



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

## THE NEWS & OBSERVER

### Canes end losing streak, beat Wings 3-1

By Chip Alexander

The Carolina Hurricanes' losing streak has ended at three games.

The Canes put together a strong team effort Monday and at times were dominating in a 3-1 road win over the Detroit Red Wings at Little Caesars Arena.

The Canes ended their power-play struggles with a pair of power-play goals -- from Justin Faulk and Micheal Ferland.

They ended their penalty-killing struggles with some hustling kills, getting a shorthanded, empty-net goal from Jordan Martinook in the final minute of regulation.

The Canes (5-3-1) also got a stellar game in net. Petr Mrazek made some scrambling stops among his 20 saves -- and got some timely help from Faulk in the third -- in besting his former team.

Finally, with the Wings desperately trying to tie the score, with a six-on-four advantage, the Canes' Jaccob Slavin gathered in the puck and deftly skated his way out of the defensive zone to set up Martinook for the game-clincher.

"They earned a win," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "They did the things right and there was no doubt who the better team was, and that's the way we have to play."

Every line contributed. Brock McGinn and the fourth line gave the Canes some early energy and effective forechecking. Jordan Staal's line, with Justin Williams and Warren Foegele, were aggressive forecheckers throughout the game.

Faulk's power-play goal late in the first period gave the Canes a 1-0 lead in a period in which Carolina once held a 14-0 lead in shots. Faulk, scoring his first of the season, moved past Glen Wesley into second place in franchise history for career points by a defenseman -- Faulk has 228 points, trailing only Dave Babych, who had 240 for the Hartford Whalers.

Ferland's power-play score in the second was perfectly executed -- Sebastian Aho with a pass low to Valentin Zykov, who found Ferland open in the slot for his sixth goal of the season.

Aho now has points in all nine games, the longest season-opening streak in Hurricanes history.

The Canes, leading 2-0 in the third, weathered a push by the Wings (1-6-2). Andreas Athanasiou scored at 12:02 of the period and Mrazek and the Canes survived a wild flurry with less than five minutes left in regulation.

With the Wings attacking the net on a power play, Mrazek made a save, had Faulk step into the crease to deny another on a shot by Athanasiou, then made a pad save.

"He made a couple of huge saves at the right times," Brind'Amour said of Mrazek. "Obviously at the end there was a lot of scrambles. But it wasn't just him. We had a bunch of guys diving in front of pucks and doing whatever they had to do to make sure we got the win."

The Canes were last in the NHL in both the power play and penalty killing, and had to kill off two penalties in the third -- a boarding call against Martinook and then a delay-of-game penalty against Dougie Hamilton with 1:44 left in regulation.

The Wings had a six-on-four advantage after Hamilton, trying to clear the puck, lifted it over the glass for a penalty and the Wings pulled goalie Jimmy Howard for a sixth attacker. But McGinn blocked a shot and Slavin found Martinook for his empty netter.

"We had some real good kills tonight and what a play by Slavin at the end of the game," Brind'Amour said.

Brind'Amour made some tweaks to the power-play units during Sunday's practice, changing up some personnel. With the Canes 2-for-30 on the power play after eight games, something had to be done.

This night, it worked, allowing the Canes to move into first place in the Metropolitan Division with 11 points.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

## Canes send Darling to Checkers on conditioning stint

By Chip Alexander

Carolina Hurricanes goalie Scott Darling took another step toward joining the lineup Monday, being activated off injured reserve and being assigned to the Charlotte Checkers of the AHL on a conditioning stint.

Darling, who had been placed on the NHL injured-reserve list on Oct. 3 with a lower-body injury, should play Wednesday in the Checkers' game against the Utica Comets in Utica, N.Y., Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said Sunday.

"I think that's just the logical progression, make sure he can get through a game -- more for him, probably, just the mental side of things," Brind'Amour said Sunday. "Get him physically ready to go and then he's back hopefully to where he was before the injury."

The Canes have a road game Monday against the Detroit Red Wings, then do not play until hosting the San Jose Sharks on Friday.

"He probably, hopefully, will be ready for that game and then we'll make decisions at that point," Brind'Amour said.

Darling, coming off a nightmarish first season with the Canes, lost 25 pounds in the offseason and returned in much better overall physical condition in September. He played well in preseason games but left the Canes' final exhibition game, against the Nashville Predators on Sept. 30 with what Brind'Amour initially called a hamstring injury.

The Hurricanes claimed goalie Curtis McElhinney off waivers from the Toronto Maple Leafs to team with Petr Mrazek during Darling's absence. McElhinney won his first three starts before taking the loss Saturday as the Canes were beaten 3-1 by the Colorado Avalanche.

Darling has returned to practice and Brind'Amour noted having three goalies is not ideal.



## Hurricanes send G Darling to AHL for conditioning stint

The Carolina Hurricanes have activated goalie Scott Darling from injured reserve and are sending him on a conditioning assignment in the minor leagues.

General manager Don Waddell said Monday that Darling will join the team's AHL affiliate in Charlotte. He's expected to start Wednesday at Utica.

The 29-year-old Darling suffered a lower body injury in the Hurricanes' preseason finale against Nashville on Sept. 30. In his absence, the team's goaltending pairing of Petr Mrazek and Curtis McElhinney have allowed 3.13 goals per game, ranking 18th in the NHL.

## Ferland, Martinook, Faulk send Hurricanes past Red Wings 3-1

The Carolina Hurricanes dominated Detroit through most of the game, but needed a timely block by defenseman Justin Faulk to beat the Red Wings and snap a three-game losing streak.

Faulk, who also scored a goal, made a crucial short-handed block on a shot by Detroit's Andreas Athanasiou with less than five minutes left and Carolina leading 2-1. Goaltender Petr Mrazek was down and out after making a big save on Frans Nielsen when Athanasiou appeared to have an empty net and a chance to tie the game.

But Faulk blocked the shot in the crease.

"We put ourselves in a tough spot. I got beat and Petr made a huge save on the back door on Nielsen," Faulk said. "Then full scramble mode, everyone is diving around."

Jordan Martinook added an empty-net goal in the final minute to seal Carolina's 3-1 victory.

Michael Ferland scored in his fourth straight game and Sebastian Aho assisted on Ferland's second-period goal. The assist stretched his season-opening points streak to nine games (four goals and 10 assists), surpassing the franchise record of eight by Victor Rask (2016-17).

"There was no doubt who was the better team. I've liked our game. I've liked it all year," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said.

Mrazek, who was drafted by Detroit in 2010 and played a number of seasons with the Red Wings, made 20 saves.

"It always feel great when you win," Mrazek said. "It doesn't matter which team or where you are, especially after the three losses we had. I'm really happy today."

Athanasiou scored for Detroit and Jimmy Howard stopped 36 shots in the loss. The Red Wings were outshot 36-12 in the first two periods.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

"That's 100 percent inexcusable, to not be ready to work, to not be ready to compete at the start of the game through the second period," Detroit coach Jeff Blashill said.

Athanasios made it 2-1 with 7:58 left when he tapped in a pass from Thomas Vanek. It was Athanasios's third goal.

Faulk's power-play goal gave Carolina a 1-0 lead with 1:35 left in the first period. He got his first goal of the season on a slap shot from the high slot area, about 15 feet inside the blue line.

Ferland made it 2-0 at 8:05 into the second period with a power-play goal. He beat Howard from the inside edge of the left circle. It was Ferland's sixth goal.

The Hurricanes outshot the Red Wings 21-6 in the first period.

NOTE: Carolina wore their third jerseys, which are black with red numbers and letters with white trim and the team's logo in red, white and black. ... Detroit did not get its first shot until 13:30 into the game, when rookie defenseman Dennis Cholowski managed a shot from the high slot. The Hurricanes had 14 shots by then.



## Recap: Canes Prevail Over Red Wings

Faulk, Ferland score power-play goals in 3-1 win

by Michael Smith

Led by their specialty teams, the Carolina Hurricanes got back in the win column with a 3-1 victory over the Detroit Red Wings.

Justin Faulk and Micheal Ferland scored power-play goals, while the penalty kill came up big in the third period with two kills and a shorthanded goal for the Hurricanes en route to snapping their three-game losing skid.

"They earned the win. They did things right. There was no doubt who the better team was, and that's the way we have to play," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "You're not always going to get the bounces, but if we stick to the process of how we're playing, I think good results will be there."

Here are five takeaways from tonight's game in the Motor City.

One

Both the Hurricanes' power play and penalty kill ranked last in the league coming in to tonight's game.

Go figure, then, that both would be the reason the Hurricanes walked out of Detroit with their fifth win of the season.

"We've been saying it all along: special teams are very important in every game," Faulk said. "To be honest, it's been quite brutal to start the year, both the power play and penalty kill, and both were huge tonight."

"That's why we won the game. We won the special teams battle," Jaccob Slavin said. "I think it's been a long time coming for both of those to break through, so it was nice not to give one up on the PK and score a couple on the power play."

Two

A power-play goal, you say? How about two?

In just two periods' time, the Hurricanes doubled their output on the power play from the first eight games of the season.

Late in the first period, Justin Williams laid a puck off for Faulk at the point, and he bombed one through traffic in front and past Jimmy Howard to give the Canes a 1-0 lead.

In the second period, the Canes went tic-tac-toe on the man advantage to take a 2-0 lead. Sebastian Aho fed the puck down low to Valentin Zykov. Tic. Zykov one-touched it to Ferland. Tac. Ferland beat Howard glove side. Toe.

"It's nice just to get it going. It's been a pretty sore spot throughout the year so far," Faulk said. "We just need to keep it going. We're obviously happy it was that way tonight, but we're not satisfied, knowing that one game is not enough. We need to turn around and do it again Friday."

Three

That first power-play goal was timely, too, an exclamation point on what was an absolutely dominant first period for the Hurricanes.

"I think the boys were probably more happy that it was a power play, just to kind of get the monkey off our back," Faulk said. "We came out strong in the first."

The Canes recorded 14 shots on goal before the Red Wings notched their first with 6:30 left in the period. Amid a chorus of mocking cheers from the antsy home crowd, the shot came off the stick of Dennis Cholowski, as he weaved into the zone, and Petr Mrazek responded with a sharp right pad stop. An equally rousing cheer echoed throughout Little Caesars Arena when a dump-in beyond the red line trickled in on Mrazek - shot No. 2 for the Wings.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

Mrazek had to be on his game, too, despite not facing much action. Justin Abdelkader snuck behind the Canes defense and was in alone, but Mrazek kept his paddle flush to the ice, his fourth save in what was then a scoreless contest.

The period ended with a 21-6 shot advantage for the Hurricanes, the goal a tangible reward for having near total control of the game for the first 20 minutes.

That dominance continued in the second period, and in the third, the Hurricanes were able to clamp down and seal the victory, their third on the road this season.

"Hard to believe in that game we didn't score 5-on-5. It felt like in the first two periods we were doing everything we wanted to do," Brind'Amour said. "The difference tonight versus the other nights was we did get a power-play goal. That set the stage for us to get this win."

"I think the guys were excited to get going tonight. Three-game skid, we wanted to cut that off. We had to get back in the win column. That's what we did," Slavin said. "The guys worked hard and dominated play all around."

Four

While the power play shone brightest in the first 40 minutes, the penalty kill took center stage in the third period.

After Andreas Athanasiou scored on a 2-on-1 rush to draw the Red Wings within a shot of tying the game, the Canes killed off two penalties in the last six minutes of regulation.

On the first kill, a mad scramble somehow prevented the score from being equalized. The sequence began with Mrazek pushing across the crease to make a pad save on Frans Nielsen. Athanasiou located the rebound and attempted to bang it home, but Faulk dove into the blue paint to make a right leg save. Then, Michael Rasmussen's third attempt was blocked by the combination of Faulk and Mrazek before a merciful whistle blew the play dead.

"We put ourselves in a tough spot. I got beat, and Petr made a huge save on the backdoor on Nielsen. Then, full scramble mode. Everyone's diving around. Maybe you don't always see that in game nine ... but we're in a position where we lost three in a row," Faulk said. "Losing four wasn't really an

option in this room, so we had to make sure we stepped up and did what we had to do."

"Everyone was jumping in front of those shots. That's big to see," Slavin said. "I think that's why we won the game."

Then, with less than two minutes remaining in regulation, the Canes faced a 6-on-4 man disadvantage with Dougie Hamilton in the box for delay of game and Howard on the bench for Detroit's extra skater. On the kill, Slavin morphed into a one-man wrecking crew, pushing two Red Wings off the puck before dangling around the third and carrying the puck up the ice. He settled the puck and fed Jordan Martinook with a backhand pass, and Martinook deposited the puck into the empty net. Game.

"We needed it. We had some real good kills tonight," Brind'Amour said. "What a play by Slavin at the end of the game to just take it over. It was a good win for us tonight."

Mrazek finished the night with 20 saves on 21 shots, earning a feel-good W against his old team.

"He made a couple huge saves at the right times," Brind'Amour said. "I knew this was a special game for him. It was great to see him have the game he did."

Five

On the second power-play goal, a pair of individual streaks were extended. Aho stretched his season-opening point streak to nine games (4g, 10a), the second-longest point streak to start a season in franchise history behind only Ron Francis' 11-game streak in 1984-85. Additionally, Ferland extended his goal streak to four games and leads the team with six through nine games.

Backtracking to the first goal, as well: With his power-play goal, Faulk surpassed Glen Wesley for second-most points by a defenseman in franchise history (228), with only Dave Babych in front of him (240).

Up Next

Another three-day gap separates the Canes from their next game, as they host the San Jose Sharks on Friday to open a three-game homestand.

## Darling Assigned to Charlotte for Conditioning

Goaltender activated from IR, will play for Checkers Wednesday in Utica

by Canes PR

Don Waddell, President and General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today announced that the team has activated goaltender Scott Darling from injured reserve and assigned him to the American Hockey League's Charlotte Checkers for a conditioning stint.

Darling, 29, suffered a lower-body injury in Carolina's final exhibition game against the Nashville Predators on Sept. 30, and was placed on injured reserve on October 3. He is expected to start for Charlotte on Wednesday, when the Checkers visit the Utica Comets. Darling (6'5", 226 lbs.) was 1-0-0 with a 1.97 goals-against average and .938 save percentage in the preseason prior to his injury.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018



## NHL News & Notes: Darling, Anderson-Dolan & More

By Brandon Share-Cohen

In today's News & Notes, the Carolina Hurricanes have activated their starting goaltender from the injured reserve, Jaret Anderson-Dolan has been returned to his WHL club and the Toronto Marlies have signed a familiar face.

### Hurricanes Activate Darling From Injured Reserve

The Carolina Hurricanes have activated goaltender Scott Darling from the injured reserve. The team has also assigned him to the Charlotte Checkers, their AHL affiliate, for a conditioning stint.

Darling has been out of action since suffering a lower-body injury on Sept. 30 in a preseason contest against the Nashville Predators. Though Darling struggled in his first season with the Hurricanes, posting a record of 13-21-7 with a goals-against average of 3.18 and a save percentage of .888, he should still be the team's best option in net upon his return to NHL action.

In his absence, the Hurricanes have gone 4-3-1 with Curtis McElhinney and Petr Mrazek starting for the team. McElhinney has posted a solid record of 3-1 despite a sub-par 2.76 goals-against average and .892 save percentage. Despite his peripherals being less than favorable, McElhinney has still been a better option statistically than Mrazek who has posted a 1-2-1 record with a 3.06 goals-against average and .874 save percentage.

Darling proved to be a very effective option for the Chicago Blackhawks prior to the trade that sent him to Carolina. The hope is that he can bounce back in 2018-19 and play a bigger role for the club moving forward.

### Anderson-Dolan Returned to WHL

The Los Angeles King have returned Anderson-Dolan, their second-round pick in 2017, to the Spokane Chiefs of the

WHL. The 19-year-old Anderson-Dolan cracked the team's lineup out of training camp and recorded one assist in five games with the team this season.

A star in the WHL, Anderson-Dolan was a very effective point-producer and goal scorer last season in 70 games with the Chiefs, scoring 40 goals and 91 points.

Getting this opportunity out of training camp was a good one for the 19-year-old rookie who proved he's closer to NHL ready than not. The Kings clearly feel that he could benefit from some more time away from the NHL level, however, and if the AHL was an option they would certainly prefer that while keeping the option to recall him open. Instead, the team will have to let him play out the season in the WHL and take a look at him again once his season is completed.

### Corrado Signs With Marlies

Frank Corrado has returned to Toronto. The 25-year-old has signed an AHL contract to join the Toronto Marlies after spending time in the Maple Leafs organization from 2015-17.

Corrado, a fifth-round pick from 2011, has played in 76 games at the NHL level in his career. Those games have been spread out across six seasons and three different teams, however, as he originally played in 38 with the Vancouver Canucks before playing in 41 with the Toronto Maple Leafs and finally seven with the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Though Corrado was with the Maple Leafs from 2015 until 2017 and played in 39 games with them in 2015-16, he would only play in two games with the team in 2016-17 and was left in limbo for the entirety of the season before finally being traded to the Penguins in 2017. While in Pittsburgh, Corrado would deal with more of the same as he played in only seven NHL games and 49 AHL games in that time.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018



**SB NATION**  
**CANES COUNTRY**

## Hurricanes assign Darling to Charlotte for conditioning stint

The assignment signals good news for the Canes' netminder's health.

By Justin Lape

The Carolina Hurricanes have announced they have assigned goaltender Scott Darling to the Charlotte Checkers for a conditioning stint. Darling suffered a lower-body injury in the Canes final pre-season game against the Nashville Predators on Sep. 30.

Darling will start in net on Wednesday against the Utica Comets (Vancouver Canucks affiliate). Darling will start over current Checkers starter Alex Nedeljkovic has a 2.17 goals against average and .917 save percentage in all six games this season. Darling's assignment could lead to more roster shuffling for the Hurricanes when Darling is eventually recalled as they already have two goaltenders on their roster. Darling will not need to clear waivers once he is recalled.

The Checkers are now 5-1 on the season after starting the season on a five-game win streak. Charlotte suffered their

first loss of the season on Saturday against Hershey after being shut out 2-0 at home.

Here is the press release from the Hurricanes on Darling's assignment:

Don Waddell, President and General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today announced that the team has activated goaltender Scott Darling from injured reserve and assigned him to the American Hockey League's Charlotte Checkers for a conditioning stint.

Darling, 29, suffered a lower-body injury in Carolina's final exhibition game against the Nashville Predators on Sept. 30, and was placed on injured reserve on October 3. He is expected to start for Charlotte on Wednesday, when the Checkers visit the Utica Comets. Darling (6'5", 226 lbs.) was 1-0-0 with a 1.97 goals-against average and .938 save percentage in the preseason prior to his injury.

## Carolina Hurricanes at Detroit Red Wings: Lineups and Game Discussion

The erstwhile Redvolution visits the Red Wings as they try to get back to winning ways.

By Jake Crouse

After three tough matchups all spelled losses, the Hurricanes will look to get back to racking up points as they face a struggling Detroit team on the road.

Petr Mrazek (3.07 GAA, .874 SV) will start against his former franchise, which he led to the playoffs twice in his five full seasons there. This may be one of Mrazek's few remaining starts as the Canes' No. 1 with the news of Scott Darling's conditioning stint in Charlotte.

Nothing shuffled on the lines for today, and Clark Bishop is still sticking around for now.

Note: this will be the only road game this season in which our hockey boys will be dressed in their slick third jerseys. So if you don't care about the hockey itself, then A) it's kinda weird that you stumbled upon this post and B) tune in for the style.

Here's how the Canes are projected to take the ice:

Warren Foegele - Jordan Staal - Justin Williams

Micheal Ferland - Sebastian Aho - Teuvo Teravainen

Jordan Martinook - Lucas Wallmark - Andrei Svechnikov

Brock McGinn - Clark Bishop - Valentin Zykov

Jacob Slavin - Dougie Hamilton

Calvin de Haan - Justin Faulk

Trevor van Riemsdyk - Brett Pesce

Petr Mrazek

Curtis McElhinney

Scratches: Phil Di Giuseppe (healthy), Victor Rask (hand)

Sadly, the reunion between brothers Andrei and Evgeny Svechnikov won't come on the ice, as Evgeny recently underwent ACL reconstruction surgery, but the two got to hang out before the game.

Andreas Athanasiou is now a winger instead of a center, but all I can think about when I see him is that we could've traded Justin Faulk for him in the offseason.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

## Hurricanes Ride Strong Special Teams Performance to Big Win in Detroit

The Canes had a much-needed breakout game from their power play and penalty kill en route to an important win.

By Brett Finger

Losers of three consecutive games, the Carolina Hurricanes desperately needed to get themselves back into the win category on Monday night against a Detroit Red Wings club that finds themselves at the very bottom of the NHL standings.

Despite the game being a lot closer than it probably should have been, the Canes went into Little Caesars Arena and picked up a Hot-N-Ready win to improve to 5-3-1 on the season.

The Hurricanes were nothing short of dominant in the first period. And even that might be an understatement.

The Canes outshot the Wings 21-6 in the opening frame and had a 74.42% corsi share at 5-on-5. It wasn't a 5-on-5 goal that got Carolina on the board, though.

For just the second time this season (excluding Teuvo Teravainen's ENG against the Rangers), the Hurricanes scored a power play goal. Justin Williams drew Detroit's high penalty killer and delivered a slick behind-the-back feed to Justin Faulk, who wired home his first goal of the season to give the road team a 1-0 lead.

That goal came at a very good time for the Hurricanes. They had already failed to convert on a power play earlier in the first period, and another unsuccessful man advantage right before the end of the period could have set the tone for bad night in the Motor City.

The Hurricanes road that wave of energy into the middle frame, where they continued to dictate the pace of play and control puck possession. That strong play led to another power play, and they were able to take advantage once again.

This was an excellent passing sequence from the Canes' new-look top power play unit. Sebastian Aho fed the puck down low to Valentin Zykov, and the Russian rookie one-touched an Elias Lindholm-esque pass from the goal line out to Micheal Ferland who ripped home his sixth goal of the season and extended his goal-scoring streak to four consecutive games.

Aho's assist put him at 10 assists and 14 points through nine games. He extended his point streak to nine games to start the season.

The Hurricanes managed to triple their 2018-19 power-play-goals-on-actual-goalies total against the Red Wings on Monday.

Little victories.

The Red Wings had a small push toward the end of the second period, thanks in part to a hooking penalty from Andrei Svechnikov, but the Canes' penalty kill was able to keep Detroit's top-ten NHL power play off the board and finished the game with a perfect four-for-four outing.

After getting outshot 36-12 through two periods on home ice, the Wings came out with a lot more fight in the final frame. They got a number of quality chances early, but Petr Mrazek was excellent when he needed to be.

But with 8:00 to go in the third period, the home team got on the board and made things interesting. Thomas Vanek found Andreas Athanasiou on the 2-on-1 rush. Mrazek had no chance of making the save and, just like that, it was a game again.

Detroit didn't tail off, by any means. In the third period, they outshot Carolina 9-3 after getting absolutely pummeled on the shot clock through 40 minutes. They kept their foot on the gas and, with time running out, it looked like they were going to tie the game.

Somehow, they didn't, though.

Mrazek, Faulk, and Calvin de Haan combined for a series of miraculous saves to keep the Hurricanes in front.

A late delay of game penalty from Dougie Hamilton gave the Canes another scare, but with Howard on the bench for a sixth skater for the Red Wings, Jaccob Slavin took the game on his shoulders and single-handedly put the game away.

Slavin took the puck from his own goal line, threw off a Red Wing forward, deked his way to the neutral zone, and delivered a perfect backhanded pass to Jordan Martinook, who put the puck into the empty net and secured a road victory for the Hurricanes.

Monday night's tilt in Mo Town was big for Carolina. They had lost three consecutive games in regulation after an unexpected four-game win streak. They needed to bounce back against a team that they are, very much, better than. Thankfully, they got the result they wanted and earned.

There are still some concerns. They didn't manage to get any even-strength goals and actually got outscored 1-0 at 5-on-5 by a team that entered play as the worst team in that category. The Hurricanes, undoubtedly, earned the win with how they played but, in a lot of ways, they were lucky to win given how close things were down the stretch.

They have to figure out a way to convert these lofty shot totals to actual goals that win hockey games. That's not a new issue for this team, but it's an issue they have to get fixed.

For now, though, I think they will be satisfied with taking the two points. It was an excellent effort on the road, and former Red Wing Petr Mrazek had a marvelous performance in his old stomping grounds. A big positive is that the Canes had two power play goals and finished +3 with their special teams, if you include their shorthanded goal during the 6-on-4 sequence in the final two minutes. It's the first time this season that Carolina has finished with a positive goal-differential with their power play and penalty kill.

