they could, between his shifts at the steel mill and the busy life with Edwards and his three sisters, who were each pursuing dreams of their own.

They were there for his first NHL shutout, and to celebrate the Vezina Trophy that he won alongside his counterpart Bob Sauve with the Sabres in 1980. They cheered along as he helped the Sabres beat the Soviet Red Army that same year, and when he represented Team Canada in the 1981 Canada Cup.

It was all because of them, he says. Everything the couple earned went toward providing a better life for their family. There were times when Arnold would be in the stands watching his son play, with little more than 25 cents in his pocket.

"They sacrificed it all for their kids," Edwards says.

There was a snowstorm in the forecast after the game in Buffalo that evening, but Arnold and Donna decided against staying the night with their son's young family. They worried about being far from their youngest daughter because of threats made by an ex-boyfriend, George Harding Lovie, who'd been charged with sexual assault and unlawful confinement for an alleged attack on her several weeks before. He stalked her, driving around for hours outside of her apartment.

Arnold and Donna said goodbye to their three grandchildren and set out for the hour-long trip across the border to the two-bedroom home near Hamilton, Ont., that they'd built and raised their family in.

Edwards watched his parents drive into the night. It was the last time he saw them alive.

Six days later, on the morning of March 21, 1991, Lovie hid beneath the steps of Michelle Edwards' apartment with a high-powered hunting rifle and a knife with a six-inch blade.

When Michelle saw him, she fled across the street to her parents' home. Lovie followed. He shot and killed Donna Edwards through the front door window as she blocked the entrance with a love seat. Michelle called 911 pleading for help as Lovie smashed through the glass sliding door into the kitchen. Arnold Edwards confronted him. Lovie let go of the gun as they fought, and Michelle grabbed it and tried to shoot him. But Lovie had secured the safety mechanism and she couldn't fire. Lovie stabbed Arnold five times, killing him. He then grabbed Michelle by the throat, kissed her and said he was going to give her a "slow and painful" death. But he stumbled as she fought him, and she managed to escape the house.

During Lovie's trial, the Edwards family listened to the horrific 911 call capturing the gunshots, screams and pleas for help as Donna and Arnold Edwards were murdered. The family heard Lovie's sister testify that he'd shared plans in the weeks before the murders to have Don Edwards' three young children abducted from school and that he'd threatened to maim Michelle Edwards with his rifle. Lovie blamed his violence on the fact that he'd been charged with sexual assault and unlawful confinement two months before he committed the murders. He delayed the proceedings by more than two weeks by refusing to return to the stand for cross-examination, claiming that he was seeing visions of his victims.

In the end, Lovie was convicted on two counts of first-degree murder and one count of attempted murder.

He received two life sentences to be served concurrently, with eligibility for parole after 25 years.

The eyes followed him everywhere. Edwards could feel it. He couldn't escape them.

Every time he walked into a room, everyone knew that he was there — and they knew what had happened to his family.

He could feel their gaze. "There's Don Edwards — his mom and dad were murdered."

The anxiety continued to build through the months after the trial. Lovie was in prison, but the constant reminders remained.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

The threats against his children, reported in court, haunted him.

Paranoia set in.

Can he escape? What if does?

It was difficult to let his three children out of his sight. He was at the bus stop when they left for school and was waiting for them when they were dropped off. Outside of class, he and his wife rarely left their children alone.

At home, Edwards became reclusive. He avoided public events. He stayed in his house, leaving only when he absolutely had to. He isolated himself from his friends.

He stayed awake at night, afraid to fall asleep, terrified that his mind would return him to his childhood home — and to that morning; house full of police officers, the shattered glass, blood on the floor and walls, the black bags that held his parents' bodies.

But even while awake, he could hear the horror of that 911 call.

He tried to work, but he couldn't focus. Tannis found him in his office, staring at a blank computer screen. He'd been there for hours.

His broadcasting career crumbled. It seemed unlikely he could face the camera now. And even if he could, no calls came. It was unspoken, but he felt shunned. Could he handle the pressure of live TV? Could his broadcasts ever escape the gravity of what hung over him? His mom and dad were murdered.

His real estate side business fell apart, too. He couldn't find the focus it took to sell a home.

"There was no separation of the trauma we'd gone through," Edwards says. "Even while he was incarcerated."

Unable to work, he supported his family with the money he'd put away through his NHL career, more than \$400,000.

For four years, Edwards folded in, trying to hold himself together.

Edwards thought about his parents watching from the stands. He thought about how they'd been there through it all — from those early days learning how to play at the Caledonia arena, to wearing the Team Canada sweater.

The game brought them so many happy memories. Now it was the only obsession that could mute the agony.

For a few years, Edwards was among the best in the world — but he always felt that even at his peak, he could have been better. He wanted to find out how. And he wanted to find a way to show other goalies how they could be better, too.

In the office where he'd stared for hours at a blank screen, he began to tell the story of his career through a maze of charts and numbers.

Edwards watched hours of tape, every recorded moment from his playing days he could find. He analyzed every shot he faced and recorded every angle, every reaction. He immersed himself in a critique of his work, obsessing over every unnoticed clue he could cipher.

Alone in that office, shut out from the world, Edwards spent more than a year charting out his goaltender equation in a book. He avoided friends and public life — lost in the game he loved. He used the meticulous details to develop a system for analyzing a goaltender's ability, by looking deeper than goals against and save percentage.

"It was my escape," Edwards says. "To get into another world — to something that didn't consume all of my thoughts."

Four years after the murders, Edwards tried to return to the world he'd left. He sent the book to every NHL contact he had, hoping to find a way back into the game.

Few calls came. Edwards felt forgotten.

But Larry Robinson remembered. It was 1995. The legendary defenseman was about to enter the Hall of Fame — and begin his first season as head coach of the Los Angeles Kings. Robinson had worn a Team Canada sweater alongside Edwards during the 1981 Canada Cup. He was intrigued by his old teammate's meticulous goaltending analysis.

The Kings hired Edwards as an assistant coach. He was on his way back — but he'd have to leave his family behind. The kids were in high school now; their lives were in Buffalo. So Edwards went west, to L.A. — battling the anxiety that came with the separation.

Edwards kept the trauma hidden from his professional life. Robinson wasn't even aware of the murders when the Kings hired him.

"We didn't know anything," Robinson says. "The whole coaching staff was just flabbergasted that something like this could happen."

The frantic pace of life in the NHL was a distraction. But his PTSD remained. He did his best to hide the effects, quietly escaping social settings whenever the anxiety settled in. Colleagues like Robinson never noticed how deeply the constant trauma affected him.

"I worked hard to harness it," Edwards says. "But it's just there. It's something that will be part of my life."

PTSD haunted him as he sat alone in his apartment. The insomnia lingered too, sleep never quite bringing peace.

Once, Edwards fled a movie he and Tannis attended when an early murder scene set him off.

Despite those struggles, Edwards found a sense of peace and purpose for six years with the Kings.

"I was back around my friends," he says. "I was back with all those things that I wanted so dearly to be with."

After L.A., Edwards joined the Carolina Hurricanes coaching staff alongside Paul Maurice. He was with the Hurricanes when they went to the Stanley Cup final in 2002. Eventually, Edwards returned to Ontario — a log cabin on a lake in Peterborough. He ran a Tier 2 Junior hockey program in Oakville and then became general manager of the Saginaw Spirit in the OHL.

"That was my life," he says.

Don Edwards has suffered from PTSD for nearly three decades.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Lovie is now 61 years old. He spent the years since the murders making his way through the Canadian penitentiary system, building his case for his eventual release.

The Correctional Service of Canada, which administers all criminal sentences of two or more years, has a mandate to actively encourage and assist offenders in becoming law-abiding citizens.

As offenders move through the correctional system — according to their progress and risk assessments conducted by CSC — they are moved to institutions with lower security levels and more freedom of movement. They are gradually moved into programs and activities that reflect conditions an offender is likely to encounter when released into the community.

The Edwards family knew the time would come when Lovie would be eligible for conditional release. In 2011, he formally started the process required to seek parole when he'd become eligible five years later. The Edwards family did everything they could to keep him incarcerated.

They showed up for each of his parole hearings, armed with victim-impact statements meant to share the excruciating pain they still feel and to remind the parole board what the man had done.

They travelled across the country for the initial hearing, only to have Lovie refuse to return after the first recess.

Each time Lovie was denied, he reapplied — in 2015, 2017 and 2019. They returned for each hearing with new impact statements.

Through those years, Edwards' PTSD peaked.

"We relive the whole nightmare," he says.

The Parole Board of Canada operates independently of the Correctional Service of Canada and is responsible for making decisions on the conditional release of offenders.

"The role of the board is to really look at offenders and assess their risk to the community and make decisions about the timely reintegration of offenders," says spokeswoman Holly Knowles.

Offenders serving a life sentence, like Lovie, are under the jurisdiction of the Correctional Service of Canada and subject to the conditions of the Parole Board of Canada for the rest of their lives.

That offers little comfort to victims like the Edwards family. They've remained adamant that Lovie poses a threat to them and to the public, despite an assessment by the CSC that Lovie is a low risk to be a violent re-offender.

Among several concerns, the Edwards family points to Lovie's repeated insistence that the sexual assault charges were the catalyst for his murderous rampage. (After Lovie was convicted of two counts of first-degree murder and attempted murder, the sexual assault and unlawful confinement charges were stayed — so the allegations were never tested in court.)

As difficult as it is for Edwards, he can't imagine what his sister Michelle endures. During Lovie's parole hearings, she usually reads her impact statement in a separate room so she doesn't have to be near the man who killed her parents and tried to kill her.

But during the hearing at the Beaver Creek Correctional Institution in late August, Michelle sat in the small boardroom alongside her family and directly behind Lovie. She had to pause several times as she read her statement, describing the terror as Lovie killed her father and came for her.

