



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • Oct. 11, 2017

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

In first two games, Hurricanes prove their resiliency the difficult way

By Luke DeCock

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October 10, 2017 10:54 PM

RALEIGH By the next time the Carolina Hurricanes play a home game, they'll know a lot more about themselves than they do now. That's four games and 14 days from now, thanks as always to the state fair.

What they do know, after taking three points from their first two games and being awfully disappointed that it wasn't four, is that they've got what co-captain Jordan Staal called "sticktoitiveness." They came back from two goals down to beat the Minnesota Wild on Saturday, and scored with 85 seconds left to force overtime against the Columbus Blue Jackets on Tuesday.

In neither game did they give up after a backbreaking goal – Minnesota's tying goal with 0.3 seconds left – or a really bad goal, the first allowed by Scott Darling – Columbus' opening goal, a near-post stuff by Sonny Milano, with 10 minutes to play – so they have that going for them. Which is nice.

"There's no quit, no give-up," Darling said. "We've been down in both games and fought back to tie it up. That's a great attribute to have in a team. We're not quitters in here."

Even better would be not falling behind in the first place. But they're 1-for-8 on the power play, including two minutes Tuesday that should have led to a 2-1 overtime win instead of a 2-1 overtime loss on another Milano goal, seconds after Sebastian Aho misfired at an open net on a three-on-one rush. That was really the difference on Tuesday, and not only in overtime. On a night when open space on the ice was hard to find (and when there was, the puck was bouncing all over the place thanks to the unseasonable humidity) the Hurricanes can't afford to squander chances with the man advantage.

That's the No. 1 area for improvement going forward, with more offense in general being area No. 1A. So far, most of

the Hurricanes' offense has been generated by Aho, with his two third-period assists Saturday, or Jeff Skinner, who jumped into the air to knock down a clearing attempt with the Carolina net empty on Tuesday, then walked in on Sergei Bobrovsky and scored the first goal against the Columbus goalie this season.

The Hurricanes have gotten more or less what they expected from the Aho-Staal-Elias Lindholm line and the fourth line of Brock McGinn, Marcus Kruger and Joakim Nordstrom. They need more from the lines centered by Victor Rask and Derek Ryan. Justin Williams has been active but not yet productive, Teuvo Teravainen continues to baffle and Janne Kuokkonen looks like a rookie, which is entirely fair.

It's too small a sample size to draw any sweeping conclusions – Hurricanes coach Bill Peters acknowledged it's all "a work in progress" – but the Hurricanes' resiliency looks like something they can build upon going forward. They'll find out quickly. Over the next two weeks they'll go from Manitoba to Alberta to Texas. The schedule's loose enough that Darling could probably start all four games, but Cam Ward will probably get a look in Calgary or Edmonton, and the Canes will learn something from that as well.

"We've got to get playing some games and get some rhythm of that," Peters said. "That'll happen when we go out on the trip."

By the time they're back home in two weeks to face the Tampa Bay Lightning, this team will have a better sense of what works and what doesn't. All it knows now is that it doesn't seem inclined to give up easily when facing adversity, but playing from behind every night is no way to go through a season..

Read more here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/sports/spt-columns-blogs/luke-decock/article178199891.html#storylink=cpy>

Here's the Canes player who lost his role when the team named co-captains

By Chip Alexander

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October 10, 2017 11:33 AM

When the Carolina Hurricanes announced their team captains last week, one name was noticeably missing: Victor Rask.

Jordan Staal and Justin Faulk were named co-captains and Jeff Skinner a permanent alternate captain for the 2017-18 season. A year ago, when the Canes didn't have a captain, all three served as alternate captains along with Rask – four players with A's on their jerseys.

Why no Rask this year? Canes coach Bill Peters said it wasn't that Rask asked not to be a captain. Nor was it some reflection on Rask's play last season, when the Swedish



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center, by his own admission, was not consistently at his best.

Rask said Monday that he wasn't miffed about the decision or consider it a slight.

"No, absolutely not," he said. "We have really good leaders in this group. It doesn't matter if you wear an 'A' or not. It's just one of those things."

So no bruised feelings?

"No," he said. "As I said, we have a lot of leaders and I just want to be a part of it. That's the way we wanted to go and that's the way we will do it."

One way to lead is to be one of the team's best players in games, when it counts. Rask did that in the season opener Saturday against the Minnesota Wild, contributing a goal and assist in the Canes' 5-4 shootout victory.

Had Minnesota not scored in the final second of regulation – and the Canes still believe the Wild should have been called for goaltender interference – it would have been Rask with the winning goal to complete the comeback victory. His top-shelf shot from the right circle, off a pass from a spinning Sebastian Aho, gave the Canes a 4-3 lead with 1:34 left in the third.

"Really good play by him, that pass was right in my wheelhouse," Rask said.

Peters said he met with Rask before the captains were announced to talk things over and said Rask was "real good about it."

"He wants to concentrate on having a good year for himself, individually, that leads to us being good collectively," Peters said.

Peters said in looking at the top two centers on each team in the Metropolitan Division and Eastern Conference, that Rask is "right there with those guys and it's a real good group."

Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin, John Tavares, Nicklas Backstrom ... it's a strong collection of centers in the conference.

"He's right there," Peters said. "He just wants to concentrate on his game and make sure everything is in order and contribute to the team in that regard."

Rask, 24, had shoulder surgery after the 2015-16 season, limiting his offseason conditioning. Given a six-year, \$24 million contract extension and the "A" that he said was a "huge boost," Rask finished with 16 goals and 45 points in 82 games last season – decent numbers but a dip from the year before and not what he or the Canes expected.

But Rask played for Sweden's gold-medal winners in the 2017 World Championship after the season. He worked on have a quicker, more explosive stride in training. He feels good.

There's just no "A" this season.

"He's going to have a good year," Skinner said. "He's still such a young guy and his future so bright that when he looks back this will really be just a footnote."

Read more here:

<http://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article178038821.html#storylink=cpy>

Canes' Trevor van Riemsdyk out with concussion

By Chip Alexander

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October 10, 2017 4:41 PM Carolina Hurricanes coach Bill Peters said Tuesday that defenseman Trevor van Riemsdyk is going through the concussion protocol, which will sideline him indefinitely.

Van Riemsdyk was injured in the Hurricanes' season opener Saturday against Minnesota, falling and sliding into the end boards. His head and back slammed into the wall and he had to be helped off the ice.

Van Riemsdyk went through the off-ice concussion protocol but returned to the game. He did not practice Monday and Peters later said he did not think van Riemsdyk was

concussed but was dealing with lower-body injuries, adding it was unlikely van Riemsdyk would play Tuesday against the Columbus Blue Jackets.

Klas Dahlbeck will replace van Riemsdyk in the lineup Tuesday and be paired with rookie Haydn Fleury.

Van Riemsdyk was obtained in an offseason trade with the Vegas Golden Knights after playing the past three seasons for the Chicago Blackhawks to help shore up the third defensive pairing.

Read more here:

<http://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article178117211.html#storylink=cpy>

Blue Jackets edge Hurricanes in OT

By Chip Alexander

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October 10, 2017 9:48 PM

The Columbus Blue Jackets have found a scoring star early in the season.

Sonny Milano scored twice Tuesday, the second on a breakaway with 31 seconds left in overtime, to give the Blue



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Jackets a 2-1 win over the Carolina Hurricanes at PNC Arena.

Jeff Skinner gave the Canes new life late, scoring his first goal of the season with 1:25 left in regulation after goalie Scott Darling was pulled for an extra attacker. It was the first goal allowed by Blue Jackets goalie Sergei Bobrovsky and it tied the score 1-1.

In overtime, the Blue Jackets' Artemi Panarin was called for hooking Jordan Staal by Bobrovsky, the 2017 Vezina Trophy winner, was rock solid in net. Milano then scored after the Canes' Sebastian Aho missed the net on a 3-on-1 rush.

The Hurricanes (1-0-1) and Blue Jackets (2-1-0) played the first 50 minutes of the game waiting for one of the goalies to blink. Darling finally did and the Blue Jackets took advantage.

Milano's first goal, with 9:59 left in the third period broke a scoreless tie. Milano score his third of the season with a shortside shot from below the goal line, the puck glancing off Darling's left pad at the post.

In Saturday's opener against Minnesota, the Canes rallied in the third period, their best of the game, and then won a shootout. They also did it before a loud sellout crowd that clearly enjoyed the 5-4 victory.

It wasn't the same Tuesday. The crowd was much slimmer on a week night — announced at 7,892 — and the noise level lower in the Canes' first Metropolitan Division game of the season.

The game was more of a grind — scoreless after 20 minutes, scoreless after 40. Darling and Bobrovsky both faced 20 shots in the first two periods in what became an increasingly physical game.

Bobrovsky, who shut out the New York Islanders 5-0 in the Columbus opener, stopped a Teuvo Teravainen shot on an odd-man rush by the Canes early in the game, then again in

the final minutes of regulation. There were a few wicked tips to stop and Darling once lunged to smother the puck after first bobbling it.

The Blue Jackets caught a break in the second period when the referees missed the Blue Jackets' Matt Calvert flipping the puck over the glass in the first moments of a Canes power play. Carolina would have had 1:57 of a 5-on-3 advantage but delay of game was not called and the Blue Jackets made the kill.

The Canes said Tuesday that defenseman Trevor van Riemsdyk suffered a concussion in Saturday's opener and would be out indefinitely. They then had another scare against Columbus when defenseman Brett Pesce was banged into the boards by Nick Foligno in the first period.

Pesce, hit from behind, was taken off the ice for treatment and Foligno penalized for boarding for what could have been a dangerous hit.

Pesce, paired Tuesday with Jaccob Slavin, quickly returned to the game.

Klas Dahlbeck replaced van Riemsdyk in the lineup and teamed with Hadyn Fleury to give the Canes some physical play. Dahlbeck rocked Foligno behind the Canes net in the second, putting his shoulder into the Blue Jackets' captain.

After two at home, the Canes play their next four games on the road — the annual N.C. State Fair trip — before returning to PNC Arena on Oct. 24 to face the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Read more here:

<http://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article178191136.html#storylink=cpy>

For Hurricanes, a tough point to let go

By Chip Alexander

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October 10, 2017 11:14 PM

Hockey, like so many sports, is a game of ebbs and flows.

Often, it's within a game. At times, it's game to game.

On Saturday, when the Carolina Hurricanes opened the season, Sebastian Aho could do no wrong. His two assists in the third period, one on a dazzling, spinning pass to Victor Rask, helped the Canes rally and then beat the Minnesota Wild in a shootout.

Three nights later, Aho had the game on his stick. With the Canes and Columbus Blue Jackets locked up in overtime Tuesday at PNC Arena, Aho seemed poised to finish off a three-on-one rush with a shot from the right wing.

But Aho misfired. His attempt was well wide of the net, the puck taking a hard carom around the boards. Columbus forward Sonny Milano soon was in full flight the other way, beating Canes goalie Scott Darling on a breakaway with 31 seconds left in OT for a 2-1 win.

Milano's second goal of the game came on a crafty forehand-to-backhand shot that was almost identical to the shootout shot the Canes' Jaccob Slavin used Saturday to beat the Wild. And on the same end of the ice.

When the Canes came back to take two points out of the opener, it was just what they needed. But Tuesday's loss was a stinger, and against a Metropolitan Division team they might be battling for an Eastern Conference playoff spot by season's end.

As the Canes' Jeff Skinner said, "It's a tough point to let go. We left one on the table in OT."



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Darling did not play poorly, although the Blue Jackets' Sergei Bobrovsky was better. The Canes' goal, with 1:25 left in regulation, came on Skinner's shot from the slot after Darling was pulled for a sixth attacker.

The Canes could have won in overtime after the Jackets' Artemi Panarin was called for hooking Jordan Staal as he broke to the net. Carolina had five shots, some heavy, but Bobrovsky, as befitting a two-time Vezina Trophy winner, shut the Canes down.

"You need one there," Canes coach Bill Peters said. "You need one there or on the three-on-one. Those were good opportunities to finish."

The Canes, in two games, have twice gotten two tough calls. On Saturday, the Wild's last-second goal in regulation counted after a review for goaltender interference, a decision that did not set well with the Canes. On Tuesday, a no-call was problematic. With the Canes on a power play, the Blue Jackets' Matt Calvert flipped the puck over the glass. It could have been 1:57 of a 5-on-3 advantage for Carolina, and replays indicated the puck was not touched by a Canes player, but the ruling was no delay-of-game call and the Blue Jackets killed off the penalty.

Nick Foligno's hit on Canes defenseman Brett Pesce didn't set well with Peters, either.

Foligno was called for a two-minute boarding minor after hitting Pesce from behind in the first period and sending him head-first into the boards. Pesce was not hurt but could have been.

"That's a two-minute minor in the NHL these days," Peters said. "It's the same as that little slash ... That hit, to me, was probably a little more than a two-minute minor, I would think, but not my decision."

Calls aside, the Canes didn't generate a lot five-on-five. They were sluggish during their two power plays in regulation.

But defenseman Klas Dahlbeck stepped in for Trevor van Riemsdyk, out indefinitely with a concussion, and gave the Canes some thump. So did his defensive partner, rookie Haydn Fleury, who had a team-high five hits.

The Hurricanes will need to be better on the road and that's where they're headed. They now have four straight away games during the N.C. State Fair — at Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary and Dallas — before returning to PNC Arena on Oct. 24 to face the Tampa Bay Lightning.

"It will definitely show us where we're at," Staal said.

Read more here:

<http://www.newsobserver.com/sports/nhl/carolina-hurricanes/article178201026.html#storylink=cpy>



Hurricanes fall in OT after late goal earns them a point

Jeff Skinner's late goal with the extra attacker finally solves Sergey Bobrovsky

[October 10, 2017 Cory Lavalette Article, NHL, Sports](#)

RALEIGH — There were 10,000 fewer fans at PNC Arena for Tuesday's Carolina Hurricanes game than Saturday's season-opening sellout against the Wild. That's probably a good thing, because the first 58 minutes of Columbus' 2-1 overtime win Tuesday wasn't going to win any "grow the game" or style awards.

After 50 minutes and a second of scoreless play, Blue Jackets rookie Sonny Milano scored the kind of goal one figured might make the difference. From behind the Carolina net, Milano bounced the puck off Hurricanes goalie Scott Darling's pad and it rattled in for this third consecutive game with a goal to start the season.

Then with 85 seconds remaining, Carolina's Jeff Skinner answered.

Skinner, with Darling pulled for the extra attacker, leaped and nabbed a Marcus Hannikainen clearing attempt out of the air with his glove, dropped it and beat Columbus goalie Sergei Bobrovsky — the first time in nearly two full games someone scored on the reigning Vezina Trophy winner — to tie the game in front of just 7,892 fans.

Milano would get the last laugh, scoring on a breakaway in overtime for this fourth goal of the year, but Carolina (1-0-1) stole a point on a night when neither team did much offensively.

"It's been a little tough to sort of find a rhythm offensively ... and I think for us sort of as a whole tonight," Skinner said. "But yeah, it's always nice to get the first one out of the way."

It was the second time in as many games this season Carolina got a huge goal with less than two minutes remaining in regulation. Victor Rask scored a go-ahead goal late against the Wild, only to see Minnesota send it to overtime with 0.3 seconds remaining.



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"It's a resilient group. ... A work in progress, obviously," coach Bill Peters said after the game.

The Hurricanes had chances to win it in overtime. Sixty-one seconds in, captain Jordan Staal drew a hooking penalty on Artemi Panarin, but the Hurricanes power play (0-3 on the night) faltered.

"I don't think the puck's been moving as quick as we like or getting the Grade-A chances that you want on a power play," Staal said. "So there's definitely improvement to be had there. We need a little more killer instinct as well. When the opportunity's there and we know that it's a big one, we've got to find a way."

Columbus (2-1) and Carolina slogged through two periods without scoring, exchanging feeble power play attempts and failing to create any sign of momentum for either side.

Shots favored Columbus 11-10 after one period, but the only Grade-A chance came when Milano slid a cross-ice pass to Hannikainen for a one-timer that Darling (25 saves) snatched with his glove.

The second offered more of the same: each team had a chance with the man advantage, neither converted.

The Milano goal then shifted Carolina into desperation mode against Bobrovsky, who started the season with 118 minutes of shutout hockey before Skinner's tally.

The Hurricanes' overtime man advantage created little, but Sebastian Aho did have a chance after to end it on a 3-on-1 rush. His one-timer off a Teuvo Teravainen pass sailed wide, however, springing Milano for the breakaway he finished with a backhand similar to the one Jaccob Slavin used on the shootout winner Saturday.

"We shoot one wide they go on an odd man, they shoot one wide we get a breakaway," Columbus coach John Tortorella said. "We score, they don't."

Notes: Columbus captain Nick Foligno took a two-minute boarding penalty in the first period on a bad hit on Carolina defenseman Brett Pesce. Pesce went to the Hurricanes locker room briefly but returned shortly after. ... The Hurricanes had a massive edge in faceoffs, winning 40 of 66. ... Carolina outshot Columbus 38-27, and Columbus went 13:59 between its last shot in regulation, with 9:30 left, to the OT game-winner with 31 ticks remaining. ... Skinner had a game-high five shots on goal. ... Justin Williams had zero shot attempts in 17:14 of ice time.



Recap: Canes Fight Back to Snag Point

Skinner forces OT with late goal in third period

by Michael Smith @MSmithCanes / CarolinaHurricanes.com

October 10th, 2017

The Carolina Hurricanes fought back to earn a point against the Columbus Blue Jackets but fell 2-1 in overtime.

[Jeff Skinner](#) tied the game at one with just 85 seconds left in regulation to force extra hockey, and Sonny Milano scored his second goal of the game in overtime to give Columbus the extra point.

Here are five takeaways from tonight's game.

One

The Hurricanes were just over a minute away from walking away with no points against a divisional opponent.

Then, Markus Hannikainen attempted a clear of the zone and Skinner leapt in the air to intercept the puck. He settled it on the ice before snapping a shot past Sergei Bobrovsky, the first and only goal the Russian goaltender has allowed in two games this season, to even the score at one and ultimately send the game to overtime.

"[Staal] had good pressure on the guy, so I thought his only option was to come up the middle with it," Skinner said.

"Luckily I got a hand on it, it kind of settled down for me and I was able to sneak it five-hole."

Two

Assessing overtime postgame in the locker room, the Canes felt like they left the extra point on the table. [Jordan Staal](#) drew a hooking minor on Artemi Panarin, but the Canes were unable to convert on a full two minutes of their 4-on-3 advantage.

"It's been on and off," Staal said of the power play, which was 0-for-3 tonight. "I wouldn't say we're feeling all that great. I don't think the puck has been moving as quick as we'd like or getting the grade-A chances you'd want on the power play. There's definitely improvement to be had there. We need a little more killer instinct."

"That's a tough point to let go," Skinner said. "We had some chances and created a little bit of movement. It just seemed like they did a pretty good job of clogging up the middle. That's where you want to get your shots from. Maybe we sort of settled for outside shots when we could have maybe worked for a better shot, but he made some saves."

Later in overtime, the Hurricanes rushed down the ice on a 3-on-1. [Sebastian Aho](#) dished over to [Teuvo Teravainen](#), who then gave it back to Aho for the one-timer. He unfortunately sent it wide, and Milano was there to gather the



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rebound carom off the end boards, race back the other way and score the game-winner.

"We got a great, glorious scoring chance that we just missed, and they go back the other way with another great scoring chance and find a way to put it in," Staal said. "It was nice to sneak in a point there."

Three

Through 50 minutes of tonight's game, there wasn't much leeway given at either end of the ice. Both [Scott Darling](#) and Bobrovsky were standing tall in net and each team was stingy in its own zone.

"There wasn't a lot 5-on-5 either way," head coach Bill Peters said. "There were times we dictated and times they dictated and were heavy in our zone. It was back-and-forth a little bit there. I thought it was even throughout."

Milano broke the scoreless deadlock just past the midway point of the third when he circled around the back of the net and banked a shot off Darling and in.

Four

Through two games in the 2017-18 regular season, what have we learned about the Canes?

"It's a resilient group," Peters said. "A work in progress, obviously. We've only played twice."

"We've got some stick-to-itiveness," Staal said. "We stuck with it these two games and continued to play the right way and assume if we do that we'll get a result. That's been good."

"There's good and bad to take from everything. It's good to come back, tie it up and get a point. Today we probably left a

point on the table there in OT," Skinner said. "There's positives and negatives in every game. You try to build off the positives and correct the negatives. It's still early. We've got a big road trip ahead of us, and we want to try to keep building off the positive things in our game."

Five

Nick Foligno caught [Brett Pesce](#) with a nasty board in the first period. It was a categorically bad check from the Blue Jackets' captain, as he saw Pesce's numbers the whole way. Pesce was understandably slow to get to his feet and then skated off under his own power to the dressing room, presumably to be tested for a concussion. Pesce returned to game action at the conclusion of the ensuing two-minute power play, though Foligno could have and should have received a stiffer punishment.

"That's a two-minute minor in the NHL these days. It's the same as a little slash. The same value of a penalty as getting two centers kicked out (of a faceoff)," Peters said. "That hit, to me, probably a little more than a two-minute minor I'd think, but it's not my decision."

If the league is looking to protect its players' safety and purge the game of these dangerous and reckless hits, they need to be treated as such.

Up Next

It's time for the Canes to hit the road for their annual State Fair trip, which will take the team through Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary and Dallas over the span of a week.

"It's nice to get some points and continue to build on it. The group still hasn't played our best," Staal said. "We've got room for lots of improvement."



SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY

Recap: Carolina Hurricanes overcome malaise with late equalizer, fall to Columbus 2-1 in OT

Well, that was a game that happened and should never be spoken of again.

by Brian LeBlanc@bdleblanc Oct 10, 2017, 10:37pm EDT

There are games that take your breath away with their dazzling offensive skill. There are nights where the final result is in question until the very last second, as the sellout crowd at PNC Arena on Saturday night will tell you.

And then there are nights like Tuesday, when the [Carolina Hurricanes](#) and [Columbus Blue Jackets](#) put on an exhibition befitting the preseason two games into the regular season, the Jackets winning 2-1 in overtime in a game that was

largely the antithesis of exciting despite coming down to the final shot.

If you're a fan of defensively-based hockey, this was the game for you. [Scott Darling](#) stood tall, stopping all 20 shots he saw in the first two period en route to a 25-save performance. At the other end, [Sergei Bobrovsky](#) ran his shutout streak to over 100 minutes, backstopping a solid defensive performance in front of him and making 37 saves of his own.

The most fired up either team got all night, outside of the winning goal, was when Jackets captain [Nick Foligno](#) skated in from roughly the vicinity of Mebane and boarded [Brett Pesce](#), somehow escaping a major penalty but sending the



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Canes' defenseman to the locker room. Fortunately for the Canes, already down a defenseman to a head injury with Trevor van Riemsdyk out, Pesce returned quickly and didn't miss a shift.

As with Saturday, the malaise that hovered over the Carolina bench prompted Bill Peters to start shaking up the line combinations in the second period. Not seeing what he wanted to, though, the changes didn't last long, as it became blatantly obvious that a garbage goal was going to decide things.

[Artemi Panarin](#) nearly got that dirty goal on a power play in the third period, after Cam Atkinson's stick broke attempting a one timer. Panarin tried to lift the puck over a sprawling Darling, but drew iron on the near side. [Haydn Fleury](#) came up big killing the penalty, blocking two Jackets shots in quick succession just as the penalty expired.

[Sonny Milano](#), the Jackets' hottest scorer, finally broke the deadlock midway through the period. [Victor Rask](#) lost a faceoff and couldn't get back into position to cover Milano behind the net, and an [Oliver Bjorkstrand](#) point shot was tipped wide of the net but right to Milano. He took advantage of a rare Darling miscue, failing to seal the post for the wraparound, to pot his third in as many games to begin the season.

With six minutes left, [Jordan Staal](#) snuck all alone in front of the net, taking advantage of a Columbus turnover, but he had to settle down the bouncing puck and couldn't pick his spot against Bobrovsky, who robbed him with his shoulder.

It took until 18:35 of the third period to dent the reigning Vezina Trophy winner. [Jeff Skinner](#) leaped up to force a turnover, gloving the puck down to the ice, and in a single motion he wound up and fired through Bobrovsky's five hole to knot it up on Carolina's 30th shot of the night, ending the shutout streak at 118:35. For the second straight game, the fans at PNC would see extra hockey.

When [Artemi Panarin](#) hooked Jordan Staal a minute into the extra session, the Canes earned their third power play of the game, and their first at 4-on-3 of the season. Despite a powerful shot by [Noah Hanifin](#) and a tip chance by Jeff Skinner, the Canes couldn't convert in spite of four shots on the power play, their best performance with the extra man all night.

[Sebastian Aho](#) had a great chance to win it with a 3-on-1, but on the return pass from Jordan Staal he shot it wide, springing Milano for a breakaway. The youngster's second of the night was the difference, sending the Canes on the road with no shortage of disappointment.

