



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • November 8, 2018

## THE NEWS & OBSERVER

### Will Cam Ward be net for the Blackhawks against the Canes? He won't say.

By Chip Alexander

First, the obvious question: will Cam Ward be in net for the Chicago Blackhawks on Thursday when they host the Carolina Hurricanes?

"Oh, you know I can't say that," Ward said Wednesday.

Then again, the two teams play again Monday in Raleigh. What about being the starting goaltender in his return game to PNC Arena, again facing his former team?

"I hope so, but that's to be determined, I guess," Ward said.

That will be the coach's call and as of Tuesday the Blackhawks had a new one. Joel Quenneville, winner of three Stanley Cups, was fired after the Blackhawks' 6-6-3 start and Jeremy Colliton named as his replacement.

"It's been crazy, with the coaching change," Ward said in an interview. "It's not something as a team that you want to see or go through. We're making that transition now and going through the expectations of what Jeremy wants to get out of his players."

"Personally, it caught me by surprise. I've only been here for a short period of time and unfortunately didn't get to know 'Q' as much as I would have liked. You had to respect what he did in his coaching career and in this organization the past decade."

Colliton, who was coaching the Rockford IceHogs of the AHL, is 33, the youngest coach in the NHL. Ward is 34.

"Definitely something new, to be older than the head coach," Ward said. "I played against Jeremy in junior. He was with the Prince Albert Raiders."

Asked if Colliton scored on him in the Western Hockey League, Ward chuckled. "Oh, I can't remember. It's hard to remember all the people who scored on me. There's been too many."

In 13 seasons with the Hurricanes, Ward won a Stanley Cup and was the franchise goalie, setting many franchise records. He made the commute to work from his North Raleigh home -- the one he still owns -- and became part of the community.

Then, he was gone. The Canes did not pursue a new contract with Ward after last season and he signed as a free agent with the Blackhawks in July.

Ward was brought in on a one-year, \$3 million contract to be the backup for Corey Crawford, giving the Blackhawks another veteran goalie as Crawford continued to recover from concussion symptoms that lingered from last season.

Ward started the first five games. He won the first two in overtime, at Ottawa and St. Louis, then gave up seven goals

to Toronto in his first start at the United Center in a wild 7-6 overtime loss.

In eight games, he has a 3-2-3 record with a 3.83 goal-against average and .887 save percentage, numbers that have had some Blackhawks fans casting some of the blame at him after Quenneville's firing. Crawford is 3-4-0 with a 2.92 GAA and .907 save percentage, losing his last three starts.

"When I look at my games, you want to base it off how you feel and how you performed and not get too deep a dive into the numbers, because they can be skewed," Ward said. "Toronto was the one game I felt like I was off. Otherwise I feel when I've played I've been able to try to give this team a chance to win and that's what I'm striving to do."

Ward said slipping into a Blackhawks uniform for the first time was slightly surreal.

"The first time I did it, you take a second and recognize this is different," he said. "But with that said, there's also excitement, too. There's a lot of history with this franchise. You think of all the special players who have been able to wear this jersey and wear it proudly."

Ward moved the family to Chicago, into a high-rise apartment downtown -- as he put it, "Right in the mix of everything."

"As long as my family is happy I'm happy and it's been a smooth transition with my kids and getting into their new schools," he said.

Ward described himself as feeling like the new kid in school with his new team. It has taken a while, he said, to be himself.

"I'm a guy who likes to have fun and do some pranks and get involved with everybody," he said. "I did find myself being the new quiet kid for a while. Just get used to your new surroundings. It's such a big change from Carolina."

Ward said he planned to drop by the Canes' team hotel Wednesday night, just a few blocks away, and see some familiar faces. He said he keeps "close tabs" on the Hurricanes, saying, "There are guys over there I genuinely care about."

Coach Rod Brind'Amour, Canes captain Justin Williams, Ward ... they won the Cup together in 2006. And there are so many others to see, longtime friends.

Then, the quick turnaround and next week's game at PNC Arena. Again, it should be surreal.

"I'm really not sure what the emotions are going to be like when I come back to Carolina and walk into PNC again and not go to the Hurricanes' side," Ward said. "At the same time, in a sense, I feel like I'll be coming home."



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Ward said the family would be with him in Raleigh. It's also the Blackhawks' "Dads Trip" and his father, Ken, will be with him.

"I'll forever be grateful for what the Hurricanes organization and the fan base, the community and friends have all done for me," he said. "When it's all said and done, I can look back at all the great memories I had over the years in that city.

The plan doesn't change that it's where I want to retire and reside.

"That said, we want to beat them in these two games. Don't get that twisted."



## A Hurricanes story: The sequel

By Adam Gold

Raleigh, we have a problem.

The Carolina Hurricanes have officially lost their way. Unable to sustain their style of play for long stretches, unable to stay out of the penalty box, unable to convert their abundance of scoring chances into goals. The end result is a 2-7-1 stretch and a free fall down the standings in the Metropolitan Division and the Eastern Conference.

Make no mistake, it's not "early", no matter how many games are still to be played. 15 games in is more than a good enough sample size to understand the team's challenges. It's pretty clear that many of the questions we had going into the season remain unanswered.

I'm not going to get into the weeds with statistics about shots and chances and posts hit and bad bounces and blah blah blah blah blah. If I did, it would only further the frustration at the recent stretch that has seen the Canes score just 17 goals in their last 10 games — after scoring 18 in the previous THREE. You watch the games. You can see with your own eyes that, at the very least, the Canes should have scored more goals. For the most part, this has not been a team that has been outclassed.

Sure, there've been times and games where they just flat stunk. But — again, leaving the advanced metrics out of the conversation — just cash in a couple of the breakaways, 2-on-1 chances, or the occasional power play and there would be a lot less hand-wringing and a lot fewer "here we go agains" amongst the faithful.

For the record, you're absolutely justified if you're in that camp because here we are...AGAIN.

It's been 10 games since Sebastian Aho has scored a goal. I'm not criticizing the Canes' best player, I'm just pointing out a fact. When Aho isn't scoring, who is? Michael Ferland leads the team in goals, but if you expected him to score 35 this year you need to read the back of his hockey card. Teuvo Teravainen must contribute. Jordan Staal and Justin Williams must figure out a way to get pucks through.

That trio, combined, has nine goals on the season. Or, as many as former Hurricanes forward Elias Lindholm. Sorry if that hurts. It stings me and I wrote the damn line.

Andrei Svechnikov has three goals, which wouldn't be that big of a deal if this team weren't built counting on at least moderate production from the 18-year old future star. In fact, between him and fellow rookie Martin Necas, the Canes were probably hoping for about 30 combined goals. At this rate, and considering that Necas is still working through things in the American Hockey League, they might not reach 30 combined points.

Of late, Svechnikov has obviously played better. He's getting plenty of power play time. He had several chances to ring the bell last night, but saw his best chance clang off the pipe. And, it was nice to see him play with Aho and Ferland for a couple of games. But, I'm still waiting for the moment, THAT moment, when you go "thaaaaaaaat's why everyone thinks he's going to be a star." If you have, you're imagining things. That isn't to say that he won't be great or very good tomorrow, or next week, or next year. It's just that, to date, it hasn't happened.

Speaking of hasn't happened. Carolina was supposed to be built from the blue line out. While not the Hurricanes' weakest link, the defensive corps has been far from their greatest strength. Jaccob Slavin has not played well on this road trip, in spite of being responsible for the lone goal in St. Louis. Justin Faulk has just one goal in 15 games. Dougie Hamilton has not played well this season.

With that said, that crew will figure it out because there's too much talent in the group for them to continue along this path. Hamilton is probably putting too much pressure on himself to be the guy who scored 17 goals for the Flames.

Surprised it's taken this long to talk about goaltending? Well, what did you expect? Carolina's goalie tandem going into the season was arguably the biggest worry. Now, there are three mouths to feed in net and none of them have shown anything remotely resembling above average ability.

There have been flashes of brilliance — specifically from Darling in the 1st period and a half against Boston. McElhinney's performance at Columbus was far better than his statistics would say. Same for Mrazek in wins against Detroit and San Jose. But, there have been no Laurent Brossoit, Louie Domingue, Phillip Grubauer, Chad Johnson or Thomas Greiss performances from Carolina's crease. Just thinking about Greiss is giving me a twitch.



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Carolina has lost nine times this year. Opposing goalies have been the first star FOUR times and were either a second or third star three other times. Your goaltender is allowed to win you a game, I checked with the league.

The Canes are headed to Chicago to say hi to an old friend on Thursday, then they have their next six on home ice and we'll find out for sure if this team is going to play games of consequence after Thanksgiving.

Truly, there's not much they can do, short of a major trade, to change the roster. They could bring back Necas — or Janne Kuokkanen — and put Valentin Zykov in the press box. But that isn't going to immediately infuse a goal per game back into the team. Victor Rask is still four weeks away, but after the last two seasons, it almost seems dirty to think that Victor

is the answer to what ails the Hurricanes. Maybe flip around the defensive pairings. Reunite the Slavin-Brett Pesce duo.

These are the Carolina Hurricanes. We thought that with five rookie forwards and no real depth at center there would be struggles to score enough goals. We knew that the goaltending was a question mark. We knew there were a lot of new pieces to fit together. All with a first time head coach. There's still the potential to turn it around. Still another level they can find to finally start making teams pay for THEIR mistakes.

Right now, however, fans are frustrated. They've seen this movie before. And, they don't like the ending at all.

## Hurricanes recall Bishop and Di Giuseppe from AHL

Raleigh, N.C. — Don Waddell, President and General Manager of the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes, today announced that the team has recalled forwards Clark Bishop and Phil Di Giuseppe from Charlotte (AHL) and assigned forward Nicolas Roy to the Checkers.

Bishop, 22, has posted five points (3g, 2a) in nine AHL games this season. He has skated in a pair of NHL games with Carolina, making his NHL debut on Oct. 20 vs. Colorado after being recalled on Oct. 17. The 6'1", 199-pound forward was re-assigned to Charlotte on Oct. 23 and scored a goal in his first game back with the Checkers on Oct. 24. The St. John's, N.L., native has recorded 39 points (12g, 27a) in 119 career AHL games.

Di Giuseppe, 25, appeared in a pair of AHL games after being assigned to Charlotte on Nov. 1, and he skated in two NHL games prior to his assignment. The Maple, Ont., native posted 13 points (5g, 8a) in 49 games with the Hurricanes last season, and has registered 37 points (13g, 24a) in 128 career NHL games. The 6'0", 192-pound forward has also tallied 89 points (35g, 54a) in 160 career AHL games.

Roy, 21, played six games with the Hurricanes after being recalled on Oct. 23. The Amos, Que., native recorded seven points (5g, 2a) in six games with Charlotte prior to his recall, and was named AHL Player of the Week on Oct. 7. The 6'4", 205-pound forward skated in 70 AHL games last season with Charlotte, posting 38 points (11g, 27a), and made his NHL debut vs. Tampa Bay on April 7, 2018.



## Preview: Hurricanes at Blackhawks

Canes wrap up road trip in Chicago

by Michael Smith

CHICAGO - The Carolina Hurricanes wrap up a weeklong, four-game road trip when they face off with the Chicago Blackhawks on Thursday night.

The Hurricanes have only managed a point thus far on the trip (0-2-1) with a chance to mark the win column before heading back home for a season-long, six-game homestand.

"We need to stick together. In tough times, that's what every team has to do," Justin Williams said after a 4-1 loss in St. Louis on Tuesday. "Stick together, work through it together because that's the only way we're going to get through it together."

Ending the Skid

Dating back to late October, the Hurricanes are winless in their last five games (0-4-1), and after beginning the season 4-0-1, the team is just 2-7-1 since.

A win - really, a string of wins - would help rebuild the team's confidence.

"The guys are giving us everything they can. That's all we can ask," head coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "It's the same story no matter what. You have to be prepared and give it your best."

A constant in this recent slide has been the Hurricanes' paltry offense, which has managed seven goals in five games, a 1.4 goals per game average. That's a stark



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contrast to the 4.4 goals per game the Canes averaged over their first five games of the season.

"Our game is solid, and we're playing pretty well overall. We're creating more than enough chances to win a hockey game. The fact that they're not going in right now, that's the frustrating part," Brind'Amour said. "It's a test for these guys and ourselves to stick with what we're doing and try to find a way to manufacture offense. Scoring goals is not easy. We've got to get dirty."

"At the end of the day, excuses are for losers," Williams said. "We're not going to use them, and I'm not searching for them."

Bishop, Di Giuseppe Re-Join the Squad

The Hurricanes on Wednesday swapped forwards with Charlotte, recalling Clark Bishop and Phil Di Giuseppe and reassigning Nicolas Roy.

Bishop made his NHL debut with the Canes on Oct. 20 against Colorado and played in two games before being reassigned to the AHL, where he has recorded five points (3g, 2a) in nine games with the Checkers this season.

