



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 15, 2018

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Jets end Canes' four-game winning streak

By Chip Alexander

In a season of firsts for Carolina Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour, there was another one on Sunday.

This time, not a good one.

The Canes were beaten 3-1 by the Winnipeg Jets, ending their four-game winning streak and giving Brind'Amour his first regulation loss as a head coach.

Bryan Little's goal off the rush at 17:51 of the third period gave the Jets a 2-1 lead, and Kyle Connor added an empty-netter in the final second for the final margin. But the Jets' biggest star was backup goalie Laurent Brossoit, who made 42 saves and was the difference in the game at Bell MTS Place in Winnipeg.

Regulation losses are the worst -- zero points gained. The Canes (4-1-1) played hard and for the most part well much of the game, and goalie Petr Mrazek made some athletic, amazing saves, once stopping a two-on-none rush by the Jets.

But Brossoit was better this night. The only Canes goal came on a tap-in by Micheal Ferland after a Dougie Hamilton shot in the third -- Sebastian Aho earning an assist to extend his point streak to six games.

Little's goal came not long after the Canes iced the puck. The Canes' Andrei Svechnikov cleared the zone but failed to get the puck deep enough during a line change, and the Jets quickly counterattacked and Little scored.

"Those the ones that hurt a little bit but it's a learning experience," Brind'Amour said. "We had some mistakes by our young guys that cost us. That one at the end, we didn't quite get it out far enough. We always talk about we're fighting for inches and we didn't get it out far enough and they come back and counter. It's a tough learning lesson for these young guys but we believe in them and we move on."

"Everyone says that's a team that's up for the Stanley Cup. I didn't feel like we were over-matched. We were hanging in there with them and probably had some opportunities to win the game. Overall, I'm happy with the effort for sure."

Brossoit faced 18 shots in the first period, 32 in the first two and 43 in all. Mrazek had 24 saves, 13 in the second period when he made some spectacular stops.

The Jets scored the game's first goal in the third after Jordan Staal's shot smacked squarely into the post. Staal soon was called for a penalty and the Jets converted on the power play as Patrik Laine ripped a shot from the left circle at 4:14 of the third.

The Canes were in the back-half of a back-to-back set, having rallied Saturday to beat the Minnesota Wild in overtime, 5-4. The three-game road trip will end Tuesday against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Brind'Amour had notched his first victory as a head coach and had his first winning streak. He was the first head coach in franchise history to earn points in the first five games of the season. Now comes the first "L."



Recap: Canes Edged by Jets

Ferland ties game in third, but Winnipeg nets late game-winner

by Michael Smith

WINNIPEG - The Carolina Hurricanes suffered their first regulation loss of the season, falling 3-1 to the Winnipeg Jets.

Bryan Little scored the game-winning goal for Winnipeg with just 2:09 remaining in regulation, while Micheal Ferland tallied the lone goal for the Hurricanes.

Here are five takeaways from tonight's cross-conference match-up.

One

Unless the Hurricanes were going to finish the season 81-0-1, or some undefeated-in-regulation variant of that, the team's first regulation loss of the season was bound to happen sooner or later.

And, all things considered, a 3-1 loss to one of the best teams in the Western Conference on the tail end of a back-



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to-back isn't anything to hang your head over. The Hurricanes remained aggressive, they fought back to tie the game in the third period and they got a solid performance in net from Petr Mrazek.

"It was a hard-fought game," Jordan Staal said. "We were right there. We did a lot of great things and worked really hard. Sometimes they don't go your way. I thought we could have had a better result, but that's hockey. We'll move forward from this one."

"I didn't feel like we were overly matched. It felt like we were hanging in there with them and probably had some opportunities to win the game," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "Overall I'm happy with the effort for sure."

Two

A broken line change and a puck that didn't get deep enough led to the Jets turning the puck back the other way with speed. Then, it was on and off the tape of Little, as he tallied the game-winning goal with 2:09 left in regulation.

A tough bounce and a tough break for the Canes, who probably deserved a better fate. But, you learn from it and move forward.

"An unfortunate way to end," Staal said. "It was just a quick play off a tired change. That's just the way the game goes sometimes."

"Those are the ones that hurt a little bit, but it's a learning experience. We had some mistakes by our young guys tonight that cost us," Brind'Amour said. "We always talk about fighting for inches, and we didn't get it far enough. They came back and countered and it's in the net. It's a tough learning lesson for these young guys, but we believe in them and we'll move on to tomorrow."

Three

Much of this game belonged to Mrazek and Laurent Brossoit, who dueled it out at opposite ends of the ice through a scoreless 40 minutes.

"They both played really well," Staal said. "I swear I was going to get one tonight, but it didn't work."

In the second period, Mrazek came up with what's probably the save of the young season for the Hurricanes. The Jets skated into the zone on a 2-on-0 - yes, you read that correctly. Nikolaj Ehlers and Patrik Laine executed the give-and-go, but Mrazek didn't bite too hard on the give to Laine

and was in good enough position to slide over and deny Ehlers' shot.

Earlier in the second, Mrazek came up big on the always-dangerous Laine, who had a quality scoring chance on what was essentially a 2-on-1. Mrazek was able to push across the crease and body down Laine's shot.

"Mraz played really, really well. Some big saves," Staal said. "He was good tonight."

Four

In one moment, Staal had room to skate along the near wing, blistering a wrist shot off the inside off the far post and out, mere inches away from giving his team a 1-0 lead in the third period. In a moment shortly after, he was whistled for an interference penalty. On the ensuing Jets power play, Laine scored on a one-timer from the near circle - Alex Ovechkin's house - to put the Jets on the board first.

But, there's no quit in this Canes team. Even in the second half of a back-to-back, the Canes only trailed the Jets in the third period for just over three minutes. Dougie Hamilton took a pass from Sebastian Aho and backhanded a shot that squeaked through Brossoit. Though the puck was likely going to cross the goal line anyway, Micheal Ferland hammered it in just to be sure.

"I thought we kept our foot on the gas the entire game," Ferland said. "We kept going at them and at them. Their goalie played really good, and our goalie played really good, too."

"When you continue to put shots on net and play the way we have, pucks are going to go in eventually," Staal said. "We're believing in that, and we have the talent to do it."

Five

The Canes have responded well to in-game adversity this season, not letting a deficit affect their mentality or how they approach their offensive attack. Now, they face the adversity of a regulation loss for the first time this season. How do they respond on Tuesday in another tough match-up?

"We know if we play that way every night, we can beat any team in this league," Ferland said. "That's what we take away from tonight's game. Be ready to work in Tampa."

Up Next

The Hurricanes will wrap up this three-game road trip in Tampa Bay on Tuesday.

Projected Lineup: Hurricanes at Jets

Mrazek to start in net in Winnipeg

by Michael Smith

WINNIPEG - The Carolina Hurricanes are riding a franchise-best start to the 2018-19 season, and they'll finish off a back-to-back set in Winnipeg.

The Hurricanes are not expected to make any changes to their lineup, with the exception of starting Petr Mrazek in net.

Here is a projected lineup for the Hurricanes.

Forwards

Foegele-Staal-Williams
Ferland-Aho-Teravainen
McGinn-Necas-Zykov
Martinoock-Wallmark-Svechnikov

Defense



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Slavin-Hamilton
de Haan-Faulk
van Riemsdyk-Pesce

Goalies

Mrazek
McElhinney

Scratches: Di Giuseppe (healthy), Fleury (healthy), Darling (lower body; injured reserve), Rask (hand; injured non-roster)

Note: Lineup subject to change prior to opening faceoff.

Preview: Hurricanes at Jets

Canes bring 4-0-1 record to Winnipeg

by Michael Smith

WINNIPEG - A night after a thrilling 5-4 overtime victory over the Minnesota Wild, the Carolina Hurricanes get right back to it against the Winnipeg Jets.

The Hurricanes have equaled their best start in franchise history, having earned nine of a possible 10 points and a 4-0-1 record in their first five games.

"The message has been pretty clear from day one," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "They believe in each other right now, and we've got to keep that momentum."

Never Out of It

The Hurricanes didn't trail in Minnesota until the third period, when they first fell behind 3-2 and then 4-3. Both times they fought back to tie the game, first Sebastian Aho on the power play and then Justin Williams with the extra attacker on and just 68 seconds remaining in regulation.

This was one of those games, too, where the Hurricanes could have easily folded - vastly outshooting their opponent but struggling on special teams and falling behind twice in the final period - but they remained resilient, a trait that has defined the club's early-season identity.

"It's just an attitude, an attitude that we're never out of it and we can get it done," Williams said. "It's very early, but we're trending in the right direction and doing a lot of good things. Because of it, we're racking up some wins."

"The simple fact is that we're creating a lot of offense, so I think they feel like it doesn't matter if we give up one. We'll at least be able to create enough chances to get back," Brind'Amour said. "We've got a good leadership group. They don't hang their heads."

Aho Leads the Charge

"He's a good player," Williams said, matter-of-factly, after the Canes' 5-4 win in Minnesota.

He was, of course, talking about Aho, who tallied two goals, including the game-winner in overtime, and two assists in a first-star performance.

His two goals came at critical junctures, too. The first, a long rebound goal, finally got the Canes' power play on the board and tied the game at three in the third period. The second secured the extra point for the Canes in 3-on-3 overtime, as Aho accepted a pass from Williams, took a couple of steps to the middle of the ice and rifled a wrist shot past Devan Dubnyk.

Aho now leads the Canes in both goals (4) and points (10) in the first five games of the season.

"Game by game. We're not done. We want to get better every day," he said. "We're a young team. We've got to learn every day."

An Eye on Special Teams

While the Canes have found early season results, special teams play has been a bit of a speed bump, so much so that it could have very well been a primary factor in the team's first regulation loss of the season.

The Canes surrendered two power-play goals, and, before they tied the game in the third period on their seventh power play of the game, they were 0-for-6 in the game and 1-for-16 on the season on the man advantage (and the one conversion was an empty-net goal).

Instead, the Canes fought through it, bounced back and won the game. But, it's not a long-term recipe for success.

"Our special teams are not good enough. Our power play isn't good enough, and our penalty kill is not good enough," Williams said. "That's the reason we were tied after the first period and the reason we had to battle back in this one. We'll work on it. It's only game five."

The Opposition

Sunday's match marks the beginning of a six-game homestand for the Winnipeg Jets, who are 2-2-0 on the young season. Most recently, the Jets were shut out, 3-0, in Nashville on Thursday.

ADVANCE AUTO PARTS KEYS TO THE GAME

1. Take Away Home Ice

The Jets begin a season-long, six-game homestand tonight, and they've won 10 straight at Bell MTS Place dating back to last season. This is a building that can get rowdy when the Jets get rolling, so it will be important for the Hurricanes to take away that home ice advantage.

2. Power to the Power Play

The Jets have been shorthanded 20 times through their first four games of the season. The Hurricanes' power play is just 2-for-19 on the season. The man advantage came through in the clutch on Saturday in Minnesota, but the Canes need it to improve, especially if the opportunities arise.

3. Keep Shooting



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The Canes fired a season-high 57 shots on goal in Minnesota, and they rank first in the league with 211 shots on goal through five games. Keep shooting. Keep scoring.

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Listen: 99.9 The Fan, Hurricanes app, Hurricanes.com/Listen



Hurricanes Winning, but That Goaltending

By Mark Shiver

Fans of the Carolina Hurricanes are ecstatic that their team has started the season so well. It is almost impossible to remember a start this exciting but underneath the shiny veneer of winning and scoring goals lies a troublesome reality. The Hurricanes have still not solved their challenge between the pipes.

Hurricanes Hot Start

For some, this observation may seem like a wet blanket on an exciting new season. After all, look at the team's results. The Hurricanes are in first place in the Metropolitan Division and in second place in the league, with the Toronto Maple Leafs leading the way with 10 points to the Hurricanes' 9.

It's been quite a start for the young guns from Raleigh, NC and it doesn't appear likely they will run out of gas. The Hurricanes have yet to finish a game without at least a point, an amazing accomplishment for this team given their recent history.

But, with 77 games ahead, the Hurricanes need to tighten up their goaltending. If this area is not addressed and strengthened, it may come back to – in the words of Forrest Gump – bite the Hurricanes in the buttocks. Any potential for a remarkable season could be derailed.

Hurricanes High Hopes for McElhinney

Curtis McElhinney was picked off waivers by the Hurricanes, from the Maple Leafs, when regular goalie Scott Darling was reported to be out for an indefinite time with a hamstring injury. He has been around the league for a long time and has proven he can play the position. When he was acquired it was thought to be for the short-term, but that has quickly changed.

When he first donned Hurricanes gear, McElhinney wanted to be more than a short-term gap-filler. His play against the Columbus Blue Jackets was exceptional in helping the Hurricanes get a 3-1 win. He showed a lot of class in scooping up the game puck at the final horn and making sure head coach Rod Brind'Amour got it to commemorate his first win as the team's head coach. Hurricanes fans and the

occasional talking head raised an eyebrow at the thought of McElhinney's potential.

For a team that has been starving for elite goaltending, he seemed to be a welcome bright spot. That has changed a bit. In three starts McElhinney has three wins. He has faced 80 shots on goal and saved 72 of them. Having given up eight goals gives him a .900 save percentage. His goals-against average is 2.64.

Petr Mrázek's numbers for his two starts are disconcerting. He has a win and an overtime loss. But his 3.53 goals-against average and .841 save-percentage need improvement.

Should Giving up Goals Be a Concern?

Mrázek's numbers are not too bad nor are they great. What is cause for concern, however, is the trend in goals against. He has given up one, three and, on Saturday night, four goals. Were they all his fault? Absolutely not. But, it's a problem that needs to be fixed. Whether it's the defense or the goaltender, the Hurricanes' chances of making the playoffs and doing well will only improve by tightening up team defense, goaltending included.

After Saturday night's wild win against the Minnesota Wild in overtime, Brind'Amour acknowledged that his group is confident in its ability to score goals. "We're creating a lot of offense so I think they feel like it doesn't matter if we give up one, we'll be able to at least create enough chances to get back."

He also acknowledged that the opposing team is "getting paid, too" and they're also going to have some good shifts and score goals. Brind'Amour also said:

We don't want to give up four goals every night, because we can't count on getting five. They believe in each other right now and we've got to somehow keep that momentum.

That momentum is real right now and Brind'Amour is right, understanding it and capitalizing on it is huge. But, there are ebbs and flows in a season, and even though McElhinney is 3-0, giving up fewer goals would be very beneficial to the Hurricanes' long-term goals this season.



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Recap: Jets deal Hurricanes first regulation loss

The Canes fall just short in a stiff back-to-back road test.

By Andy House

In what was a scoreless game through two periods, the Carolina Hurricanes and Winnipeg Jets provided proof that low-scoring doesn't mean low-action as the Jets defeated the Hurricanes 3-1 on Sunday night, ending Carolina's four-game winning streak and dealing the Canes their first regulation loss of the season. Both goalies, Petr Mrazek and Laurent Brossoit (making his first start of the season) played spectacularly in stopping 65 of the 68 shots taken in the game. In the end, the difference was Bryan Little's wrist with just over two minutes remaining in regulation.

Coming off of a hard fought overtime win in St. Paul last night, the Hurricanes came out of the gates strong in the first period as they controlled play for much of the opening stanza outshooting the Jets 18-6. Nonetheless, Brossoit turned away a couple of solid chances from Martin Necas and a shorthanded breakaway from Sebastian Aho, blanking the Canes on the scoreboard through one period.

As the Jets came out flying in the first few minutes of the second period, Mrazek proved he too was up to the task with a trio of big stops including thwarting a two on none breakaway. (Mrabbery? A Mracle? Mrastounding? Take your pick.) The Jets would continue to test Mrazek with consistent pressure, peppering him with 13 shots in the period.

Meanwhile, Brossoit continued his tremendous play throughout the second period. Despite numerous chances on both sides, the game remained scoreless through the middle stanza.