TriangleSportsNetwork

Hurricanes fall 2-1 to Blue Jackets in overtime

[October 10, 2017 Peter Koutroumpis Carolina Hockey Network, Carolina Hurricanes, Triangle Sports Network, Triangle Sports Roundup](#)

By Peter Koutroumpis

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RALEIGH, N.C. – The [Carolina Hurricanes](#) couldn't complete the comeback and came up short, losing 2-1 in overtime to the Columbus Blue Jackets at PNC Arena on Tuesday.

Columbus forward Sonny Milano tallied both goals for the Blue Jackets while Jeff Skinner picked up his first of the season for Carolina.

It was a different night and atmosphere throughout the rink compared to [Carolina's season and home-opening night](#) that ended in an exhilarating 5-4 shootout win for the Hurricanes over Minnesota.

Be it that it was an early-week contest, and maybe many were still hungover from the weekend's triumph, but this match-up had a different feel to it.

Much of it was played conservatively at both ends.

No real excitement – at least not until the third period.

Or more accurately, not as much from the offensive side of things.

"It was that type of game that could have gone either way," captain Jordan Staal said.

"I thought there was times we dictated and there was times they dictated in our zone," Hurricanes head coach Bill Peters added.

"Kind of back and forth a little bit there. I thought it was pretty even throughout."

Each team presented structured forechecking and defensive play that ultimately placed the focus on Hurricanes netminder Scott Darling and Columbus keeper and reigning Vezina Trophy winner Sergei Bobrovsky.

One of them would end up determining which team would win this one.

In the end Darling finished the game with 25 saves while Bobrovsky earned the win with a 37-save performance – seven of which came in overtime.

"It was two high-skilled, fast-paced teams and that's the type of game we expected it to be," Darling said.

"It was a different type of game (than Saturday) – more shots tonight, but less end zone action – a little less tiring. It's easy to stay focused, that's my job as a goalie to stay focused for 60 minutes no matter what. A couple times, I can't let in that goal, that squeaker in regulation. Luckily Skins saved my bacon there, had a great goal and we got a point out of it."



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Both teams played to a scoreless opening period with the Blue Jackets outshooting Carolina 11-10.

The second period featured much of the same as neither sides' power play could find an opening to end the deadlock.

Columbus pressured Darling and the Hurricanes early in the third, and with Klas Dahlbeck in the penalty box for slashing, Artemi Panarin had the chance to put the Blue Jackets ahead.

However, his one-timer hit the right post and play continued as Carolina successfully defended their third penalty kill of the night.

Columbus remained diligent and the effort paid off as Milano banked a shot off Darling's left pad from behind the goal line and gave the Blue Jackets a 1-0 lead with 9:59 remaining in regulation.

Carolina's best chance to even the score up to that point came when Staal got the puck in the low slot with only Bobrovsky to beat.

The Vezina winner made the point-blank save with his trapper.

Two minutes later, Bobrovsky snagged a snap shot from Tuevo Teravainen.

Time was running short for Carolina.

And then it happened.

With 1:25 on the clock, Skinner beat Bobrovsky post-to-post and tied it up 1-1, the result of picking off a high clearing attempt by defenseman Markus Hannikainen in the Columbus zone.

"It's a learning experience for him," Columbus head coach John Tortorella said of his young defenseman's mistake.

"I thought he got tunnel-vision there, and he wanted to get the puck out of the end zone."

Both teams remained tied and headed to overtime.

A hooking penalty to Panarin with 3:59 remaining in the extra period gave Carolina the opportunity it needed.

However, four successive shots were turned away by Bobrovsky as the Hurricanes' 4-on-3 couldn't convert, the third man-advantage opportunity and most critical of the game Carolina missed on.

As play continued at 3-on-3, following a missed Sebastian Aho shot that caromed off and around the boards out of the Hurricanes' zone, Milano picked up the puck and streaked in unopposed and beat a sprawling Darling with a toe-drag-backhand move and shot that bulged the twine high.

It was another roller-coaster finish that at least energized the 7,892 in attendance by the end of it all as Carolina finished its two-game homestand earning three of four points.

"It could be worse," Darling concluded.

"Obviously, you want four, but we'll take three."

Notables: While scoreless on the power play (0-3), the Hurricanes' penalty kill went 3-for-3 and stands at 5-of-6 for the season — "a small sample size to look at," according to Peters...Carolina dominated in the faceoff circle, winning 61 percent of all draws led by Derek Ryan winning 8-of-11 and Staal claiming 11-of-15...Marcus Kruger skated in his 400th career NHL game.



Milano nets 2nd goal in OT, Blue Jackets beat Hurricanes 2-1

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Blue Jackets left wing Sonny Milano is definitely off on the right skate this season.

The 2014 first-round draft pick scored two goals Tuesday night, including the game-winner on a breakaway with 31 seconds left in overtime to give Columbus a 2-1 victory over the Carolina Hurricanes.

"Forget about offense," Blue Jackets coach John Tortorella said. "We knew that was coming. But (Milano) has really been consistent away from the puck, too. He had some coverages tonight in our zone that were really good, and he did a really good job on the wall protecting pucks and getting pucks out. That's the most important part for this coach. And then he has free reign offensively."

Milano scored midway through the third period before Jeff Skinner tied it late in regulation with Carolina's net empty. Sergei Bobrovsky, last season's Vezina Trophy winner as the NHL's top goalie, made 37 saves for Columbus.

"That was fun," Bobrovsky said. "I don't like to talk about goals — it is what it is. But we got two points and that's the most important thing for us. In those kinds of games you build up confidence in the locker room and confidence in each other."

Scott Darling, obtained in an offseason trade with Chicago, stopped 25 shots for the Hurricanes.

Milano scored on a ricochet off Darling's backside at 10:01 of the third, becoming the first Columbus player to score in his first three games of a season. Oliver Bjorkstrand and Nick Foligno assisted on the goal.

"I just went for a spot goalies usually leave open and got it over the pad," Milano said. "It's good to have three goals in three games, especially being a rookie."

Skinner tied it with an unassisted goal at 18:35 after the Hurricanes had pulled Darling.



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But with the clock ticking down in overtime, the 21-year-old Milano scored his second game-winner.

"I knew all three guys were caught on my breakaway," he said.

Carolina (1-0-1) has not won the first two games of a season since 2010.

"I thought there were times when we dictated and times where they dictated," coach Bill Peters said. "It was kind of back-and-forth. But I thought it was pretty even throughout. ... It's a resilient group and it's a work in progress."

Columbus outshot the Hurricanes 11-10 in the first period, with each team killing off one minor penalty. The second period went similarly, as each team killed off a penalty and the Hurricanes outshot the Blue Jackets 10-9.

NOTES: It was the 400th NHL game for Hurricanes center Marcus Kruger. ... Carolina's next four games are all on the road before a return home on Oct. 24 against Tampa Bay. ... Carolina D Trevor Van Riemsdyk (concussion) sat out, while C Martin Necas and RW Josh Jooris were healthy scratches. ... Ex-Carolina center Zac Dalpe, and D Scott Harrington, were healthy scratches for the Blue Jackets. ... Columbus hosts Carolina in their next matchup Nov. 10.

UP NEXT

Blue Jackets: Return home Friday night to play the New York Rangers.

Hurricanes: At the Winnipeg Jets on Saturday night for the first of three straight games in Canada.



Canes power play falters in overtime loss

Alec Sawyer, Assistant Sports Editor

9 hrs ago

For the second-straight game to start the season, 60 minutes wasn't enough for the Carolina Hurricanes. This time, however, the Canes were only able to secure one point in a 2-1 overtime loss to the Columbus Blue Jackets Tuesday night at PNC Arena.

The Hurricanes (1-0-1) got a game-tying goal from forward Jeff Skinner with just 1:25 left in the game and their own net empty, but weren't able to capitalize in overtime as the Blue Jackets (2-1-0) wrapped things up with a breakaway goal from forward Sonny Milano late in the extra period.

"It's a resilient group and it's a work in progress obviously," head coach Bill Peters said. "We've only played twice, and we got to get playing some games and get some rhythm, and that will happen."

Milano scored both goals in the game for Columbus, tallying the first midway through the third period with a shot from behind the net that deflected off of Carolina goaltender Scott Darling's pad and into the net.

In overtime, Milano collected a rebound off of an errant shot by Canes forward Sebastian Aho, carrying the puck up the ice and converting on a one-on-one chance with just 31 seconds left in the extra period.

For the Hurricanes, Skinner scored on a phenomenally acrobatic play. With the Carolina net empty, Columbus attempted to clear the puck, but Skinner was able to make a jumping stop with his hand and bat the puck out of the air. From there, Skinner calmly collected the puck and slotted it past Blue Jackets goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky.

"It was nice to get a goal. Nice to get the first one of the season and nice to tie the game up and force OT," Skinner said. "You just try and do your best to get a piece of it. I got a hand on it and it settled pretty nice in front of me."

Defensively, both goalies played exceptional games in net. Darling made 20 saves on 22 shots faced, including four big power play stops. Bobrovsky was even better, stopping 28 of the Hurricanes' 29 shots and stifling eight shots on net during Canes power plays.

"It's a different type of game," Darling said. "More shots tonight, but less in-zone action. A little less tiring. It's easy to stay focused. That's my job as a goalie, to stay focused through 60 minutes no matter what. They're a good team, it's fun to play against good teams. You can't let in that goal, that squeaker in regulation."

A big part of the Hurricanes failure to create chances and score was their inability to get anything going on power plays. Carolina had a man advantage three times in the game, including a 4-on-3 boost in overtime. However, the Hurricanes were flat and nonthreatening on the power play, and unable to make the most of their advantages.

The worst of these power plays came in the overtime period. The Hurricanes had tons of space in the attacking third of the ice, but looked content at passing it around the zone and not attacking the net, costing them an extra point and the game. Peters discussed potentially tweaking the power play unit after its lackluster performance.

"Yeah, you need one there for sure," Peters said. "We have a small sample size to look at and we have some other things we can do with some other guys."



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The Hurricanes will now embark on a four-game road trip while the State Fair is in Raleigh, starting Saturday in

Winnipeg to face the Jets. Carolina will be back at home on Oct. 24 against the Tampa Bay Lightning.



Checkers' Chemistry, Confidence Build In First Two Wins

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

Published: October 10, 2017

As far as kicking off a new season goes, you would be hard pressed to find a more successful start than the Checkers' opening weekend.

With several new pieces fitting together, from new bench boss Mike Vellucci down to a group of heralded rookies, the Checkers expected there to be something of an adjustment period as they jumped into their regular season slate.

"Early on in that first game, it took a while for everyone to get comfortable with each other and get into a rhythm," said Vellucci. "[Hartford] scored a real quick goal and it just took us a while to get in a rhythm. We hadn't played together since a lot of those guys didn't play in the preseason."

Fortunately for the Checkers, that adjustment period was brief.

"Once we started getting rolling there and then into the second game, everyone was comfortable with their linemates and how we were playing," said Vellucci. "They started playing well and doing some good things."

A key indicator of that meshing was the way the team responded when faced with adversity. The Checkers fell behind by two goals on two different occasions in Friday's contest and trailed for a chunk of Saturday's as well, both tough positions to be in for a team that had only recently come together as a whole.

"Early on I don't think you have the ultimate confidence," said Vellucci. "We just stuck with the game plan. I talked to them and my point was that we need to stay positive and keep doing the things that make us successful."

Setting a precedent early on in the season for how to handle those tough situations is a key tool moving forward, and Vellucci really pushed that mindset on his team.

"My job is to keep them positive," he said. "We'll score goals.

We had a couple power plays in the second game where we had great chances to score but guys were getting frustrated because we didn't score. You can't get down on each other and you have to stay positive. I told them if you get chances you're going to score eventually and we did."

And as we now know, that worked for the Checkers, who erased all deficits and came out of the weekend with four points.

"I think we all just stayed together," said Warren Foegele. "This is a pretty close group it seems like, so no one is getting down or putting other people down. It's just staying positive and knowing that we can do it."

A big part of both Charlotte wins was the stellar play of Foegele, whose four goals in two games earned him AHL Player of the Week honors.

"He was great," said Vellucci. "Two shortys in the second game, that's pretty remarkable. Warren was in the right spots at the right times, but he worked to get in those spots."

The 21-year-old Foegele, playing in his first two contests as a pro, wasn't shaken by the big stage.

"Not too much jitters, I just treated it like a normal game," said Foegele. "I find if I get too excited or whatever I don't succeed. I had my linemates to help me and they helped me adjust to the game."

Foegele lined up on the wing alongside Clark Bishop and Patrick Brown for both tilts, and the trio did damage. Aside from the rookie's four tallies, Brown finished the weekend with a pair of assists and a plus-three rating and Bishop added a helper for himself.

"That whole line played great," said Vellucci. "Brownie had a bunch of chances, Bish played really well. What they do is they skate, they compete, they outwork the opponent and goals are going to come from that."

While Foegele ended up with the hardware for his efforts, he is quick to extend credit to Brown and Bishop.



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"We had a hard forecheck and were working hard and I just found some lucky bounces for myself," said Foegele. "I had some great passes from my linemates and I think as a line we did really well and that contributed to my individual success."

The trio is listed on paper as the Checkers' fourth line, but Vellucci has stated proudly over the last few weeks his trust in all four of his lines against any opponent. This weekend proved him right in that trust.

"I think for us it's just work hard, be reliable and contribute as much as you can," said Foegele of his line. "We just have to keep it simple."

Vellucci kept all of his forward lines together for both road games, and by the looks of the final product, that could be

the way things stay.

"Chemistry-wise, when you win everyone gets along with their linemates," said Vellucci. "I don't like to change lines if I don't have to. But if it's not going well we will. Those two games we were trying to get chemistry from everybody."

The coaching staff will now take in another week of work as they prepare for this weekend's home opener against Bridgeport, hoping to build off a successful first week.

"Not too many highs, not too many lows," said Vellucci. "Just keep an even keel. It'll be a tough matchup for us but we have to be ready to go. Play our style which is puck speed, foot speed and competing as hard as we can."

Warren Foegele Named CCM/AHL Player of the Week

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

Published: October 10, 2017

After a pair of stellar outings on Friday and Saturday, forward Warren Foegele has been named CCM/AHL Player of the Week.

The 21-year-old rookie netted a pair of goals in his pro debut on Oct. 6 against the Hartford Wolf Pack, including the game winner with a minute left in regulation. Foegele then followed that up with another two goals the next night in Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, including another game winner, with both coming shorthanded.

"He was great," said head coach Mike Vellucci. "Two shortyts in the second game, that's pretty remarkable. Warren was in the right spots at the right times, but he worked to get in

those spots."

"I thought our line did really well," said Foegele. "We had a hard forecheck both games and we were working hard and I just found some lucky bounces for myself. I had some great passes from my linemates and I think as a line we did really well and that contributed to my individual success."

A third-round draft pick by Carolina in 2014, Foegele was named OHL Playoffs MVP last season after helping lead the Erie Otters to a league title.

Foegele is the eighth player in franchise history to earn AHL Player of the Week honors and the fourth forward, joining Aleksii Saarela last season, Brock McGinn in 2014-15 and Zach Boychuk in 2010-11.



Milano scores twice, Blue Jackets top Hurricanes in overtime

Columbus forward gets winning goal on breakaway after Carolina ties it late

by Kurt Dusterberg / NHL.com Correspondent

October 10th, 2017

RALEIGH, N.C. -- [Sonny Milano](#) scored on a breakaway with 31 seconds remaining in overtime to give the Columbus Blue

Jackets a 2-1 win against the Carolina Hurricanes at PNC Arena on Tuesday.

The goal, Milano's second of the game, came moments after [Sebastian Aho](#)'s shot missed the net for Carolina on a 3-on-1.

"I knew I had a lot of time," said Milano, who has four goals in three games. "I knew all three of their guys were caught



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(up ice). I definitely had that backhand in mind. It's a move I use a lot."

The Blue Jackets (2-1-0) had to kill a penalty in overtime after [Artemi Panarin](#) hooked [Jordan Staal](#) going to the net. [Sergei Bobrovsky](#) made seven saves on the Carolina power play.

"The saves he makes just look so easy, especially on the [penalty kill in overtime]," Blue Jackets captain [Nick Foligno](#) said. "It just calms everybody down. He's not flopping and trying to dive across. He's just making solid, steady saves. When he's like that, it just goes right through the whole team."

Milano gave Columbus a 1-0 lead at 10:01 of the third period when he circled the net and banked a shot off goalie [Scott Darling](#)'s glove at the right post. Foligno won the face-off and [Oliver Bjorkstrand](#) shot wide, setting up Milano's chance.

"I try that a lot, maybe a little too much," Milano said. "Going around the net, I know there's a little spot there [where] I could just bank it off the goalie."

[Jeff Skinner](#) scored for Carolina to tie the game 1-1 with 1:25 remaining in the third period. Skinner intercepted [Markus Hannikainen](#)'s clearing attempt and scored on a low shot from between the circles.

"[The play] has run through my head probably 100 times already, what I should have done," Hannikainen said. "I should have taken the puck and taken a few strides, then get it down the ice. But I made a mistake and I have to learn from it."

Darling made 25 saves for the Hurricanes (1-0-1).

Goal of the game

After trailing the play on Carolina's 3-on-1, Milano got to the long rebound of Aho's shot and skated the length of the ice before making a forehand-to-backhand move.

Save of the game

Bobrovsky was sharp on a hard shot from [Noah Hanifin](#) at 1:56 of overtime.

Highlight of the game

Skinner jumped to bring down Hannikainen's clearing attempt with his left hand, then moved in on Bobrovsky for the goal.

They said it

"Forget about offense, because we know that's going to be there. I think he's been really consistent away from the puck too. He gets the puck out, and that's the most important part for this coach." -- *Blue Jackets coach John Tortorella on [Sonny Milano](#)*

"There wasn't a lot either way 5-on-5, I didn't think. It was pretty even throughout. Both teams have a pretty good set of [defensemen], so it's hard to get at the net. I didn't think we were at the net early in the first (period), but I thought we got there more as the game went along. It's tough when your defensemen are as good as theirs." -- *Hurricanes coach Bill Peters*

Need to know

Bobrovsky has allowed one goal in two games this season. ... Hurricanes forward [Marcus Kruger](#) played his 400th NHL game. ... The Hurricanes are 5-1-3 in their past nine games against the Blue Jackets here.

What's next

Blue Jackets: Host the New York Rangers on Friday (7 p.m. ET; NHLN, SN1, TVA Sports, MSG, FS-0, NHL.TV)

Hurricanes: Visit the Winnipeg Jets on Saturday (7 p.m. ET; SN1, CITY, FS-CR, NHL.TV)

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SportScan

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

1077439 Carolina Hurricanes

For Hurricanes, a tough point to let go

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

Hockey, like so many sports, is a game of ebbs and flows.

Often, it's within a game. At times, it's game to game.

On Saturday, when the Carolina Hurricanes opened the season, Sebastian Aho could do no wrong. His two assists in the third period, one on a dazzling, spinning pass to Victor Rask, helped the Canes rally and then beat the Minnesota Wild in a shootout.

Three nights later, Aho had the game on his stick. With the Canes and Columbus Blue Jackets locked up in overtime Tuesday at PNC Arena, Aho seemed poised to finish off a three-on-one rush with a shot from the right wing.

But Aho misfired. His attempt was well wide of the net, the puck taking a hard carom around the boards. Columbus forward Sonny Milano soon was in full flight the other way, beating Canes goalie Scott Darling on a breakaway with 31 seconds left in OT for a 2-1 win.

Milano's second goal of the game came on a crafty forehand-to-backhand shot that was almost identical to the shootout shot the Canes' Jaccob Slavin used Saturday to beat the Wild. And on the same end of the ice.

When the Canes came back to take two points out of the opener, it was just what they needed. But Tuesday's loss was a stinger, and against a Metropolitan Division team they might be battling for an Eastern Conference playoff spot by season's end.

As the Canes' Jeff Skinner said, "It's a tough point to let go. We left one on the table in OT."

Darling did not play poorly, although the Blue Jackets' Sergei Bobrovsky was better. The Canes' goal, with 1:25 left in regulation, came on Skinner's shot from the slot after Darling was pulled for a sixth attacker.

The Canes could have won in overtime after the Jackets' Artemi Panarin was called for hooking Jordan Staal as he broke to the net. Carolina had five shots, some heavy, but Bobrovsky, as befitting a two-time Vezina Trophy winner, shut the Canes down.

"You need one there," Canes coach Bill Peters said. "You need one there or on the three-on-one. Those were good opportunities to finish."

The Canes, in two games, have twice gotten two tough calls. On Saturday, the Wild's last-second goal in regulation counted after a review for goaltender interference, a decision that did not set well with the Canes. On Tuesday, a no-call was problematic. With the Canes on a power play, the Blue Jackets' Matt Calvert flipped the puck over the glass. It could have been 1:57 of a 5-on-3 advantage for Carolina, and replays indicated the puck was not touched by a Canes player, but the ruling was no delay-of-game call and the Blue Jackets killed off the penalty.

Nick Foligno's hit on Canes defenseman Brett Pesce didn't set well with Peters, either.

Foligno was called for a two-minute boarding minor after hitting Pesce from behind in the first period and sending him head-first into the boards. Pesce was not hurt but could have been.

"That's a two-minute minor in the NHL these days," Peters said. "It's the same as that little slash ... That hit, to me, was probably a little more than a two-minute minor, I would think, but not my decision."

Calls aside, the Canes didn't generate a lot five-on-five. They were sluggish during their two power plays in regulation.

But defenseman Klas Dahlbeck stepped in for Trevor van Riemsdyk, out indefinitely with a concussion, and gave the Canes some thump. So did his defensive partner, rookie Haydn Fleury, who had a team-high five hits.

The Hurricanes will need to be better on the road and that's where they're headed. They now have four straight away games during the N.C. State Fair — at Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary and Dallas — before returning to PNC Arena on Oct. 24 to face the Tampa Bay Lightning.

"It will definitely show us where we're at," Staal said.

News Observer LOADED: 10.11.2017

1077440 Carolina Hurricanes

In first two games, Hurricanes prove their resiliency the difficult way

BY LUKE DECOCK

RALEIGH By the next time the Carolina Hurricanes play a home game, they'll know a lot more about themselves than they do now. That's four games and 14 days from now, thanks as always to the state fair.

What they do know, after taking three points from their first two games and being awfully disappointed that it wasn't four, is that they've got what co-captain Jordan Staal called "sticktoitiveness." They came back from two goals down to beat the Minnesota Wild on Saturday, and scored with 85 seconds left to force overtime against the Columbus Blue Jackets on Tuesday.

In neither game did they give up after a backbreaking goal — Minnesota's tying goal with 0.3 seconds left — or a really bad goal, the first allowed by Scott Darling — Columbus' opening goal, a near-post stuff by Sonny Milano, with 10 minutes to play — so they have that going for them. Which is nice.

"There's no quit, no give-up," Darling said. "We've been down in both games and fought back to tie it up. That's a great attribute to have in a team. We're not quitters in here."

Even better would be not falling behind in the first place. But they're 1-for-8 on the power play, including two minutes Tuesday that should have led to a 2-1 overtime win instead of a 2-1 overtime loss on another Milano goal, seconds after Sebastian Aho misfired at an open net on a three-on-one rush. That was really the difference on Tuesday, and not only in overtime. On a night when open space on the ice was hard to find (and when there was, the puck was bouncing all over the place thanks to the unseasonable humidity) the Hurricanes can't afford to squander chances with the man advantage.



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That's the No. 1 area for improvement going forward, with more offense in general being area No. 1A. So far, most of the Hurricanes' offense has been generated by Aho, with his two third-period assists Saturday, or Jeff Skinner, who jumped into the air to knock down a clearing attempt with the Carolina net empty on Tuesday, then walked in on Sergei Bobrovsky and scored the first goal against the Columbus goalie this season.

The Hurricanes have gotten more or less what they expected from the Aho-Staal-Elias Lindholm line and the fourth line of Brock McGinn, Marcus Kruger and Joakim Nordstrom. They need more from the lines centered by Victor Rask and Derek Ryan. Justin Williams has been active but not yet productive, Teuvo Teravainen continues to baffle and Janne Kuokkonen looks like a rookie, which is entirely fair.

It's too small a sample size to draw any sweeping conclusions — Hurricanes coach Bill Peters acknowledged it's all "a work in progress" — but the Hurricanes' resiliency looks like something they can build upon going forward. They'll find out quickly. Over the next two weeks they'll go from Manitoba to Alberta to Texas. The schedule's loose enough that Darling could probably start all four games, but Cam Ward will probably get a look in Calgary or Edmonton, and the Canes will learn something from that as well.

"We've got to get playing some games and get some rhythm of that," Peters said. "That'll happen when we go out on the trip."