They absolutely need their special teams to be better, and tonight was a good start.

The Hurricanes will get another string of off days before hosting the San Jose Sharks on Friday night. There will be



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

some important practice days for Rod Brind'Amour and his team this week as they look to manufacture another win streak here as we near the end of October.

## THE ATHLETIC

### Pronman: Top 100 NHL players under 25

By Corey Pronman

Welcome to the second edition of my top 100 NHL players under the age of 25. This ranking is based on a talent assessment of who I believe will have the best NHL careers. It is not based on how well a player will perform in the 2018-19 season.

To qualify a player needs to have played at least 25 NHL games in one season, or 50 career games, and be under the age of 25 as of Sept. 15, 2018. So players like Rasmus Dahlin, Elias Pettersson and Dylan Strome will not be considered, but they were part of my ranking of the top 100 prospects entering this season.

Evaluations are based in part on my talent evaluations of a player, as I've scouted almost all the players over the years, as well as incorporating their statistical production, adjusted for age, position and context. I prefer forwards to defensemen, centers to wings, and I am very conservative in valuing goalies, particularly younger goalies.

1. Connor McDavid, C, Edmonton  
Previous rank: 1

On paper, McDavid has been the most valuable player in the NHL for each of the past two seasons. On the 20-80 scale, McDavid's skating tests the definition of what 80 really means. He's got elite skill, makes incredibly skilled plays at a blistering pace and hustles hard. To add on to his elite pace, he's one of the best passers in the league, finishes at a well above-average level and can kill penalties. He's clearly the best player in the league and projects to have the best career among all current U25 players by a clear margin.

2. Auston Matthews, C, Toronto  
Previous rank: 2

Matthews had a very good season in 2017-18 considering his injuries and has been off to a torrid start this season. When he's healthy, he's a unique player. Few players in the NHL combine his elite skill, big frame and ability to score down the middle. He's one of the most dangerous shooters in the NHL as he enters his Age 21 season, and with good health, I expect he could be on the verge of a dominant season.

3. Nathan MacKinnon, C, Colorado  
Previous rank: 13

Last year in this article I wrote about MacKinnon, "I do believe in his ability and think it's a matter of time before he has a season that ranks him at the top of the league." A broken clock is right twice! MacKinnon became everything those who watched him at 16 and 17 years of age envisioned he would be. He's one of the best speedsters in the world, for my money the second best skater in the league

behind McDavid. He has a ton of skill, he's very smart, he competes well and, for the first time in four years, he finished his scoring chances at an above-average level, leading to an MVP caliber season.

4. Jack Eichel, C, Buffalo  
Previous rank: 4

I'm a Jack Eichel truther. I think he's one of the very best young players in the league who hasn't put up giant numbers partly due to health and partly due to the team around him. He's got big time skill and hockey sense, he's big, and he skates well. He's the total package of a foundational No. 1 center, and he even killed penalties last season. As the Sabres continue to improve — and they quickly are — I think Eichel will have a true dominant season.

5. Patrik Laine, RW, Winnipeg  
Previous rank: 3

Laine has been one of the most prolific teenage scorers in the history of the NHL. Everyone knows about his big-time shot, but he has so many other tools to work with. He's 6-foot-4, he has great hands, he can make plays at a high level and he improved his skating from his draft-eligible days. He has a 40-goal season to his name already, and I expect a few more are on the horizon.

6. Aleksander Barkov, C, Florida  
Previous rank: 8

Barkov has established himself as one of the best centers in the NHL. He's a legit all-situations star No. 1 pivot. He has fantastic hockey sense and skills, with the two-way acumen to be a dynamic playmaker and able to check some of the league's best forwards. He had as many power play goals as he did shorthanded goals this past season. I don't think he can beat McDavid in a race, but Barkov has pace to his game due to his sense.

7. Mathew Barzal, C, New York Islanders  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Barzal was one of the most dangerous offensive players in the NHL as a rookie. He's a fantastic talent, with high-end skill and even better vision. I've always liked his skating due to his elusiveness, but he's also added so much explosiveness the past few seasons. The Islanders are in for (more) pain and building years, but he's a big piece to start with.

8. David Pastrnak, RW, Boston  
Previous rank: 5

Pastrnak continues to establish himself as one of the premier young scorers in the league and a major part of Boston's future. His skill/IQ combination is elite, he creates a ton of



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

scoring chances and he scored more than 30 goals in each of the past two seasons. I don't know if he's ever going to be a great defensive forward in terms of how tough he plays off the puck, but with it he's among the very best players in the NHL.

9. Seth Jones, D, Columbus  
Previous rank: 24

When Jones was a draft-eligible prospect in 2013, it was envisioned that a guy his size with his mobility, skill and high-end IQ would develop into a monster, possibly one of the best defensemen in the league. He's been very good for a while, but 2017-18 saw that promise realized. Jones was dominant, a legit No. 1 defenseman who can impact the game in multiple ways, and I have every reason to believe he'll continue to be that for years to come.

10. Leon Draisaitl, C, Edmonton  
Previous rank: 14

Draisaitl has been one of the most dangerous young centers in the league the past two seasons. He's a dynamic playmaker who can move the puck with the best players in the NHL and this past season added PK duties. His skating will never be his strong point but it's gotten good enough to where he can skate with NHLers and it's not an issue. He's expected to be a top scorer in the NHL yet again this season.

11. Nico Hischier, C, New Jersey  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Hischier was a top-six forward for the Devils right from the start of his 18-year-old season, being the team's second leading scorer and looking every part like a key to their future. Hischier has fantastic skills and hockey sense, and is a player who can make tough offensive plays with pace. He's still young, but given how smart he is and how hard he competes, I expect he'll round out into a very good two-way No. 1 center.

12. Sebastian Aho, RW, Carolina  
Previous rank: 16

I'm a longtime member of the Sebastian Aho (the forward, probably the defenseman as well) fan club, and he's continued to impress. He was Carolina's best player last season in his 20-year-old campaign and was dominant at the World Championships. He has all the tools to be a consistent top scorer between his IQ, hands and speed. While he's delivered most of his value in the NHL from his offense, I believe there's some defensive value to get out of him as he matures physically.

13. Mitch Marner, RW, Toronto  
Previous rank: 9

Marner is one of my favorite young players to watch. He has so many offensive elements, between his great hands, a very imaginative offensive mind and the ability to play a quick game; and while he's at his best making plays, he's able to score, as well. His ice time went up as the season went along, getting his second straight 60 point season before he turned 21, and I think several more of those are on the horizon. I don't know if he'll ever be an amazing two-way forward, but he'll create a lot of goals.

14. Clayton Keller, LW, Arizona  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Longtime readers know I'm president of the Clayton Keller fan club (we meet monthly, play board games and have great snacks). He's a game-breaker, even if he stays on the wing all his career, and was one of the top rookies in the league last season, playing at the top of Arizona's lineup. He's got all the tools between his skating, skill and vision to be an impact forward even though he's not the biggest guy.

15. Filip Forsberg, RW, Nashville  
Previous rank: 12

Forsberg for the past four seasons has been a consistent offensive threat for the Predators. He's got fantastic skills, can finish chances and competes well for pucks. I have every reason to expect he'll hover around the 30 goal mark for the next few years. Will he ever become a legit top-five winger in the league? I think he'd need to add a tad more speed to be that, but even if he doesn't he'll be up there.

16. Mikko Rantanen, RW, Colorado  
Previous rank: 60

I've been a mild skeptic of Rantanen for the past few years, but it's hard to continue to be so after the season he just had, where he was one of the more dominant offensive players in the league. Few big men have his combination of puck skills, vision and finishing ability. He's gotten a bit quicker from his younger days, and even if that will likely never be an area of strength, he's good enough to be a legit top line forward in the NHL.

17. Brock Boeser, RW, Vancouver  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Prior to getting hurt Boeser looked like one of the top young goal-scorers in the NHL. He's always had his big shot, but I was really impressed by how much skill he's shown in the NHL, to go along with how hard he competes and the pace he plays at. His skating isn't amazing, but it's improved enough for him to be an impact guy in the league and a critical part of Vancouver's rebuild.

18. Matthew Tkachuk, LW, Calgary  
Previous rank: 23

I'm a big fan of Tkachuk's game. The pest part of Tkachuk's game aside, he's a very skilled offensive player with near elite level offensive instincts. He makes a ton of plays and, with some better linemates, luck and health, I thought he played well enough to put up significant point totals. I expect him to emerge soon as one of the league's best young forwards.

19. Zach Werenski, D, Columbus  
Previous rank: 10

Werenski followed up his great rookie season with just as good of a second campaign. He's one of the best young puck-moving defensemen in the game. He's very mobile and smart, can make the game seem easy at times and makes a lot of plays from the offensive blueline. The question with Werenski going forward is whether he'll round out into an elite two-way defenseman, but last season he was only 20



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

years of age, so there is plenty of time for him to up his defensive value.

20. Brayden Point, C, Tampa Bay  
Previous rank: 48

Point's development has gone as well as you could have hoped for when he was in the WHL. The high-end skill and vision have translated, he was never a poor skater but he's gotten quicker and, despite being small, he makes a difference on the defensive side of the ice. He's become a major part of one of the best teams in the NHL for Tampa and one of the top young centers in the NHL. The 5-foot-10 pivot was used about as often on the PK as he was on the power play for Tampa.

21. Sean Monahan, C, Calgary  
Previous rank: 19

Monahan's been a consistent force for the Flames for the past few years. He's a very solid No. 1 center who is coming off his most impressive offensive campaign yet on a per game basis. He's a very skilled and smart pivot with a big shot, and has shown he can be a player who can lead an offense. I feel like his current offensive level might be his peak for his talent level, but that is still a heck of a player.

22. Dylan Larkin, C, Detroit  
Previous rank: 30

I was expecting a breakout season for Larkin soon and he delivered. He became arguably the most important piece for the Wings and is their No. 1 center for the future. He doesn't have the skill/playmaking style of Claude Giroux, but Larkin has good hands, is more creative offensively than I thought he'd be when he was younger, works very hard and has elite speed. A lot went wrong in Detroit the past few years, but Larkin isn't one of those things.

23. Aaron Ekblad, D, Florida  
Previous rank: 7

Ekblad didn't put up a ton of points this season, but given he wasn't a regular on Florida's top power play unit and was deployed in tough defensive situations, he produced quite well. His toolkit is high-end. He's big, strong, skates well, moves the puck very well and has a big shot. He has all the attributes you want in a legit top-pairing defenseman. Ekblad may not end up on a ton of highlight reels, but he's one of the premier young defensemen in the game.

24. Pierre-Luc Dubois, C, Columbus  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Dubois had a fantastic rookie season, as one of the top rookies in the league and at times logging some pretty heavy minutes for the Blue Jackets. He does a lot well. Dubois is a very smart forward with good skills and size, competes hard and has continued to add speed to his game. While he was primarily used for his offensive talents last season, he will likely evolve into a very good two-way center in the NHL.

25. William Nylander, C, RFA with Toronto holding rights  
Previous rank: 21

Nylander is one of my favorite players to watch. He has all the offensive tools to be an impact player. He has great

hands and offensive instincts, and the skating ability to the push the pace. He played center last season and produced similar numbers to the prior season, clearing 60 points. He's in a tough depth chart (depending on how his contract uncertainty unfolds) for him to ever produce legit star-level numbers, and he's not great off the puck, but I believe a ton in his skill set and think he has upper-echelon upside.

26. Ivan Provorov, D, Philadelphia  
Previous rank: 27

Provorov had a fantastic second NHL season as a heavy minutes/all-situations defenseman for the Flyers. He may never get PP1 minutes on the same blueline as Shayne Gostisbehere, as Provorov is quick and skilled but not of the same level as Gostisbehere. However, Provorov still is an offensive force due to how smart he is as a puck-mover to couple with his other good offensive qualities. He's a complete defenseman.

27. Hampus Lindholm, D, Anaheim  
Previous rank: 22

Hampus Lindholm has been a very steady producer for the past few seasons. He's never going to wow you with his counting numbers, and on a deep offensive blueline he doesn't need to. He's a highly mobile and intelligent two-way defenseman. He takes the tough minutes and still manages to push the puck up the ice in a significant manner. I have every reason to believe he'll continue to be such a player for years to come.

28. Bo Horvat, C, Vancouver  
Previous rank: 40

Horvat has become a legit all-situations center for the Canucks, and by the second half of last season, he was often playing 20 minutes a night. Is he a legit PP1 guy on a contender? It's debatable, but I could see it, especially after how impactful offensively he looked last season. He's highly skilled, works hard and has very good hockey sense to make plays. You add on his defensive play and he's a heck of a player.

29. Kyle Connor, LW, Winnipeg  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Connor had a breakout season, securing a full-time job with the Jets and hitting the 30-goal mark as a rookie. He has a great all-around offensive toolkit: he brings speed, high-end skill and the ability to beat goalies from a distance. On a team loaded with offensive weapons, he might have a hard time separating himself as a go-to guy, but he'll be one of the Jets' most important players for years to come.

30. Charlie McAvoy, D, Boston  
Previous rank: Not eligible

McAvoy was one of the best rookies in the NHL this past season and then led defensemen in scoring at worlds. He played significant minutes as a rookie in most situations and handled it well. McAvoy is a great skater with high-end offensive instincts and competes well. He could be a top-pairing guy for years, and as Zdeno Chara inches towards retirement, McAvoy will become the go-to guy for the Bruins.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

31. Alex DeBrincat, RW, Chicago  
Previous rank: Not eligible

DeBrincat is one of the more interesting prospects of the past decade. He's a small winger without great speed, and thus even among some (but not all) of the most progressive scouts I know, he was doubted as a top NHL prospect. He proceeded to score 28 goals and 52 points despite not getting prime offensive opportunities in his 20-year-old rookie NHL season. He's highly skilled but is also just incredibly smart and has a fantastic shot. It's hard to be that skeptical about him anymore, and in scouting circles he's a player being cited to contrast a lot of common wisdom.

32. Morgan Rielly, D, Toronto  
Previous rank: 46

Rielly had a huge season with his counting numbers, which wasn't all that much a surprise as he's always been a very good offensive talent. But unlike 2016-17, he got real power play time with about half his points coming on the man advantage. I don't know if he's ever going to be a truly dominant top 5-10 defenseman in the league, but he has all the tools to be a true top-pair guy who can make high-level offensive plays and take tough minutes.

33. Jacob Slavin, D, Carolina  
Previous rank: 38

Slavin has been a very good defenseman for the Canes the past few years. He'll never get the big power play minutes on the same team as Justin Faulk, but he's a very smart two-way defenseman who can move the puck at a high level because of his feet and instincts, and make stops. He had a 55 percent Corsi rating this past season despite starting a significant amount of shifts in the defensive zone.

34. Nikolaj Ehlers, LW, Winnipeg  
Previous rank: 20

Few players are as entertaining to watch as Ehlers. His speed/skill combo is fantastic, and he has the ability to create a scoring chance out of nothing. He recorded his second straight 25 goal/60 point season and looks like someone who will be a major part of the Jets' offense for a while. He's not a perfect player in terms of his physical play/battles, but you take that with the game breaking ability any day.

35. Rasmus Ristolainen, D, Buffalo  
Previous rank: 37

Ristolainen is a divisive player in the NHL community. He's been an all-situations guy for Buffalo for years, putting up big number while doing so. Some are also quick to point out his poor Corsi numbers and that he's not great defensively. There's a happy medium there. Ristolainen can transport the puck with his feet and vision, he's very good in the physical game, and he's an overall solid two-way defender. He's not a No. 1 on a good team, which is the role he plays in Buffalo, but as Rasmus Dahlin develops, Ristolainen can hopefully be used in a role that doesn't ask too much of him.

36. Mathew Dumba, D, Minnesota  
Previous rank: 64

Dumba's always been a bit of a lightning rod and that continues even after he had a 50 point campaign and logged heavy minutes for the Wild. He's a fantastic skater with a high skill level who makes plays but also lives on the edge and can be a bit too risky with the puck. He might never be a perfect player and might not be a legit No. 1 defenseman on a good team, but he's shown steady improvements defensively.

37. Teuvo Teravainen, LW, Carolina  
Previous rank: 59

The 2017-18 season was Teuvo Time (sorry, not sorry) as he delivered his first major season scoring-wise, which I thought he'd be capable of when he was a prospect. Teravainen is a dynamic playmaker when he's on his game, with outstanding vision and a high skill level. He's never going to be a great physical/defensive forward, but he's a power play threat and someone who can drive play offensively.

38. Nolan Patrick, C, Philadelphia  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Patrick started off his rookie season just alright, but his play picked up in the second half. He's a well-rounded center with size, skill, fine speed and great hockey sense. He makes a lot of plays and projects to drive a line. Is he ever going to be a legit star? I have doubts, but I think he could be a very solid first-line center.

39. Sam Reinhart, RW, Buffalo  
Previous rank: 43

Reinhart might never live up to the hype that comes with a second-overall-pick tag, but he's rounded out into a very good winger. He's a very smart playmaker with great offensive instincts and in the NHL has been a better goal-scorer than I thought he'd become, looking very good around the net. He's not the quickest or biggest, but he's been productive. In junior I thought he'd be a great two-way forward, but I don't know if that will ever materialize.

40. Jonathan Drouin, C, Montreal  
Previous rank: 25

Drouin is a lightning rod of a player. His talent level is off the charts, he's got all the tools between his skating, puck skills and vision to be an impact NHL player. However, while he's produced well, he's never been that player consistently. He's indifferent off the puck and was converted to center last season seemingly out of necessity because of weaknesses on the Habs' depth chart. I still think he's a good player, with the realistic potential to be a great player, but that best-case outcome might never happen.

41. Jake Guentzel, LW, Pittsburgh  
Previous rank: 53

Part of the reason why the Penguins stretched out their contender window this long is turning 77<sup>th</sup>-overall picks into players like Jake Guentzel. Guentzel is not a star, though he's had some amazing hot stretches the past two years, but he's a very solid top-six forward. He's got great hockey sense, good touch with the puck and has great finishing ability. He might not dazzle with elite speed and skill, but he's consistently productive and useful for his team.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

42. Alex Galchenyuk, LW, Arizona  
Previous rank: 34

Is Galchenyuk a wing or a center? Is he a big-time scorer or just a rather nice player? I still don't know the answer to these questions even after Galchenyuk finishes his six seasons in Montreal and begins a new chapter in Arizona. He's got a fantastic skill level, makes plays and has a good shot. I don't know if the rest of his offensive game is dynamic, be it his speed or vision. At the end of the day, I think he'll be a very nice top-six forward, but not a game-breaker.

43. Tomas Hertl, C, San Jose  
Previous rank: 52

Hertl's game continued to improve over the years to where he's now an all-situations center and top forward for the Sharks. He has fantastic hands with great hockey sense, plus he has size down the middle and a good power element to his game. Hertl's main weakness was always his skating and, while I don't think he's a speedster, I have seen him get a little quicker.

44. Jacob Trouba, D, Winnipeg  
Previous rank: 31

Trouba has been a quality top-four defenseman for Winnipeg the past few years. I don't think he has much more room to improve from where he is now, which is a very good player. He's big, mobile, tough and has some offense in his game. I don't think he's ever going to be a big-time producer, but he moves the puck fine, has a good shot and can get up into the attack when he needs to. He's tough on his checks and is a very good penalty killer.

45. Shea Theodore, D, Vegas  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Theodore actually started the season in the AHL due to a roster crunch, but after he came up he was a regular in Vegas' top four and a QB for their power play. He's a very smart and creative puck-moving defenseman with the mobility and brain to create a lot of chances. Defense has never been his calling card and I don't know if he'll ever be a true tough minutes defender, but I think he's going to be a big point producer.

46. Travis Konecny, RW, Philadelphia  
Previous rank: 57

I'm a big fan of Konecny's game. He's got high-end speed, skill and compete, and is a player who can be a good top-six forward. He didn't get a ton of power play time last season, thus 44 of his 47 points were at even strength (although that number was slightly inflated by a high PDO), but I think he will develop into a more important offensive player with time for the Flyers.

47. Nick Schmaltz, C, Chicago  
Previous rank: 94

Schmaltz had a breakout year, lining up alongside Patrick Kane for most of the season and producing good numbers in a top-line role. I've been a skeptic of his in the past, — I questioned his work ethic and physical play — but his skill level and offensive instincts are high-end. It's clear he has

the ability to center a scoring line in the NHL, even if he might never be a perfectly well-rounded player.

48. Timo Meier, RW, San Jose  
Previous rank: 80

Meier is one of the better up and coming power wingers in the league. He has high-end speed to go along with good touch with the puck and can be a handful for defenders to deal with when he comes barreling down the wing. I don't know if he'll ever be this amazing playmaker, but he generates a ton of shots and his Corsi percentage has been very positive since he's joined the league. He's also taken on PK duty to start this season.

49. Andrei Vasilevskiy, G, Tampa Bay  
Previous rank: 54

There are few goalies I've ever watched who I'd go to bat for as hard as Vasilevskiy. When I think of a goalie with all the tools, he's one guy who immediately comes to mind. He's got size, elite athleticism, he squares up a lot of pucks and tracks very well. He's been very good in Tampa since earning the No. 1 job. He hasn't been truly dominant yet, but I think that big season is coming.

50. Elias Lindholm, C, Calgary  
Previous rank: 56

Lindholm always impressed scouts with his skill level and ability to make plays. He's got the talent to run a power play and make things happen offensively. He was a very reliable top-six center for Carolina for years before being traded to Calgary in the Dougie Hamilton deal. The question is whether he has that next level ability to take over a game, and I don't think he's much of a scorer either.

51. Max Domi, LW, Montreal  
Previous rank: 58

Domi was one of Arizona's top offensive players last season and was traded to Montreal in the offseason. He's a very good skater with a high skill level and is a great passer. He's small but works hard and has an edge to his game. His goal-scoring issues are notable, and I didn't think his inability to generate shots/score would be this poor when he was in the OHL. He can make a lot of plays, though, so he retains value.

52. Noah Hanifin, D, Calgary  
Previous rank: 51

During his time in Carolina, Hanifin, who coming up as an amateur was considered a very good two-way defenseman without dynamic offensive abilities, was used in a very sheltered offensive role. He's a great skater who can move the puck fine and create offense that way, but since moving to Calgary he's been used as more of an every situations type of player, which is what I envisioned him initially becoming. I don't know if he's ever going to be a star (and I know he already played in an All-Star game) but I can see him being a very solid top-four defenseman.

53. Esa Lindell, D, Dallas  
Previous rank: 95

Lindell had a solid second NHL season, being an all-situations defenseman for the Stars. I don't think I've ever



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

seen him look spectacular in a game, but he's always very steady and smart, making effective plays at both ends and showing the hockey IQ to make some plays and defend fine. He might never be a game breaker, but you could get worse production than 27 points and a 50-plus Corsi %percentage with a lot of minutes at age 23.

54. Kevin Fiala, LW, Nashville  
Previous rank: 79

Fiala had his first big season in the NHL where he was healthy and productive, emerging as a legit top-six forward in the NHL and nearly hitting 50 points. Aside from his frame, he has all the tools to succeed. He's quick, very skilled, makes plays and can score. I still have some small questions about how he'll do in the physical parts of the game, but otherwise I like a lot about him.

55. Mikhail Sergachev, D, Tampa Bay  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Sergachev is a guy who scouts are split on. Some love him. They see a big body defender with great speed, good skills and the ability to dominate a shift. But there are some skeptics who question if his hockey IQ is good enough to play in their top four. He put up a ton of points for a teenage defenseman but had some puck luck and was very sheltered, with 70 percent of his non-neutral zone faceoffs at even strength starting in the offensive zone. I think he becomes a good top-four defenseman, but I'm not yet convinced he's a true No. 1.

56. Jesper Bratt, LW, New Jersey  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Bratt turned a lot of heads to start the season, where he surprisingly made the Devils out of training camp and was immediately a factor, putting up points and playing on both special teams units. He ran out of steam in the second half, but all indicators look good for Brett after what he did as a 19-year-old and the skill set he has. He's got great hands and offensive instincts and I think will be a scorer for them in the short and long-term.

57. Brandon Montour, D, Anaheim  
Previous rank: Honorable mention

Montour's development curve has been a long upward line for the past few years. His toolkit is dynamic, as he's a fantastic skater with a great offensive mind. I've long had questions on his defensive game, but he's shown progression in that area and even was entrusted with penalty killing time in 2017-18. Anaheim is deep on defense so he might never receive premium ice time, but he's emerging as a true top defenseman in the league.