## October Canes Prospect Profile: Andrew Poturalski

Andrew Poturalski helps Checkers to their best ever start  
by Nikki Stoudt

Welcome to the Canes Prospect Profile, presented by Uber, a new monthly feature here on CarolinaHurricanes.com.

Each month we'll take a look at the top-performing Canes prospects across the system. This month, it's Checkers forward Andrew Poturalski, who led Charlotte with 11 points (2g, 9a) in nine games through October.

At 10-1-0 this season, the Checkers are having the best start in franchise history. They currently lead the AHL in terms of both points (20) and points percentage (.909).

Poturalski hit the proverbial ground of the 2018-19 season running, notching four points (1g, 3a) in the Checkers' season-opener at Rockford.

The veteran then carried a five-game point streak through Oct. 19, tallying nine points (2g, 7a) along the way.

"To me, he just looks confident this year," Sergei Samsonov, the Hurricanes' head of Forwards Development said of Poturalski. "But the confidence comes from having success early and not having many down games."

"He's gotten a ton of ice time [this season] and has gotten really comfortable with the grind of the AHL's schedule."

Di Giuseppe has played two games with the Hurricanes and two games with the Checkers this season. He's tallied 37 points (13g, 24a) in 128 career games with the Canes.

Familiar Face

For the first time in his NHL career, goaltender Cam Ward will be on the opposite side of the ice (or opposite bench) in a game featuring the Hurricanes. Ward signed with the Blackhawks on July 1, leaving behind a number of Hurricanes goaltending franchise records, including games played (668), wins (318), shutouts (27), playoffs wins (23), playoff shutouts (4) and more.

Ward is 3-2-3 with a 3.93 goals-against average and a .887 save percentage in eight appearances with Chicago this season. There hasn't been any indication thus far whether Ward or Corey Crawford will get the nod in net.

The Opposition

The Blackhawks on Tuesday parted ways with Joel Quenneville, the second-winningest coach in franchise history, after starting the 2018-19 season with a 6-6-3 record and going 0-4-1 in their last five games. At just 33 years old, Jeremy Colliton becomes the youngest head coach in the NHL, and he'll make his debut behind the Blackhawks' bench tonight.

Charlotte's special teams are among the best in the league, with the power play ranked 5th overall (25.9%) and penalty kill ranked 8th (85.5%). Poturalski has one power-play goal through the first 11 games.

The difference-maker, to Samsonov, is that Poturalski doesn't waste time when it comes to production.

"He's making plays and producing offensively. He doesn't need many chances to produce, score goals or make plays. He just does it and keeps going."

The Hurricanes re-signed Poturalski this June to a one-year, two-way contract following his second full season at the professional level.

ONE TO WATCH

Janne Kuokkanen (5g, 5a through Oct. 31) has kept statistical pace with scoring leaders through the first month of the season, owning a multi-goal season opener (2g, 1a) to start and entering November on a four-game point streak (1g, 4a).

"This is another guy who has gained a lot of confidence over the last year," Samsonov said. "Janne is getting used to playing against men in general ... when he has the puck, he wants the puck."

Welcome to Snipe City.



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### SB NATION CANES COUNTRY

### Carolina Hurricanes at Chicago Blackhawks: Preview and Storm Advisory

The Hurricanes will try to snap an awful five game losing streak tonight in Chicago.

By Andrew Ahr

Carolina Hurricanes (6-7-2) at Chicago Blackhawks (6-6-3)

SBN Opponent: Second City Hockey

The free-falling Hurricanes take on a mediocre Chicago Blackhawks team — and longtime backstop Cam Ward — in Illinois tonight.

#### Vital Statistics

Category	Hurricanes	Blackhawks
Record	6-7-2	6-6-3
Points	14	15
Division Rank	7 Metro	6 Central
Conference Rank	13 EC	10 WC
Last 10 Games	2-7-1	3-6-1
Streak	Lost 2	Lost 3
Goals/Game	2.60	3.07
Goals Against/Game	3.00	3.73
Shots/Game	41.6	32.8
Shots Against/Game	24.3	33.5
Faceoff %	52.3%	49.4%
Power Play % (Rank)	12.5% (28)	14.0% (27)
Penalty Kill % (Rank)	69.8 (29)	76.6% (23)
ES Corsi For %	61.44%	51.50%
ES PDO	97.4	98.7

Category Hurricanes Blackhawks

PIM/Game 8:03 8:55

#### Goaltender #1

Category Scott Darling Corey Crawford

Record 0-2-0 3-4-0

Save % .893 .907

GAA 3.14 2.92

#### Goaltender #2

Category Curtis McElhinney Cam Ward

Record 3-2-0 3-2-3

Save % .884 .887

GAA 2.81 3.92

#### Game Notes

ICYMI, the Hurricanes recalled Phil Di Giuseppe and Clark Bishop from Charlotte. Nicolas Roy, who played six games and logged zero points in Raleigh, has been reassigned to the Checkers.

Tonight is the first game in the season series between the teams. The Hurricanes will host the Blackhawks next Monday in Raleigh to complete the series.

The Hurricanes had the edge last season in the series, earning a 1-0-1 record, and three out of four possible points.

Tonight's game is the first between the two teams since Cam Ward signed in Chicago last summer. Chicago's starting goaltender is unconfirmed as of this morning, but I'd imagine that we'll see Cam at least once in these two meetings.

It's the first game behind the Blackhawks bench for new coach Jeremy Colliton. The former NHL player and coach of



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the Blackhawks' AHL affiliate was tapped to replace the fired Joel Quenneville on Tuesday.

Storm Advisory

What if the NFL brands were replicated in hockey?

Jakub Voracek is not happy about Ubergate. [NBC Sports]

Milan Lucic was fined the maximum amount possible.

Antii Raanta has been placed on IR after being labeled day-to-day with an injury. [NBC Sports]

## Hurricanes Recall Bishop and Di Giuseppe, Assign Roy to Checkers

Roy played in six games during his second career NHL recall.

By Brett Finger

The Carolina Hurricanes announced on Wednesday that the club has recalled forwards Clark Bishop and Phil Di Giuseppe from the Charlotte Checkers. In a corresponding move, the team assigned forward Nicolas Roy to the Checkers.

Roy skated in six games with the Hurricanes after getting called up on October 23. He failed to record a point during his second NHL stint while averaging just 6:57 of ice time per game.

Bishop got his first NHL call-up in October and played in his first NHL game on October 20 against the Colorado Avalanche. He appeared in two games for the Hurricanes before being sent back to Charlotte. In nine games with the Checkers this season, Bishop has three goals and five points. Since returning to the AHL, he has scored two goals in five games.

Di Giuseppe started the season with the Hurricanes and skated in two games with the team before being put on waivers and, eventually, getting assigned to the Checkers. In four total games played between the NHL and AHL this season, he has recorded zero points and has racked up 23 penalty minutes.

## Metropolitan Division Weekly Roundup: Five Points Separate First and Last

The Islanders lead the division with 18 points but the eighth place Devils are just five points behind with a game in hand.

By Zeke Lukow

### 1. New York Islanders: 18 Points (8-4-2)

After a rocky 3-4-0 start, the Isles now have points in seven straight games. The Isles have been successful on the backs of their goaltenders. Despite a 42.53% Corsi for and being outshot 242-172 in these games they have won these games by a combined 24-13 score. Obviously, this means the Isles are relying on their goaltending. Since the start of their points streak on October 24<sup>th</sup>, the Islanders have had a .954 save percentage at even strength. As a comparison, the next best team in the Metro, the Rangers, has a .939.

This is not a sustainable level for the goaltending, but it also shows what a little bit of puck luck does for a team. Getting 12 points in two weeks has done enough to move them from the bottom to the top of the standings. Each year a team goes on a crazy run and it does enough to get them in the playoffs. We saw that with the Blue Jackets and Flyers in 2016, and the Devils winning 9 out of 11 to start the season in 2017. The Isles are getting out ahead of the division early, hoping that will be enough to get them through any of their downswings later in the season.

### 2. Columbus Blue Jackets: 17 Points (8-6-1)

Zach Werenski now has three goals and seven assists in 15 games played this season which ranks him third in the division for defensemen scoring. The 21-year-old is an offensive defenseman who has some defensive struggles. He has a -2 on the year and a 47.72 Corsi for percentage. However, the Blue Jackets deploy him correctly; he has a 55.68% zone start percentage, meaning that he is starting in the offensive zone more than the defensive zone.

The Blue Jackets have one of the worst power play percentages in the league, only scoring seven goals on 59 attempts. Werenski has factored in on all but two of those power play goals. He has proven to be the difference maker for the Jackets. When he earns a point, the Blue Jackets are 5-3, but when he doesn't earn a point they are 2-4-1.

### 3. Pittsburgh Penguins: 15 Points (6-4-3)

With the Penguins losing four straight, the entire division has tightened up. All eight teams are now within five points of each other in the standings. The Penguins losing streak started on October 30 with a 6-3 loss to the Islanders. Since that night they have averaged 4.5 goals against per game. Matt Murray has started all four games with a .839 save percentage and a 4.65 goals against average. Both stats rank last for any goaltender in the league over this period.

The offensive struggles have mainly come from a struggling power play. From the start of the season until the losing streak, the Pens scored on 29.2% of their power play chances, which put them in the top five in the league. Since then they have gone 2 from 15 for a 13.3% success rate, which is the sixth worst. The penalty kill has also struggled seeing a decrease from 88.5% to 69.2%, a similar decrease from top five to bottom five in the league.

### 4. Washington Capitals: 15 Points (6-4-3)

The Caps have been stagnant in the standings with a 4-4-2 record in their last 10 games. Going into their last game against the Oilers, the Caps did something they don't do too often: they switched up their lines. Todd Reirden moved Jakub Vrana down to the fourth line with Travis Boyd and Devante Smith-Pelly. The plus side for Vrana is that he is now playing with Boyd, who he played on the same line with in Hershey. What was the result of this change? Only that the fourth line scored two goals and the Caps won the game.



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This is exactly what the Caps needed. They won the Cup last season not because they had the deepest roster, but because their young players were contributing, and they could roll all four lines. Getting players on the same line who have come up through the AHL together and know how to play with each other make the difference. The Caps aren't scared to move players and lines around until they get the right combination figured out.

## 5. Philadelphia Flyers: 15 Points (7-7-1)

The Flyers are playing just bad enough to keep the fans angry but just good enough to not cause any major shakeups. The Flyers have 15 points in the standings which is locked dead in the middle even with a -8 goal differential. The Flyers were in a rough spot going into their West Coast road trip with a 4-7-0 record and a three-game losing streak. Going into California, the Flyers took 5 out of six points and won their final game in Arizona before heading back home for a five game homestand.

During the road trip the Flyers second line of Nolan Patrick, Jakub Voracek, and Oskar Lindblom have been the top performing unit. The unit combined for five goals and 15 points in just four games. The Flyers have to be happy with Patrick's performance. After being slow out of the gates with two points before this trip but is now up to eight points in 12 games played. The Flyers have to get more consistent play out of Patrick if the hope to continue to climb the Metro standings.

## 6. New York Rangers: 15 Points (7-7-1)

On Tuesday the Rangers called up their 7<sup>th</sup> overall pick from the 2017 draft, Lias Andersson. Andersson has 12 points in 14 games in the AHL including four goals. The plan is to play Andersson at center and play him in all game situations (even strength, penalty kill, and power play). He didn't factor into any points into last night's game but was able to generate three shots.

On the flip side, Kevin Hayes has been struggling as the second line center with just five points this season. With Andersson's skillset being in the top six, Hayes is now the odd man out. However, Filip Chytil, the other first round pick of 2017, and Ryan Spooner are playing in the bottom six, and both have more time left on their deals. Hayes on the other hand signed a one year, \$5,175,000 contract this off season and has already been a likely target to move at the deadline. Now with six centers on the roster, it looks like he could be moving much earlier.

## 7. Carolina Hurricanes: 14 Points (6-7-2)

The honeymoon phase with head coach Rod Brind'Amour is over with Canes fans. The absolute unwillingness to change

## About Last Night: Voting for Needed Change

The ship is sinking rapidly and something has to change to right it.

By Cody Hagan

What do we want? Wins!

When do we want them? Now!

the lines is impossible to justify. Even in a game where the Canes were shut out against struggling Vegas, RBA didn't change lines for the game against the Blues. What also shouldn't be lost is the fact that the Canes have played an incredible amount of games against backup goaltenders and are still struggling to score, and they still aren't changing their strategy. The team is stagnant, and it shows because they have now lost five games in a row.

The most inexcusable part of all this is the refusal to give Andrei Svechnikov a larger role with the team. The Svechnikov-Jordan Martinook-Brock McGinn line still generated multiple chances in the game but its clear that Svechnikov is being held back by his linemates. He had a give-and-go with Martinook that eventually led to a shot off the post, but you would think with Jordan Staal that would have been a goal. What more do you want out of him? He has a 63% Corsi for percentage, he's physical, and he generates chances both from his shot and his passing.