By the time they're back home in two weeks to face the Tampa Bay Lightning, this team will have a better sense of what works and what doesn't. All it knows now is that it doesn't seem inclined to give up easily when facing adversity, but playing from behind every night is no way to go through a season..

News Observer LOADED: 10.11.2017

1077441 Carolina Hurricanes

Blue Jackets edge Hurricanes in OT

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

The Columbus Blue Jackets have found a scoring star early in the season.

Sonny Milano scored twice Tuesday, the second on a breakaway with 31 seconds left in overtime, to give the Blue Jackets a 2-1 win over the Carolina Hurricanes at PNC Arena.

Jeff Skinner gave the Canes new life late, scoring his first goal of the season with 1:25 left in regulation after goalie Scott Darling was pulled for an extra attacker. It was the first goal allowed by Blue Jackets goalie Sergei Bobrovsky and it tied the score 1-1.

In overtime, the Blue Jackets' Artemi Panarin was called for hooking Jordan Staal by Bobrovsky, the 2017 Vezina Trophy winner, was rock solid in net. Milano then scored after the Canes' Sebastian Aho missed the net on a 3-on-1 rush.

The Hurricanes (1-0-1) and Blue Jackets (2-1-0) played the first 50 minutes of the game waiting for one of the goalies to blink. Darling finally did and the Blue Jackets took advantage.

Milano's first goal, with 9:59 left in the third period broke a scoreless tie. Milano score his third of the season with a shortside shot from below the goal line, the puck glancing off Darling's left pad at the post.

In Saturday's opener against Minnesota, the Canes rallied in the third period, their best of the game, and then won a shootout. They also did it before a loud sellout crowd that clearly enjoyed the 5-4 victory.

It wasn't the same Tuesday. The crowd was much slimmer on a week night — announced at 7,892 — and the noise level lower in the Canes' first Metropolitan Division game of the season.

The game was more of a grind — scoreless after 20 minutes, scoreless after 40. Darling and Bobrovsky both faced 20 shots in the first two periods in what became an increasingly physical game.

Bobrovsky, who shut out the New York Islanders 5-0 in the Columbus opener, stopped a Teuvo Teravainen shot on an odd-man rush by the Canes early in the game, then again in the final minutes of regulation. There were a few wicked tips to stop and Darling once lunged to smother the puck after first bobbling it.

The Blue Jackets caught a break in the second period when the referees missed the Blue Jackets' Matt Calvert flipping the puck over the glass in the first moments of a Canes power play. Carolina would have had 1:57 of a 5-on-3 advantage but delay of game was not called and the Blue Jackets made the kill.

The Canes said Tuesday that defenseman Trevor van Riemsdyk suffered a concussion in Saturday's opener and would be out indefinitely. They then had another scare against Columbus when defenseman Brett Pesce was banged into the boards by Nick Foligno in the first period.

Pesce, hit from behind, was taken off the ice for treatment and Foligno penalized for boarding for what could have been a dangerous hit.

Pesce, paired Tuesday with Jaccob Slavin, quickly returned to the game.

Klas Dahlbeck replaced van Riemsdyk in the lineup and teamed with Hadyn Fleury to give the Canes some physical play. Dahlbeck rocked Foligno behind the Canes net in the second, putting his shoulder into the Blue Jackets' captain.

After two at home, the Canes play their next four games on the road — the annual N.C. State Fair trip — before returning to PNC Arena on Oct. 24 to face the Tampa Bay Lightning.

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1077442 Carolina Hurricanes

Canes' Trevor van Riemsdyk out with concussion

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

Carolina Hurricanes coach Bill Peters said Tuesday that defenseman Trevor van Riemsdyk is going through the concussion protocol, which will sideline him indefinitely.

Van Riemsdyk was injured in the Hurricanes' season opener Saturday against Minnesota, falling and sliding into the end boards. His head and back slammed into the wall and he had to be helped off the ice.

Van Riemsdyk went through the off-ice concussion protocol but returned to the game. He did not practice Monday and Peters later said he did not think van Riemsdyk was concussed but was dealing with lower-body injuries, adding it was unlikely van Riemsdyk would play Tuesday against the Columbus Blue Jackets.

Klas Dahlbeck will replace van Riemsdyk in the lineup Tuesday and be paired with rookie Haydn Fleury.

Van Riemsdyk was obtained in an offseason trade with the Vegas Golden Knights after playing the past three seasons for the Chicago Blackhawks to help shore up the third defensive pairing.

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1077443 Carolina Hurricanes

Here's the Canes player who lost his role when the team named co-captains

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

When the Carolina Hurricanes announced their team captains last week, one name was noticeably missing: Victor Rask.

Jordan Staal and Justin Faulk were named co-captains and Jeff Skinner a permanent alternate captain for the 2017-18 season. A year ago, when the Canes didn't have a captain, all three served as alternate captains along with Rask – four players with A's on their jerseys.

Why no Rask this year? Canes coach Bill Peters said it wasn't that Rask asked not to be a captain. Nor was it some reflection on Rask's play last season, when the Swedish center, by his own admission, was not consistently at his best.

Rask said Monday that he wasn't miffed about the decision or consider it a slight.

"No, absolutely not," he said. "We have really good leaders in this group. It doesn't matter if you wear an 'A' or not. It's just one those things."

So no bruised feelings?

"No," he said. "As I said, we have a lot of leaders and I just want to be a part of it. That's the way we wanted to go and that's the way we will do it."

One way to lead is to be one of the team's best players in games, when it counts. Rask did that in the season opener Saturday against the Minnesota Wild, contributing a goal and assist in the Canes' 5-4 shootout victory.

Had Minnesota not scored in the final second of regulation – and the Canes still believe the Wild should have been called for goaltender

1077577 Winnipeg Jets

Rookie makes NHL debut after Byfuglien injury

Jason Bell By: Jason Bell

Winnipeg Jets' Nikolaj Ehlers checks Edmonton Oilers' Kris Russell during the first period in Edmonton, Monday. Ehlers would score three goals in a row for Winnipeg on the night, giving him a natural hat-trick.

The Jets finally hit the victory column without the services of the big man, registering an impressive 5-2 win over the host Oilers to raise their record to 1-2-0 with the 2017-18 NHL campaign still in its infancy.

Byfuglien, who was called on for 25 shifts and 25 minutes, two seconds of ice time on Saturday in Calgary, suffered a lower-body injury in the battle with the Flames — a contest the Jets led 3-1 before stalling out in the final 40 minutes and losing 6-3.

The 6-5, 250-pound defenceman didn't practise Sunday in Edmonton or take to the ice in Monday's morning pre-game skate, and his participation in the collision with the Oilers was a game-time decision.

By the time the evening rolled around, he was scratched from the lineup and replaced by rookie Tucker Poolman, a 24-year-old rearguard from East Grand Forks, Minn., who made his NHL debut.

interference – it would have been Rask with the winning goal to complete the comeback victory. His top-shelf shot from the right circle, off a pass from a spinning Sebastian Aho, gave the Canes a 4-3 lead with 1:34 left in the third.

"Really good play by him, that pass was right in my wheelhouse," Rask said.

Peters said he met with Rask before the captains were announced to talk things over and said Rask was "real good about it."

"He wants to concentrate on having a good year for himself, individually, that leads to us being good collectively," Peters said.

Peters said in looking at the top two centers on each team in the Metropolitan Division and Eastern Conference, that Rask is "right there with those guys and it's a real good group."

Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin, John Tavares, Nicklas Backstrom ... it's a strong collection of centers in the conference.

"He's right there," Peters said. "He just wants to concentrate on his game and make sure everything is in order and contribute to the team in that regard."

Rask, 24, had shoulder surgery after the 2015-16 season, limiting his offseason conditioning. Given a six-year, \$24 million contract extension and the "A" that he said was a "huge boost," Rask finished with 16 goals and 45 points in 82 games last season – decent numbers but a dip from the year before and not what he or the Canes expected.

But Rask played for Sweden's gold-medal winners in the 2017 World Championship after the season. He worked on have a quicker, more explosive stride in training. He feels good.

There's just no "A" this season.

"He's going to have a good year," Skinner said. "He's still such a young guy and his future so bright that when he looks back this will really be just a footnote."

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Jets head coach Paul Maurice said Byfuglien remains "day-to-day with a lower-body injury." The Jets complete a three-game road trip Thursday night against the Vancouver Canucks.

"(Byfuglien) came in for the (Monday) morning skate and tried to loosen it up and it didn't quite warm up," Maurice said, shortly after the triumph at Rogers Place.

"Then he came in an hour before (the game)... we do a bunch of things with these injuries, and if he doesn't feel right you don't put him on the ice."

Byfuglien, 32, has been a workhorse for the Jets, missing just 20 games over the last four seasons. The organization and the fans who support it are keenly aware of the risks and rewards associated with the product of Roseau, Minn., who possesses speed, power and game-breaking abilities, but also makes frequent mistakes that hurt his team.

Translation? You notice him, for better or worse.

His replacement, paired with veteran blue-liner Toby Enstrom, was quietly impressive.

Poolman had a solid training camp and steady pre-season performances to secure a spot on the club's 23-man roster. He was a healthy scratch in Winnipeg's opening two defeats before drawing into his first-ever NHL contest ahead of Ben Chiarot, who watched from the press box along with extra forward Joel Armia and injured centre Matt Hendricks.

The former star with the University of North Dakota Fighting Hawks opted for smart, simple plays and made no major gaffes, finishing with 19 shifts



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and more than 14 minutes of ice time. He also got a 'welcome to the bigs, kid' greeting from rugged Oilers forward Milan Lucic, by way of a crushing bodycheck.

No sure bet after being selected by Winnipeg in the fifth round (127th overall) of the 2013 NHL Draft, Poolman certainly impressed his new coach.

"He did all the simple things well. He settled in to the game and he's just a smart, smart defenceman with the puck," Maurice said. "He's older, and it's a big (difference) from an 18- or 19-year old coming in. He's physically mature, he can handle the play down low. It was a really good game for him, but that's very close to his training camp."

Ten days ago, Brandon Tanev was in a fierce battle with seven or eight other skaters for a job on the Jets' bottom-six forward crew.

Since then, a handful were shipped to the Manitoba Moose of the American Hockey League, a few have been in and out of the lineup, while a couple have started on the third line and then dropped to the fourth.

Tanev, a fourth-liner and penalty killer, was the recipient of a promotion on Monday.

The 25-year-old Toronto-born winger had 15 shifts and 8:29 of ice time in the Jets' 7-2 loss to the visiting Toronto Maple Leafs on Wednesday, and 16 shifts and 9:27 of playing time on Saturday in Calgary. In Edmonton, however, he played a chunk of time on the third forward unit with centre Adam Lowry and left-winger Shawn Matthias, took 22 shifts and played nearly 13 minutes, while blocking a pair of shots and finishing as the club leader with six hits.

Despite taking an ill-advised cross-checking penalty in the third period with his club leading 4-2, Tanev, who replaced Nic Petan on the Lowry trio midway through the game, was lauded by his coach afterward.

"Just a lot of speed, and Lowry and Matthias can use it," Maurice said. "He's been hard on pucks, made really good decisions and showed some hands. He's found a way to get a breakaway (Tanev scored a short-handed tally in Calgary) each game, and he's a good penalty killer.

"When you play a team with special players like Edmonton, you have to have two lines that can play against them. (The Lowry line) was just as important going on the ice as Mark (Scheifele's) line."

It's worth reiterating Scheifele and his wingers, Nikolaj Ehlers and Blake Wheeler, combined for 10 points against the Oilers.

Ehlers broke a 2-2 tie with a natural hat trick, beating goalie Cam Talbot twice in just 1:09 late in the middle period and then firing his third of the game with just under two minutes left in the third.

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1077578 Winnipeg Jets

Gritty Perreault off to strong start

Jason Bell By: Jason Bell

VANCOUVER — Mathieu Perreault is picking up right where he left off last spring.

The veteran forward has scored once and added a pair of assists in the first three games of the 2017-18 NHL season for the Winnipeg Jets, although he and linemates Bryan Little and Patrik Laine were blanked Monday night in Edmonton.

He's on a point-a-game pace but, like most of his teammates, has strides to take on the defensive side.

Perreault finished up an injury-plagued 2016-17 campaign as one of Winnipeg's most productive performers. He fired nine goals and collected 28 points in the final 25 games, just one point shy of the team's leading point man, centre Mark Scheifele, during the same stretch.

A 45-point total was a career high for the nine-year veteran, who was sidelined for 17 games because of illness, a fractured thumb and a back injury. That's nothing new for the injury-prone 29-year-old from Drummondville, Que.

The closest he's come to playing a full 82-game season was two years ago when he hit the 71-game mark with the Jets.

At 5-10, 188 pounds, he is considered a smaller player by NHL standards, but is gritty, plays with an edge and doesn't hesitate to invade the dirty areas of the ice. Lately, he's been tasked with crowding the front of the crease on Winnipeg's second power-play unit and has been clunked three or four times on different body parts from friendly fire.

Playing that gritty style has severely hindered Perreault's durability. But when he's physically sound, he's an impactful, offensive player.

"I'm working and doing everything I can to help this team win," Perreault said on Monday, prior to the Jets' tilt with the Oilers in Edmonton.

"Confidence is a really big thing in this game and I'm feeling a lot of that right now."

Perreault, who signed a four-year, US\$16.5-million contract extension in the summer of 2016, has settled in as a top-six winger with the Central Division squad after a few turns at centre with limited success. He's also been one of Jets head coach Paul Maurice's go-to guys in man-advantage situations.

Perreault said he's most comfortable skating on the wing, and has a more thorough grasp of the defensive responsibilities that come with it.

"I started two years here as a centre and it always took me a while to get going. It didn't really work out there, and then every time I got moved to the wing this is where I kind of took off and played better," he said. "As long as I feel like I'm helping the team and am being put out there to do a job, whether it's scoring or checking, I'm happy."

Jets captain Blake Wheeler said Perreault's tenacity and compete level is infectious.

"He brings it every single shift. A guy like that, with whoever he plays with, you're going to get that effort on the left side. He's great on the forecheck and never gives up on pucks," Wheeler said.

"He's a nice guy to get that consistency out of every single day.

"There aren't guys like him just falling off trees. The more guys like him you can get to stay put and buy in and want to be around here and be a part of it, the better we're going to be."

Perreault has finished a minus-11 in each of the past two seasons, unattractive numbers for a guy who maintains he tries to be accountable in both ends of the rink. He's already a minus-two after three contests, although the Jets (1-2-0) only have five players on the plus side of the ledger.

"So far, I'm still a minus and that's not good. I take pride and want to improve on that," Perreault said. "I'm battling really hard to keep pucks out of my net. And I think it's the mindset we should all have here. It's always fun to produce, but the offence is going to come. We've got to find a way to cut down on the pucks that go in on us."

While he works to find that balance, Perreault is also balancing a lot of added responsibility at home.

He and his wife, Jennilie, who already have a toddler, Violette, welcomed twins Penelope and Hector a few weeks ago.



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"It's hard right now. We get help during the day but at night it's just me and my wife. So, the sleep's a little different. They're so little, so it's just feeding and then sleep," Perreault said. "I change diapers at night and she'll feed them and I'll wake up and do that for 10 or 15 minutes, so it's not too bad. She's up for hours but I still get to sleep. She's really good about it. She knows I need my rest.

"Once summertime comes, she'll get me back."

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1077579 Winnipeg Jets

Jets' Maurice praises Poolman for play against Oilers

ken-wiebe BY KEN WIEBE, WINNIPEG SUN

VANCOUVER — Tucker Poolman showed very few signs of nerves as he made his NHL debut.

The Winnipeg Jets rookie defenceman stepped into the lineup and didn't look out of place at all, taking 19 shifts for 14:30 of ice time while playing mostly on a pairing with Toby Enstrom in a 5-2 victory over the Edmonton Oilers on Monday at Rogers Place.

"He did all the simple things well and he just settled into the game," Jets head coach Paul Maurice said. "He's just a smart, smart defenceman with the puck. He's 24 years old and that's a big difference than (when) an 18 or 19 year old comes in. He's physically mature and he can handle the game down low. It was a really good game for him."

Poolman did all the things he did during the pre-season, using his mobility and hockey sense to move the puck and be in the proper position defensively.

"He was great. Almost effortless-looking," said Jets captain Blake Wheeler. "He skates really well, kept it simple and didn't try to do too much. He made the right pass when he needed to and played within himself. Pretty impressive for a young guy to come in and play defence against that team."

BYFUGLIEN SITS OUT

Because Maurice said rather emphatically that defenceman Dustin Byfuglien was going to play after needing a maintenance day on Sunday, the conspiracy theorists were out in full force when he was not on the ice for the pre-game warm-up.

Many were suggesting Byfuglien was being benched for his defensive-zone play through the first two games.

The problem with the theory was that Byfuglien hadn't been on the ice the past two days and if he was being punished, he would have been on the ice taking part in an extra conditioning skate with the other scratches on Monday.

Following the game, Maurice said Byfuglien was day-to-day with a lower-body injury.

"He just never warmed up," Maurice said. "He came in for the morning skate and we tried to loosen it up and it didn't quite warm up. Then he came in an hour before (the pre-game warm-up) and we do a bunch of things with these injuries and if he doesn't feel right, we don't put him on the ice."

Byfuglien was spotted walking with a bit of a limp in the hallway after the game, so it will be interesting to see how the injury progresses during the coming days.

Given how well Poolman played on Monday, it will allow the Jets to ensure Byfuglien is as close to 100% as possible before he's put back into the lineup.

THE 700 CLUB

Wheeler suited up in his 700th NHL game on Monday and he made it a memorable one, chipping in three helpers in what was a solid all-around effort for the Jets' captain.

"I feel lucky," said Wheeler, who has four assists in three games this season. "I've been blessed with some great opportunities. I'm very fortunate to have played on some great teams with some great players. I'm having blast and hopefully there are more nights like (Monday) to come.

"You blink your eyes and you go from a 22-year-old kid and all of a sudden, you're one of the older guys with three kids. It does go by fast."

Wheeler has 199 goals, 319 assists and 518 points in those 700 games with the Jets, Atlanta Thrashers and Boston Bruins.

TIMELY TIMEOUT

After several Jets players talked about the importance of the timeout Maurice called at 13:33 of the second period, the head coach was asked about what message he was trying to get across after the Oilers had scored twice in 40 seconds to tie up the contest.

"It was an opportunity for us to handle (the adversity) and we did," Maurice said. "The result of it is that (Nikolaj Ehlers) scores a big goal. But the two shifts (after the Oilers second goal) were right and we just relaxed, (played) simple and hard. Or something like that."

THREE-LINE GAME

With a couple of extra days between games — and the Jets feeling a sense of urgency to get into the win column — Maurice cut down to three lines for a good chunk of the second and third periods on Monday.

That meant it was a relatively quiet night for Marko Dano (6:53), Andrew Copp (7:13) and Nic Petan (10:13).

Petan's ice time was a bit higher because he saw 2:23 of power-play time on the first unit, but most of his even-strength ice time during the final 40 minutes went to Brandon Tanev.

Tanev played 12:49 and finished with six hits and two blocked shots, though he took an undisciplined cross-checking minor at 6:42 of the third period when the Jets were clinging to a two-goal lead.

"A lot of speed," said Maurice, asked about what he's seen from Tanev. "He's been hard on pucks, made really good decisions and shown some hands, found a way to get a breakaway in each game. And he's been a good penalty killer."

Under the circumstances, you can understand why Maurice shortened the bench.

But before long, the Jets are going to need to find a fourth line that can log a bit more ice time or they'll run the risk of taxing their top-line forwards.

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1077580 Winnipeg Jets

Jets' top trio leads the way

BY KEN WIEBE, WINNIPEG SUN



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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VANCOUVER – - It was a dominant performance by a line that has the potential to do some serious damage when clicking on all cylinders.

In Monday's 5-2 win over the Edmonton Oilers, the Winnipeg Jets top line of Mark Scheifele between Blake Wheeler and Nikolaj Ehlers racked up points and did the heavy lifting in containing Connor McDavid and company.

Although it was Ehlers who led the offensive barrage with a hat trick (the second of his career), four points, eight shots on goal and a whopping 12 shot attempts, he was quick to pass on the credit to his linemates.

It's fine (and commonplace) to dish the props to the guys you're playing with and while it's true slick passes from Wheeler (on the second one) and Scheifele for the one-timer to complete the natural hat trick were an obvious factor, Ehlers showed tremendous finish in this contest.

Ehlers' first goal of the game – which helped the Jets restore the lead at 16:48 after the Oilers scored twice in 40 seconds during the second period to tie things up – was all about his creativity and release.

The speedy Danish forward used his speed to gain the zone and then found a lane before unloading a quick shot that beat Cam Talbot to the blocker side.

"Move our feet, that's the key to our game on both sides of the puck," said Wheeler. "(Scheifele) and Ehlers had some great back-checks and we were able to transition and get some rushes. When those guys are (hustling) back, there's no room for the other team. They move so well and they're so dynamic going back the other way offensively.

"If you're getting three-on-two's all day with those two guys, something good is going to happen."

The Jets close out a three-game swing through western Canada on Thursday at Rogers Arena against the Vancouver Canucks.

For those who were wondering about what Jets head coach Paul Maurice meant last week when he suggested that Ehlers needs to relax and play his game, not worry about trying to earn his raise every shift, this was a prime example.

Ehlers was unable to generate much offence during the first two games and seemed to be a little out of sorts.

Although the extension only kicks in next season, it's natural for young players to try and press after signing a big deal.

On Monday, Ehlers simplified his game and did the things he does well – and the dividends were obvious.

Scheifele has scored in each of the first three games and had three points on Monday, but his biggest contribution was raising his level of playing while being asked to go up against McDavid for a good chunk of the evening.

That's no easy task, but the Scheifele line produced three of their four goals with McDavid on the ice.

And McDavid's pass to Leon Draisaitl on the Oilers first goal came against Bryan Little's unit.

Scheifele has talked about pushing himself to be among the best centre's in the NHL and in this case, he won the head-to-head match-up against the guy who is the reigning MVP and Art Ross Trophy winner as the leading scorer.

It's only one game, but the effort wasn't lost on Maurice during his post-game media address.

"Ehlers scores the three, but that's the most dominant Scheifele and Wheeler have been going both ways," said Maurice. "Those are two periods in terms of all you want out of your leadership. That's as good a game as I've seen (Scheifele) play."

As impressive as the Jets top line was, there were several other critical contributions throughout the lineup.

Jets defenceman Jacob Trouba was outstanding, logging a game-high 26:50 of ice time in what was the best game for the reunited pairing with Josh Morrissey.

Trouba made sound decisions, used his skating ability and dished out a jarring hit that sent Draisaitl to the ice, finishing the contest with three shots on goal, two hits and two blocked shots.

This was Trouba at his best, playing the role of a bona fide, No. 1 defenceman.

And the Jets don't win the game without quality goaltending from Connor Hellebuyck, who turned aside 37 shots in his first start of the season.

Hellebuyck had to be sharp early, making seven saves during an Oilers' power play in the opening minutes that had the potential to put the Jets behind the eight-ball early.

Instead, his saves seemed to inject confidence into a group that had given up 13 goals through the first two games.

It was the first 60-minute effort the Jets had put together and there was little doubt who led the way.

And when the top trio is playing that two-way game, the Jets can be a tough team to play against.

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1077581 Winnipeg Jets

Hellebuyck earns praise

BY KEN WIEBE, WINNIPEG SUN

VANCOUVER – - Did Connor Hellebuyck do enough to earn consecutive starts?

The answer to the question won't likely be known for at least another day, since the Winnipeg Jets took Tuesday off following a 5-2 victory over the Edmonton Oilers.

But it's a good bet Hellebuyck will get his second start of the season when the Jets face the Vancouver Canucks on Thursday at Rogers Place after making 37 saves on Monday.

"Fantastic," said Jets captain Blake Wheeler. "There were a couple (of saves) in the first period where (Hellebuyck) was just kicking them out over and over. Great on him to stay with it. He got an opportunity and had a great game."

While the Jets would like to cut the shots against down after giving up 39 against the Oilers as they work to continue to tighten up defensively, Monday's effort was a step in the right direction.

"He really made some good saves, but what I thought what was so important for Connor was that he looked calm when he didn't have control of the puck. He was square to it," said Jets head coach Paul Maurice. "He's just physically stronger than he was last year and he holds his body position in some of those scrums. He worked hard to find the pucks through traffic and he had his glove going."

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1077582 Winnipeg Jets

Poolman makes NHL debut for Jets



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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BY KEN WIEBE, WINNIPEG SUN

EDMONTON – - Tucker Poolman had been on stand-by and the Winnipeg Jets rookie defenceman finally got the call he's been waiting for.

Poolman, who earned a job on the 23-man roster thanks to a strong training camp and pre-season, replaced Dustin Byfuglien for Monday's game against the Edmonton Oilers and started on a pairing with Toby Enstrom.