58. Robby Fabbri, C, St. Louis  
Previous rank: 50

I could see reasonable arguments to put Fabbri up and down this list by a significant amount. He's got a ton of skill, works hard and can be an impactful offensive player with the kinds of plays he can make. However, he's had a problem staying healthy in recent years, missing the entire 2017-18 season, and it's been hard getting a read on how good he truly is at the NHL level. I loved him as a junior player and he's showed well in flashes for the Blues.

59. Jakob Chychrun, D, Arizona  
Previous rank: 74

Chychrun has had issues staying healthy, but when he's on the ice, he's impressive for a teenage defenseman. Chychrun is a highly mobile and intelligent defenseman who can move the puck at a high level and get himself involved in the attack. I think as he matures he will also round out his game and become a very good two-way defenseman for the Coyotes.

60. Thomas Chabot, D, Ottawa  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Chabot is a defenseman with dynamic offensive elements. He's a great skater with good skills and high-end offensive instincts. He has the potential to be a PP1 quarterback who can impact a game at even strength, too. The main issue with Chabot historically has been improving his defensive play and becoming tougher to play against. With Ottawa's thin blueline, he will get opportunities to play a major role, and if he shows he can handle it, he can be a big part of their future.

61. Anthony Mantha, RW, Detroit  
Previous rank: 47

Anthony Mantha's development curve has a lot of peaks and valleys, from junior stardom to Jim Devellano calling him very disappointing in his rookie pro season to becoming a 20-goal winger this past season. His effort/consistency wavers, thus his game is prone to criticism, but he's a highly skilled scorer with size. He could be a star but it's hard to pin down where his future lies.

62. Darnell Nurse, D, Edmonton  
Previous rank: Honorable mention

Nurse is what I envision when I think of an ideal "defensive defenseman." He's big, incredibly mobile, tough to play against, but competent with the puck and with good instincts. He may never be a giant point producer, but he makes an impact when he's on the ice. He's a fun player to watch due to how hard he competes and the athletic tools he has, but he generates some offense, too, and gets a lot of shots on net.

63. Jake DeBrusk, LW, Boston  
Previous rank: Not eligible

There's a lot of people who tend to mock the Bruins' 2015 draft class, but DeBrusk has played well enough to escape the scope of those jokes. He had a great rookie NHL season, building off a great AHL rookie year, and showed why he could be considered a quality top-six forward in the NHL. He's skilled, smart, works hard and got quicker over the years. Boston has a deep forward group, so power play time will be competitive, but he'll be right in the mix for significant minutes now and long-term.

64. Ryan Pulock, D, New York Islanders  
Previous rank: Not eligible

I've been a Pulock skeptic for as long as I can remember, but lately he's started to win me over. He moves the puck well, has a big shot and shows good enough hockey sense at both ends to be a reliable defenseman. I don't love his



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

quickness, but he got better defensively over the years despite not being incredibly fast and became a top guy for the Islanders. His shot generation has also been quite high.

65. Alexander Wennberg, C, Columbus  
Previous rank: 49

Wennberg's production took a dip last season, and while I'm skeptical he'll consistently hang around the 60-point mark like he did in 2016-17, I still like the player a lot. He's a good skater and puck handler with great hockey sense, and he showed he can play in all situations for Columbus. He's certainly a pass-first player, which plays to his strength, but his lack of ability to light the lamp as a top minutes forward isn't ideal.

66. Josh Morrissey, D, Winnipeg  
Previous rank: 83

Morrissey had a good season, and while he hasn't had a chance to be a top player on a deep Winnipeg blueline, I still think he has more to show, especially offensively. He's a very good skater with high-end hockey sense at both ends of the rink. He's played a mostly defensive role lately, but he has good skills and could be a power play guy for the Jets in the future.

67. Tyson Jost, C, Colorado  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Jost is an interesting player. I don't know if he's ever going to be a true top-end offensive producer, but he's still quite skilled and smart, has pace to his game, and I think as he develops he's going to round into a reliable two-way center. He's starting the season on Colorado's top power play unit and does have offense in his game. I'm very curious to see what level he can reach this upcoming season.

68. Jesse Puljujarvi, RW, Edmonton  
Previous rank: 18

Puljujarvi is an incredibly frustrating player to figure out. He has the tools you want between his size, speed and skills, and he generates shots. But he can also leave you wanting with his reads and decisions, something I didn't think was a problem when he was a 17-year-old. I still believe in him, but my high ranking last year was clearly too optimistic with a potential bias from his pre-draft years.

69. Kevin Labanc, RW, San Jose  
Previous rank: Honorable mention

Labanc is one of my all-time misses in terms of players I underrated. Watching him when he was 17, I never thought there was a chance he'd become the player he is today. Now he's a highly skilled power play guy for the Sharks with the hands to make NHL players miss with consistency. He's not a perfectly well-rounded player, but he consistently improved and earned recognition.

70. Alex Tuch, RW, Vegas  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Tuch is a player I underrated as a prospect, as he's become a very solid player for Vegas. He's gotten a lot quicker from where he was as an amateur, and with a big frame and good hands, he's able to create quite a bit of offense. I don't think he's going to be a primary playmaker on a line, but his toolkit

allows him to accomplish a lot and he should be a solid middle-six guy.

71. Mike Matheson, D, Florida  
Previous rank: 76

When he's not pile driving guys into the ice, Matheson is a solid two-way defenseman. He's a fantastic skater who can stay with the quickest forwards. I've never been blown away by his skill, but his offensive totals have been impressive given how little power play time he gets in Florida. He can certainly move the puck fine and get up into attacks. He's developed into a guy who takes a lot of D-zone starts and moves the puck in the right direction.

72. Will Butcher, D, New Jersey  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Butcher is a tough player to get a read on. On the one hand, he's got fantastic offensive hockey sense, moves the puck with skill and pace, and scored 44 points as a rookie. On the other hand, he's small, not incredibly fast and has been sheltered defensively throughout his time in the NHL. I like the upside and the offense, but there's a thought in my mind the 23-year-old tops out as a specialist.

73. Chris Tierney, C, Ottawa  
Previous rank: Honorable mention

Since entering the league, Tierney was a very solid two-way forward. He was traded recently as part of the Erik Karlsson package and has shown better offensively (though I don't think he's a true talent/point per game player). I like his skill set and he has good abilities around the puck, but his game in the NHL is more about matching up against good players, working hard and making smart plays.

74. Vince Dunn, D, St. Louis  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Dunn had a solid rookie season for the Blues. His deployment was rather guarded, as his defensive play still has a ways to go, but very few defenders can transport the puck the way Dunn can with his speed. He's a skilled offensive defenseman who should be a mainstay on the Blues' power play for years to come. His development curve the past five years was a steady upward trend, so I believe in his ability to somewhat round out his game to take heavier minutes.

75. Pavel Buchnevich, LW, New York Rangers  
Previous rank: 92

Longtime readers know I was a founding member of the Buchnevich fan club and, through his ups and downs, I maintain that he's a solid top-six forward. He may not endear himself to coaches and he doesn't have elite speed, but he's very skilled with great offensive hockey sense, isn't small and has shown he can help an NHL power play. He might never be a star given his limitations, but Buchnevich is a quality NHL forward who can do well in a certain role.

76. Artturi Lehkonen, LW, Montreal  
Previous rank: 73

Lehkonen is a very interesting player. I've always liked him, he has a nice skill set and can play a reliable 200-foot game. One may argue he was unlucky last season, although he



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

was playing hurt for a good portion of it, but he's played 150 NHL games and his team has shot around 6.5 percent with him on the ice. I do think he's skilled and can make plays. For now he's getting top-six minutes in all situations in Montreal.

77. Ondrej Kase, RW, Anaheim  
Previous rank: Not eligible

I've had a soft spot for Kase since his U18 days, so I was happy to see the success he had last season. He scored 20 goals despite not playing a full season. He's got a high skill level and, while I don't think he's a top-line forward, I see a guy who can carve out a very successful career in Anaheim's middle six, contributing offense if he stays healthy.

78. Christian Dvorak, C, Arizona  
Previous rank: 90

Dvorak might never be a regular on highlight reels, but he's a very smart two-way pivot. He's a reliable player for a coach, as he can play all situations well and has enough offensive touch to create for his linemates. I've never been blown away by Dvorak, but he does a lot of things at an average to above-average level and works very hard. He projects to be a quality middle-six center, which is what he's been so far.

79. Jakub Vrana, LW, Washington  
Previous rank: Not eligible

I've long been a fan of Vrana's skill set, and while he still has a ways to go before he shows he's a true top young player in the league, he's looked very good early on this season. He has all the tools, between his skating, skill and hockey sense, to be a good top-six forward if he puts it together consistently. He's not the best off the puck, but he'll help Washington's power play for a while.

80. Samuel Girard, D, Colorado  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Girard was one of my favorite players to watch in junior hockey when he was in the Q because of how dynamic a skater and puck-mover he is. His first NHL season I thought went well, at his size he needs to be perfect defensively and still needs work there, but the offense is legit and he can move the puck well above NHL average. He doesn't have a big shot but his vision is exceptional and I think Girard finds a way to become a top offensive player for the Avs soon.

81. Anthony Beauvillier, LW, New York Islanders  
Previous rank: 77

Beauvillier was always a player I had a soft spot for. He might not be incredibly dynamic, but he's still quite skilled, very smart, works hard and, at his peak, he'll be a guy who plays on both special teams and is a consistently above-average forward. He had a great second half last season offensively, and I'm intrigued to see if he can carry it over to this campaign.

82. Brady Skjei, D, New York Rangers  
Previous rank: 65

Skjei had two quality seasons in the NHL. He's an incredible skater for a defenseman his size, who closes gaps very well and has the mobility to create offense with his feet. He's not a puck skills guy who is going to dangle opponents, but he's

smart and steady. He's been an all-situations defender for the Rangers. On a good team he might not get as much power play time, but to his credit he's produced more offense than I thought he would as an amateur.

83. Damon Severson, D, New Jersey  
Previous rank: 78

Severson will probably never make an All-Star team or put up giant numbers, but every season he's hanging around the same production rate and been a quality player for the Devils. He plays reliable top-four minutes, he moves the puck well and has the athletic tools you covet. Severson's upside is close to what he's been so far, but that's still a very solid defenseman.

84. Juuse Saros, G, Nashville  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Saros was one of my favorite goalies to watch coming up as an amateur. There's a reason why, despite being a sub six-foot goalie, he's able to be a puck stopper consistently at the pro level — it's because he has elite tools. His athleticism is amazing. He's very quick but in control and has excellent hockey sense. He's not a starter currently, but he's absolutely starting goalie quality.

85. Andre Burakovsky, LW, Washington  
Previous rank: 70

Burakovsky can be a tough player to get a read on. Some days you see a dynamic player with speed and skill, and at his size and ability level, you think he can be a true top player in the league. That hasn't been the case yet, speaking to some of the consistency issues in his game. When healthy, Burakovsky has shown he can produce and be a good second power play type of forward for the Caps, although he hasn't been a regular on the man advantage to start the season.

86. Anthony Duclair, LW, Columbus  
Previous rank: Honorable mention

Duclair has had a lot of words written about him as he has bounced between four NHL organizations. It's easy to get down on him because he can be inconsistent and not great off the puck, but his speed and skill can break open a shift. He has the potential to create a scoring chance out of nothing and early indicators in Columbus have been positive. I'm sure there are some scouts who will cringe at him being on this list, and some who will be fully behind it.

87. Radek Faksa, C, Dallas  
Previous rank: Honorable mention

Faksa is not the usual type I get excited about. He's smart and a quality two-way center who kills penalties. He's not dynamic offensively, but he's steadily contributed middle-six offense the past few years despite not being on Dallas' power play. He's more skilled than I gave him credit for when he was a U20 and has developed into a quality center for the Stars. The upside likely is what he already shows, but that's still a nice player.

88. Brett Pesce, D, Carolina  
Previous rank: 85



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

Pesce never put up giant scoring numbers, but he's a very steady and smart defenseman. He's has solid Corsi numbers given he gets tougher minutes and is a very good penalty killer. Carolina's had deep defense units, so it's hard to gauge his offensive potential. I wouldn't call his skill high-end by any means, but he has good instincts and pace to his game.

89. Oliver Bjorkstrand, RW, Columbus  
Previous rank: 66

Bjorkstrand was a bit up and down to start his NHL career (as of when I wrote this profile, his ice time's been low this season after posting 40 points last season). I'm a fan of his game, though, due to how high his skill level is. I think he has far more scoring touch than he showed last season, where he converted on only 6.7 percent of his shots. He might not be the biggest player or the quickest guy for a smaller forward, but I think he will find a way to consistently be a quality player.

90. Danton Heinen, LW, Boston  
Previous rank: Not eligible

I had time for Heinen when he was in college, but he blew my expectations away last season with a 47-point campaign. I love his hockey sense and playmaking ability. There's still reasonable concerns about how much speed is in his game, but it's hard to be critical given how he's progressed. Heinen's ice time will be limited on a deep Bruins forward group this season, barring injuries, but 2017-18 showed what his upside is.

91. Andreas Athanasiou, C, Detroit  
Previous rank: 71

Athanasiou has the potential to dazzle. His speed and skill are dynamic, and he can create a scoring chance out of nothing. Every now and then he pops and shows you the potential of a guy who can impact a shift. He's inconsistent, though, and not a guy I'd describe as a primary playmaker. He's produced at a quality level and seems to have settled into being a league average player.

92. Josh Anderson, RW, Columbus  
Previous rank: Not ranked

There was a time I was a skeptic of Anderson as an NHL prospect, but he continued to impress and showed he can be a modern-day power forward. He has size and can put pressure with his hustle, but also has speed and decent touch with the puck. He might never be the primary driver on a top-two line, but I see him as a guy who can get a lot of scoring chances with the tools he has.

93. Miles Wood, LW, New Jersey  
Previous rank: Honorable mention

Wood is not an incredibly flashy player, but he performed quite well in 2017-18 as a guy who logged bottom-six minutes. And 19 goals at age 22 is nothing to sneeze at. He's a great athlete and skater who can push the pace and play a power-forward style game. He might never be a dynamic playmaker, but I can see him carving out a solid career in a specific role and creating quite a bit of offense.

94. Sam Bennett, C, Calgary  
Previous rank: 75

It's hard to get overly excited about Bennett currently. I admit he's ranked here in part because of the potential I thought he had five years ago as opposed to anything amazing he's done recently. The former fourth-overall pick in 2014 is a fine NHL player, just nothing marvelous. He works hard, has good pace and skill to his game, but I might have overrated his offensive instincts when he was a prospect.

95. Matt Murray, G, Pittsburgh  
Previous rank: 42

Murray is a tough player to evaluate based on his 2017-18 season given he dealt (<https://theathletic.com/288840/2018/03/26/matt-murray-expects-to-hit-his-stride-when-postseason-begins/>) with numerous injuries and personal tragedy. His pro career seemed in cruise control up until that point, with his high-end hockey sense and big frame allowing him to become a dominant goalie in the AHL and NHL, but lately his performance took a massive dip. I don't think you can just write off an entire season of performance, especially since goaltending performance is very volatile already, but it's worth keeping in mind the context.

96. Christian Fischer, RW, Arizona  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Fischer was one of my favorite players to follow as a prospect. He's a very gifted player, as he's got size and great hands, and can impact a shift with his talent level. He's got work to do defensively and he's not an incredibly fast skater. But I like his instincts and overall feel like he's got significant upside. He was solid as a rookie for the Coyotes in 2017-18, and I think better days are ahead for him.

97. Denis Malgin, RW, Florida  
Previous rank: Not ranked

Malgin is a player I've been high on for a long time. He's a highly skilled and intelligent playmaker who last season showed steady progression into becoming a regular in Florida's top nine. He's a small guy with good but not exceptional speed, so I get why some might not get very enthusiastic about him. But Malgin makes a lot of plays and can help a team's power play. Florida has a deep forward group, but I still think he'll put up numbers.

98. Kasper Kapanen, RW, Toronto  
Previous rank: Not eligible

Kapanen has been a longtime favorite of mine. He has all the tools in my mind to succeed in the NHL. He's a great skater, has a high skill level and can make plays. His game evolved the past few years, becoming a more well-rounded forward and adding penalty killing to his repertoire. He's off to a torrid start to the season. He's not this good obviously, but he's a guy who could be an above-average forward.

99. Brendan Perlini, LW, Arizona  
Previous rank: Honorable mention

Perlini is a very intriguing player due to his athletic abilities. He's big and can skate like few forwards his size. I haven't seen a ton of year to year progression in his game, which



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

speaks to how much he can get away with on just his tools. He's got offensive skill but I've never seen him as a very instinctual playmaker, rather someone who can make plays in a very specific way. He's been productive, though, and is still rather young.

100. Pavel Zacha, C, New Jersey  
Previous rank: 82

There was a part of me that wanted to get Zacha off this list completely. It's been years since he produced at a level that would be impressive relative to his age in the NHL, internationally or in junior. But on the other hand, he's still Zacha. He has the tools, between his skating, hands and size, to be a player. There might not ever be enough there to apply the tools he has, but, at age 21, he's worth mentioning on this list for at least for one more year.

Honorable mentions (alphabetical order):

Tyler Bertuzzi, LW, Detroit

Anders Bjork, LW, Boston

Connor Brown, RW, Toronto

J.T. Compher, C, Colorado

Tony DeAngelo, D, New York Rangers

Travis Dermott, D, Toronto

Vinnie Hinostroza, C, Arizona

Adrian Kempe, C, Los Angeles

Alex Kerfoot, C, Colorado

Olli Maatta, D, Pittsburgh

Jared McCann, C, Florida

Victor Mete, D, Montreal

Ryan Murray, D, Columbus

Markus Nutivaara, D, Columbus

Neal Pionk, D, New York Rangers

Devin Shore, C, Dallas

## The Hockey News

### Who stays and who goes as rookies inch towards all-important 10-game mark?

As rookies eligible for the entry-level slide come up on their 10th game of the season, their respective teams need to decide whether they'll stick with the big club or head to the AHL or major junior.

By Jared Clinton

The Kings gave Jaret Anderson-Dolan a five-game audition, but that was enough for Los Angeles to make the call on where he will spend the remainder of the 2018-19 campaign. On Monday morning, they announced the 19-year-old pivot has been assigned to the WHL's Spokane Chiefs.

Returning Anderson-Dolan to the WHL comes as little surprise, mind you. Through five games, the rookie's use had been infrequent at best. He was made a healthy scratch on the opening night of the campaign, in Los Angeles' third game of the season and again sat out in Saturday's loss to the Buffalo Sabres. When he did get into the lineup, too, Anderson-Dolan was often among the least utilized forwards. He twice skated below 10 minutes and cracked the 12-minute mark in only one outing, playing nearly 18 minutes in an Oct. 13 contest against the Ottawa Senators.

There's little downside, if any, in sending Anderson-Dolan back to Spokane. The Kings' second-round pick, 41st overall, in the 2017 draft, Anderson-Dolan can head back to the WHL and continue to grow as one of the league's elite players. Additionally, it opens up the opportunity for Anderson-Dolan to test his mettle on the World Junior Championship stage. He captained Canada's U18 entry at

the 2016-17 tournament, and he attended camp with the U21 squad this past summer.

There is an added benefit for the Kings, too. In shipping Anderson-Dolan back to Spokane before he played his 10th game of the season, the Kings effectively save a year on his entry-level contract, thanks to the entry-level slide.

Anderson-Dolan isn't the only prospect eligible for the slide, however, which means the coming days and weeks will be important for a number of rookies who will see their teams make similar decisions about their fates for the remainder of the 2018-19 campaign. So, who stays and who goes? Here's a rundown of every slide-eligible rookie who has seen action this season:

#### STAYING

Max Comtois, Anaheim Ducks

If there is a silver lining to the Ducks' injury issues, it's Comtois' play. He's tied for the team lead with seven points and he's had a couple of games with top-six minutes. Anaheim would probably need to keep the 19-year-old with the big club regardless of his scoring given he's a healthy body for a team that has very few, but he's earned his place.

Rasmus Dahlin, Buffalo Sabres

The Sabres have actually done a good job of letting Dahlin get his feet wet without throwing him to the wolves. His ice time has remained firmly middle-pairing and he's contributed to the offense. We knew from the start of the season that Dahlin would be in Buffalo all year, so let's not waste time debating it.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

Andrei Svechnikov, Carolina Hurricanes

Four points through his first four games in Carolina had Svechnikov looking like an early Calder Trophy frontrunner, but he's been absent from the scoresheet in each of his past four games. Still, bank on the second-overall pick from the June draft to keep his spot in the lineup. He could blossom at any moment

Henri Jokiharju, Chicago Blackhawks

Seemingly a prime candidate to end up back with the Portland Winterhawks when he made the NHL out of training camp, Jokiharju has mustered five assists in eight games and he's second in ice time among Blackhawks defensemen. He's also playing alongside Duncan Keith, which is quite the pairing. He's not going anywhere, it would seem, and that is indicative of a new era in Chicago.

Miro Heiskanen, Dallas Stars

There's a snowball's chance in Texas that Heiskanen plays anything but the entire campaign in Dallas. He has been a revelation on the blueline. The Stars knew they had a special player in Heiskanen, but even they may have underestimated how quickly he'd catch on. He's driving play, putting up points and is third in ice time among Stars defensemen, making him a lock to stay.

Kailer Yamamoto, Edmonton Oilers

Based on ice time figures, one might expect Yamamoto to face a second nine-game cut, but chances are he sticks around this time. Thanks to Ty Rattie's injury, Yamamoto's ice time has actually increased in each of the past three games and he's getting a look alongside Connor McDavid. If he can click with the Oilers captain, look out.

Filip Chytil, New York Rangers

In some ways, Chytil's second early stint in the NHL has been no different from his first. He's playing limited minutes under coach David Quinn and has two points through eight games. There's little reason to demote him to the AHL's Hartford Wolf Pack, though. He played well in the AHL as a rookie last season, so the Rangers are likely to let him learn to translate that to the big league this season.

Jesper Kotkaniemi, Montreal Canadiens

Canadiens GM Marc Bergevin's decision to draft Kotkaniemi was questioned, but the pivot has proven his worth. He's expected to stay with the big club once the 10-game mark comes and goes, and it might be for the best. As the season goes, he can grow into a larger role. For the time being, the Canadiens seem content for him to play sheltered minutes in the middle of the lineup.

Brady Tkachuk, Ottawa Senators

The likelihood of Tkachuk playing anywhere but the NHL this season? Zero. Zilch. Nada. Barring a conditioning stint, he's with the Senators for the long haul. As he should be, too, given he's scored three goals and six points in four games. He's been as advertised, if not better, for Ottawa.

## GOING

Isac Lundestrom, Anaheim Ducks

Lundestrom remains with the Ducks roster only due to injuries, making it doubtful he remains in Anaheim for much longer. He's been the Ducks' most sheltered center, yet has a poor relative possession percentage. The best thing for Lundestrom would be some time in the AHL or another

season in the Swedish League. He'll be better for it in the long run.

Urho Vaakanainen, Boston Bruins

Brought up to the big club on an emergency basis, Vaakanainen has seen action in just one game, patrolling the blueline for under 13 minute against the Vancouver Canucks. He's bound for the AHL, where he was playing quite well and had two helpers in six games, as soon as one of Charlie McAvoy, Torey Krug or Kevan Miller returns from injury.

Juuso Valimaki, Calgary Flames

Travis Hamonic's face injury complicated matters. If the Flames blueline was at full strength, Valimaki would likely be heading down to the AHL. Instead, he looks primed to stick around. He's on the bubble, though, and it might be best for his development to log heavier minutes than the 15 minutes he's seen per night through eight games. If Hamonic is healthy sooner than expected, Valimaki could be packing his bags for Stockton.

Michael Rasmussen, Detroit Red Wings

Few would have expected Rasmussen to earn a spot on the club out of camp, yet he was in the lineup on opening night. His days are likely numbered in Detroit, however, and that would be the best thing for the big center. He's barely seeing any ice time — 12:17 average over seven games — and there's no need to rush him into Detroit with the Red Wings likely destined for the NHL's basement this season. He'll have to head back to the WHL's Tri-City Americans, not the AHL, if the Red Wings demote him.

Evan Bouchard, Edmonton Oilers

Bouchard impressed enough in the pre-season to come straight out of the draft and into the NHL. However, he's been sparingly used on the Oilers' blueline. He was made a scratch against the Winnipeg Jets last week and his season high is 14:36, skated Saturday against the Nashville Predators. Bouchard can gain more from playing big minutes in the OHL than he can sitting down or sitting out in the NHL.