"He gets to hear my pain, tears and cries," Michelle said. "He gets to know how successful he was at destroying my family."

"George Lovie is our life sentence," she said.

After listening to the family's impact statements, Lovie slouched forward in his chair and answered questions from the parole board.

"It's all my fault. I don't blame her," Lovie told the two-person panel. "The allegation of sexual assault. That's what set me off. I denied it then. I'll deny it tomorrow. Every time I bring up the allegation of sex assault, I get told I'm blaming the victim. ... That was my trigger. That's what set me off to commit the murders I committed."

The Edwards siblings choked back tears as he spoke, looking away and shaking their heads. Tannis Edwards, sitting directly behind Lovie, folded forward and sobbed.

"I can't justify my actions," Lovie said. "I can't defend them ... I'll never be free of what I did. It's going to torment me for the rest of my life."

The parole board deliberated for about 20 minutes. When the family returned to their seats, the board announced that Lovie would be released to a halfway house in Sudbury, Ontario — under a series of strict conditions.

Edwards left the small conference room quickly. He slammed the door of the locker that held his car keys and wallet. Members of the family asked as many questions as they could to parole board representatives, but they received no answers to satisfy their anger and frustration. Several of them broke down in tears.

"Mother of God," Tannis said.

Lovie would leave the facility as soon as a room became available. In six months, he'd be eligible for full parole.

The Edwards family is not permitted to be involved in that process.

"How do you like me now?"

A few weeks after Lovie was granted day parole, Don Edwards repeats the words that haunt him.

He still hears them every day.

In the time since, Edwards has written letters. To the Parole Board of Canada, to Canada's Minister of Public Safety, to the halfway house where Lovie lives — reminding them to report any infraction, because they're watching.

He's waged a campaign to challenge what he views as a "grossly failed system" of justice in Canada. He's had security cameras installed at an address he won't disclose.

Edwards continues to deal with the symptoms of his PTSD. The "flood of things" — the frustration, the anger, the fear, the memories ... the pain. The same now as ever. But, as difficult as it is, he tries to find some way to turn that constant negative into something positive.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

He's working on a book to help tell his story and outline how he believes the Canadian justice system needs to change to better protect victims. There are no more blank screens; the words are coming now. And he wants everyone to know.

Edwards shares his story as a motivational speaker at events across the continent. In rooms he once couldn't stand to enter, he takes the podium to share the journey of his NHL career. He tells funny tales from the locker room and what it took to find success in the game.

Then Edwards shares the nightmare that followed the dream, one that very few people in the room are aware of.

He explains how hockey saved him. How he remembers those cold morning drives to practice, and the sight of his parents watching him from the stands. How even when they were gone, he found hope and solace in the game they shared — and how it gave him a second chance.

"It's about getting up and walking again," he says.

In the end, Edwards is often asked how it was possible, at all, to move forward in the aftermath of such violent deaths. And he's not quite sure, to be honest. But he must.

Edwards repeats the phrase his sister Michelle shared during the hearing — a sentiment that each member of the family expressed, in some form, throughout the parole process: while the killer gets life, their sentence never ends.

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1108976 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canucks cap 'a special night for everyone' with complete win over Kings

Iain MacIntyre | @imacSportsnet October 10, 2019, 2:09 AM

VANCOUVER – There is always risk to sports teams that stage their own history as the Vancouver Canucks did Wednesday when they invited a few of the best and most beloved players in franchise history to help anoint Bo Horvat the new captain.

Yes, there will be emotion and energy and excitement on nights like this. But then you have to play the actual game, and where will those emotions take you?

On Wednesday, it took the Canucks straight over the Los Angeles Kings, who were over-run early and late and beaten 8-2 to start this new era for Vancouver's National Hockey League team.

The only guy who looked nervous was Horvat, who shortly after accepting the captain's jersey from future Hall-of-Famer Henrik Sedin, promptly passed the puck to no one a couple of times. But the rest of his team was focussed, and Kings' goalie Jonathan Quick was not.

"Honestly, I was kind of getting emotional on the ice a little bit," Horvat said. "Even in warmups, you hear people chanting your name.

"I had butterflies in my stomach. I was nervous obviously. It's a huge moment and a huge opportunity. I got more comfortable as the game went on. I started making more plays and getting back to being myself. But (at the start) you're pumped so full of adrenaline, your heart is going a million miles an hour. You just want to have a great game on this night. What a way to start."

If Canucks coach Travis Green made a checklist before the game of the many things he wanted his team to accomplish — and he probably did — there would have been no empty boxes at the end of the night.

Last season's Calder Trophy winner, Elias Pettersson, and this season's rookie-of-the-year candidate, Quinn Hughes, scored their first goals. Newcomer J.T. Miller had the first four-point night of his career.

Vancouver's power play scored a goal and penalty killers were perfect in four disadvantages that included a 45-second five-on-three late in the second period. Centring a reworked third line that included new Canuck Micheal Ferland, dropped by Green from Pettersson's first line after only two games, checking centre Brandon Sutter scored twice — half his total from last season.

Canucks goalie Jacob Markstrom was as sharp as Quick was suspect, making 37 saves and doing his best work in the middle of the game when the Kings had started climbing back from a 3-0 deficit.

But the best thing of all was that after scoring just two goals in two hours while losing road games last week in Edmonton and Calgary, the Canucks won a game emphatically and made their first standings deposit of the season.

"Anytime you can put up eight, it's fun," Miller said after his first-star performance. "But I also thought we did a lot of good things. I don't want people thinking we lost our first two games, (so) it was a bad start. We felt comfortable and confident after those games. It's nice to see the pucks starting to go in. We really wanted to win tonight. To get that done was the first priority."

After Sean Walker's wrist shot lifted the Kings with two goals, down 4-2, at 6:51 of the third period, the Canucks poured in four goals in eight-and-a-half minutes to win by a touchdown.

That surge began on a sequence that, as more than any other, illustrated how this rebuilt Canucks team is trying to be different than the one that missed the Stanley Cup playoffs the last four seasons.

The shift after Walker's goal, the Canucks countered on a three-on-two rush. Brock Boeser passed cross-ice to Hughes, who froze Quick, then lasered a pass into the net off the stick of defence partner Chris Tanev.

Tanev is the stay-at-home defenceman who has scored twice in each of the last three seasons.

But the way the Canucks are now trying to play, and with the dynamic Hughes as his blue-line partner, Tanev isn't stay-at-home anymore. Just like Tanev, the Canucks plan on going places.

It was another tantalizing night for Hughes, who doesn't turn 20 until next week but already has six points in eight NHL games, including a five-game trial straight out of the University of Michigan at the end of last season.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

The five-foot-10 defenceman scored his first NHL goal to make it 1-0 just 5:26 after the Horvat ceremony, blistering an unscreened slapshot past Quick's glove. And shooting the puck is supposed to be the least impressive weapon in Hughes' offensive arsenal.

"You're always thinking about when you're going to score your first goal," he said. "It's something I've been thinking about for a long time. Just to get that one under my belt was nice. I've told everyone from the start: I'm going to try to get better every game. At Game 30, I think I'll be a different player. Same thing goes for Game 60. But I feel really good right now. Just a special night for everyone."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108977 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / How new Canucks captain Bo Horvat learned to lead from Henrik Sedin

Iain MacIntyre | @imacSportsnet October 9, 2019, 10:13 PM

VANCOUVER – We do not associate royalty with the Vancouver Canucks, but there have been kings, and most of them captained the National Hockey League team.

When Henrik Sedin handed Bo Horvat the captaincy in a ceremony before the Canucks' home-opener Wednesday against the Los Angeles Kings, it continued a noble line of ascension that runs nearly unbroken like a ribbon of gold through most of the team's 50 years in the NHL.

Sedin was the captain encouraged and taught by Markus Naslund and Trevor Linden, who in turn was mentored as a young player by Stan Smyl, who arrived in the Canucks organization in 1978 just as the franchise's original captain, Orland Kurtenbach, departed as coach.

But the transfer of power between Sedin and Horvat actually began years ago, on Dec. 17, 2015, before a morning skate in Philadelphia when Horvat was slowly suffocating amid a 27-game goal drought during a torturous sophomore season.

Henrik reassured Horvat that he and his brother, Daniel, had also suffered epic slumps and self-doubt, and that the then 20-year-old was a good player who just needed to stay positive and keep working towards better days.

"It was an optional morning skate and there was only him and me a few others on the ice," Henrik recalled Wednesday afternoon. "I didn't think much of it at the time; I just wanted to talk to him and see how he was doing.

"I see a lot of young guys come up. Some guys are there just to play hockey and do everything they can. And there are some guys that have a bigger picture; you can tell there is something more in them than just being a hockey player. You could see Bo was like that."

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That shoulder-to-shoulder circumnavigation of the ice in Philadelphia was a seminal moment for Horvat and, it turns out, a transformative one for the Canucks. That's what leadership looks like.

"I think about it all the time," Horvat said before his coronation. "To have somebody of that stature come up to me and say he's been there and actually done a lot worse, to expose yourself like that to bring somebody else up... I'll never forget that. I'll remember that the rest of my life."

"Bo always mentions the Sedins, always," his dad, Tim Horvat, told Sportsnet. "He still does to this day. I'll go out on a limb and say that after that first training camp in 2013, when (former coach) John Tortorella said he wasn't sure Bo would ever play in the NHL because he's not fast enough and isn't in great shape, Bo watched the Sedins and I think they actually changed his whole mindset. I remember Bo saying: 'I've got to work harder. I watch these guys and I know I've got to work harder.'"

Horvat's skating and conditioning improved dramatically — as they had for the Sedins a decade earlier — and the centre from Rodney, Ont., learned to lead by example. Again, just like the Sedins.

"Playing behind (Henrik) has made me the player I am now," Horvat, who is now 24, said a few months before the Sedins retired 18 months ago. "And the way he handles himself in the community, and all that stuff, and seeing how much he brings to this organization, it's incredible to watch and it makes you want to be better as a player and a person."