"It's exciting. We'll see what happens but either way, you've got to prepare so you're ready," Poolman said this morning, when his status was still up in the air. "Mostly when old friends, coaches or family will call, that's when I think about the journey and kind of savour it. But other than that, I've been focusing on the days here."

As is the case with many players making their NHL debut, Poolman, 24, was sent out for the customary solo lap during the pre-game warm-up before his teammates joined him.

Byfuglien had 25:10 of ice time in Saturday's 6-3 loss to the Calgary Flames, but used Sunday as a maintenance day and didn't skate again on Monday, so it's likely he was scratched because of a minor injury.

Poolman, who turned pro after finishing his junior season with the University of North Dakota Fighting Hawks, has been trying to soak up everything he can while he's up with the big club.

"It's like watching video with the systems and seeing different tendencies of different guys," said Poolman, when asked what he's noticed from watching NHL games from the press box. "I've been watching the defencemen mostly, just trying to see if there is anything I've been missing or different things I can focus on (when) I get out there."

"The first day coach talked to me and said to always be ready, grind it out and be prepared at all times."

Poolman showed his versatility during the pre-season, as he played on both the left and right sides at different points.

"It was good to get reps on both sides for sure," said Poolman, who was chosen by the Jets in the fifth round (127th overall) of the 2013 NHL Draft. "It doesn't really matter what side to me. I'm comfortable with both."

Poolman is encouraged by the way his body has responded after having bilateral shoulder surgery during the off-season.

"It was kind of a question mark when you go out for the first game or the first practice, you don't know how you're going to respond," said Poolman. "But it was a good summer (of recovery) and I've been happy so far with my body."

IN AND OUT

The Jets made one other lineup change for Monday's game, inserting Marko Dano onto the fourth line for Joel Armia.

Armia, who suffered a lower-body injury during the pre-season, has no points and was minus-four in two games while averaging only 10:48 of ice time per game.

Armia was also demoted from the third line to the fourth line.

"Just some quickness," said Jets head coach Paul Maurice, when asked what's been missing from Armia's game. "His injury in training camp set him back. He's got a good set of hands, but when you're feet aren't going, you have a tendency to turn the puck over like we've seen a couple of times in his first two."

"So we've got to get those legs back right, so he can get himself back into the holes and make the plays that he can make."

It was the second game of the season for Dano, who suited up in the opener but was scratched on Saturday.

BACK ON THE BOARD

When Jets winger Brandon Tanev potted a shorthanded marker on Saturday against the Calgary Flames, it was his first NHL goal since Nov. 4 of 2016, when he scored twice against the Detroit Red Wings.

"It was nice to get one, it had been a while and it gets the confidence going," said Tanev, who snapped a 40-game drought. "It tells you that your offensive abilities are there. If you continue to play your way, the chances will come. It's nice to contribute offensively when you can, especially in a special-teams situation."

Tanev had two goals and nine points in 23 games with the Manitoba Moose last season.

While he isn't known for his offensive abilities, Tanev is trying to leave his mark on the penalty kill – though he was on the ice for two of the four power-play goals the Jets had surrendered during the first two games.

LEAVING HIS MARK

There's been plenty of chatter about Kris Versteeg enjoying success against the Jets during his career, but let's not forget about Oilers centre Mark Letestu.

Letestu, a fourth-line pivot who also sees time on the power play, had nine goals and 11 points in 15 games against the Jets during his career going into Monday's match-up.

Although McDavid will understandably be the focal point, but the Jets would be well served to keep an eye on Oilers centre Mark Letestu, who has nine goals (three on the power play, two while shorthanded and two game-winners) and 11 points in 15 career games against them.

"Recently I've had a good run against them," said Letestu. "Some players have more than one, I just only have one. It's one of those things where some guys feel comfortable in certain situations or get breaks or what have you. With my role on the power play – and how many penalties they've taken over the past few years has probably played a role in that. But they've tried to cut down on that, so I may not get as many looks."

Was Letestu expecting a shadow or any extra attention?

"I'm sure I'm not getting the highlight treatment on the pre-scouts," said Letestu.

AROUND THE GLASS

The Jets' primary affiliate, the Manitoba Moose, split a pair of games against the Grand Rapids Griffins last weekend, losing 5-3 and winning 7-2...Centre Mike Sgarbossa chipped in two goals and four points in the two games to lead the Moose in scoring, while Kyle Connor (two goals, three points), Jack Roslovic (one goal, three points) and Brendan Lemieux (one goal, three points) all had strong weekends offensively...Goalie Michael Hutchinson made 36 saves for the Moose to pick up his first AHL victory since he played for the St. John's IceCaps during the 2013-14 campaign...The Moose face the Cleveland Monsters in their home opener on Friday at Bell MTS Place.

Winnipeg Sun LOADED 10.11.2017

1077583 Winnipeg Jets

Jets goalie Hellebuyck stands tall in win over Oilers

BY KEN WIEBE, WINNIPEG SUN



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • Oct. 11, 2017

EDMONTON — Connor Hellebuyck was given a tough assignment, but was ready for the test.

Used in just under one period of work in relief during the first two games of the season, Hellebuyck got the start against the high-octane Edmonton Oilers and had to be sharp.

But after making 21 saves during the first period — and catching a bit of a break when a Milan Lucic shot rattled off the iron — Hellebuyck stood tall and helped the Jets earn a 5-2 victory on Monday at Rogers Place.

“A win is a win and I’m really proud of the guys in front of me,” said Hellebuyck, who finished with 37 saves as the Jets improved to 1-2. “Everybody really dug in and dug deep and we pulled out a team win. I was seeing a lot of pucks and that means the guys in front of me are doing the right things.”

The Jets close out this three-game swing through western Canada on Thursday against the Vancouver Canucks.

You might say Jets head coach Paul Maurice played a hunch in making his decision to start Hellebuyck, who had an 0-4 record to go along with a 4.76 goals-against average and .857 save% in four prior appearances against the Oilers.

But Hellebuyck got the job done between the pipes and offensively, the Jets were led by their top line of Nikolaj Ehlers, Mark Scheifele and Blake Wheeler, who combined for four goals and 10 points in the contest.

They also did a great job defensively, which was equally important against the high-octane Oilers’ offence, which was kept in check.

Jets defenceman Dmitry Kulikov came up with his best effort of the season, scoring his first goal with his new team and adding an assist on Scheifele’s third goal in as many games, which opened the scoring.

But once again, the Jets could not build on a good start.

A defensive breakdown and a turnover by Kulikov once again plagued the Jets during the second period, when Leon Draisaitl and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins scored goals 40 seconds apart to even the score.

In an effort to avoid another meltdown, Maurice called a timeout to try to help his team take a deep breath.

Instead of watching the house of cards fall to the ground, the Jets were able to stem the tide and got a pair of goals from Ehlers to restore the two-goal cushion after two periods of play.

“First of all it was a great timeout. Great timing for it,” said Wheeler. “It was just a great time to slow it down and remind everyone what we’re looking for. Straight lines, nothing fancy, don’t reinvent the wheel. We just needed to bang out a few good shifts, try to get the momentum back in our favour and I thought we did that. Go figure, shortly thereafter, we bang home a couple and take over the game.”

“There probably won’t be a single game we play all year where there’s no adversity and nothing goes against us and it’s just smooth sailing. It just doesn’t happen in this league. So we need to learn how to deal with that.”

Ehlers added an insurance goal with 1:18 left in the third period to complete the natural hat trick and give him a four-point night.

“When does that not feel good,” said Ehlers, who recorded his first points of the season after signing a seven-year contract extension. “I play with two great players, where it’s just backdoor tap-ins. We played simple, hard and fast and were able to find those holes. We’ve got to find a way to keep that going.”

This was exactly the type of effort the Jets needed to restore their faith in what they’re trying to do. After two poor defensive efforts, the Jets still give up a few too many quality opportunities, but they didn’t crumble under pressure.

With all of the talk about expectations being on the rise, the Jets can ill-afford a flat October. And after talking about needing to show more urgency, the Jets did exactly that.

“There wasn’t any panic,” said Wheeler. “The first two games probably went as bad as you could script it. That being said, guys were coming to the rink with a good mentality, trying to get better. That’s a good sign when your team responds like that.”

Playing without veteran defenceman Dustin Byfuglien, who is day-to-day with a lower-body issue, the Jets didn’t miss a beat as Tucker Poolman made his NHL debut.

After recording one assist and 15 shots on goal in six pre-season games, Poolman sat out the first two games as a healthy scratch.

But when his first opportunity to play in an NHL game presented itself, Poolman quickly showed he was ready.

Poolman, who turned pro after his junior season with the University of North Dakota Fighting Hawks, showed plenty of composure with and without the puck as he was used mostly on a pairing with Toby Enstrom.

Byfuglien’s absence also meant an expanded role for Jets defenceman Jacob Trouba, who logged a game-high 26:50 of ice time while being used in all situations.

Winnipeg Sun LOADED 10.11.2017

1077474 Edmonton Oilers

Top Winnipeg Jets line soars, grounds Edmonton Oilers’ dynamic duo

Jim Matheson

Under hoary hockey cliches, No. 1 is “your best players have to be your best players.”

So, yes, Winnipeg Jets winger Nikolaj Ehlers had 14 shots directed at Edmonton Oilers goalie Cam Talbot Monday, eight on net, four blocked and two that went wide, scored three and could have had four in the visitors’ 5-2 victory, but Talbot stoned him on a breakaway.

He was better than Leon Draisaitl.

And Jets centre Mark Scheifele had the game’s first goal and set up Ehlers for two sitters.

He was better than Connor McDavid.

And even though Talbot faced 32 shots over the last 40 minutes with only defenceman Dmitry Kulikov’s uncontested wrist from the high slot one that maybe he’d like back — this wasn’t Dustin Byfuglien, out day-to-day with a lower-body injury, unloading a slap shot — the other far-less-hyped Connor — Winnipeg goalie Hellebuyck — made 20 stops in the first 20 minutes.

Hellebuyck wasn’t interested in talking after the morning skate, but his play spoke volumes.

He was better than Talbot, certainly early.

“The responsibility level. It starts with your star players,” said Oiler coach Todd McLellan. “Your stars have to be superstars every night on both sides of the puck. One line really did a good job of it and they wore white. One line on our team wore orange and we didn’t quite get it done.”

McDavid, who was phenomenal in the Oilers’ opening game with a natural hat-trick, and Draisaitl, who got one of the Oiler goals off a



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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McDavid feed, were both on for three Jets scores. In the third, McLellan broke them up, putting Draisaitl at centre on a line with Anton Slepyshev and Iiro Pakarinen.

Was McLellan looking for more pop in shuffling the lines?

"Maybe I was looking for defence," he said wryly.

Ehlers, Scheifele and Jets captain Blake Wheeler, their No. 1 line, were all plus-3 on the night. Ehlers had four points, the other two three each. Wheeler was playing his 700th NHL game.

"Yes, Nikky (Ehlers) scores three (second career hat-trick) but that's the most dominant Scheifele and Wheeler have been, going both ways ... and those were the best two periods I've seen Mark Scheifele play, just driving the game, smart and hard," said Jets coach Paul Maurice, finally able to breathe after his team was clobbered 7-2 and 6-3 their opening two games.

But their entire top line was dynamite.

"How they get the puck from our end to their end, it was simple. They got pucks off, got pucks deep and made real good decisions," said Maurice. "Scheifele's backchecked ... and those are important things from a leadership point of view. That's as good a game as I've seen him play."

This isn't totally why the Oilers lost 5-2, of course — their second straight bad game after they whipped Calgary 3-0 in the home-opener. Defensively, they were R-O-T-T-E-N, yes in capital letters.

It's looking very much like they miss Andrej Sekera considerably more than we thought on the blue-line. Nobody's saying Sekera is Erik Karlsson, but he plays 20 minutes a night and now young Matt Benning is being tasked with playing higher up the food chain than he should as a second-year pro, in the No. 4 hole. He was very good the first night and has struggled badly the last two.

"There's hesitation in his game, a lot of mishandles of the puck. The pucks seem to get caught up between his stick and his feet. He's an honest kid, who'll keep trying to improve," said McLellan.

The responsibility level. It starts with your star players. Todd McLellan

And Talbot, who got the hook after three goals in seven shots in Vancouver, fell on his own sword.

He didn't like his game at all, even though he made half a dozen outstanding stops.

He has an .896 save percentage through his first three games, even with a shutout.

"They're saves you've seen me make before, that I expect to make and my teammates expect me to make," said Talbot. "I have to give us a chance. Tonight, I didn't do that, again."

"Once the guys start to have confidence in me back there, then they'll start to have confidence playing in front of me. It starts from the net out. I have to be better."

Talbot owned it, but really, it's a team thing.

Nobody's kissing their ring after they got within one game of the Western Conference final last spring.

"After that first game, maybe we thought it would be a little easier," said Talbot. "But it only gets harder from here on out. Teams start to lock it down differently and teams start to create."

Edmonton Journal: LOADED: 10.11.2017

1077434 Calgary Flames

Goalie Smith impressing Flames early on

KRISTEN ODLAND, POSTMEDIA

Michael Stone has been asked about this subject before.

"Many, many times," the Calgary Flames defender said with a chuckle.

But when the subject is your goaltender, his competitiveness and his ability to stop pucks in key situations, you don't mind answering a few more questions.

Because Mike Smith, a 2017 National Hockey League All-Star, was a big deal in the desert. And now after three games, including his first shutout as a member of his new team, the 35-year-old netminder is starting to create a buzz in Calgary too.

This is not news to Stone.

Nor is it surprising.

"Basically my first year in Arizona, he got us to the (Western) Conference finals," Stone said, shaking his head. "When he's on, he's unbelievable."

Unbelievable, like facing 44 shots in his first game with the Flames and against one of the best players in the world in Connor McDavid, only to have the team falter in front of him and lose 3-0.

Unbelievable, like stopping another 28 shots in the team's home opener, a 6-3 win over the Winnipeg Jets.

Unbelievable, like posting a 43-save effort in his first shutout of 2017-18 in a 2-0 victory at the Honda Center where the Flames hadn't won a regular-season game since 2004. (For that, alone, he probably could run in Calgary's mayoral race and win).

"I'm not sure if I can see anything in particular when he's on," Stone continued. "But when he's getting all of those shots, he seems to get better and better."

"He just gets in that battle zone, and he wants to make those saves. He just takes it to another level on games like that."

And three games in, there's certainly a lot to like.

To the surprise of no one, Smith took Tuesday off for "maintenance" as the Flames brought out a shooter-tutor in his place at the L.A. Kings practice facility, the Toyota Sports Center, in El Segundo, Calif.

In the final 14.8 seconds of Monday's game, he appeared to jam his left arm in a goalmouth scramble but hung on to secure the victory.

Smith insisted everything was fine.

"A tough game ... I want to get the mind right and get ready for (Wednesday)," he said. "There's always little bumps and bruises that come out of every game but nothing that's going to keep me out of the lineup."

The Flames, however, are aiming to limit the amount of traffic Smith gets in front of him.

In an ironic twist, the Flames are second in the NHL for shots allowed (an average of 38.7) through the first three games of the season, sitting behind only — you guessed it — the Arizona Coyotes, who have allowed an average of 4.15 shots.

Flames head coach Glen Gulutzan said the shot totals may be misleading this year, just based on the NHL's attempt to become more consistent in every arena.

But, still, 40-plus shots a night is very busy for any netminder.

"I think shots are going to be up as a whole by the way they're counting them this year," Gulutzan said. "Anything that has a possibility to get in



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your net is counting as a shot. Anything that rolls to the goalie is being counted. So I think you're going to see shot-counts getting higher.

"But certainly we'd like to out-shoot our opponent on most nights so that's something we need to get better at."

At the moment, however, Flames general manager Brad Treliving looks like a genius for acquiring Smith in the off-season because the six-foot-four, 215-pounder has been lights-out through three games. Smith also posted his first shutout of the season which came quickly comparatively to last year when his first goose-egg of the 2016-17 campaign came on Jan. 26, 2017 in a 3-0 win over the Vancouver Canucks.

"We gave up a lot of goals last year," said Stone who joined the Flames from the Coyotes before the 2017 NHL trade deadline, just a few months before Treliving traded for Smith from the Desert Dogs. "It's a confidence thing. If you're confident in the guy you have behind you, it makes you play a little more free. Instead of chipping it out all the time, you can try and make that play. If you didn't have confidence in the guy, you might not make it. With him back there and able to be so dynamic and make saves, it gives you confidence to make plays."

Life is good now, and they are just starting to make plays.

But there's 79 more on the docket including Wednesday's clash at Staples Center.

"I understand it's a long season," Smith said. "So I'm not going to have a party because we have won a couple games in a row, and I have a shutout already. At this point in my career and the amount of games I've played, things can turn pretty quickly. I never want to take that for granted."

"(Monday) is in the past as far as I'm concerned, and I'm looking forward to (Wednesday) and have that mentality all season long."

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1077435 Calgary Flames

With a little help from Jobu, Flames end skid in Anaheim

Kristen Odland, Postmedia

Glen Gulutzan wouldn't reveal the exact number.

But like most men of a certain age from a certain era, the 46-year-old native of Hudson Bay, Sask., admits he has watched Major League "a couple times."

Matt Stajan says it was a staple, like most sports cult movies are, on a hockey bus.

And while it wasn't teammate Kris Versteeg's favourite movie growing up, it was his brother Mitch's favourite, so he's seen it enough to recite a few scenes. Plus, you know, if he's flipping through channels on a Saturday afternoon, and it happens to be on ... hey, why not?

As for fellow Calgary Flames forward Michael Frolik?

"To be honest, no," said the 29-year-old, sheepishly. "I didn't see that one."

So, then, the Jobu figurine and the reference to Pedro Cerrano's difficulty with a curve ball ("I can no hit curve ball") and the movie clips of Major League were lost on the native of Kladno, Czech Republic?

"I was a little bit (confused) and didn't know exactly what was going on," Frolik said with a grin. "But I kind of get the point."

The point was, of course, to attempt to make light of the team's horrible record at Anaheim's Honda Center and address the issue of the Flames' 29-straight losses (including playoffs) in that building, rather than simply to brush it off.

Of course, the media never forget the facts and the line of questioning — "Why can't you win there?" — usually begins prior to the Flames arriving in Orange County.

But, this time, Flames head coach Gulutzan and his staff were armed.

"We're always looking for stuff," Gulutzan explained. "We were talking during the regular season (last year) about the curse and all the stuff you guys make up — the media. So it didn't mean that much to us. But then we just thought, 'Let's deal with it.' We're always looking for (video) clips. Major League is always one that we use for different things, so we thought, let's bring in Jobu."

A replica of the one used in the movie by Dennis Haysbert's voodoo-practising character who defected from Cuba was ordered online in the springtime.

On Monday morning at the Honda Center, prior to their third game of the 2017-18 campaign, Gulutzan mentioned they brought in "someone" who "wasn't very big" to help them with the losing skid. He wouldn't say anything more.

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to the media, the team had created a nameplate for Jobu and found a stall for him.

"Between Chips (video coach Jamie Pringle) and Siggy (goalie coach Jordan Sigalet), and I, we stumbled on Jobu and decided to put him in our locker room," Gulutzan explained.

And what did the players think?

"I knew right away," Versteeg said. "I had a good laugh. They showed the clips, and it was pretty funny. It kind of took our mind off the questions and the reality for a bit."

The reality was the Flames had not won in that building during the regular season since Jan. 19, 2004, making it 25 regular-season losses in a row. The last time they won in the playoffs at the Honda Center was April 25, 2006.

"Every time we played in Anaheim at the Honda Center, everyone knew about the streak, so we were just trying to avoid it," Stajan said. "And they brought in Jobu."

"If you've watched that movie, you'd know he helps break curses, and we talked about it. We watched a clip."

So, naturally, when Sean Monahan scored in the second period, Mikael Backlund sealed the deal in the third period, and Mike Smith stopped 43 shots en route to a 2-0 win over the Ducks which ended the curse, the answer was clear.

"Hey, Jobu got the job done at the end of the day," Gulutzan said with a grin. "You can say what you want and make fun of it, but hey, I think Jobu had something to do with it."

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1077436 Calgary Flames

Flames GameDay: vs. host Los Angeles Kings

KRISTEN ODLAND, POSTMEDIA

CALGARY FLAMES at LOS ANGELES KINGS



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • Oct. 11, 2017

8:30 p.m., Staples Center, TV: Sportsnet West, Radio: Sportsnet 960
The Fan

THE BIG MATCHUP

Matthew Tkachuk vs. Drew Doughty

The teenager made headlines last spring when he elbowed the Kings defenceman and the aftermath turned into a war of words. First, Doughty called Tkachuk a "pretty dirty player" following the Kings 5-2 loss at the Saddledome that night. Then, Tkachuk extended the storyline when he told Postmedia that he "expected more" from Doughty "than to go right to the media and start complaining after a loss." Tkachuk was suspended for two games and end of story. But 2017-18 is a new slate, and Wednesday could bring the bad blood back to the surface.

FIVE KEYS TO THE GAME:

1. KEEP IT ROLLING

Monday night in Disneyland was a dream that really did come true — the Flames finally snapped a 29-game losing string in Anaheim. But on top of it all, the team appears to be rolling to start the 2017-18 NHL campaign. And they need to keep the energy going if they want to return back to Calgary with four points.

2. SMART SPECIAL TEAMS

A big part of Monday's 2-0 win over the Anaheim Ducks was the fact their special teams were clicking. Sean Monahan was set up beautifully by Kris Versteeg on a passing play with Kevin Bieksa off for cross-checking. Their penalty kill was a perfect five-for-five. No doubt, they'll walk the line against the Kings, and, if they are penalized for it, they'll need to be strong again.

3. QUICK ON QUICK

Jonathan Quick has a tendency to show up against the Flames, and the visitors must get to him early and often. Much like Flames goalie Mike Smith, the 31-year-old Quick has been spectacular to start the season, posting a shutout and two wins in the Kings' first two games of the season.

4. SHOTS, SHOTS, SHOTS

As in, quit giving up so many of them. In three games to start the season, the Flames have allowed an average of 38.7 shots per game. The only other team that has allowed more? You guessed it, the Arizona Coyotes. And while the Flames know Smith likes being busy, it's not a trend they want to continue. Look for the defence to suppress more shots and the forwards to limit turnovers that lead into shots.

5. MOVES LIKE JAGR?

For the second-straight day, Flames head coach Glen Gulutzan said he has a plan for Jaromir Jagr and that didn't include him in Monday's lineup at Anaheim's Honda Center. But will he play on Wednesday at Staples Center? The head coach said it would be on Jagr's terms when he felt he was ready to make his Flames debut. Oh, to be a fly on the wall at the team's Tuesday practice in El Segundo, Calif., when the head coach and 45-year-old right winger had a long chat.

FLAMES GAMEDAY LINES

Johnny Gaudreau-Sean Monahan-Micheal Ferland

Matthew Tkachuk-Mikael Backlund-Michael Frolik

Kris Versteeg-Sam Bennett-Curtis Lazar

Tanner Glass-Matt Stajan-Troy Brouwer

DEFENCE PAIRINGS

Mark Giordano-Dougie Hamilton

TJ Brodie-Travis Hamonic

Michael Stone-Matt Bartkowski

GOALIES

Mike Smith

Eddie Lack

KINGS GAMEDAY LINES

Alex Iafallo-Anze Kopitar-Dustin Brown

Tanner Pearson-Jeff Carter-Tyler Toffoli

Mike Cammalleri-Adrian Kempe-Andy Andreoff

Kyle Clifford-Nick Shore-Trevor Lewis

DEFENCE PAIRINGS

Derek Fobort-Drew Doughty

Jake Muzzin-Christian Folin

MacDermid-Oscar Fantenberg

GOALIES

Jonathan Quick

Darcy Kuemper

SPECIAL TEAMS:

POWER PLAY

FLAMES: 27.3 % (6th)

KINGS: 0 % (T-26th)

PENALTY KILL

FLAMES: 90 % (T-9th)

KINGS: 100 % (T-1st)

SICK BAY

FLAMES

Healthy apart from forward Marek Hrivik (concussion) who started the season on injured reserve.

KINGS

D Alec Martinez (lower body), RW Marian Gaborik (knee)

Kristen Odland

Calgary Herald: LOADED: 10.11.2017

1077437 Calgary Flames

Flames' Smith creating buzz in Calgary

BY KRISTEN ODLAND, POSTMEDIA

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Calgary Sun: LOADED: 10.11.2017

1077438 Calgary Flames

'Let's bring in Jobu': The story behind the Flames' figurine fascination

BY KRISTEN ODLAND, POSTMEDIA

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"I knew right away," Versteeg said. "I had a good laugh. They showed the clips, and it was pretty funny. It kind of took our mind off the questions and the reality for a bit."

The reality was the Flames had not won in that building during the regular season since Jan. 19, 2004, making it 25 regular-season losses in a row. The last time they won in the playoffs at the Honda Center was April 25, 2006.