Alex Formenton, Ottawa Senators

A concussion has forced Formenton to miss the past three games, but he looks at though he could be back in the lineup Tuesday against the Boston Bruins. Even if he is healthy, though, Formenton should be a prime candidate for a return to major junior. The Senators are performing better than expected, but that's no reason to force Formenton into the lineup. He should go back to London, where he'll likely get another go-round with Team Canada at the World Junior Championship.

Robert Thomas, St. Louis Blues

Healthy scratched for back-to-back outings and averaging 8:51 across five games. He's the top prospect in the Blues's system, but that doesn't mean St. Louis has to rush him along. Unfortunately, he can't head to the AHL, which means the only option is to send him back to being the frontman of Matchbox Twenty. Wait, wrong Rob Thomas...

## GONE

Martin Necas, Carolina Hurricanes

Necas got a seven-game audition to begin the season, though he hardly saw the ice. His average ice time was 10 minutes, which made sense given he was absolutely crushed in the possession game. He had a more than three-to-one



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

ratio of offensive zone to defensive zone starts but a relative possession rate 11 percent worse than his teammates. Don't count out a return for Necas at some point this season, though. He'll be among the first names on the call-up list.

Kristian Vesalainen, Winnipeg Jets

Like Necas, Vesalainen was given a short audition with very little ice time. He skated less than six minutes in two of the

five games he saw with the Jets. It seems likely Winnipeg takes the Kyle Connor or Jack Roslovic approach with Vesalainen, which is to say he'll remain in the AHL for a full season before getting his shot to crack the big club on a full-time basis come the 2019-20 campaign. For cost controlling purposes, and for Vesalainen's development, it's probably for the best.



## PHT Power Rankings: Best starts to 2018-19 NHL season

By Adam Gretz

In this week's PHT Power Rankings we take a break from the overall team rankings to look at the best and most impressive individual performances to start the 2018-19 season.

The best individual performance (so far) does not reside in Edmonton or Toronto where there is a "best player" argument unfolding (actually, that argument is probably only taking place in Toronto), or in Washington, Nashville, Tampa Bay, Pittsburgh or Boston where some of the league's best teams reside.

The best performance is currently in ... Anaheim.

There might be one or two other surprises in there.

To the rankings, where we take especially in-depth looks at the top-five...

The best of the best ... so far

1. John Gibson, Anaheim Ducks — If you take a quick at the Ducks' record on Monday and see them sitting at 5-3-1 and in first place in the Pacific Division you might think, "hey, that is a pretty impressive start for a team that has been without three of its best forwards for most of the season."

And it is an impressive start ... if you look at only the record.

But here is the harsh truth about this team so far: It has stunk, and it has stunk bad. Part of that is due to only getting four total man-games from the trio of Ryan Getzlaf, Corey Perry, and Ondrej Kase (all four of them belonging to Getzlaf), three of the team's top-five scorers from a year ago. But no matter the reason the team that is taking the ice every night has stunk.

They have spent the entire season getting absolutely caved in in terms of shots against and scoring chances against, they are giving up close to 40 shots per night, and they aren't really great offensively.

The only reason the record does not reflect how much this team has stunk is because Gibson (and to a lesser extent, backup Ryan Miller when he has had to play two times), has been a miracle worker in the crease and kept the team afloat. In his first seven appearances this season he has a .949 save percentage that is tops in the league among goalies with at least four appearances, he has already made at least 37 saves four different times this season, only allowing more than two goals in one of those four games, and has somehow lost three of them, including a 42-save on 44-shot performance against Vegas on Friday night. Two of the Ducks' wins in net have been one-goal decisions, including a 1-0 win over Arizona.

John Gibson is not only the Anaheim Ducks best player right now, he has been the most impressive player to start the 2018-19 season.

2. Connor McDavid, Edmonton Oilers — I love the way that McDavid referred to his record about most consecutive goals contributed to to start a season: "You know what, it's whatever. I'm not overly proud of it. I don't think it's a stat we should be proud of either."

They should not be. They definitely should not be.

It's a perfect response, and the fact that McDavid has, quite literally, been the Oilers' entire offense this season is a perfect representation of his first three-plus seasons in the NHL. When he does what he did this past week against Winnipeg when he single-handedly led a third period rally to steal a win, or when he ruined the Boston Bruins' overtime two nights later, he can put an entire organization on his back and carry it to heights it has no business reaching.

As of Monday he has 11 points in six games and looks to be well on his way to winning yet another scoring title. The Oilers still only have 13 goals this season as a team, meaning they have only scored two goals this season that McDavid has not factored in on. Only one of those two goals has come during 5-on-5 play. It is not a stretch to say that McDavid is responsible for this team not being winless through six games. Do the rest of the players on the Oilers



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

get tired of hearing that, that everything they do is because of one guy? They might. But it's not their fault. There is no doubt they are doing their best and playing to the best of their abilities. The fault lies upstairs in the front office.

3. Nathan MacKinnon, Colorado Avalanche — This was going to be an interesting season for MacKinnon because even though he was coming off of an absolute monster season a year ago I still thought he was a bit of a mystery. He burst onto the scene in 2013-14 with a remarkable rookie season, and then his production kind of leveled off for a while. It wasn't bad production at all, it just wasn't anything, for lack of a better word, special. Then the 2017-18 season and he just completely erupted offensively. Which MacKinnon would we get this season? The 100-point pace guy from a year ago, or the 55-point pace guy from the three years prior? Or, more likely, something in between? It turns out, so far, we are seeing the 100-point pace guy as MacKinnon is once again leading the Avalanche. Through the first eight games he already has eight goals and 14 total points, with almost all of that production coming at even-strength. He is not totally dependent on the power play like another dominant offensive player that we will get to shortly.

4. Morgan Rielly, Toronto Maple Leafs — Yes, there is a Maple Leafs player in the top-four. No, it is not the player you thought it would be. The Maple Leafs defense is a giant question mark and there is reason to doubt whether it is good enough as currently constructed to be a championship team this season. But Rielly has been awesome and, so far, been able to do something that almost no one else on his team has been able to do: Carry play at even-strength.

He is one of the few players on the Toronto roster that is keeping his head above water when it comes to shot attempts and scoring chances at 5-on-5, and when he is not on the ice there is a slight difference in the team's performance versus when he is on. With him they are a positive shot attempt team, positive scoring chance differential team, and outscored their opponents by a 12-7 margin. Without him they fall into the red in all shot and scoring chance metrics and have been outscored by a 9-13 margin.

Oh, and he also has 14 points in nine games and is off to one of the best starts offensively for a defenseman in league history.

5. Auston Matthews, Toronto Maple Leafs — Look, Matthews is great. He is one of the best players in the league and on a path toward superstardom, if he is not already there.

He is everything he was advertised to be in his draft year, if not more.

But Matthews, like the rest of the Maple Leafs team around, is still very much a work in progress.

He is not scoring 50-in-50. He is probably not even scoring 50 at all this season (and there is nothing wrong with that!) and for as great as his start has been, if I am looking at who has been the best player so far this season, and I am looking at players with nearly identical overall production and performance, I am going to give the slight edge to the players (McDavid and MacKinnon) that have carried the play at even-strength.

Power play goals count just as much as 5-on-5 goals and there is something to be said for starting the season with 10 goals in nine games (it was actually 10 goals in six games) and 16 total points.

None of this is to say that the Maple Leafs' power play isn't valuable. It is. It absolutely is. It is one of the most dominant five-man units in the league and it can carry the team for a long time during a season.

But eventually if you are going to be a Stanley Cup team you have to also do that when you don't have a man advantage. Matthews and the Maple Leafs are not quite there. Yet.

The rest of the best

6. Evgeny Kuznetsov, Washington Capitals — He cooled off a bit from where he was in the first three games, but Kuznetsov still has at least two points in four of his first seven games and is picking right back up where he left off in the playoffs when he was a key cog in the Capitals' run to the Stanley Cup. He is a remarkable talent and over the past two years has been putting it all together to become one of the league's best players.

7. David Pastrnak, Boston Bruins — The Bruins' top line is as good as you are going to find in the NHL and it is almost impossible to separate the performances of Patrice Bergeron, Brad Marchand, and Pastrnak. Individually they are all great, and when put together they become an unstoppable three-headed monster that can carry the Bruins every single night. Two of the three (Bergeron and Pastrnak) already have a hat trick this season, and the one that doesn't (Marchand) already has two three-point games, including a four-point effort. Who has been the best so far? Pick one out of a hat if you want, but I think I have to go with Pastrnak to stand out above the rest, just because he is literally averaging a goal-per-game entering play on Monday and has scored some of the most beautiful goals in the league.

8. Sebastian Aho, Carolina Hurricanes — A model of consistency so far for the Hurricanes. Aho has recorded at least one point in every game the team has played through the first eight games, including three multi-point games. He is still only 21 years old and is well on his way to becoming a star for a Hurricanes team that is finally — maybe? — becoming the team everyone has thought it could be for the past five years.

9. Johnny Gaudreau, Calgary Flames — Gaudreau is not only one of the best offensive players in the world, he is a one-man highlight reel nearly every single night. He put on an especially good show at Madison Square Garden on Sunday night in a win over the New York Rangers.

10. Evgeni Malkin, Pittsburgh Penguins — Malkin's season has been weird so far. The point production is better than everyone in the league (he is literally averaging two points per game) and is exactly where you expect Malkin to be. But he hasn't always looked great so far or seemed as dominant as he can be. He has been really good; but he has another level to get to.

11. Alex Ovechkin, Washington Capitals — Like Malkin, I don't think he has been at his best yet, but the production is still there. Which is scary to think about. He has some challengers for the goal-scoring crown but don't be surprised



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

if he ends up at the top of the list once again. That one-timer on the power play is still there, and no one can stop it.

12. Alex DeBrincat, Chicago Blackhawks — Like Gaudreau, the lesson with DeBrincat is that if you are an NHL general manager or a head scout and sitting at your draft table on draft weekend, and you find an obscenely skilled, undersized forward that has shown an ability to score goals and put up points, you should probably take that player.

13. Devan Dubnyk, Minnesota Wild — Dubnyk has been one of the league's most productive goalies since arriving in Minnesota (fourth best save percentage in the league among goalies with at least 100 games played) and he has been tremendous so far this season with a .944 save percentage to help the Wild earn 10 of a possible 12 points in his starts. He has allowed two goals or less in four of his first six starts, and in one of the two where he allowed more than two goals he still made 52 saves in an overtime loss to the Hurricanes.

14. Kyle Palmieri, New Jersey Devils — Palmieri deserves some extra attention because he has been overlooked and

underrated ever since he arrived in New Jersey (he is the other forward Ray Shero stole for the team). He is not the best player on the Devils (that honor still goes to Taylor Hall), but Palmieri is a legitimate top-line forward in the NHL and has been a driving force for the Devils' fast start this season.

15. Tomas Tatar, Montreal Canadiens — Not sure how long it will last this season, but so far this season has been the Tomas Tatar redemption tour. He has been a steady, consistent 25-goal scorer his entire career but was pretty much a punch-line in the second half of last season because George McPhee gave up a lot of draft picks to acquire him at the trade deadline, and then for whatever reason he never quite found his place with the Vegas Golden Knights. He didn't suddenly forget how to play hockey, but the Golden Knights had an opportunity to get Max Pacioretty and sent Tatar to Montreal as part of that trade. With a fresh start in Montreal this season Tatar has been a wonderful addition for a surprising Montreal team that has, to this point, exceeded all of its expectations.

YAHOO! SPORTS

## The Roundtable: Week 3

By: Michael Finewax

The Roundtable question of the week looks at goaltenders in trouble of losing their jobs early in the 2018-19 season

This week's question is:

Which goaltender is in the biggest danger of losing his job as a starter?

Michael: There are a couple of situations I think are worth noting. The goaltending problem in Philadelphia has Brian Elliott playing rather poorly and the Flyers are awaiting the return of Michal Neuvirth to see if he is able to handle the net. The goalie they really want to take over is their goalie of the future, Carter Hart but he has started quite slowly in the AHL and needs to gain some confidence. It's not the right time to bring him up and ruin his confidence.

Another spot is Carolina. Their goalie of the future is Alex Nedeljkovic who they took 37<sup>th</sup> overall in the 2014 Draft. He has been strong in goal for Charlotte of the AHL with a 2.17 GAA in six games this season. The goaltending trio of the injured Scott Darling, Petr Mrazek and Curtis McElhinney are not the caliber of goaltending you want, if your aspirations are the playoffs and the Stanley Cup.

Ryan: Jacob Markstrom got 57 of the Canucks starts last season, but Anders Nilsson has a real chance of wresting the gig away from him in 2018-19. Both goalies have started in four games so far and Nilsson has averaged out to be the better option. They're going to be fighting over the job for a while yet, but I think it's fair to say that Markstrom has the least job security out of the list of established starters.

Brian: Carter Hutton's tenure as a starting goalie in the NHL could be a very short one. Signed to be the primary starter in Buffalo after very successful seasons as the backup in New York and St. Louis, Hutton has not been overly sharp in his six games thus far, posting a 3.27 GAA, a .906 SP and a 2-4 record. In contrast, talented backup Linus Ullmark, has won both of his starts allowing only one goal on 56 shots. I wouldn't be surprised if we see Ullmark steal the number one job from Hutton by Thanksgiving.

Corey: I agree with Ryan that Markstrom's job as the number one netminder is not secure. Nilsson has been the superior option early in the year.

Another team worth monitoring will be New Jersey. Cory Schneider lost his spot as the Devils' top goalie last year because of injury and some struggles, but he is healthy now and should rejoin the team soon following his AHL conditioning assignment. Keith Kinkaid had an outstanding start to 2018-19, but two straight losses will open the door for Schneider to seize back his role. He played very well in the playoffs last year and if he can rediscover that form then he should be able to wrestle back control of the crease.

Joey: Petr Mrazek is getting another opportunity to be a starting goalie in Carolina, but the results have been underwhelming so far. The Hurricanes liked Curtis McElhinney enough to claim him off waivers before the start of the season. In an ideal situation, McElhinney would be a backup goalie, but Mrazek's inconsistency could force the 'Canes to give the veteran a longer look. McElhinney has won three of four starts this season, while Mrazek has won one of four. The Hurricanes should probably go out and acquire a goalie at some point.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018



## Scott Darling Joins Checkers on Conditioning Stint

Written by Paul Branecky

Goaltender Scott Darling, who was the presumed No. 1 option in Carolina prior to a preseason injury, will take the next step forward in his rehab by joining the Checkers on this week's road trip.

Darling, who has been out since a Sept. 31 preseason game against Nashville, could play for Charlotte as soon as Wednesday's game in Utica. If he suits up, it will be first time the Checkers, who are off to a 5-1-0 start, have used a goaltender other than Alex Nedeljkovic this season.

It would also not be the first time wearing a Checkers sweater for Darling, who signed a professional tryout contract with the team for one weekend during the 2011-12 season, three years before his first NHL game, but did not play.

After getting some game time in with the Checkers, who also play in Binghamton on Friday and in Syracuse on Saturday before returning to Charlotte, Darling will be looking to reclaim his place in a Carolina rotation that has been split evenly between Petr Mrazek and Curtis McElhinney in his absence.

## Weekly Report: Oct 22, 2018

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

After a perfect start on the road, the Checkers opened up the home portion of their schedule with a split series against the Hershey Bears.

Week in Review

Team Statistics

Overall record

5-1-0

Home record

1-1-0

Road record

4-0-0

Last week's record

1-1-0

Last 10 games

5-1-0

Division Standings

2nd

Conference Standings

3rd

League Standings

5th

Checkers 4, Hershey 3 (SO)

Taking the Bojangles' Coliseum ice for the first time this season, the Checkers locked into a back-and-forth battle with the Bears. Nicolas Roy opened the scoring by tapping home a rebound early on in the first, then the two sides proceeded to trade goals for the remainder of regulation. The Bears were able to convert on three of their seven man advantages throughout the night, including a power-play strike midway through the third that evened the score and pushed the game to overtime. After a scoreless extra period, the Checkers tapped a pair of rookies for the shootout, with Morgan Geekie and Martin Necas both pulling off slick moves to score. On the other side, Alex Nedeljkovic denied both attempts by Hershey to secure Charlotte a 4-3 win and keep the undefeated streak rolling. Full recap

Bears 2, Checkers 0

The next night's rematch was similarly bogged down with penalties and the Checkers' offense could never quite find its rhythm. Both teams were handed eight power plays on the night but only one converted, with Liam O'Brien giving Hershey an early lead. The Bears would tack on one more goal in the second and that would be more than enough. Vitek Vanecek stopped all 25 shots he was faced with in the Hershey net as the Bears handed the Checkers their first loss of the season. Full recap

Three Stars Of The Week

3rd Star

Morgan Geekie

1 shootout winner

2nd Star

Janne Kuokkanen



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

1g, 1a

1st Star

Andrew Poturalski

0g, 2a

Notables

### OWNING OCTOBER

Even with their first loss of the year this past weekend, the Checkers have enjoyed a historically strong start to the season, including becoming the first team in franchise history to win each of their first five games.

The Checkers have never won more than six games during the month of October, hitting that mark four times in eight AHL seasons. The year's team is guaranteed to finish the month with a record over .500 for the second consecutive season and the third time in the last four years. Their best opening month in terms of points percentage came in 2012-13 when the Checkers roared out to a 6-2-1 record in October.

### SHUT IT DOWN

The Checkers have established themselves as the stingiest defense in the AHL thus far this season, surrendering just 2.17 goals-per-game on average, the best mark in the league. They have been especially frustrating for opposing offenses late in games, allowing just three goals in the third period this season.

### NED'S ON A ROLL

After winning each of his first five appearances for the Checkers this season, Alex Nedeljkovic was finally saddled with a loss on Saturday, snapping a 10-game points streak that dated back to last season. Even so the netminder remains in first place across the AHL with his five wins this season, having played more minutes than any other goalie in the league.

### SHOOTOUT SUCCESS

The Checkers took part in their first shootout of the young season on Friday and picked up a win for the first time since March 25, 2017. The team only saw three games last season go to a shootout and wound up on the wrong side each time.

Both Morgan Geekie and Martin Necas lit the lamp on their shootout attempts – the first of their North American pro careers – and gave Charlotte its first shootout with more than one conversion since April 12, 2017.

### POTTING POINTS

Andrew Poturalski continues to have the hot hand for Charlotte. The third-year forward found the scoresheet for each of the team's first five games until his streak was finally snapped in Saturday's loss.

Still, Poturalski leads the team with nine points through the first six games, a total that puts him in a tie for seventh across the league as well.

Ranks

Andrew Poturalski is tied for seventh in the league in points (9) and tied for fourth in assists (7)

Alex Nedeljkovic leads the league in wins (5) and minutes played (359:15), is tied for the league lead in shootout percentage (100), tied for third in saves and ranks ninth in goals-against average (2.17)

Josiah Didier ranks fifth among league defensemen in penalty minutes (22)

### INJURIES

Josiah Didier missed 4 games starting 10/5

Spencer Smallman missed 1 game starting 10/13

### Transactions

#### Incoming

Oct. 22: (G) Scott Darling - Assigned from Carolina (NHL)

Oct. 17: (D) Haydn Fleury - Assigned from Carolina (NHL)

Oct. 17: (C) Martin Necas - Assigned from Carolina (NHL)

#### Outgoing

Oct. 19: (D) Michael Fora - Assigned to Florida (ECHL)

Oct. 17: (C) Clark Bishop - Recalled by Carolina (NHL)

### By the Numbers

CATEGORY	RECORD	AHL RANK	LAST WEEK
Power play	22.6%	t-12th	1st
Penalty kill	82.4%	12th	t-10th
Goals per game	3.67	11th	t-3rd
Shots per game	32.17	t-9th	4th
Goals allowed per game	2.17	1st	t-3rd
Shots allowed per game	26.17	5th	t-15th
Penalty minutes per game	19.33	2nd	t-10th

### LEADERS

CATEGORY LEADER(S)

Points Andrew Poturalski (9), Nicolas Roy, Janne Kuokkanen (7)



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

Goals	Nicolas Roy (5), Janne Kuokkanen (4), Four tied (2)	Shots on goal	Nicolas Roy (20), Julien Gauthier (17), Jake Bean (16)
Assists	Andrew Poturalski (7), Trevor Carrick (4), Spencer Smallman, Janne Kuokkanen (3)	Penalty minutes	Josiah Didier (22), Trevor Carrick, Roland McKeown, Andrew Poturalski (10)
Power play goals	Janne Kuokkanen (3), Nicolas Roy (2), Andrew Poturalski, Clark Bishop (1)	Plus/minus	Roland McKeown, Nicolas Roy (+6), Michal Cajkovsky (+4)
Shorthanded goals	Nicolas Roy, Saku Maenalanen, Patrick Brown (1)	Wins	Alex Nedeljkovic (5)
Game-winning goals	Nicolas Roy (2), Janne Kuokkanen, Dennis Robertson (1)	Goals-against average	Alex Nedeljkovic (2.17)
		Save percentage	Alex Nedeljkovic (.917)



### Aho, Ferland help Hurricanes end skid with win against Red Wings

Forwards continue hot streaks, Carolina avoids fourth straight loss

by Dave Hogg

Sebastian Aho extended his season-opening point streak to nine and Micheal Ferland scored for the fourth straight game to help the Carolina Hurricanes to a 3-1 win against the Detroit Red Wings at Little Caesars Arena on Monday.

Defenseman Justin Faulk and forward Jordan Martinook scored for the Hurricanes (5-3-1), who had lost three straight after winning five of their first six.

"There was no doubt who was the better team tonight," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "I liked our game tonight and I've liked it all year."

Goalie Petr Mrazek made 20 saves in his second start against his former team. Mrazek, who played his first 166 NHL games with Detroit, was traded to Philadelphia on Feb. 19 and pulled in the second period of a 5-4 shootout loss to the Red Wings on March 20.

"It always feels a lot better when you win," Mrazek said. "I'm really happy today."

Forward Andreas Athanasiou scored for the Red Wings (1-6-2) and goalie Jimmy Howard made 36 saves, including 20 in the first period.

"Carolina has been doing that to teams all year, creating a lot of shots and a lot of chances," Howard said. "We took some good steps forward in the last couple games, but that didn't carry over tonight."

The Hurricanes took a 1-0 lead on Faulk's power-play goal at 18:25 of the first period. Ferland made it 2-0 with another power-play goal at 8:05 of the second.

Aho had an assist on Ferland's goal and became the second player in Hurricanes/Hartford Whalers history to have at least one point in each of the first nine games to begin a season. Ron Francis had an 11-game point streak for the Whalers at the start of the 1984-85 season.

Carolina entered with the NHL's worst power play, having scored twice in 30 opportunities. But the Hurricanes went 2-for-3 and killed four Red Wings power plays.

"If you look at the box score at the end of the night, you will see that the team that takes care of special teams wins the games," Faulk said. "Both our penalty kill and power play have been brutal to start the season, but they were huge tonight."

The Red Wings were outshot 36-12 in the first two periods.

"That was 100 percent inexcusable," coach Jeff Blashill said. "When you oversleep, it takes you a long time to get moving, and it took us two periods to get going."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

The Hurricanes held a 14-0 advantage in shots on goal before Red Wings defenseman Dennis Cholowski forced Mrazek to make a pad save at 13:31 of the first period. Mrazek also made a save against Justin Abdelkader on a breakaway at 15:34.

"It's one of the hardest things, not seeing a shot and then facing a 2-on-1 and a breakaway," Mrazek said. "I was trying to go behind the net and play the puck just to feel like a part of the game."

Athanasίου scored at 12:02 of the third period when he redirected Thomas Vanek's feed past Mrazek to make it 2-1.

The Red Wings nearly tied the game on the power play with 4:45 remaining, but Faulk blocked Athanasίου's shot on the goal line and Michael Rasmussen couldn't score on the rebound.

"I thought it was a tie game," Athanasίου said. "I was looking at an empty net, but Faulk got across and somehow got his arm on the shot."

Faulk felt his save made up for a mistake that created the frantic defensive effort.

"I got beat and Petr had to make a huge save on (Frans) Nielsen," he said. "After that, it was full scramble mode with everyone diving around."

## Faulk, de Haan help out Mrazek in goal after spectacular save

Hurricanes pull out all the stops to prevent tying goal, kill penalty

by Daniel O'Leary

Petr Mrazek makes a brilliant save, followed by a desperate block from Justin Faulk to keep the Hurricanes' 2-1 lead intact in the 3rd period

Three shots, three saves, three different players between the pipes.