They continue to play Lucas Wallmark on the second line and give him more power play time, but he is also a rookie and has substantially less potential than Svechnikov. The other interesting player to look at for the Canes is Valentin Zykov. He has been struggling to perform offensively and is getting about 10 minutes per game. As someone who is more of a top six style player, this just isn't doing it. Since RBA seems unwilling to breakup the top line of Sebastian Aho, Teuvo Teravainen, and Micheal Ferland, there isn't room for Zykov's full offensive potential to be reached.

## 8. New Jersey Devils: 13 Points (6-6-1)

The best story of the NHL this year has been the return of Brian Boyle after beating leukemia, which he was diagnosed with early into last season. The NHL has had the Hockey Fights Cancer program for many years, where each team hosts a game in November to promote the program. On Monday the Pittsburgh Penguins hosted the Devils on their Hockey Fights Cancer night. Already it was a great story that Boyle was able to play in the game at all. Boyle, wasn't happy with just starting, though; he went on to score a hat-trick in the game, doubling his season total for goals in one night.

The Devils overall have been struggling in November with a 1-3-0 record so far in the month. They have been outscored 15-11 in four games. The Devils have averaged 3.70 goals against per game, and anytime you are around four, it's not good. Goaltender Cory Schneider has been struggling to come back from his injury. He has a sub .900 save percentage and was pulled after letting up four goals on 22 shots against the Ottawa Senators last night.

How are we going to get them? Change!

While many Americans went out yesterday to cast a ballot in hopes of changing something regardless of their affiliation, the Carolina Hurricanes showed us all that some of the biggest changes that need to be made in the state capital are right off of Edwards Mill Road.



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With another completely deflating loss, this time to the St. Louis Blues, the Hurricanes are spiraling out of control on their way to their accustomed home at the bottom of the NHL. It's mind-boggling to understand how we have gotten to this point when just three weeks ago this team looked like the surprise of the year. Yet, it appears those hopes and dreams have not only faded, but crashed and burned with the team now losing eight of their last ten contests.

Last night was just another display of the same issues we have seen all along during this collapse. A refusal to show up for the first period of games, special teams producing abysmal results, out-shooting the opponent by throwing extremely soft shots at the net, and a total lack of effort from a team built on the principal of outworking their opponent.

## First Period Woes

In six of their last eight games, the Hurricanes have been outscored in the first period. This disturbing trend only gets worse when you realize not only have they been outscored, its by a margin of 11-3. There is no way a team can be successful at that rate.

Last night was no exception as they gave up three goals in the first period of a game they knew they needed to win. The game started off tense to say the least. Neither team wanted to be the first to make a mistake and it was reflected in the cautious play. That changed when Micheal Ferland failed to get a puck out of his own zone creating a quick odd man rush for the Blues. Jaccob Slavin, who had one of the worst games of his career, failed to stop the pass and Ryan O'Reilly got his first goal of the night.

It would only get worse from there as a failed three on one for the Hurricanes turned in to a two on one for the Blues. Once again Slavin horrendously fails at breaking up the pass and it's as easy as it gets for the Blues from there.

But then the Hurricanes got some life. Ironically, it was Slavin himself that got the Hurricanes on the board with a simple wrist shot on the power play. But the attempt at a comeback lasted all of twenty one seconds. Nic Roy took a slashing penalty seconds after Slavin's goal giving the Blues a power play. It took only a few seconds for O'Reilly to cash in again while sucking the entire life out of the Hurricanes.

So here we are once again, down two goals after the first period. Playing catch up with a team that can't score. That combination is simply a recipe for disaster.

It's simply gotta change.

## Horrendous special teams

In no way is this an attempt to kick a dead horse. But it seems as if somehow rookie head coach Rod Brind'Amour can't figure out how to run special teams. Truthfully, why is it a surprise that the power play got worse? Brind'Amour was in charge of it dating back to the Kirk Muller era and it's been bad the whole time. Now it's just gotten worse with Rod in charge.

Yes, the Canes scored a power play goal last night but it was more luck than skill.

Both units are stagnant and can hardly make entry in to the offensive zone. Until Slavin scored that power play goal with

ten seconds left remaining on Joel Edmundson's penalty, the Hurricanes power play had looked atrocious. They do not possess the ability to get good shots on goal and their passing is just lazy.

Valentin Zykov was supposed to be the big body presence in front of the net that Jordan Staal has never been, yet he's been as quiet as a mouse. The team has resorted to using guys like Lucas Wallmark and Brock McGinn - guys who should be killing penalties, not scoring - on the power play and to no one's surprise that doesn't work either.

So while the box score will show the team went one for five on the power play last night, don't let that fool you. For nine minutes and forty-five seconds out of the ten minutes of power play time the Canes had, it was just as horrendous as it has always been under Rod Brind'Amour's direction.

The team is 7 for 56 on the power play. This has got to change.

On the flip side, the penalty kill is no better. Yes, they held the third best power play unit in the league to just one goal last night. That is certainly an improvement from where they were a few weeks ago, but the one goal they gave up was the back breaking goal late in the first period. The team as a whole has given up at least one power play goal in 12 of their 15 games this season. Let that sink in for a second. Twelve out of 15 games they have allowed the opposing team to score a power play goal!

Once again, it simply doesn't cut it. Change it!

## Where's the effort?

Remember when the Canes were sitting at 4-0-1 and were atop the NHL standings? That record came because the Hurricanes were not just outworking their opponents, but putting them to shame by severely outworking them. Sebastian Aho, Jaccob Slavin, Warren Foegele, and so many more were up and down the ice like bolts of lightning. Constantly applying pressure, forcing turnovers, generating odd man rushes, and downright dominate games.

## What happened to that?

The effort has not been present at all over the past two games nor was it there in the first period of the Coyotes game. It's no secret the Canes are not the most talented team but they never needed to be. They just needed to outwork the other team every shift. The rest would work itself out. If they lost but they outworked their opponent we can handle that, but the past two games have been eerily similar to the last few months of the Bill Peters era. The team hasn't shown up to play, they are no longer outworking their opposition, and they are getting their rear ends kicked because of it.

St. Louis walked up and down the ice and played the game they wanted to play last night. They created their own chances and made the Hurricanes defense look stagnant. There was minimal hustle and the score reflects it. The worst part of it all is it's the guys who need to be leaders who are the guiltiest of them all. Slavin, Aho, Staal, Faulk, they all looked disinterested. If they all gave the heart and work ethic of Warren Foegele the Hurricanes likely wouldn't be losers of eight of their last ten.



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Rod Brind'Amour and Justin Williams preach outworking the other team night in and night out, yet here we are.

Change!

As fans, seeking change in a sports team is beyond frustrating. You cannot go vote on what changes should be made or who should be in charge. You do not have the ability to truly voice your opinion to those in charge. You have to have blind faith that changes will be made when things go bad.

Tom Dundon has never seemed to one of patience so it's hard to see things staying this way for long. Maybe the answer is calling up guys like Martin Necas, Janne Kuokkanen, or Morgan Geekie in place of Wallmark, Roy, or McGinn. Maybe it's switching defensive pairings and putting

Andrei Svechnikov with real linemates. Maybe it's pulling the trigger on a William Nylander deal.

The answers are unclear at this time. But the one thing that is extremely clear is change must happen now. The effort, results, and outright play of the Hurricanes over the past ten games is unacceptable and you need not look any further than last night to understand that.

We have been down this road for nine years where we watch this team dissolve and fade away in to the pit of mediocrity where no playoffs exist. If something doesn't change soon that is exactly what will happen once again. Maybe Dundon and company will take action and be the leaders we need in this time of despair, one can only wait and see. The season isn't a lost cause yet, but they must right this ship now before it completely sinks.

## THE ATHLETIC

### Thoughts on Thoughts: Senators Uber and Black Cloud Club, Nylander's situation, 'first on, last off' and more

By Justin Bourne

It's been a long time since I've rolled out a "Thoughts on Thoughts," so it feels really good to be back at it. For those who haven't read one of these before, the idea is pretty simple: I take a handful of notes from Elliotte Friedman's excellent "31 Thoughts" and react to them. Here's his latest, which started with – you guessed it – thoughts on the Ottawa Senators Uber-bizarre situation off the ice.

What a wild 24 hours.

My first reaction to the Ottawa Senators' Uber video: there by the grace of God go I.

How many times have you been frustrated with your boss, a co-worker, your partner, a friend, whoever and privately unloaded to someone else? (Or, at least you thought it was private.) Honestly, when you saw/heard of the video, how many of you thought, "That could have been me?"

It's almost unifying that so many people watched that video and had the initial thought, "Thank the holy heavens that when I was younger, the world wasn't papered with cameras and other recording devices." A very small percentage of the takes following the leak of the video were negative toward the players. It was mostly cringing and "Yeah I've been that person." Those moments happen with varying frequency depending on how things are going at work.

In an odd quirk, one of my favourite things as a hockey player was finding the other sarcastic, and we'll say somewhat "judgy" people, and unintentionally forming Black Cloud Club. Those people were great to have morning coffee with. I'm aware these people exist in every walk of life, but I feel like in hockey your life and future is particularly in the hands of the coaches on a daily basis, so it's really, really easy to blame them for your own failures. The job is hyper-volatile, and you can't succeed without proper opportunity, your team can't succeed without structure and discipline, and

in hockey, every day and every minute the staff dictates those things.

So when things aren't going great – and there are times in every season that's the case – lord, can the conversations get hilariously nasty (as we saw). That's just part of being a coach – if you want to be the guy making the decisions, you have to live knowing how players talk about you when it's going poorly.

But truly, as a player, it's so important to be able to pour it all out like that. I swear it's therapy. Because the next day when you make about 10 high percentage plays and none work out, and you're in-game adrenaline'd up, and you get hollered at on the bench every time, you need to be in a good place to not yell back, which can be extremely detrimental to your career.

4. One note about Jeremy Colliton's coaching: opponents said AHL Rockford became much more aggressive under him. Lots of activity from the defence in the offensive zone, which is similar to what the NHL club prefers. They also aggressively held the blueline, stopping and attacking in certain cases. Previously, they tended to sag back and protect the net.

I had the privilege of playing with Jeremy in Bridgeport for a short while, and got to spend a week with him at a Leafs development camp (the Leafs often bring in young coaches from outside the organization to further relationships, pick brains, etc.). If I could use three words to describe Colliton as I know him, I'd go with smart, serious, open-minded (is that four words?).

Obviously it won't be easy as a young guy taking over such a storied franchise, but if anyone can it's him. During my time as his teammate, I was certain he was older than me. Not looks-wise, just maturity. Most of the on-bench advice from teammates consists of "You gotta f\*\*\*ing pass me that puck there!" He was great about explaining things in detail to me



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when I wasn't in the right spot, and generally making me feel comfortable off the ice.

Turns out I'm a couple years older than the guy, but I'm not worried he's too young to succeed with the Blackhawks. For those reasons, I'm confident they'll grow to take him seriously. He'll have his work cut out for him in the early going, but he's such a hard worker, I have no doubt he'll find a way to make it work as well as that roster is able to.

5. So, after a season with no coaching changes, we have two before American Thanksgiving. Right from the start, the pressure's been intense. There were a ton of rumours about Dave Tippett going back behind a bench. Reached Monday, he said, "I'm happy in Seattle, and I will be staying here."

While I get saying this, if he means it, I don't really get it. What competitive coach would choose the option of not coaching for almost two full years, then taking on a team that – hot take coming here – isn't going to be good for a long time.

I get the job security – it's years and years to work with (read: get paid). But I think another team would give him that. I'm pretty convinced everyone is so blinded by Vegas' early success that they think that's just going to be the new norm for expansion teams. I'm not buying it.

It sounds to me like NHL teams have learned from the Vegas expansion draft (our own Pierre LeBrun discussed this at a Toronto Puck Talks event). When Seattle's turn comes, nobody's overreacting and trading them the equivalent of Jonathan Marchessault to take Reilly Smith. Nobody's sending them Alex Tuch to "only" take Erik Haula. Some teams may lose a decent player; this time they'll just eat that loss and move on.

So all of that is to say: Tippett is either bluffing, or making what looks like a surprising choice to me. Would an offer from the Ducks change his mind? The Red Wings, the Blues ... somewhere? Time flies and all, but you'd think he'd want back in at some point before October of 2020, particularly if he gets the chance to coach a roster with potential after all those tough years in the desert.

22. Back when Connor McDavid was at OHL Erie, his trainer, Gary Roberts, warned him that "90-second and two-minute shifts don't work in the NHL." Yet, there was the electrifying forward blowing by Ryan Suter to score after a 79-second shift last Tuesday in Edmonton.

There's actually something in common between those two. Suter, who, in 2013-14 played the fourth-most minutes in one season since the NHL began recording ice time, is excellent at conserving energy while being out there for a long time. McDavid has that ability, too, but, as Roberts says, "He's put in the work. He's committed. In the summers, when his friends were going out or finishing for the day, he's the guy who stayed to do one more thing or work on something on his own."