Just minutes into the third period, Warren Foegele sprung Jordan Staal on right wing for a chance that he rang solidly off the left post. Shortly after, Staal was called for holding the stick, which resulted in a power play goal from Patrik Laine at 4:14 of the third period.

But as they have seemed to do at will in the early part of this season, the Canes responded with the equalizer at 7:53 of the third period as Aho fed Dougie Hamilton out front, and his shot off the post was guided home by the opportunistic Micheal Ferland to knot the score at 1-1.

From there, this tense battle resulted in scoring chances on both sides, but Mrazek and Brossoit remained up to the challenge until Bryan Little snapped one past Mrazek with just over two minutes remaining. At that point, the Canes attempted to go three-for-three in empty net situations on the young season, but it was not to be this time as Kyle Connor cashed in on the empty net as the final horn sounded to put the finishing touch on the 3-1 Jets victory.

The Hurricanes will now continue their road trip as they do the typical...uh...(checks notes) Winnipeg to Tampa Bay trip to take on the Lightning on Tuesday night.

Carolina Hurricanes vs. Winnipeg Jets: Preview, Game Hub

The Hurricanes play their second game in two days against a strong Winnipeg Jets team.

By Andrew Ahr

The Hurricanes will try to build on a strong start to the state fair road trip as they take on the Jets in Winnipeg tonight. The Jets are coming off of two days off while the Hurricanes took down the Minnesota Wild last night.

Game Notes

Tonight's game is the first of two between the clubs this season. The second will take place in PNC Arena on March 8th.

The Jets swept the season series with a record of 2-0-0 last season.

Despite being outshot each game, the Jets have won their last four matchups against Carolina.

Sebastian Aho is the fifth player in Hurricanes history to open the regular season with a five game point streak (4g, 6a).

The Hurricanes have scored a goal in 13 consecutive periods.

Lines and Rosters

The Canes jumped on a flight from Minnesota to Manitoba last night and did not skate this morning. They will likely go with the same lineup except for a change between the pipes.

Warren Foegele - Jordan Staal - Justin Williams

Micheal Ferland - Sebastian Aho - Teuvo Teravainen

Brock McGinn - Martin Necas - Valentin Zykov

Jordan Martinook - Lucas Wallmark - Andrei Svechnikov

Jacob Slavin - Dougie Hamilton

Calvin de Haan - Justin Faulk

Trevor van Riemsdyk - Brett Pesce

Petr Mrazek

Curtis McElhinney



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The Jets are coming off of a tough loss in Nashville on Thursday and have had a few days to clean up their team defense. Here's how they're projected to line up tonight.

Kyle Connor - Mark Scheifele - Blake Wheeler

Nikolaj Ehlers - Bryan Little - Patrik Laine

Kristian Vesalainen - Jack Roslovic - Mathieu Perreault

Andrew Copp - Adam Lowry - Brandon Tanev

Josh Morrissey - Jacob Trouba

Dmitry Kulikov - Tyler Myers

Ben Chiarot - Joe Morrow

Laurent Brossoit

Connor Hellebuyck

Injuries: Dustin Byfuglien

About Last Night: Take a Deep Breath

The good, the bad, the ugly and, most of all, the win.

By Jake Crouse

Saturday's game was the biggest gut, mind and grit test the Hurricanes have faced this season. It was hard to catch a breath with all the madness -- the absurd Corsis, unnecessary whistles, Sebastian Aho athleticism, Rod Brind'Amour venting, power play headaches, "getting skates under ya," Justin Faulk-ian flusters, near-calls on Devan Dubnyk, Andrei Svechnikov's clear learning curve...

takes deep breath

There are 1,001 things to examine from the overtime win over the Wild, but here are just a few that bear larger inspection.

1) The Win Itself

With all due respect to the Canes' first four wins, this one was probably the most meaningful. Yes, for the team record of a fifth straight point-producing game for Rod Brind'Amour and for extending a great start to the season this franchise has desperately needed the past few years, but also because of the opponent and situation.

Outside of the Blue Jackets, the Canes' previous games were against opponents who they should be able to beat if the squad wants to call itself a playoff contender (Islanders, Rangers and Canucks). The Wild are a playoff-contending team who sent one of the best goaltenders in the league to the ice on Saturday, touting home-arena advantage at the outset of a road trip that includes the two potential Stanley Cup finalists in Winnipeg and Tampa Bay. A loss to begin the stretch could be a momentum killer.

It also would have been a killer considering the Canes put 57 shots on net to Minnesota's 23. And though four goals on 23 shots won't sit well on Curtis McElhinney's mind, a win in net will hopefully be enough mental support through his next start.

2) Aho the Animal

Is this the season that Aho goes off? Because it's starting to feel like the season where Aho goes off.

The switch to center is paying dividends in the early season - a period in which he's struggled at the NHL level -- as he picked up two goals and two assists to move to 10 points over the first five games. (Did our Kyle Morton call it a year

and a half ago when he said Aho could be a legit top center?)

Aho showed off on Saturday. He made Eric Staal look stationary as he circumnavigated the offensive zone to tally an assist on a deflected goal off the stick of Brett Pesce, a move that screamed "elite talent."

He had his hand-eye working well on his first goal, a rebound off the left pad of Dubnyk, then went full snipe mode past Dubnyk's blocker side to seal the game (did that setup pass remind anyone else of Svech to Martinook a few games back?).

With the defensive pressure the Jets are likely to bring, it would seem Aho will also be a big key to a victory in Winnipeg. This performance should certainly give him the confidence to take some risks and use his speed/shot combo to get his team on the board.

3) Still Not-so-special Teams

Despite Aho's PPG, the special teams felt quite lackluster for all the opportunities the Canes had last night. The team upped their power play percentage to 10.5 with the goal, but went 1-for-9 on the night with only a couple creating multiple dangerous opportunities.

The penalty kill was just as much of a letdown, as the Wild went 2-for-5. In last night's case, if the goalie is a team's best penalty killer, Dubnyk certainly outdueled McElhinney for that honor. The Canes backup came back to earth a little, allowing two power play goals that he arguably shouldn't have let in.

The first was a missed blocker save on a puck that wasn't redirected, though it was close to being so at first glance. Instead of pushing it out, the puck rose over McElhinney's back and, despite a decent swipe for it in midair, dropped in to tie the game. In the third, he allowed a go-ahead PPG from Jason Zucker, who wristed an undeflected puck off the draw into the net for a score. It had a bit of pace, and the Canes' D certainly should've stepped up, but McElhinney was just beat and his confused look after showed it.

(McElhinney also allowed a short-side goal later in the period that was almost the game-winner, and though the linesman should get out the way and it was a decent shot, it was no Kuznetsov).

The special teams were a concern last year as the Hurricanes ranked in the bottom third in both power play and



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penalty kill percentage, so it's certainly an area to watch throughout the season. To his credit, Brind'Amour has reportedly spent a ton of time coaching the power play in practice, but it's a results-driven business, despite the luck, breaks and pure perseverance sometimes necessary.

4) Purposeless Penalties

One showed his age. One showed his youth. Both showed a lack of concern for the dire situation.

Both Justin Faulk and Svechnikov drew unnecessary penalties in the third period that created extra tension in an already-tense game. While on the bench, Faulk asked not what his team could do for him, but what he couldn't do for his team by grabbing Zach Parise's stick as a battle for the puck occurred near the Carolina box. He was whistled for

interference, and about a minute later, Zucker netted his go-ahead goal. And Brind'Amour knows stupid when he sees stupid:

Then the rookie showed what appeared to be a bit of frustration after a little bumping at the circle on a faceoff, hitting Ryan Suter with a high stick for his third (!) penalty of the game. Fortunately, this one didn't lead to a goal, but Svechnikov isn't exactly the guy the Canes want taking penalties, so let's hope this trend doesn't continue and he can get it cleaned up.

There are plenty of other things to address from last night (feel free to do so in the comments), but by the nature of back-to-back games, I'm sure there will be some leftovers to discuss after today's game against the Jets.

THE ATHLETIC

Down Goes Brown weekend power rankings: Attempting to find a signal in all the noise

By Sean McIndoe

Last week's theme was "it's way too early." This week's could be something along the lines of "it's still early, but maybe not as early as you think."

We're still less than two weeks into a six-month season, and everyone's still got 75+ games left to play. There's lots of time left, and yes, some of the entries in this week's rankings will look silly at some point down the line.

But as a wise man once said, it gets late awfully early around here. And history tells us that by this point in the schedule, some truths about how the season will play out are starting to reveal themselves. It's just a question of finding a signal in all of the noise.

Take last year as an example. When we all woke up on October 15, 2017, a look at the standings would have revealed two winless teams: the Sabres and the Coyotes. Both were young teams that had been hoping to make a push into the playoff conversation. Six months later, the Sabres had finished dead last while the Coyotes were 29th. Only five games into a very young season, it turns out that both teams had already shown us what they'd be when they grew up.

They weren't the only ones. The Canadiens, fresh off a first-place finish in the Atlantic, had stumbled out to a slow start. So had the Rangers, coming off a 102-point season, as well as the 103-point Oilers. All three teams missed the playoffs by a mile. Meanwhile, teams like Colorado, New Jersey and Vegas were all off to strong starts that turned out to be a preview of what was to come.

By this time last year, we'd already learned some important things. Of course, we were also being misled by more than a few teams. The Blackhawks were leading the Central, while the Flames were the top team in the Pacific. And the only two teams without a regulation loss were the Kings, who

turned out to be just OK, and the Senators, who were about a month away from driving off a cliff.

So what can we read into today's standings?

Well, maybe not a tonne. There really aren't any teams that are off to completely dominant or disastrous starts, and we've got a real traffic jam in the middle – 19 out of 31 teams are sitting at either two or three wins on the season. That's going to make it tough to draw any firm conclusions, let alone put together a power rankings. But we're all about staring down adversity around here, so let's give it a shot.

Road to the Cup

The five teams that look like they're headed towards a summer of keg stands and fountain pool parties.

It was a good weekend for Canadian teams, who went a combined 7-0, including six wins on Saturday. Somewhat amazingly, that appears to be only the second time that's ever happened. I think we can all agree that weekends like that are way better than winning a Stanley Cup every quarter-century or so.

5. Boston Bruins (4-1-0, +9) – It's hard to know what to make of the Bruins this year. It's not easy to be sporting a +9 goals differential a week after losing your opener 7-0, but here we are. They've done it by following that opening night disaster with four blowout wins, but it's hard not to notice that all four of those wins came against teams that weren't very good last year, while that one big loss came against the defending Cup champs.

So are the Bruins a good team, or just one that kicks sand on the weaklings but gets exposed when they try to pick on someone their own size? We may not find out anytime soon, as they head out on a four-game Canadian road swing that sees them play four more teams that missed the playoffs last year.



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4. Toronto Maple Leafs (5-1-0, +7) – Saturday's showdown with the Capitals didn't turn into the shootout we were all hoping for but Mike Babcock will probably be just fine with a 4-2 win. Auston Matthews scored and had multiple points yet again, but the bigger story might be Frederik Andersen's best game of the young season and a rare example of the Leafs' holding down a third-period lead without wetting themselves.

The win capped off a sweep of a four-game road trip and was the Leafs' first of the season against a team that made the playoffs last year. They'll get two more of those matchups this week when they host the Kings and Penguins, before the Blues arrive to close out the homestand on Saturday. And after that, it's on to a home-and-home with the Jets that should be all sorts of fun.

Hey, speaking of those guys...

3. Winnipeg Jets (3-2-0, even) – They haven't necessarily looked great, even in last night's win over the Hurricanes, but we'll give them another week before we bump them out of the top three. This week should be a productive one, since it serves up the Oilers, Canucks and Coyotes. Those are the sort of teams that a legitimate Cup contender racks up points against. The Jets should do just that.

2. Tampa Bay Lightning (2-1-0, +3) – I thought the Blue Jackets would be pretty good this year. I still do. So seeing the Lightning flex on them in an 8-2 win was a reminder of why Tampa still deserves Eastern Conference favorite status.

By the way, we're back to the same problem we had for much of last year: three teams from the same division in our top five. If we're trying to predict a Cup winner, it doesn't make much sense to have one team on our list that by definition, can't make it past the first round. It's a real problem, and we'll handle it the same way we did last year – by pretty much ignoring it until March and the playoff picture starts coming into focus.

1. Nashville Predators (4-1-0, +5) – A big win in an early season showdown with the Jets and a workmanlike victory against the overmatched Islanders is enough to keep them in the top spot in the power rankings for the second week in a row.

[Watches as the Predators raise a "Top spot in the DGB power rankings two weeks in a row" banner.]

Not ranked: Carolina Hurricanes or New Jersey Devils – As we explained last week, in the early going these rankings will be heavily weighted towards preseason consensus, meaning it will take more than a few good games for a team to go from presumed also-ran status to the top five. Other power rankings focus more on what's happening right now, which is a perfectly valid way to do things. But we're looking ahead here, which means the shifts happen more slowly.

So no, you're not going to see a team like the Hurricanes or Devils show up in the rankings quite yet. But man, they may not be far off.

The Devils are the league's only perfect team, albeit through just three games thanks to that early-season Europe trip. They've beaten up on the defending champion Capitals, and yesterday beat a legitimate contender in the Sharks. And

Kyle Palmieri has two goals in each of the wins, making him an early season front-runner to win the Auston Matthews Trophy for most goals scored by somebody who isn't named Auston Matthews. (I'm assuming this award will be unveiled over the next few days.)

If anything, the Hurricanes have been even scarier. They've been speedbagging teams on the way to a 4-1-1 record and top spot in the Metro. Saturday's win over the Wild was about as lopsided as an overtime game can be. Then they headed for Winnipeg the very next night, faced a rested Jets team, and very nearly beat them too, while once again dominating the shot clock.

I mean... yikes:

Again, we're putting a lot of stock into last year's results and the preseason expectations, and we're still talking about a wildcard team and one that missed the playoffs entirely. We're trying not to overreact here. But the conservative approach only lasts for so long, so if you're a Devils or Hurricanes fan wondering when your team will get some respect, the answer is: maybe soon.

The bottom five

The five teams that look like they're headed towards hoping the ping-pong balls deliver Jack Hughes.

Hey NHL, you know that thing you did on Friday where there weren't any games at all? Let's not do that again any time soon, OK? Some of have families we're trying to avoid.

5. Vancouver Canucks (3-2-0, +2) – They won on Saturday. Nobody cared.

Instead, all the talk was about Elias Pettersson leaving the game after a choke slam from Panthers' defenceman Mike Matheson. He left the game and didn't return. For now, that's about all we know, although he was apparently feeling "a little bit better" yesterday.

But in the aftermath of the game, the bigger conversation was over the Canucks' reaction to the sight of their talented rookie being taken out ... or lack thereof. Somewhat surprisingly, given all the recent talk in Vancouver about the importance of comradery and the sanctity of The Code, nobody on the Canucks did much of anything in response.

Well, that's not quite true. They did win the game, which we're supposed to say is the important thing. It was their third win in five, a decent start for a team almost everyone was picking to bring up the rear in the West. So far, they look like a team that might be able to surprise a few people. But they'll need a healthy Pettersson to do it, which brings us back to their collective Saturday night shrug.

For their part, Vancouver fans noticed – check out the livid replies to the official team account's attempt at a positive post-win tweet. Jason Botchford has a good roundup of the aftermath in his post-game column.

As for payback, well... next time, apparently.

4. Ottawa Senators (2-2-1, -1) – Five points in five games isn't great, but it's more than what most were expecting from the Senators heading into the season. They've already earned a win over one of our top-five teams, having beaten



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Toronto last week, and they rolled over the Kings on home ice on Saturday.

But even more important than the wins and losses, the kids are leading the way, with guys like Thomas Chabot and Brady Tkachuk looking like the sort of players who could someday replace the start power that's already left or may be on the way out. The team isn't great, and may not even be good, but so far the Sens have been worth watching.