This is the Sedins' legacy.

The only team Horvat captained before the Canucks was Team Ontario at the 2012 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge. That team included Max Domi, Aaron Ekblad and Darnell Nurse, among several other future NHLers, and won a bronze medal in Windsor, Ont.

Former Canucks general manager Mike Gillis drafted Horvat in 2013 — ninth overall out of the powerhouse London Knights junior program — after trading emerging goaltending star Cory Schneider to the New Jersey Devils to acquire the pick.

"Honestly, I was sick to my stomach," Tim Horvat said. "Everyone was so excited for him and I was, too — don't get me wrong. But I thought the ramifications for this kid are massive. Not only are you going to a Canadian market, but you got traded for a No. 1 goaltender. So that put extra pressure on the kid. But Bo said: 'Not to worry, dad, I will show them.' That's exactly what he said.

"I read what people were saying about him: Can't skate, doesn't put up numbers. I thought: Oh, boy, just give him some time."

Horvat has soared beyond projections that he might develop into a third-line NHL centre, a checking guy with a low offensive ceiling.

His points-per-game have improved in each of his five NHL seasons, and last year Horvat finished with 27 goals and 61 points despite playing with 30 different combinations of wingers.

With Calder Trophy-winner Elias Pettersson starting his second season in Vancouver, Horvat won't rise beyond the second-line centre spot for the foreseeable future. But that

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

doesn't lessen the importance to the Canucks of Horvat, who has grown up in the NHL playing against the opposition's best players.

Remember, Ryan Kesler won a Selke Trophy in Vancouver as the second-line centre behind Henrik Sedin when the Canucks were the best team in the league.

"He'll say something in the dressing room, but Bo's not a rah-rah guy," his dad said. "He just wants to do it on the ice. He knows he's got great players around him. He knows there are a lot of leaders in that room. Bo just wants to lead by example."

Like great leaders do.

"They choose captains because of who you are," Henrik Sedin said. "That's why they didn't name a captain right away; they wait and see what kind of person a guy is and how he handles different situations. That's why they picked Bo.

"It's always tough to see where young guys will end up. Where he is right now, if he ends up being this kind of player (for the rest of his career), that's plenty. But he could take other steps for sure. Bo has all the intangibles to become something great."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108978 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Oilers' fast start begs the question: Is this for real?

Mark Spector | @sportsnetspec October 9, 2019, 6:28 PM

NEWARK — The Edmonton Oilers are 3-0 after blowing the New York Islanders out of Nassau Coliseum Tuesday night. Frankly, Connor McDavid's team looks nothing like the confused crew that stumbled through the 2018-19 season.

There is really only one question worth asking on a rainy New Jersey practice day, with the Devils on tap Thursday night:

Is this for real?

"It's early," winger James Neal said, "but you like to think it's for real."

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OK — they're not going to go 82-0. And even though Neal — the "Real Steal" who has six goals in three games — leads the NHL in goals, he's probably not going to win the Rocket Richard Trophy.

More to the point, however, the Oilers have received steady goaltending and they're breaking the puck out of their zone with far more skill and consistency. And if you dig into the 'why' a little bit, it sounds very much like the big guns (read:

Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl) have changed their games to help the concept of team defence take hold.

"There are certain things we want to do as a team defending, and it has nothing to do with the offensive game," head coach Dave Tippett said. "Our goals against has to come down, and it's not, 'OK, you guys over here defend. And you guys over here, don't worry about it.' It's, 'Everybody defend.'"

It's not about McDavid, Draisaitl and the rest of the forwards becoming checkers. It's about going on offence only when the team is ready to support that offence. It's about the subtle changes we've seen in their game, like getting lower in the defensive zone and staying longer, so when the defenceman looks up with the puck on his stick, the pass is short and quick, not long and far away with a chance of being intercepted.

"We're playing as more of a unit, offensively and defensively," said left-shot defenceman Kris Russell, who looks far more comfortable playing his proper side this season. "Our forwards are coming really low, so we're having those little 'pop plays' instead of 10, 15-foot passes."

These are Dave Tippett asks: That when the puck is in the defensive zone, there are five Oilers in that zone; that the same goes for the neutral and offensive zones, and no one is cheating for offence.

The result is, McDavid has eight points in three games, and has been in on roughly 50 percent of team scoring — just like last season. But an Oilers team that was minus-42 in goal differential last season is plus-5 through three games, a clear sign of more support scoring and better defensive play.

"Connor and Leon, they get lots of points," said Tippett. "But for us to be a better team, we need other people to get points too. To balance the scoring throughout the lineup.

"Same thing for defending. We can't just have a couple of people defend. We need everyone to defend. That's what I mean by playing as a team."

Senior Writer Ryan Dixon and NHL Editor Rory Boylen always give it 110%, but never rely on clichés when it comes to podcasting. Instead, they use a mix of facts, fun and a varied group of hockey voices to cover Canada's most beloved game.

To decide if this is all for real, we should ask if the things that are working here are sustainable:

- Like the goaltending, which has been steady, yet not asked to be spectacular. Edmonton is allowing 31 shots against per night, but not a lot of high quality chances. We're not bullish on the goaltending here, but if Mike Smith and Mikko Koskinen aren't under siege, they may be able to stop enough pucks to survive.

- The defence: Russell has made a tidy third pairing with Matt Benning. All four of the current Top 4 can move the puck, a huge improvement from last season. Ethan Bear has been smooth and patient beyond his years thus far, and Joel Persson just quietly moves the puck. Darnell Nurse (three points) is maturing in his decision making, while Oscar Klefbom (four points) has passed the 300-game plateau and has a calm air about his game that wasn't always there.

The verdict is, if this team continues to play Tippett's style, they have a chance. Maybe better than a chance.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

"It's just a good start — nothing else," cautions Klefbom. "The work ethic from our whole group — especially from our forwards — that's going to be a big key for us, to keep up the work ethic. If we work all over the ice, and control the middle, we're really hard to play against."

"The biggest thing (Tuesday) was the work ethic. Just to see the forwards back-checking hard, and be there for the defencemen so we can break out easily, that's a good sign for us."

It can't just be about two all-world players, and a team that never makes the playoffs. There has to be more in Edmonton, and Tippett will tell you, "I think Connor likes to win more than he likes personal accolades."

"A few changes have made a big difference," said Neal. "Talking to guys, they feel like it's a different vibe."

"We've got a winning attitude around here."

Could it really be for real?

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.10.2019

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Sportsnet.ca / Canadiens Takeaways: Poor discipline proves costly vs. Sabres

Eric Engels October 9, 2019, 11:00 PM

The Montreal Canadiens were one tough bounce off Ben Chiarot's shinpad away from possibly coming out of their first road trip of the season with five-of-six points in the standings earned.

Instead, a goal for Marcus Johansson gave the Buffalo Sabres a 5-4 overtime win over the Canadiens on Wednesday night. He was the beneficiary of a nice pass from defenceman Colin Miller after the puck jumped off Chiarot's leg.

Tough break, but four-out-of-six points is still a good result for this Canadiens team. Especially when you consider they came back from deficits of at least two goals in all three of their season-opening games.

This is a tenacious Montreal team, one that has proven it will fight no matter how far up against the wall they find themselves. They had seven come-from-behind wins when trailing after two periods a season ago — only the Tampa Bay Lightning (nine) and Calgary Flames (eight) had more — and they've picked up right where they left off in that department.

Now the Canadiens just need to find a way to hold on to a lead. They were unable to do so in the third period of their season-opener in Carolina. They relinquished early and late leads to Toronto last Saturday. And they had a 2-1 lead over Buffalo undone in the fifth minute of the second period of Wednesday's game.

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THE BIG TAKEAWAY

Three bad penalties — two from Tomas Tatar and one from Phillip Danault — killed Montreal's chances of winning this game.

You can debate the calls — Canadiens coach Claude Julien did after the game — but all three plays gave the officials cause to make them.

In the first period, Tatar stuck his hip out on a player who released the puck well before contact was made — and did so in the neutral zone when there was no real threat coming from the Sabres. The Canadiens were dominating the game to that point, but the penalty put Buffalo's 6-for-10 power play to work.

The result? 1-0 for the home team.

At 2-1 Canadiens in the second, Tatar slashed Evan Rodriguez near his top hand and sent the Sabres back to the power play. Tatar's fourth minor of the young season.

Refs are looking for this. They have been for over a year now. Maybe Tatar never got Rodriguez on his hand, but he gave the refs cause to call it. pic.twitter.com/2l0nVx5yEa

— Eric Engels (@EricEngels) October 10, 2019

It took all of 48 seconds for Buffalo captain Jack Eichel to tie the game and push the Sabres' power play to 8-for-13 on the season.

And then, after the Canadiens erased a 4-2 Buffalo lead in the third period with goals from Jesperi Kotkaniemi and Chiarot, Danault took a neutral-zone slashing penalty on Sam Reinhart. Danault didn't like the call, and neither did Julien, but the Montreal forward's stick got into Reinhart's legs and tripped him up with 35 seconds remaining in regulation.

Johansson's game-winner in the second minute of overtime may have come at even strength, but it hit the back of the net before Danault had a chance to make it back to his own zone from the penalty box.

Discipline was going to be key against the Sabres on Wednesday, and Montreal's lack thereof cost them a precious extra point in the standings.

QUICK HITS

- The Canadiens' penalty kill was a factor in the loss, too. They had chances to clear the zone on both of Buffalo's power play goals but they just couldn't find a way.
- Eichel's second goal, to put the Sabres up 3-2, was an excellent individual play. But Tatar's fly-by in the neutral zone gave Eichel time and space to back the Canadiens up, and goaltender Keith Kinkaid gave the Sabres' top forward enough room to shoot right through him. Danault, Chiarot and Petry were all back on the play, but no one stepped up on Eichel, who scored on what was basically a one-on-three.
- Earlier in the day, Julien was asked what former Sabre Joel Armia had to do to capitalize on all the good work he does in the offensive zone. The coach said Armia just needs to

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

shoot more. Armia responded by scoring on his first two shots of the game.