That summed up a wild sequence for the Carolina Hurricanes near the end of their 3-1 victory against the Detroit Red Wings on Monday.

Leading 2-1 with under five minutes to go and the Red Wings on the power play, Hurricanes goalie Petr Mrazek made a sprawling save on Red Wings forward Frans Nielsen.

Martinook's shorthanded empty-net goal gave the Hurricanes a 3-1 lead at 19:16.

They said it

"I didn't need to say anything to Petr about tonight. I knew this was a special night for him, and it was great to see him play the way he did." -- Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour on goalie Petr Mrazek

"You have to earn everything you get in this league, and we aren't doing that. We could have snuck out of here with a point or two because of (Howard), but that would have been absolute robbery." -- Red Wings defenseman Niklas Kronwall

Need to know

Faulk's goal gave him 228 points with the Hurricanes, passing Glen Wesley for second among defensemen in Hurricanes/Whalers history. Dave Babych is the all-time leader with 244. ... Ferland leads the Hurricanes with six goals in nine games. ... The Red Wings' start through nine games is their worst since they started the 1985-86 season with eight losses and a tie.

A charging Andreas Athanasίου had a chance at a wide open net with Mrazek still down, but Hurricanes defenseman Justin Faulk jumped in the net and blocked the shot. But we are only getting started.

Red Wings forward Michael Rasmussen gained possession as Faulk's momentum was carrying him to his right and out of the crease. So Hurricanes defenseman Calvin de Haan jumped in front and did all he could to get a piece of Rasmussen's shot, which eventually ended up hitting Mrazek's left leg pad while he was still on the ground.

Mrazek eventually corralled the puck and got the whistle.

All in a day's work on the penalty kill.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

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## SportScan

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

1111411 Carolina Hurricanes

Canes end losing streak, beat Wings 3-1

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

The Carolina Hurricanes' losing streak has ended at three games.

The Canes put together a strong team effort Monday and at times were dominating in a 3-1 road win over the Detroit Red Wings at Little Caesars Arena.

The Canes ended their power-play struggles with a pair of power-play goals -- from Justin Faulk and Micheal Ferland.

They ended their penalty-killing struggles with some hustling kills, getting a shorthanded, empty-net goal from Jordan Martinook in the final minute of regulation.

The Canes (5-3-1) also got a stellar game in net. Petr Mrazek made some scrambling stops among his 20 saves -- and got some timely help from Faulk in the third -- in besting his former team.

Finally, with the Wings desperately trying to tie the score, with a six-on-four advantage, the Canes' Jaccob Slavin gathered in the puck and deftly skated his way out of the defensive zone to set up Martinook for the game-clincher.

"They earned a win," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "They did the things right and there was no doubt who the better team was, and that's the way we have to play."

Every line contributed. Brock McGinn and the fourth line gave the Canes some early energy and effective forechecking. Jordan Staal's line, with Justin Williams and Warren Foegele, were aggressive forecheckers throughout the game.

Faulk's power-play goal late in the first period gave the Canes a 1-0 lead in a period in which Carolina once held a 14-0 lead in shots. Faulk, scoring his first of the season, moved past Glen Wesley into second place in franchise history for career points by a defenseman -- Faulk has 228 points, trailing only Dave Babych, who had 240 for the Hartford Whalers.

Ferland's power-play score in the second was perfectly executed -- Sebastian Aho with a pass low to Valentin Zykov, who found Ferland open in the slot for his sixth goal of the season.

Aho now has points in all nine games, the longest season-opening streak in franchise history.

The Canes, leading 2-0 in the third, weathered a push by the Wings (1-6-2). Andreas Athanasiou scored at 12:02 of the period and Mrazek and the Canes survived a wild flurry with less than five minutes left in regulation.

With the Wings attacking the net on a power play, Mrazek made a save, had Faulk step into the crease to deny another on a shot by Athanasiou, then made a pad save.

"He made a couple of huge saves at the right times," Brind'Amour said of Mrazek. "Obviously at the end there was a lot of scrambles. But it wasn't just him. We had a bunch of guys diving in front of pucks and doing whatever they had to do to make sure we got the win."

The Canes were last in the NHL in both the power play and penalty killing, and had to kill off two penalties in the third -- a boarding call



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

against Martinook and then a delay-of-game penalty against Dougie Hamilton with 1:44 left in regulation.

The Wings had a six-on-four advantage after Hamilton, trying to clear the puck, lifted it over the glass for a penalty and the Wings pulled goalie Jimmy Howard for a sixth attacker. But McGinn blocked a shot and Slavin found Martinook for his empty netter.

"We had some real good kills tonight and what a play by Slavin at the end of the game," Brind'Amour said.

Brind'Amour made some tweaks to the power-play units during Sunday's practice, changing up some personnel. With the Canes 2-for-30 on the power play after eight games, something had to be done.

News Observer LOADED: 10.23.2018

1111412 Carolina Hurricanes

Canes send Darling to Checkers on conditioning stint

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

RALEIGH-Carolina Hurricanes goalie Scott Darling took another step toward joining the lineup Monday, being activated off injured reserve and being assigned to the Charlotte Checkers of the AHL on a conditioning stint.

Darling, who had been placed on the NHL injured-reserve list on Oct. 3 with a lower-body injury, should play Wednesday in the Checkers' game against the Utica Comets in Utica, N.Y., Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said Sunday.

"I think that's just the logical progression, make sure he can get through a game -- more for him, probably, just the mental side of things," Brind'Amour said Sunday. "Get him physically ready to go and then he's back hopefully to where he was before the injury."

The Canes have a road game Monday against the Detroit Red Wings, then do not play until hosting the San Jose Sharks on Friday.

"He probably, hopefully, will be ready for that game and then we'll make decisions at that point," Brind'Amour said.

Darling, coming off a nightmarish first season with the Canes, lost 25 pounds in the offseason and returned in much better overall physical condition in September. He played well in preseason games but left the Canes' final exhibition game, against the Nashville Predators on Sept. 30 with what Brind'Amour initially called a hamstring injury.

The Hurricanes claimed goalie Curtis McElhinney off waivers from the Toronto Maple Leafs to team with Petr Mrazek during Darling's absence. McElhinney won his first three starts before taking the loss Saturday as the Canes were beaten 3-1 by the Colorado Avalanche.

Darling has returned to practice and Brind'Amour noted having three goalies is not ideal.

News Observer LOADED: 10.23.2018

1111513 San Jose Sharks

Ramblings: Why the Sharks are A-OK without Joe Thornton

By PAUL GACKLE

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Joe Thornton flew to Nashville with his Sharks teammates Monday, but he'll probably see more cowboy boots, live music and menus with hot chicken this week than game action.

Head coach Pete DeBoer's acknowledgement Sunday that Thornton is receiving antibiotic treatment through a PICC line suggests that he's unlikely to play on the Sharks three-game road trip. That isn't necessarily bad news.

Tuesday's game against the Nashville Predators (7-1) will mark the 41st time in the last 43 regular season games that the Sharks (4-3-1) have laced up the skates without Thornton. They're 22-15-4 in those games, reaching the second round of the playoffs last season, and they've added Erik Karlsson to the lineup. They've clearly forged an identity without their longtime leader. It's unclear at this point how much better or worse Thornton's presence would make the team.

On paper, the Sharks are undoubtedly among the top-eight teams in the NHL, regardless of how many games Thornton plays this winter. The Sharks biggest-perceived flaw heading into training was the group's center depth. No one knew what expect from Thornton, who's 39 and coming off two major knee surgeries. So far, he's missed six of eight games. General manager Doug Wilson also sent Chris Tierney to the Ottawa Senators in the Karlsson trade, forcing his team to open the season with rookies at third and fourth line center.

Regardless, the early results suggest that the Sharks center alignment isn't a pressing issue.

Joe Pavelski has jumped into Thornton's spot in the middle of the Sharks scoring line and the unit is producing. Pavelski, Evander Kane and Kevin Labanc have combined for six even-strength goals and 10 even-strength points in six games.

Likewise, the third line is doing just fine without Tierney. The Scandinavian connection of Marcus Sorensen, Antti Suomela and Joonas Donskoi is controlling play every night, putting together strong shifts seemingly every time they step on the ice. Suomela has yet to score his first NHL goal, but he's a force on the puck, ranking second on the team in Corsi percentage with a 66.30 percent rating.

The fourth line is doing its job, as well, with rookie center Rourke Chartier anchoring the group. Granted, the line isn't exactly setting the scoresheet on fire, but each member of the group, which also includes Barclay Goodrow and Melker Karlsson, is posting a Corsi rating north of 54 percent.

As a team, the Sharks rank first in shot differential (176), first in Corsi (61.86 percent) and second in shots per game (38.9).

The team's centermen must be doing a decent job in Thornton's absence.

Here's another way to think about the Sharks ongoing-Thornton situation: anything they get from him this season is a bonus.

If Thornton comes back and plays like the guy who piled up 26 points in his last 28 games last season, the Sharks will go from being a legitimate top-eight team to a clear-cut Stanley Cup favorite.

But the concern in Sharks territory is that Thornton could come back and actually be a hindrance instead of a boon. This is a false worry, though. Let's be honest, DeBoer isn't going to allow Thornton to bring the team down.

As I mentioned above, the benefit of playing a half-season without Thornton is that the team's identity is changing and it's reforming itself in DeBoer's image.

In past seasons, DeBoer often deferred to Thornton as most coaches do with team icons.

When Thornton told reporters there was "no doubt" he'd be in the Sharks lineup for Game 1 of their 2017 playoff series against the



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

Edmonton Oilers just three days after tearing the anterior cruciate and medial collateral ligaments in his left knee, DeBoer refused to contradict him. Last year, as Thornton struggled in mid-November, DeBoer admitted that he probably couldn't keep him off the ice even if he wanted to.

But last week, DeBoer took greater control of the situation. After Thornton called himself a possibility for last Thursday's game against the Buffalo Sabres, DeBoer didn't hesitate to contradict him. The coach chuckled, described Thornton's status as doubtful and said that the antibiotics needed time to do their work.

Sunday, DeBoer admitted that Thornton is using a PICC, deflating the will-he-play-or-won't-he-play hoopla for another week. DeBoer's a straight shooter, Thornton can be misleading. Now, the coach is controlling the message.

Here's the point stated more clearly: DeBoer isn't going to hesitate to reduce Thornton's role if he returns and disrupts the top line's momentum. He has made it clear from Day One that he's willing to shuffle things around all season to squeeze out the best results. The message is being heard in the room because the team is repeating it ad nauseam. DeBoer isn't going to make an exception for Thornton.

The good news is that Thornton is on board with DeBoer's plan. He made it clear during the playoffs last year that he didn't want to come back and hurt the team, and he's approaching the situation with the same mindset this year. Thornton sees how the team is getting along without him. He doesn't want to be a disturbance.

At the end of the day, DeBoer is a smart coach and Thornton is a team-first guy. In a worst-case scenario, the Sharks will figure out a way to reintegrate Thornton into the lineup in a manner that accentuates the strengths of a forward group that's looking pretty darn good without him.

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1111514 San Jose Sharks

Sharks' Timo Meier off to hot start and finding early chemistry with linemates

By Chelena Goldman October 22, 2018 8:00 PM

In the first month of the NHL season, it's fairly typical for offensive lines to get jumbled up as teams try to find chemistry. But Sharks forward Timo Meier has already found it with linemates Logan Couture and Tomas Hertl, and it's already leading to goals.

"We've been strong defensively, which helps us to set up our o-zone game," the winger explained the day after his line opened up the scoring in San Jose's 4-1 victory over the New York Islanders. "Those are two guys who can make a really nice play. I think we put all of our strengths on the ice together."

One of Meier's strengths is how well he can compliment his veteran linemates. It was almost a year ago that bench boss Peter DeBoer made the 22-year-old forward a healthy scratch in a game against the New York Rangers. Now, Meier is a playmaker who can be slotted on any veteran's wing and make a difference.

"I've always taken pride in being a guy who can play up and down the lineup," he said. "I try to be easy to play with. We have so many great guys on this team, it really doesn't matter who you're on a line with."

In the latter half of his 2017-18 campaign, the Swiss native began finding his footing and putting points on the board on a more regular

basis. He constantly had the puck, finding a way to elude opposing defensemen and post up in front of the net to tap in a goal or two. Meier went from the player who registered two points in his first seven games to the player who tallied two goals and two assists in his last seven games. Through this new season, he already has six points in eight contests and has scored four times.

What's more impressive than his scoring prowess, however, is his ability to create on-ice chemistry with his veteran teammates. This ability first came to light last season when he was placed on San Jose's top line with Joe Thornton and Joe Pavelski, with the Sharks' captain regularly setting the young winger up for goals.

That success has continued this season with Meier on the second line with Couture and Hertl. Perhaps the best example of their chemistry came in that first goal on Saturday, when Meier snagged a nice feed from Couture in front of the net and knocked in his own rebound past Islanders' netminder Robin Lehner.

"You try to learn from these guys," Meier said of working with both Pavelski and Couture. "You've got to talk a lot on the ice to make it easy for each other."

That communication has obviously paid dividends. Despite being one of the youngest players on the team, Meier has developed a veteran mentality that makes him a playmaker no matter who he's skating with.

"You have to know how they play," Meier said, "but most importantly you have to know how you have to play up your strengths."

"And that's what I'm trying to do. Just play my game and it will help them play better."

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 10.23.2018

1111515 San Jose Sharks

As the Sharks showcase their depth, some veterans see their roles reduced

By Kevin Kurz Oct 22, 2018

It's a pretty straightforward concept, but it brings potential complications, too.

On strong NHL teams that enjoy plenty of depth, certain players might not get the kind of ice time they would on a lesser team.

Sharks coach Pete DeBoer has used the example of Phil Kessel countless times. When Kessel was traded to the Penguins in 2015, he essentially became a third-line winger. There just wasn't room in Pittsburgh in the top six, in contrast to when Kessel was on the Maple Leafs, who weren't all that strong for most of his six seasons there, missing the playoffs in five of those seasons.

While that move worked out brilliantly for Kessel and the Penguins, who captured the Stanley Cup in 2016 and repeated in 2017, reducing a veteran player's ice time isn't always so painless. After all, NHL players will tell you that they prefer as much ice time as possible, and the most direct way a coach can send a message to a player that is underperforming or not giving full effort is to reduce his ice time.

After the Sharks acquired and re-signed Evander Kane and traded for Erik Karlsson — while also seeing some of their younger players improve — some long-time Sharks aren't seeing as much ice as they used to.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

Take Justin Braun. Before the Sharks acquired Karlsson on Sept. 13, the first day of training camp, the 31-year-old veteran defenseman was part of the Sharks' top shutdown pair for the majority of the past four seasons. Suddenly, Braun, who was coming off arguably his best season in the NHL with a career-high 33 points, was shifted to the third pair with Brenden Dillon. Karlsson took his place alongside Marc-Edouard Vlasic.

Through eight games, Braun's average ice time per game has been reduced by more than two full minutes, going from 21 minutes and 19 seconds last season to 19:06 this season.

It probably wouldn't surprise anyone if Braun, who has one more season after this one on his contract with a \$3.8-million salary cap hit, was a bit annoyed about that.

But he's not.

"(You) kind of expect that's the case when you get a guy like Karlsson," Braun said on Sunday. "You just take what you get, and do your job when you're out there and try to make the most of your minutes."

Braun continued: "You can't leave some of these guys on the bench with the skill and talent they've got. So they've got to be out there. When Dilly and I get a chance, or sometimes I'm with (Brent Burns), you try and do the best you can. But the amount of skill we have on this team and what we can accomplish, some guys have to take a back seat with their ice time, and egos and everything. I think guys have done a great job of that."

DeBoer mentioned before the Sharks hosted the Islanders on Saturday that the message was sent early in training camp that players might have to make certain sacrifices in order to compete for a championship.

"We realized we didn't win a Stanley Cup last year, and we're going to make changes until we have a chance to win one," DeBoer said. "Any time you're bringing in good players, everyone's got to give a little bit. Your role changes a little bit."

"The one thing about our group is it oozes character, and it starts with our leadership. They are the first guys in line to take a little bit less — (Joe Pavelski's) ice time is down a little bit. When you have your best players willing to do that, then that filters through."

As DeBoer referenced, Pavelski is also not getting as much time as he did in the past. The captain checks in with an average of 17:01 so far this season, after he averaged 19:15 last season.

Pavelski is still on the top power-play unit, but at even strength he's gone from 15:46 per game last season to 12:22 so far this season. That's a pretty drastic difference.

"We expect to be out there in crucial moments, in a tie game, trying to keep the lead, trying to build on leads. But we're rolling four lines, and some games it will be different on certain nights," Pavelski said. "It's not an issue."

Kane, Pavelski's linemate, checks in at 17:15 per game this season after averaging 20:15 with the Sabres and Sharks last season. Before he got hurt, Joe Thornton skated just 14:09 in the second game of the season against the Kings, well below his career average. Meanwhile, players like Timo Meier and Marcus Sorensen are playing more than they used to.

DeBoer has had the luxury, especially in the last two games — both convincing wins at home — to roll four lines. Against the Islanders on Saturday, a 4-1 Sharks win, the so-called third line of Antti Suomela, Joonas Donskoi and Sorensen was arguably the team's most effective. Donskoi scored the tie-breaking, game-winning goal in the second period, set up by Suomela.

Against the Sabres on Thursday, a 5-1 win, it was fourth-line center Rourke Chartier who drew three penalties, including a double-minor

for high sticking in the first period, leading to three Sharks power-play goals.

The Sharks and Ottawa are the only teams in the league to have seven players with at least six points. When you're getting those contributions from up and down the lineup, ice time will naturally be spread out more evenly.

"We're winning games, playing good, feel like we're in every game," Pavelski said. "You guys are writing about this right now, but you go back to when Pete first got here, there was a lot of talk about (being) a four-line team. Every year is a little different, every game is a little different. ... It's early, and we've created a lot throughout the season so far."

DeBoer said: "Third line, fourth line — the minutes are pretty similar. We're a four-line team."

The ultimate goal of winning a Stanley Cup, of course, has eluded everyone on the Sharks roster other than goalie Martin Jones. They know that this current group has perhaps the best chance of any previous team they've been on to win it all.

If some of them have to play a little less for the team to reach the pinnacle of the sport, so be it.

"I don't think there's any personal agendas in (the dressing room)," DeBoer said. "These guys have been around long enough, they've been close enough. They know that's the singular motivation. As long as they feel that the decisions being made are helping the group towards that goal, there's no issues."

Braun said: "A lot of these guys have been around forever and we're trying to get to back (to the Stanley Cup Final) and finish it off. If you're getting a few less minutes every night and that's what it takes, then that's what it takes."

The Athletic LOADED: 10.23.2018

1111481 New York Islanders

Islanders past and present have fond memories of Charles Wang

By Steven Marcus

Charles Wang was a player-friendly owner.

"Most owners, it's 'I sign your check.' That's kind of where the relationship stops," former Islanders goaltender Rick DiPietro said Monday of Wang, who died Sunday at 74. "He was just as excited as we were when we won. He would always make a point to get to know you, your kids. Whatever he could do to make it feel like a family atmosphere, he would do it."

Wang learned hockey from his players, and he had some novel ideas. "He suggested putting a sumo wrestler or someone of that size in goal," DiPietro said. "That way they couldn't see the goal."

"He ended up becoming a huge fan of the sport. He loved the game, he was at every game. I remember from the times being hurt sitting up in the suite with him watching the games, how emotional he got. Goals either scored for or against, you could see the emotional reaction he had to it."

Wang enjoyed the company of his players.

"He was a great basketball player. He loved basketball," DiPietro said. "I hate to admit it, but he used to rain threes on me all day long. He also made a hell of a meatball when we had a meatball cook-off. He was just a really good guy. He was so humble and down-to-earth."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

"I'll never forget we were going out, maybe we were going to lunch, he ends up pulling up in a green Volkswagen Beetle. I said, 'What are you doing? Why you driving that?' He said, 'What do you mean? It's a nice car.' I said, 'I would expect you to have a fancy car.'

"He told me a story that he actually had a Bentley but he was really nervous about driving because he doesn't like to be showy about anything. He went really early in the morning to Oyster Bay to get groceries, and as he was getting back to the car, he forgot how to unlock it so he pressed the wrong button and the alarm started going off. He got all upset that people would actually see him in that car. He never drove it again."

DiPietro said Wang also had a strong connection to the fan base.

"I'll never forget one of the games we played, it was a blizzard and everybody thought the game was going to be canceled," he said. "Charles was actually standing out at the [Nassau Coliseum] door shaking all the fans' hands, saying how much he appreciated them showing up at the game."

Former Islanders player and coach Butch Goring said that even after the team fired him, he remained on great terms with Wang.

"When they did fire me, I met with him and we talked about the team, what I liked about the team, what I didn't like, what changes I would make. I kept a very good rapport with Charles. We were friends even though they fired me. I still came to the rink and I sat in the box. I have good, positive thoughts about him."

"He was first-class all the way. I think Charles was very receptive to the players' wants and needs. He made every effort to make these guys as competitive as possible. When one of the players had an issue with his wife's [health], he flew him home. He was a very good owner to his players."

The current Islanders credit their former majority owner with keeping the team on Long Island.

"He poured his heart into that Lighthouse project. I remember having conversations with him; he really wanted that to happen," Matt Martin said. "There was a lot of chatter about the team moving elsewhere. He always kind of shut that noise down. So I think the people of Long Island who love the Islanders owe him that at least. He really fought hard for this organization. Now we'll have a home at Belmont. He's a big part of that."

Anders Lee added, "You know what it meant to the community here to have the Islanders. He did what he could to make sure that we stayed here. We're very thankful, obviously. This is our home."

Lee said it is sad that Wang will not get to see the Islanders' new arena at Belmont.

"It is unfair. We will have to honor him in some way," Lee said. "Everything that he's done for the Islanders isn't going to be forgotten."

Newsday LOADED: LOADED: 10.23.2018

1111482 New York Islanders

Charles Wang's death met with sadness and regret by Rick DiPietro

By Steven Marcus

Charles Wang initially knew nothing about hockey but plenty about how to treat players. He was not a distant owner; the players could hear him cheering in the rafters and mingled with him off the ice.

"Generally, you're nervous to be around the owner," Matt Martin said Monday as the Islanders mourned the passing of Wang, who died Sunday at 74 of lung cancer. "He's the kind of guy that comes right over to see how your summer was, gives you a hug. Just a great guy to be around. He will be missed for sure."

The team will pay tribute to Wang on Wednesday at Barclays Center, beginning with a moment of silence before the game against the Panthers. The Islanders said the funeral for Wang will be private.

The Islanders reacted on Monday to the news

Ises on Wang's passing: 'Somber day for the organization'

Wang never stopped believing in his players. That resonated with former goaltender Rick DiPietro, who endured a prolonged gantlet of criticism over a lengthy contract that ultimately paid few dividends for Wang. Sadness overwhelmed DiPietro, 37, when he learned of Wang's death.

"It was more than him just being the owner of the team," DiPietro said Monday. "The personal relationship I had with him from the day I got drafted, I almost looked at him like a second dad. When I needed advice or anything, if I had questions about what to do with real estate, whatever it was, he was always there to answer the questions."

But the goalie's parting with the Islanders had a trace of bitterness.

DiPietro was the John Tavares of his day, the No. 1 pick in the 2000 draft, and Wang envisioned him being in goal when the Islanders returned to Stanley Cup glory. Wang was so certain of it that in 2006, he signed DiPietro to a 15-year contract worth \$67.5 million. Then injuries invaded DiPietro's career, and from 2008-13, he played in only 50 games. A compliance buyout was announced in July 2013 and the Islanders are still paying DiPietro \$1.5 million a year through 2029.

"Sunday was a tough day because it was sadness and also a lot of regret," DiPietro said. "He's only 74 years old. I let the way that it ended kind of affect the relationship. It was way too long that I got over it. I probably still didn't get over it yet. I was hoping we would get back to that great relationship that we had. That we didn't make it made [Sunday] a really tough day for me."

DiPietro said he felt as if he let Wang down.

"I still do, to this day," he said. "He was always looking to protect me, always the first one to give me great advice. If stories in the papers weren't great stories or if they criticize the contract, he'd always say the best thing you can do is go out and have overwhelming success. If you want to go get past all the criticism, go out and have overwhelming success."

"It was a smart deal. It just didn't work out. At the time, I figured if I continue to play well, I would have years where I was probably underpaid, years at the back end where I was maybe overpaid. Just, unfortunately, for both of us, I ended up getting hurt, and [it] ends up looking like a bad deal."