23. Roberts had a great line about playing with Sidney Crosby for a year-and-a-half. "I'd see him on the ice 30 minutes before practice. I'd ask him what he was doing. He said, 'I didn't like the way my hands felt last night.'" Roberts said he laughed and replied, "Well, how do you think the rest of us feel?"

Hockey twitter (and sports Twitter in general) has its share of go-to punchlines. One justifiable one is the old preseason "he's in the best shape of his life!" This is a well-beaten joke, and justifiably – it's everyone every preseason, apparently. A guy would basically have to show up with icing sugar and Cheetoh dust on his shirt for anyone to report anything different.

I will say though: the "first guy on, last guy off" stuff is much tougher to parse. That's simply because some guys really are, and it does make a difference. So my point here is unrelated to either McDavid or Crosby, who are all-universe talents with extreme drive – we'll never really know what's god-given gift and what's just the sheer work they've put in. But whenever someone says/writes the "first on last off" phrase, I'd always want to know what the players are doing. Because I was a first on/last off guy, but only because I love the fresh sheet of ice before practice starts, with no coaches around, and just a little time to enjoy the game before the "get it in deep"-fests would begin. And after practice I liked to play Rebound, or even just keep-away, because again, hockey is fun. But that didn't make me better, at least not much.

It's great to be first on, last off. But when we read about anyone being mythologized for those habits, it'd be great to know how that extra time is actually used. Some guys are just so much more efficient at using bonus time to truly work at getting better.

11. The speedbump for Carolina is they have business to do. Sebastian Aho needs a new contract. So do Micheal Ferland, Brock McGinn and Teuvo Teravainen. No one needs permission to speak to Nylander, who is a free agent, so you can discuss contract concepts without penalty. Aho's the internal priority as a franchise cornerstone, but his contract won't go into Auston Matthews/John Tavares territory. That helps the Hurricanes with Nylander's key issue: salary too far below teammates.

I strung together some tweets earlier today on Nylander's contract situation, which basically said that I could conceivably see him neither getting signed or traded this year. Here's that thread, starting with a link to Boss Mirtle's Leafs thoughts post:

What struck me about this point on Nylander earning closer to his teammates if he was in Carolina, and that being a good thing is ... say what now? If he can earn \$6.5 million in Toronto – much less than their top players – he'd be less happy than if he were making \$6.5 million in Carolina, where there aren't players earning a bunch more? I'm not great at math, but I can't imagine concerning yourself with Income Rel given \$6.5 million USD is \$6.5 million USD no matter where you are. There are arguments to be made for earning in both cities – one's cheaper, one has fewer taxes, one has opportunities to earn you wouldn't get in the other, and all that. But surely "playing with lesser players who earn less to make yourself feel better" can't be a worthwhile factor.

31. Most sports fans of my vintage (48) were Sports Illustrated readers. My first subscription was a 12th birthday present in 1982, and my favourite writer/reporter became Dr. Z, Paul Zimmerman. He looked at everything a little differently, through the eyes of both a former player and



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tough reporter. He created his own charts, his own method of judging effectiveness and always came up with new details you couldn't find elsewhere. I loved reading his stuff.

For one of his All-Pro Teams, he selected a Chicago Bears offensive lineman named Mark Bortz. He wrote that someone told him not to do it, because Bortz was "a butcher." Zimmerman did it anyway. When we were at Western University, old friend Scott Feschuk told me, "Paul Zimmerman doesn't think you can be great at this job." He showed me a quote where Dr. Z said (paraphrasing), "You can't be a great reporter without being a prick." (Scott always thought I was too nice.) You guys can judge how that turned out, but it was an excellent reminder of how we can't be afraid to step out of our comfort zones. RIP to a legend.

I consider myself extremely fortunate to be able to write about the game from an angle that rarely puts me in a

position to have to confront those I'm writing about. Generally, I get to say "here's the video, here's an idiotic play," then move on with my life.

Which is to say, I thought Mark Lazerus' piece on the Blackhawks scapegoating Joel Quenneville was tremendous. He made some excellent points about Q getting hung out to dry for being handed an inferior roster, and he did it candidly, knowing he has to go in and talk to the brass face to face at some point again. When I started blogging, it was super easy – it feels like you can say whatever, whenever, about anyone. It takes some real courage to still write like that when you have to confront the people on the other end of those words. I admire reporters who can do that a great deal. Check that piece out here.



## Roundtable: Breakout players, Cup picks, surprise teams and more

Which breakout player are you buying?

Greg Wyshynski, senior NHL writer: Elias Pettersson has nine goals in nine games, and about half of them have been of the highlight-reel variety. Barring some kind of calamitous injury, the Vancouver Canucks rookie is going to waltz to the Calder Trophy and continue his breakout season. He's the realest of real deals and a future star.

Emily Kaplan, national NHL reporter: Few players had a better October than 22-year-old Mikko Rantanen. His 21 points and 16 assists in October tie a franchise record with Joe Sakic. Rantanen now paces the league in points (24) and assists (19) and I'm all-in on him challenging yet another inevitable Connor McDavid Art Ross trophy -- well, Rantanen will come close, at least. The Colorado Avalanche's top line is filthy good, and shows no sign of regression. I believe in Rantanen because the young Finn has been on a steady ascent since the 2016-17 season. Rantanen's entry-level contract expires after this season, and I'm curious to see what his new deal looks like; it helps that linemate Nathan MacKinnon is one of the best bargains in the league (the reigning runner-up for league MVP is making \$5.57 million through 2020-21).

Ben Arledge, associate editor: Let's give the Toronto Maple Leafs some love. Morgan Rielly seems to be finally putting it all together in his age-24 season. The defenseman is coming off back-to-back, six-goal, 76-game campaigns. In 14 games this season, he's already hit that number -- along with 12 assists -- albeit at a shooting percentage of 14.0, well above his 4.6 career rate. He is in the green on plus/minus and has nine power-play points. Could he be the No. 1 defenseman the Leafs need him to be? Absolutely. He could probably even stand to see an ice-time increase, as his 22:27 is 45th in the NHL right now. I think Toronto still makes a move for another blueliner at the trade deadline, but Rielly seems to be taking the next step with an overall improved club.

Has your preseason pick for the Stanley Cup Final changed?

Wyshynski: The Tampa Bay Lightning winning the Stanley Cup is a pick I feel very comfortable about at this point. Like "lounging in a recliner in your cozies with a cup of hot cocoa watching HGTV" comfortable. They're 10-3-1, a plus-12 in goal differential, and even though coach Jon Cooper keeps making line salad with his forwards, that salad always seems to eat like a meal. The San Jose Sharks winning the Western Conference is a pick I feel slightly less comfortable about. Like "wearing sweatpants a size too small on a rainy day and all you want is chicken noodle soup but all you have is Manhattan clam chowder" comfortable. There have been stretches when they reached their potential, and stretches when they've been really underwhelming. The fact that there's an international debate about Erik Karlsson's overall effectiveness is disconcerting, too. But I'm willing to go with the theory that, as a playoff team, the Sharks could be formidable.

Kaplan: Winnipeg Jets over the Tampa Bay Lightning? Still feel pretty good about that one. I do regret not picking the Lightning to win the Atlantic (I had the Toronto Maple Leafs there). Tampa Bay is looking like a wagon in the regular season once again. My biggest divisional regret is picking the Vegas Golden Knights to win the Pacific, although I'm hesitant to write them off just yet. Vegas may be seventh in the Pacific right now, but the division is wide open. I don't doubt this team will get a late push, especially when they get key figures, like Max Pacioretty (imminent) Nate Schmidt (Nov. 18) and Paul Stastny (probably December) back.

Arledge: Nope. I had the Lightning over the Jets, and there's no reason to backtrack at this point. The Bolts' 10-3-1 record is good for second in the entire league, as seven players already have double-digit points and Brayden Point is establishing himself as a real offensive threat. Oh, and Andrei Vasilevski is putting up Vezina Trophy-caliber



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numbers in goal. What's not to love here? And yeah, the Jets aren't hitting the afterburners just yet, but it's early, and there is just too much talent on this team for them to hide in the shadows too much longer. Blake Wheeler has just a 4.8 shooting percentage, and Connor Hellebuyck has started slow. Neither trend will last.

What team has been the biggest surprise?

Carey Price remains a popular pick as the most reliable goalie in a must-win game. Plus, new award suggestions, career stitch tallies and much more.

Wyshynski: The Montreal Canadiens were a team many assumed would be tabulating lottery odds with an underwhelming roster and without defenseman Shea Weber for the early part of the season. Instead, they're a wild-card team (8-4-2) despite being middle-of-pack offensively (3.07 goals per game) and defensively (2.86). Max Domi has 15 points in 14 games at center. Carey Price has looked like Carey Price. And those of us who expected GM Marc Bergevin would be out of a job before the Canadiens circled back to contention are very, very confused.

Kaplan: The Vancouver Canucks are in second place in the Pacific Division. I repeat, the Vancouver Canucks -- who had a dismal 2017-18, made questionable veteran free-agent signings, and have, on paper, not much depth on forward or defense -- are in second place in the Pacific Division. We'll see if they can sustain it; an upcoming six-game road swing isn't critical, but could be telling. Credit to coach Travis Green for getting his group to buy in. It helps that Elias Pettersson has emerged as a true must-watch player. The rookie can make up to \$2.85 million in bonuses this season, and he's worth every penny.

Arledge: The Calgary Flames are atop the Pacific Division with nine wins and 19 points. That's good for second in the West. Sure, the Pacific is weaker, but the Flames are sixth in the NHL in goals per game with that top Sean Monahan-Johnny Gaudreau-Elias Lindholm line really clicking to the tune of 23 goals so far. Goalie Mike Smith's play is a concern, but I think this team is for real and should be a playoff team come April.

Artemi Panarin will be skating for the \_\_\_\_\_ at the end of this season. Sergei Bobrovsky will be minding nets for the \_\_\_\_\_.

Wyshynski: At the start of the season, I was convinced that Panarin would have been traded well before Bobrovsky. I'm not so convinced anymore. There have been various reports that both players aren't keen on returning to the Jackets as unrestricted free agents. Let's go with that premise. If the Jackets are a playoff contender, they have a better chance of actually advancing in the postseason with Panarin than without him. Columbus GM Jarmo Kekalainen might catch hell for holding onto an expiring asset, but that's undeniable. Bobrovsky? If he's not coming back and you have playoff contenders willing to ante up large for a goalie to get them over the hump, I think you take your chances that Joonas Korpisalo can get them in (and that, just maybe, he can be better than Bobrovsky's .891 career playoff save percentage). So, the official predictions: Panarin is a Blue Jacket; Bobrovsky goes "home" to the Flyers as a rental.

Kaplan: Scarred by missing the playoffs by just one point last season, the Florida Panthers will make a splash before the trade deadline to acquire Panarin. GM Dale Tallon is fully aware it might just be a rental, although if Panarin likes the way things go in Florida (and if the team makes a playoff run) the stint could be an excellent recruiting pitch for the inevitable free-agency bonanza this summer. As for Bobrovsky? The Islanders are a natural fit, although Thomas Greiss and Robin Lehner have proved to be a more-than-capable platoon so far. Considering both Greiss and Lehner are on short-term deals, I wouldn't rule out Bobrovsky signing there this summer. Instead, I see Bobrovsky landing with St. Louis this spring as a last-ditch attempt to salvage the season.

Arledge: It sounds a bit crazy, but I could see Panarin heading to the Big Apple to play for the New York Rangers. Yes, they are in a rebuild, and yes, they are a last-place team in the Metropolitan Division. But they will have some money freed up after this season with the potential to extend him, and he could be the focal point for a reborn offense. Just 27, he has plenty of time left in his prime, and he'd jump-start the rebuild as a true superstar on that first line. As for the Blue Jackets' goalie, I could see Bobrovsky fixing the aforementioned Calgary goaltending issue. Smith is off to a slow start, and if we get closer to the trade deadline and see little improvement, Bob could serve as a rental alternative for a team looking to make some noise out West (and Smith could theoretically head back the other way to Columbus). It would just be a matter of making the money work. I'd also keep an eye on the Flyers (allowing GM Ron Hextall to hold off on promoting Carter Hart too quickly) and Carolina Hurricanes, as both clubs could use an upgrade in net if they manage to hang in the playoff conversation. I'm not sure Kekalainen would send their Vezina Trophy winner somewhere within the division if he can help it, though.

Do you buy the first-place Islanders as a playoff team?

Wyshynski: Do I believe a team rocking a 105.29 PDO at five-on-five might come back down to earth at some point? Why yes, yes I do. The Islanders are doing things right now that are astonishing, from Josh Bailey and Anders Lee being all like "John who?" to having a team save percentage of .932 for second best in the NHL -- the Barry Trotz/Mitch Korn effect, one assumes. I can't imagine it's going to continue like this, but the Metro is the type of division where a few good runs might merit a playoff spot. (See: Devils, New Jersey in 2017-18.) I don't see the Islanders ultimately making the cut, even if a playoff battle against the Maple Leafs would be the greatest thing to happen to the NHL since the legalized forward pass.