• On Armia's second goal, 20-year-old Nick Suzuki was credited with an assist. It was his first NHL point — a gift from Sabres defenceman Rasmus Ristolainen, who took the puck from Suzuki behind the net and handed it right to Armia out in front.

700 games for the big bro. Congrats on an amazing accomplishment @NateThompson44 ! Just getting into your prime #44 #700 pic.twitter.com/2Xf1bXTTDh

— Max Domi (@max_domi) October 10, 2019

• On Armia's first goal, Nate Thompson, who was playing in the 700th game of his NHL career, made a great play while the Canadiens were killing their second penalty of the game. The 35-year-old, who had a goal and six assists in 25 games with Montreal last season, has started off strong with two points in his first three games this year.

WHAT'S NEXT

The Canadiens welcome the 2-1-0 Detroit Red Wings to Montreal for their home-opener at the Bell Centre on Thursday.

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1108980 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canucks owner: Bo Horvat is 'right player to represent the team'

Sportsnet Staff | @Sportsnet October 10, 2019, 12:08 AM

The Vancouver Canucks named Bo Horvat the 14th captain in franchise history on Wednesday and team owner Francesco Aquilini is happy with the choice.

Aquilini congratulated the 24-year-old on Twitter after the announcement during the opening ceremonies of the Canucks' home opener. The owner added that he believes Horvat was the right player to "represent the team, the franchise and the city."

I'm very happy Jim and Travis decided the time is now to give Bo the "C." He's the right player to represent the team, the franchise, and the city.

— Francesco Aquilini (@fr_aquilini) October 10, 2019

The Canucks owner also praised the various characteristics the six-year veteran has demonstrated since he was drafted ninth overall by Vancouver in the 2013 NHL Draft, including Horvat's desire to put the team ahead of himself.

Bo leads by example, on and off the ice. Focus and determination, both ends of the rink. Tireless workhorse, hard to play against, tough but clean.

— Francesco Aquilini (@fr_aquilini) October 10, 2019

Back in August, Aquilini hinted at the possibility of Horvat being the next captain when he sent out a letter to season

ticket members where he credited "Horvat's emergence as a confident leader."

When the Canucks announced that Horvat, Chris Tanev, Alex Edler and Brandon Sutter would form their leadership team this season, Aquilini said in an interview with Sportsnet 650 that the choice on who would be the next captain was "probably the worst-kept secret in town but I'm not going to let the cat out of the bag."

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1108981 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Why Maple Leafs are closer to finalizing the roster they want

Luke Fox | @lukefoxjukebox October 9, 2019, 4:11 PM

TORONTO – The Toronto Maple Leafs are taking another step toward solidifying the lineup they believe in.

Coach Mike Babcock announced an end, at least temporarily, to his rotation of bubble players, and Toronto will dress the best version of itself Thursday, an attempt to snuff out a two-game skid and swipe Round 1 from the mighty Tampa Bay Lightning, the Leafs' closest thing to a franchise measuring stick.

Skilled forwards Jason Spezza and Nic Petan have seized the lead for the full-time gigs on Frederik Gauthier's fourth line, surpassing — for now — KHL recruit Nick Shore and Marlies grad Dmytro Timashov, respectively.

And right-shot Justin Holl has thus far outduelled lefty Martin Marincin for the pleasure of skating with rookie phenom Rasmus Sandin on the club's third defence pairing.

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Spezza, Petan and Holl will each dress consecutive games for the first time this season, a decision coaches and management don't take lightly — and is, by no means, final.

With the caveat that the only permanence is change, coach Mike Babcock says evaluating the six players on the bubble through four exhibition games plus two regular-season tryouts apiece has given the candidates a decent sample size to prove their capabilities.

"Any way you look at it, the guys have had quite a bit," said Babcock, following a snappy and lengthy practice Wednesday. "Not only do we want to be right, we want to give the guys a fair chance, and we think we've done that. That doesn't mean it'll be the same next game, but that's what we're doing."

Particularly when it comes to the forwards, it would be difficult to argue for the contrary.

When anchoring Timashov and Shore, Gauthier's line posted a 46.2% Corsi rating at even strength in a scramble

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

opener versus Ottawa and plummeted to 14.3% versus Montreal — the one game, Babcock says, he was not impressed by his roster's performance.

Spezza and Petan joined the Goat for a sparkling 100% Corsi rating (5-on-5) during Friday's victory in Columbus and an impressive 71.4% rate in Monday's loss to St. Louis, the type of grinding outfit more in line with the style of play Toronto will be challenged with come April.

Toss in the fact Petan and Spezza, with some nifty midair stick work in tight, helped orchestrate Gauthier's second goal in a week, and the decision to give that trio another chance against a testy Tampa squad is a smart one.

Surely Gauthier was chuckling to himself when he hashtagged his goal-celebration Instagram post #ontheroadto50, but a winter with a couple of skilled wingers like Spezza (a versatile face-off and special-teams weapon) and Petan could see the Goat track well past his previous career high of three goals.

Spezza's trials in the early going here have been well-documented, but the plights of the lesser-known Petan and Holl are compelling for different reasons.

Acquired at the trade deadline from Winnipeg and struggling to win over a coach who prefers some size in his bottom six, the five-foot-nine Petan devoted his summer to upping his speed so that he could be quick on the forecheck.

Left outside of the Leafs' opening-night roster, Petan cleared waivers, which, ironically, makes him a more valuable asset. He can be sent up and down to the Marlies without paperwork for the next three weeks.

Holl, a late-blooming 27-year-old, is enthused at the prospect of dressing back-to-back games — something the defender had to wait until March of last season to accomplish, despite being on the NHL roster all season.

"Getting two in a row will be really good," said Holl, a smile splashed on his face. "Staying in the lineup and keeping your skills sharp, it's something to build off.

"Every player wants to play every night. When you're in and out like that, it's harder to get momentum going in a positive direction. That being said, everyone has to find their own way. If that's how you gotta get in, you gotta be prepared to play whether you've played recently or not."

Enjoying fast chemistry with fellow Marlies grad Sandin, whom, Holl says, communicates well during shifts, the righty is making a concerted effort to increase the physical aspects of his game.

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Holl needn't be reminded how tenuous his grasp on a career with Leafs is, but if he can limit mistakes and log a tough 10 to 13 minutes, the spot alongside Sandin could be his until Travis Dermott (shoulder) returns to action.

Babcock has suggested that the clear eyes and open minds of new assistant coaches Paul McFarland and Dave Hakstol have helped form fresh opinions in recent weeks on players that had already been in the system.

Holl and Petan fit that bill.

"I think Hak is great. He's got really good structure on the PK — and good little tips that are helpful. He brings a nice presence," Holl explains.

"For me, it's just important to play as well as I can and try to impress everybody. That's the main key, whether it's Hak or Babs. Just making sure they appreciate the way I play."

So far, so good.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.10.2019

1108982 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / NHL Power Rankings: Extremely Small Sample Size Edition

Luke Fox | @lukefoxjukebox October 9, 2019, 10:00 AM

The Carolina Hurricanes will win the Presidents' Trophy.

James Neal completes his transformation from goat to GOAT.

And the San Jose Sharks (0-82-0) will put all their hopes into the draft lottery.

That's right, kids. The best predictor of future behaviour is this past week's behaviour.

It's our annual NHL Power Rankings: Extremely Small Sample Size Edition, in which we use the trends of hockey's first seven days to wildly and confidently extrapolate season-long conclusions.

All 31 teams are ranked in order of the power they've showed since Opening Night. The write-ups peer into the future with the assumption that Week 1's trends are only bound to continue through April.

Please, don't waste energy disputing the law of averages.

It's science.

1. Boston Bruins

It's impressive that Tuukka Rask's .937 save percentage holds up through April, but it can't top tandem mate Jaroslav Halak's 1.000.

2. Carolina Hurricanes

A resurgent James Reimer registers a sparkling 41-0-0 record with a .940 save percentage, cementing himself as the greatest backup goalie to ever walk the earth.

3. Vegas Golden Knights

Reilly Smith and William Karlsson break the NHL record for most shorthanded points by a pair of teammates when they amass 55 apiece. This leads to opposing teams declining power plays in the post-season.

4. New York Rangers

Mika Zibanejad's 328-point campaign (164 goals, 164 assists) marks the greatest individual season in the history of team sport and leads the Rangers to the Presidents' Trophy.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

5. Buffalo Sabres

A triumphant end to the longest playoff drought in the NHL sparks a debate in Buffalo over whether to erect a statue of Ralph Krueger (55-0-27), Rasmus Dahlin (137 points) or Victor Olofsson (82 goals).

6. Colorado Avalanche

Nikita Zadorov leads all defencemen with a plus-164 rating and can no longer be ignored in the Norris voting.

7. St. Louis Blues

Doug Armstrong signs off on \$1.0935 billion worth of contract extensions by the end of the regular season.

8. Edmonton Oilers

James Neal's change of scenery pays off with an 164-goal showing, Mike Smith wins every game he starts despite a .892 save percentage and a playoff berth assures Connor McDavid of a Hart Trophy.

9. Anaheim Ducks

John Gibson's perfect record and .970 save percentage lock up the Vezina for him and the Jack Adams for new coach Dallas Eakins.

10. Toronto Maple Leafs

Auston Matthews' 102 goals and zero assists make him the greatest Cy Young winner of all time. Equally impressive: A 41-goal breakout campaign by Frederik Gauthier.

11. Tampa Bay Lightning

Steven Stamkos calls out his team 27 times as the Lightning's 41 standings points mark a drastic 87-point drop-off from 2018-19.