3. Arizona Coyotes (1-3-0, -6) – They scored this week! Granted, it was only twice, and they were back to being shut out on Saturday against the Sabres, of all teams. But still, progress is progress, so we'll drop them out of the top spot.

2. New York Rangers (1-4-0, -6) – They showed some signs of life with Thursday's OT win over the Sharks, but any momentum vanished quickly with Saturday's loss to the Oilers. Henrik Lundqvist looked good and he's now sporting a .938 save percentage on the season, which makes you wonder what happens if or when he comes back to earth.

Meanwhile, Kevin Shattenkirk was back in the lineup after sitting out against San Jose, but he didn't do much. The Rangers' oddly specific prediction might just be in play.

1. Detroit Red Wings (0-3-2, -11) – Not an especially tough choice this week.

The Red Wings are the only team in the league with a double-digit negative goals differential, and they're the only team left without a win except for Florida, who've only played three games. The Wings have played five, and managed to earn a loser point in two of them. But they're trending in the wrong direction and Saturday's 8-2 blowout at the hands of the Bruins was ugly from start-to-finish.

That's not good. Except it might be good, because the Red Wings are one of those teams that doesn't seem to want to try a full rebuild even though they sure seem like they could use one. Falling out of the playoff hunt by November could nudge Ken Holland even further towards fixing his gaze on the future. Some short term pain might go a long way to making things easier on Holland next year and beyond. (Or, you know, Steve Yzerman.)

Not ranked: Vegas Golden Knights – I guess the league isn't rigged for them anymore.

The Knights have started off 2-4-0, which is hardly a disaster, especially in the Pacific. But the record might flatter them, as they've really only had one game – the shootout win over the Wild – where they looked much like last year's feel-good story. Saturday against the Flyers felt like an early must-win, and they did, but only because Marc-Andre Fleury stole it for them. These guys just aren't clicking yet.

Some of that can be chalked up to who they're missing, as Nate Schmidt's suspension and Paul Stastny's injury have had an impact. And some of it may just be slumps; we know Max Pacioretty will be better than one goal in six games, and we think William Karlsson should start scoring soon (although that may not be a sure thing). Fleury hasn't been great in the losses, so maybe he's back on track. They should be OK.

They may not be much more than OK, although doubting the Golden Knights hasn't exactly been a great strategy over the last year or so. But either way, last year's Western champs have earned some benefit of the doubt, and they'll get it here. But not forever, because it's already getting late early.

It's an attitude not a 'system,' and it's working for Rod Brind'Amour's Hurricanes

By Sara Civian

ST. PAUL, Minn — “If you don't score on a 5-on-3 that's generally a killer,” Rod Brind'Amour conceded after the Hurricanes' 5-4 overtime win at Minnesota on Saturday. “You usually lose the game. That's just how it works. You have to score there, and we didn't.”

Leave no doubt about it, the Hurricanes whiffed on their golden five-on-three opportunity. Even though it was only halfway through the first period, it was the kind of thing you watch in real time and chalk up to a loss.

What drove that feeling home further is the 5-on-3 that shall not be named was a microcosm of the Hurricanes' biggest issue right now — special teams. They're 2 for 19 on the power play and 13 for 19 on the penalty kill. They went 1 for 9 on the power play against the Wild. This is what it looked like before the third period, when Sebastian Aho broke the ice with the first comeback equalizer on the man advantage:

So, while the Canes ultimately led 57-23 in shots — the most from a Wild opponent in Xcel Energy Center history — a lot of those shots that could've been high-danger were kind of lobbed in or blocked.

“Our special teams are not good enough,” Justin Williams said. “Our power play is not good enough. Our penalty kill is not good enough. That's the reason we had to battle back.”

As Brind'Amour said, that's generally a killer in a game you have to come back twice in the third period to win. That's just how it works.

“Our (power play) has been bad all year,” Aho offered. “But when we needed it most we scored.”

Blemishes and all, how do you kill a team that just refuses to die?

“We have a lot to get better at right now, but you cannot argue with the compete in this group,” Brind'Amour said. “No quit in our group ... I love the way we were just not giving up. We've got a good leadership group, they don't hang their heads.”

In a sport with so much ridiculous performative anger, these guys seem to bounce right back after mistakes. While Williams noted they'd have been upset if they lost this one (come on, they tried so hard — 57 shots!), Brind'Amour doesn't force them to pretend to be angry when the in-game bounces don't always go their way. In the time they might've spent fake-pouting on the bench, they're just worried about



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how to improve. That's been immediately evident already, with two insane third-period comeback rallies.

They're even encouraged to — *clutches pearls* — celebrate the wins! He knows Saturday night was far from perfect, but twice in our postgame conversation, Brind'Amour noted how much he and the players are going to enjoy this win.

"We gotta enjoy this because it was a good win for our group," he said. "... We have to take advantage of being on a roll because it could change in a heartbeat. You gotta take some time to enjoy it, though. It's one of those wins you don't see very often."

Can it really be that simple? How is this feel-good story of a Hurricanes hero-turned-bench-boss off to a franchise-best start (4-0-1) actually happening?

Strangely enough, it's happening in the same way that the power play is a ... uhh ... we'll call it a work in progress for now. When Brind'Amour said he wants his team to feel like it can make mistakes and "worry about them later," he very seriously meant it. To a certain extent, as long as you're playing hard, a few honest mistakes aren't going to toss you from his lineup. Through five games he's been true to that. Even if he had maybe wanted to shake things up on the power play, he must've felt the current units' levels of compete were up to snuff.

"Coach kept sticking with us, sticking with us," Williams said. "He was saying, 'All right these are the guys going out. Get it done.'"

They might be dishing out a few heart attacks in the process, but they're getting it done. The coach is all-in on his players, and they're all-in on his system.

"The message has been pretty clear from day one," Brind'Amour said. "They see that it's a fun way to play but also a way to have outcomes like tonight, where we can come back. We don't want to give up four goals every night, but they believe in each other right now."

Williams, who lived up to his "Mr. Game 7" nickname with the equalizer that sent his team to overtime, wouldn't exactly call it a system.

"System is one thing, it's an attitude, though," he tried to explain to me. "An attitude that we're never out of it and we can get it done. Listen, it's very early, but we're trending in the right direction. We're doing some good things and as a result, we're racking up some wins."

I said it before and clearly it bears repeating: Aho is on another level this season. Not only is the October monkey off his back, but the winger who couldn't score until Nov. 13 last season transformed into the center with 10 points (four goals, six assists) by Oct. 14. What's more is he's racking up these points in crucial times — four points in a comeback thriller here, overtime game-winner there. Not to get ahead of ourselves in between Game 5 and Game 6 of the regular season, but perhaps this is the year he gets the national respect he deserves. Sandwiched somewhere among, like, 15 Maple Leafs players, he's No. 4 in the league in points. A friend who trains junior hockey players told me Aho is his favorite "2018 player addition ... every year I add a guy to my list to watch. He does so many subtle things well. Love his movement patterns. Every morning I make clips for my database of examples and I was like, 'I keep clipping this guy.'"

So now we have the answer as to why the power-play units don't seem to be budging despite their struggles: Brind'Amour's embracing that struggle with the long term on his mind. As frustrating as it has been at times, you can't chalk any of it up to tangible losses yet, so c'est la vie.

Brind'Amour legitimately didn't know he made franchise history with points in all five of his first games as head coach. When The Athletic Minnesota's Jessi Pierce asked him about it, his eyes got big.

"That's the first I've even heard of any of that stuff."

You just know he meant it.



Bryan Little lifts Jets past Hurricanes, 3-1

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) — Blake Wheeler was honest after the Winnipeg Jets' victory over Carolina.

"I'm not going to pretend we're firing on all cylinders right now, but we're grinding," Wheeler said.

Bryan Little broke a tie with 2:09 left in the Jets' 3-1 on Sunday night in the opener of a six-game homestand.

"We knew going into the game that the puck wasn't going to get moved well or easily," Jets coach Paul Maurice. "That game wasn't going to look like you would hope it would. It hasn't for any of their opponents. Nobody's beat them in

regulation. They're on fire right now. We had our challenges all night with them and still found a way to create some pretty good offence."

Patrick Laine opened the scoring for the Jets at 4:14 of the third period, and Kyle Connor added an empty-net goal with a second left. Backup goalie Laurent Brossoit stopped 42 shots for the victory, allowing only Micheal Ferland's tying goal.

Petr Mrazek made 23 saves for the Hurricanes. They dropped to 4-1-1.



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"We had some mistakes by our young guys tonight that cost us," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "At the end there, we didn't quite get it out far enough. We always talk about we're fighting for inches and we didn't get it far enough. They come back and counter and it's in the net. It's a tough learning lesson for these young guys but we believe in them and we will move on for tomorrow."

After Laine one-timed a pass from Blake Wheeler on a power play to put the Jets ahead, Ferland poked home a shot from Dougie Hamilton that was drifting behind Brossoit. Little then slammed in the winner for his first goal of the season.

"It's a tough one, especially to lose that late in the game," Ferland said. "I thought we kept our foot on the gas the entire

game, kept going at them and at them. Their goalie played really good. Our goalie played really good, too. I think we would have at least deserved a point there."

NOTES: Winnipeg put Marko Dano on waivers before the game. The 23-year-old forward hasn't played for the Jets, his third NHL franchise, this season. He was a 2013 first-round draft pick by Columbus.

UP NEXT

Hurricanes: At Tampa Bay on Tuesday night.

Jets: Host Edmonton on Tuesday night.



NHL Power Rankings: Top injury concern for all 31 teams

The Penguins will go as far as Matt Murray takes them this season, but he's currently out with a concussion. Jeanine Leech/Icon Sportswire

We're just a few games into the 2018-19 season, but there's already been some movement in the ESPN NHL Power Rankings. Here's our latest rundown, along with the top early health concern for all 31 teams.

Note: These rankings reflect which teams our voters think would win head-to-head matchups. Higher-ranked teams would be favored against lower-ranked teams.

1. Toronto Maple Leafs

Preseason ranking: 3

There are no early injury concerns to report in Toronto right now. There are early concerns about a defense that's let up 20 goals in five games, but hey, the offense is as good as advertised.

2. Nashville Predators

Preseason ranking: 4

It's been a healthy early going for the Predators. The only thing the Predators are ailing from is criticism for their curious banner-raising. (Regular-season Western Conference champions? Really?)

3. Washington Capitals

Preseason ranking: 5

It's been minor maintenance so far for the defending Stanley Cup champions. The only current injury is a lower-body designation for Travis Boyd (who was seen in a protective boot). Boyd battled with Nic Dowd for the fourth-line center job in camp, so Dowd assumes the role by default.

4. Tampa Bay Lightning

Preseason ranking: 2

The Lightning have only played two games thus far (weird scheduling quirks) but will get a boost with the return of Tyler Johnson. Ryan Callahan is still rehabbing his right shoulder. He's skating, but aiming for a November return.

5. Winnipeg Jets

Preseason ranking: 1

Well, a healthy team is usually a successful team -- especially when that healthy team also happens to be one of the NHL's most stacked. So far, so good for Blake Wheeler & Co.

6. Boston Bruins

Preseason ranking: 9

Defenseman Torey Krug remains on injured reserve with an ankle injury he sustained in a preseason game. Krug, who has been wearing a walking boot, will be re-evaluated in a little over a week. Krug usually quarterbacks the power play, which has still been effective early (four goals on nine opportunities in four games).

7. Anaheim Ducks

Preseason ranking: 18

Great news: Ryan Kesler scored in his return, and his dragged-out comeback from hip surgery in summer 2017 might finally be complete. Bad news: Ryan Getzlaf is out, but general manager Bob Murray says the veteran's groin injury is not as bad as feared. He could be back next week.

8. Pittsburgh Penguins

Preseason ranking: 8

It's concerning that 24-year-old Matt Murray has been diagnosed with a concussion for the third time in his NHL



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career. (Last February, the goaltender was concussed in practice and missed nearly a month.) Murray was skating Thursday; in the meantime, Pittsburgh will rely on its in-house backups, Tristan Jarry and Casey DeSmith.

9. Carolina Hurricanes

Preseason ranking: 22

Amid all the fun in Carolina is a goalie shuffle! Scott Darling's comeback season has been halted by a lower-body injury (no timetable to return), which led the team to pick up Curtis McElhinney on waivers. What does McElhinney's strong debut mean for Darling and Petr Mrazek? We don't know, but we're grabbing the popcorn.

10. Columbus Blue Jackets

Preseason ranking: 11

The blue line is getting healthier. Scott Harrington came back from injured reserve and No. 1 defenseman Seth Jones (knee) isn't far off at all. Brandon Dubinsky's oblique injury -- he'll be out at least a month -- is a damper, because his line looked great early.

11. San Jose Sharks

Preseason ranking: 6

The Sharks are spreading good news about Joe Thornton's latest knee setback. It's only an infection, coach Peter DeBoer said, with no structural damage. That means Jumbo Joe's stint on injured reserve should not be prolonged.

12. Los Angeles Kings

Preseason ranking: 13

The Kings are without starting goaltender Jonathan Quick, who is still not skating with the team after sustaining a lower-body injury. Backup Jack Campbell doesn't have a ton of experience (five NHL starts prior to this season), but the No. 11 overall pick in 2010 posted 36-plus saves in each of his first two starts before a 40-save shutout of the Canadiens.

13. Dallas Stars

Preseason ranking: 14

It's an important season for Martin Hanzal, who has now undergone three back surgeries in his career and played only 109 games over the past three seasons. The 31-year-old center, who carries a \$4.75 million cap hit through the 2019-20 season, is looking at a late November return, optimistically.

14. Colorado Avalanche

Preseason ranking: 20

The Avalanche have stayed relatively healthy, but the injury history with Conor Timmins is worrisome. He's currently out with a concussion. The defenseman is an important part of the Avalanche's future, and the absence not only limits his chance of making an impact this season, but could hamper his development.

15. New Jersey Devils

Preseason ranking: 17

Cory Schneider is back practicing with the team, which means the Devils could get their top goaltender back soon. The big question is if Schneider will automatically assume the No. 1 role or if he'll begin by platooning with Keith Kinkaid.

16. Chicago Blackhawks

Preseason ranking: 24

Any minor injuries pale against the status of goalie Corey Crawford, who has been sidelined since last December after a concussion. Coach Joel Quenneville keeps circling Oct. 18 as the date for a return, and Blackhawks fans are antsy as free-agent plug-in Cam Ward has been underwhelming (including an .867 save percentage).

17. Philadelphia Flyers

Preseason ranking: 12

Splashy free-agent acquisition James van Riemsdyk is sidelined five to six weeks with a lower-body injury. Jordan Weal gets the immediate promotion, but the Flyers' depth will be tested.

18. St. Louis Blues

Preseason ranking: 10

Robby Fabbri is a promising talent, but his career has been sidetracked by injuries (he last played in a game Feb. 4, 2017). This was the season he was supposed to be healthy, but the Blues are taking a patient approach as he rehabs his knee. He has yet to play in a game.

19. Minnesota Wild

Preseason ranking: 15

A team that was decimated by injuries last season begins the season with ... nobody on the injury report? That's all we'll say, because we don't want to jinx anything.

20. Vegas Golden Knights

Preseason ranking: 7

Paul Stastny will miss at least three games with a lower-body injury, which should be minor. Alex Tuch, also with a lower-body injury, is in a bit of a murkier situation. The middle-six winger isn't with the team on its current road swing, and it's unclear when he'll be debuting.

21. Calgary Flames

Preseason ranking: 19

Canucks defenseman Erik Gudbranson hit heralded Flames rookie Dillon Dube in the season opener -- and Flames defenseman Travis Hamonic took umbrage. Hamonic fought the (much bigger) Gudbranson and is now week-to-week with a facial fracture.