The contract, DiPietro said, was born out of his desire — and Wang's — for him to be an Islander for life. The two saw the future far beyond the poor practice facilities and aging Nassau Coliseum.

When DiPietro started his career, the team's gym room was a trailer. "It only got better with him," DiPietro said.

The owner was committed to keeping the team on Long Island one way or another. That's why Wang inserted an undisclosed escape clause in the supposed "ironclad" lease with Barclays Center.

"He saved the Islanders," DiPietro said. "If it was up to the NHL and who was going to buy the team, I have a hard time believing they would have kept that team on Long Island."

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# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

1111402 Boston Bruins

Joakim Nordstrom gets his shot to anchor Bruins' third line

By Kevin Paul Dupont

OTTAWA — Joakim Nordstrom, man of the moment, is the Bruins' latest answer to the question: Hey, who's going to center the third line?

A career left winger, the 26-year-old Nordstrom signed with the Bruins as a free agent in July, looking for regular work as an 11th or 12th forward. In recent days, he has helped fill out open spots on the top six, and now, amid a spate of injuries, he's suddenly the glue guy on a line with wingers Anders Bjork and Chris Wagner.

"I want to be a player that can play anywhere in the lineup," said Nordstrom, who spent nearly a full season on Carolina's top offensive line in 2015-16. "I feel comfortable doing it, so I'll play wherever the coach wants me to play."

Over the summer, figuring they were rich both in roster depth and prospects, the Bruins felt they were well stocked at the center position.

But wing was another story. So rather than bring back Riley Nash following his career season (15-26—41), they brought in low-budget wingers Wagner (cap hit: \$1.25 million) and Nordstrom (\$1 million) and lost Nash to the free agent market, where the Blue Jackets snatched him up for three years at \$2.75 million per.

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Not a bad decision in and of itself, and Nash as of Monday morning stood a lackluster 0-1—1 after seven games.

Wagner and Nordstrom have shown to be competent, versatile performers, with a combined line of 3-1—4. Nordstrom, spotted in at second-line right wing, scored the club's lone goal Saturday night in Vancouver.

But coach Bruce Cassidy has yet to figure out how to make up for Nash's void at No. 3 center. David Backes moved into that spot last week, looked comfortable at his old position (albeit lower in the batting order), and then took a knock to the head Thursday night in Edmonton that dramatically curtailed his playing time that night and kept him in street clothes in Vancouver.

Backes did not make the trip here, instead returning to Boston for testing.

"Pretty much every Swedish player I've come across is generally a good 200-foot player," said Cassidy, noting his comfort factor with using Nordstrom in Backes's absence. "The play well away from the puck. Good thinkers of the game. He is no exception.

"We are really encouraged by how strong he is on puck battles. I didn't see as much of that in China, and he got concussed there, so you are always worried it will go the other way, but he's been very hard in there in every aspect of the game.

"He's worked hard to get his minutes and we're real pleased with his game. Hopefully he'll keep it going."

With Backes hors de combat, Sean Kuraly and Nordstrom helped cover the No. 3 center spot for the rest of the night in Vancouver. Cassidy remains far more comfortable with Kuraly pivoting the No. 4 unit, typically flanked by Wagner and Noel Acciari. With Wagner moved up a notch to play with Nordstrom, rookie Ryan Donato will take up left wing with Kuraly and Acciari.

The No. 3 spot will remain under scrutiny, unless Nordstrom locks it down. The top candidates in AHL Providence remain Trent Frederic (two goals and a fight Saturday) and Jakob Forsbacka Karlsson, but neither of them showed in training camp that they were fully prepared to handle varsity playing time.

That said, Cassidy openly acknowledges the NHL now has a "development league" element to it — and for young forwards, that typically means easing in on the third or fourth lines.

A safer bet, if the Bruins were to reach down to the AHL prior to Thursday's visit by the Flyers, might be Colby Cave (5-2—7 in six games). Now a fourth-year pro, Cave filled in for three games last season, played competently, and his risk factor would be lower than Frederic or JFK now after playing 230 games in the AHL.

Not rushing Krug

Meanwhile, back in Boston, Torey Krug continues to skate on his own. Krug, the club's No. 2 point-getter on the power play last season (5-19—24), sustained an ankle injury late in the preseason and has yet to return to game action.

According to Cassidy, Krug was ready to make the trip here to practice with the club Monday and Tuesday, but flight issues kept him grounded. He began skating again last Wednesday, and Cassidy needs to see how he has progressed before putting him back on the game roster.

"He's going to have to battle at some point — right? — and that's where you have to be careful," said Cassidy. "You don't want to reinjure a guy in practice.

"Don't forget, he missed most of training camp, so it's like starting over for him. So the contact part, getting a feel of jostling and battling for pucks — not just hitting, but every shift and grind of winning pucks — is where we'll have to get him up to speed."

In Krug's absence, Matt Grzelczyk has assumed the driller's position on the power play. The defenseman has the skating skills to walk the blue line and be an effective puck distributor, but the Bruins miss Krug's hard, quick-triggered deliveries up top.

Entering Tuesday's game vs. the Senators, Grzelczyk is 0-4—4 for the season, with two of those helpers on the advantage.

Overall, Krug set a career high in points last season with a 14-45—59 line and led all Bruins in minutes (260:36) on the power play.

The Bruins came out of the weekend ranked No. 14 on the power play (5 for 22, 22.7 percent). They have been particularly challenged on the road, connecting only once on 13 chances.

Injury updates

Kevan Miller, hurt earlier on the trip when trying to block a shot with a hand, also is back in Boston for an exam. "We'll have an update on him when we get back," said Cassidy. "But he's definitely out [Tuesday]." . . . Backes, said Cassidy, is dealing with "the same issues as yesterday," which furthers the suspicion that he sustained yet another concussion when belted by Edmonton's Matt Benning . . . "Nothing new," said Cassidy in reference to defenseman Charlie McAvoy, who returned to Boston Friday when not feeling well in the wake of the OT loss in Edmonton. "He's undergoing a bunch of tests, and hopefully we'll get news on him tomorrow." Asked how McAvoy's spirit is holding up, Cassidy added, "Well, not great. Not playing, especially at that age, hockey becomes your whole life for the most part — not married, no kids, stuff like that. So I imagine he is a little bit down. But hopefully the results come back and he's fine and ready to go." McAvoy missed time last year because of a heart condition and subsequent corrective procedure, but Cassidy sounded confident that this absence is not cardio related. "I don't believe it's anything to do with that," he said. "But again, until I get back home and talk to the doctors, or they give me some information — but I don't think it has anything to do with his heart. I think he is



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

fine in that regard.” . . . Donato, noted Cassidy, “probably isn’t where we envisioned him at the start,” now slotted as a fourth-liner. “But if he can chip in on the power play, get his game, maybe it will do him some good, like it did Danton [Heinen] last year.”

Boston Globe LOADED: 10.23.2018

1111403 Boston Bruins

Could Rask’s standing as Bruins’ No. 1 goalie be in jeopardy?

By Joe Haggerty October 22, 2018 4:52 PM

Tuukka Rask hasn’t outright lost his No. 1 job with the Bruins at this point, but he’s certainly playing like he wants to.

The longtime Bruins netminder has an .875 save percentage through the first four games of this season, and outright hasn’t given the Bruins any chance to win in two of those four games with bad performances against Washington and Calgary. He also watched on Saturday night as backup Jaroslav Halak made his second straight start while Rask sat on the bench. Halak played well enough to get the Bruins a point in the 2-1 overtime loss to the Canucks, and stopped 20-of-22 shots after similarly getting a point in another OT loss in Edmonton last week.

Overall Halak has a 2-0-2 record with a .933 save percentage for the Bruins, and has picked up points in four of his appearances while outplaying Rask to this early point in the season.

The expectation is that Rask is going to get the start on Tuesday night against the Ottawa Senators, and Bruce Cassidy admitted that’s the way he was leaning with his choice while stopping short of announcing it officially. So the Bruins No. 1 goalie hasn’t been “benched” at this point in favor of his backup, but it sure looks like Rask and Halak are splitting up playing time at much closer to a 50/50 clip than anybody could have guessed.

Clearly the Bruins coaching staff isn’t ready to simply give Halak an extended run and saddle Rask with a baseball cap on the bench, but that time gets closer to reality with each outing where the Finnish goaltender isn’t up to par. If Rask again goes out and gives up three or four goals in the first period on Tuesday night, could the Bruins go with Halak for a run of three or four games similar to the one Anton Khudobin went on in November last season?

It may still be early for that to happen given that the Bruins want both of their goalies to get into a healthy midseason rhythm before they start sitting one of them for a couple of weeks at a time. But there’s a lot riding on Rask’s performance on Tuesday night against an Ottawa Senators team that’s been better than anybody could have expected going into this season.

The good news is that Rask has already beaten this Senators bunch once this season when he stopped 28-of-31 shots and played reasonably well for one of his two wins this year. But there will be a little more pressure on him this time around as Halak has been up to the task in the Bruins goalie competition to date, and once again Rask has been slow to get going for a suddenly injury-ravaged B’s hockey club that needs all the help it can get.

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1111404 Boston Bruins

Haggerty’s NHL Power Rankings: Settling in at the top

By Joe Haggerty October 22, 2018 4:02 PM

It’s a few weeks into the regular season and the cream is beginning to rise to the top with the Predators, Lightning and Winnipeg Jets pushing toward the top of the rankings. The Preds and Lightning have lost only once in regulation and the Maple Leafs continue to look like the best offense in the entire NHL.

The other end of the spectrum is equally interesting as the Sharks, Kings and Golden Knights – playoff teams with high hopes this season – are all rounding out in the bottom third of the league. It’s still early yet for both ends to meet somewhere in the middle, but it’s not going to be too early much more with Thanksgiving about a month away.

At that point, things in the standings will begin to cement a little bit, so there are just a few more weeks for underachieving teams to get things in gear.

Anyway, without further ado here are this week’s power rankings:

1. Nashville Predators (7-1-0, rank last week: 3) – The Predators are allowing under two goals per game, Filip Forsberg has picked up the pace offensively and Peter Laviolette is wearing bull masks. All is right in Music City.

2. Tampa Bay Lightning (5-1-1, LW: 15) – The Lightning are on a roll now with four players scoring at a point-per-game clip and the offense averaging four goals per game.

3. Colorado Avalanche (5-1-2, LW: 7) – Nathan MacKinnon off to a torrid start for the Avs, who look like they’re finally ready to take that step to a legitimate contender this season. The eight goals and 14 points in eight games are pretty darn good.

4. New Jersey Devils (4-2-0, LW: 6) – Taylor Hall is putting up points, but he’s also got just one goal and is a minus player in six games thus far this season. The Devils are winning so it doesn’t matter right now, but it’s not a gold standard start for the reigning Hart Trophy winner.

5. Toronto Maple Leafs (6-3-0, LW: 1) – The Leafs lead the entire NHL with 34 goals scored thus far this season, but they’re also allowing over three goals per game at the same time. That’s a formula that may not play well late into the season, and postseason, if it doesn’t change.

6. Anaheim Ducks (5-3-1, LW: 5) – The Ducks are off to a strong start despite some injuries, and they’ve also managed to sign wayward RFA Nick Ritchie to a new contract as well. Everything is coming up Milhouse for the Ducks.

7. Winnipeg Jets (5-2-1, LW: 13) – The Jets are off to a decent start and somehow Josh Morrissey is leading the Jets in points right now. I did not see that one coming.

8. Pittsburgh Penguins (3-1-2, LW: 8) – The Penguins have allowed as many goals as they’ve scored this season. That’s going to need to change if Pittsburgh is truly going to get their house in order.

9. Chicago Blackhawks (4-2-2, LW: 2) – Patrick Kane and Alex DeBrincat have combined for 14 goals in eight games for the Blackhawks this season. That is some serious offensive firepower.

10. Carolina Hurricanes (4-3-1, LW: 10) – Considering that Scott Darling hasn’t even played a game for the Canes this season, the start is pretty good thanks to some brilliant young players in front of the goaltenders.

11. Montreal Canadiens (4-1-2, LW: 21) – Tomas Tatar and Paul Byron are setting the pace for the Canadiens offensively. You have to wonder how long that’s going to last, but credit where it’s due that they’re better than expected.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

12. Calgary Flames (5-3-0, LW: 14) – The Flames are off to a pretty good start led by Johnny Gaudreau, who looks like he might even be taking his game to another level.

13. Boston Bruins (4-2-2, LW: 4) – The Bruins have been bailed out by Jaroslav Halak's play between the pipes, but they're not going to go very far as long as Tuukka Rask is sitting at an .875 save percentage.

14. Ottawa Senators (4-2-1, LW: 22) – Chris Tierney has nine points in seven games for the Senators. It's a great story so far, but we'll have to see how long it lasts for a Sens team that can never seem to get it together for too long.

15. Washington Capitals (3-2-2, LW: 11) – The Capitals are scoring goals like crazy, but Braden Holtby is slow out of the gate this season. That's going to need to turn around for the reigning Cup champions.

16. Minnesota Wild (4-2-2, LW: 17) – Young guys like Joel Eriksson Ek and Joel Greenway are off to slow starts for Minny, who again look like they're going to be just good enough to get their fan base excited.

17. Columbus Blue Jackets (4-3-0, LW: 12) – Cam Atkinson and Nick Foligno have finally started joining the offensive party for the Blue Jackets along with the Artist already known as the Bread Man.

18. San Jose Sharks (4-3-1, LW: 20) – Zero points, four assists and a minus-4 rating in eight games for Erik Karlsson thus far. Well, that certainly is pretty underwhelming.

19. Edmonton Oilers (3-3-0, LW: 27) – After a tough start, the Oilers have kind of righted the ship after finally getting home to Edmonton. Now we see what this talented hockey team is truly made of.

20. Vancouver Canucks (4-3-0, LW: 18) – Brock Boeser, Bo Horvat and Elias Pettersson continue to power the Canucks through an early-season surprise with Boeser and Horvat teaming to take down the B's last weekend.

21. Buffalo Sabres (5-4-0, LW: 16) – A decent start for Rasmus Dahlin and a decent start for the Sabres as well, so they have that going for them... which is nice.

22. Philadelphia Flyers (4-4-0, LW: 25) – High-end offensive players and mediocre-to-bad goaltending? Same old Flyers.

23. Vegas Golden Knights (4-4-0, LW: 24) – One goal and a minus-4 in eight games for Max Pacioretty is just part of the difficult climb for the Golden Knights in year two of their NHL existence.

24. Dallas Stars (3-4-0, LW: 19) – Alex Radulov, Tyler Seguin and Jamie Benn are off to hot starts, but once again it's the same old question marks for the Stars struggling to keep the puck out of the net.

25. St. Louis Blues (2-3-2, LW: 26) – The Blues only have two players on their roster with a positive plus/minus rating right now. That's a tough way to win the NHL.

26. New York Islanders (3-4-0, LW: 23) – If Robin Lehner can keep playing close to his current level this season, the Isles could be better than anybody thought. They could use something, anything from Jordan Eberle, though.

27. Los Angeles Kings (2-5-1, LW: 19) – The Kings rank no higher than 23rd in the NHL in any major team category, and that tells you exactly the brand of mediocre hockey that they're playing right now.

28. Arizona Coyotes (2-5-0, LW: 28) – Clayton Keller is picking up the offensive pace for the Coyotes a bit, but the rest of that roster is looking pretty light on the offensive side of things right now.

29. New York Rangers (2-5-1, LW: 29) – The Rangers continue to try to get by with guys like Mats Zuccarello, Chris Kreider and Mika

Zibanejad as the best players on their team and that continues to qualify as a full-out rebuild.

30. Florida Panthers (1-2-3, LW: 31) – A team thrown into a turmoil due to one injury to Roberto Luongo may not be as good of a hockey team as we thought they were. A tough start for the Panthers.

31. Detroit Red Wings (1-5-2, LW: 30) – Anthony Mantha is already a minus-11 just a couple of weeks into the NHL season. How the heck does that even happen?

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1111556 Websites

The Athletic / Why more NHL players are moving away from canned quotes and instead are giving honest answers

By Justin Bourne Oct 22, 2018 95

Sometime around the middle of last week, I had something of an epiphany. Was it just me, I wondered, or are NHLers starting to say some pretty interesting stuff in interviews? This is a league where being a bland quote wasn't just the norm, it was an expectation from teammates, opponents and organizations. In years past, Sean Avery regularly said things that didn't fall within hockey's beige oral parameters and he found himself a pariah in a hurry (justifiably, I'd argue, but still). Basically any time a team heard a single player on another team suggest their team wasn't great, the quote was blown up to poster-size and used as a rallying cry. Creating "bulletin board material" was seen as one of the games biggest sins.

Part of this was certainly the buttoned-up culture of the game, but also, it served a tangible purpose. If you were the player who decided to speak up and air a grievance, or give a negative opinion about an opposing team, all you did was make your life harder. On the ice you were a target; you took extra whacks, extra chirps, and if you said something bad enough, extra fists to the nose. In your own dressing room, teammates became distant, they played you harder in practice, there was simply no benefit to standing out off the ice.

But as hockey has shed its thugs at an astonishing rate, the game has changed drastically. Think how recently it was mandatory that every team have at least one face-puncher. The post-Colton Orr era Toronto Maple Leafs in 2014-15 still got 20+ games from Frazer McLaren, Brad Ross, Troy Bodie, David Broll, Sam Carrick, and Jamie Devane (all of whom racked up north of 60 PIMs, often in just a handful of games). That was just a few years ago.

So yes – with the game having changed so much, so fast, players have not only had to adjust on-ice, but also come to grips with the league's new culture off of it. It turns out that if you happen to run your mouth a little off the ice, for the most part, you no longer have to answer for it. Most players today are legitimately just trying to play hockey, so players are a little more free to say what they like. When the game starts, they can simply say "if you don't like what I said, stop me." And, if you're a good enough player that's easier said than done, meaning that verbal leash suddenly seems a lot longer.

In turn, I feel like today's players are relaxing a bit more when they're near microphones. Just look at some of the great quotes we've had this year.

Lars Eller after losing to the Leafs: "We were just playing against (Sidney) Crosby and (Evgeni) Malkin (Pittsburgh won the season opener 7-6), so everything kind of drops off from there. It's not that special [the Leafs' team], to be honest. It's a good team, like a lot of others. They'll probably be a playoff team, I would think."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

Totally fair comment! And while he had to deal with some mild Toronto media backlash after that, I'm guessing he's not too terrified that next time the Caps play the Leafs that Mitch Marner and Tyler Ennis are coming for him. That's the type of thing that, years ago, would've turned him into an instant target. You kinda get the vibe that these days, the thought is "The next time we play the Capitals, we're not going to spend extra energy on Lars Eller. They have Ovechkin and Backstrom and Kuznetsov."

Here's Drew Doughty in a great interview by Pierre Lebrun on the concept of signing with the Leafs as a UFA. He had hinted prior to signing his Kings deal that he'd love to play in Ontario, where he grew up.

"The things I said to the media, they were a little bit true, but at the same time I was just saying those things to make sure L.A. didn't think I was for sure staying so they could screw me on the contract.

"I know people don't think I'm that smart but I'm smarter than I look and I know how to work my ways in that sense. You know, I did think about it. But I always knew I was going to sign with L.A., obviously."

The biggest takeaway for me here, is that not only is the fear of physical retribution from opponents diminished, players are getting smarter. I don't mean IQ-wise, there's just such a long list of players that have gotten screwed by trying to be loyal to organizations that they've come to recognize that they're all their own companies. Players understand better than ever that teammates have to do what's best for them, that the higher-ups can be ruthless and things are different from back in the day. It's acceptable for every player to try to get theirs at all costs.

When my dad played for the Islanders during their Cup years there were hushed discussions in the dressing room about what certain teammates earned each season, but it wasn't usually openly known. The idea then was more about that it didn't matter, they were a team and that was all that mattered and those who didn't fall in line were chastised. A situation like William Nylander's would probably have been frowned upon by his teammates back then. But do you think a single player on the Leafs begrudges Willy trying to get what he believes he's worth today? There's not a chance.

Guys like Doughty being honest in an interview, well, there's no blowback. His teammates get it and the organization probably does too.

Similarly, if you're providing more on-ice value than the money you're earning, you're pretty free to say whatever you like without your team resenting you. Here's one of my favourite quotes from this season, courtesy Evgeny Kuznetsov. He was told a teammate (T.J. Oshie) called him a top-five player in the league, and was asked if a Hart Trophy was a goal of his:

"I don't give [an expletive] about that. To be MVP, you have to work hard 365 [days] in a year, but I'm not ready for that. I want to have fun, and I want to make those risky plays when sometimes you don't have a play and you guys don't understand every time those plays. It's not easy to make. But to be MVP in this league, you have to play even better. You have to go next level. It's not easy. More important, you have to stay focused 365 [days], but that's not my style."

I feel like if I had made that comment in junior they wouldn't have dressed me for a month, let alone the NHL. "I probably could be better but I can't be bothered to try all the time" is an amazing work of verbal art. And you know what happened to Kuzy in the wake of him saying that? The organization didn't flinch, and he put up five points in the next three games and none of his teammates said boo, because he's really good at hockey and that's basically all anyone cares about at this point.

While the concept of team-first is still a part of the fabric of hockey, at the highest levels, the acceptance that it's a business – which is a premise organizations have almost always operated under – seems

to have been accepted by players too, which appears to have been somewhat freeing.

We're seeing young players right out of the gate say whatever the hell they want more and more, and god is it refreshing. Patrik Laine's been saying whatever he's wanted to say for as long as I've seen him on TV. Auston Matthews and Connor McDavid did spreads in GQ, which might have been enough for teammates back in the day to resent them, or at least talk about them behind their backs. Today, their buddies just had a laugh. Hell, when Matthews was asked about the Kuznetsov quote he said, "I'm a fan." This was around the time Kyle Bukauskas of Sportsnet asked him if he'd ever been as hot as he was during his 10-goal in six game run, where Matthews started his answer with an unblinking "I have." The age-old requirement of false humility from NHLers in interviews seems to be fading.

The fun part, now, is that the players who didn't up grow up marinating in the hockey culture of old are starting to take the spotlight and they don't seem to see the spotlight as something to shy away from. Honest answers no longer get you exiled or shunned. We're 14 seasons into Sidney Crosby being maddeningly bland in interviews. Jonathan Toews followed in his footsteps. NHL star after star for most of my life has failed to say much of any value, entertainment-wise, politically, even just hockey-wise. It feels like with the change in how the game is being played, and with how contracts are doled out, and even with the current social climate (not to mention social media), we're on the verge of actually getting to know a few NHL players.

Bland quotes have long been a complaint from fans, so if we are in fact on the cusp of a change, I think it'd be healthy for the game. We may not like everything we hear as the Pandora's Box of player opinions gets opened, but at least we should have a better idea of who we're rooting for in what appears to be becoming a more open, personality-laden era of NHL hockey.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.23.2018

1111557 Websites

The Athletic / A giant hockey family tree, with roots running across the NHL, grows in Charlestown

By Fluto Shinzawa Oct 22, 2018 1

Keith Tkachuk was in his hometown. He was with wife Chantal and daughter Taryn. He was about to watch 19-year-old Brady Tkachuk, his youngest son, make his NHL debut against the Bruins at TD Garden.

He felt terrible.

"Put it this way — I wanted to throw up before the game," said Keith Tkachuk. "You're excited, but you're sick to your stomach. It's out of your control. It's not like he's five years old and you're taking him to the rink. He's a big boy now playing big-boy hockey in the best league in the world. You get more stressed and nervous watching your child play than when I played."

Pragmatism often fogs the lens through which parents view their children. Grandparents, on the other hand, usually have no such filter. Joy is too powerful to blur.

"It's something that's beyond explaining," said Gerry Tkachuk, Brady's grandmother and Keith's mother. "You cannot believe it. Even when Keith made it, we couldn't believe he made it. Not that



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

we didn't have faith, but we never expected that. Now, to see the boys, it's incredible. We're so lucky."

On Oct. 8, 19-year-old Brady became the third member of his family to join the NHL, following 46-year-old father Keith and 20-year-old brother Matthew.

When the concentric family circles expand, other names enter the hockey discussion: uncle Tom Fitzgerald, the ex-Bruin and current New Jersey assistant general manager; uncle Scott Fitzgerald, an amateur scout for the Bruins; uncle Bryan Fitzgerald, who played at UMass Amherst; and cousins Ryan and Casey Fitzgerald, currently playing for Providence (AHL) and Boston College.

The other side of the family tree has NHL branches too: ex-Bruin Jimmy Hayes and younger brother Kevin, now on a one-year deal with the Rangers.