12. Nashville Predators

Matt Duchene's 164-assist performance snaps Wayne Gretzky's single-season record and compensates nicely for the fact he fails to score a goal for his new club.

13. Calgary Flames

Milan Lucic amasses a monstrous 55 fights and 713 penalty minutes. Cam Talbot never does get to start.

14. Detroit Red Wings

Anthony Mantha's franchise-record-breaking run to 137 goals helps him lock up the runner-up spot to Neal's Maurice "Rocket" Richard Trophy by Christmas.

15. Philadelphia Flyers

Travis Konecny's agent begs to renegotiate with Flyers brass after his 22-year-old explodes for a 246-point campaign.

16. Washington Capitals

The trade serves Radko Gudas well as the hard-nosed defender posts a career-high 41 points and career-low 41 penalty minutes.

17. Winnipeg Jets

The Winnipeg Jets' blue line depth gets tested as they lose 81 defencemen to trade, injury, free agency or personal reasons.

18. Montreal Canadiens

Keith Kinkaid never does play a minute for the Montreal Canadiens, but his tweet game remains (fire emoji).

19. Los Angeles Kings

Drew Doughty chirps Matthew Tkachuk through the media 41 times — and we're still not bored of it.

20. Pittsburgh Penguins

The Penguins will attempt to trade Jack Johnson 41 times this season. Sidney Crosby takes out his frustrations by dropping the gloves 57 times, setting a new career-high.

21. New York Islanders

Devon Toews outscores Jonathan Toews by a mellow 57 points.

22. Florida Panthers

Mike Hoffman's noteworthy 66.7 shooting percentage confirms what his mother always suspected. He's the most accurate player to ever pick up a hockey stick.

23. Chicago Blackhawks

The Blackhawks play all 82 games in Prague.

24. Dallas Stars

Joe Pavelski's new team and his former team combine for a mere 10 victories all season, as Dallas and San Jose disappoint with a combined 10-154 record on the season.

25. Columbus Blue Jackets

When neither half of the Joonas Korpisalo–Elvis Merzlikins tandem can muster a save percentage greater than .860, a van full of Blue Jackets fans hatch a plan to drive down to Sunrise and kidnap Sergei Bobrovsky.

26. Arizona Coyotes

Darcy Kuemper turns in a spectacular 1.54 goals-against average and .945 save percentage ... and never wins a game.

27. Vancouver Canucks

Alumnus Roberto Luongo crafts 27 hilarious Photoshops to the tune of 113.4K retweets.

Look what I found when I zoomed out a little
<https://t.co/5ug8hSh5QO> pic.twitter.com/0pCuUrvYPk

— Strombone (@strombone1) October 1, 2019

28. New Jersey Devils

Blake Coleman's right wrist scores 41 goals, singlehandedly.

29. Minnesota Wild

The Minnesota Wild's top two scorers running away are both defencemen: Ryan Suter (123 points) and Matt Dumba (82 points).

30. Ottawa Senators

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Pierre Dorion orchestrates 41 small trades in which the other team retains salary.

31. San Jose Sharks

Barclay Goodrow co-leads the Sharks in goals with 20. Erik Karlsson leads the Sharks in newborn babies with 20.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.10.2019

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Sportsnet.ca / Early returns on Neal-Lucic swap exactly what Oilers, Flames hoped

Eric Francis | @EricFrancis October 9, 2019, 12:44 PM

Milan Lucic might have been the last person in Alberta to hear about James Neal's four-goal shocker Tuesday night.

After all, while Edmonton Oilers fans were busy texting every Calgary Flames fan they knew, declaring early victory in their summer swap, Lucic was pounding away on the face of six-foot-five Los Angeles Kings defender Kurtis MacDermid.

Neal's night powered the Oilers to a win on Long Island.

Lucic's fists turned a 3-0 deficit into an emotional comeback thwarted by Drew Doughty in overtime.

One thing has been clear since the Flames and Oilers swapped problems this summer — Neal and Lucic will forever be inextricably linked.

Both former 30-goal men carry onerous contracts for the next four years while battling the reality they are post-apex in their careers.

Both were massive disappointments in their respective cities where disengagement, foot speed and father time appeared to be their biggest opponents.

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The idea was that with new opportunity, could come new life, which is exactly what has come to fruition three games in.

One leads the NHL in goals (6); the other in penalty minutes (26) and fights (2).

Yes, it's early.

But so far both have fit in exactly the way their new teams had hoped, leaving fans in their previous stops scratching their heads.

When told of Neal's goal binge after Tuesday's game, Lucic was quick to understand updates on one another's comeback attempts will be ongoing, as one can't be mentioned without thinking of the other.

"For sure, you're not going to be able to get away from it," said Lucic who, like Neal, has clearly embraced his new digs.

"I can't focus on what other guys are doing on other teams or you drive yourself nuts. He's a natural goal scorer and I do things more than scoring goals. But I've got to find a way to chip in sooner than later."

Offensively, it's not necessary.

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Flames fans would be content if Lucic repeated last season's six-goal campaign, as long as he flexed his muscles regularly enough to ensure his Calgary cast feels insulated from the abuse opponents haven't been afraid to inflict.

With two fighting majors against league heavyweights so far, his presence has been appreciated by teammates and Dome-dwellers who've welcomed the beefy North Vancouver native with "Looooooch" every time he's on the ice.

"It's good — obviously you appreciate it from the fans," smiled Lucic, 31, who had just three fights last season in a city in which he was the whipping boy.

"You just have to keep it going on a night-to-night basis."

Bingo.

Neal is using top-six minutes and prime real estate on the power play alongside Connor McDavid to regain his scoring touch, and Lucic is reinvigorated as a role player on a team that desperately needed his snarl.

Both teams craved having those roles filled, which was why the trade was a no-brainer from the start.

That doesn't mean news of Neal's four-spot didn't feel like a Lucic gut punch to some Flames fans who may have taken a brief respite from reality and wondered if perhaps the team should have stuck with Neal.

Wrong.

Neal was never going to be successful in Calgary after the mail-it-in, seven-goal season he had last year.

Disengaged at best, Neal offered nothing to a team that outbid itself to hand him US\$28.75 million.

He arrived in less than optimal shape and wasn't popular in a dressing room where his stall was in the far corner for a reason.

Clearly upset he wasn't given a top-line role with the Flames early on due to the instant success of Elias Lindholm alongside Johnny Gaudreau and Sean Monahan, he was unable to chip in any other way.

He didn't use his size to hit anyone, he was never involved in scrums and he was too slow to fit in on the Flames second line, which would have involved playing defence.

The depth in Calgary and his attitude made it crystal clear that as a one-dimensional player he was never going to work out in Cowtown.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

The Flames spent the last two years searching for moxie and grit, making Lucic attractive as part of a provincial switch aimed at salvaging something – anything – from a pair of bad deals.

Lucic clearly had his own engagement issues, openly admitting after the trade he was having a hard time getting motivated on a bottom-dwelling club he felt pressure to be better on.

In Calgary, he feels relaxed in a role more suitable to his skill set.

It's certainly safe to say most Alberta residents – north and south – saw Edmonton as having the higher upside on the deal.

The fact is, a 25-goal bounceback for Neal doesn't mean the Oilers would "win" the swap.

Ultimately, the best judge of which team came out better revolves around a season-end review determining if Neal could help land Edmonton a playoff spot and if Lucic's role can help Calgary past the first round or two.

Win-win seemed the most probable outcome, which is exactly where it's trending early.

Both teams are getting far more out of the new player than their previous employer did.

"He had to waive his no-trade clause for us to switch spots, so I thank him for that," Neal told Mark Spector on Wednesday. "We both needed a fresh start — he struggled here and I struggled in Calgary."

"Calgary needed a guy like him to come in there, a guy who can score goals but a guy who plays physical. He takes on one of the tougher guys last night in MacDermid. He's a great player."

A Neal resurgence would certainly help the Flames personnel-wise as hitting the 21-goal mark would land Calgary a third-round draft pick this summer, as long as he outscores Lucic by at least 10.

As a trade-off, Lucic's deal is more onerous to buy out than Neal's.

Sadly, the first Battle of Alberta isn't until Dec. 27.

Until then, the only salvos fired will continue to come via endless texts between the two fanbases.

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Sportsnet.ca / NHL Rookie Notebook: Ilya Mikheyev making waves for Maple Leafs

Emily Sadler | @EmmySadler October 9, 2019, 11:27 AM

'Tis the season for NHL debuts and all the good-news stories that come with them.

Colorado Avalanche defenceman Cale Makar is off to a solid start with two assists in two games and has been widely considered the Calder Trophy favourite since he burst on to the scene last spring with a strong playoff stint.

I can't believe Cale Makar is 20 years old. This kid's toolbox is overflowing.

One shift after eliminating the super-fast Fiala with awesome footwork and stickwork, he takes out Eriksson Ek

— Michael Russo (@RussoHockey) October 6, 2019

Brothers Jack and Quinn Hughes will no doubt be watched closely all year, as will New York's newest Ranger, Kaapo Kakko, as they heat up in their respective rookie seasons.

Every two weeks, we'll highlight some of the most noteworthy rookie performances around the NHL. We'll start 2019-20 with a look at a few of the players — some expected, others not so much — making strong first impressions with their first NHL strides.

Glass has Golden Knights teammates gushing already

Last Wednesday's home opener in Vegas featured a couple of pretty cool firsts for the NHL's newest team. Cody Glass, the Golden Knights' first-ever draft pick (6th overall, 2017) stepped on NHL ice and became the first player drafted by Vegas to make his NHL debut.

The 20-year-old from Winnipeg certainly made the most of the opportunity, scoring his first career goal in his first game — and on his first shot, no less. The goal, which helped Vegas to a 4-1 win over rival San Jose, came off a gorgeous pass from linemate (and biggest fan) Max Pacioretty. Glass is currently centring Pacioretty and Mark Stone on the Golden Knights' second line — talk about a dream setup for a talented rookie.