22. New York Islanders

Preseason ranking: 26

It appears Andrew Ladd (upper-body injury) is nearing a return. He'll likely slide onto the Islanders' third line, at wing alongside Valtteri Filppula and Leo Komarov. New York's bottom-six talent remains an area of concern.



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23. Florida Panthers

Preseason ranking: 16

Roberto Luongo is out two to four weeks because of an MCL strain, which once again thrusts James Reimer into a bigger role. Reimer is a capable backup goaltender -- and kept the Panthers afloat in extended action last winter -- so no reason to fully fret.

24. Buffalo Sabres

Preseason ranking: 25

A lower-body injury has sidelined defenseman Zach Bogosian for the first three games. Injuries have plagued the 28-year-old throughout his career (he's played more than 72 games only once in his 10-year career, and played only 18 games last season).

25. Montreal Canadiens

Preseason ranking: 28

We were worried about the Canadiens' blue line in the preseason, and now we're really worried about it. Star defenseman Shea Weber is out until at least December, and David Schlemko is out six weeks with a knee injury. Another rough start for Schlemko, who didn't make his debut last season until Nov. 29 (hand).

26. Arizona Coyotes

Preseason ranking: 23

For a team struggling with offense (two goals in three games) there are great expectations for newly acquired forward Alex Galchenyuk, who sustained a lower-body injury in training camp. Updates from coach Rick Tocchet have been vague, and Galchenyuk's not yet practicing -- not great.

27. Vancouver Canucks

Preseason ranking: 29

Free-agent acquisition Antoine Roussel missed training camp with a concussion, but on Thursday coach Travis Green said he's getting closer. When he's ready to play, the Canucks will have to decide which young player gets bumped out (for now).

28. Ottawa Senators

Preseason ranking: 31

Center Jean-Gabriel Pageau tore his Achilles tendon during fitness testing on the first day of training camp. That's just the way things have been for these Senators. Surgery sidelines Pageau roughly four to six months; he's hopeful he can return this season.

29. Detroit Red Wings

Preseason ranking: 30

The blue line is looking thin, but the biggest absence has been Mike Green. The veteran D-man is out for undisclosed time after battling a virus attacking his liver (the worst appears to be over). Rookie Dennis Cholowski took Green's spot on the top pairing -- and now he's day-to-day with an upper-body injury.

30. New York Rangers

Preseason ranking: 27

Fans might take Kevin Shattenkirk's healthy-scratch designation Thursday night against the Sharks as a benching, but coach David Quinn wants to remind us all that New York's highest-paid defenseman is still recovering from major knee surgery -- and his shaky start is likely a byproduct of that.

31. Edmonton Oilers

Preseason ranking: 21

The season hasn't started out great for the Oilers in the standings, but at least everyone's healthy at the moment. So they've got that going for them, which is nice.



Winnipeg Jets top Carolina Hurricanes behind Bryan Little's late tally

Bryan Little scored late in the third period to put the Jets ahead as Winnipeg went on to win 3-1.

WINNIPEG — Blake Wheeler had to be honest — it was not the Winnipeg Jets' prettiest win. But it will do.

Bryan Little put away the winner with just over two minutes left in the third period as the Jets topped the Carolina Hurricanes 3-1 on Sunday night as Winnipeg began a six-game homestand.

"I'm not going to pretend we're firing on all cylinders right now but we're grinding," said Wheeler after the win.

Patrik Laine set things up with the first goal of the game earlier in the third and Kyle Connor added one into an empty

net with a second to go. Micheal Ferland scored Carolina's only goal, in a game that started out looking like it was the Hurricanes' to lose.

The Jets (3-2-0) were swarmed by Carolina (4-1-1) in the scoreless first period, outshot 18-6, and coughed up the puck often to put pressure on new backup goalie Laurent Brossoit.

But Wheeler said there was no panic or theatrics in the dressing room.

"There was no coming to Jesus speech we didn't need to reinvent the wheel," said the Winnipeg captain. "There's an element of patience and being positive five games in to the season that you know you just stay with it and find a way to



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get two points. Tomorrow we'll try to get better. Hopefully the next game we'll be quicker."

Jets head coach Paul Maurice agreed with Wheeler.

"We knew going into the game that the puck wasn't going to get moved well or easily," said Maurice. "That game wasn't going to look like you would hope it would. It hasn't for any of their opponents. Nobody's beat them in regulation. They're on fire right now. We had our challenges all night with them and still found a way to create some pretty good offence."

Brossoit made 42 saves for Winnipeg, while Petr Mrazek made stopped 23-of-25 shots for the Hurricanes

Ferland said it was a frustrating loss but that overall there was a lot for Carolina to learn from.

"It's a tough one, especially to lose that late in the game," he said. "I thought we kept our foot on the gas the entire game, kept going at them and at them. Their goalie played really good. Our goalie played really good, too. I think we would have at least deserved a point there."

Hurricanes head coach Rod Brind'Amour said it was a learning experience for a young team.

"We had some mistakes by our young guys tonight that cost us," said Brind'Amour. "At the end there, we didn't quite get it out far enough. We always talk about we're fighting for inches and we didn't get it far enough. They come back and counter and it's in the net.

"It's a tough learning lesson for these young guys but we believe in them and we will move on for tomorrow."

Brossoit said his only regret was not stopping all 43 shots.

"If I didn't let in that one goal. I felt good in the game, and obviously it's nice to contribute and get that first win out of the way."

Notes: Winnipeg put Marko Dano on waivers before the game. The 23-year-old forward hasn't played for the Jets, his third NHL franchise, this season. He was a 2013 first-round draft pick.



NHL Power Rankings: Predators make strongest opening statement, Rangers sink to the bottom

Taking stock of all 31 NHL teams after one week of the 2018-19 season

It's really hard to take stock of NHL teams even halfway through the season. It's even harder -- no, impossible -- to take stock of NHL teams just a week into the season.

But you know what? We're doing it anyway.

Some teams have played just one game, and others have played a handful. But hockey is back, and that's what matters! Early on, we've already got a couple of pretty solid realities: The defending Stanley Cup champion Washington Capitals are not hung over from their title run, the Erik Karlsson trade did not make the San Jose Sharks invincible, and the New York Rangers most definitely are smack dab in the middle of a rebuild.

As we run through all 31 teams in this week's edition of NHL Power Rankings, keep in mind that we've got some gigantic risers and some monumental decliners -- but no definitive answers. The Caps may be hot along with the 2016-17 Western Conference champion Nashville Predators, and the Sharks may not amid a 1-2 start, but just because we thrust someone like the Dallas Stars into the top 10 after one week of hockey doesn't necessarily mean we think they're going to stay there. We're trying to balance season-long expectations with the small sample size we've got, so be prepared to get dizzy.

With one week down and many more to go, here's another look at the NHL pecking order:

- 1
Predators If Pekka Rinne stays upright this year, they are in for another awesome ride.
- 1 4-1
- 2
Lightning Andrei Vasilevskiy: Early Vezina favorite.
- 1 2-1
- 3

- Capitals Hey, hey, hey. The champs are still good! And the offense is alive and well.
- 4 2-2
- 4
Maple Leafs Auston Matthews can't do it all, but the workload should even out as we move forward.
- 1 5-1
- 5
Jets Nothing to worry about here. Most of the guys who should be hot are hot.



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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2		3-2	9	2-4
6			16	
Bruins	Thank Patrice Bergeron they were able to recover from Opening Night.		Devils	They've got a tough week ahead with the Caps, Sharks and Stars on tap.
2		4-1	1	3-0
7			17	
Ducks	These Ducks continue to find ways to fight while banged up.		Sabres	Yes, Jack Eichel, yes! The NHL is better if the Sabres aren't a dumpster fire.
7		4-1	9	3-2
8			18	
Blackhawks	We don't expect them to stay up here for long, but just look at their goal production: Fifteen in three games!		Panthers	Tough loss for Bob Boughner's club in the net, but they're talented enough to be OK.
14		3-0	3	0-2
9			19	
Avalanche	They're going to be hard to write off as long as Nathan MacKinnon is on the ice.		Flyers	Can Gritty play goalie?
10		3-1	6	2-3
10			20	
Stars	We see you. This first line is for real.		Blue Jackets	Their offense is like clockwork. Slow, often painful, clockwork.
10		3-1	10	3-2
11			21	
Hurricanes	Only three other teams have scored more goals.		Islanders	If anyone's bound to drop from their ranking this week, it's probably them. But good for Barry Trotz.
13		4-1	4	2-2
12			22	
Sharks	Not quite the start we expected. Still, they can't fall all the way down with their defensive talent.		Blues	They need good Jake Allen if they're going to be serious this year, and they have bad Jake Allen right now.
8		2-3	11	1-2
13			23	
Penguins	It's hard to say whether their star power is truly in flux. It's usually safe not to bet against them.		Flames	So much for an explosive start on the way to the playoffs. Mike Smith must be better.
4		2-1	5	3-2
14			24	
Kings	They could slide soon, because the age and the injuries are already showing via Jonathan Quick.		Wild	They're better than No. 25, but if everyone outside Zach Parise keeps on with the status quo, there will be issues.
2		2-2	8	1-1
15			25	
Golden Knights	We knew it'd be hard to replicate 2017-18, but this was still a slower start than anticipated.		Oilers	Rough schedule to open the year traveling all over.



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4	1-2	5	1-3
26		29	
Canadiens Price is great, after all.	Maybe Carey	Red Wings	At least soon there won't be any more empty red seats in the house.
4	2-1	1	0-3
27		30	
Canucks	Take a look at their youngsters and try not to get at least a little excited about their future.	Senators	Until the unknowns of the rebuild put things together consistently, they have to stay down here.
2	3-2	1	2-2
28		31	
Coyotes score for the first time, so ... yeah.	They're still trying to	Rangers	Oh, it's bad. Fourteen allowed goals in just three game



Little, Brossoit help Jets defeat Hurricanes

Forward breaks tie with 2:09 remaining, goalie makes 42 saves in Winnipeg win

by Scott Billeck

WINNIPEG -- Bryan Little scored with 2:09 remaining in the third period and Laurent Brossoit made 42 saves to help the Winnipeg Jets to a 3-1 win against the Carolina Hurricanes at Bell MTS Place on Sunday.

Jets defenseman Josh Morrissey rushed down the left side into the Hurricanes zone and found Little in the slot for his first goal of the season and a 2-1 lead.

"I saw quite a bit of net," Little said. "He almost got a glove on it. Josh made a great pass, kind of opened up the seam and made a great pass right on my tape, so credit to him."

Patrik Laine and Kyle Connor also scored for Winnipeg (3-2-0). Brossoit made 32 saves over the first two periods; his shutout ended when Micheal Ferland scored at 7:53 of the third.

"If I didn't let in that one goal," Brossoit said. "I felt good in the game and obviously it's nice to contribute and get that first win out of the way."

The Hurricanes (4-1-1) failed to set a franchise record for best start to a season; they matched it with a 5-4 overtime win at the Minnesota Wild on Saturday. The 1995-96

Hartford Whalers won their first four games and tied their fifth.

Petr Mrazek made 23 saves for Carolina.

"It's a tough one, especially to lose that late in the game," Ferland said. "I thought we kept our foot on the gas the entire game, kept going at them and at them. Their goalie played really good. Our goalie played really good too. I think [we] would have at least deserved a point there."

Laine made it 1-0 on the power play at 4:14 of the third period with his second goal of the season. Morrissey's point shot missed and deflected off the end boards to Blake Wheeler, whose cross-ice pass found Laine for a one-timer.

The goal was Winnipeg's first in 133:53.

Ferland tied the game 1-1 at 7:53 on a rebound after Sebastian Aho's shot hit the post.

Connor scored an empty-net goal at 19:59 of the third to make it 3-1.

"It was a hard-fought game," Hurricanes forward Jordan Staal said. "Two minutes left, and that was it. We did a lot of great things, worked really hard. Sometimes they don't go your way. I thought we could have had a better result, but that's hockey sometimes. We'll move forward from this one."

They said it



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"Everyone says [Winnipeg's] a team that's up for the Stanley Cup. They've proven it. They were one of the best teams in the League [last season]. I didn't feel like we were [outmatched]. It felt like we were hanging in there with them and probably had some opportunities to win the game. Overall, I'm happy with the effort for sure." -- Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour

"We had our challenges all night with them and still found a way to create some pretty good offense. Their guy made some good saves. Fortunately for us, our guy [was] fantastic. It was a continuation of his training camp, a very strong camp, and for those of you who watch him practice every day, you saw an awful lot of that in practice." -- Jets coach Paul Maurice on goalie Laurent Brossoit

Need to know

With an assist, Aho became the sixth player in Hurricanes/Whalers history to have at least one point in each of the first six games of a season. He has four goals and seven assists. ... Jets defenseman Dustin Byfuglien did not play because of an upper-body injury. He is day to day. ... Jets forward Marko Dano was placed on waivers Sunday.

What's next

Hurricanes: At the Tampa Bay Lightning on Tuesday (7:30 p.m. ET; SUN, FS-CR, NHL.TV)

Jets: Host the Edmonton Oilers on Tuesday (8 p.m. ET; TSN3, SNOL, NHL.TV)

Rookie watch: Svechnikov quick to make impact on Hurricanes

Forward, No. 2 pick in 2018 NHL Draft, key part of Carolina's strong start

by Mike G. Morreale

Andrei Svechnikov wants to be part of the solution as a rookie forward with the Carolina Hurricanes this season.

The Hurricanes have gotten off to a promising start with the hope of qualifying for the Stanley Cup Playoffs for the first time in 10 seasons, having scored 23 goals in six games (4-1-1). Svechnikov is doing his share.

The 18-year-old, selected No. 2 in the 2018 NHL Draft, has four points (two goals, two assist) and two game-winning goals. The Hurricanes control 67.54 percent of all shots attempted at even strength with Svechnikov on the ice.

He scored his first NHL goal in an 8-5 win against the New York Rangers on Oct. 7 and was presented with a plaque by the team in the locker room after the game.

When asked to give a speech, Svechnikov smiled and said, "OK, boys we got to win every game and just, good job." The delivery might not have been perfect, but the message was loud and clear.

"When I was growing up, this was my dream, to score the first goal in the NHL and now that I scored, I'm super happy," Svechnikov said. "We want to just do our jobs, listen to our coach, and win every game."

Svechnikov (6-foot-2, 188 pounds) is adjusting with every NHL shift. Coach Rod Brind'Amour has him in a bottom-six role alongside Jordan Martinook and Lucas Wallmark to begin the season and he's averaged 12:28 in ice time.

"From where he started to the first preseason game to the first regular-season game to where he is now, he's picking up stuff super fast," Brind'Amour said. "I'll be honest with you, I had some concerns on the defensive side and I still do, but he's learning and picking it up. It's a testament to him because he wants to learn. He's willing to sit down and listen every day, and we love to do that."

Hurricanes director of amateur scouting Tony MacDonald likes the fact Svechnikov takes pride in doing the little things

well and knows how to adapt because he's such a quick learner.

"Andrei has his own style and his game is perfectly suited to the one that is played today," MacDonald said. "Our only other second overall pick in the draft was Eric Staal in 2003, and while they are different type players, the one thing Svechnikov and Staal have in common is they score big goals in clutch situations."

"The player for me that Andrei most resembles in stature and style is Andrew Ladd, who we moved up to draft No. 4 in 2004. They are both big, strong and smart power wingers, and are skilled, efficient, play responsible defense and score goals. Andrei is blessed with more speed and can play any style game."

Brind'Amour said the biggest thing with Svechnikov is understanding no shift is insignificant.

"More than anything, I think he just takes a little breath here and there and you just can't in this League when you're out there," Brind'Amour said. "But he's finding his way."

Martinook, acquired by the Hurricanes in a trade with the Arizona Coyotes on May 3, has been impressed with Svechnikov's strength and hard work in the tough areas to create offense.