"Every time we played in Anaheim at the Honda Center, everyone knew about the streak, so we were just trying to avoid it," Stajan said. "And they brought in Jobu."

"If you've watched that movie, you'd know he helps break curses, and we talked about it. We watched a clip."

So, naturally, when Sean Monahan scored in the second period, Mikael Backlund sealed the deal in the third period, and Mike Smith stopped 43 shots en route to a 2-0 win over the Ducks which ended the curse, the answer was clear.

"Hey, Jobu got the job done at the end of the day," Gulutzan said with a grin. "You can say what you want and make fun of it, but hey, I think Jobu had something to do with it."

Calgary Sun: LOADED: 10.11.2017

1077590 Websites

The Athletic / Mirtle: What went into Auston Matthews' game-breaking OT winner against the Blackhawks?

James Mirtle

Mike Babcock called where the puck went "that ear hole."

Patrick Marleau marveled at the timing of it, with a minute and change left in overtime.

And linemate Zach Hyman summed it up with, simply: "It's just Auston."

This was what the goal looked like in real time, as a point of reference, for the hermits and shut-ins that somehow missed Auston Matthews' latest heroics on Thanksgiving Monday night:

It was impressive as it happened, and it improved the Leafs to 3-0-0 on the year. It was part of a Toronto comeback from down 3-1 late in the third period against the Blackhawks.

They completely dominated the game, and no player contributed more to that domination than Matthews.

What was interesting at practice on Tuesday was how all of the Leafs saw the goal a little differently. Some pointed out how Matthews had eluded the defender and fooled the goaltender. Others focused on the shot itself.

This type of move is something Matthews worked on in the off-season, although he declined to talk about that process with the media on Tuesday. He also declined to elaborate on what he was thinking as he went in on goal with the game on his stick.

"I don't know. You just shoot it," he said quietly. "Put it where you're trying to put it. Not much going through your head there."

Perhaps not. But a lot went into making that play happen the way it did.

The threat of a pass

"What stands out is that [Jake] Gardiner got on his horse and blew by two guys and created the opportunity for Auston," Babcock said. "If he's not there, obviously the guy plays him different."

"The goalie has to play the pass as well as the shot kind of," Marleau added. "He might be, like, ready, loading up that leg to move. I'm not a goalie but..."

"Yeah, that's what we think," James van Riemsdyk chimed in, chuckling. "But, in that situation, he had time to get his shot off, so he was able to assess where he wanted to go with it. A lot of times, the goalie's thinking in that situation you're going to pass or shoot to the blocker side. If you're able to hit your shot glove side, the goalie's kind of leaning because he's worried about the pass a little bit. The threat of that drive [from Gardiner] helps out with that."

Avoiding the defender

What Hyman noticed about the play was the defender, Gustav Forsling, getting in the way at the last minute. It would have been hard for Matthews to shoot from any other stance than he did.

That made the last-second curl he made with the puck — and the fact he was still able to shoot it from that new position — vital.

Here's a slow-mo version that highlights the resistance Forsling offered:

"The D actually put his stick in the lane," Hyman said, "and Auston kind of pulled it back and then got it up so quick the goalie didn't have much of a chance on it."

"His ability to be deceptive when he shoots it — he's stickhandling a couple times before — the goalie's not really sure when he's going to release the puck. Once he does, it's already in the net. He's done it before, but that one was a really, really nice one."

Matthews' deception

Getting that movement on the shot — with Matthews quickly pulling the puck in tight to his body and firing — made things even tougher on the goaltender, Anton Forsberg.

Not every NHL player can shoot the puck that well from that position.

"Sometimes you're stickhandling the puck and you just shoot it — or if you can pull it in and shoot it, which is what he did — or sometimes you push it over [away from your body] to shoot it," van Riemsdyk explained. "It's all different ways to try to throw the goalie off his angle a little bit. The goalie's trying to get square to the puck. So every inch you can move the



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puck either way, the goalie has to adjust to that to be able to make a save.

"Not many guys [in the NHL] can not only shoot it like that but also put it where they want it and score. It's tougher and tougher now to score on shots that are a little further out. When you're quick and deceptive and changing your angle, you're giving yourself a better chance to score."

"He's got such a deadly accuracy to his shot," added Cat Silverman, one of our resident goalie gurus here at The Athletic. "If you look at where he releases the puck, Forsberg has really no way of knowing that shot is going so high. He – rightfully, in my opinion – starts to drop to protect the open space near and between his skates, and Matthews immediately takes advantage."

'He changed the angle. He got it off quick. He got it up.'

Everyone that either coaches or plays with Matthews says his ability to be unpredictable is one of his greatest strengths. I was talking to Matthews long-time skating and skills coach Boris Dorozhenko recently, and he said what you'll notice over time is very few of his goals look alike.

Matthews' teammates have gained an appreciation for that already.

"He put it pretty much over his ear – so the goalie can't really do much about that spot," van Riemsdyk said. "It's one of those things, you see him working at it a lot out there [on the practice rink]. He's got a lot of different tools in his toolbox.

"It's not only having those; it's knowing when to use them, too. That was a good situation there where if you're going to shoot at that spot you want to try to change the angle as much as you can and give yourself the most amount of room as possible.

"He changed the angle. He got it off quick. He got it up."

And that's why it went in.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.11.2017

1077591 Websites

The Athletic / Las Vegas native Jason Zucker pays homage to shooting victims, friend

Michael Russo 15 hours ago

The Zuckers were on their way to Spring Valley Medical Center when the phone rang.

"We are on complete lockdown and can't take you right now," Evan Zucker recalled the voice on the other end of the phone saying.

With his wife, Amanda, about to give birth to the couple's first child, things were "understandably" put on hold.

Four miles from the hospital, a madman fired hundreds of rounds of rifle fire from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Resort onto an unsuspecting mass of country-music fans enjoying the Jason Aldean concert at the Route 91 Harvest Music Festival.

Fifty-eight people were killed, nearly 500 injured, and the hospital at which Amanda was scheduled to have labor induced was treating victims and losing medical staff to other hospitals in larger need of help.

At 8 a.m. on Oct. 2, two hours before the Zuckers were supposed to re-report to the hospital, the entire Zucker family — including Evan's brother, Wild forward Jason Zucker — received a text from mother, Natalie, that lifelong friend Nick Robone was shot in the chest during the incident.

Jason Zucker, at Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul, didn't see the text but got a call from his wife, Carly, right before practice Oct. 2.

"It was a really crazy time for me," Zucker said. "I got to the rink that morning not thinking anybody I knew was involved. I got a call from my wife, and it was a whirlwind. That was a bit of an odd practice for me, and I was thinking more about Nick and the tragedy than anything else."

Robone, 28, survived the shooting in large part to quick action of one of Jason's close friends — Robone's 25-year-old brother, Anthony.

.@HENDFIREDEPT'S ANTHONY ROBONE WENT TO CONCERT WITH HIS BROTHER, @UNLV HOCKEY COACH NICK, WHO'S RECOVERING AFTER BEING SHOT IN CHEST @KTNV PIC.TWITTER.COM/IDG3B11YQS

— TOM GEORGE (@THETOMGEORGE) OCTOBER 3, 2017

Zucker is the only Nevada-produced NHLer in history. He played ice and roller hockey with the Robones his entire childhood, especially Anthony.

Nick Robone is an assistant hockey coach at UNLV, a Division I team in the American Collegiate Hockey Association. He played in the Wednesday and Sunday night adult league with Evan and brother Adam Zucker.

"So this really hit home for us," Evan Zucker said.

Anthony is a firefighter and paramedic in Henderson. Off-duty on the night of Oct. 1, Anthony and his girlfriend went to the concert with Nick and some friends after they attended the Vegas Golden Knights exhibition game.

"And Anthony hopped into action, which is pretty cool," Evan Zucker said.

Anthony was at Nick's side when the shooting began. While hovering over his girlfriend to protect her, Anthony heard Nick scream, "I got hit."

Anthony turned around and saw his fallen brother spitting up blood.

AFTER RESCUING HIS INJURED BROTHER, PARAMEDIC ANTHONY ROBONE STAYED BEHIND TO HELP OTHER INJURED CONCERTGOERS [HTTPS://T.CO/AVW92XZU8H](https://t.co/AVW92XZU8H)

— CNN (@CNN) OCTOBER 3, 2017

Anthony told CNN that's the moment he realized it was time to get out of there. After finding an entry wound, Anthony and friend William Tufano picked Nick up and raced for the exit. Anthony told CNN that after finding a police car, he grabbed an officer's first-aid kit and used the plastic sheath on the outside of a Band-Aid box and three bandages to cover his brother's wound.

Nick was conscious and stable, so once his brother was loaded into an ambulance, Anthony actually raced back into the venue with Tufano to help more victims.

Nick Robone underwent a three-hour surgery and his life was saved. Luckily, the bullet just missed his lung, but he has a long road to recovery and a GoFundMe page was set up to help with his medical costs.

"I watched Anthony go through the EMT and firefighter training," Jason Zucker said, smiling. "It was really cool and he was super-excited to pass, and not that he needed it, but this more than justifies all the training he did. He saved his brother's life."

PIC.TWITTER.COM/AOJXQSTQZJ

— NICK ROBONE (@NICK_ROBONE) OCTOBER 4, 2017

Zucker, a man with a big heart, has long paid homage during games to those close to him.

He writes "mom" and "dad" on every stick just under the initials of his friend, Nick Schaefer, who died in 2010 at the age of 19 in a car accident. Tattooed on Zucker's chest is "Game Time," a funny saying Schaefer used to say. Tattooed on Zucker's left wrist is the autograph of a young



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boy named Tucker that Zucker befriended before Tucker died of a rare form of bone cancer in 2016.

Also tattooed there are the words, "SHOOT MORE," which was advice Tucker always used to give Zucker.

So on opening night in Detroit last week and again in Raleigh on Saturday, Zucker applied tape to his left wrist and wrote, "ROBONESTRONG" AND "VEGASSTRONG."

Wild winger Jason Zucker paid tribute to his friend, Nick Robone, who was one of more than 500 shooting victims during an Oct. 1 shooting in Zucker's hometown of Las Vegas. Robone thankfully survived. (Photo submission: Aaron Sickman, Minnesota Wild)

Zucker scored the game's first goal on a power play 6 1/2 minutes in against Carolina.

"Pretty special," Evan Zucker said.

Since the Oct. 1 massacre, Jason has texted back and forth with Nick, Anthony and their father, Tony. At last check, Jason said Nick was still in the hospital "and trying to get back to a normal life."

Evan Zucker said, "It's a small hockey world here, and a few of the hockey guys are taking all the texts that every player sent the family and Nick and putting together one big collage to show Nick how many people care about him."

Vegas is getting back to normal, Evan said a day after returning from El Paso, where he and his brother, Adam, coached a division of the Jr. Golden Knights in a tournament.

"The first few days, it was pretty surreal," Evan Zucker said. "I'm driving to and from the hospital and you don't even feel safe driving around. You're wondering what was going to happen next. Friday, I had some work and drove by the Mandalay Bay, and you're still seeing the windows shattered out and the crime scene tape, so it kind of hits you in the stomach."

"But the last few days, Vegas itself is feeling OK, like we're bouncing back from it."

Zucker and his dad, Scott, are Golden Knights season-ticket holders. They have already set up a suite for Jason's first arrival with the Wild in March.

And, they will be at the special, bound-to-be-emotional, first-ever Golden Knights home game on Tuesday night against the Arizona Coyotes.

Classily, the Golden Knights won't put any ads along the boards. It'll just say, "VEGASSTRONG."

THERE WON'T BE ANY ADVERTISEMENTS ON THE BOARDS TONIGHT. INSTEAD, OUR BOARDS WILL REFLECT WHO WE ARE. #VEGASSTRONG PIC.TWITTER.COM/29PL7WMMWJ

— VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS (@GOLDENKNIGHTS) OCTOBER 10, 2017

"Needless to say, it's not going to be our typical opener. We'll save that for Friday," Golden Knights general manager George McPhee said. "Tuesday night is not about us. It's about honoring and remembering the victims and supporting their families and recognizing the first responders that did tremendous work. It has been, obviously, for this country and for this city an incredibly emotional experience and a devastating experience for a lot of people. We are going to try to have the ceremony Tuesday night that provides the respect and dignity to everyone involved that it deserves."

The Zuckers certainly appreciate that.

Oh, and by the way, after a 40-hour labor, Amanda Zucker did give birth to a boy they named Ethan on Oct. 4.

"I was glad," Evan Zucker said. "I didn't want him born on that day. I didn't want him to have that [Oct. 1] birthday. He's healthy ... and very good."

"I brought him home on Thursday night and I left Friday for Texas. Life as a hockey coach."

The Athletic LOADED: 10.11.2017

1077592 Websites

The Athletic / Custance: Radulov impact already felt in Dallas as Stars poised to break out

Craig Custance 17 hours ago

FRISCO, Texas – It takes only a few minutes of watching Dallas Stars practice to see the passion. On this Monday morning, with the Stars sitting at 0-2 and preparing for a game against the Detroit Red Wings, it came in the form of a seemingly meaningless play.

Stars forward Alexander Radulov circled around the net and put himself in position to score. A pass was sent in his direction, but goalie Kari Lehtonen got just enough of a stick on it to break up the pass and opportunity to score. That was it. The drill was over. Everyone went back to their line, but Radulov slammed his stick to the ice. He was clearly frustrated at not getting a chance to shoot.

That stick slamming returned when Lehtonen made a save late in practice, followed quickly then by a huge smile from Radulov and hug of the Stars goalie.

There was only one conclusion to make on this early season practice. Man, he's into it.

"Oh, that's legit," said teammate Tyler Seguin of the emotions that Radulov puts into everything on the ice. "The guy loves to work. Loves hockey."

That's been the big first impression he's made on his Stars teammates early on in his tenure after signing a five-year, \$31.25 million contract to move from Montreal to Dallas.

Asked to describe his initial thoughts on Radulov, Seguin looked over at him across the dressing room and smiled.

"Ugly," Seguin said. "Real ugly."

Then he got serious.

"So competitive," Seguin said. "Especially in practice, he's one of the hardest practice players I've played with."

The Stars made so many changes after underachieving last season that it was easy to lose this one among the high-profile moves. They brought in a future Hall of Famer in Ken Hitchcock to coach. They finally addressed their goaltending with the addition of Ben Bishop. They added veterans like Martin Hanzal and Marc Methot, becoming a popular pick to win the impossible Central Division in the process.

Stars GM Jim Nill had an opening on the right side of his forward group with the departures of Patrick Sharp and Ales Hemsky, along with a little money to spend. He'd been scouting Radulov since the Russian winger was 16 years old, always noting that he was one of the best in the world among his age group in every tournament he scouted. This offseason, Nill heard the speculation everyone in hockey heard, that Radulov was likely headed back to Montreal. But Nill called Radulov's agent, Rick Komarow, and was encouraged by the response.



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"When I talked to Rick, it was, 'He's open to going anywhere,'" Nill told The Athletic.

So the Stars made their push. Nill checked in with guys like Vernon Fiddler and Rich Peeverley to get the scouting report on Radulov. It was unanimously glowing. Nill had the commitment to spend and captain Jamie Benn was part of the recruiting process.

Benn is a star in the NHL but he's also a hockey fan at heart. There are two players he always wanted a chance to play with that had still eluded him before this season – Pavel Datsyuk and Radulov. With Datsyuk's exit to the KHL, that dream has vanished. Now, he had a shot at Radulov and he made a call to see if he could help in any way.

The pitch?

"Just how great the city of Dallas is, the people here, the weather is awesome," Benn said. "We have a great group of guys here."

"He calls me, and he was like, 'We want you,'" Radulov told The Athletic. "I'm happy to be here and play with these guys. Now, we need to start going."

That's the beauty of Radulov. All he cares about right now is that the Stars are 0-2. Ask him about Montreal and the Canadiens and he acknowledges that he's following their start, but adds that he's following every team. That's what he's done his whole life as a die-hard hockey fan.

"It's still early in the season. Teams battling hard. You got to worry about ourselves," Radulov said. "Who gives a fuck about the other ones? We have our group of guys all here in the locker room. We have to believe in each other and go out and play."

And that's where every conversation with Radulov ends up: How the team is playing.

Ask him how he's doing?

"Not good," he said. "We're losing."

Suggest that the offseason moves for Dallas looked great on paper?

"Doesn't matter," he said. "It's just paper."

They've got to go out and do it and Radulov doesn't appear like he's going to rest until he helps make it happen. He's relentless in practice and he's been relentless in trying to get things working with linemates Seguin and Benn during games.

Part of his passion is constant communication on the ice, trying to find ways to get an edge against opponents. Seguin has a new spot on the power play, in the middle of the ice, and Radulov is constantly looking for new ideas in which to take advantage of Seguin in that spot, right down to breaking down exactly where Seguin wants the puck.

At even strength, those learned tendencies will come in time, as the trio gets used to each other. For example, early on Seguin would jump into the corner with Radulov to help win puck battles. It didn't take him long to realize that wasn't necessary.

"He wins most his battles, you really don't need to," Seguin said. "Those are things that just come."

It's quite the difference for Dallas compared to last year. The Stars are struggling a little to start the season because they're working in so many different high-end players into a system that has proven to be very successful. Last year, the early struggles were because the team was crushed by injuries and breaking in a defense that never quite got where it needed to be.

Watching Radulov, you're reminded of just how dangerous this team could be once it figures things out.

"We got to get better in all areas – defensive zone, offensive zone," Radulov said. "Everybody knows that. We just got to keep working hard

and going to those dirty areas and get it done. No one is going to give it to us. We have to come and take it."

The Athletic LOADED: 10.11.2017

1077593 Websites

The Athletic / Pronman Notebook: Dante Fabbro stands out in NCAA, concern about Gabriel Vilardi

Corey Pronman

Today's column will look at my trips to Quinnipiac to watch the Bobcats play Boston University, the AHL game between the Philadelphia Flyers and New York Rangers' affiliates, as well as prospect notes from around the league.

NCAA

Shane Bowers, C, Ottawa: Bowers is a player who is tough to get a read on. I don't think any scout I talk to hates him, but the question is can he be on your power play in the NHL or is he a safe two-way forward at the top level. "He's got a lot of talent and a great work ethic, he plays physical and goes to the dirty areas," said Boston University's coach David Quinn. Those latter elements give hope that even if he doesn't become a dominant scorer, he can still find a way to carve out a role as a pro.

Dante Fabbro, D, Nashville: Fabbro has looked good early on, as he moves the puck quite well and often makes smart plays. He hasn't taken off as a dominant college player yet, and I attribute that to a lack of standout mobility, as while he knows what to do, his feet hamper him at times from making the best plays.

Jordan Greenway, LW, Minnesota: Greenway, along with Anaheim prospect Troy Terry, have been promoted by Team USA for the 2018 Olympics, so you can likely slot him in their lineup, but he needs to do more than he showed me this past weekend if he's going to be anything more than a fourth liner. After his standout world juniors last winter, he tailed off in the second half. When he's on, he's a quick power forward who can get pucks to the net, but his lack of standout skill can make him disappear and just leave an edgy big man.

Patrick Harper, LW, Nashville: Harper was a standout at the game, making high-skill plays seem routine. The big thing with Harper is getting a little quicker especially given his diminutive frame, but on a playmaking level the 19-year-old sophomore should be among the best in college hockey and a leader for the U.S. world junior team.

Jake Oettinger, G, Dallas: Oettinger wasn't fantastic in this game, but hopes are quite high for the first round pick. "He's an elite goalie who can play on a championship team," Quinn said. "He really understands where the net is, he's very poised, he doesn't get rattled." Oettinger did make a few high level stops seem easy during the game as his combo of size and IQ combined with decent athleticism projects well to the highest level.

Keith Petruzzelli, G, Detroit: Petruzzelli was fantastic in the game vs. BU, keeping Quinnipiac in it while the scoring chances kept coming. He moves incredibly well for a 6-foot-5 goalie and while at times he was a little all over the place, but often he gathered himself to angle off shooters well and square up pucks. Toronto prospect Joseph Woll and Dallas prospect Jake Oettinger likely have the USA net held down at the World Juniors, but I wouldn't hold that against Petruzzelli due to age differences.

Brady Tkachuk, LW, 2018 draft eligible: Tkachuk didn't put up the points Harper did, but he arguably looked as good. He doesn't dangle around



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players left and right, but he's a beast. Tkachuk generated at least five scoring chances by simply taking the puck and driving with his strong 6-foot-3 frame to the net. Don't mistake that for a lack of skill, as he showed he can turn the corner on defenders or make a cute hands play to get the puck on net.

Hartford (New York Rangers)

Alexei Bereglazov, D: There were quite a few moments during the game Bereglazov showed impressive skill. That made me take notice of him because he did not make those type of plays when I scouted him a few weeks ago in Traverse City. He showed fine intelligence defensively, but his mobility hampered him in that area at times as the 6-foot-4 defenseman is not a fantastic skater. He's close to NHL ready, but behind Neal Pionk on the depth chart.

Neal Pionk, D: I didn't think Pionk was incredible, but he led Hartford in ice time by my subjective count and showed reasons why he was leaned on. He moved the puck quite well, including a few seeing eye passes out of his defensive zone that stretched the opposing defense. His hockey sense and skill are very good, even if he's small and not that quick he could be the first call up if a Rangers defenseman goes down.

Lehigh Valley (Philadelphia)

Oskar Lindblom, LW: I was hoping for a little more from Lindblom, who was a late cut by the Flyers. He showed some value as a guy who was strong on the puck and in front of the net on the first power play unit, but his lack of standout speed and skill was also noticeable at this level. I like him a lot as a prospect due to his IQ, but I'd like to see him dominate the AHL before we start talking about his NHL chances.

Danick Martel, LW: Martel is a lesser prospect in the Flyers deep farm system, but he was a guy I noticed several times. With four goals in the first two games of the season despite little power play time, Martel's skating and puck skills stood out to me. He's small and not a killer offensive player, but I see some reason to believe in him.

Philippe Myers, D: There were quite a few times Myers had a shift that wowed me. He's such an incredible skater for a 6-foot-5 player and can make unique rushes to gain the zone. I think his defense is decent for his age at the level, but he showed he needs time to catch up to the pace with his decisions. He made a few mistakes, but one that stood out was when Myers made a brutal giveaway at the offensive blue line in a tie game with two minutes left.

Mikhail Vorobyov, C: I was quite impressed by Vorobyov. A player with experience playing versus high-level pros in the KHL, Vorobyov showed the ability to set up chances and make skilled plays at an AHL tempo. If you get him to add to his skating a little and add some bulk to his frame, I think Philly's 104th overall selection in 2015 could be a significant player in their lineup in the not too distant future.

Other prospect notes:

Drake Batherson, C, Ottawa: I caught Batherson playing a game the other night and was rather impressed by his skill level. You don't want to overreact to a 19 year old in the QMJHL, but he showed a lot of creativity with the puck and good vision. He needs to get faster and I'd like to see how he does at an international or pro level before reading too much into his play, but he's on my radar now.

Kaapo Kahkonen, G, Minnesota: Everyone's favorite CBA debate in the summer is over college free agents where after being on a team's reserve list for four or sometimes more years a NCAA player can become an unrestricted free agent. In the 2013 CBA, one interesting wrinkle was extending rights for European players from two years (where they could be re-drafted) to four years, similar to college players. We may be coming up on our first major European unrestricted free agent. Kahkonen, drafted by the Wild in the fourth round in 2014 is having a breakout campaign in Finland's Liiga and is attracting interest from other NHL teams. The 21 year old leads the league with a .937 save percentage through the first quarter of the season.

Andrei Kuzmenko, RW, free agent: For the super prospect geeks, which let's face it is our core audience, keep an eye on Kuzmenko. The highly skilled 21-year-old winger led the MHL playoffs in scoring last spring and has been quite good for CSKA in the KHL. He's on the NHL radar for me especially if he improves his skating.

Ostap Safin, LW, Edmonton: Safin has been quite good for Saint John early in the QMJHL season. Scoring around a point per game and generating nearly four shots per game, Safin can do this because he's such a good skater at 6-foot-5. He's not a zero with the puck, but he's not going to dangle through guys. He can be effective keeping his skill plays simple and using his feet to get to the net.

Andrei Svetlakov, C, Minnesota: The CSKA Minnesota prospect most know about is super prospect Kirill Kaprizov, but Wild fans should also closely monitor Svetlakov. The 21 year old is logging a lot of minutes on both special teams for one of the best teams in the KHL. He does a lot well even if he's not dynamic and could see time with Russia's national team this season.

Kristian Vesalainen, LW, Winnipeg: The Jets first round pick a few months ago has been just ok to start his season in Finland. His ice time has been up and down, as he started off on HPK's top line, got sent down to the fourth line, and is now back in the main scoring rotation. His speed and skill at his 6-foot-3 frame standout even at the pro level and he can make plays off the rush, but his decision making has been touch and go.