Glass's early-career success has his teammates gushing about him already, telling NHL.com's Nick Cotsonika about just what, exactly, makes the rookie such a special talent. Via Cotsonika:

Pacioretty: "He has the ultimate hockey tool, and that's hockey IQ and knowing where to be on the ice ... He's a lot of fun to play with. He's the future of this team, and I can't say enough good things about him."

Nate Schmidt: "Man, I love watching him play ... He's got better vision and playmaking ability than I could ever have. I just think the way that he sees the game, and he can slow it down and understand how the play's going to happen."

Paul Stastny: "I think you say one thing, he kind of digests it and knows ... He's always asking, 'Why?' He knows we do things for a reason. So in that sense, for us smarter players that play with him, he's easy to play with because you can talk to him and know he's going to make adjustments."

Mikheyev making a soup-er first impression

Toronto's best kept secret no more, former KHLer Ilya Mikheyev has officially introduced himself to the NHL. The undrafted Russian signed as a free agent with the Maple Leafs back in May after a months-long pursuit by GM Kyle Dubas & Co., and has so far looked right at home on NHL ice.

It took the 24-year-old rookie (he turns 25 on Thursday) all of one game to capture the hearts of Toronto hockey fans,

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

thanks to two points and this gem of a quote heard 'round Leafs Land:

"What's important for me, I don't know why – I like soup. Yes. I like soup. I don't know why you don't eat soup," Mikheyev said after his debut, talking about his adjustment to his new home away from home. "My girlfriend is cooking, and I'm very happy when I eat."

Considering his success so far — three points in four games while quickly earning the trust of head coach Mike Babcock on the penalty kill — we'll be hearing plenty more from Mikheyev.

Leafs Hour

A promotion coming for Ilya Mikheyev at Kasperii Kapanen's expense?

October 08 2019

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Brannstrom's debut almost ends in disaster

Erik Brannstrom's NHL dream came true when he made his debut last week with the Ottawa Senators, but it almost turned into a nightmare for the the young defenceman.

Right after stopping a last-second hat trick attempt by Maple Leafs forward Auston Matthews, Brannstrom's face was cut by Matthews' falling skate blade just below his eye. Thankfully, the Swedish rearguard was bloodied but OK — a few stitches, and luckily no further damage. Tough kid indeed.

Olofsson is our early rookie scoring leader

One week into the season and the rookie scoring race is underway. At the front of the pack is a face unfamiliar to most hockey fans... but already beloved in Buffalo: Victor Olofsson, a 2014 seventh-rounder who is perhaps the poster boy of patience.

Career goals among 2014 #NHL 7th-round picks:

Ondrej Kase: 36 (in 151 games)

Victor Olofsson: 5 (in 9 games)

The other 28 guys combined: 0

Tim Murray doesn't get much love from #SabresTwitter, but give him credit for taking Olofsson at the top of the round #Sabres

— Ted Goldberg (@TedGoldbergTV) October 8, 2019

Olofsson, 24, took his first NHL strides during a six-game stint at the end of last season, with two goals and two assists to show for it. Sixth months and one opening-night roster spot later, the Swedish winger is off to a hot start and proving the Sabres were right to be patient with his development.

Victor Olofsson's first 9 #NHL games: 5 PP goals, 3s #Sabres pic.twitter.com/aBktO1yb5

— Ted Goldberg (@TedGoldbergTV) October 8, 2019

Just three games into 2019-20, Olofsson already has three goals and an assist, having struck some seriously strong first-line chemistry with Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart.

Fleury's NHL debut is a family affair

When Canadiens rookie Cale Fleury hit the NHL ice for the first time in Montreal's season opener, he did so with a familiar face across the rink — his big brother, Haydn.

While the Habs rookie didn't get on the scoreboard, Sportsnet's Eric Engels wrote about his strong debut performance in the loss.

Surely, one of many NHL matchups to come between the two.

Heinola's historic goal is making us feel ancient

We'll no doubt be hearing plenty from Jack Hughes and Kaapo Kakko as they get warmed up, but for now we're highlighting another member of that 2019 draft class, who's making us feel incredibly old right now.

Winnipeg Jets defenceman and pick No. 20 of June's draft, Ville Heinola, scored his first career NHL goal Tuesday night in a big win over the Pittsburgh Penguins. His strong early-season play couldn't come at a better time for the Jets, whose blue line has seen better days.

Which 2019 NHL drafted player is having the biggest impact right now? How about #GoJetsGo rookie D Ville Heinola. The 18yo No. 20 pick has 1g/2a/3p, +2 rating, 53.85 (SAT%), is tied among WPG def w/ 8 shots on goal & averaging over 19:00 in 4 gms for depleted D corps

— Mike Morreale (@mikemorrealeNHL) October 9, 2019

He's the youngest Jet to score a goal in a Jets sweater, the first of his draft class to register a goal, and the first NHLer born in 2001 with an NHL goal to his name.

#GoJetsGo Ville Heinola becomes the first player born in the 21st Century to score an NHL goal

— Sportsnet Stats (@SNstats) October 8, 2019

Feel old yet?

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TSN.CA / Five Takeaways: Canucks vs Kings

Jeff Paterson

Brandon Sutter

1) The Canucks kicked off their 50th anniversary celebrations in style on Wednesday night rocking Jonathan Quick and the Los Angeles Kings 8-2. The eight goals equaled the teams highest goal output all of last season when they scored eight times in an 8-5 win in Boston last November. After getting shutout in Calgary and without a win through their first two games, the floodgates opened for almost everybody wearing a Canucks uniform. Seven different goal scorers found the back of the net and 14 different skaters figured in the scoring. That's important for a team that was being questioned about its lack of offense in

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Alberta last week. Now, guys can see what's possible and key players like Elias Pettersson no longer have to fret about when their first goal of the season will come. Pettersson's goal to make it 3-0 early in the second period stood up as the game winner. It was his first even-strength goal since February 5th in Washington.

2) Because he registered just six shots in his five games at the end of last season, Quinn Hughes hadn't really put his slap shot on display at the NHL level. Three games into this season he's already felled the Oilers Adam Larsson and on Wednesday flat out blew a slap shot past Jonathan Quick for his first NHL goal. The ever-confident Hughes was asked about his shot quality at development camp last month and assured those within earshot that he believed he had a pro level shot. Despite his size, he was able to get everything he had behind the blast that opened the scoring on Wednesday. According to NHL.com Hughes scored from 44-feet out in front of the Kings net. He later added an assist on a sublime set up for Chris Tanev on the doorstep off the rush. Hughes now has three points this season to go along with the three points he picked up last season. That gives him six points in eight NHL games and while it's early in his career and the sample size remains tiny, Hughes just looks the part of a guy who will shatter Canucks scoring record for defensemen.

3) Brandon Sutter had just two goals and six points in the 26 games he was limited to in a season lost to injuries in 2018-19. On Wednesday, he generated half of last season's point total with his first two goals and a nifty set-up for Elias Pettersson. It's important to note that the offense comes with Sutter playing wing which is not his natural position. The Canucks have shuffled him to the right side to create a spot in the line-up for Adam Gaudette. Instead of pouting and wondering about his job security, Sutter has embraced the challenge and on Wednesday was one of the Canucks best players. No one has ever doubted his shooting ability and his first goal just 42 seconds after Quinn Hughes had opened the scoring was proof that Sutter can score from distance. He took a feed in the right circle from Jake Virtanen and snapped the puck up under the bar behind Jonathan Quick. Sutter's second goal wasn't nearly as pretty and needed the war room in Toronto to blow play dead to inform the on-ice officials that the puck had indeed crept across the Kings goal line with four minutes remaining in the game. It was interesting post-game to hear Travis Green concede he has heard many in the market trying to run Sutter out of town. But the coach was quick to praise the veteran for his play on Wednesday and then doubled-down when he explained how his trust and belief in Sutter has allowed him to have confidence in Gaudette in the defensive zone. He says Sutter serves as a security blanket for the young centre and the two seem to be developing some chemistry after just two games together.

4) JT Miller had been the best Canuck forward through the team's first two games. Now that wasn't saying much for a team that had just two goals and only one from a forward. But Miller's work rate stood out from the first day of training camp and continued through the preseason where he was noticeable on almost every shift. There was more of that in Alberta last week but he had just a single assist to show for it. Miller's offense bubbled to the surface on Wednesday as he led the Canucks with four points -- his first four-point night in the National Hockey League. Miller had assists on Sutter's first goal of the night and later figured in goals by Pettersson and Alex Edler. He also set up Brock Boeser for a glorious scoring chance -- one of the few the Canucks did not convert

on the night -- early in the third. The newcomer also got a welcome bounce when he banked a puck off Ilya Kovalchuk and in to make it a 5-1 game late in the second period. The Canucks paid a steep price to pry Miller out of Tampa Bay, but it certainly looks like they have a player who will drive play and contribute offense. Against LA, Miller was on the ice for three Canuck goals and wasn't on for either of the LA scoring plays. The Canucks also controlled north of 60% of the shot attempts with Miller on the ice at even strength. There were suggestions after the trade that Miller's work ethic and consistency was a concern to some in the NHL. That simply hasn't been the case for him in the early going in Vancouver.