Kaplan: I love the Islanders as a story. I hesitate to say they are a playoff team for a few reasons. The team's shooting percentage is quite high (11.03 as of Tuesday). For context, no team has finished a season with a shooting percentage above 10.0 since 2012-13. And their Corsi for percentage is low (42.4 as of Tuesday, third lowest in the league). So, much like 34-year-old Valterri Filppula's scorching start -- four goals and two assists in his first six games, one point in the seven games since -- a crash to Earth feels inevitable. That said, the one thing that looks sustainable is goaltending. In a platoon, Greiss and Lehner both rank top 10 in 5-on-5



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save percentage among goalies who have played at least 300 minutes. This team has been waiting for dependable goaltending for some time, and they may have finally found a solution.

Arledge: Listen, we all naysayed the Golden Knights last October when they came screaming out of the gates. And then they -- oh right, they went to the Stanley Cup Final. OK,

bad example. The Islanders won't be anywhere near that, but I love the way this team is setting itself up for the future. Mathew Barzal will adjust to the No. 1 center role, the Isles crushed June's draft and they are finally getting good goaltending with some prospects on the way. They will live on and return to prominence without Tavares; it just won't be this season. There are too many good teams in the East, and there are too many unsustainable factors at play.



## Five potential trade destinations for Maple Leafs' William Nylander

Chris Johnston joins The Jeff Blair show to talk about how contract negotiations between William Nylander and the Toronto Maple Leafs are getting into uncharted territory.

Rory Boylen

The closer we get to Dec. 1, the more trade speculation will ramp up around William Nylander and the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Still without a contract, Nylander is less than a month away from the cut-off date when he either needs to sign a deal or will be ineligible to play in the NHL this season. And there is no indication the team and player are any closer to agreeing on terms.

"I get the sense that they've hit a real road block with Nylander, like a serious road block," Elliotte Friedman said on Sportsnet 650's The Program last Tuesday. "It can change, but as I talk to you right now I understand they're at a total standstill.

"I still lean towards [believing] they want to sign him. I believe that's their first choice, but they haven't made a lot of progress. I think both sides are getting frustrated, but the one thing about the trading is — I don't think they've decided to trade him now, but I think they've at least made the decision that they're going to have to think about it."

Prior to the start of the season we highlighted a number of RFAs who missed training camp or the start of the season in recent years. Two of the five highlighted players who missed regular season games were traded within two years: Ryan O'Reilly and P.K. Subban, who had massive new contracts. The other three were Hampus Lindholm, Andreas Athanasiou and Jacob Trouba, and you still have to wonder what Trouba's future in Winnipeg holds.

Only one of the three players we mentioned who only missed training camp were eventually traded, so while Nylander isn't destined to be traded yet, more than a few players in his situation have eventually been moved. Most of the time that was because the new contracts they signed ended up being too rich for the teams that signed them.

So, as we crawl towards the ever-important Dec. 1 date, and with Auston Matthews back skating for the Leafs, we look at a few potential trade destinations for Nylander, if it ever gets to that point.

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This is the most obvious fit for Nylander.

"I do think that when the time does come — if the time does come — that Toronto decides they're going to deal him I think that Carolina has made it very clear they are all in," Friedman said on Hockey Night in Canada's Headlines segment last Saturday.

Carolina needs scoring and Toronto needs defence, so naturally they look like good trade partners on paper. The Canes' offence looked to be turning a corner with 25 goals in their first seven games this season, but more than half of those (13) came in two games against the Rangers and Canucks. They've mustered only 13 goals in their past seven and a 6.5 shooting percentage on the season that ranks dead-last in the NHL.

Toronto, meanwhile, can score with the best of them, but their main challenge is defending other teams' top units. They especially need another right-shot defenceman, or two.

Players the Leafs could target: Brett Pesce, Justin Faulk, Valentin Zykov

### LOS ANGELES KINGS

The Kings very much want to change the way they play the game. After years of dominating with a 'heavy hockey' style, Los Angeles hasn't adapted to a speedier game with as much success as other teams have. Head coach John Stevens was dismissed on Sunday, players are beginning to appear in the trade rumour mill, and as of Tuesday, the Kings sat last in the NHL with a 4-8-1 record.

With 2.15 goals per game, Los Angeles has the least-productive offence in the league. Using last year's final scoring lists, Nylander's 61 points would have been good for second (tied with Jeff Carter) on Los Angeles' roster.

The fact that Nylander could potentially become a centre one day helps the Kings, as they could move Carter back to the wing. Nylander's speed and shiftiness add an element the Kings lack. The only issue that could arise is Los Angeles' cap situation — today they already have \$76.954 million committed to 16 roster players next season.

Players the Leafs could target: Jake Muzzin, Tanner Pearson, Kale Clague, Rasmus Kupari



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## PHILADELPHIA FLYERS

From Feb. 1 through the end of the regular season in 2017-18, the Flyers had a top-10 record in the NHL at 18-8-6. That finish set the bar higher on expectations in 2018-19.

So it's been hard to swallow another middling 7-7-1 start through 15 games.

"You look at our team on paper, and we've got a pretty good team. But paper doesn't mean a whole lot. We need to play better," Flyers GM Ron Hextall told reporters in late October. "I'm a pretty patient guy, but things need to start going better here."

The Flyers have answered with three wins in their past four games (all on the road) and got at least a point in each one. This has probably dulled the speculation that head coach Dave Hakstol is on the hot seat, but if a Nylander-type becomes available, the Flyers would be an intriguing fit.

On last week's 31 Thoughts Podcast, Friedman noted the Flyers were a "stealth team" for Nylander and have pieces Toronto would want if they decide to move.

Players the Leafs could target: Shayne Gostisbehere, Travis Sanheim, Philippe Myers, Robert Hagg

## MINNESOTA WILD

A hot 8-3-2 start maybe makes it less likely the Wild jump into the trade market, but with a new GM in Paul Fenton, you can bet that at some point he'll want to put his mark on this roster.

Even with a good record, though, you have to wonder if Nylander is worth shaking things up for. The Wild average 3.08 goals per game (15th in the league) and convert on 18.6 per cent of their power plays (20th) so there is room to improve in an area Nylander excels.

Consider, too, that Minnesota is one of the league's oldest teams with an average age of 29 and you can see why a

flashy 22-year-old with back-to-back 60-point seasons would be an enticing target.

Eric Staal's expiring contract means it's possible there will be a hole at centre soon and Mikko Koivu will turn 36 before the playoffs start. The Wild are going to need to start skewing younger soon.

Players the Leafs could target: Jonas Brodin, Jared Spurgeon, Matt Dumba

## ANAHEIM DUCKS

Speaking of stealth teams, how about the Ducks? GM Bob Murray usually goes about his business quietly and seems like a GM who could be in the market for a player of Nylander's type.

It's no secret the Ducks are struggling. They are 6-6-3, a record improved by the outstanding netminding from John Gibson, and despite the league's worst average shot differential per game (-11.7). Last year Anaheim got off to a similarly slow start with an 11-10-4 record through Nov. 29, and then traded defenceman Sami Vatanen to New Jersey for centre Adam Henrique.

Injuries helped Murray into the trade market in November of last season and the Ducks are again hurting today. Ryan Getzlaf has been in and out of the lineup. Patrick Eaves just returned for the first time in a year. Ondrej Kase remains out with a concussion. Nick Ritchie returned from his own contract dispute and then got injured. Rookie Max Comtois recently went down, and vet Corey Perry is out for a while.

When the Ducks were swept out of the first round of last year's playoffs by San Jose, Murray spoke about the need for his team to get faster in 2018-19. There were no additions made over the summer to achieve that, which makes Nylander an intriguing option.

Players the Leafs could target: Brandon Montour, Josh Manson, Josh Mahura, Troy Terry, Max Jones

## NHL Power Rankings: How Hot Is Your Coach's Seat? Edition

Luke Fox

But, really, aren't they all interim coaches?

So much for the anomaly that was the NHL coaching landscape of 2017-18, when all 31 head coaches survived the 82-game gauntlet.

Just over a month into 2018-19, already two modern dynasties have fired their bench boss, and other jobs are in danger early.

Chicago's Joel Quenneville, he of three Stanley Cup championships, was handed his walking papers Tuesday and immediately joins Alain Vigneault as a tempting free agent.

"It was pretty shocking," says Golden Knights coach Gerard Gallant, no stranger to the axe himself.

"That's two in two days. Joel Quenneville is at the top of the coaching pedigree. It's too bad. It's a part of our business, we all understand that, but it's real tough."

This week, we examine the security\* of all 31 head coaches in our NHL Power Rankings: How Hot Is Your Coach's Seat? Edition.

Per tradition, all 31 teams are ranked in order of their current awesomeness. The write-ups, however, zero in on the men in suits screaming expletives.

### 1. Nashville Predators

Among current NHL head coaches, Peter Laviolette is now the third longest-tenured man standing. He ranks second (to Babcock) in playoff games won (73) and first in bull's heads worn during a post-game scrum. Laviolette's Preds finished tops in the regular season last year and lead the pack in points percentage now. Judging by the video evidence, Laviolette is feeling pretty secure:

### 2. Tampa Bay Lightning

It feels like yesterday that AHL call-up Jon Cooper was the new kid on the block. Now, at age 51, the former lawyer has seized Quenneville's mantle as the NHL's longest-tenured



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head coach. That speaks volumes about both Cooper's abilities and the fickleness of the gig.

"He's got a lot of things on his fingers that I don't have," Cooper told reporters Tuesday of Coach Q, a mentor. "He's the envy of many coaches."

Cooper himself is in a contract year, but new GM Julien BriseBois has publicly endorsed the man behind the East's top team.

### 3. Toronto Maple Leafs

When Bodog released its rather grim odds ranking of NHL coaches most likely to get fired at the top of season, Mike Babcock's were the longest: 66/1. Toronto's coach left his previous post under his own volition and is widely believed to hold job security in a career without any. Under contract through 2022-23 at \$6.25 million per, Babcock altered the pay scale for his position. Expectations are through the roof, and he has time and space. Three straight first-round playoff exits could crank the thermostat, though.

### 4. Calgary Flames

After a shaky start, the Flames have won four straight, shot to the summit of the Pacific, and are buying in to new coach Bill Peters' demanding style of defence. Here's betting this is a legit playoff team. If not, the axe may not fall on the coach this time.

### 5. New York Islanders

In signing a five-year deal to reset the Islanders in the wake of a turbulent off-season, the Stanley Cup-winning Barry Trotz has job security aplenty. Entering with low expectations and more Komarovs than Tavareses, Trotz has guided the Islanders to the top of the Metropolitan without a clear No. 1 goalie and only one goal from Mathew Barzal.

### 6. Minnesota Wild

When a new GM steps in and doesn't make a coaching change, as was the case in Minnesota with Paul Fenton, the theory goes that the first firing is free. Compound that with Bruce Boudreau's reputation as a brilliant regular-season coach (.654 winning percentage) whose clubs come up short in spring (.478 in the playoffs), and the seat isn't exactly icy. Boudreau does have a season beyond this one on his deal (at \$2.65 million), and the Wild have come out the gates strong.

### 7. San Jose Sharks

Under Peter DeBoer, the Sharks have been fine but unspectacular after their blockbuster off-season. Doug Wilson's franchise is all-in now, so we imagine DeBoer's job security depends on how his troops perform in a post-season they almost always make.

### 8. Boston Bruins

Bruce Cassidy rose from interim bench boss to Jack Adams finalist, and he's found a balance between the Bruins' youth and ring-bearing veterans to remain a contender in a highly competitive, top-heavy Atlantic Division. The early returns have far exceeded expectations. He's dealing with a compelling goalie controversy these days, as backup Jaroslav Halak outplays Tuukka Rask.

### 9. Winnipeg Jets

Paul Maurice is the perfect example of how a coach can survive calls for his head and thrive. After an extension many ripped in the 2017 off-season, all Maurice did was guide the Jets deeper into spring than they've gone. Maurice has a wealth of experience to draw on, and he's now the second-longest-tenured man in the biz, next to Cooper.

### 10. Colorado Avalanche

A Jack Adams Award finalist in June, Jared Bednar came into Colorado green and turned the Avs into a legitimate player in the Central Division — thanks in no small part for stacking that ridiculous top line. Bednar's work last season earned him an extension through 2019-20, and a team we thought might stake a step back has done anything but.

### 11. Montreal Canadiens

Quickly scooped from a divisional rival, Claude Julien alone failed to produce an immediate turnaround, but his work this season — the Habs look young and fast and some new faces have assimilated smoothly — is impressive. That GM Marc Bergevin has already played his fire-the-coach card and Julien is owed \$15 million for the next three seasons removed him from the hot seat. Scratching vets like Tomas Plekanec and Karl Alzner is a sign of a man comfortable in his career.