"He's got all the skill in the world, but you see how hard he pushes," Martinook said. "He pushes the pace, he pushes me, he pushes (Wallmark). We'll come off from a good shift where all three of us just gave it a little bit, and he's like, 'Let's go again.' He's a Russia-born player, but he's been here for a couple years and speaks good English. He's very vocal out there, which is awesome to have for a young guy. He obviously wants to be the best player he can."

Svechnikov was named the 2017-18 Canadian Hockey League Top Prospect of the Year, after he had 72 points (40 goals, 32 assists), nine power-play goals, six game-winning goals and a plus-26 rating in 44 regular-season games for Barrie of the Ontario Hockey League.

He also was considered the most NHL-ready player not named Rasmus Dahlin in the 2018 draft. Dahlin was selected No. 1 by the Buffalo Sabres.



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"Dahlin was the best D-man in the draft and we felt Svechnikov was the best forward so it worked out that both teams got what they wanted, and more importantly, what they needed," MacDonald said. "It was important to draft a player who could fit into the lineup right away and be capable of contributing to the team effort."

"Andrei is very humble and respectful, yet at the same time he exudes a quiet confidence that is a common trait found in strong leaders."

TODAY'S LINKS

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SportScan

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

1110061 Carolina Hurricanes

Jets end Canes' four-game winning streak

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

October 14, 2018 10:36 PM

In a season of firsts for Carolina Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour, there was another on Sunday.

This time, not a good one.

The Canes were beaten 3-1 by the Winnipeg Jets, ending their four-game winning streak and giving Brind'Amour his first regulation loss as a head coach.

Bryan Little's goal off the rush at 17:51 of the third period gave the Jets a 2-1 lead, and Kyle Connor added an empty-netter in the final second for the final margin. But the Jets' biggest star was backup goalie Laurent Brossoit, who made 42 saves and was the difference in the game at Bell MTS Place in Winnipeg.

Regulation losses are the worst -- zero points gained. The Canes (4-1-1) played hard and for the most part well much of the game, and goalie Petr Mrazek made some athletic, amazing saves, once stopping a two-on-none rush by the Jets.

But Brossoit was better this night. The only Canes goal came on a tap-in by Micheal Ferland after a Dougie Hamilton shot in the third -- Sebastian Aho earning an assist to extend his point streak to six games.

Little's goal came not long after the Canes iced the puck. The Canes' Andrei Svechnikov cleared the zone but failed to get the puck deep enough during a line change, and the Jets quickly counterattacked and Little scored.

"Those the ones that hurt a little bit but it's a learning experience," Brind'Amour said. "We had some mistakes by our young guys that cost us. That one at the end, we didn't quite get it out far enough. We always talk about we're fighting for inches and we didn't get it out far enough and they come back and counter. It's a tough learning lesson for these young guys but we believe in them and we move on.

"Everyone says that's a team that's up for the Stanley Cup. I didn't feel like we were over-matched. We were hanging in there with them and probably had some opportunities to win the game. Overall, I'm happy with the effort for sure."

Brossoit faced 18 shots in the first period, 32 in the first two and 43 in all. Mrazek had 24 saves, 13 in the second period when he made some spectacular stops.

The Jets scored the game's first goal in the third after Jordan Staal's shot smacked squarely into the post. Staal soon was called for a penalty and the Jets converted on the power play as Patrik Laine ripped a shot from the left circle at 4:14 of the third.

The Canes were in the back-half of a back-to-back set, having rallied Saturday to beat the Minnesota Wild in overtime, 5-4. The three-game road trip will end Tuesday against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Brind'Amour had notched his first victory as a head coach and had his first winning streak. He was the first head coach in franchise history to earn points in the first five games of the season. Now comes the first "L."

News Observer LOADED: 10.15.2018

1110062 Carolina Hurricanes

Canes find another way to win, rally to top Wild 5-4 in OT

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

October 14, 2018 08:50 AM

Carolina Hurricanes defenseman Dougie Hamilton recently was talking about the difference between teams that make the Stanley Cup playoffs and teams that don't, having played on both.

Talent, goaltending, injuries all are factors, Hamilton said, but also the ability to somehow squeeze points out of games where you're not at your best or close to a regulation loss.

The Hurricanes did a lot of squeezing Saturday.

Sixty-eight seconds away from their first regulation loss of the season, and Rod Brind'Amour's first as a head coach, the Canes first tied the score against the Minnesota Wild on Justin Williams' goal, then won it 5-4 at 2:57 in overtime on Sebastian Aho's second of the game.

Just like that, two points.

Tweeted Canes owner Tom Dundon: "I can't take much more of this!"

The Canes, who were starting a three-game road trip, were 4-0-1 and headed to Winnipeg. That was tied for the best start in franchise history -- the Canes/Hartford Whalers were 4-0-1 in 1995-96.

"You've got to give all the credit to our guys, they kept battling back," Brind'Amour said. "When they kept getting ahead there was no quit in our group. There are a lot of things to get better at but I just love the way we're not giving up."

Williams' goal with 1:08 left in regulation, his first of the season, came on a tight-angled shot after the Canes had pulled goalie Curtis McElhinney for a sixth attacker. Aho then ended it with a shot from the slot, ripping it past Wild goalie Devan Dubnyk.

Aho was a slow starter offensively his first two years in the NHL, but not in his third. The center has 10 points (four goals, six assists) in the first five games.

Aho finished with two goals and two assists for the Canes, who outshot the Wild 57-23, and McElhinney earned his third victory in as many starts



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with 19 saves. Williams had two assists and defenseman Brett Pesce a goal and assist.

The Canes led 1-0 in the first on Jordan Staal's goal and 2-1 in the second when Pesce redirected an Aho shot. The Wild took a 3-2 lead in the third before Aho tied the score with his first goal on a power play, and Minnesota led 4-3 after Mikael Granlund's score at 15:47 of the third at Xcel Energy Center.

"You can't argue with the compete in this group right now," Brind'Amour said. "The message has been pretty clear from day one and they've done what we've asked of them."

"I think they see it's a fun way to play but also a way where we can have outcomes like tonight where we can come back. They believe in each other and we have to keep that momentum."

Brind'Amour set some franchise history, too -- the first coach to earn points in each of his first five games.

News Observer LOADED: 10.15.2018

1110063 Carolina Hurricanes

It's an attitude not a 'system,' and it's working for Rod Brind'Amour's Hurricanes

By Sara Civian Oct 14, 2018

ST. PAUL, Minn — "If you don't score on a 5-on-3 that's generally a killer," Rod Brind'Amour conceded after the Hurricanes' 5-4 overtime win at Minnesota on Saturday. "You usually lose the game. That's just how it works. You have to score there, and we didn't."

Leave no doubt about it, the Hurricanes whiffed on their golden five-on-three opportunity. Even though it was only halfway through the first period, it was the kind of thing you watch in real time and chalk up to a loss.

What drove that feeling home further is the 5-on-3 that shall not be named was a microcosm of the Hurricanes' biggest issue right now — special teams. They're 2 for 19 on the power play and 13 for 19 on the penalty kill. They went 1 for 9 on the power play against the Wild. This is what it looked like before the third period, when Sebastian Aho broke the ice with the first comeback equalizer on the man advantage:

So, while the Canes ultimately led 57-23 in shots — the most from a Wild opponent in Xcel Energy Center history — a lot of those shots that could've been high-danger were kind of lobbed in or blocked.

"Our special teams are not good enough," Justin Williams said. "Our power play is not good enough. Our penalty kill is not good enough. That's the reason we had to battle back."

As Brind'Amour said, that's generally a killer in a game you have to come back twice in the third period to win. That's just how it works.

"Our (power play) has been bad all year," Aho offered. "But when we needed it most we scored."

Blemishes and all, how do you kill a team that just refuses to die?

"We have a lot to get better at right now, but you cannot argue with the compete in this group," Brind'Amour said. "No quit in our group ... I love the way we were just not giving up. We've got a good leadership group, they don't hang their heads."

In a sport with so much ridiculous performative anger, these guys seem to bounce right back after mistakes. While Williams noted they'd have been upset if they lost this one (come on, they tried so hard — 57 shots!),

Brind'Amour doesn't force them to pretend to be angry when the in-game bounces don't always go their way. In the time they might've spent fake-pouting on the bench, they're just worried about how to improve. That's been immediately evident already, with two insane third-period comeback rallies.

They're even encouraged to — *clutches pearls* — celebrate the wins! He knows Saturday night was far from perfect, but twice in our postgame conversation, Brind'Amour noted how much he and the players are going to enjoy this win.

"We gotta enjoy this because it was a good win for our group," he said. "... We have to take advantage of being on a roll because it could change in a heartbeat. You gotta take some time to enjoy it, though. It's one of those wins you don't see very often."

Can it really be that simple? How is this feel-good story of a Hurricanes hero-turned-bench-boss off to a franchise-best start (4-0-1) actually happening?

Strangely enough, it's happening in the same way that the power play is a ... uhh ... we'll call it a work in progress for now. When Brind'Amour said he wants his team to feel like it can make mistakes and "worry about them later," he very seriously meant it. To a certain extent, as long as you're playing hard, a few honest mistakes aren't going to toss you from his lineup. Through five games he's been true to that. Even if he had maybe wanted to shake things up on the power play, he must've felt the current units' levels of compete were up to snuff.

"Coach kept sticking with us, sticking with us," Williams said. "He was saying, 'All right these are the guys going out. Get it done.'"

They might be dishing out a few heart attacks in the process, but they're getting it done. The coach is all-in on his players, and they're all-in on his system.

"The message has been pretty clear from day one," Brind'Amour said. "They see that it's a fun way to play but also a way to have outcomes like tonight, where we can come back. We don't want to give up four goals every night, but they believe in each other right now."

Williams, who lived up to his "Mr. Game 7" nickname with the equalizer that sent his team to overtime, wouldn't exactly call it a system.

"System is one thing, it's an attitude, though," he tried to explain to me. "An attitude that we're never out of it and we can get it done. Listen, it's very early, but we're trending in the right direction. We're doing some good things and as a result, we're racking up some wins."

• I said it before and clearly it bears repeating: Aho is on another level this season. Not only is the October monkey off his back, but the winger who couldn't score until Nov. 13 last season transformed into the center with 10 points (four goals, six assists) by Oct. 14. What's more is he's racking up these points in crucial times — four points in a comeback thriller here, overtime game-winner there. Not to get ahead of ourselves in between Game 5 and Game 6 of the regular season, but perhaps this is the year he gets the national respect he deserves. Sandwiched somewhere among, like, 15 Maple Leafs players, he's No. 4 in the league in points. A friend who trains junior hockey players told me Aho is his favorite "2018 player addition ... every year I add a guy to my list to watch. He does so many subtle things well. Love his movement patterns. Every morning I make clips for my database of examples and I was like, 'I keep clipping this guy.'"

• So now we have the answer as to why the power-play units don't seem to be budging despite their struggles: Brind'Amour's embracing that struggle with the long term on his mind. As frustrating as it has been at times, you can't chalk any of it up to tangible losses yet, so c'est la vie.

• Brind'Amour legitimately didn't know he made franchise history with points in all five of his first games as head coach. When The Athletic Minnesota's Jessi Pierce asked him about it, his eyes got big.

"That's the first I've even heard of any of that stuff."



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You just know he meant it.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.15.2018

1110130 Tampa Bay Lightning

'Pucks had eyes' for Lightning vs. Blue Jackets

By Nick Kelly Published: October 14, 2018 Updated: October 14, 2018 at 11:20 PM

TAMPA – Saturday, the Lightning made it look as if its first two games of the season never happened.

Remember that team that couldn't score more than one goal a game? It seemed all but a distant memory.

The team that scored the most goals of any NHL team last season waited three games to truly make its return. And the Lightning made up for the lack of goals scored in an 8-2 win over the Blue Jackets.

The eight goals are tied for second most in a game in franchise history.

"Overall, I liked the way we put ourselves in a lot of positions to score (Saturday night)," coach Jon Cooper said after the game. "We were fortunate the pucks had eyes for us."

Here are some Lightning numbers to know from the rout of the Blue Jackets:

7 Players scored: Victor Hedman, Cedric Paquette, Brayden Point, Yanni Gourde, Alex Killorn, Nikita Kucherov and J.T. Miller.

6 Players had multiple points. Miller (goal and two assists) and Point (two goals and an assist) led the team with three each.

13 Players of the 23 on the roster registered a point.

4 Power-play goals scored, tied for the second most in a game in franchise history. The last time the Lightning scored four in one game was on Jan. 12, 2010, in a 7-4 victory over Washington. The four also are tied for the most power-play goals in one home game.

0 Power-play goals allowed through three games. The Lightning even killed a four-minute penalty in the second period. This is the same team whose penalty kill finished 28th in the NHL last season. After Saturday, the Lightning leads the NHL in penalty kill. The other teams in the top five have played at least four games, though.

The penalty-kill streak almost came to an end in the first period when Point went to the box for slashing. Goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy, who stopped 30 of 32 shots overall, stopped a barrage of shots but was out of position to make one more save. The Blue Jackets would have scored if defenseman Anton Stralman had not jumped in front of the puck in the crease.

"That's what our PK is doing: blocking shots, getting sticks in the lane," Point said. "That was a big turning point in the game."

As the Blue Jackets power play expired, Paquette scored to give the Lightning a 2-0 lead.

Up next

vs. Hurricanes, 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Amalie Arena

TV/radio: Fox Sports Sun; 970-AM

Carolina is off to a hot start. It has nine points and leads the Metropolitan Division with a 4-1-1 record, and it didn't lose its first game in regulation

until Sunday against the Jets. Tuesday's game is the Lightning's fourth in a five-game home stand.

Tampa Bay Times LOADED: 10.15.2018

1110067 Colorado Avalanche

After embarrassing OT loss at home, Avalanche prepares to hit the road

By MIKE CHAMBERS | October 14, 2018 at 3:56 PM

Kiszla: Bradley Chubb failing to make impact expected of No. 5 draft pick. Here's what Broncos can do about it.

Shortly after Calgary star forward Johnny Gaudreau scored to beat the Avalanche in overtime, 3-2, late Saturday night to complete a comeback at the Pepsi Center, Avs players met to discuss the meltdown. And then the players met with the coaches.

The consensus: Get back to work and put the loss behind them. The Avs were outshot 31-9 after taking a 2-0 lead into the second period.

So the team practiced Sunday in good spirits. No bag skate. No mid-drill meetings. No dodging the media.

"The players had a chat yesterday after the game and I know some of the things that were said," Avs coach Jared Bednar said after Sunday's practice. "The coaches met with the players this morning and went over some things that were pretty obvious after looking at in on video on why we weren't successful. We went out and worked on some D-zone coverage today and getting quick to contact and making sure we got support around the puck. I thought our intensity level was really good.

"We're all aware, coaches and players, that that wasn't our best game and that when teams push we have to push back."

The Avs (3-0-1) will travel to New York on Monday and play the Rangers on Tuesday to begin a four-game road trip. The eight-day East Coast swing goes through New Jersey, Carolina and Philadelphia.

Colorado is in the midst of stretch where it plays seven of eight games on the road.

"Four games, good teams — some of those teams are playing real good right now," Bednar said of the upcoming trip. "It will be a good challenge for us. I'm excited to get back out on the road, actually, see what our team's got. Just came off a short road trip, playing really well in one game, so hopefully we can repeat that performance."

Footnotes. Goalie Semyon Varlamov (3-0-1) will make his third consecutive start Tuesday in New York. Philipp Grubauer (0-1) is expected to start Thursday at New Jersey. ... Forward Sven Andrighetto again practiced in a non-contact jersey Sunday but will not travel Monday. Andrighetto, who might join the team at some point on the road, suffered a leg injury in preseason and has yet to play in the regular season. An extra forward will be called up from the Colorado Eagles of the American Hockey League to begin the trip. ... Rookie defenseman Conor Timmins has been sent home to Ontario, Canada, where he will continue to recover from concussion-like symptoms. Timmins had been skating on his own and attending Avalanche home games but the team felt he wasn't improving. "Our trainers are in constant communication with him," Bednar said of Timmins.