5) The Canucks organization deserves credit for a job well done on Wednesday night. The pregame ceremony hit almost every note pitch perfect as it captured a half-century of history. From former players from various decades joining the current players as part of the pre-game introductions to the pregame video to the new projection system lighting up the ice in a dizzying display of Canuck colours, it was a spectacle to be sure. It was, of course, topped off with the handing of the captaincy to Bo Horvat at centre ice in a presentation involving former Canuck captains Orland Kurtenbach and Henrik Sedin. Horvat is the right man for the job and will carry on the legacy of leadership. Although still young at 24-years of age, he is now in his sixth NHL season and apprenticed under both Henrik and Daniel Sedin. He has command of the Canucks locker room and the respect of those in it. He had his parents in attendance at Wednesday's game and spoke openly after the game about how nervous he was during the centre ice ceremony where he swapped out his jersey with an A for the one he'll wear moving forward with the C on it. If he was nervous before the puck drop, it hardly showed during the game. Horvat finished the night playing 18:17 and had a beautiful cross-crease assist on Josh Leivo's third period goal.

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TSN.CA / James Neal making the most of early opportunity with Oilers

Frank Seravalli

NEWARK, N.J. — Oh, to have been a fly on the wall in Brad Treiving's office at the Saddledome on Tuesday night.

The news of James Neal's four-goal night pinging across the continent from Long Island must have left a pit in the Calgary Flames general manager's stomach.

Neal and Milan Lucic are inextricably linked. It's been just three games, but this is the appetizer referendum on a one-for-one course that tastes delicious in Oil Country after Taylor Hall for Adam Larsson — especially given the Battle of Alberta implications.

Neal is pacing the NHL in goals (six) and a pointless Lucic leads the league in penalty minutes (26).

Gulp.

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NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

Treliving is in the middle of this mess, with a heap of blame placed squarely on Flames coach Bill Peters.

Because everyone has spent the past 24 hours asking: What is Neal doing this year that he couldn't last year? What's different about Neal?

"What's different?" Neal said, chuckling.

Everyone is searching for a revelation or grand explanation, but the truth is: "Nothing," Neal said.

The difference is the 'Real Deal' has gotten a real opportunity in Edmonton.

Seravalli: Neal getting a real 'opportunity' with Oilers

James Neal is all the buzz right now with six-goals over his first three games with the Oilers and Frank Seravalli explains why the opportunity he's getting in Edmonton is something he didn't get while in Calgary.

Neal, 32, is the same shoot-the-lights-out scorer he's been since he broke into the NHL as a rookie in 2008-09 under coach Dave Tippett with the Dallas Stars.

"You just get him the puck," defenceman Oscar Klefbom said. "He does the rest himself."

Neal looks like the same 10-time 20-goal scorer he has always been, which includes that 2012-13 lockout-shortened season. It's been just three games, but even if Neal fizzles and falls short of that 20-goal mark again, it's clear that the aberration was in Calgary.

"I signed a five-year contract in Calgary thinking I would do this, be a go-to guy," Neal said Wednesday, after the Oilers improved to 3-0-0. "It didn't work out. I find myself here. I couldn't be happier. It's weird how things work out."

In Edmonton, Neal has been given an opportunity to succeed. In Calgary, Neal was given an opportunity to fail.

Why was that the case?

"I don't know," Neal said. "I ask myself. I ask everyone."

"When I was in Calgary, I asked for help. I said 'Hey, I need a chance. I need help. I want to play more. I need this, I need that.' I never got it. I've moved on."

The clearest indicator of Neal's opportunity with the Oilers is in deployment.

Neal played a total of 98 minutes on Calgary's top line last year, the equivalent of 15 periods of work. He's started this season with Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Tomas Jurco, adding a much-needed dimension to a team that was the best helicopter (no wings, all centres) in the NHL.

But his impact has been felt most on the power play.

Last year, Neal played a grand total of 16:15 over the entire season on the Flames' top power-play unit with Johnny Gaudreau and Sean Monahan.

In just three games, Neal has already skated 12:25 on the Oilers' top unit with Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl.

Some of that has come through a bit of luck. Alex Chiasson won that top unit spot out of camp because Tippett said Chiasson got the "benefit of the doubt" based on his success in that role last year.

But then Chiasson came down with an illness that kept him out of the lineup for two of the first three games.

"I give Nealer credit. He's jumped in there and jumped on the opportunity," Tippett said.

Neal knew he had to seize the chance to play a man-up with a Hart Trophy winner and 50-goal scorer. The result has been four power-play goals in three games.

"You know, being on that left side, with Connor being a lefty there, I felt like I could pop out and get some chances at the net because there's heavy pressure on him and [Draisaitl]," Neal explained. "That leaves some open space for me. I've been there lots in my career and I've just tried to take advantage of it as best I can."

It's an opportunity and advantage that Lucic had many times in his three seasons in Edmonton. Lucic received countless passes from McDavid and Draisaitl in tight quarters on the power play.

He simply couldn't convert – and not for lack of effort.

That is what makes this trade so difficult for Treliving and Calgary to swallow. In three games, their worst fears are being realized – and Lucic likely doesn't have the physical capability anymore to be anything more than a third or fourth line physical presence.

What's the deal, Neal?!? - Flames not bothered by his hot start

James Neal only managed to score seven goals with the Flames last year, but already has six through three games with the Oilers. But his former teammates aren't holding any grudges and know Milan Lucic brings something special to their team as well.

Just looking at the numbers, including shooting percentage and career history, and the narrative coming off of back-to-back trips to the Stanley Cup Final – Neal was the only player in this trade who truly had the chance to rebound. Neal's shooting percentage last year (5.0) was less than half his career average (11.8).

"I think we both just needed a fresh start," Neal said. "I appreciate [Lucic] he had to waive his no-trade clause for us to switch spots. I thank him for that."

It's a good bet that Lucic would not have been back with the Oilers this season regardless. But GM Ken Holland somehow found a way to turn an anvil into an engine.

Instead of digging in and forcing Peters and Neal to work out their differences, Treliving offered a get-out-of-jail-free card to Edmonton, acquiring a player with less upside and a more penalizing contract to buy out.

As Tippett said on Wednesday: "So far, so good."

"I feel like it's a different vibe. We've got a winning attitude around here," Neal said. "I've gotten a great opportunity here with people that believe in me."

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NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

TSN.CA / 'Hungry' Toronto Maple Leaf William Nylander takes his game to another level

Kristen Shilton

William Nylander scored his second goal of the season on Monday, in the Maple Leafs' fourth game, achieving a feat it took 24 games to accomplish a season ago.

Back then, a protracted contract stalemate with the Leafs cost Nylander all of training camp, the preseason and two months of the regular season, leaving him a shell of the player Toronto thought it signed to a six-year, \$45 million deal.

But that's behind the winger now. Nylander has been a standout at both ends of the ice in the early days of Toronto's season, and linemates Auston Matthews and Andreas Johnsson describe him as hungrier than ever before.

Head coach Mike Babcock, though, says the improvement is all relative to Nylander's proper preparation.

"We're talking about hunger, but he wasn't here. So it was hard to be hungry [last year]," Babcock said after the Leafs' practice on Wednesday. "And then when you get here and the league is going 900 [miles an hour] and you're going 20, she's tough. But the more he goes to get [the puck] with his speed, with his tenacity, with his stick lifts, with his contact in those traffic areas, the more he's going to have the puck and the more dynamic he'll be."

Nylander is more succinct about what's allowed his confidence to skyrocket.

"I feel the same way as last year in ways, but pucks are going in right now," he said, smiling. "So that's the difference. When you're scoring it's always fun. It gives you a little extra jump versus when it's [not] like it did at the start of last season for me."

Babcock tried reuniting Nylander on a line with Matthews and Johnsson when the Swedish winger rejoined the team last December, but it never clicked and he ended up in a bottom-six role after that.

Nylander has been back flanking those two since training camp began, which was right around the time Johnsson first sensed a shift in the 23-year-old.

"You feel like he's hungry," Johnsson said. "Especially when you play on the same line, you feel even more how the other players are playing, and right now he's hungry and he's chasing pucks and he's aggressive. So it's easy to play with him right now."

That unit has been the most consistent for Toronto through four games, generating seven even-strength points among the three skaters (three goals for Matthews, a goal and two assists for Nylander and an assist for Johnsson). But after several missed opportunities against St. Louis, including on a couple hit posts, Matthews said the line is angling for more of a return on their chances.

"Willy is obviously playing really well and Johnny, we're all meshing really well together," Matthews said, "So I think we just want to continue to get better every night and continue

to get those good opportunities and hopefully cash in on them."

"Some nights, nothing goes your way," added Johnsson. "But we're feeling positive from these games. We had the puck a lot in the offensive zone and we created chances and when you do that, it's not really much to worry about. Just have the same mindset next game."

Dreger: Dating back to the world championships, Nylander has impressed

Andi Petrillo, Darren Dreger and Mike Johnson discuss how William Nylander has performed so far in a season where there is a lot of pressure to make up for last year's results.

Whether spending holidays together in Toronto or riding scooters around Scottsdale, Ariz., Matthews has built a tight friendship with former Leafs' teammate Patrick Marleau.

So when the news came out Tuesday night that Marleau had signed a one-year, \$700,000 contract with the San Jose Sharks, returning him to the club he played for from 1997-2017 before leaving to join Toronto for two seasons, Matthews immediately reached out to celebrate the good news.

"It was great to see that," Matthews said. "I sent him a text. [I'm] happy for him, happy he can go home with his family and hopefully do well. I'm really happy for him."

Nylander hadn't heard the news prior to media informing him about it Wednesday, but was equally excited.

"It's incredible. That's got to be lots of fun for his family to go back to San Jose," Nylander said. "Just the way he is as a pro, every day at the rink, practising, working hard, stuff like that. He taught us to become better pros."

Marleau had one year remaining on his three-year deal with Toronto when the club traded him to Carolina last June, removing his \$6.25 million cap hit from the books. Ultimately, Marleau wanted to follow his wife Christina and four sons back to the Bay Area, and accepted a buyout from the Hurricanes without any guarantee the Sharks would take him back.

That it all worked out for the 40-year-old in the end was all the Leafs had hoped for Marleau.

"That's what he wanted. That's what was best for his family," Babcock said. "Probably took a little longer than he wanted, but he said last night his wife and his kids were real happy. Patty wants to keep playing past this year as well, so we wish him luck."