### 12. Vancouver Canucks

Travis Green — whom Vancouver has locked up for three more years at a relatively cheap \$1 million salary — is our early favourite for Coach of the Year. No one is getting more out of less, and that's a compliment. The Canucks' effort and entertainment value is suddenly of the charts.

### 13. Washington Capitals

Washington let its only Stanley Cup champion head coach, Barry Trotz, walk away in order to promote Todd Reirden. The results have been decent, if not exactly Trotzian, but to be fair, Reirden's top six has remained in flux in light of Tom Wilson's 20-game suspension. He describes his group as "definitely a work in progress."

### 14. Edmonton Oilers

Prior to puck drop, Todd McLellan was ranked No. 1 by Vegas odds-makers as first coach fired. At worst, he'll be the third. Continually to make difficult lineup decisions, keep a superstar happy, and figure out which of his wingers can actually play, McLellan staunchly defied the early bleeding and has led the Oilers into playoff position. But the pressure valve will never fully be turned off.

### 15. Pittsburgh Penguins

Mike Sullivan was the man pulling the strings during the only back-to-back NHL championship run of the salary-cap era. He oversees the best one-two centre punch in hockey and has two years left on his contract, and yet his power-play is dry, his goaltending isn't where it once was, and his Penguins have recently been humbled by the Isles, Leafs and Devils. He's certainly not on the hot seat, but there is tension in that Pittsburgh room.

### 16. Dallas Stars



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When a team starts with three straight seasons with a different coach, the next significant change might come elsewhere. Veteran Jason Spezza is enjoying a resurgence under NCAA grad Jim Montgomery, whom he says doesn't carry himself like a newbie to the pro game.

"He'll call you out if you're not paying attention. He commands your attention when he's speaking. You can tell he's a confident coach who knows what he's doing," Spezza says. "He has his way he wants us to play, and until we start playing that way, he's going to make sure he's driving it into us."

## 17. Columbus Blue Jackets

The Blue Jackets gave John Tortorella a two-year extension in September that carries Torts through 2020-21. We don't see why a small-market club would do such a thing if the coach was on a leash as short as some of his post-game conferences. It's the futures of Columbus's star players — Sergei Bobrovsky and Artemi Panarin — that are of greater concern.

## 18. Arizona Coyotes

Rick Tocchet's group has performed significantly better in Year 2, the Coyotes plus-8 goal differential indicating that they've deserved a better fate than their record. Compare Tocchet's roster to other in the Pacific, and it's difficult to blame him for the Coyotes' struggles. He's signed through 2019-20 at \$1.5 million per season.

## 19. Buffalo Sabres

Sabres fans are hardly convinced Phil Housley is the man to lead them back to the dance, and already this season has been a bit of a roller coaster in Buffalo. The Pegulas haven't been shy about cutting cheque if they sense an upgrade is available. On the flip side, the Sabres roster is still one in transition, Housley was GM Jason Botterill's choice, and making a coaching change every two years would show the kind of indecisiveness this club could do without.

## 20. Philadelphia Flyers

Dave Hakstol has another season beyond this one (\$2-million salary) on his deal with the Flyers, but were his tenure a video game, he'd be down to his last life. GM Ron Hextall backed his man after last year's "Fire Hakstol!" chants, but there's been no such endorsement this fall. He's in his fourth season and has yet to win a playoff round. The Flyers need to take a step.

## 21. New York Rangers

Of the three NHL bench bosses tied with the most years remaining on their deals (signed through 2022-13), David Quinn is the only one without a Cup ring. Heck, the college grad doesn't even have six weeks of NHL experience under his belt. But as the Rangers gun for a lottery reset, Quinn's pressure to win is virtually nil. His task is to take the long view and elevate work ethic (see: Kevin Shattenkirk's healthy scratch). It's working during this four-game win streak.

## 22. Ottawa Senators

Dealt yet another off-ice controversy during a season in which his contract is up, Guy Boucher and his assistants are

hanging by a thread. It's hard to lay the blame at the feet of the coach after the star power from the Sens' 2017 Eastern Conference finalist roster got gutted. It might also be difficult to find a willing, qualified candidate to take over at this juncture.

## 23. St. Louis Blues

Here's something Mike Yeo already said: "Heck, my job should be in question."

If we're doing Coach Q's Next Gig Power Rankings, St. Louis rises to the top. The Blues are not supposed to be rebuilding, nor are they supposed to be last in their division. Oh, and there is a website solely dedicated to tracking whether Mike Yeo has been fired. It's called [IsMikeYeoStillCoach.com](http://IsMikeYeoStillCoach.com). Harsh.

## 24. New Jersey Devils

In any other year, John Hynes would've gained considerably more Jack Adams consideration for his excellent work in 2017-18. The Devils subtracted instead of added to their young roster over the summer, Cory Schneider has been sidelined, and still Hynes has them at .500.

## 25. Chicago Blackhawks

That Chicago is eating another two years of iconic coach Joel Quenneville's salary means his Stan Bowman-picked replacement, Jeremy Colliton, should have ample berth to install his aggressive system and try to make the Blackhawks a playoff team again. Preferably, ASAP, according to CEO John McDonagh. The youngest head coach in the league will have his hands full returning a very accomplished and well-paid core back to glory.

## 26. Anaheim Ducks

Randy Carlyle finds himself in the same boat as so many Ducks: win now or else. Anaheim's championship window is closing, if not already shut. Big-name injuries and imbalanced shot clocks haven't helped matters. The heat is on.

## 27. Carolina Hurricanes

Under rookie coach Rod Brind'Amour, the Hurricanes started strong and have put up solid possession metrics, but they've fallen back to the pack and are juggling three goaltenders. Considering this team just cleaned house a few months ago, we'd expect a trade before any further off-ice shake-ups.

## 28. Vegas Golden Knights

The coach of the only team (Los Angeles) that scores less frequently than Gerard Gallant's Golden Knights has already been fired. But we certainly don't pin that on the reigning Jack Adams winner. Both of the franchise's big forward finds, Max Pacioretty and Paul Stastny, have been injured. Nate Schmidt, who drives play from the back, got suspended 20 games. And their shooting percentage is a dismal 6.8 (30th). Bad luck is real. Ask Vegas. Signed through 2020-21, Gallant won't be pushed curbside anytime soon.

## 29. Florida Panthers

After one of the NHL's better second halves, rookie coach Bob Boughner and his Cats looked ready to make noise this



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fall. But with Roberto Luongo going down for a month, Florida is behind the 8-ball. Boughner has three seasons left at \$1 million apiece and should be given at least two of those to mold a playoff team.

## 30. Detroit Red Wings

It's tough to fairly judge Jeff Blashill's work since he inherited the gig from Babcock with the Red Wings' roster the thinnest it's been in the average reader's lifetime. Blashill has a .490 win percentage, is one of the few head coaches making less than \$1 million, and he's in the final year of his deal. Ken Holland, who was extended not long ago himself, is a fan — but just look at some of the more qualified candidates now available.

"I was given this quote a while ago," Blashill told reporters Tuesday, "and I think it's a great quote for anybody in any

high pressurized job where there is hirings and firings: the best soldiers are the ones that aren't afraid to die.

"I don't come here at any point at any time worried about that. I come here worried about doing the very best job I can."

## 31. Los Angeles Kings

The interim tag that prefaces Willie Desjardins' job title leads us to believe he'll need to jumpstart the Kings back into the playoff picture if he's to stick beyond June. That's a tall order when commandeering an old, slow group of forwards whose offence has run dry. P.S. Your starting goaltender, Jonathan Quick, is out until further notice.



## Blackhawks start new era vs. Hurricanes

CHICAGO -- Perhaps the last thing the Chicago Blackhawks expected was to return home to the United Center for the first time in November riding a five-game losing streak.

by STATS

CHICAGO -- Perhaps the last thing the Chicago Blackhawks expected was to return home to the United Center for the first time in November riding a five-game losing streak.

But even more likely was the fact that the Blackhawks would be returning from a winless three-game road trip without coach Joel Quenneville behind the bench. But after the winningest coach in franchise history was fired on Tuesday after leading Chicago to three Stanley Cup championships since 2010, the Blackhawks will attempt to right the ship with new coach Jeremy Colliton as the man tasked with getting the Blackhawks back on track.

Colliton, who was promoted from Chicago's American Hockey League franchise in suburban Rockford, will make his debut on Thursday when the Blackhawks host the Carolina Hurricanes. After the Blackhawks front office decided Quenneville was no longer the right choice to put the franchise back on a path for playoff success, the message to Colliton became one of urgency. The Blackhawks will carry a 6-6-3 record into Thursday's game and although Chicago's recent skid wasn't the sole reason for Quenneville's ouster, it played a part.

"A decision like this isn't made on one game, one play, or one specific thing," Blackhawks general manager Stan Bowman told reporters during Tuesday's press conference. "It's sort of a collection of things. Certainly, the road trip was concerning. But I think even heading into that there were some elements to our game where they weren't where they needed to be. It's not just based off the record of the team,

so it's more a totality of circumstances than it is just based on one specific game."

Now, with Colliton in place, the Blackhawks must quickly turn the page from its recent struggles but must do so under a coach they are just getting to know. For Colliton, that won't make his debut any easier, but he knows he doesn't have much of a choice. At 33, Colliton is the youngest coach in the NHL.

"Ultimately, it's about winning," Colliton told reporters, according to the Chicago Tribune. "I have to earn their trust by them believing that I can help them win, that I can help them be better individually, that we as a staff can put together a plan so they can have success. So if I can do that, there's no problem. It doesn't matter how old I am."

The Hurricanes have lost five straight games heading into Thursday's date with the Blackhawks and are 2-7-1 in their last 10 games. Carolina dropped a 4-1 decision to the St. Louis Blues on Tuesday and have managed just four goals in their past three games. This all comes after Carolina started the season 4-0-1.

While Carolina won't have to worry about the kind of transition the Blackhawks face, the Hurricanes have a similar mission to get back to finding a way to play winning hockey. The Hurricanes have struggled of late despite leading the league in shots per game (41.8) and shots allowed per game (24.8).

"We should be frustrated," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said after Tuesday's loss, according to NHL.com. "I would hope so, but we've got to park it and come back and show all the stuff we've done well. Do the stuff that we need to clean up. We can't keep giving up goals early, but at some point, these chances are going to go in for



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us and as long as our game is solid, then we're going to get straight."



## Checkers, Verizon Wireless Continue "Pass it Forward" Campaign

The Charlotte Checkers and Verizon Wireless today announced the continuation of their "Pass it Forward" campaign. The program, which is designed to surprise with random acts of kindness throughout the Charlotte community, won the American Hockey League's award for Unique Community Relations Initiative in its inaugural run last season.

Throughout the 2018-19 season, Checkers players, the CheckMates dance team, staff members and/or the team's mascot, Chubby, will again appear unannounced at various locations throughout the community. At these appearances, unsuspecting patrons will receive gift cards, tickets and other prizes at random, with the goal being for the recipients to then "pass it forward" to someone else they encounter. Those touched by the program will be encouraged to then

share their own acts of kindness on social media using the #Verizon and #LetsGoCheckers hashtags.

"Giving back to the communities where we live and work is very important to all of us at Verizon," said Russ Preite, Southeast Market president for Verizon. "We are proud to partner with the Checkers again through the 'Pass it Forward' campaign with the simple goal of spreading kindness throughout Charlotte."

In each of the program's first two seasons, the Checkers and Verizon donated \$20,000 in gift cards over the course of 10 events.

## Shaya's 10 Thoughts: Nov. 7, 2018

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

1) Although the outcomes of last Friday and Saturday were the same – the Checkers won both contests – the officiating style was completely different. Saturday's game saw a continual parade to the penalty box for both teams. There were 18 power plays and a penalty shot in one game. That means of the 60 minutes of hockey, nearly half was spent on the power play. Continual stoppages absolutely destroyed the flow. On Friday night, we went about seven minutes with only one stoppage due to an icing. That's hockey the way it's meant to be played. Yet, the next night, the officials sought to stamp out any fun by calling many penalties that were totally unnecessary. They ruined what was going to be a good rematch. A disgrace!

2) Greg McKeeg missed Saturday's game due to a lower-body injury but he projects to return on Friday against Binghamton if all goes well this week at practice. The Checkers won on Saturday without him but when McKeeg isn't in the lineup, it's noticeable. The team is far better off when he's playing.

3) Martin Necas continues to find his game in Charlotte. Head coach Mike Vellucci talked about Necas needing to slow the game down, understand his defensive zone responsibilities and use his teammates more. We should remember that Necas is only 19 years old and this is his first season playing in North America. The Czech league, where

he played last year, isn't highly regarded among other European leagues and the transition for Necas is going to take time. Vellucci has coached many NHL players in his years as a coach so Necas is in great hands. Vellucci: "He's improved every game that he's been here and he's getting a lot of ice time and it's very beneficial for him."

4) Roland McKeown is now 8th in the league in plus/minus and 5th among defensemen. Last year, he finished 3rd in the league at +34. This is enough of a sample size to derive the effectiveness of his play as a defenseman. He continues to trend in the right direction. In the last three games, he's registered four assists and is +4.