Gabriel Vilardi, C, Los Angeles: The 11th overall pick missed Canada's junior camp and LA's training camp with an injury, vaguely described as some sort of back/hip ailment. The early word was that holding him out was precautionary, but I've heard over the summer and fall hints from NHL people that it could be a serious injury. The Kings may be holding out hope he can make a turnaround as they haven't publicly provided an update or any recent indication to the severity. Given where we are on the calendar, Vilardi's injury situation is going from a minor fact to a potential problem.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.11.2017

1077594 Websites

The Athletic / Dellow: Risk, reward and the Dustin Byfuglien question

Tyler Dellow

Luck's a complicated thing in hockey. I tend to think that hockey people don't weight it enough and analytics people (including me, no doubt) overweight it. I think of what we call luck as being like the darkness in an unlit room with weird angles and some candles fixed in place, although not enough to light all the crannies. If you can find the candles and get them lit, you can shrink the darkness. You'll never be able to get rid of it all though, because pucks hit feet, referees blow calls – luck happens.

(Part of what we perceive as "luck" changes as a result of adjustments too. If a team is doing something that results in some negative outcome, the coaching staff will likely find it and change it. If it's getting away with something that results in some positive outcome, the league will eventually assimilate that information and take it away from them. "Luck" isn't just about bounces; it's about the Darwinian processes in the NHL that push teams back towards narrow norms on certain things.)

Since the Jets moved to Winnipeg, Dustin Byfuglien has one of the worst differences between his on-ice and off-ice save percentages at 5-on-5 in the NHL. When Byfuglien's on the ice, the Jets have put up a .909 since 2011-12. When he's on the bench, they've put up a .924. Only Seth Jones and Jake Muzzin have worse differentials amongst defencemen



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who've been on the ice for at least 2000 shots in that window. They're both much closer to the 2,000 shot threshold (2,337 shots against and 2,406 shots against) than Byfuglien (3,735 shots against), which means that there's probably more noise in their save percentages than in Byfuglien's.

As a result of this, Byfuglien is one of the unusual players whose Corsi% is quite different than his GF%, even in a large sample. Relative to his team since 2011-12, Byfuglien's Corsi% is 2.4 points better than the Jets when he's on the bench. That's good! His GF% is 1.7 points worse than the Jets when he's not on the ice. That's bad! It's important to note that this is a save percentage problem, not a shooting percentage problem – the Jets have shot 8.2 per cent with Byfuglien on the ice at 5-on-5 in this time and 8.0 per cent when he's on the bench.

If you were to talk to someone well versed in analytics thinking, they'd likely tell you that standard analytics thinking would be that Dustin Byfuglien has suffered from bad luck. In general, I agree with this conclusion. When you see defencemen with big differences between their save percentage and that of their team, it's probably luck, whether good or bad. In Byfuglien's case, I've always suspected that there's something more to it.

Byfuglien plays an extremely aggressive game, both physically and in terms of taking risks for offence. The latter trait was on display in Winnipeg's disastrous game in Calgary on Saturday night. I grabbed a couple of clips to illustrate what I'm talking about.

Clip 1: Byfuglien pinches, with Mark Scheifele covering for him. He kind of dawdles in terms of getting back and Scheifele is left to (poorly) defend Calgary's breakout and ensuing rush.

Clip 2: Byfuglien strolls down the wall into the corner with the puck, looking for a pass. Fair enough, but he gets awfully comfortable once he's there – if the puck had been turned over, Winnipeg's left defending a rush with a defence pair of Nikolaj Ehlers and Toby Enstrom.

Clip 3: The piece de resistance. Byfuglien aggressively leaps to try and keep a puck in the offensive zone rather than retreating. He misses and the puck bounces out into centre, whereupon Josh Morrissey is left to deal with it on his backhand, with Johnny Gaudreau in his face. Rather than get back and give Morrissey some support, Byfuglien lets a Flames forward go and skates off to the side, hoping that Morrissey can get a pass through to him. Morrissey can't, and although the Flames don't score on the glorious chance, they end up scoring in the subsequent offensive zone sequence.

There's data in support of my suspicion that Byfuglien is unusually aggressive in getting deep into the offensive zone as well. He routinely has one of the shortest 5-on-5 shot distances in the NHL amongst defencemen. Since 2011-12, he has two of the three shortest shot distance seasons amongst defencemen taking at least 100 unblocked 5-on-5 shots, three of the shortest 11 seasons and four of the shortest 44 seasons.

Having a short average shot distance is great, all other things being equal. I've always had a sneaking suspicion that in his case, all other things aren't equal and that his save percentage problem is somehow tied to him being too aggressive, resulting in odd-man rushes or rushes where a Jets' forward is ineptly acting as a defenceman.

Unfortunately, our brains lie to us relentlessly, telling us convincing stories to explain phenomena that we observe. I've known for a long time that Byfuglien has a disastrous on-ice save percentage; it's entirely possible that I'm hyper-aware of his positioning on the ice as a result and that I'm concocting some sort of explanation for something that's purely bad luck.

Bill James had a line about thinking that's always stuck with me (I think it was Bill James; I've read enough of his books that I just assume it was him whenever it's something to do with how to think about a problem): "If this was true, what else would be true?" Thinking about the Byfuglien

phenomenon, it seemed to me that it might make sense to check whether it's forwards or defencemen who are lighting him up.

If this is all somehow tied up in Byfuglien being too aggressive and conceding glorious rush opportunities, I'd expect opposition forwards to have particularly benefitted from that, because I'd expect the forwards to be getting much more of those chances than the defencemen. Defencemen do get into the rush but generally, it's more likely that a forward will. Sure enough, this seems to check out. Defencemen have shot 3.0 per cent against the Jets with Byfuglien on the bench and 3.7 per cent with Byfuglien on the ice. Forwards have shot 9.4 per cent and 11.0 per cent respectively. The increase in the shooting percentage enjoyed by forwards is more than double the increase enjoyed by defencemen.

Let's try and parse this information a little more finely. Do specific shift types correspond with Byfuglien getting lit up by opposing forwards? I've looked at this from the perspective of the shooter and calculated their shooting percentage based on two factors: whether Byfuglien is on the ice and how the shift started for the shooter. Here's the breakdown.

The point of looking at things like this is that certain decisions that the defenceman has to make or plays that he has to make are more likely to arise on certain shifts. A defenceman is more likely to have to deal with decisions about pinching when his shift starts with an offensive zone win than he is if it starts with a defensive zone loss. If you see a bad trend, you can consider whether it's just luck or driven by something else.

Let's look at the goals scored when the shooter's shift started with a DZL, an offensive zone win for the Jets. The NHL switched video providers at the All-Star break in 2015-16, which is unfortunate, because we lost easy access to goal videos going back to 2010 or so – they haven't yet put that video back online. (Yet? One can hope because getting a setup to easily do stuff like this is surprisingly difficult.) As a result, we'll look at goals scored by a shooter on a shift starting with a DZL since the 2015-16 All-Star break.

Winnipeg's given up 15 goals to forwards on DZL shifts at 5-on-5 since then. Byfuglien has been on the ice for eight of those. I'm hypothesizing that Byfuglien is somehow connected to more dangerous rush shots where he's off doing who knows what. The video backs it up. Of the 15 goals, Byfuglien was on the ice for eight. Seven of them were off the rush; five of those involved Byfuglien. Of those five, four of them featured Byfuglien getting caught somehow, whether due to a bad read, a bad shot attempt or because he's deep in the zone.

This isn't definitive proof that Byfuglien gets the risk/reward equation wrong, of course. I'm just looking at the plays that turned into goals, not all of the plays. Teams are secretive about their analytics departments and how they're integrated into their operation but the Jets were looking into analytics over the summer. If the Jets have one that has some interaction with the coaches, there's a pretty good question to dig into here – pull all of the shots by shooters on DZL shifts since the Jets came to Winnipeg, sort them by whether Byfuglien is on the ice or not and determine whether more of the ones with Byfuglien on the ice were rush shots. I would bet that the answer is yes. Obviously, that's just one aspect of it. There are some other trouble spots with Byfuglien that could be explored as well, as you can see from the graph above.

The problem with this is that the coaching staff is probably deeply familiar with Byfuglien's game at this point. Charlie Huddy has been in Winnipeg since 2011. He's steered less talented players to reasonably successful seasons in the past. If he hasn't been able to solve whatever it is that results in Byfuglien consistently posting a terrible save percentage, well, I'm not sure that it's a fixable problem. It's unfortunate for the Jets because they've made a significant commitment to him. And he's been less than his underlying numbers would suggest, which is a tough thing to overcome.

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The Athletic / Duhatschek: Overlooked Nikolaj Ehlers provides the spark the Jets need

Eric Duhatschek

Can one play — one moment in one game so early on — actually turn the tide for an entire NHL season?

It seems unlikely and yet, there were the Winnipeg Jets, with a 0-2 record, after leaking 13 goals in the first two games against the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Calgary Flames, and looking in trouble again Monday night against the Connor McDavid's, on the road, in Edmonton. In the second period, the Oilers had just scored twice in rapid succession to erase a two-goal deficit against a Jets' team which had also blown a two-goal lead Saturday night in Calgary. The momentum had shifted against the Jets in Monday's game in the same way it did two nights earlier when the Flames rattled off five goals in a row to win the game going away.

And then Nikolaj Ehlers rode to the rescue, turning nothing into something the way only the ultra-skilled can. It began as an innocuous rush inside his own blueline, Ehlers gathering in a pass from Jacob Trouba and then gathering steam as he sidestepped Leon Draisaitl at the Jets' blueline. Pressing forward and crossing the Oilers' line, Ehlers looked off the Oilers' defence pair of Kris Russell and Matthew Benning and then fired a rising shot past goaltender Cam Talbot on the blocker side to put the Jets ahead again — and most importantly restore calm. Ehlers then scored twice more — 69 seconds later and again as time wound down on a third-period power play — to produce a natural hat trick as the Jets won 5-2.

What a key victory — all conjured up on a play by the 21 year old from Aalborg, Denmark, who'd just signed a seven-year, \$42 million contract extension on the opening day of the season to stay with Winnipeg for the prime of his NHL playing career. And even though the contract doesn't kick in until the start of next season, you can understand why Jets' general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff invested that kind of dough in Ehlers.

Most of the attention, when it comes to Jets' youngsters, generally falls on Patrik Laine — and that's understandable. Laine had 64 points as a rookie, and came up just short against Auston Matthews in last year's balloting for the Calder Trophy. But Ehlers also scored 64 points last year, and though his skill set is different than Laine's, there is no question about his talent — and what he brings to the mix. Coach Paul Maurice likes to shuffle the personnel of his top two lines and what clicked Monday was a re-united unit that featured Ehlers, playing with Mark Scheifele and Blake Wheeler, a trio which accounted for 10 points but most importantly helped staunch the early-season bleeding in Winnipeg. Making his first start of the season, Connor Hellebuyck, the Jets' young goalie, had a hand in the victory too, as did Scheifele and Wheeler, who both had their best games of the season by far.

But Ehlers made the right play at the right time to help restore some of the organizational confidence in the Jets that had been sinking fast since their opening-night loss to the Maple Leafs. An 0-3 start would have been ugly. Now, at least they have some breathing room, heading into Thursday's game against the Canucks in Vancouver.

The other day, when I asked Wheeler what makes Ehlers such a special player, he spoke of the quality on display on the go-ahead third goal — his wheels. Ehlers may not be McDavid fast, but he is so dangerous on the rush that he can back off the defence with a look, which then creates options, for him and for his linemates.

"He has the ability to make plays at high speed — and that's rare," explained Wheeler, the Jets' captain. "A lot of guys who can skate fast

sometimes need to slow down to make plays. He does things at a high speed all over the ice. So, he's a really dynamic player. From his rookie year to last year, was night and day, in terms of his approach to the game and being more of a complete player — and in camp, he's really taken the next step."

Ehlers became just the third player in franchise history to score a natural hat trick and the other two — Ilya Kovalchuk (Nov. 11, 2005) and Marian Hossa (Jan. 15, 2008) — both did it during the team's Atlanta Thrashers incarnation. The Jets had already been in Winnipeg for three full seasons when they selected Ehlers ninth overall in the 2014 entry draft, after watching him play two junior seasons for the Halifax Mooseheads of the QMJHL.

Denmark is slowly becoming an unexpected source of hockey talent — Ehlers and Toronto goaltender Frederik Andersen (of Herring, Denmark) are both integral to their teams' hopes and aspirations this season. But most Danish players with NHL ambitions need to leave the country at a relatively early age to receive the level of competition they need to develop their skill sets, according to Ehlers.

"The Danish hockey, it is getting better," said Ehlers, in a wide-ranging interview. "We've got a lot of young guys over here (in Canada) and a lot of young guys in Sweden. One of my good friends is in Switzerland. Everyone is trying to give themselves the best chance to get better.

"I was 11 when I moved to Switzerland, with my whole family. My dad was a coach, so when he got a coaching job in Switzerland, we all moved there. That was a pretty good chance for me to get better. After six years there, I signed a pro contract in Switzerland, but soon after that, I signed a junior hockey contract to play in Halifax. I wanted to give myself the best chance to get drafted over here, to know the systems, to know the game they play over here."

Ehlers played one game for the Biel (Switzerland) under-17 team in 2009-10, when he was just 14. Seven games into his second full season, he was bumped up to their junior team and by the end of the 2012-13 season, he was playing for their senior team, EHC Biel-Bienne. That was also the year of the NHL lockout, so Ehlers got a chance to watch NHL players, in Switzerland, up close.

It also helped his development that he was the son of a hockey coach, who let him know early on what it would take to legitimately fill those NHL aspirations.

"I look back now and at some points, back then, you were probably not as happy with your dad because he was more of a coach than he was a father," Ehlers said. "But it was never too hard or never too much — even though maybe sometimes I thought it was.

"We used to go running on Sunday. I'd go to the lake in Switzerland with all my friends and all my teammates. He would call me at 5 o'clock; I would still be there; and he would say, 'I'm picking you up in 15 minutes and we're going for a run.' At that point, I was 13 or 14 years old and the other guys were like, 'what are you doing? It's Sunday and 30 degrees out.' But when I look back, I wouldn't be here without him. He helped me so much. That push he gave me in the right direction is the reason I'm here."

Ehlers cracked the Jets' lineup at the start of the 2015-16 season and produced 38 points in 72 games. Last year, he added 64 in 82 games. In short, his transition to the NHL has gone fairly smoothly.

"What I learned from the first two years is, you play so many games, and you think that at some point, the play of the games will stay the same," Ehlers said. "But in this league, there are four quarters, and every quarter, the game gets harder and the game gets better. I haven't been in the playoffs, so I wouldn't exactly know how it is then, but I would expect it to be even better.

The Jets haven't made the playoffs in Ehlers' first two seasons, but that is the goal this year.



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"The team here, we haven't had the easiest of two years," Ehlers said. "We had a young team; we still have a young team. But I think everyone in here has some experience now. We all know that it's time to do something more than have a long summer break. We know what it takes now and we're prepared to sacrifice pretty much everything to get to where we want to be.

"When you get to the end of the regular season and you see your team outside the playoffs, it's not fun. But now, we really feel like we've taken a big step over the last two years – and we feel confident. We know we can do it."

Much could still go wrong for the Jets over the final 79 games of the regular season, but when they were looking for a spark Monday – something, anything – to lift them out of their early funk, it was the diminutive Dane that provided it.

Who knows where the turning point of a year can be? Maybe we've seen it already.

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The Athletic / Welcome to Claude Julien's Canadiens

Arpon Basu

Perhaps a few years of Michel Therrien is what makes this so jarring. Or even newsworthy.

Claude Julien would have been able to easily justify shaking up his line combinations for the Canadiens home opener against the Chicago Blackhawks on Tuesday. His team has scored three goals in three games, two of them shorthanded, and the breakouts have been a source of distress for both the coach and the players.

But Julien did next to nothing, at least not at the morning skate.

"I'm not convinced it's the lines that are stopping us from scoring," Julien said. "It's the way we play that has to change."

Julien said one thing jumps out about the three games the Canadiens have played, that they aren't taking the puck to the net enough. And by "taking it to the net" he doesn't necessarily mean driving into the blue paint. He means curling to the inside instead of the outside when entering the zone and getting to scoring areas more often.

When asked if some skill players just don't have it in them to do that, who need the space on the outside to operate and use their skills, Julien had a great response.

"There isn't a clause in any player's contract saying he doesn't have to go to the net," he said.

Still, leaving the lines intact is a bold move, because even if you think the Canadiens need to drive the net more – they do – a lot of coaches would have used line changes to send that message. Julien did not.

This accomplishes a few things, but one in particular is most important. Leaving the lines intact conveys a sense of confidence to his team that the good has outweighed the bad. Whether that's true or not is irrelevant. What's important is that his team believes that.

"Obviously there's some trust, some belief from the coaching staff," Brendan Gallagher said. "It puts some responsibility on you as players to get the job done. Every line that we have is capable of producing, capable of putting the puck in the net. You have a job to do and you know you're relied upon to do that.

"It hasn't been the case where every line's been producing, where we've been able to score three or four goals in a game, but nobody's doubting it in here. I think it's just a matter of the little details in your game, outworking goalies, outworking defenders in front, finding those pucks and putting them in."

Therrien was criticized for years for his quick trigger finger, switching up lines on what seemed like a daily basis, going back to combinations that worked in the past. The forwards reached the point that they didn't want to discuss their lines anymore because they knew they would change. It was almost as if building chemistry was not being incentivized.

Julien is doing the opposite of that. His greatest asset as a coach, or at least one of them, is his confidence in his own decisions. This is what a confident coach does, give his decisions time to work. Or not work. But evaluating those decisions based on three road games in four nights, without a single opportunity to get the matchups you are looking for at home, is probably not wise.

It just seems odd, based on what we've seen around here for years.

Here are tonight's expected lineups, keeping in mind the Blackhawks did not skate Tuesday morning after their 4-3 overtime loss in Toronto on Monday. Some lineup changes could probably be anticipated for them playing a second game in two nights. Corey Crawford gets the start in his hometown.

CANADIENS

Forwards

Max Pacioretty – Jonathan Drouin – Brendan Gallagher

Charles Hudon – Tomas Plekanec – Artturi Lehkonen

Alex Galchenyuk – Phillip Danault – Andrew Shaw

Paul Byron – Torrey Mitchell – Ales Hemesky

Defence

Victor Mete – Shea Weber

Karl Alzner – Jeff Petry

Jordie Benn – Brandon Davidson

Goal

Carey Price

Al Montoya

Out: Jacob De La Rose, Mark Streit, Joe Morrow, David Schlemko (hand)

BLACKHAWKS

Forwards

Brandon Saad – Jonathan Toews – Richard Panik

Ryan Hartman – Artem Anisimov – Patrick Kane

Patrick Sharp – Tanner Kero – Alex DeBrincat

Lance Bouma – Tommy Wingels – John Hayden

Defence

Duncan Keith – Brent Seabrook

Gustav Forsling – Jan Rutta

Michal Kempny – Connor Murphy

Goal

Corey Crawford

Anton Forsberg



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Out: Nick Schmaltz (upper body), Cody Franson, Jordan Oesterle

• A big night for Jonathan Drouin and Charles Hudon playing in the home opener, two Quebec kids realizing a dream. Drouin led the stretch after the morning skate, the importance of this night to him should be obvious because he's made it clear how badly he wanted to play here. For Hudon, this is the end of a long journey, and the beginning of another one as an NHL player. He has 15 family and friends coming down from Alma and the Lac St-Jean region to come watch, and he knows everyone in the area will be glued to their televisions. "It's a good nervous thing," he said. Hudon also enters the game as one of the Canadiens most effective forwards; through three games he's tied for third on the team with 11 shots on goal, one less than his linemate Artturi Lehkonen. "All we're missing is putting it between the two posts," he said.

• It's also a big night for Victor Mete, who has his parents, his sister, his girlfriend and a couple of cousins coming down for the game. He said he watched the Canadiens home opener last year and it was "way cool." But if you think he might be nervous, well, probably not. I mentioned a great photo we've run here a couple of times of him standing on the blue line with the London Knights with Mitch Marner next to him and they're having a laugh. This one:

Mete said he's seen the photo and likes it a lot. What makes it great is that he says it came prior to Game 1 of the 2016 OHL finals against Niagara. "I remember the moment," Mete said, still laughing about it. "He said something about the camera being there and it made me laugh." So yeah, nerves might not be an issue for this kid.

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1077597 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Golden Knights strike balance between respect, celebration in opener

Kristina Rutherford

LAS VEGAS — The Vegas Golden Knights had done everything right to honour and tribute the many people affected by the atrocious events that took place in this city just nine days ago, and then Deryk Engelland removed his right glove, took hold of a microphone, and he skated to centre ice.

Around the Golden Knights defenceman, 18,191 people stood in silence, some with tears in their eyes, some with tears rolling down their faces, others with their hands over their hearts.

The most important moment of Engelland's hockey career came next.

"Like all of you, I'm proud to call Las Vegas home," the 35-year-old said, with an even tone. Engelland knows this city better than any member of this team, having played a couple seasons for the ECHL's Las Vegas Wranglers more than a decade ago.

"I met my wife here, my kids are born here, and I know how special this city is," Engelland continued. "To all the brave first responders that have worked tirelessly ... we thank you."

The crowd at T-Mobile Arena erupted in cheers.

"To the families and friends of the victims, know that we'll do everything we can to help you and our city heal," Engelland said. "We are Vegas Strong."

It was powerful. It was perfect. And then it was game time, for the first time in history, as Sin City officially welcomed the NHL.

And as head coach Gerard Gallant put it: "Tonight was a perfect night," one that saw the Golden Knights get out to an early lead and earn a 5-2 victory over the visiting Arizona Coyotes.

For days, Golden Knights players have been saying they hoped to provide a happy distraction for a city still healing after being the site of the worst mass shooting in modern American history, when 58 lives were taken and some 500 others were injured due to a senseless act at a music festival.

And if you saw winger James Neal grinning on the bench, flashing those sparkly whites after scoring his second goal of the game in the first period, you'd know the team had achieved just that.

Because opening night really couldn't have gone any better for the NHL's 31st franchise, on the ice and off it.

On the ice, it took Vegas just 2:31 to get on the board. It took the Golden Knights just 6:15 to build up a 3-0 lead, and it was 4-0 when the first period was just a little more than half old.

"We couldn't have had a better start," Neal said. "I wasn't sure how we were gonna be off the opening draw. We jumped on 'em right away."

They did. And with the win, the Golden Knights made history, becoming the first expansion team in NHL history to get out to a 3-0 start. They're tied for first place in the NHL, as the team's Twitter account — the funniest in the league — will repeatedly point out.

Left-winger Tomas Nosek was the first in history to score in a regular-season game in this city, after he got a quick pass from Pierre-Edouard Bellemare and beat Coyotes goalie Antti Raanta five-hole, and made T-Mobile Arena go berserk. Soon after, Engelland made it 2-0 on a shot from just above the faceoff circle, for the 23rd goal of his NHL career.

Then the game-winning goal-scoring hero from Games 1 and 2 in franchise history got involved. Neal jumped on a puck that rebounded off a Coyotes shin pad, then turned and fired it past Raanta for his fourth of the year.

Vegas scored three goals on five shots, each celebrated heartily by the crowd here, each punctuated by a band banging on light-up drums and wearing light-up glasses while girls wearing a ton of glittery gold cheered in front of a castle replica on the second level of the arena. What else did you expect in Las Vegas?

Neal got his second goal of the night and the team's first-ever power-play goal to make it 4-0, which gave him five of the team's eight goals in franchise history to that point. Not bad for a guy who had major surgery on his right wrist in late July, who now has a plate and screws in there, who says "I was just surprised I was able to play" in the season opener.

Up 4-1 after the first period, the Golden Knights left the ice to a standing ovation.

It was one of many on the night. The team wanted to get this win for this healing city, but first the goal was to put on a respectful and dignified ceremony to honour the many people here affected by the tragedy. The NHL's newest franchise did so beautifully.

As is custom for all home openers, the Golden Knights introduced each of their players — but they were secondary. First came the heroes of Oct. 1: the police officers, paramedics, doctors, fire fighters, nurses, sergeants. And those first responders got bigger cheers than many of the players did, some of them wearing their nurse uniforms, or police uniforms. It was the first responder introduced, then "accompanied by No. 21, Cody Eakin."

And it was the first responders who stood on the black carpet along the blue line, with the players standing in behind. When the Coyotes skated onto the ice, they got some hearty boos that quickly turned to cheers once fans watched them skate in behind the Golden Knights, joining them behind the first responders on the Vegas blue line.



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Fans observed 58 seconds of silence, one for each of the lives lost, and all 58 names were displayed on the ice. As soon as those 58 seconds were up, a fan yelled "We are Vegas Strong!" and the crowd erupted. Later, during the national anthem, tears ran down some cheeks.