Somehow, the collision of the Fitzgerald and McNeil families of Charlestown produced five NHL first-round picks: Tom Fitzgerald (No. 17 by the Islanders, 1986), Keith Tkachuk (No. 19, Winnipeg, 1990), Kevin Hayes (No. 24, Chicago, 2010), Matthew Tkachuk (No. 6, Calgary, 2016), and Brady Tkachuk (No. 4, Ottawa, 2018).

But the most extraordinary thing about the Fitzgeralds and the McNeils, families with dockworking and firefighting in their bones, is how ordinary they are.

### Center of the family

If you picture the family like a line, the Fitzgeralds are the centers. Casey and Ryan Fitzgerald, along with younger brothers Jack and Brendan, are flanked by first cousins on both wings: Matthew and Brady Tkachuk on one side, Jimmy and Kevin Hayes on the other.

The first of the Fitzgeralds to put a serious blade onto ice was Tom, a schoolboy star at Austin Prep before committing to Providence College. Like most boys of his generation, Tom and younger brothers Scott and Bryan played other sports such as soccer, football, and baseball before the rinks sunk their teeth into the Fitzgeralds.

For Tom Fitzgerald Sr., his boys' love of hockey engaged him with the sport to a deeper degree.

The son of Charlestown's George and Mary Fitzgerald worked on the docks. His father was also a longshoreman. Hockey was the family's recreation.

Like many young couples in Charlestown in the 1960s, Tom and Sharon Fitzgerald followed Bobby Orr and the Big Bad Bruins. Tom, their first son, was born in Charlestown in 1968, two years before the Bruins rampaged to the Stanley Cup.

In 1971, the Fitzgeralds moved to Billerica. Sharon worked as a part-time nurse at Tewksbury Hospital. As young Tom progressed through his childhood career, Tom the elder became more involved with Billerica Youth Hockey. The man without a hockey background taught himself to become a coach.

"He knew just as much about coaching hockey," cracked Tom Fitzgerald of his father's start behind the bench, "as one of those fat guys who'd yell at me at the Garden."

George and Mary's other child followed hockey too. Daughter Gerry had the Bruins bug just as bad.

"We always had season tickets to the Bruins," Gerry Tkachuk said. "I was probably seven years old starting at a hockey game. The Original Six — that's when I was going to hockey games."

Tom Fitzgerald would not be the only family member with Charlestown roots to advance to the NHL.

Dozens of family members showed up Oct. 8 for Brady Tkachuk's first game in Boston with the Senators.

### A natural athlete

Gerry and John Tkachuk, a firefighter in the Boston Fire Department, settled in Medford, where they raised Kevin, Keith, and Mary Kay. Charlestown's pull has never waned.

"We're both Townies," Gerry said of her and her husband. "We've probably lived in Medford for 40 years. But we still say Charlestown's our home."

It did not take long for Keith, their younger son, to flex his athletic muscles. Hockey, baseball, and football came easily to Keith. The natural athlete starred at Malden Catholic before attending Boston University for one season.

Over a 1,201-game NHL career, Tkachuk scored and checked and bulled his way into America's Greatest Generation alongside Massachusetts peers such as Tony Amonte, Bill Guerin, and Jeremy Roenick. For his mother, just making the BU roster, to say nothing of the 538 goals her son scored in the NHL, was a feather in the family cap.

"When he got the scholarship, we never anticipated him making the pros. Or even thought that," recalled Gerry Tkachuk. "When he got a full scholarship to BU, we thought we were way ahead of the game."

Keith's genes were amplified one generation later. Matthew went 13 picks earlier than his dad. Two years later, Brady bested brother and father by going fourth overall. Like their old man, Matthew and Brady are rambunctious players with thunderous shoulders and sharp elbows.

A similar transference of bloodlines took place between Tom Fitzgerald and Ryan, his oldest son. Tom served as Nashville's original captain because of his smarts and work ethic as much as his skill. Ryan, a second-year pro, projects to be a bottom-six NHL wing because of his processing power.

There is also an active third hockey branch of the family tree, even if one generation didn't make it onto the ice.

Brady Tkachuk, center, with his grandparents, John and Gerry Tkachuk, after his first pro game in Boston.

### The Brothers Hayes

Jim McNeil, Sharon's brother, had an important job at Christmas. When the extended crew gathered at the Fitzgeralds' Billerica home, he was Santa Claus. It took some time before Sharon's boys figured out that Uncle Jimmy was playing the role.

Another important task for Jim and wife Joanne was to be parents to Shelagh. Their daughter, cousin of Tom, Scott, and Bryan Fitzgerald, would marry Kevin Hayes and settle in Dorchester. Kevin and Shelagh are parents to Jimmy and Kevin Hayes, who both starred at Nobles and BC before starting their pro careers.

Jimmy, signed by Pittsburgh on July 1, is currently in Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, the Penguins' AHL affiliate. After signing a one-year extension with the Rangers, Kevin will be an unrestricted free agent at year's end, making him a candidate to be moved before the deadline. Both BC boys, curiously, are playing for Rhode Island natives who attended Boston University: Clark Donatelli and David Quinn.

Jimmy and Kevin Hayes are regular summertime visitors to York, Maine, where the extended family gathers in a rented house. This summer, the crew bypassed Maine in favor of Cape Cod to attend Jimmy's wedding.

Sharon Fitzgerald, great-aunt to Jimmy and Kevin, does not have an answer to why the hockey genes in her family are so robust. But she thinks about something her husband Tom, who died in 2015, used to say: Hockey is a game. It is supposed to be fun.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

For the Fitzgeralds, Tkachuks, and Hayeses, there are few places more fun than the rink.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.23.2018

1111558 Websites

The Athletic / Comparing Michael Peca's contract dispute to William Nylander's and the importance of open dialogue

By Pierre LeBrun Oct 22, 2018 51

That Kyle Dubas and Lewis Gross met on Sunday can only be construed as a good thing in the ongoing William Nylander contract stalemate.

The Toronto Maple Leafs GM and the agent for the restricted free agent met during the Flames-Rangers game at MSG, sources confirm, although whether any progress was made, nobody was saying.

But it beats the alternative. When the dialogue dies, that's when you know you're headed to a point of no return.

Which is what happened 18 years ago when restricted free agent Michael Peca ended up sitting out the entire 2000-01 season because of his contract squabble with the Buffalo Sabres.

It's a situation neither Nylander or the Leafs want to replicate now.

In Nylander, Peca can certainly see the parallels of a player wanting to stick to his beliefs and what he believes he should get paid.

"I think that's the key, if you will feel you have a strong, principled position and you're willing to see it through," Peca told The Athletic over the phone on Sunday. "I mean it's difficult, though. Obviously you want to be playing and travelling with the guys and be in that locker room. But it's part of the process. Obviously timing is everything, with the Leafs and the Tavares deal and Matthews and Marner around the corner, it becomes a trickier scenario for Kyle Dubas and how he fits all of that in."

The two situations are different in many ways, of course. Peca lived out his contract stalemate in the pre-cap era with a Sabres team under the former Rigas family ownership that was very budget conscious. Every dime mattered. While money is no object in Toronto, the Leafs are limited by the salary cap and are trying to shoehorn Nylander, Matthews and Marner over the next year underneath that ceiling.

"The difference between both situations is that I was 25-26 years old going through it and it was my third contract," Peca said. "Now these kids are going through this stuff with their second contracts and they want to capitalize. A lot of kids are coming out of their entry-level deals and signing huge, long-term deals. If he feels he's got the statistics and data to back it up, then he's got every right to fight what he feels is fair."

And this is where the similarities come into play despite the 18-year gap in respective contract squabbles. Nylander's opening contract demands jaw-dropped the Leafs. Peca, led by veteran agent Don Meehan of Newport Sports, asked for the kind of money that the penny-pinching Sabres at the time were floored by. One of the NHL's premier defensive centres, a 200-foot monster, Peca put up back to back 20-goal seasons in what was still the Dead Puck Era. It came down to the player and team not being on the same page as far as his overall value and impact to the Sabres.

"They were trying to use the collective bargaining agreement to their advantage, which they had a right to do, and didn't feel like the guy that was the third or fourth-leading scorer on the team, regardless of everything else I provided for the team, was worthy of that," Peca said. "I disagreed with it and felt my value to the team didn't just rival but exceeded most guys, other than Dominik Hasek, on our team. So that's what I was fighting for at the time."

The monetary gap regarding Peca's value was vast from the get-go and never really shrank.

And so both sides dug in. And it got ugly.

"They become very difficult situations in that both sides believe very strongly in their positions," former Sabres GM Darcy Regier told The Athletic over the phone on Sunday. "It's obviously important for the club. But I think the one difference is that it's personal to the player. That's a distinction. When you're the general manager you're acting on behalf of people you work with, ownership, obviously the coaching staff wants that player back, so they're focused more on whether they can get the player back. The club loses the player, the player loses time and money and potentially opportunity, although certainly not in Michael Peca's case. As a GM you are acting in the best interest of the club and you want to make sure you're reasonable."

But how do you resolve the gap? It's a question for both Regier then and Dubas now.

"From the general manager's standpoint, nothing you're going to do is done in a vacuum," said Regier. "What you do might impact your ability to win by not allowing you to optimize, in our case in Buffalo at that time, optimize our budget. Now it's relative to the cap today. Then you think in terms of how will this impact future signings for your club because nothing is done in a vacuum, other agents are going to use that signing in some shape or form as a comparable with their player with your club..."

In the meantime, it's harder on the player to be sure. He's on an island. He's not playing the game he loves.

"Probably what made things a bit more difficult for me is that I had been in Buffalo longer (than Nylander in Toronto) and was the captain of the team and had roots in the city," Peca said. "So when it was getting to the point where I knew how difficult this was going to be, and part of what helped me make that stance was just the way the Rigas' were dealing with me in the media. They owned the 24-hour TV and radio sports stations (Empire Sports) that were just bombarding me left and right and a lot of it was just false stuff. I think really galvanized me in that scenario. ... Where as William is younger and he can hold tight, he's over in Europe skating, staying fit and kind of away from the noise. I can't imagine him going through this while living in Toronto. It would magnify things a couple of hundred times. I was living in Buffalo and seeing people every day... it was difficult from time to time, trying to give people enough but not too much because you're trying to respect the process."

Nylander and the Leafs both face a Dec. 1 deadline which in the CBA states RFAs must be signed to a contract or else can't play in the NHL that season. That rule did not exist back in 2000-01 which is too bad because it probably would have led to a quicker resolution for Peca and the Sabres, either way.

"Yeah I agree with you 100 percent," Peca said. "With that hard deadline, it puts a little pressure on the organization as well. I think at the time, I was really the only one with the pressure to wait it out because the team was being successful and playing well. I certainly wasn't going to cave in though. With that hard deadline, it gives the organization a bit more to think about."

Echoed Regier on whether today's Dec. 1 rule would have helped then: "Yeah it might have. I agree with that, had that rule been in there; deadlines are good, generally. Deadlines get things done."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

In the end, it got to the point of no return between the Sabres and Peca and he was traded to the Islanders at the June draft in 2001 and later that August signed a five-year, \$20-million deal (the kind of contract the Sabres were never going to sign).

Dubas has been on record saying he doesn't wish to trade Nylander. That's understandable. Regier didn't want to trade Peca, either. It's not the ideal result of a contract stalemate.

"You don't want to create an environment or be perceived as creating an environment where players can force a trade, because they didn't get what they believed they were entitled to," Regier said. "You don't want to establish a precedent that isn't going to work for the organization."

For Regier, there was no joy in trading Peca to the Islanders as a final result.

"No, I didn't personally feel there was any winner in that situation," Regier said. "The Buffalo Sabres didn't win, Michael would have to answer for that himself but he probably didn't feel like he won, and it shouldn't be about winning. But what can happen and it's a risk over time but you have to be very careful with respect to egos, positions walking in, people becoming entrenched, people not wanting to negotiate ... when that happens, the risk of digging in becomes more pronounced. Then it becomes how do we move this thing along, how do we get out of this situation? It doesn't feel as though it gets easier."

That is certainly not where things are right now with Nylander and the Leafs. The fact that Dubas went to Switzerland last week to meet with Nylander is something in itself that Regier and Peca never did during their stalemate. The fact Dubas and Gross spoke Sunday means the dialogue is alive.

There's still hope.

In the meantime, Peca knows how Nylander might be feeling as every day goes by, missing his teammates.

"It's a serious conflict of interest because you love the guys and you want them to succeed," Peca said. "But you end up growing up so angry at management and ownership and you don't want to see them succeed. It twists your soul. It's a difficult thing to go through. I'm sure he sees all the reports and sees how they're scoring, although maybe deep down he's a bit relieved they've quieted down the last few games. But as good as they are now, people realize they could be even better with him. You just hope as a Leafs fan and as the organization, they get him signed."

The Athletic LOADED: 10.23.2018

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The Athletic / The inside story of how Tim Hortons brought 'The Away Game' to the world

By Ryan S. Clark Oct 22, 2018 14

More than one million viewers have watched it on YouTube. Countless others have watched the ad on television throughout North America.

Canadian coffee and donut giant Tim Hortons' latest commercial entitled "The Away Game" invited the world to learn about the Kenya Ice Lions. As the only men's hockey team in the East African nation, they were flown to Toronto and got a chance to play their first game against an actual opponent.

And they did but with the help of two new "teammates" in superstars Sidney Crosby and Nathan MacKinnon.

This is the story of how the commercial came together, the day itself and the potential long-term impact it could have.

Chris Wakefield, who is the regional marketing and sponsorship lead for Tim Hortons, said the company works with an advertisement agency to discuss ideas for the start of hockey season.

The goal was to have the commercial involve Crosby and MacKinnon, the two Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia stars, whose faces are synonymous with the company's hockey cards program.

Ad agency Zulu came to Tim Hortons in April with an idea. They came across the Kenya Ice Lions and presented what they learned about the team.

"We saw some video, read about them and were floored and inspired about their devotion and passion for the game," Wakefield said. "It perfectly lines up with Tim Hortons' passion for hockey and for the markets we're in within Canada and the United States."

Zulu sent representatives to Kenya to meet with the team. The idea was then presented to Crosby and MacKinnon.

"When they saw it," Wakefield recalled of Crosby and MacKinnon. "They said, 'We need to be a part of it.' They went above and beyond with what they would normally do with us."

Tim Hortons flew the team to Toronto for five days. They visited famous landmarks around Canada's largest city. On one of those evenings, the group got a chance to visit the Hockey Hall of Fame. Wakefield said they even received a private evening viewing with the Stanley Cup.

And that's when Tim Hortons broke part of the news that the Ice Lions would be playing a game against another team for the first time in their club's history.

"Over in Kenya, they do not have enough players for a real game," Wakefield said. "They do not have goalies. We were able to get them goalies. We also arranged for a team of local firefighters and we took them to an arena in Brampton where junior and minor hockey is played."

Steve Burgie, a Mississauga fire fighter, said the department's hockey players were given limited information in the beginning. They heard from a friend of a friend that a hockey team was needed for "some marketing stuff" back in August.

"It was hard to find teams that they could put together pretty quickly," Burgie said. "Just somehow the word got to us and we said, 'Yeah. We got 12, 13 guys we can get together fairly quickly.'"

Burgie said the team was comprised of players from the three Mississauga Fire Department intramural teams.

The firefighters did not know the whole story until the day of the filming drew closer.

"We saw some video footage they had on YouTube about the hockey rink with square corners and when we showed up, we were happy to be part of a special moment so they could see what a rink looks like," Burgie said. "It brings us back to our grassroots as kids and enjoying that special moment. We just really wanted to be a part of that and show them a good time."

"None of us knew how it would go. Whether it was a scrimmage, practice, drills."

Wakefield said Tim Hortons worked with Crosby and MacKinnon while partnering with their equipment manufacturer, CCM, to provide the Ice Lions with the best possible experience.

The commercial shows the Kenyans getting ready in the dressing room when unbeknownst to them, Crosby and MacKinnon walk



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

through the door wearing the Ice Lions' uniform and waiting to take the ice with them.

How does that work? What did Tim Hortons do to keep Crosby's and MacKinnon's involvement a secret for so long that nobody but a select few knew what was happening?

"That's a good question. We had a little bit of luck on our side," Wakefield said. "We just worked with our ad agency and we also have a close-knit group here at Tim Hortons and that includes Sid and Nate and their representatives. Everyone knows they come up and shoot a commercial. I just don't think people expected anything above and beyond that."

Wakefield said there were local news media members who were at the game in August but they signed an agreement that they would not report on the event until the commercial aired months later.

Burgie also added that the firefighters who played were not allowed to say anything about their experience until they received the green light from Tim Hortons.

Crosby and MacKinnon were brought through a side entrance and got dressed in another area of the rink, Wakefield said.

Once Crosby and MacKinnon entered the Ice Lions' dressing room, the team soon realized they would be playing with two of the game's biggest stars.

"They're big hockey fans. They watch closely and it was really cool," MacKinnon said about meeting the Ice Lions. "They have their iPads and their computers and things like that to watch hockey. It's obviously humbling that they're big fans like that."

Cameras captured what has become the seminal moment of the commercial. It's when one of the players touches Crosby's face to see if he was real and the moment itself was not a dream.

What the cameras did not show was the reaction of the firefighters when they learned about Crosby's and MacKinnon's involvement.

"The moment we saw them, we were really surprised," Burgie said. "We sat on the bench and Tim Hortons said they had some special guests to help them with drills. We saw the special guests were Nate and Sid. They were fantastic. They came over to say 'Hi' and I cannot say enough about their professionalism. They're amazing hockey players and even better off the ice."

"We chatted as hockey players too and saw them run the Kenyans through some drills."

Although Crosby and MacKinnon were involved, the experience itself was not scripted.

Wakefield said there was a general outline of how the commercial would be filmed but they wanted the game to be genuine.

"They had a warm-up and played a game," Wakefield said. "There was nothing set up like, 'Make this pass.' None of that happened. It was an actual game and a warm-up and we were able to share some of it."

Burgie said he was impressed with how the Ice Lions performed throughout the afternoon.

"Only playing for a couple years and to see where they are at with their skating ability, it is not an easy sport to learn as an adult," he said. "We've been playing since we were 5 or 6. To see the way they skate or maneuver, it was quite impressive."

Even with Crosby and MacKinnon on the ice, the firefighters still played the Ice Lions hard as if it were a league game.

And with that soon came the reminder Crosby and MacKinnon might be kind of good at this hockey thing.

"We were going hard against them and it was amazing to see what they can do firsthand. It's that next level of hockey for all of us that we all wished we could be at," Burgie said of Crosby and MacKinnon. "At first, they are really good and then they turn it up a couple times. You know they have more in the tank that you're not seeing. It was amazing."

Burgie said his youngest son is a big Crosby fan and to line up against his son's favorite player was pretty special.

"He was telling all his friends," Burgie said. "But they don't believe him!"

Once the game was over and filming stopped, everyone involved in the commercial started heading home.

Except Crosby and MacKinnon.

"Sid and Nate were in the dressing room signing all their jerseys, giving them sticks and the camera crews already left by that point," Wakefield said. "It was a long day and shooting was complete and they wanted to be a part of it even more."

MacKinnon said he and Crosby wanted to hang out with the Ice Lions to learn more about them.

"It was cool to hear their story and their perspective of things," MacKinnon said. "To hear a little bit about what they do back home for work or for fun, things like that. It was just getting to know them as individuals. It's not just all about on camera."

"We're real people off the camera and it was cool to interact with them."

Burgie was not around when Crosby and MacKinnon were in the dressing room but he gleaned enough to know they were beyond enthralled with the Ice Lions.

"For being two of the best in the world, they don't act like it," Burgie said. "Truly humble professional people. We got to chat a little bit with them but they mostly kept them with the Kenyans. We're the background players and that's understandable. The small moments we had with them, we were truly impressed with how they conduct themselves and it was an amazing experience to meet them."

"It was fantastic. We would have loved to hang out with them and have a couple beers if it would have been possible."

Most of the "Sid and Nate" ad campaigns are comedic in nature. There's the series when they're working a Tim Hortons' drive-thru back home and ask customers silly questions upon meeting them.

Crosby and MacKinnon have done everything from playing street hockey with local children, to driving a Tim Hortons truck around Halifax, to climbing a 110-foot ladder with firefighters, to riding a Zamboni through an actual drive-thru while placing an order.

It works out to where Crosby is the straight man and MacKinnon the comic relief.

Wakefield said once they started looking at the footage, they knew immediately this was unlike any commercial Tim Hortons had previously done.

"Absolutely. To skate with people from Kenya, it's cool," MacKinnon said. "We want to grow the game. I'm not sure how long it's going to take for it to grow in Africa but maybe it's a step in the right direction. They have a small rink they love to play on. It's a start for sure and it's obviously really cool they're interested as much as they are."

That's what made this experience so different. It was not two guys from the same hometown with their "aw, shucks" personalities having fun together.

Crosby and MacKinnon transcended continents, culture, hemispheres and race in a way hockey has rarely seen.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

"You could see a direct connection with the people you are working with," MacKinnon said. "The commercials we've done before, I'm sure it's funny for people at home to watch but to see the impact we have firsthand was special and it's cool to do things like that."

Burgie, MacKinnon and Wakefield were all devout in sharing their feelings that they want to see the Ice Lions succeed and the game grow in new areas.

"We've always considered it a sport for the northern parts of the world and in the NHL alone, over the last decade, they have tried to grow the game in the states with a lot of the U.S. teams," Burgie said. "It's good to see the sport is growing and it would be great to see it grow at a world level like the Olympics and see more than just two or three teams be competitive."

"It's about seeing more countries being competitive. To see the game reach out to southern regions, it gives us a lot of hope that the game will be on a bigger world stage."

Since the advertisement aired last week, Tim Hortons' corporate offices have been flooded with emails and phone calls about the story itself.

Wakefield said they never expected the commercial to go viral but now that it has, he hopes it leads to more people around the world taking an interest in the Ice Lions and the game as a whole.

"It's just a great story and people are coming together and sharing love for something they also share with others," Wakefield said. "That's where we look at it and it's been above and beyond our expectations."

The Athletic LOADED: 10.23.2018

1111560 Websites

The Athletic / Down Goes Brown weekend power rankings: How low should the Kings go?

By Sean McIndoe Oct 22, 2018 46

This is the time of year when coming up with power rankings starts getting fun. Over the first few weeks, everyone's screaming at you about not overreacting, so you're basically just going by the preseason consensus. After a few months go by, the best and worst are pretty much locked in and one game here or there doesn't change much of anything, making it a challenge to come up with new things to talk about every week.

But right now, we're headed into the sweet spot. It's still early, of course, but not so early that we can't start second-guessing some of those initial assumptions. Maybe the Canucks aren't going to be terrible after all. Maybe the Blackhawks are back, or close to it. Maybe the Kings are in trouble.

Or maybe not. Experience tells us that we're still going to be wrong about a lot of this stuff. This time last year, we still thought the Blackhawks were good and the Avalanche were bad. But we're getting close to the point where we've seen enough action to start venturing out of our comfort zone, if only a little bit.

It's also the time of year where we're less concerned about the dangers of reading too much into a small sample of games. We can, for example, watch the Penguins and Blues shut down the Maple Leafs in back-to-back outings and start to wonder whether Toronto isn't quite where some thought they were. Or we can see the Bruins lose three straight up in Canada and realize they haven't really

beaten anybody good. Or maybe we start to wonder if we've all misjudged the Canadiens, or even the Senators.

And that's just one division. See, week three is fun. Nobody knows anything, but we're feeling more confident about it.

All that said, this week's rankings don't look radically different from the first few weeks. We've actually only got one brand new team making a debut appearance. That team moves into the bottom five and apparently they were so excited by the news that they held a closed-door meeting about it.

But first, on to the good teams. Or at least the teams that are still tricking us into thinking they're good.

Road to the Cup

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

The Blackhawks aren't especially close to making either list; they've won four and lost four with a goal differential of -1, so they're just about as average as a team can be right now. But one of the better stories of the weekend was seeing Corey Crawford back in the win column for the first time since last season's concussion. It's only been two games, but so far he's looked like his old self. If that remains the case, the Blackhawks have a shot at being something more than just average.

5. Toronto Maple Leafs (6-3-0, +4) – We'll leave the suddenly toothless Maple Leafs in the top five, no so much on merit, but because nobody else is really knocking down the door to get in. Even after forgetting how to score in back-to-back losses, they're still sitting tied for second in the league. But we'll learn something about them this week as they face the Jets in a home-and-home.

In the meantime, it's starting to seem like the William Nylander situation is coming to a head, or at least to the point where we can start taking scenarios off the table. We're still a month away from any actual deadline, but it feels like this will be resolved one way or another well before that.