5) This week, Hurricanes President and General Manager Don Waddell had glowing praise for Checkers goalie Alex Nedeljkovic. With every passing game, Nedeljkovic's dominance in the crease is becoming more clear. Should this keep up, I think it's fair to suggest he will carve a spot for himself in the NHL next season. I should note here that with Charlotte holding a one-goal lead with just a few minutes left on the clock, Alex made two incredible saves to preserve the lead and help the Checkers to a league-best 10-1 record.

6) After the Uber scandal in Ottawa, which was apparently because the driver felt he wasn't tipped enough so he released the video out of spite, the Senators waxed New Jersey last night 7-2. Good for the guys in Ottawa and



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shame on the idiot Uber driver.

7) Vellucci and I recorded an interview that aired last night on the Fox Sports Carolinas pregame show where we discussed the early success of Charlotte and specifically the young talent in the lineup. One player he made sure we covered was Julien Gauthier, calling him among the most improved prospects on the team. Vellucci: "He's come in and done nothing but get better every day. I am very proud of him. He is our most improved from last year without a doubt. His attitude, his work ethic is second to none and when you're that big and that fast and you work that hard, good things are going to happen and good things are happening."

8) The upcoming three games in three days will be the toughest of the season. After the Checkers play Binghamton on Friday and then Lehigh Valley on Saturday, they have to make an almost four-hour bus ride through the night to play at 3pm on Sunday against Bridgeport. After the game, they will go back to Lehigh Valley, the city they were in less than 24 hours earlier, and play them again on Wednesday before rounding out the trip with two games in Wilkes-Barre

## Canes Recall Bishop And Di Giuseppe, Assign Roy

Written by Nicholas Niedzielski

The Hurricanes are making a swap at forward, assigning Nicolas Roy to Charlotte and recalling Clark Bishop and Phil Di Giuseppe from the Checkers.

After making his NHL debut with Carolina in last season's finale, Roy was recalled earlier this season and appeared in six games for the Canes. The second-year pro got off to a scorching start for the Checkers, logging seven points (5g, 2a) in six games before his recall and earning the first AHL Player of the Week award of the season.

Bishop returns to the NHL after making his debut earlier this season and logging two games with the Canes. The third-year-pro has recorded five points in nine games for the

Scranton. I'll probably be too tired to complain...probably.

9) Former Carolina Hurricane and Charlotte Checkers forward Zac Dalpe is tearing it up for the AHL's Cleveland Monsters with 12 goals and 19 points in 12 games, two totals good enough to lead the league. It's hard to imagine you'd come across a better person than Zac, who is now married with a son. I am sure Columbus has taken notice. With that kind of output, it's going to be hard to keep Zac in the AHL. Paris, Ontario produced a fine kid and we always wish him nothing but the best.

10) Besides Charlotte, one of the best teams in the league is Springfield, led by former Checkers assistant coach Geordie Kinnear. In my many years in hockey, I'm not sure I've met a more dedicated hockey man than Kinnear. I believe he will be an NHL head coach one day and I don't think it's too far into the future. If and when it happens, he won't be outcoached by anyone.

Checkers.

Di Giuseppe appeared in two games during his stint with the Checkers, going scoreless and racking up 19 penalty minutes. The fifth-year-forward now heads back to Raleigh, where he played in two games before his recent assignment.

With those moves the Checkers now have 12 healthy options at forward plus Greg McKegg, who missed Saturday's game with an injury but returned to practice Wednesday in a yellow no-contact jersey. Charlotte is back in action Friday in Binghamton to kick off a three-in-three weekend on the road.

### TODAY'S LINKS

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# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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## SportScan

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

1114324 Carolina Hurricanes

Will Cam Ward be net for the Blackhawks against the Canes? He won't say.

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

First, the obvious question: will Cam Ward be in net for the Chicago Blackhawks on Thursday when they host the Carolina Hurricanes?

"Oh, you know I can't say that," Ward said Wednesday.

Then again, the two teams play again Monday in Raleigh. What about being the starting goaltender in his return game to PNC Arena, again facing his former team?

"I hope so, but that's to be determined, I guess," Ward said.

That will be the coach's call and as of Tuesday the Blackhawks had a new one. Joel Quenneville, winner of three Stanley Cups, was fired after the Blackhawks' 6-6-3 start and Jeremy Colliton named as his replacement.

"It's been crazy, with the coaching change," Ward said in an interview. "It's not something as a team that you want to see or go through. We're making that transition now and going through the expectations of what Jeremy wants to get out of his players."

"Personally, it caught me by surprise. I've only been here for a short period of time and unfortunately didn't get to know 'Q' as much as I would have liked. You had to respect what he did in his coaching career and in this organization the past decade."

Colliton, who was coaching the Rockford IceHogs of the AHL, is 33, the youngest coach in the NHL. Ward is 34.

"Definitely something new, to be older than the head coach," Ward said. "I played against Jeremy in junior. He was with the Prince Albert Raiders."

Asked if Colliton scored on him in the Western Hockey League, Ward chuckled. "Oh, I can't remember. It's hard to remember all the people who scored on me. There's been too many."

In 13 seasons with the Hurricanes, Ward won a Stanley Cup and was the franchise goalie, setting many franchise records. He made the commute to work from his North Raleigh home -- the one he still owns -- and became part of the community.

Then, he was gone. The Canes did not pursue a new contract with Ward after last season and he signed as a free agent with the Blackhawks in July.

Ward was brought in on a one-year, \$3 million contract to be the backup for Corey Crawford, giving the Blackhawks another veteran goalie as Crawford continued to recover from concussion symptoms that lingered from last season.

Ward started the first five games. He won the first two in overtime, at Ottawa and St. Louis, then gave up seven goals to Toronto in his first start at the United Center in a wild 7-6 overtime loss.

In eight games, he has a 3-2-3 record with a 3.83 goal-against average and .887 save percentage, numbers that have had some Blackhawks fans casting some of the blame at him after Quenneville's firing. Crawford is 3-4-0 with a 2.92 GAA and .907 save percentage, losing his last three starts.

"When I look at my games, you want to base it off how you feel and how you performed and not get too deep a dive into the numbers, because they can be skewed," Ward said. "Toronto was the one game I felt like I was off. Otherwise I feel when I've played I've been able to try to give this team a chance to win and that's what I'm striving to do."

Ward said slipping into a Blackhawks uniform for the first time was slightly surreal.

"The first time I did it, you take a second and recognize this is different," he said. "But with that said, there's also excitement, too. There's a lot of history with this franchise. You think of all the special players who have been able to wear this jersey and wear it proudly."

Ward moved the family to Chicago, into a high-rise apartment downtown -- as he put it, "Right in the mix of everything."

"As long as my family is happy I'm happy and it's been a smooth transition with my kids and getting into their new schools," he said.

Ward described himself as feeling like the new kid in school with his new team. It has taken a while, he said, to be himself.

"I'm a guy who likes to have fun and do some pranks and get involved with everybody," he said. "I did find myself being the new quiet kid for a while. Just get used to your new surroundings. It's such a big change from Carolina."

Ward said he planned to drop by the Canes' team hotel Wednesday night, just a few blocks away, and see some familiar faces. He said he keeps "close tabs" on the Hurricanes, saying, "There are guys over there I genuinely care about."

Coach Rod Brind'Amour, Canes captain Justin Williams, Ward ... they won the Cup together in 2006. And there are so many others to see, longtime friends.

Then, the quick turnaround and next week's game at PNC Arena. Again, it should be surreal.

"I'm really not sure what the emotions are going to be like when I come back to Carolina and walk into PNC again and not go to the Hurricanes' side," Ward said. "At the same time, in a sense, I feel like I'll be coming home."

Ward said the family would be with him in Raleigh. It's also the Blackhawks' "Dads Trip" and his father, Ken, will be with him.

"I'll forever be grateful for what the Hurricanes organization and the fan base, the community and friends have all done for me," he said. "When it's all said and done, I can look back at all the great



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memories I had over the years in that city. The plan doesn't change that it's where I want to retire and reside.

"That said, we want to beat them in these two games. Don't get that twisted."

News Observer LOADED: 11.08.2018

1114325 Carolina Hurricanes

Canes' losing streak at five games after 4-1 loss to Blues

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

Former Carolina Hurricanes coach Bill Peters once said losing is contagious, and it seems that way now under first-year coach Rod Brind'Amour.

The Canes took a four-game losing streak into St. Louis on Tuesday and it became five after the Blues took a 4-1 victory at the Enterprise Center. Ryan O'Reilly had his first career NHL hat trick and goalie Chad Johnson finished with 38 saves for the Blues, who led 3-1 after the first period.

The Canes (6-7-2) have established a trend in the 0-4-1 slide that's much the same as it was the past few years under Peters:

- Finish with a lot of shots and enough scoring chances to win.
- Hit posts, miss the net, have shots blocked and fail to finish.
- Lose the goaltending battle.

"We should be frustrated," Brind'Amour said. "I would hope so. But we have to park it and then come back and show them all the stuff they've done well and the stuff they need to clean up.

"It's a test for these guys and obviously ourselves to stick with what we're doing and try to find a way to manufacture offense. Scoring goals is not easy. You've got to get dirty."

The Canes have had more than 30 shots in each of their 15 games. They were averaging 41.8 a game before Tuesday, setting an NHL record for most shots on goal in the first 14 games of a season (585).

But only defenseman Jaccob Slavin was able to score and his first goal of the season, on a power play, was quickly negated by bad penalty and a sudden Blues strike.

Two sequences in the first period were telling. The first came after O'Reilly had given the Blues a 1-0 lead as Canes rookie Andrei Svechnikov, with a good chance off the rush, hit the post, then had Johnson get a glove on the puck as Svechnikov tried to knock in the rebound.

The Blues quickly were in transition, Robby Fabbri finishing off a rush for a 2-0 lead with his first goal since December 2016.

Slavin's score, on a shot through traffic from the point, made it a one-goal game with 26 seconds left in the first period. But Canes rookie center Nicolas Roy lost a faceoff to O'Reilly, then slashed him moments later, and O'Reilly's power-play score with five seconds left in the period made it 3-1.

"The guys know they can't keep giving teams goals early and get behind," Brind'Amour said.

The Blues locked it down from there with some good work in the neutral zone and defensive zone. O'Reilly's third goal was an empty netter.

Since the 4-0-1 start that had everyone excited, the Canes have gone 2-7-1 and scored two or fewer goals seven times.

Brind'Amour gave goalie Curtis McElhinney the start Tuesday as Petr Mrazek continues to recover from a lower-body injury.

The Canes will finish the four-game road trip in Chicago on Thursday after what will have been an unsettling few days for the Blackhawks, who fired coach Joel Quenneville on Tuesday. The Blackhawks, who have lost five straight, named Jeremy Colliton head coach.

The Canes will have all that working against them as they look to end their slide before a six-game homestand that begins Saturday against the Detroit Red Wings.

"Our game is pretty solid," Brind'Amour said. "We're playing pretty well overall. We're creating more than enough chances to win the hockey game. The fact they're not going in right now is the frustrating part.

"The guys are giving us, the Hurricanes, everything they can. And that's all we can ask."

News Observer LOADED: 11.08.2018

1114339 Chicago Blackhawks

In replacing future Hall of Famer with inexperienced head coach, pressure is on Stan Bowman to help the Blackhawks re-win

By Charlie Roumeliotis November 07, 2018

The Blackhawks made arguably the toughest decision in franchise history on Tuesday to part ways with the best coach that has ever walked through their doors in Joel Quenneville, who also just might be the greatest coach in Chicago sports history.

After 11 seasons in Chicago that resulted in three Stanley Cups, the Blackhawks felt it was time for a change. Out goes the second-winningest coach in NHL history and in comes a 33-year-old with zero NHL coaching experience.

It's a significant changing of the guard behind the bench and essentially means one thing: Stan Bowman got his guy in Jeremy Colliton and now it's time to see what decisions he makes going forward with a head coach that better aligns with his views philosophically.

"This is the first head coach that Stan Bowman has hired and I'm excited about that," said Blackhawks President & CEO John McDonough. "Stan has been very high on Jeremy for a long time and I'm anxious to see how this is going to play out."

Hockey insiders expected the Blackhawks to be aggressive this past offseason via free agency, but it was quite the opposite. They entered the season with more than \$5 million in unused cap space and were reluctant to add a third year to any deal, settling for veteran role players. Perhaps part of that was because of the uncertainty of this season and not wanting to tie up a large amount of money to one particular player if things went sideways again or it ultimately resulted in an early season coaching change, which it did, and didn't exactly fit the new coach's playing style. If that's the case, then Quenneville was set up to fail from the beginning.

But now that the decision has been made, the pressure really shifts to Bowman because he's going to be the one held most responsible for the product on the ice and not what the head coach isn't getting out of the group. With Quenneville as the coach, there were too many instances where the Blackhawks tried fitting a square peg into a round hole with newly-acquired or signed players (Trevor Daley



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and Michal Kempny, to name a few) and nobody wins in that situation.