"It was so meaningful," said goalie Marc-Andre Fleury, who was once again exceptional, making 31 saves in the win.

It isn't easy to strike a perfect balance between respect for a tragedy and celebration for the start of something exciting, but the Golden Knights did. The team promised the opening-day festivities would be toned down in light of the tragedy, and if this was toned down, you have to wonder what it'll look like in full force. The day was plenty celebratory. Between the first and second periods, Cirque Du Soleil performed on the ice. Pre-game, you'd find six well-adorned Clydesdales pulling a Budweiser carriage — with a Dalmatian in tow. Because, why not?

It was a sight to see, the pre-game procession on the sparkly gold carpet, commissioner Gary Bettman posing for pictures with fans who actually weren't booing him, Blue Man Group guys taking selfies with fans and giving them Polaroids, centreman Jonathan Marchessault introducing himself to fans and asking "Do you know me?" (they didn't), Cirque performers walking all artsy, a band drumming in a parade of fans to open the doors of T-Mobile Arena, an Elvis impersonator wandering around. This is hockey in Vegas, after all. It was bound to be a little different.

In many ways, the way the Golden Knights approached this opening game mirrors the feeling in the city. If you walk around here, Las Vegas feels much like it did before that deadly shooting. It remains a friendly place where strangers smile and say "Hello" as they walk by. The Strip is still overrun by tourists snapping photos and grinning for selfies backed by the Bellagio or a picture of Cher, and take even a short walk along on Las Vegas Ave. and at least a couple people will attempt to sell you something.

There are also signs of grief, signs of what happened here on the first day of this month, like the 58 white wooden crosses to honour each of the victims by the world famous "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas Nevada" sign. At the Mandelay Bay Hotel, a board covers a broken window on the 32nd floor, where Stephen Paddock was staying on Oct. 1 when he fired those deadly shots.

You might order breakfast to go and see Vegas Strong written in black Sharpie on the container. There are signs of Vegas Strong everywhere — around the rink boards instead of advertisements, on the backs of Vegas players' jerseys during warmup, on players' helmets (both teams), hanging outside businesses, on the rally towels distributed at the game.

A hockey game has never felt like this, and it never will again. Not just because it was played in the wake of a massive tragedy. Not just because of the Cirque element, the Clydesdales, the Elvis impersonators, the fact there's a rollercoaster next to the rink, the fact fans walked up to the doors with beers in hand, that Carrot Top and his orange hair figured big in in-game entertainment.

Sin City, a place long known for entertainment, a place for the last 10 days also known for tragedy, is now also carving a reputation as a hockey town. Tuesday marked the first big step here at home.

"It went unbelievable," Gallant said. "The script went—it was perfect."

Engelland will remember a lot about tonight's game, the feeling of standing near the first-responders, the way the crowd reacted, how nervous he felt delivering that pre-game speech.

"It was the first time I've spoken in front of probably more than 20 guys at once," he said. "Honestly, I was just trying to block everything out and get through it."

Neal joked that he saw Engelland practicing the speech in front of the mirror, pre-game. "That's tough, grabbing the mic like that in front of that many people and focusing on a hockey game and what just happened,"

Neal said, grinning. "I don't know how he did it, it was impressive. He got us off to a good start."

Indeed it was a good start for this new franchise. It was historic. It was poignant. It was heartfelt. It was victorious.

The Golden Knights nailed it.

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1077598 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Karl Subban offers up the Subban plan for success

Canadian Press

TORONTO — Despite helping his three sons reach the pro ranks, Karl Subban is the first to admit he's no hockey expert.

Subban does know potential, however. And having spent more than 30 years as an educator, Subban has plenty of experience in unlocking it.

The 59-year-old Subban, whose five kids include sons P.K. (Nashville Predators), Malcolm (Las Vegas Golden Knights) and Jordan (AHL Utica Comets), offers up life lessons, family stories and words to live by in his new book "How We Did It."

Subban delivers his advice to parents and kids in easily digestible bites. "How We Did It" is a good read with plenty of substance.

He had no interest writing a hockey book. Instead he wanted "to tell a story that would be a difference-maker to whoever cared to listen to my message."

Hence the book's subtitle: "The Subban plan for success in hockey, school and life."

While the book details the childhood of his hockey-playing sons — and two oldest daughters — the gregarious Subban has his eye on the bigger picture.

In his role as a Toronto school principal, Subban says he would often ask students a simple question: "Anyone who wants to be better, raise your hand."

"Every hand shot up," he writes. "That should come as no surprise — every child wants to be better. The problem is too many don't believe they can be."

Subban calls it a crisis among our children — too many adrift, lacking the direction and support they need until they can find their own way.

He believes everyone is born with the gift of potential inside them. He calls it the GPS — Growing Potential System. It just needs someone to help develop that potential.

Sometimes plans don't work out, he writes. "But if you stay true to the spirit behind them, they can lead to something better."

Subban recalls how, at the age of 12, he moved with his family from Jamaica to Sudbury, Ont., where his father, who had arrived two months earlier, had found work as a diesel mechanic at a mine.

He started watching hockey on TV, following the Montreal Canadiens on the French channel. Ken Dryden became his hockey hero.

Basketball soon overtook hockey, however, and the sport took Subban — dreaming of the NBA — to Lakehead University.

"I learned a very important lesson too, that dreams and goals must be realistic. I wasn't going to make the NBA."



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Coaching during the summer — his pupils at the time included co-author Scott Colby — Subban realized he enjoyed working with kids. Having found his calling, he went to teachers' college after graduating from Lakehead.

"We all have a sleeping giant inside of us — it's another way to think of our potential," he writes. "We must find the thing that awakens it and brings it to life."

Hockey drove his boys — daughters Taz (who played basketball at York University) and Natasha are both teachers — and Subban and wife Maria were happy to help them.

It started at the local rink.

"Skating was something we did as a family. We didn't do it to raise NHLers," said Subban.

The Subban kids practised their sports. Being good at something at a young age builds self-confidence, Subban believes.

P.K. was not short on self-confidence or talent. As a five-year-old playing with six-year-olds, he scored 19 of his team's 21 goals. And he has always enjoyed a stage.

After switching from the elite Toronto Red Wings to the Mississauga Reps as a 10-year-old because of his father's disagreement with the coach, P.K. scored four goals and added an assist in a 5-1 upset win over his former team.

Still, Subban says he never confused the roles of dad and hockey dad. "I never forgot the most important one," he added.

Today P.K. is one of the NHL's elite defencemen, a showman off and on the ice.

Another kernel of advice Subban likes to use is "Be yourself because everyone else is taken."

"Guess what, there's only one P.K.," he said with a laugh.

"What you see on TV, what you see on the ice and off the ice, that's always been P.K.," Subban added. "He has not changed."

One of Subban's proudest moments was in 2015 when P.K., then playing for the Canadiens, announced a pledge to raise \$10 million over seven years for Montreal Children's Hospital.

"He scored many goals on the ice, many memorable goals. But that goal that he announced that day was one of the most important ones," said Subban.

"Sometimes it's the goals between your ears that are most important."

Subban says today's kids face more distractions and uncertainty than ever. Growing up, he says he knew he would find a job, have a family and buy a home.

Now the future can seem cloudy.

Subban recently came out of retirement to return as principal of Brookview Middle School in Toronto's Jane and Finch neighbourhood.

His current gig is short-term, but it's a chance to keep working at a school where he says he spent the most fulfilling years of his teaching career before being transferred elsewhere.

"I did not want to leave," he said of Brookview. "Because we are losing so many children. And maybe I can't save them all but Karl Subban's going to try."

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Sportsnet.ca / Burrows forged connection to Vancouver that Canucks aim to achieve

Iain MacIntyre

VANCOUVER — There is no one thing about Alex Burrows that fully explains the outpouring of love that cascaded down upon him Tuesday when the heart-and-soul winger returned to Rogers Arena with the Ottawa Senators after spending the last 12 years with the Vancouver Canucks.

But when the crowd of 17,273 stood simultaneously and started roaring for Burrows the moment the Canucks' tribute video to him began on the scoreboard, it was clear that fans felt a connection to the 36-year-old player who climbed to near the top of the National Hockey League from an East Coast League tryout.

There is an identity with Burrows, and it's not about biting or whining or saying things on the ice that he shouldn't have at a time when the only "lines" about trash-talking in hockey were painted on the playing surface.

Burrows gave everything he had to the Canucks. He never took for granted for even one day the NHL career he earned after nearly quitting hockey. And even when he departed in last spring's trade to the Senators, he was still thinking partly about the Canucks.

"Yeah, a little bit," Burrows admitted after the morning skate. "I think so. That was a little bit of my reasoning for sure (to accept a trade). I want these next generation (of Canucks players) — the young Bos, Hutton ... and Jake — to play well in a few years and have good prospects coming back and help them achieve a Stanley Cup in Vancouver. I'd be really happy for those guys and all the fans in B.C. and Vancouver."

Bo Horvat and Ben Hutton and Jake Virtanen are a long way from a Stanley Cup with the Canucks these days. But the Canucks, at least, are finally inching back in the right direction. And the elite prospect leveraged from Ottawa for Burrows, Swedish scorer Jonathan Dahlen, will help in a season or two.

What the Canucks are trying to do now is achieve what Burrows did: an identity, a re-connection to fans.

In this, too, they are making progress.

Through two games of a season in which they are almost universally picked to finish near the bottom of the NHL, the Canucks have beaten the Edmonton Oilers 3-2 and lost 3-2 in a shootout to the Senators.

Mark Stone scored the shootout winner for Ottawa, leaving the Canucks with only one point on Tuesday after Hutton's turnover led to Senator Ryan Dzingel's tying goal at 5:09 of the third period.

There have been a lot of Vancouver turnovers the first two games, something of a by-product of the more aggressive style new coach Travis Green has the Canucks playing.

The Canucks do not skate fast, but Green wants them to play fast hockey. He also wants them to be harder to play against, more numerous in attack and fully engaged at all times. These changes in ideology have been noticeable the first two games.

"I wouldn't call it risk-and-reward (hockey)," Canucks defenceman Erik Gudbranson said after the game. "I would say it's just playing proactively. With everything we try to create offensively, there's just as much work going back and taking care of your own end. If we're to have a good season this year, we're going to have to build from the back end. It's a lot of work the system we play. But we're working hard to get good at it and we're going to continue to get better."

On Day 1 of training camp, Green halted practice and berated his players for their lack of intensity and execution. They have been skating and practising hard since then. They're playing hard now.



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"That's always the case before every year — you talk about (identity)," captain Henrik Sedin said. "I think you see a little bit of that where we're trying to create a team where we're not going to be the biggest team or the fastest team, but we play fast and we're tenacious on the puck. Intensity is high. I think that's going to be our identity."

And the turnovers that helped the Senators amass 42 shots against Canucks goalie Jacob Markstrom?

"We're making some poor decisions with the puck," Sedin said. "That's on the players; it's not on the system."

Markstrom robbed Burrows after a ghastly turnover by Troy Stecher early in the game, and the former Canuck failed to score in the shootout. But Burrows' presence was still felt, and not only because of the fans' salute to him and the emotions it generated.

"The one thing that stood out is he did everything he could to stay on this team," Canuck Danny Sedin said of Burrows. "And when he moved up the ranks, he didn't change. He was the same guy. He worked hard in practice, he listened to the coaches. He would never cheat on drills or during games. He would always do the right things."

A blueprint to build an identity.

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Sportsnet.ca / Carolina Hurricanes attendance drops by more than 10,000 after one game

Mike Johnston

When the Carolina Hurricanes opened their 2017-18 campaign with an overtime victory against the Minnesota Wild on Saturday they did so in front of a sold-out crowd of 18,680 at PNC Arena.

On Tuesday, the Hurricanes' second home game of the season had a different feel. This time the team lost to the Columbus Blue Jackets in overtime and the announced attendance at PNC Arena was a sparse 7,892.

Tuesday night don't mind if I do!! #Canes20 #CBJvsCAR #Redvolution pic.twitter.com/S5wW1NDGI8

— Co-captainDumbledore (@marcellepulley) October 10, 2017

The Hurricanes are about to embark on a four-game road trip, so their next home game isn't until Oct. 24 when they host the Tampa Bay Lightning. There are plenty of tickets remaining for that contest, as the below Ticketmaster arena map indicates.

The blue sections mean there are tickets available. The grey sections are sold out. Out of the 30 lower-bowl sections, 22 of them are listed as having more than 100 tickets available.

Poor attendance at Hurricanes games is not a new trend.

Back in July, the website 247WallSt.com reported the Hurricanes had a 32.3 per cent drop in attendance over the past 10 years, which is the largest drop of any NHL franchise.

The team's average attendance during that time was 11,776 — that number does not take into consideration the two games this season. The Hurricanes have not qualified for the playoffs since 2009, which has clearly had an impact on attendance figures.

'06 Hurricanes: Stanley Cup Champs and loudest fan base in the League

'17 Hurricanes: Mediocrity and attendance barely breaking AHL figures — MAGIC NUMBER (9) (@ErikZarins) October 11, 2017

In addition to the general blasé atmosphere at PNC Arena, Tuesday's game was largely forgettable until the third period and overtime.

Also, this fan was sold a bad salad. Rough night in Raleigh.

@NHLCanes Got this salad at 2nd level east lounge. The "grilled chicken" is frozen. Frozen. @PNCArena pic.twitter.com/QNfZxUNHBQ

— joy (@joyless_heathen) October 11, 2017

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Sportsnet.ca / Jonathan Drouin, Canadiens anxious to break through offensively

Eric Engels

MONTREAL — It's a moment Jonathan Drouin will never forget.

On Tuesday, before the Montreal Canadiens dropped their third consecutive game — this one by a score of 3-1 to the Chicago Blackhawks — Drouin finally got to experience something he'd waited the better part of his life for: Bell Centre public address announcer Michel Lacroix belting out his name in the player introductions at the team's home opener.

The crowd roared, Lacroix paused for a couple more beats than he did with any other player, and the ovation got louder and louder for the kid from a town that's just 70 kilometres north of Montreal.

Some dude named Jonathan Drouin soaking in that Bell Centre love... pic.twitter.com/ozpp211Se0

— Eric Engels (@EricEngels) October 10, 2017

"It was awesome," Drouin said after the game.

A special moment, no doubt, played out in front of family and friends who had waited just as long as Drouin had to experience it.

But as the 22-year-old from St. Agathe, Que., also acknowledged on Tuesday, nothing would've been more special than to have heard Lacroix's booming voice call his name for a goal as part of a Canadiens win. It hasn't happened since Drouin was traded to Montreal this past summer. His one goal in the pre-season came in Quebec City, and his shootout winner in the Canadiens' season opener came in Buffalo.

It hasn't been for lack of trying.

Drouin did everything he could to reverse his fortunes on Tuesday. He was a firefly in the Blackhawks zone, weaving in and out of traffic, charging the net with authority, and dangling around defenders to uncork a team-leading six shots at Hawks goalie Corey Crawford.

Ultimately he came up empty.

In a lot of ways, his night was a microcosm of what we've seen from the Canadiens in the early going of this season.

They are now 1-3-0, have averaged close to 40 shots per game and outshot and out-chanced their opponents in all of them, and have only four goals to show for their efforts.

It looked like the story was going to shift early on in the first period, when Montreal got a goal from Tomas Plekanec 1:15 into the game. He had stolen the puck and blindly fired it past an unsuspecting Crawford from



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above the right faceoff circle. It was the kind of bounce the Canadiens had been hoping for and they followed it up with a barrage that gave them a 14-2 lead in shots before the game was barely 10 minutes old.

Canadiens coach Claude Julien had said in the morning that he wanted to see more players going to the net, doing the greasy work in the trenches that leads to goals being scored in the NHL. They obliged through the first 17 minutes of the period.

And then Blackhawks rookie Alex DeBrincat found the back of Carey Price's net with a one-timer from 45 feet out exactly 19 seconds before teammate Brandon Saad scored his fifth of the season on a perfect three-way passing play with Jonathan Toews and Richard Panik.

The Canadiens finished the first period with 16 shots and trailed by a goal. They finished the game with 42 and were left once again trying to explain the unexplainable.

"Luck is something, I think, on the outside that can be said," said Julien. "I don't think you can use that as an excuse. There's no doubt that there's a couple of times where you've seen like, 'Wow, we didn't get a break here or there.' But you can't rely on that; you gotta fight through it. That's what I want us to do. I want us to fight through."

"Using excuses, we don't want excuses. We want solutions. That's how you become a hard team and a mentally strong team as well because you're going to face, at times during the year ... we've gotta be able to face those kinds of adversity the right way."

"We could use a little bit of puck luck, no doubt. But there's more we can do, I think, as far as maybe getting some confidence."

It's fairly difficult to pinpoint what exactly the Canadiens should do about this situation. Even if it's consensus they aren't going to the net enough or obstructing the view of the opposing goaltender enough or exercising the patience to make better plays than the ones they are choosing, they're getting enough quality chances to score more than one goal per game.

They've had 14 power plays — including five in Tuesday's game — and come up empty. They've had zero issues breaking the zone and setting themselves up, zero issues getting the puck to the net, and they have zero to show for it.

"We were dominating, cycling the puck, getting shots from D and lines," said Drouin. "As a team and as a player, too, when the puck's not going in maybe you tighten the stick or you think a little bit too much. But I think tonight that was not the case. Hopefully moving forward it's not the case, either. I think we're playing pretty well and the puck's not going in."

The Canadiens will have to hope the dam bursts on Saturday against the Toronto Maple Leafs, who have started off this year's campaign as the most offensively dominant team in the NHL. It'll be a bonus for Drouin if he ends up being at the helm of that breakout.

At least two people believe strongly in that possibility.

"I know I'll break through soon," said Drouin. "I know we will. We have to."

Lacroix agrees.

"I have no doubt I'll be calling his name out for a goal in the near future," he said as he left the Bell Centre.

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Sportsnet.ca / Why the 2017-18 Jets have to prove they're on track for success

Mark Spector

The Winnipeg Jets are one of the top "draft and develop" teams in the entire National Hockey League, those magazines full of hockey experts will tell you.

They have such a crop of young talent, we have heard for some time, that the Jets are poised for a long and successful stay atop the NHL standings. And when you watch 24-year-old Mark Scheifele, Nikolaj Ehlers (21), Jacob Trouba (23) and Patrik Laine (19) walk out of Rogers Place in Edmonton after a dominant, resounding 5-2 victory, you can begin to see peoples' point here.

The Jets are big, fast, good and young — even if they haven't accomplished a damned thing.

OK. Let's take a step back.

I am quite pleased for a solid, Canadian hockey market like Winnipeg, to accept as reality the bright future in Manitoba. We've always said, there are more hockey fans in Winnipeg (and Quebec City) than in any one of 15 American markets. Less people, yes, but more hockey fans.

I have personally touted the Jets inevitable ascent on many occasions, and believe after what the market has been through, hockey success in Winnipeg should be celebrated. With one caveat:

When does it start?

"You can't make it happen in one night, and you can't wait until the last month to make it happen," Trouba was saying before the Edmonton game, his team still at 0-2 and searching for its identity. "We know (the Jets overall game) hasn't been good, and we know it has to improve. At the same time, you've got to stay with what you're doing, with everyone on the same page. You can't go off on your own — that's not how it's going to get solved."

"It's not something where you flip a switch. It takes some time."

The Jets found "it" later that night and spanked the Oilers good, with Ehlers notching a hat trick in a 5-2 game that left both teams at 1-2 on the young season. Trouba was outstanding, it must be said.

Afterwards, I wrote a piece on the Oilers that asked if they were complacent. If last spring was a fluke, or if the Oilers were willing to put in the work necessary to return to their status as a Cup contender.

But even if the former is true, at least Edmonton finally got there. Yes, their rebuild was a series of comedic decisions, but the Oilers made the playoffs, won a round and made it to Game 7 of Round 2.

Tape II Tape

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Winnipeg, now in its seventh season since coming over from Atlanta, hasn't accomplished a thing in Manitoba let alone won a playoff game, swept by Anaheim in its only playoff appearance three seasons ago. General manager Kevin Cheveldayoff and head coach Paul Maurice were both handed extensions this summer, a move that says Jets ownership can see around the corner to all the success that awaits.

Make the playoffs, contend in the Central, and that owner will look brilliant. But like picking last decade's San Jose Sharks to win the Stanley Cup, predicting the Taylor Hall rebuild to finally turn the corner in Edmonton, or waiting for stability in the ownership suites of Florida and Arizona, we'll leave that prediction to someone else.

The Jets looked fantastic Monday. Big, strong, fast and young, with goaltending to boot.



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It was one game in a row.

"All the pieces," acknowledged Maurice post-game. "We had real good goaltending, we had a number of our defencemen — difficult to single them out because I thought they were all pretty good. Up front, Nik scores the three but that was the most dominant Scheifele and Wheeler have been, going both ways."

My eyes tell me this Jets project has matured to the point where it can surpass a St. Louis or Nashville in the Central Division this season. Then my brain asks, "Which goalie is going to allow that to happen? Connor Hellebuyck? Or Steve Mason?"

My eyes say, after watching Hellebuyck in Edmonton, "Well, this kid is only 24. He's only entering his prime as a goalie."

And my brain says, "Yeah, and the Jets have been entering their prime as a team for how many years now?"

What we saw in Edmonton was a microcosm of Jets hockey: They played a fabulous game — to get to 1-2 on the season.

"It was a good sign, when your team responds like this and everybody does their job," said Wheeler, a calming, veteran voice in the Jets' room. "We do still have a young team and guys have to build confidence in themselves and respect the fact that the opposition has good players and bad things are going to happen."

"But all we can do is get back to our game and have confidence that we can prevail in the end."

Just win, baby. Just win.

The time has arrived for results in Winnipeg.

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Sportsnet.ca / Why Leafs' Patrick Marleau sticks by dated two-piece stick

Chris Johnston

TORONTO — In the eyes of Patrick Marleau's younger teammates, it is akin to stepping on the first tee with a persimmon driver.

The Toronto Maple Leafs greybeard brings a sense of history to his craft by using a two-piece composite stick that is on the verge of extinction in NHL dressing rooms. His old-school leanings have been generating discussion on Twitter — "He must love playing with the heat gun," former NHLer Patrick O'Sullivan wrote Monday — and among Marleau's new colleagues.

"Yeah, we were asking him the other day actually why he still uses a two piece," linemate Nazem Kadri said after Tuesday's practice. "I think he's got to be probably one of a handful of guys that does that, maybe even two or three of them."

"He just told me he couldn't wrap his head around using the all one-piece composite."

It is not for lack of trying.

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The 38-year-old has switched over to the lighter model favoured by virtually the entire league on numerous occasions — going 30 straight games during one stretch with the San Jose Sharks — but always finds his way back to old reliable eventually.

It all comes down to the ability to stickhandle in tight spaces for the speedy winger.

"I can shoot better with a one piece," said Marleau. "It's just for me, probably because I've used (a two piece) for so long, it's the handling of the puck. Getting it into a spot to shoot just feels a little off for me when I go to a one piece."

"It's all about repetitions. I could probably make the change but I just haven't."

Marleau sits third among active NHL players at 510 goals after potting two in his Leafs debut at Winnipeg last week. So far he's made the transition to a new organization look pretty smooth after nearly two decades in California — generating nine shots on goal in the three season-opening victories.

Not only has he spent extra time after practice working with the likes of Mitch Marner and Connor Brown, but Marleau's tried to educate a few others on the tools of his trade. Former Sharks teammate Joe Thornton is believed to be the only other NHLer currently using a two-piece stick.

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"These guys think (it's so different)," said Marleau. "There's not much difference between a one-piece and two-piece (stick). The only thing is I put it together here, they have theirs put together at the factory."

His typical game-day routine includes pulling out the blow torch to attach a blade to the shaft of his Warrior-branded sticks. He'll usually prepare one or two at a time. As a result, the No. 12 stick rack is positively empty compared to those beside it inside the team's dressing room — many of them crammed full with 20 sticks or more.

"I like making my own," said Marleau. "It gives me something to do."

It's been part of the routine of a life spent in hockey.

Incredibly, Marleau hasn't missed a game since the 2010 playoffs and now sits just four regular-season games shy of 1,500 for his career. He first cracked the Sharks lineup as an 18-year-old and now has four sons of his own — the oldest of which, 11-year-old Landon, joined some of the Leafs for a pre-practice skate last weekend.

Still, time hasn't robbed him of his effective shot. He scored 27 goals last season and has displayed a nice touch around the net during his short time in Toronto.

More from Sportsnet

Auston Matthews delivers in big way for Leafs yet again

"Just the mechanics of his shot is so quick," said Kadri. "He just gets it off. His release is probably one of the best I'd say that I've seen. It's not necessarily about the power of the shot, it's how quick he gets it off and how accurate he is."

The comfort level with his stick certainly helps. While many of the Leafs struggled to remember if they even had a two-piece composite during their minor-hockey days, at least one of the young sharpshooters understands why Marleau has an affinity for the dated technology.