4. San Jose Sharks (4-3-1, +5) – The record isn't all that impressive, but the underlying numbers are, and it feels like the Sharks are righting the ship after some early season stumbles. And the fun part is that they're largely doing it without anything spectacular from shiny new toy Erik Karlsson, who doesn't have a primary point at even strength, yet. That might worry Sharks fans who were expecting Norris type numbers and it may worry Karlsson's agent as he looks ahead to a record-breaking contract. But it should also worry the rest of a very mediocre-looking Pacific Division, because the Sharks are already dominating possession, and when Karlsson starts doing Karlsson things, they're going to be awfully tough to stop.

3. Winnipeg Jets (5-2-1, +4) – They've got points in four straight, and managed to get a win over the Coyotes, despite giving up 45 shots. The schedule hasn't been all that challenging over the last few weeks, but you can only play the teams they put in front of you, and the Jets are banking points.

As a side note, that pair of Jets/Leafs games this week is a back-to-back for Toronto but not for Winnipeg, who have to make a stop in Detroit in between. Remember when a home-and-home meant two games in two nights and by the end of it the two teams hated each other? Those were fun. The Jets actually do have one of those coming up in a few weeks, against the Panthers of all teams, because apparently the schedule maker doesn't know how maps work.

(Update: No, apparently I'm the one who doesn't understand maps. The Jets/Panthers games are in Finland.)

2. Tampa Bay Lightning (5-1-1, +9) – That second period last night was downright terrifying. They outshot the Blackhawks 33-6, tying an NHL record for shots in a single period on their way to three



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

unanswered goals and an eventual 6-3 win. If that happened in a video game, you'd assume you'd accidentally changed the difficulty setting to "easy."

1. Nashville Predators (7-1-0, +12) – They swept their Alberta road swing and have now won five straight. But the big story is Pekka Rinne, who left Friday's win in Calgary after a collision with Kevin Fiala. He was placed on IR on Saturday, meaning Juuse Saros will be the starter for the foreseeable future. That's hardly a disaster, since Saros is one of the best backups in the league and may be the Predators' full-time starter as soon as next year. Any time a good team loses a star, it's news. But based on Saturday's 3-0 win in Edmonton, it should be business as normal in Nashville.

Well, maybe "normal" isn't the right word ...

THIS IS @PREDSNHL COACH PETER LAVIOLETTE. THE TEAM HAD A BET IF THEY WON THE FIRST TWO GAMES OF THE TRIP THRU WESTERN CANADA HE WOULD WEAR THIS..AND THAT'S NO BULL. PIC.TWITTER.COM/HZFLFGAQZT

&Mdash; GENE PRINCIPE (@GENEPRINCIPE) OCTOBER 21, 2018

Not ranked: Anaheim Ducks – Despite a 5-3-1 record, I'm not close to putting the Ducks into the top five teams. But I might be a week or so away from putting John Gibson there. Just him. Gibson in the top five and the rest of the Ducks in the bottom five. Three weeks into the season, he's the MVP by a mile.

As for the rest of the team, it remains to be seen whether they're bad or just slumping. But the early results have been ugly. Heading into last night's action, they were dead last at 5v5 in both possession and expected goals percentage, and it wasn't especially close in either case.

So last night, the question was whether even the mediocre Sabres could come into Anaheim and tilt the ice. The answer: Yep. The Ducks were outshot 45-28, and with Gibson getting a night off, they couldn't turn to him to steal one. At some point, you wonder if Randy Carlyle has to make some changes – or be the victim of one.

The bottom five

Five stories from teams around the league where things aren't going so well.

While the Ducks may not be very good outside of their goalie, their ceremony game is on point. Last night's retirement of Paul Kariya's number was great to see, even if it did come years later than it should have.

5. Ottawa Senators (4-2-1, +3) – Given that the Senators were just about everyone's consensus pick as the worst team in the league heading into the season, we should probably want to see more than seven games before we drop them out of the bottom five altogether. But after three straight wins, it's starting to feel inevitable that the Senators aren't long for this list.

There's at least a little bit of smoke and mirrors here, as the Senators are among the league's worst teams in terms of possession and are riding a bit of a PDO bender. Still, at the risk of invoking one of hockey's most overused clichés, they're finding a way to get where they need to go. Basically, through seven games the Senators have been this Craig Anderson GIF.

4. Los Angeles Kings (2-5-1, -13) – Here's that lone debuting team we mentioned back in the intro. And sure, maybe it's too early, and this will be one of those early-season picks we look back on in a month or two and roll our eyes at.

Or maybe it's just getting in the ground floor of a major story, because man, the Kings look awful these days. They can't score, putting up two or fewer goals in six of eight. They're not getting bailed out by their goaltending as often as they're used to. Ilya

Kovalchuk has been just OK, and Anze Kopitar and Drew Doughty are off to uninspiring starts.

Worst of all, the Kings are losing to teams they should beat. There's no such thing as an easy two points in today's NHL, but when the schedule serves up the Senators, Islanders and Sabres in a one-week window, good teams will bank most of those points. The Kings didn't manage any, losing those three games by a combined score of 16-4. That's a disaster.

The good news, such as it is, is that the team is still missing Dustin Brown, meaning they're not at full power yet. But if the loss of Dustin Brown can turn you into a last-place team, there's a good chance you weren't very good to start with.

The Kings get the Stars, Wild and Rangers this week, which offers up a chance to turn things around. But quality of opponent hasn't mattered much lately, and another poor week could push the Kings far enough out of a playoff spot heading into November that they're in danger of being written off altogether. We're not quite there yet. But it's close.

3. Arizona Coyotes (2-5-0, -7) – Their win over the Blackhawks was easily their best game of the season, but a tough matchup with the Jets on Saturday meant they couldn't do much to build on it. Their start hasn't been anywhere near the sort of debacle that last season's was, but they're already five points back of a wildcard spot. That should create some urgency for a team that knows what it feels like to be out of the playoff race early.

2. New York Rangers (2-4-1, -7) – The good news is that Henrik Lundqvist still looks like an elite goaltender. But the Rangers can't score; their 18 goals through eight games is tied for the worst mark in the East with the next team on our list.

1. Detroit Red Wings (1-5-2, -16) – They got their first win. Baby steps.

One of the most fascinating early-season subplots has been Jeff Blashill's job security. Heading into the season, he seemed like an easy choice for "first coach fired" honors; the Red Wings weren't expected to be good, Blashill was entering the last year of his deal, and they'd already hired his presumed replacement by bringing in Dan Bylsma as an assistant. It wasn't hard to imagine the Red Wings getting off to a terrible start, and Ken Holland figuring that he may as well get the change over with and let Bylsma use the rest of the season to evaluate the roster up close.

Sure enough, that terrible start has happened, and the calls for a coaching change from the fan base are getting louder and louder. And yet it sounds like Holland might be willing to dig in his heels here. He's said that he doesn't want to make a change, and while plenty of GMs say that right before they go ahead and do it anyway, Holland might be different. With 20+ years on the job and only one fired coach to his name, maybe we should take him at his word.

Time will tell. But Blashill's future will remain a story, at least until the Red Wings can string together a few wins.

Not ranked: Florida Panthers – They have one win in six games, and that one came in a shootout. They've already lost to the Canucks and the Red Wings. They're missing their Hall of Fame goaltender. And the terrible division that was supposed to make it relatively easy to cruise to a wildcard suddenly doesn't seem all that terrible.

So when do we start to worry about the Panthers? I think the answer is soon, but not quite yet. Their numbers suggest that they've been at least a little bit better than their record indicates, and history suggests that James Reimer and Michael Hutchinson should be able to hold down the fort until Roberto Luongo is back. And even as they find ways not to win, the loser point is keeping them afloat – and their one win did come against the defending champs. They should be OK.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

This week, they head out onto the road to face the Rangers, Islanders and Devils. You figure they should be able to grab at least four points out of those matchups, which would be enough to calm some nerves and start the climb back towards the top half of the Atlantic. But if they don't, things could get serious; they start November with that pair against the Jets.

If a week from now they're headed into that Winnipeg stretch as a one-win team, then they'll probably be the next team we introduce to the bottom five. Maybe start thinking about scheduling that closed-door meeting now, guys.

The Athletic LOADED: 10.23.2018

1111561 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Canucks unable to contain Capitals' predictably dangerous power play

Iain MacIntyre | @imacSportsnet October 23, 2018, 1:56 AM

VANCOUVER — Three keys to beating the Washington Capitals:

1. Don't let their power play beat you
2. Don't take penalties — so their power play can't beat you
3. Really, you still don't get it?

The Vancouver Canucks took just enough penalties on Monday for the Capitals' power play to beat them.

Washington actually has a lot more than just its power play going for it. After all, the Capitals won the Stanley Cup last year, so they must do some other stuff well, too. But some nights, a lot of nights, their power play is enough.

Evgeny Kuznetsov's power-play one-timer was a surprise. Alex Ovechkin's was not. Those goals powered the Capitals to a 5-2 win against the Canucks, who struggled for energy at the start of the game the way they did towards the end of their 2-1 overtime win Saturday against the Boston Bruins.

They're not likely to feel fresher soon. After a six-game road trip, followed by two home games against championship-calibre teams, the Canucks leave Tuesday for back-to-back games in Las Vegas and Arizona.

Universally picked to finish near the bottom of the National Hockey League standings for a fourth straight year, the Canucks have survived their early endurance test, winning five of nine games. But they teetered at times against the Bruins and Capitals, and this looks like a very important week for them.

Are they going to keep surprising people, or slip towards the level predicted for them?

"For us to just say we'll get by isn't good enough for our group," Canucks centre Bo Horvat said. "We want to play hard every night, want to be tough to play against."

"It's a grueling schedule. But we knew it was going to be like this. We looked at the schedule before the season and knew it was going to be tough. None of the games are easy. When you play the Stanley Cup champions, you know they're going to come hard."

The Capitals seemed to play only as hard as they needed.

After a fluke goal by Vancouver defenceman Troy Stecher, whose floater from the point was palmed into the Washington net by Capital Nic Dowd to tie the game 1-1, Kuznetsov blasted short-side through

Canuck goalie Anders Nilsson to make it 2-1 at 9:29 of the middle period.

Brandon Sutter cleared a rebound against Ovechkin and into the Vancouver net to make it 3-1 at 19:34 of the second. And when Sven Baertschi buried a rebound for a Canucks power-play goal just 20 seconds into the third period, Ovechkin buried the Canucks with a shot that seemed to gather velocity as it nicked defenceman Chris Tanev and blew past Nilsson at 5:35.

Washington's top-ranked power play, which began the night at 38.5 per cent, finished two-for-five and has produced 12 goals in the Capitals' first eight games.

"The first goal, we're happy giving that shot up," Tanev said of Kuznetsov's blast. "It's almost from the boards and just a really good shot; nothing we can do there. And the Ovechkin goal ... he shoots it and hits the back of my leg and it goes in. I've got to get in the lane there and block the shot. We knew how good their power play was coming in and our goal was to shut it down. They scored two goals and that ended up being the difference in the game."

"They have a lot of different options, a lot of shooting threats," defenceman Alex Edler said. "We did a pretty good job, I think. There wasn't too much going through our [penalty-killing] box. But they're good. Sometimes you've got to try to take away the most dangerous play and they still find a way to score."

Asked about the Canucks' lifeless start, when they allowed John Carlson's redirect goal at 2:20 after puck-drop and were outshot 13-6 in the opening period, Edler said: "I don't know what it was. Our execution wasn't there. And especially against a team like this, you're going to get punished if you're not sharp."

The Canucks haven't outshot an opponent since elite rookie Elias Pettersson was concussed by Florida Panther Michael Matheson's illegal hit on Oct. 13. Pettersson, who rejoined the Canucks for the morning skate on Monday and is expected to fully practice on Tuesday, could play on the two-game road trip.

Vancouver is 2-2 without its leading scorer. The Canucks could use an energy boost.

"Obviously, it's been a tough two weeks for sure with travel and stuff," Sutter said. "But I don't think it's our energy. We've had a couple of days off the last few days, too, so I thought guys were still feeling pretty fresh. We've just got to keep our energy."

And keep surviving.

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Sportsnet.ca / Oilers' McDavid vs. Crosby a best-on-best meeting worth savouring

Mark Spector | @sportsnetspec October 22, 2018, 8:40 PM

EDMONTON — Up here in Northern Alberta, in that long ago time when people routinely affixed stickers onto the fenders, trunks and rear windows of their cars, there was a particularly memorable one back in the early '80s. It came hard on the heels of the Great Oil Boom of the '70s.

It was called a 'bumper sticker,' and it went like this:

"Dear Lord, Please Give Me Another Oil Boom. I Promise I Won't Piss It All Away This Time."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

How does this pertain to hockey? Well, if you grew up here, watching the Oilers of the '80s, there is a similar admission that almost everyone would make. So let me go first.

We took Wayne Gretzky for granted. Like the oil rush, we thought the gushing rig of hockey feats that was the Great Wayne Gretzky would never run dry. That the '80s would run into the '90s, and all that success would carry seamlessly into the next century.

But, in our defence, it all looked so easy.

Gretzky's Oilers, for five years in a row from 1981-86, scored over 400 goals per season. (Historical perspective: Last season Tampa led the NHL with 296 goals.)

Gretzky won seven consecutive Art Ross trophies in a row, three times by amassing at least 100 more points than the 108 that earned Connor McDavid that same Trophy last season. In 1981-82 he scored 92 goals. No one in today's NHL scored 92 goals in the past two full regular seasons combined.

A three-point game by Gretzky barely made the sports anchor's script the next day, so accustomed were we to watching him pile up points against the Warren Skorodenskis, Murray Bannermans and Reggie Lemelins of the world.

Then, it ended. And as it turns out, hockey here hasn't been quite as much fun for most of the next 30 years.

Then, along came McDavid. He wears the same Oilers uniform, and for two straight years has won the same Art Ross Trophy.

On Tuesday he will host Sidney Crosby and the Pittsburgh Penguins. And we promise, Lord, we'll watch a little more closely this time.

"It's really special," Milan Lucic said of the matchup. "It's a game a lot of people tune into and I know, as an athlete, it's a game you want to be in, playing in front of and with greatness. It's kinda like back in the day when Mario and Wayne would play against each other."

As the debate wears on over who is the best player in the game, Crosby and McDavid are on every single ballot — usually eating up the top two spots. This is the reigning champ versus The Next One. The very tandem that makes us look at our watch and wonder aloud to the NHL when it's going to give its head a shake and get back into the Winter Olympics.

"That's what's thrilling about being a fan, a coach, a teammate, a player," said Todd McLellan. "You get to watch these stars go head to head. They're both extremely proud players, but successful players. They're fun to be around, and you have to pay attention, because usually when they're on the ice, something good's going to happen."

That Team North America did not make that final at the most recent World Cup is such a shame, when you consider who the top centre men were on each team. There are 10 years between them, which makes games like Tuesday night's a rare gem, with Sid still in the latter years of his prime, while McDavid — at just 21 years old — is expecting to get better and better for some time yet.

What does he admire most about Crosby's game?

"It's his full, 200-foot game," marveled McDavid. "He's dominant in the faceoff circle, solid defensively, and obviously his offence speaks for itself. He's kind of that perfect mix of everything. He's got that flash, but he's also got that grind that makes him hard to play against."

In the arc of his career, McDavid is pretty much right on track with Crosby. Through their first three seasons, McDavid averages 1.22 points per game to Crosby's 1.38. In his fourth NHL season, McDavid has seen his faceoff percentage jump 10 points to just over

52 per cent. It only took Crosby three seasons to win more than half his draws.

Head to head, McDavid (2-5-7) has crushed Crosby (0-1-1) in the four games they've faced each other. How has McDavid witnessed the matchup?

"Well, I don't think we've ever beaten them," said the Oilers captain, whose team is 0-2-2 vs. Pittsburgh. "So, that would be not very good."

It happens just twice a year, unless one of them is injured. Then, the two best players in the game may only see each other once in a season.

They meet Tuesday night, in Edmonton.

Don't piss it away.

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Sportsnet.ca / Canucks' Pettersson skates with team for first time since concussion

Iain MacIntyre | @imacSportsnet October 22, 2018, 6:16 PM

VANCOUVER — Leading rookie scorer Elias Pettersson skated with his Vancouver Canucks teammates Monday morning for the first time since suffering a concussion on Oct. 13 and is expected to travel for road games this week in Las Vegas and Phoenix.

Pettersson, injured when thrown to the ice by Florida Panthers defenceman Michael Matheson during a 3-2 Canucks win in Sunrise, Fla., is expected to practise fully with teammates on Tuesday.

The Canucks visit the Vegas Golden Knights on Wednesday, then play the next night against the Arizona Coyotes.

Canucks coach Travis Green said after this morning's skate that Pettersson continues to follow "concussion protocol." Vancouver plays its fourth game without the 19-year-old Monday night against the Washington Capitals.

With five goals and eight points in five games, Pettersson still leads the Canucks in scoring and is the top scorer among all National Hockey League rookies.

Asked if the Swedish teenager is being handled the same way any player would in the concussion protocol, Green said the Canucks will take everything into consideration before clearing Pettersson to play. Matheson was suspended two games for his body-slam on Peterson.

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Sportsnet.ca / Canucks' Pettersson skates with team for first time since concussion

Iain MacIntyre | @imacSportsnet October 22, 2018, 6:16 PM



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

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Sportsnet.ca / Babcock emphasizes stronger work ethic amid Maple Leafs' slump

Chris Johnston | @reporterchris October 21, 2018, 4:14 PM

TORONTO — There's no mystery about how Mike Babcock expects the Toronto Maple Leafs to pull out of their mini-tailspin. Facing a rare Sunday practice after scoring just one goal in two games, the coach blared his message across the video screens in the team's dressing room:

"Frustrate With Our Work Ethic."

If there's a downside to building a team with as many offensive weapons as the Leafs have — and we fully acknowledge this should be regarded as a very good "problem" to have — it's that they can grow easily frustrated when the goals dry up.

This is a group that expects to be great. It's a team that saw Auston Matthews score 10 goals in six games at the same time John Tavares was putting up six in six.

However, in Thursday's 3-0 loss to Pittsburgh and Saturday's 4-1 loss to St. Louis, they came up against some big defencemen who funnelled the play to the outside. The Leafs generated just seven high-danger chances against the Blues while too often settling for low-percentage shots.

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When Babcock rewatched the game from the vantage point of a higher camera angle, he saw too much space between the forwards and defencemen. That made clean breakouts much tougher to execute and had the Leafs hemmed in their own zone. The coach also made note of too many puck battles lost for his liking.

"We just got to the nitty gritty today," said Babcock, in explaining his approach to Sunday's practice. "We just talked about the facts. Today was a reality therapy meeting: What's really going on? Let's solve the problem and let's put the problem behind us and get on. So we did that.

"I don't know what you're like, I always like people that tell me the truth. Tell me what they want and tell me how to fix it. As soon as someone tells me what to do, I can get that done."

He is asking his players to put on their hard hats. For as much skill as the Leafs boast, Babcock believes the key to success is pressuring the puck to such a degree that opponents will quickly come to realize that nothing comes easily against Toronto.

To create some frustration in others rather than getting frustrated themselves.

"We've got to get to work," said Babcock. "You never mind leaving the building and walking by everyone when you've played really hard and you won all the battles and you won all the races and the score didn't turn out right. You can be proud and happy and it's no big deal.

"But when, [like] the last couple nights, you haven't won enough battles and enough races — to me you don't feel very good about what's going on, so you've got to fix it, you've got to get back to work."

They should also benefit from a little rest. Toronto was the first NHL team to play nine games this season — a handful are only at six — so players were understandably looking forward to a team Halloween party on Sunday night and a complete day off Monday.

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

A light week ahead comes with just two difficult games on the schedule — a home-and-home with the Winnipeg Jets on Wednesday and Saturday. That should afford them some time to step back and take account of where things are at.

Matthews believes they've got to show a little more creativity to get back to producing the scoring chances that led to 33 goals for in their first seven games.

"I think it starts with not only working harder, but I think working smarter," he said. "I think sometimes we're a bit too predictable. You do the same thing over and over again, I think teams obviously they Watch video. Kind of mixing it up, changing it up off of faceoffs and neutral zone and stuff like that."

They're also focused on setting up shop a little more in the offensive zone.

"I just don't think we've been moving that much," said winger Mitch Marner. "Those big D-men can trap you pretty quickly if you're not moving. So that's something I didn't think we did enough of and something we need to get back to."

It won't come easily. The Jets are arguably the class of the Western Conference and feature a group of forwards just as skilled as Toronto's. They can also roll out a blue-line that includes Dustin Byfuglien, Tyler Myers, Jacob Trouba and Josh Morrissey, not to mention Vezina Trophy finalist Connor Hellebuyck in goal.

They won't be an opponent that's easily frustrated.

"We don't think we're going to score like we did at the start [of the season]. That's a fantasy tour," said Babcock. "We think we've got enough people to score, but we want to play better than this. I think when you play better you score."

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# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • October 23, 2018

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USA TODAY / Six NHLers feeling the pressure before season is three weeks old

Kevin Allen, USA TODAY Published 10:30 a.m. ET Oct. 22, 2018 | Updated 11:21 a.m. ET Oct. 22, 2018

The NHL boasts its share of good stories in the early going, including surprising starts by the Montreal Canadiens (4-1-2) and Vancouver Canucks (5-3-0).

And how about those Colorado Avalanche, who are 5-1-2? Or Auston Matthews, who has 10 goals in nine games, or David Pastrnak and Nathan MacKinnon, who both have eight goals in eight games? Anaheim Ducks goalie John Gibson's .949 save percentage in his first seven starts is also noteworthy because his Gibson's save percentage has been growing steadily since 2014-15.

But life hasn't gone as well for other NHL folks.

Here are those already feeling the pressure after the first 19 days of the season:

Los Angeles Kings general manager Rob Blake: The Kings are 2-5-1 and that does not appear to be a fluke. While it is true injuries to Jonathan Quick and Dustin Brown have undermined them, they simply don't look like a team designed to compete in the speed-driven NHL. Fans are starting to wonder whether Blake should have done more in the offseason to change the look of this team. The Kings still boast core players from their two championships. Have they kept them for too long?

The Kings have a -13 goal differential and rank 30th in the league with a 1.88 goals-per-game scoring average. The team's power-play percentage is 10.7%.

Quick is a proven difference-maker, but his return to the lineup a few days ago didn't change all of that. His .851 save percentage and 4.67 goals-against average after three games are symbolic of the team's struggles.

San Jose Sharks defenseman Erik Karlsson: This is not the kind of start the Sharks envisioned when they acquired Karlsson this offseason. At some point, Karlsson will explode offensively. But right now, he has no goals and his plus-minus of -4 in the Sharks' worst. The Sharks' power play also ranks 22nd. The 4-3-1 Sharks are expected to be among the Western Conference's best teams.

St. Louis Blues defenseman Jay Bouwmeester: He was a healthy scratch on Saturday for the first time in his career, and the Blues looked sharper defensively in a 4-1 win against the Toronto Maple Leafs. Bouwmeester is 35, and his effectiveness has slipped. Blues general manager Doug Armstrong made key offseason moves to strengthen this team, but they need Bouwmeester playing at a higher level to be a strong defensive team.

Los Angeles Kings coach John Stevens: Fair or not, coaches are the first to pay the price for a struggling team. It's hard to not list him on the top of the candidates to be the first coach to be fired this season. Could he be getting more out of his team? Probably. But he cannot make them faster.

Toronto Maple Leafs general manager Kyle Dubas: The managerial wunderkind has as much job security as any GM in the game. But he's in Toronto, where fans judge the tiniest of moves. He has to feel pressure about the stalemated contract negotiations with William Nylander, a restricted free agent, who hasn't played this season. Nylander is an important asset.

Should Dubas budge on his offer and risk more salary cap trouble in the future? He has more negotiations on the horizon, including with Matthews, a restricted free agent this offseason. Or does Dubas trade Nylander for a defenseman, a position the Maple Leafs need to strengthen to make a run for the Stanley Cup? Even if Dubas gets Nylander signed, he is under pressure to find a blueliner.

Vegas Golden Knights left wing Max Pacioretty: General manager George McPhee acquired Pacioretty and gave him a four-year contract extension that pays him \$7 million per season starting in 2019-20. He is supposed to replace the goals lost by the departure of James Neal. But Pacioretty hasn't found his way yet, posting one goal and no assists in his first eight games. Neal has also started slowly in Calgary with one goal in eight games. Both of them have 25-goal potential.

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