Denver Post: LOADED: 10.15.2018

1110068 Colorado Avalanche



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Flames scratch and claw their way to an overtime win over Avs

By Jeremy Jerez - October 14, 2018

A hot start from the Avalanche wasn't enough to keep the Flames down as Calgary fought their way back into the game, ultimately stealing the win in overtime. The road team won on a Johnny Gaudreau breakthrough, burying the Avs 3-2 for the first Colorado home loss of the year.

"Our first period and our goaltender got us a point," coach Jared Bednar said following the loss. "We should be happy as can be getting a point out of that."

Eleven seconds was all it took for Nathan MacKinnon to keep his scoring streak alive, scoring in each of the five games the Avalanche have played this season.

A second early dagger helped suck some life out of the Flames when J.T. Compher capitalized on one of the Flames defenseman's turnover at 2:40 into the game. After creating some havoc on the forecheck, Compher walked in all alone and scored his third goal of the season, putting the Avalanche up 2-0.

"We had a great start to the game where we come out with a purpose," Bednar assessed. "And then it looked to me like we thought it was going to be easy; get away from our game, standing around, every play has to be a fancy play, every play has to be through somebody on the other team, we won't skate, no intent to get any pucks to the net."

The game seemed to be out of Calgary's reach at that point. Not only was the score 2-0, but the shot count favored the Avalanche pretty heavily. However, the Flames noticeably shifted momentum and were able to get their first goal just over halfway into the second period. Sam Bennett put home a juicy rebound off of the rush and Calgary was finally able to get on the scoreboard.

"I guess we were surprised, we should have expected more of a response," Nathan MacKinnon commented on the Flames pushback. "It's pretty rare teams call timeout quick. Obviously, they weren't happy. I'm sure Bill Peters wasn't happy and it got them fired up for the rest of the game."

The 2-1 lead heading into the third period presented some adversity for Colorado, and there was a palpable tension inside Pepsi Center as the entire building felt the momentum shift that had taken place.

The Flames refused to lay down and threw everything they could at the Avalanche in the third period, and the Avs stayed resilient during the onslaught of Calgary shots. That is until the Flames added the extra attacker and with 1:54 left in the third period, Elias Lindholm finally tied the game for Calgary.

It was a deflating goal for the home team, and despite the team's usual success in 3-on-3 overtime, the Avalanche were on their heels and it showed in the 46 seconds of overtime that occurred.

As Bednar alluded to, Avs goaltender Semyon Varlamov was Colorado's biggest asset once again, particularly while the Avs were on the penalty kill. Varlamov stopped 38 shots Saturday night, 12 of which while Calgary had the man advantage. The Avalanche penalty kill was 4-for-4 on the night, moving to 22-for-23 on the season.

"He's great, we need to help him for sure," MacKinnon said on his goaltender's play. "Tonight he faced 42 shots or something. You know, that's very preventable. They played well but we kind of gave it to them as well."

Johnny Gaudreau's overtime winner resulted in a loss that was tough for the Avalanche to swallow. But, Colorado are still off to a strong start as they head out on a four-game east coast swing playing the New York Rangers, New Jersey Devils, Carolina Hurricanes and Philadelphia Flyers respectively.

A quick practice on Sunday is all they will have to readjust before they take their flight out east on Monday.

milehighsports.com LOADED: 10.15.2018

1110074 Detroit Red Wings

Detroit Red Wings' forwards 'not good enough,' need to hold onto puck

Helene St. James, Detroit Free Press

Published 4:10 p.m. ET Oct. 14,

MONTREAL — The Detroit Red Wings had a meeting before practice on Sunday, reflecting the urgency for a victory.

Their next chance comes Monday against the Canadiens. Smarting from Saturday's 8-2 humiliation in Boston, the Wings went over what they need to do better — win one-on-one battles, get pucks deep and hold onto the puck in the offensive zone, among other things. There's growing frustration that the Wings can't seem to get it together.

"I showed 19 clips today," coach Jeff Blashill said. "Not one of them were clips where we didn't have enough talent to win. That's not the case. We have good enough players to win, without a shadow of a doubt. We have to make sure that we are doing the work and winning the battles that it takes to win."

Frans Nielsen called it a "good meeting. We talked about how we have to be harder on the puck and make better decisions with the puck. It starts with us veterans — we have to play the right way and hopefully the younger guys are going to follow that."

Blashill called out the team's forwards for "not being good enough" in Boston. He is making at least one lineup change up front against Montreal as Martin Frk will make his season debut; he adds a shot from the right and he shoots hard. Frk practiced with Justin Abdelkader and Christoffer Ehn.

On the back end, rookie Dennis Cholowski (upper body) is expected to be available. Danny DeKeyser re-aggravated a hand injury on Saturday and is to see a specialist Tuesday; beyond that, the timeline is uncertain. If Cholowski can't play, Luke Witkowski will sub in.

Andreas Athanasiou and Thomas Vanek are two forwards who are overdue in the offensive zone. Athanasiou, especially, has been snake-bit on breakaways.

"A lot of those chances, nine times out of 10, they go in," he said. "Chances are there every game. It's just a matter of bearing down and one will go in eventually."

Blashill had Athanasiou with Frans Nielsen and Tyler Bertuzzi as lines were given new looks in hopes of sparking a revival.

Bruins center Noel Acciari tries to score as Red Wings goaltender Jonathan Bernier makes a save during the second period of the Wings' 8-2 loss on Saturday, Oct. 13, 2018, in Boston. Mary Schwalm, AP

"How to dig out is simple," Blashill said. "We've had a bunch of guys who've had lots of chances over the course of the first four games that didn't score. The answer to that can't be hoping for offense and cheating for offense and to stop working. It has to be to work and do it right and and simplify."

"What's happening a little bit for us is when it goes the wrong way, one, we slump our shoulders, so we better get rid of that right now. We better get our shoulders up and chins up and go to work. And two, we start trying to force it at times. We just have to simplify and play the right way



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and trust in a shift-by-shift basis. Certainly we need some guys that have been around here the last number of years to step up and be big-time players on their next shifts.”

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 10.15.2018

1110075 Detroit Red Wings

Detroit Red Wings can win by losing, but it requires patience

Staff Report

Detroit — This is no time for the squeamish.

Faced with a 0-3-2 start, their worst in 38 years, the Red Wings are conjuring thoughts of times that try souls, and concerns about summer soldiers and sunshine patriots.

Used to prolonged success, this feels epochal.

It is.

But it is also hockey, not the American Revolution. And, it all argues for staying the course.

The leaders of the ground-swelling “Lose for Hughes” campaign cannot complain if the Wings’ losses pile high.

Losing is required, if a goal is to improve lottery odds enough for the Red Wings to have the best shot at Jack Hughes, who skates with some brilliance in Plymouth for the National Team Development Program (NTDP) of USA Hockey.

A lot of losing.

Well, they are off to a pretty good start. And, management should let it go.

Temptation may build to peruse the waiver wire, hoping to staunch the bleeding.

Forget about it.

No player should ever take the ice intending to lose. It is up to management to design a roster, under reconstruction, that provides the best opportunity for draft position.

It is how a team tanks, not by quitting on the ice.

The time for churning the roster, having arrived a while ago, is ever more present now.

Whether one’s belief is in God or the “hockey gods,” it almost feels as if divine intervention is leading the way.

Injuries to Trevor Daley, Danny DeKeyser, Jonathan Ericsson, Mike Green and Niklas Kronwall have churned the roster in a way that management has, until recently, resisted.

Seizing that initiative, GM Ken Holland said at the end of 2017-18 that the Red Wings would skate two or three new players, at the start of 2018-19.

Arguably late to the task, Holland kept his promise.

Then, casualties intervened.

In addition to starting the season with Dennis Cholowski, Christoffer Ehn and Michael Rasmussen, and perhaps Evgeny Svechnikov, until his injury, the Wings have added Joe Hicketts, Filip Hronek and Libor Sulak.

They are playing well enough to suggest the best way forward is to keep them in the lineup.

Oh, they make mistakes. One cringes, occasionally, watching.

But, the frank assessment is that they do not make that many more than the veterans. For evidence, recall the cringing in 2017-18.

Plus, the younger guys play with more pace.

The announced goal of the Red Wings for two seasons has been playing with pace. The quartet of debuting defensemen help provide more of it.

Any consideration of looking to the waiver wire to fill sandbags for the tidal surge of this early October is trumped by the twin considerations of development and losing for Hughes.

It will take 200 to 250 games played, at least, before the status of Cholowski, Hicketts, Hronek and Sulak as NHL defensemen is substantially clear.

Monday, in Montreal, they may play in their fourth, fifth, sixth and sixth games, respectively.

Play them. And then, let them play on.

Playing in Grand Rapids is not the best way for the 19-year-old Rasmussen to learn how to use that big body to finagle and finesse his way into net-front position in the NHL.

Playing him in the NHL is.

Enough banging without consistent results is likely to produce motivation for the work a young man so serious and dutiful surely knows must be done, this season and in the offseason.

Meanwhile, Filip Zadina is finding more open ice in Grand Rapids.

Zadina followed his two-goal performance Friday with four shots on goal Saturday. If he proceeds apace, the Wings should make room by Thanksgiving, if not Halloween.

The argument for more AHL experience fades when the parent club is losing. Ever more so, when losing is simply part of the price.

In rebuilding an NHL team, as in life, sometimes the way forward seems to go backward and seeing into darkness provides is the only light.

That is where the Red Wings are.

Embrace it.

And, whether it is the guidance of Eastern philosophy, or thoughts of George Washington reading Thomas Paine’s words “these are the times ...” to his troops at Valley Forge, grab what you need to make it through.

While we can expect Daley, Ericsson and Green back in the lineup, as Holland makes good on his vow to “honor all those contracts,” management must banish thoughts of reinforcing from waivers, despite the mounting losses.

And, assertiveness is required to create playing time for Cholowski, Hicketts, Hronek and Sulak, after the veterans return, and for Zadina, if he keeps finding room to operate, in the AHL.

The way forward is not trying to lose 50 instead of 60.

The way forward is steadfastness in a difficult moment.

Watching Frans Nielsen and Dylan Larkin on Fox Sports Detroit after the 8-2 debacle in Boston revealed resoluteness.

Larkin twice said he felt he should have dropped the gloves, at one juncture.

“We’ve played five games,” the young general said. “We have a lot of games to go here, so we have to find a way to turn this around.”



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"It's not going to be a fun year if it keeps going like this. And, we all know that."

No sunshine patriot, Larkin. No summer soldier, he.

Detroit News LOADED: 10.15.2018

1110076 Detroit Red Wings

Woeful offense dragging down winless Detroit Red Wings

Staff Report

Published 4:53 p.m. ET Oct. 14, 2018 | Updated 5:30 p.m. ET Oct. 14, 2018

Montreal — The Detroit Red Wings need a victory in a bad way.

The Wings and Florida are the only teams without a victory, and the Wings are coming off their worst game of the season Saturday, a terrible 8-2 loss in Boston.

Winless in five games (0-3-2), the Wings desperately need a victory over Montreal on Monday, but for that to happen, the offense needs to perk up.

For all the talk of an extremely young, inexperienced defense filling in for the Wings' many injured defensemen, there are a lot of young and old forwards who aren't scoring.

Justin Abdelkader and Thomas Vanek are without a point, with Abdelkader possessing a minus-5 rating and Vanek a minus-6.

Michael Rasmussen and Andreas Athanasiou both have one point (assists), while Frans Nielsen has two points, both assists.

Anthony Mantha has one goal and an assist. Gustav Nyquist has four assists, but is searching for his first goal.

When you take away the contributions of Dylan Larkin (three goals, two assists) and Tyler Bertuzzi (two goals, two assists), the forwards have been largely ineffective offensively.

"We can't panic right now," Nielsen said. "We've just got to simplify and play the right way. We're going to win games, but it's important that we turn this around quick now because we can't fall too far behind."

The Wings only have 11 goals as a team — eight teams had fewer entering play Sunday — and their minus-12 goal differential was the worst in the NHL.

Martin Frk is likely to make his season debut Monday, and with 11 goals last season, Frk could provide a spark.

But the Wings are going to need more out of lot of players to get out of their present hole.

"Each guy looks in the mirror and digs in," coach Jeff Blashill said. "There's no easy solution to it. There's no magic pill. There's no tricks that we can pull out. Each guy looks in the mirror and digs in and says they're going to be way better, says that's unacceptable for themselves.

"You can pass blame from guy to guy and that doesn't do any good at all. You've got to dig in and be better yourself."

Injury updates

Blashill said defenseman Danny DeKeyser (hand) will see doctors Tuesday, after the Wings return home.

DeKeyser was injured early in Saturday's loss.

One positive for the Wings is that defenseman Dennis Cholowski (upper body) is likely to return to the lineup, taking DeKeyser's spot against Montreal.

Trevor Daley (upper body), Jonathan Ericsson (upper body) and Mike Green (infection) all remain unavailable.

Ice chips

The Wings must do a better job of managing the puck. Turnovers led to numerous Boston scoring chances.

"Whether it's in our zone, through the neutral zone especially, then when we get chances in our offensive zone, don't give (opponents) free opportunities to come racing at us," Abdelkader said. "We just have to be a lot better that way if we want to win."

... Goaltender Jimmy Howard is likely to start Monday.

Red Wings at Canadiens

Faceoff: 7:30 Monday, Bell Centre, Montreal

TV/radio: FSD/97.1

Outlook: Montreal (2-1-1, 5 points) has been a mild surprise in the early going, Saturday defeating Pittsburgh 4-3 in a shootout. ... LW Tomas Tatar, the former Red Wing, had two goals and an assist Saturday. ... D Jeff Petry of Orchard Lake St. Mary's played for Michigan State.

Detroit News LOADED: 10.15.2018

1110150 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Winnipeg Jets top Carolina Hurricanes behind Bryan Little's late tally

Canadian Press October 14, 2018, 9:59 PM

WINNIPEG — Blake Wheeler had to be honest — it was not the Winnipeg Jets' prettiest win. But it will do.

Bryan Little put away the winner with just over two minutes left in the third period as the Jets topped the Carolina Hurricanes 3-1 on Sunday night as Winnipeg began a six-game homestand.

"I'm not going to pretend we're firing on all cylinders right now but we're grinding," said Wheeler after the win.

Patrik Laine set things up with the first goal of the game earlier in the third and Kyle Connor added one into an empty net with a second to go. Micheal Ferland scored Carolina's only goal, in a game that started out looking like it was the Hurricanes' to lose.

The Jets (3-2-0) were swarmed by Carolina (4-1-1) in the scoreless first period, outshot 18-6, and coughed up the puck often to put pressure on new backup goalie Laurent Brossoit.

But Wheeler said there was no panic or theatrics in the dressing room.

"There was no coming to Jesus speech we didn't need to reinvent the wheel," said the Winnipeg captain. "There's an element of patience and being positive five games in to the season that you know you just stay with it and find a way to get two points. Tomorrow we'll try to get better. Hopefully the next game we'll be quicker."

Jets head coach Paul Maurice agreed with Wheeler.



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"We knew going into the game that the puck wasn't going to get moved well or easily," said Maurice. "That game wasn't going to look like you would hope it would. It hasn't for any of their opponents. Nobody's beat them in regulation. They're on fire right now. We had our challenges all night with them and still found a way to create some pretty good offence."

Ferland said it was a frustrating loss but that overall there was a lot for Carolina to learn from.

"It's a tough one, especially to lose that late in the game," he said. "I thought we kept our foot on the gas the entire game, kept going at them and at them. Their goalie played really good. Our goalie played really good, too. I think we would have at least deserved a point there."

Hurricanes head coach Rod Brind'Amour said it was a learning experience for a young team.