"I used one until I was 14, actually — I loved it," said Auston Matthews. "He's got it all dialed in. He shoots it just fine."



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Still, don't be surprised if Marleau eventually bends to the newer trend. He is just beginning a three-year contract with the Leafs and hasn't ruled trying to play another season beyond the end of that.

He concedes that it may require him to adapt and adjust in the months and years ahead.

"Possibly, you never know," said Marleau. "I always try it in the summer and somehow I always find my way back to the two piece."

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TSN.CA / Devils wary of 'dangerous' goal scorer Matthews

By Mark Masters

* Auston Matthews had a game-high six shots on Monday against Chicago, including a beautiful strike to end it in overtime. "It felt good," he said. "I mean, that's kind of where I wanted to put it. I found a little spot and I was able to hit it."

While the 20-year-old was understated, his teammates were still buzzing about the blast.

"Yeah, there's not many players, who can do that with that precision and the quickness he got it off too," said Jake Gardiner, who served as the decoy on the two-on-one rush. "Didn't look like he had any spot to shoot at, but, of course, he found the back of the net."

In the dressing room after the game, Frederik Andersen joked that the puck was still stuck in the top of the net.

"You can see how he stickhandles right before and has a really short release," Andersen noted. "That's what makes it tough to pick up."

The Maple Leafs made a big early-season statement on Monday coming from behind to beat the Blackhawks. Toronto dominated after the first period with the Auston Matthews line getting the better of the Patrick Kane line. But it was the way Matthews punctuated the victory that has the hockey world buzzing.

After winning a matinee in Buffalo and travelling to Toronto, the Devils were keeping a close eye on the Leafs ahead of their Wednesday tilt at the Air Canada Centre.

"He can release it from anywhere," said Taylor Hall when asked about Matthews. "He gets full wood on every one of his shots no matter where it comes off his stick. We were watching the game live on TV and his release is so quick and so hard to read coming off his stick."

While the quick release is notable, Devils goalie Cory Schneider is impressed by the other ways Matthews finds the back of the net.

"What I saw from him last year was mostly in and around the net," Schneider recalled. "It was greasier goals, you know, poking pucks in, getting rebounds, jamming away. Obviously, you know about his release. Again, I haven't seen it too many times yet, but he can score in a variety of different ways and I think that's what makes him a dangerous goal scorer. He's not just reliant on his shot."

Matthews scored three goals in three games against New Jersey last season.

* Hall, a former first overall pick, was asked about the biggest adjustment from his rookie season to his sophomore campaign.

"Just playing against harder matchups, being able to digest the first and second line matchups, playing against the top D every night," he said.

"That's something that, as your career goes on, you have to get used to and you almost embrace after a while. Auston's such a good player and he's so big and strong that that's not really going to be a factor for him, I don't think."

Matthews was matched against the Patrick Kane line on Monday and saw a lot of Duncan Keith and Brent Seabrook. And yet Toronto outshot Chicago 20-3 at even-strength when Matthews was on the ice.

Taylor Hall explains the biggest difference going from his first to his second season in the NHL and says Auston Matthews won't have any issues adjusting in his sophomore season.

* Mike Babcock was asked about the strong possession numbers posted by the Matthews line on Monday.

"What's that mean?" the Leafs head coach asked with a grin. After a brief explanation by the reporter, Babcock smiled. "So, I actually knew what that meant, but still thought I'd ask. The beauty about that word, 'analytics,' you think about how many more people are working in hockey. We don't know if any of it's true, but we know they're working in hockey so good for them. What a thing."

The Leafs are one of many teams to invest in analytics, creating a Hockey Research and Development Department in 2014.

Babcock on analytics: "We don't know if any of its true"

After being asked a question about offensive possession, Mike Babcock said that analytics might not be true but it's great because so many more people are working in hockey because of it.

* While the Leafs are living up to high expectations so far, the undefeated Devils have surpassed modest expectations early in the season, outscoring the Avalanche and Sabres 10-3.

"Tomorrow could be a trap game," Babcock noted. "You think New Jersey hasn't been as good, but, I don't know if you've been watching, they're flying. Their forwards have great speed. They're playing a tight game. They're doing a good job in the D zone and neutral zone."

* Defenceman Connor Carrick practised on Tuesday, but will remain out against New Jersey with an upper-body injury.

Dominic Moore is expected to draw back in as the fourth-line centre on Wednesday.

Leafs Ice Chips: After statement win, Babcock warns Leafs about trap game

The Leafs feel Monday night's win against the Blackhawks was a big confidence booster and a statement game. But Mike Babcock warned his team that Wednesday night's game against the Devils could be a trap game since they've gotten off to a surprisingly good start.

* Lines at Leafs practice Tuesday at the MasterCard Centre:

Forwards

Hyman-Matthews-Nylander

Marleau-Kadri-Komarov

van Riemsdyk-Bozak-Marner

Martin-Moore/Fehr-Brown

Leivo

Defencemen

Rielly-Hainsey

Gardiner-Zaitsev

Borgman-Rosen

Polak-Carrick



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Goaltenders

Andersen

McElhinney

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TSN.CA / Strong start builds Leafs' confidence

By Kristen Shilton

TORONTO – Over the first three games of their season, the Maple Leafs have earned the right to feel confident.

Toronto owns a perfect record, even if their play hasn't been pristine. They've blown a four-goal lead, faced multi-goal deficits and hurt themselves by taking too many penalties. But the Leafs have also scored more goals than any team in the league (19) and are tied for most points (six).

It's a fine line between self-assured and cocky, especially with a core as young as Toronto's, but the Leafs plan to stay on the right side of it.

"I think it's good to have a little bit of swagger and confidence as a group," said winger Matt Martin after practice on Tuesday. "As long as you're working hard, the belief and confidence should be there. The first period [against Chicago] was kind of a wake-up call; it was more like a real game. They took it to us in the first period, but we were able to bounce back. That gives us something to build off of."

Perfect shot caps perfect night for Matthews line

The Maple Leafs made a big early-season statement on Monday coming from behind to beat the Blackhawks. Toronto dominated after the first period with the Auston Matthews line getting the better of the Patrick Kane line. But it was the way Matthews punctuated the victory that has the hockey world buzzing.

Toronto fell into its first deficit of the season against the Blackhawks Monday night, but recovered from a pair of two-goal holes to eventually win in overtime. Chicago was the team most closely keeping pace with Toronto in goal scoring (each side had a league-high 15 markers heading into the game) while also boasting the highest goal-differential in the league (plus-13).

Defeating the Blackhawks was a point of pride for the Leafs, and another sign of how far they've come since last season. It wasn't until Nov. 1 of last year that Toronto earned their third win, and no Leafs team has started 3-0 or better since 2010-11.

"At every level I've played at, there is an adjustment period, and it takes a year or so to get used to the level and become more confident and patient," said sophomore Zach Hyman. "You just settle down a little more and that confidence lets you make more plays and those little things end up making a difference."

Hyman's line with Auston Matthews and William Nylander has had a dazzling start to the season, including a dominating performance against Patrick Kane, Artem Anisimov and Ryan Hartman Monday night. Their possession stats, all in excess of 76 per cent, were only part of what made them great. The chemistry developed over 88 games last season has been prevalent during this season's first week. The trio has already combined for 10 points.

"[Matthews' line] did a good job [Monday]. They had the puck, they played well without it so they got it back fast," said head coach Mike

Babcock. "They all can get up and down the rink in a hurry, so it makes it hard on the opposition."

The Matthews line has only been one piece of the offensive puzzle for the Leafs, who have scoring throughout the lineup. Over three games, Eric Fehr is the only Leafs skater without a point, and the depth of talent has given Babcock freedom to rotate players in

Leafs Ice Chips: After statement win, Babcock warns Leafs about trap game

The Leafs feel Monday night's win against the Blackhawks was a big confidence booster and a statement game. But Mike Babcock warned his team that Wednesday night's game against the Devils could be a trap game since they've gotten off to a surprisingly good start

and out.

Fehr played Monday, but Dominic Moore will replace him Wednesday against the New Jersey Devils at centre on the fourth line. Rookies Andreas Borgman and Calle Rosen will again skate as the Leafs' third defence pairing while Connor Carrick sits with an upper-body injury.

"You have to build that chemistry with each other on a team," Martin said. "You see it with guys like Matthews and Nylander and Hyman and how well they see each other on the ice. When guys know where each other are because they've been together for a year, they don't have to think too much about where everyone is and just use each other."

Is Matthews destined to be the greatest Leaf of all time?

Leafs Lunch host Andi Petrillo and co-hosts Greg Gilbert & Mark Roe discuss Steve Simmons statements that Auston Matthews is destined to become the best player in the history of the Maple Leafs.

By all accounts, last season's playoff push and hanging tough with the Washington Capitals for six games in the first round of the Eastern Conference playoffs was a game-changer for the Leafs.

They went into the off-season knowing they would return to higher expectations – internally and externally – than ever before. What could have been overwhelming has, so far, been invigorating.

"I think the more confident you are, the better you are," said Tyler Bozak. "When you're confident is when you're playing your best. If you're confident as a group, you play the best as a group, so we're going to try to be as confident as we can throughout the whole season."

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TSN.CA / Devils wary of 'dangerous' goal scorer Matthews

By Mark Masters

* Auston Matthews had a game-high six shots on Monday against Chicago, including a beautiful strike to end it in overtime. "It felt good," he said. "I mean, that's kind of where I wanted to put it. I found a little spot and I was able to hit it."

While the 20-year-old was understated, his teammates were still buzzing about the blast.

"Yeah, there's not many players, who can do that with that precision and the quickness he got it off too," said Jake Gardiner, who served as the decoy on the two-on-one rush. "Didn't look like he had any spot to shoot at, but, of course, he found the back of the net."



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In the dressing room after the game, Frederik Andersen joked that the puck was still stuck in the top of the net.

"You can see how he stickhandles right before and has a really short release," Andersen noted. "That's what makes it tough to pick up."

Perfect shot caps perfect night for Matthews line

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After winning a matinee in Buffalo and travelling to Toronto, the Devils were keeping a close eye on the Leafs ahead of their Wednesday tilt at the Air Canada Centre.

"He can release it from anywhere," said Taylor Hall when asked about Matthews. "He gets full wood on every one of his shots no matter where it comes off his stick. We were watching the game live on TV and his release is so quick and so hard to read coming off his stick."

While the quick release is notable, Devils goalie Cory Schneider is impressed by the other ways Matthews finds the back of the net.

"What I saw from him last year was mostly in and around the net," Schneider recalled. "It was greasier goals, you know, poking pucks in, getting rebounds, jamming away. Obviously, you know about his release. Again, I haven't seen it too many times yet, but he can score in a variety of different ways and I think that's what makes him a dangerous goal scorer. He's not just reliant on his shot."

Matthews scored three goals in three games against New Jersey last season.

* Hall, a former first overall pick, was asked about the biggest adjustment from his rookie season to his sophomore campaign.

"Just playing against harder matchups, being able to digest the first and second line matchups, playing against the top D every night," he said. "That's something that, as your career goes on, you have to get used to and you almost embrace after a while. Auston's such a good player and he's so big and strong that that's not really going to be a factor for him, I don't think."

Matthews was matched against the Patrick Kane line on Monday and saw a lot of Duncan Keith and Brent Seabrook. And yet Toronto outshot Chicago 20-3 at even-strength when Matthews was on the ice.

Hall explains why Matthews won't falter in sophomore season

Taylor Hall explains the biggest difference going from his first to his second season in the NHL and says Auston Matthews won't have any issues adjusting in his sophomore season.

* Mike Babcock was asked about the strong possession numbers posted by the Matthews line on Monday.

"What's that mean?" the Leafs head coach asked with a grin. After a brief explanation by the reporter, Babcock smiled. "So, I actually knew what that meant, but still thought I'd ask. The beauty about that word, 'analytics,' you think about how many more people are working in hockey. We don't know if any of it's true, but we know they're working in hockey so good for them. What a thing."

The Leafs are one of many teams to invest in analytics, creating a Hockey Research and Development Department in 2014.

Babcock on analytics: "We don't know if any of its true"

After being asked a question about offensive possession, Mike Babcock said that analytics might not be true but it's great because so many more people are working in hockey because of it.

* While the Leafs are living up to high expectations so far, the undefeated Devils have surpassed modest expectations early in the season, outscoring the Avalanche and Sabres 10-3.

"Tomorrow could be a trap game," Babcock noted. "You think New Jersey hasn't been as good, but, I don't know if you've been watching, they're flying. Their forwards have great speed. They're playing a tight game. They're doing a good job in the D zone and neutral zone."

* Defenceman Connor Carrick practised on Tuesday, but will remain out against New Jersey with an upper-body injury.

Dominic Moore is expected to draw back in as the fourth-line centre on Wednesday.

Leafs Ice Chips: After statement win, Babcock warns Leafs about trap game

The Leafs feel Monday night's win against the Blackhawks was a big confidence booster and a statement game. But Mike Babcock warned his team that Wednesday night's game against the Devils could be a trap game since they've gotten off to a surprisingly good start.

* Lines at Leafs practice Tuesday at the MasterCard Centre:

Forwards

Hyman-Matthews-Nylander

Marleau-Kadri-Komarov

van Riemsdyk-Bozak-Marner

Martin-Moore/Fehr-Brown

Leivo

Defencemen

Rielly-Hainsey

Gardiner-Zaitsev

Borgman-Rosen

Polak-Carrick

Goaltenders

Andersen

McElhinney

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TSN.CA / Golden Knights hope home opener helps Vegas heal

By Frank Seravalli

For the past 18 months, the Golden Knights planned for Tuesday night to be the most unique party Las Vegas has ever seen.

It was supposed to celebrate the arrival of hockey and professional sports in Sin City, with Cirque du Soleil and a Golden Knight pulling a sword out of a stone at centre ice.

That party has been put on hold. The Golden Knights' inaugural home game against the Arizona Coyotes at T-Mobile Arena Tuesday night will instead seek to unify a community reeling in the wake of an unspeakable tragedy.



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As Golden Knights GM George McPhee said, it will be a chance “to grieve, heal and persevere.”

“It has been, obviously, for this country and for this city an incredibly emotional experience and a devastating experience for a lot of people,” McPhee told reporters. “We are going to try to have the ceremony that provides the respect and dignity to everyone involved that it deserves.”

On this night, hockey will take a back seat, even as the Golden Knights try to become the first NHL expansion team ever to win its first three games. So, too, will the big business of hockey.

The Golden Knights wiped their dasher boards free of advertisements for Tuesday’s opener, opting instead to broadcast the message of #VegasStrong.

There won’t be any advertisements on the boards tonight. Instead, our boards will reflect who we are. #VegasStrong
pic.twitter.com/29pL7wmMwJ

— Vegas Golden Knights (@GoldenKnights) October 10, 2017

“It’s not about us,” McPhee said. “It’s about remembering the victims and supporting the families and recognizing the first responders and their work.”

These Golden Knights have barely been together a month in their new adopted home, but they recognize the opportunity to provide solace and to restore some sense of normalcy to Las Vegas just a few blocks away from where the deadliest mass shooting in United States history occurred nine days earlier.

“We can give a little bit of positivity to the whole city,” Golden Knights forward Pierre-Edouard Bellemare told reporters.

It will be an introduction to a city no NHL team has experienced.

“I think it’s going to be an unbelievable spectacle, a show of support for our people and our community,” defenceman Nate Schmidt said.

Players will still walk a gold carpet to enter T-Mobile Arena, fans will still march from a nearby casino and Quebec’s famed Cirque du Soleil will still perform during the first intermission. A bigger celebration is planned for Friday night’s home game against Detroit.

But this night, which will begin with 14 first responders singing the first few words of the Star Spangled Banner before inviting all 17,500 to join as one voice, will leave few dry eyes in the building.

This is about so much more than a hockey team arriving in Las Vegas, as the marquee outside the arena reminds: “When Things Get Dark, Vegas Shines.”

“It’s going to be tough. It’s going to be real hard for a lot of people,” head coach Gerard Gallant said. “We’re a tough group. We’re going to work hard and do the best we can, because we know there will be a lot of people watching.”

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TSN.CA / The numbers behind a freewheeling first week of the NHL season

By Travis Yost

There’s no doubt Mike Babcock had the quote of the weekend. After a wild 8-5 win against the Rangers, Babcock remarked: “It’s kind of fun, eh? But it’s dumb.”

Never has a quote captured the spirit of the modern era of hockey. Coaches are militant about maintaining perfect structure and play from the defensive zone out, with net protection the most critical of focus areas. Among other things (like the improvement of goaltending, generally, around the league), this “defence wins championships” style of coaching has permeated through the league.

It’s hard to blame coaches for adapting to the changes. Teams have generally realized that in an era where there is such a premium on scoring, sucking the air out of games – especially as teams look to preserve leads – can be a winning strategy. What that’s usually meant for the NHL is low-scoring affair after low-scoring affair.

Low-scoring doesn’t always mean not entertaining, but there’s some relationship. Enough that the league has at least recognized they need to think about ways to move the goal-scoring needle in the right direction, though many of those ideas have either been killed or have taken excruciatingly long to implement.

Back to Babcock’s quote for a moment: He was obviously referencing his team’s free-wheeling play against both Winnipeg and New York, but the opened-up play wasn’t unique to the Leafs organization. Across most of the NHL, it seemed like there was incredible end-to-end action. Although it didn’t mean large goal numbers in every game, the general theme was a lot of scoring chances and a bunch of oohs and aahs from crowds in attendance.

Anecdotally, it felt that way. But the data through the NHL’s first week supports this, too. Keep in mind that in the modern era, performance numbers have rarely moved in any meaningful direction. Teams have always generated about 55 shots and 2.3 goals per-60 minutes of 5-on-5 play. Goalies have stopped about 92.1 per cent of shots. Year after year, it’s generally the same thing.

We’re only a couple of dozen games into the 2017-18 season, but play sure seems to have opened up. I’m rather skeptical that this continues – we have almost a decade of perfectly flat offensive performance numbers – but it’s a notable deviation.

Embedded Image

How do you read this? It’s pretty simple. Through the first five days of the NHL season, teams generated five more shots per-60 minutes, which is an 8-per-cent increase over what we are used to. But these shots were also coming much more frequently from prime scoring areas. Expected goals, which take into consideration both shot volume and the likelihood or probability of any individual shot finding the back of the net, were up nearly 20 per cent. These are remarkable deviations. Just in case you’re curious, the same conclusion is reached if we compare the first 60 games of this year versus the first 60 games of any other year. Even just looking at this October versus previous Octobers, the numbers are definitively up.

Toronto was a huge driver of this change, but again, they weren’t the only ones. Edmonton, Carolina, Florida, and Chicago all saw monstrous jumps in their offensive production numbers. Even the teams who didn’t play particularly well saw more offence being generated in their first few games – it was just more likely that those teams were also bleeding chances and goals against in their own zone.

The one interesting note here is that actual goal scoring didn’t move much, at least at even strength. Based on what we know about shot volume and quality, it’s reasonable to assume that goaltenders actually had a fantastic opening week. Any time you see such a substantial divide in expected versus actual goals, that’s generally going to be the case.

Even-strength hockey wasn’t the only piece of the game that saw a dramatic change, though. The whistle-happy officiating from the preseason didn’t completely carry over, but teams in the opening games saw a higher rate of power-play opportunities and a higher conversion rate. Through the same timeframe, teams are averaging about 4.3 power plays per game – about one power play more than the historical average



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of 3.3. If even a piece of that carried through the remainder of the season, it would be a remarkable change.

Again, I'm sort of skeptical that any of this is a definitive trend just yet – it's super early in the season and October tends to lend itself well to a looser style of play that tends to die as the season wears on. But, if you are a fan of up-tempo hockey with a bunch of scoring opportunities, the first week of action was a blessing from the hockey gods. Teams let their playmakers make plays, and the end result was highly entertaining hockey across North America.

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USA TODAY / Longtime Las Vegas resident Deryk Engelland delivers in Golden Knights' home opener

Kevin Allen, USA TODAY Sports Published 3:40 a.m. ET Oct. 11, 2017

LAS VEGAS — Vegas Golden Knights defenseman Deryk Engelland says before Tuesday night the largest group he ever spoke in front of “was the 20 guys in the dressing room.”

He was understandably nervous to have a microphone in his hands in front of 18,191 fans before what Vegas coach Gerard Gallant called “the most important game we will ever play.”

Engelland responded by making a memorable speech and then followed it up by scoring an early first-period goal to help lead Vegas to a 5-2 win against the Arizona Coyotes in the first regular-season home game for the Golden Knights.

“I thought his speech was unbelievable — he made a great speech out there on the ice and then for us to come out and play the way we did for the first seven or eight minutes was incredible,” Gallant said. “It was the perfect script for us.”

Engelland's speech came at the end of an emotional pregame ceremony that honored the memories of the 58 people killed in last week's mass shooting on the Las Vegas Strip. The Golden Knights also saluted the first responders who helped save many that night.

A 14-year resident of Las Vegas, Engelland said he met his wife in the city and his children were born there. He said he could relate to the fans because he was proud to be from Las Vegas.

He then thanked all of the first responders for the work they do.

“Vegas Strong,” he said in closing.

Deryk Engelland had a special message for his neighbors – the people of Las Vegas – before the @GoldenKnights opener.
#VegasStrongpic.twitter.com/pGGeg5gCyc

— NHL (@NHL) October 11, 2017

Engelland's speech and the 58-second moment of silence for all of the victims supplied some of the most poignant moments of the ceremony.

“From Deryk, it came right from the heart,” teammate James Neal said. “He has been here a long time, and it really hits home for him. He's a great teammate. There's no better guy to talk in front of a crowd. I think everyone appreciated it.”

It seemed more than fitting, like a Hollywood twist, when Engelland was one of two players to score to give the Golden Knights a 2-0 lead 4:18 into the game.

Engelland has only scored 23 goals in 472 NHL games.

Las Vegas resident Deryk Engelland won't ever forget this one.
pic.twitter.com/JFOoBt2VMD

— NHL (@NHL) October 11, 2017

“I was just trying to block everything out and try to get through it,” Engelland said about the speech. “But it was great to see the response from the fans.”

He said he worked on his speech for a couple of days. “And it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be,” he said.

Gallant had been worried about how his team would start after such a moving pregame ceremony. He thought it was possible that they would be mentally drained.

But the Golden Knights, the first expansion team ever to start 3-0, seem to be feeding off their desire to help their community work through the grieving process.

“There were a lot of emotions out there,” Engelland said.

This was a trying situation for the Golden Knights, who drastically modified their first game plans to pay their respects to a community that was suffering.

Anyone who was there would say they handled it perfectly — particularly Engelland, who did the heavy lifting.

“(The players) did an unbelievable job,” Gallant said. “When we picked the team in the expansion draft we talked about getting good people and I think we did that.”

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USA TODAY / Vegas Golden Knights make history with big win in emotional home opener

Kevin Allen, USA TODAY Sports Published 1:20 a.m. ET Oct. 11, 2017

LAS VEGAS — The expansion Vegas Golden Knights have said they want to help their city heal from last week's mass shooting that killed 58 people. They began to deliver on that promise in their first regular-season home game.

Motivated by a moving pregame ceremony honoring victims and first responders, the Golden Knights struck for four goals in the first 10:42 on their way to a 5-2 win against the Arizona Coyotes.

The Golden Knights' 3-0-0 start has provided a much-needed distraction to a city overwhelmed by the sadness of last week's tragedy.

They are first NHL expansion team to start a season 3-0.

Here is how they got here:

The star: Goalie Marc-Andre Fleury, already the team's most popular player, has given up four goals in his first three games in a Vegas jersey. He's been the team's most important player.

Neal keeps scoring: Winger James Neal had two goals against the Coyotes to give him five goals on the season. Neal will be an unrestricted free agent next summer, and he seemed like a candidate to be dealt before the trade deadline. It is way early to draw any lasting conclusion, but Neal, 30, is showing why the Golden Knights might try to extend his contract.

By the way, @jneal_18 has five goals (so far) in the @GoldenKnights' first three games. pic.twitter.com/kVUw9zRsJz



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— NHL (@NHL) October 11, 2017

The chemistry: As a general rule, expansion teams historically have patchwork rosters. Too many fourth liners and No. 6 defensemen trying to play unfamiliar roles. Because the NHL made expansion draft rules more favorable for expansion teams, the Golden Knights have more talented players and have come together quickly as a team. They have outscored opponents 9-4 in the three wins.

McPhee factor: Veteran general manager George McPhee did good work to pick the right players in the expansion draft. He has the right blend of scorers and role players up front and a diverse group on defense. Everyone understands their role. The Golden Knights spent plenty of

time studying the character of the players and that seems to be paying off.

New mission: The Golden Knights seem to be unifying behind their pledge to do their part in helping the city find joy after last week's tragedy. They seem to have added motivation to be better-than-expected. #VegasStrong.

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