Babcock said the Leafs never explored trying to re-sign Marleau for a lower price after the Hurricanes bought him out ("He didn't want to play here. He wanted to play in San Jose, so that took us out of that mix,") but said Marleau's legacy is still felt throughout the Leafs' room.

"John Tavares came here [because of Marleau]," Babcock said. "When you've got people that have come from other organizations like Patty did, that starts it. When Tavares is looking for someone to phone to find out whether he should come here or not and you have Patrick Marleau to phone, it's a pretty good guy to phone. I thought he really helped out our young guys – gave us a real good pro and example of

CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 10, 2019

how to eat, how to work out, how to train, how to practise, so we could get on the process of changing the culture.”

As for whether Marleau can make good on his desire to keep playing after this season, which will be the Saskatchewan native's 22nd, Babcock said it wouldn't surprise him in the least.

“You look around the world, the average 40-year-old isn't playing the National Hockey League,” he said. “You have to love the game and your family has to be committed to you loving the game because when you're a pro athlete, it's a lot about you. So, they have to make that commitment with you. They've all decided this is a good thing for Patty, and he's a good player.”

More than a week into the regular season, Babcock hasn't quite settled on a firm lineup for the Leafs just yet, and he's going to continue rotating certain players until he does.

On Thursday against Tampa Bay, Babcock will keep Jason Spezza and Nic Petan on the fourth line and Justin Holl on the club's third defensive pairing, but Nick Shore, Dmytro Timashov and Martin Marincin are still very much in the mix.

“They've had two [games] apiece,” explained Babcock. “One of the reasons we play eight exhibition games is it gives us a real fair chance to evaluate everyone else. So any way you look at it, guys have had quite a bit of [opportunity]. And not only do we want to be right, we want to give guys a fair chance and we think we've done that. Doesn't mean it'll be the same next game, but that's what we're doing.”

Babcock said the emergence of rookie defenceman Rasmus Sandin hasn't factored into how he's deciding whether Holl or Marincin will play in that pairing from game to game, but it's encouraging that Sandin is finding ways to make an impact no matter who his partner is.

“He's getting to play with good players,” Babcock said. “I think for him the more minutes he earns, the better opportunity is for him. Get comfortable with the size of the players. There will be a lot to handle there [against Tampa], no different than against St. Louis, but it's like anything, it comes on an earned basis.”

That goes beyond just impressing Babcock to also catching the eye of assistant coach Dave Hakstol.

“The big thing is, Hak is running the backend, and if the coach is comfortable, you get out there,” Babcock said. “And if he's uncomfortable, you don't get out there; it's just that simple. There's a confidence when they're watching [Sandin]. So if you make good plays, you keep going out. And if he starts getting nervous, you don't go out as much. That's just how simple it is.”

Maple Leafs' lines at practice:

Kapanen-Tavares-Marner

Johnsson-Matthews-Nylander

Mikheyev-Kerfoot-Moore

Petan-Spezza-Gauthier

Shore, Timashov

Rielly-Ceci

Muzzin-Barrie

Sandin-Holl

Marincin-Dermott

Andersen

Hutchinson

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TSN.CA / Tkachuk brothers passed on family photo with Stanley Cup this summer

Ian Mendes

At the end of the summer, Keith Tkachuk hosted a Stanley Cup party at his St. Louis home.

As a member of the St. Louis Blues' front office, Tkachuk was granted a day with the championship trophy. When it came time for an obligatory family photo with the Stanley Cup, however, his two NHL-playing sons politely declined the offer.

Technically, Brady and Matthew Tkachuk are in the picture – they just refused to pose for it.

“My mom wanted to do a family picture by it and Matthew and I completely refused that,” Brady said on Wednesday. “So they took the picture right in front of our senior year pictures [on the wall]. It was funny.”

There were some laughs to be had, but when it comes to getting near the Stanley Cup, it's no joking matter for the Tkachuk brothers. They both firmly believe they need to earn the privilege of being pictured with the Stanley Cup, despite their strong family connection to the Blues' championship.

“We take it pretty serious. We try our best to stay away and let other people enjoy it, because Matthew and I both have the mindset that hopefully we'll be winning it someday,” Brady explained. “Matthew and I were at the opposite end of the room and would not go near it, because hopefully one day we can lift it one day.”

In fact, the Tkachuk brothers are so serious about their own pursuits of the Stanley Cup that they even spent time planning out how the parade routes and victory parties would look if they were able to secure a championship for either Calgary or Ottawa.

“Matthew and I – pretty much all summer – we were talking about where our parades would be in our respective cities. And how much fun we'd have with our Cup parties,” Brady said. “We were pretty detailed with it and it was definitely something you visualize after being a part of it.”

So what might a Stanley Cup parade look like in Ottawa in Brady's imagination?

CAROLINA HURRICANES

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"Down the canal. Right in front of Parliament. Into the market and a big street party. Just block off the road for a big street party," he said. "We definitely thought about it."

The Blues will make their lone visit to Ottawa on Thursday night, which could allow Brady to be reacquainted with St. Louis forward Robert Thomas. Thomas' status for the game is unclear as he is day-to-day with an upper-body injury, but he spent last season living at the Tkachuk family home in St. Louis as he broke into the NHL.

When Brady returned home in the summer, he watched how Thomas went through the grind of the Stanley Cup playoffs. He attended the Blues' clinching Game 6 win over San Jose in the Western Conference final as a spectator in the stands. Brady showed his support by wearing a London Knights T-shirt with Thomas' name on the back of it. Thomas played with Matthew on the 2015-16 Knights team that captured the Memorial Cup championship.

"I just went to one, just to support Robbie. He was still grinding away. It was a pretty cool game and cool to see the atmosphere too," Brady said of the experience of watching his roommate clinch the Western Conference title on home ice.

Brady didn't attend any of the games in the Stanley Cup Final against Boston, but he did make his way onto the streets of St. Louis to soak in the atmosphere of the Stanley Cup parade.

"I was there with my dad, my mom and my sister. It was fun it was pretty cool to see how pumped my dad was," Brady said. "It takes your breath away to see how excited people get."

At the same time as soaking in the celebrations in the city, Brady says he was experiencing mixed emotions this summer around the Blues championship. It sounds like a unique combination of envy and inspiration that can only be experienced by an active NHL player who is trying to win a Stanley Cup of their own while celebrating the accomplishment with a close family member or friend.

"You're kind of jealous of them," he admitted. "I was around Robbie and you kind of see what they go through and the wear and tear. It's pretty cool to see that. I feel like I've learned a lot seeing what they went through."

While neither of the Tkachuk boys agreed to be in the family's Stanley Cup photo, there was one sibling who happily was front and centre in the picture. Their younger sister, Taryn, — herself a standout field hockey player — had no issues being photographed with hockey's Holy Grail.

"She can do whatever she wants," Brady said with a laugh.

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YAHOO SPORTS / Flyers' Carter Hart posts early save of the year in shutout effort

Arun Srinivasan

No one would blame you if you were weary of a Philadelphia Flyers goaltender, but Carter Hart is the real deal and you'll want to watch every bit of his rise to stardom.

Hart made 25 saves to record the first shutout of his young career, blanking the New Jersey Devils 4-0 on Wednesday night. But one of those stops will stand out above the rest.

The 21-year-old robbed former Hart Trophy winner Taylor Hall of a surefire goal, stretching out his glove to get a piece of the puck before it pierced the top corner. Hall was set up on a beautiful pass from 2019 first-overall pick Jack Hughes and wired his release perfectly, but was outdone by the Flyers' young netminder.

Robbery. My goodness, Carter Hart.
pic.twitter.com/n5CrbQ30pa

— Yahoo Sports NHL (@YahooSportsNHL) October 10, 2019

Philadelphia's inability to find a permanent starting goaltender since the turn of the century has been a running trope but Hart, selected in the second round of the 2016 NHL Draft, has cemented himself as the team's goalie of both the present and future.

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YAHOO SPORTS / Canucks name Bo Horvat the 14th captain in franchise history

Arun Srinivasan

The Vancouver Canucks named Bo Horvat as their next captain on Wednesday night ahead of the team's home opener against the Los Angeles Kings.

Allow us to reintroduce @BoHorvat, the 14th captain of the Vancouver #Canucks! pic.twitter.com/ibpa7JyFF5

— Vancouver Canucks (@Canucks) October 10, 2019

Bo Horvat is given the "C" as the new captain of the Canucks pic.twitter.com/AiTwnQ2wN2

— Brady Trettenero (@BradyTrett) October 10, 2019

Horvat posted a career-best 27 goals and 61 points, playing in all 82 games during the 2018-19 season. The 24-year-old was honoured in a pre-game ceremony, where his jersey with the 'C' adorned was revealed to the home crowd.

Vancouver announced Horvat among its assistants in a somewhat cryptic tweet on Oct. 1, joining Chris Tanev, Alex Edler and Brandon Sutter among the team's leadership group.

Horvat has been a staple of the Canucks since being selected ninth overall in 2013 NHL Draft and serves as one of the bridges between the team's rebuilding efforts, and its bright future aided by Brock Boeser and Elias Pettersson.

CAROLINA HURRICANES

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It's clear that Horvat's won the endorsement of Canucks legends from the past.

"It's always tough to see where young guys will end up. Where he is right now, if he ends up being this kind of player (the rest of his career), that's plenty. But he could take other steps. Bo has all the intangibles to become something great," former Canucks captain Henrik Sedin said of Horvat to Sportnet's Iain MacIntyre.

Sedin also gave Horvat some key advice.

"Be yourself. He got picked because he is who he is. That's what they told me when I became captain. It's good they've seen him for a few years. If someone comes in and you pick him right away, you don't really know what kind of guy he is," Sedin said via Ben Kuzma of the Vancouver Province.

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