"We had some mistakes by our young guys tonight that cost us," said Brind'Amour. "At the end there, we didn't quite get it out far enough. We always talk about we're fighting for inches and we didn't get it far enough. They come back and counter and it's in the net."

"It's a tough learning lesson for these young guys but we believe in them and we will move on for tomorrow."

Brossoit said his only regret was not stopping all 43 shots.

"If I didn't let in that one goal. I felt good in the game, and obviously it's nice to contribute and get that first win out of the way."

Notes: Winnipeg put Marko Dano on waivers before the game. The 23-year-old forward hasn't played for the Jets, his third NHL franchise, this season. He was a 2013 first-round draft pick.

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1110151 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Beyond the Headlines: Why Leafs' Nylander hasn't received an offer sheet

Chris Johnston | October 14, 2018, 11:12 AM

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

Explaining Nylander's lack of offer sheets

Some NHL teams have worked through it as a thought exercise. Others have crunched numbers and made phone calls and more seriously considered the possibility of extending William Nylander an offer sheet.

And yet, one month and one day after the Toronto Maple Leafs opened training camp without him, the dynamic forward remains without a contract of any kind.

Seems strange, doesn't it?

Well, the reason why doesn't appear to have anything to do with league-wide collusion or fear of breaking code with the Old Boys Network. It's a mixture of math and common sense. As one astute member of another team's front office pointed out, the answer is right there in plain sight in Article 10.4 of the CBA — the one titled "Draft Choice Compensation for Restricted Free Agents."

It reads: "The number and quality of draft choices due to the Prior Club shall be based on the average annual value of the compensation contained in the Principal Terms ... of the New Club's Offer Sheet

(determined by dividing such compensation by the lesser the number of years of the Offer Sheet or five)."

The real challenge when drafting an offer sheet is finding a number and contract structure that the other team either can't or won't match and having both the salary and draft pick compensation land in a range you can live with as a price for acquiring the player.

This clause makes the task basically impossible with Nylander, who hasn't wavered on his desire for a long-term deal.

Let's say you were willing to give him Leon Draisaitl's AAV (\$8.5 million) over the maximum term allowable (seven years). The total value of that contract would come in at \$59.5 million, which when divided by five would be calculated as an \$11.9-million offer to the player.

Look where that falls on the NHL's chart:

OFFER COMPENSATION

\$1,339,575 or below None

Over \$1,339,575 to \$2,029,659 Third-round choice

Over \$2,029,659 to \$4,059,322 Second-round choice

Over \$4,059,322 to \$6,088,980 First-round and third-round choice

Over \$6,088,980 to \$8,118,641 First-round, second-round and third-round choice

Over \$8,118,641 to \$10,148,302 Two first-round choices, one second- and one third-round choice

Over \$10,148,302 Four first-round choices

Four first-round draft choices. Four! Even if you value Nylander highly, as many teams including the Leafs do, that's an untenable number of non-lottery-protected picks to pay for anyone below the McDavid/Matthews/Laine stratosphere. And it would remain the compensation required if you lowered a seven-year offer to an AAV of \$8 million, or even \$7.5 million.

About the only way to make Toronto think long and hard would be offering a five-year deal just under the \$8.118-million threshold. That contract would walk Nylander straight to unrestricted free agency and cost a first, second and a third in compensation to the Leafs.

Is anyone doing that? Evidently not.

And so the interested suitors patiently wait to see if Kyle Dubas changes his stance on keeping the skilled Swede off the table in trade discussions...

Elsewhere on the Nylander front, there have been rumblings out of Europe in the last 48 hours that Willy is thinking about Ufa — not his UFA status, not yet, but the city located some 1,200 kilometres east of Moscow — because KHL club Salavat Yulaev has expressed strong interest.

(Good luck unearthing a firm "yay" or "nay" on that potentially interesting tidbit from official sources.)

The only trouble is that Nylander can't play a game in the KHL or anywhere else on the continent if he intends to return to the NHL this season, since that would require him to clear waivers immediately upon signing back in North America.

Even though the player's camp has drawn a strong line in negotiations, the 22-year-old does not appear to be preparing for a full season away. He continues to wear full Leafs practice gear while going through skills and skating workouts in Stockholm.

(E5)

Elliotte Friedman slipped in a silent bombshell right out of the gates on Headlines last night. The Man of Many Thoughts likes to come in low.



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My eyebrows were certainly raised when he slyly mentioned that Toronto's current push to sign Auston Matthews could see him sign a five-year extension, rather than the industry standard of eight. Ummm, excuse me?

The debate about whether a star player would be better off insisting on a shorter term for his second contract has been quietly waged among agents, NHL executives and media types in barroom's around the continent. It hinges on the idea that he would set himself up for an even greater payday on Deal 3 while still in possession of elite production and mega leverage in a league skewing ever younger.

The only thing is we haven't seen any young star test the theory since term limits were introduced coming out of the 2012-13 lockout. Connor McDavid, Jack Eichel, Aaron Ekblad and Draisaitl each opted for maximum security with life-changing money on an eight-year deal.

Matthews is on deck and could break the mould. As we're learning, he's increasingly comfortable doing his own thing.

STRAIGHT JACKET

Brother Nick Kypreos peeled back the first layer of an onion that could become a tear-jerker for the Columbus Blue Jackets when he reported on Headlines that two-time Vezina Trophy winner Sergei Bobrovsky has already drawn trade interest.

Talk about a no-win situation for the Blue Jackets.

Bobrovsky is a pending UFA who wants Carey Price money and has so far been unwilling to discuss an extension. He is also in possession of a full no-movement clause. Plus, goalies tend not to yield much value on the trade market as it is, and Columbus is a team trying to win now.

Then there's the fact Goalie Bob allowed all eight goals in Saturday's 8-2 loss in Tampa – the first time he's surrendered that many in a 397-game NHL career.

Play the Sportsnet Fantasy Hockey Pool for your chance to score big with over \$30,000 worth of prizes to be awarded!

SMOKE 'EM IF YOU'VE GOT 'EM

Canada is set to blow the doors wide open when the Cannabis Act goes into effect on Wednesday, but there won't be a fundamental impact on the NHL until or unless every U.S. state eventually follows suit.

No NHL team physician will be able to prescribe cannabis products for pain relief, for example, not with players frequently crossing borders into regions where it's still prohibited. That would be illegal.

Of course, there's nothing stopping Canadian-based players from seeking out that type of medication on their own at home. But that's always been the case.

An unpublicized aspect of the NHL-NHLPA drug-testing program is that while recreational drugs have always been tested for, they've not been subject to league-imposed suspensions. In fact, the only time a positive result might prompt action of any kind is if a dangerous amount of a substance was revealed – and even then it would be handled with confidentiality under the "Substance Abuse and Behavioural Health" program.

When it comes to non-performance-enhancing drugs, the league and PA are only worried about a player's health. That makes them more progressive than the lawmakers.

A weekly deep dive into the biggest hockey news in the world with hosts Elliott Friedman and Jeff Marek. New episodes every Thursday.

APPEAL FOR A PAYCHEQUE

With the first of two expected appeals on Tom Wilson's 20-game suspension not set to go down until Thursday in Manhattan, the Washington Capitals agitator is essentially fighting to mitigate his financial losses rather than his time out of the lineup.

By the time NHL commissioner Gary Bettman hears this appeal and rules on it, and neutral arbitrator Shyam Das hears the next appeal and rules on it, the Capitals may very well have played 20 games – just as the Calgary Flames had when Dennis Wideman's 20-game suspension was reduced to 10 in March 2016.

However, it's a process worth enduring for a multi-time repeat offender like Wilson.

He's scheduled to forfeit \$1,260,162.60 in salary for the devastating hit he laid on Oscar Sundqvist of the St. Louis Blues in pre-season and would recoup \$63,008.13 for every potential game the suspension might be reduced.

An interesting subplot here: Wilson is only due to draw \$1.1 million in salary this season after receiving a \$5-million signing bonus in the summer, so he won't receive another paycheque until 2019-20 unless the suspension is lowered.

KEEPING KOTKANIEMI?

The Montreal Canadiens still have more than a week before they need to decide if 18-year-old centre Jesperi Kotkaniemi plays his 10th NHL game and burns the first year of his entry-level contract.

But I already like the kid's chances.

Management is conducting a game-by-game evaluation of Kotkaniemi and is extremely pleased with what they've seen so far. The Finn is being heavily sheltered by coach Claude Julien – he's taken 23 faceoffs in the offensive zone, 18 faceoffs in the neutral zone and just two faceoffs in the defensive zone – but the Canadiens have been absolutely dominant in shot attempts (67.09 per cent), high-danger scoring chances (76.92 per cent) and every other metric with him on the ice at even strength, per naturalstattract.com.

They've outscored opponents 2-0 in his 5-on-5 minutes as well.

For what it's worth, Kotkaniemi recently moved out of the hotel where he'd been staying in Montreal. He's now living in an apartment with his mother, Kati, near the Bell Centre.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 10.15.2018

1110152 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Takeaways: Oilers' nervy start raises questions over team's depth

Mark Spector | October 14, 2018, 8:20 PM

The Edmonton Oilers spent the first night in their own beds in two weeks Saturday, after a European and Eastern seaboard excursion was capped off with a 2-1 win in New York Saturday afternoon.

Three games into their season they're 1-2, with one last roadie left in Winnipeg Tuesday night before returning to Edmonton for a killer run against Boston, Nashville, Pittsburgh, Washington and on the road in Nashville again.

So far, Connor McDavid has held up his end of the bargain. He's been the only producer the team has, with two goals and a point on each of the five goals this team has scored. Leon Draisaitl hasn't hit the scoresheet with anyone other than McDavid and sits at minus-4 with just four shots on net – a major early problem for Edmonton. Draisaitl has been on the ice for nine more shots against than shots for, and if that No. 2 line can't produce – or worse, gives up more than it gets – the Oilers are in trouble.



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While the Toronto Maple Leafs are averaging five goals per game, and Chicago, Boston and Carolina four each, the Oilers have five goals — period — after a pre-season in which they poured in goals for fun almost every night.

Where did the offence go? What else is going on during a nervous start for the Oilers?

Here are a few takeaways from their 1-2 start, while the team takes the Sunday off, back home in Edmonton for the first time in a fortnight.

Where art thou, pre-season?

Edmonton had an inspiring 7-1 pre-season, but the real sense of optimism came from the various boxes the club checked off during that stretch.

Ty Rattie, Kailer Yamamoto and Jesse Puljujarvi — the three young right-wingers who formed a collective question mark on the right side — all piled up points, turning a perceived weakness into at worst an area that looked like it might carry its own weight. Three games into the regular season, however, the trio has one lonely assist between them. That's it.

Rattie has been effective, more as a passer than a shooter, while Yamamoto only emerged in Game 3 when he drew a pair of penalties with some inspired play. Puljujarvi, who appeared to have taken a huge step during the pre-season, has been invisible so far, as the 20-year-old proved once again that a young player's game does not ascend in a straight line.

There is a ton of player in the big Finn, and he's only 20. But boy, you wonder when the time will come that he becomes an everyday player?

Play the Sportsnet Fantasy Hockey Pool for your chance to score big with over \$30,000 worth of prizes to be awarded!

Tending the Twine

Goalie Cam Talbot's pre-season was focused and thorough. Then the regular season started, and he watched seven pucks fly past in his first two games. It was more a reflection of the quality of the chances, but still... seven goals — not counting two empty-netters. Ouch.

Talbot gave the Oilers exactly what they needed in New York however, a 2-1 win where he outduelled Henrik Lundqvist. And frankly, of the eight goals Talbot has surrendered, it is reasonable to ask for a save on only one or two of them.

The rest were like Mika Zibanejad's goal in New York, a back-door, open-net opportunity that just doesn't get stopped. Talbot has proven thus far that if his club defends properly in front of him, he will make the saves he should — and a few he shouldn't.

After last season, the resurgence of his game was an absolute must. So far, so good.

Deep 6? Or bottom 6?

The bottom six — lines No. 3 and 4 — hasn't been productive enough, it's just that simple. If these are a bunch of eight- to 15-goal players, then fine. But those players need to start chipping away at those totals now, not weeks from now, because zero goals from anyone outside the top two lines won't cut it in today's NHL.

Fourth-line centre Kyle Brodziak was healthy scratched in Game 2, and the next night so was fourth-line staple Zack Kassian, who simply has not found whatever he had in that playoff run of 2017 — which is a long time ago. Tobias Rieder's speed needs to percolate into the odd offensive chance, and Ryan Strome — whose line was excellent defensively and dominated its matchup in New York — needs to take that one step further and start creating some scoring chances.

This team won't get a ton of points from its blue line, which puts more pressure on the third- and fourth-lines to pitch in with the odd goal. So far, nada.

Is this defence good enough?

The ability of this blue line to keep its head above water, more than anything, will be where the Oilers season is decided. A first pairing of Oscar Klefbom and Adam Larsson is OK — they're two good players — but that duo would be a second pairing on a Cup contender. Through three games the Oilers have been average at best in their own end — and more so, exiting their own zone — while surrendering 10 goals. But dig a little deeper, and you can see reasons to give this group more time.

Two goals were empty-netters. So that takes the total down to eight in three games.

Another goal against came on a 18-foot, penalty-killing deflection off of Oiler Drake Caggiula. A total fluke. Another goal was a correctable, behind-the-net miscue by Talbot that led directly to a goal.

If we were talking about a team that gave up six goals in three games, they'd grade out pretty well. More time is needed to get an answer on this D-corps, and the progress of the second pairing of Darnell Nurse and Matt Benning will be a major factor. So far, they have struggled.

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TSN.CA / Statistically Speaking: Chabot, Kapanen offer waiver wire help

Scott Cullen

It's obviously very early in the NHL season, and you may very well like the team that you drafted. But, if you're ready to make a change — perhaps prompted by an early injury or two — there are some players that will offer some value on the waiver wire.

There's real value in plucking a player off the early waiver wire. Sometimes that good early start is the precursor to a productive season and beating others to the punch is one way to gain an edge.

Here are some players to consider that are owned in fewer than 60% of TSN leagues:

Thomas Chabot — The second-year defenceman showed promise as a rookie last season, but he's been thrust into a major role on the re-tooled Senators blue line, up more than four minutes per game since last season to play 21:35 per game. Chabot has also been productive, riding a five-game point streak, during which he's put up eight points (2 G, 6 A). Owned: 54.7%

Elias Lindholm — He had tough start in his first game with the Flames, but the 23-year-old has been on target since, scoring six points (4 G, 2 A) during a four-game point streak. He's playing more than 20 minutes per game and generating a career-high 2.6 shots on goal per game. Owned: 28.3%

Micheal Ferland — Acquired by Carolina in the deal that sent Lindholm to Calgary, Ferland has provided an expected physical presence, with a three hits per game, but he also has six points (3 G, 3 A) in six games. Owned: 20.0%

Kasper Kapanen has landed a plum spot on Auston Matthews' wing.

Kasper Kapanen — William Nylander's absence from the Toronto Maple Leafs lineup has opened the door to a great opportunity for the speedy 22-year-old winger, who has responded to a move to Auston Matthews' wing by producing six points (2 G, 4 A) in four games. Owned: 10.6%

Chris Tierney — The most proven NHL commodity going to Ottawa as part of the Erik Karlsson trade, the 24-year-old is enjoying a bigger role



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with the Senators, and has a five-game point streak, during which he's produced seven points (2 G, 5 A). He has generated just four shots on goal and the Senators are getting 37% of the shots with him on the ice, though, so that offensive production will be hard to sustain without more chances being created. Owned: 11.9%

Keith Kinkaid – Maybe the Devils have been a little surprising, on their way to a 3-0 start, and maybe Kinkaid is a little surprising as their No. 1 netminder, but he played well down the stretch last season to get New Jersey into the playoffs and he's playing well now, posting a .949 save percentage in three starts. If you need help between the pipes, Kinkaid is well worth a look. Owned: 15.9%

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TSN.CA / Statistically Speaking: A long road to Campbell's first shutout

Scott Cullen

Jack Campbell shuts out the Habs; Kessel, Perron, Panarin, Zucker, DeBrincat, Tavares, Matthews, Rinne and more in Scott Cullen's Statistically Speaking.

Kings netminder Jack Campbell recorded the first shutout of his NHL career, stopping all 40 shots that he faced in a 3-0 victory at Montreal.

Campbell is getting a chance to start while veteran Jonathan Quick is injured and the 26-year-old has had a long, circuitous route to his first NHL shutout. It started with being the top goaltending prospect in hockey when he was drafted 11th overall by the Dallas Stars in 2010.

He was sensational at the World Juniors, but struggled in the Ontario Hockey League, posting a .890 save percentage in 91 games with the Windsor Spitfires and Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds.

Campbell spent seven seasons in the AHL, even playing 27 games in the ECHL, but he finally settled into the backup role with the Kings last season after they traded Darcy Kuemper to Arizona.

Now, Campbell still has a chance to have an NHL career. Maybe not the one that was predicted way back when, but also not was being predicted a couple of years ago either.

HEROES

Kessel and Malkin were too much for the Vegas Golden Knights to handle.

Phil Kessel – Pittsburgh's dynamic veteran winger had a hat trick in a 4-2 win against Vegas, giving him five points (3 G, 2 A) in three games. Evgeni Malkin assisted on all three of Kessel's goals and has six points (1 G, 5 A) in three games.

David Perron – The Blues winger responded to getting moved down the depth chart last game and recorded a hat trick in a 5-3 win against Calgary. Brayden Schenn assisted on all three of Perron's goals, the first points of the season for both.

Artemi Panarin – Columbus' star winger notched a goal and three helpers in a 5-4 win at Florida; he has seven points (3 G, 4 A) in four games.

Jason Zucker – The Wild winger scored two goals and an assist in a 4-3 overtime win against Chicago, his first points of the year.

Alex DeBrincat – Chicago's sophomore winger scored a pair of goals and added an assist in a 4-3 overtime loss at Minnesota. He has seven points (4 G, 3 A) in four games.

John Tavares – The Maple Leafs centre entered the game at Detroit, a 5-3 win, without an assist this season and left the game with four in the 'A' column, giving him 10 points in his first five games with Toronto.

Auston Matthews – Toronto's other star centre scored two more goals at Detroit. He's tied for the league scoring lead with 12 points (9 G, 3 A) in five games.

Pekka Rinne – Nashville's veteran goaltender stopped all 29 shots that he faced in a 3-0 victory against Winnipeg. The reigning Vezina winner has a .946 save percentage in three starts this season.

ZEROES

Dmitry Orlov and Matt Niskanen – Washington's shutdown defence pair had a rough night (12 for, 23 against, 34.3 CF%) and were on the ice for three goals against in a 6-0 loss at New Jersey.

Mark Scheifele, Blake Wheeler, and Dustin Byfuglien – The Jets stars were on the ice for all three goals against in a 3-0 loss at Nashville.

Carter Hutton – Buffalo's goaltender was lit up for six goals on 30 shots in a 6-1 home loss against Colorado, dropping his save percentage to .912 in four starts.

Mike Smith – After posting a 43-save shutout in his previous start, the Flames goalie surrendered five goals on 24 shots before getting pulled after two periods in a 5-3 loss at St. Louis. He has a .881 save percentage in four starts.

VITAL SIGNS

Kevin Shattenkirk – A big free agent acquisition for the Rangers a year ago, the veteran blueliner was a healthy scratch against San Jose.

SHORT SHIFTS

Jeff Carter led the Kings attack in Montreal.

Kings C Jeff Carter had a goal and two assists in a 3-0 win at Montreal, his first points after going scoreless in the first three games of the season...Wild C Eric Staal and D Ryan Suter both put up a goal and two assists in a 4-3 overtime win against Chicago, the first points of the season for both...Wild LW Zach Parise earned a pair of assists against the Blackhawks, giving him three points (1 G, 2 A) in three games...Avalanche C Nathan MacKinnon notched a pair of goals in a 6-1 win at Buffalo. He has six points (5 G, 1 A), and 23 shots on goal, in four games...Avalanche RW Mikko Rantanen contributed three assists, and has seven points (1 G, 6 A) in four games...Avalanche D Tyson Barrie chipped in a couple of assists, his first points of the season.

Morgan Rielly and Mitch Marner are playing big roles in Toronto's hot start.

Maple Leafs D Morgan Rielly and RW Mitch Marner both had a goal and an assist in a 5-3 win at Detroit. Rielly is tied for the league lead with 12 points (3 G, 9 A) in five games and Marner has 10 points (3 G, 7 A) in five games...Maple Leafs C Nazem Kadri added a couple of assists, giving him four helpers in five games...Devils RW Kyle Palmieri produced a pair of goals in a 6-0 win over Washington, his second straight two-goal game to start the season...Devils C Brian Boyle had a goal and an assist against the Capitals...Bruins C Patrice Bergeron recorded a goal and an assist in a 4-1 win against Edmonton, giving him eight points (5 G, 3 A) in four games...Bruins D Matt Grzelcyk added a couple of assists against the Oilers, his first points of the season...Canucks RW Jake Virtanen produced a goal and an assist in a 4-1 win at Tampa Bay, both coming with the Lightning net empty...Blue Jackets RW Cam Atkinson and D Zach Werenski both had a goal and an assist in a 5-4 win at Florida. They were Werenski's first points and Atkinson has four points (2 G, 2 A) in four games...Panthers RW Evgeni Dadonov put up a goal and two assists and Panthers C Aleksander Barkov contributed a goal and an assist in a 5-4 loss to Columbus.

Sharks D Brent Burns had a couple of assists in a 3-2 loss at the Rangers, giving him three assists in the past two games after going three



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games without a point to start the year...Penguins D Justin Schultz recorded a couple of assists in a 4-2 win against Vegas; he has four assists in three games...Golden Knights LW Jonathan Marchessault assisted on both Vegas goals in a 4-2 loss at Pittsburgh and has six points (2 G, 4 A) in five games...Blues LW Alexander Steen contributed a goal and an assist in a 5-3 win over Calgary, his first points of the year...Predators RW Ryan Hartman had a goal and an assist in a 3-0 victory against Winnipeg, giving him three points (1 G, 2 A) in the past three games...Blackhawks C Jonathan Toews chipped in a couple of assists in a 4-3 overtime loss at Minnesota. Captain Serious has eight points (5 G, 3 A) in four games...Rangers G Henrik Lundqvist stopped 41 of 43 shots in a 3-2 win over San Jose; he has a .942 save percentage in three starts...Canucks G Anders Nilsson turned away 33 of 34 shots in a 4-1 victory at Tampa Bay, his first start of the season, and first win since November 30, 2017.

FIRSTS

Dominik Kahun – Chicago's rookie winger scored his first career goal in his fourth career game, a 4-3 overtime loss at Minnesota.

Juho Lammikko – A third-round pick of the Panthers in 2014, the Finnish winger made his NHL debut against Columbus. He has 39 points in 108 career AHL games.

Alexandre Fortin – An undrafted winger out of the QMJHL, the 21-year-old made his NHL debut for the Blackhawks at Minnesota. He has four goals and 21 points in 55 career AHL games.

Juuso Riiikola - The 24-year-old defenceman was signed as a free agent out of Finland last season, and made his NHL debut in a 4-2 win against Vegas.

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TSN.CA / TSN Hockey's Top 10 Storylines of the Week

Scott Cullen

The high-flying Toronto Maple Leafs, Carolina Hurricanes, Pettersson, Toews, Oilers, Jets, Nylander and more in TSN Hockey's Top 10 Storylines of the Week.

PINBALL MAPLE LEAFS

The Toronto Maple Leafs made the big move of the NHL offseason, signing free agent centre John Tavares, and that addition brought expectations. This Maple Leafs team should be good but, at the very least, they were expected to score.

And score they have. Through five games, the Maple Leafs are 4-1, but they have scored 25 goals (5.0 per game). That includes a league-leading seven power-play goals on 18 shots with the man advantage (38.9 SH%).

The driving force on that power play has been Auston Matthews, who has scored four of his nine (!) goals with the man advantage. Matthews scored a total of five power-play goals in 62 games last season, so Toronto's change in their first unit power play personnel is having an immediate impact on results.

Matthews is tied for the scoring lead with Leafs defenceman Morgan Rielly, who has 12 points in five games. After a career-high 52 points last season, Rielly appears to be the big beneficiary of Toronto's new run-and-gun attack.

These are early and obviously unsustainable results, but a team that can score like the Maple Leafs is at least entertaining and, with some defensive improvement, could be serious contenders.

HURRICANE WARNING

The Carolina Hurricanes have been a successful possession team in recent seasons, but have been unable to translate their relative shot-count success into wins, last making the playoffs in 2009.

This season brought new ownership, a new general manager and a new head coach. They brought in defencemen Calvin de Haan and Dougie Hamilton, and have a lineup stocked with rookie forwards – Warren Foegele, Andrei Svechnikov, Valentin Zykov and Martin Necas – and, with goaltender Scott Darling hurt, they are running a goaltending tandem of Petr Mrazek and Curtis McElhinney.

That might not sound like the recipe for success, but the early results have been good as the Hurricanes are 3-0-1 through four games, and have dominated shot differentials, controlling 62.2% of score-adjusted shot attempts during 5-on-5 play.

Not only have the Hurricanes had some early success. They've changed up their post-game celebration, too.

This team knows how to have fun pic.twitter.com/xKF4mwvqnJ

— Carolina Hurricanes (@NHLCanes) October 8, 2018

ELIAS PETERSSON

Coming into the season, the Vancouver Canucks weren't expected to be good, but they did have some reason for optimism, with Calder Trophy favourite Elias Pettersson stepping into the lineup.

The fifth pick in the 2017 Draft, Pettersson dominated the Swedish Hockey League last season, compiling 75 points in 57 (regular season plus playoff) games, so he came into the year as my projected leading scorer among rookies. No reason to change that after he posted seven points in his first four games.

The Canucks may not be good, but the hopes for Pettersson appear to be well-founded. The kid may be skinny, but he can play.

ROOKIE D

In the early going, there are some teams leaning rather heavily on rookie defencemen. Here are the five rookie blueliners averaging more than 20 minutes of ice time per game:

Dennis Cholowski – The 2016 first-round pick has ample opportunity on a Red Wings blueline that is in flux, and has fellow rookies Libor Sulak and Filip Hronek competing for playing time, too. A solid puck-mover, Cholowski is averaging more than 22 minutes per game, and has three points in three games.

Miro Heiskanen – Taken by the Stars with the third pick in the 2017 Draft, the Finnish blueliner was expected to be NHL-ready this year and hasn't disappointed.

— Dallas Stars (@DallasStars) October 5, 2018

Max Lajoie – While others on this list come with some significant pedigree, Lajoie was a 2016 fifth-round pick who scored one goal in 56 AHL games as a rookie pro last season. With the Senators overhauling their defence corps, Lajoie has stepped into a big role and, shockingly, has five points (3 G, 2 A) in four games.

Henri Jokiharju – A 2017 first-round pick, Jokiharju not only made the Blackhawks, but he's landed a spot on the Blackhawks' top pair alongside Duncan Keith. He's also recorded five assists in four games.

Noah Juulsen – While the 2015 first-rounder did play 23 games last season, he's still a rookie and, with Shea Weber out, there is room for Juulsen to play a top-four role on the right side of Montreal's defence.

JONATHAN TOEWS



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The three-time Stanley Cup champion, one of the most decorated players in the league, is coming off a season in which he finished with a career-low 20 goals and 52 points. Suddenly, a player who was (unreasonably) being compared to Sidney Crosby a few years ago was now out of TSN's Top 50 altogether.

So, how did he respond? With eight points (5 G, 3 A) in the first four games. As a bonus, he's also won 61% of his face-offs.

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING: Toews starts the season with a bang; Dallas' big line, Matthews, Tavares, Pettersson, Chabot, Gibson and more. <https://t.co/iJSqAChYqi> @TSNAnalytics
pic.twitter.com/bHTFJAHPli

— Scott Cullen (@tsnscottcullen) October 8, 2018

OILERS

The 2017-2018 season was a massive disappointment for the Edmonton Oilers, so it would have been nice if they could get out to a quick start this year.

They started the season in Europe, playing one game in the first eight days on the NHL calendar, which they lost, and then they hit the road, where they lost in Boston Thursday night.

It's only been two games, so alarm bells don't need to be sounded just yet, but Edmonton has been outscored 9-3, while getting 39.7% of score-adjusted shot attempts, and the early schedule is daunting. After playing at the Rangers Saturday afternoon, they travel to Winnipeg, then return home to face Boston, Nashville, Pittsburgh and Washington. If the Oilers aren't ready to perform, they could find themselves with an ugly record very quickly.

GRITTY

It's rare that anything in the NHL gets crossover appeal with mainstream entertainment, but the so-bad-it's-good mascot of the Flyers did it.

GRIT HAPPENS: Accidental brilliance or all part of #Flyers' plan? The inside story of @GrittyNHL's □ rise to fame: <https://t.co/srFF4xjTyf> #TSN
pic.twitter.com/fXLMAG3Lmu

— Frank Seravalli (@frank_seravalli) October 10, 2018

HBO's John Oliver rips Gritty, the Flyers' 'bleeping horrific' new mascot (VIDEO) <https://t.co/4MKrXy4gKK> pic.twitter.com/HM46wFpS4g

— WebsiteofEverything (@wsoeorg) October 3, 2018

NEWS: Gritty brawls with Jimmy Fallon and Ricky Gervais on 'The Tonight Show' @FallonTonight @jimmyfallon #fallontonight
pic.twitter.com/5WP7K7Yr7b

— JIMMY FALLON FANS (@JimmyFans_) September 28, 2018

GOLDEN KNIGHTS

The most amazing story in sports last season, the Vegas Golden Knights are regressing hard early in their second season.

While they are getting more than 58% of the score-adjusted shot attempts, the Golden Knights aren't getting the kind of goaltending that they got last year. Marc-Andre Fleury has an .846 save percentage in four starts, and the Golden Knights are 1-4 through five games.

A silver lining: four of their first five games have been on the road, and getting back home should help them get moving in the right direction.

JETS PENALTY WOES

This isn't a new issue, by any means, but discipline issues linger for one of the league's most talented teams.

In four games, they have been shorthanded for a league-high 35:28 and, after a night of shenanigans in Nashville, the Jets are averaging 22:15 of penalty minutes per game. In second spot, the Detroit Red Wings have averaged 14:30 penalty minutes per game.

Maybe this issue is nothing significant, but it's worth monitoring if the Jets can't improve their discipline as the season progresses.

NYLANDER CONTRACT

Stuck at a contract stalemate with the Toronto Maple Leafs, the 22-year-old winger remains a restricted free agent. Anaheim's Nick Ritchie is also a restricted free agent without a contract, but he's not going to be in the same price range, and the price range does appear to be a sticking point.

The Maple Leafs, naturally, want to keep their young core of Auston Matthews, Mitch Marner and William Nylander together, but with Matthews and Marner up for new deals next summer, the Nylander contract has significant ramifications.

As noted above, the Leafs are already scoring a ton, so that's not helping Nylander's leverage in any way, but he's a young player with back-to-back 61-point seasons. Over the past two seasons, there are eight forwards under the age of 23 that have put up back-to-back seasons with at least 60 points and it's quite a list: Leon Draisaitl, Nikolaj Ehlers, Patrik Laine, Mitch Marner, Auston Matthews, Connor McDavid, David Pastrnak, and Nylander.

As it stands now, the Maple Leafs insist that they aren't looking to trade Nylander, though if they were ever going to deal for a premier right defenceman, Nylander would seem to be the type of trade chip that could get that done.

TSN.CA LOADED: 10.15.2018