In hand-picking his head coach, that's no longer an issue for Bowman. With that being said, how is he going to utilize the cap space in both the short- and long-term? How much extra flexibility does this give him in trade talks knowing his future acquisitions or signings is tailored to the way he and his new head coach want to play?

One thing is for certain: Bowman's moves from here on out will be viewed under a microscope, if they haven't been already. The Blackhawks still have playoff aspirations, labeling it as a "remodeling" period rather than "rebuilding."

But it's in Bowman's hands to help the Blackhawks re-win.

"We're all accountable for this," Bowman said. "This is not just on one person or just on Joel or the other coaches. We all play a role in this and we have to get better, so my role in this arrangement is not just simply finding players. That's part of my role. My role is interacting with our coaches and helping collaborate to help out team improve. Certainly, part of that is player acquisition of player movement.

"We're on the outlook. If we can upgrade our team in any way, we're going to pursue that."

The clock has started to tick.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.08.2018

1114340 Chicago Blackhawks

Open communication the key to Jeremy Colliton commanding respect from Blackhawks veterans

By Mark Lazerus Nov 7, 2018

Sometimes, he'd catch a player in the hallway outside the locker room. Sometimes, he'd sidle up next to a guy while he was eating breakfast. Other times, he'd take a seat in a nearby open locker stall. It didn't really matter where, or when. For Jeremy Colliton, it was always about the "why."

Why was a guy scratched? Why was he taken off the power play? Why did his minutes drop? Why was he getting added to the penalty kill? Why has he been struggling in his own end? Why wasn't he clicking with a certain linemate? Why is he struggling on the forecheck?

"Sometimes you don't know what's happening, or you don't play as much or you don't play in certain situations," Blackhawks winger Alexandre Fortin said. "And he's a coach that will come to you after a game, or after something happens, and he will talk to you face to face and will explain to you exactly why. It helps a lot. It gives you confidence in yourself, and it gives you confidence in him."

Talk to those who have been around Colliton in Rockford over the past season-plus, and the same word keeps popping up: communication. Colliton's door is always open, and he goes to great lengths to make sure everyone understands exactly what's going on at all times. It's not all generic platitudes, either. Colliton — who said he already crammed in quickie sit-downs with just about every player on the Blackhawks roster on his first day as head coach Tuesday — tailors his coaching and his constructive criticism to each player's needs, both on the ice and between the ears.

"He treats everybody individually," said goaltender Jeff Glass, who played on the same World Juniors team in 2003-04 as Colliton and then served as Colliton's goaltender in Rockford last season. "He does a very good job of finding out what makes each individual guy tick, and what he needs to do to communicate with each guy. There isn't one blanket answer I could give you, where some coaches are very obvious 'players' coaches' or not or whatever. He catered to each guy. He almost circled each guy as a new project, and he attacked each guy with a different set of solutions to try to get the most out of each player. And I think as a whole, that made our team better."

That's exactly the kind of coach an American Hockey League team needs, the kind of teacher/mentor young players such as Fortin require to develop into NHL players. But how will it fly with a guy like Duncan Keith, who's been in the league for 14 seasons, has won two Norris Trophies and three Stanley Cups, and is two years older than Colliton? Or Jonathan Toews, who's been the unquestioned leader of the Blackhawks for a decade now? Or Brent Seabrook, who's the same age as Colliton and played on that same World Juniors team? Or Chris Kunitz, who is a whopping six years older than Colliton and has four Stanley Cup rings?

How does a 33-year-old walk into a room full of stars and veterans and instantly command respect?

Well, the same way he earned the respect of the young guys: communication.

"The challenge is not so much different (than) if I were 20 years older," Colliton said. "I've got to come in with a plan and show them I can help them win. If we as a team have success, they're all going to look good, and they're not going to worry about how old I am."

Glass said it was a "little weird" at first having an old friend and teammate as a coach, but said the two sat down on Day 1, hashed it out, realized they had similar goals for the season, and quickly found a comfort level as coach and player. That IceHogs dressing room had a handful of veterans who very much didn't want to be in the AHL at the time — older guys like Glass, J-F Berube, Cody Franson and Lance Bouma, and younger guys with NHL experience like Vinnie Hinostroza, Tomas Jurco, Gustav Forsling and Tanner Kero — but Colliton found a way to get all of them on board, no matter their age, ego or experience.

Those veterans helped the IceHogs sweep two playoff series and make a strong showing in a six-game conference-final loss. So Franson said Colliton should have no trouble winning over the Blackhawks' veteran leadership core.

"Colli is one of the best coaches I have played for," Franson said. "He has a great sense of his locker room, its personnel, and how to manage it. He's extremely smart in (tactics) vs. an opponent and how to go about getting the most out of his guys. The leaders in Chicago will love and respect him for his approach, and the young guys will follow accordingly. He will be a great fit."

"The way Colli carries himself, approaches and handles situations and players, is very impressive. Also, those (veteran) leaders are of the highest quality in the game. They are there to do a job and the age won't be an issue in their mind. They want to win."

If anything, Colliton hopes his age can play in his favor. Joel Quenneville was well-known as a players' coach — a laissez-faire kind of guy who rarely meddled in players' affairs and let the leadership core police the room. He also is 60 years old, so his playing experience doesn't exactly match up with that of current NHL players. The Blackhawks brought in Don Granato as an assistant coach last season primarily because of his ability to relate to younger players.

Colliton only played 57 NHL games with the New York Islanders over five seasons, but he did play them in this century.



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"I feel comfortable with these guys, and feel like I've been where they've been," Colliton said. "Obviously, I haven't won a Hart Trophy or anything, but I want to win and I'm willing to do whatever it takes to win. And I love the game. Every one of us has a little to contribute, and I've got to do my part."

Winning, of course, would make everything a lot easier.

"He made a comment (Tuesday) that it comes down to winning," Toews said. "He's here to win and he can make some changes that are going to help us win and we see that difference, and that speaks for itself. That was the smart thing (to say) right there. Right away, we're seeing he's a great communicator and he already wants to take time to get to know each player and figure out what makes that individual (play at his) best. He doesn't want there to be any doubt or misunderstandings, not only with the system but what guys' roles are, and what's expected out of everybody in the room. I think that speaks volumes to his understanding (of) how a hockey team works."

Still, it's only natural for the veterans to look at Colliton warily. Toews' first coach was an NHL legend, Denis Savard. His second coach, Quenneville, was an established guy with a decade's worth of winning records under his belt. Colliton is relatively unknown, and entirely unproven.

Keith and Kane still sounded like they were trying to process losing Quenneville — Keith wondering aloud if things might have been different had he not been tossed from Quenneville's last game in Calgary just two minutes in, and Kane believing he could have done more to save Quenneville's job had he not been sick in Western Canada.

The veterans are still in shock, but are staying open-minded about Colliton.

The kids, on the other hand, are genuinely excited.

"As a young player going into pro (hockey), you want that feedback and to know where you stand on the team and in the organization," Luke Johnson said. "He got the best out of everyone last year (in Rockford). I'm excited to have him here."

Said Fortin: "He helped me a lot last year, telling me what I needed to work on to get to the NHL. And I think he will be working with me a lot here, too, and I'm pretty happy about it."

It's hard not to hear the way the young guys talk about Colliton as veiled, almost unintentional shots at Quenneville, who was player-friendly, but not exactly the most cuddly or approachable guy. After being traded to Arizona over the summer, Hinostroza lamented the constant uncertainty he faced under Quenneville, saying: "It changed every night. As a young guy, there's a lot of pressure (because) you never really know what you're going to be asked to do that night. ... I'm excited to just be able to play my game and not worry about stuff like that."

Nick Schmaltz was asked Wednesday about Colliton's communication skills in the context of Hinostroza's comments.

"Yeah, it's nice that if you don't know what's going on, you've got the open-door policy, so you're able to talk to him and he's going to tell you how it is, be direct with you," Schmaltz said. "It's a lot better than not knowing, like you said. You'd rather have him tell it to you straight and know what's going on, and not go home just wondering what he's thinking."

So the kids are on board. For the fellow 30-somethings who have played for Colliton in the past, there's little doubt the vets will quickly follow. And it won't come through fear or intimidation — heck, Erik Gustafsson said Colliton is basically silent on the bench, the polar opposite of the fiery Quenneville — but rather simple communication.

"My advice to him would be don't change," Glass said. "Don't change anything that got him there. Do what made you successful in the first place. There are obviously a lot of highly decorated hockey players in the dressing room he's walking into. But if he treats them the same he treated everybody in Rockford and goes about his business, they'll gain respect for him that way, rather than trying to be someone he's not. And I'm not telling him anything he doesn't know. He's going to do really well there."

The Athletic LOADED: 11.08.2018

1114341 Chicago Blackhawks

Q&A: Derek King on his opportunity with the IceHogs and working with Jeremy Colliton

By Scott Powers Nov 7, 2018

The Blackhawks went another direction, and that left Derek King in a tough spot.

King had been a Rockford IceHogs assistant coach under Ted Dent for the 2016-17 season. When Dent was let go following that season, King was among the candidates the Blackhawks interviewed for the job. But he didn't get it. The Blackhawks went an unexpected route and hired then-32-year-old Jeremy Colliton, who had been coaching in Sweden's second division.

King was disappointed. He was hopeful to finally land his first head coaching job after interviewing a number of times over the years. Instead, he had to choose between remaining with the IceHogs as an assistant or potentially pursuing other opportunities.

King chose to remain with the IceHogs. A year later, that decision has worked out well for King. He and Colliton formed a strong working relationship, helped the IceHogs develop players and win, and now King has been promoted to interim head coach in Rockford after Colliton's own promotion to Chicago.

King, 51, discussed Tuesday his aspirations to be a head coach, working with Colliton, his philosophies on the game and more.

Scott Powers: What was your reaction to the news?

Derek King: Well, I was a little shocked. I mean more with the Chicago thing which was going down. When they told me I was going to get the head job, I was excited, happy and thankful for the opportunity. That's for sure.

SP: What's impressed you about Jeremy Colliton working with him the past few seasons?

King: I think just the way he looks at the game. I've been around the game a long time as a player. I like to think I've been around enough with different coaches as a coach, and just the way he approaches the game is it's nothing we didn't really know but the way he words it makes it right. Like it makes it, yeah, you know what, this is right, this is what we should have been doing years ago. Just the way he thinks the game. He's a smart hockey guy, and system-wise, he's good at it, and you think with his demeanor, the way he is, I think it's going to be a great fit for him.

SP: What about his systems fits in with today's game?

King: Well, I think with the way teams are and the players are with the skill level, the pace, it's offense and offense and offense. I think it's the transition game from defense to tracking to backchecking to turn up quick and to go right on the offense is going to be huge for Chicago, especially with the talent they have.



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SP: In talking to IceHogs defensemen the past few seasons, it seemed like a lot of them needed time to adjust to that. In teaching that philosophy, what are some of the hurdles?

King: Well, it's kind of like the old-school guys need to buy into it and see that it works, not always thinking defense when we have the puck or coming in as a centerman low and slow. The way we played it here last year too, when we get the puck, we got to think we're gone, we're on offense, let's go, whether it's a quick up indirect or as we say it's above layers and what have you. But, if there's plays there to be made, make the plays. If they're not there, let's get pucks behind the opposition and go to work. And if you play like that and play with some pace, especially if you have a lot of skilled guys, you can be successful at it.

SP: There's a lot of understanding between risk and reward?

King: Yeah, it's like anything, you've watched enough games, you've seen enough games, we don't need to turn pucks over, but we don't want to take away the skill to make plays and the creativity of a player, but you just got to manage that. And through the neutral zone, puck management's key with our team, especially our team here and last year. I'm sure Jeremy's going to promote that also. If you don't have a play, let's get it behind them and go to work. If you do have a play, let's make it.

Jeremy Colliton replaced Joel Quenneville on Tuesday. (Scott Powers/The Athletic)

SP: Did you learn anything from him or did you have to alter any of your philosophies being his assistant?

King: No, I didn't have to alter. Again, it's old school. Why are we above layers? Why are we not coming back to help? You adjust to it, and then you start the way he brings it in front of you and shows you and teaches the guys, it makes sense. If they have two guys on the forecheck, why should we have three guys underneath them? Let's get above layers, let's go, turn the puck up and let's get on offense. And as a player, it's a lot more fun to play offense than it is defense, that's for sure. Using that philosophy, it was great to learn it. It was nothing we didn't already know. Myself as a player, we didn't really know that. We weren't really taught it that way. And then as a coach, we never looked at it that way. It was always a little different. Now knowing it, it's great and I enjoy coaching it and I enjoy watching it when it works.

SP: Have you guys utilized analytics more in the last year or the same as before?

King: Last year was kind of coming in. I know Jeremy is really big on analytics. I'm still figuring it out. I'll have to really work at it more. I'm not against it. I think it's great. Any information you can have to help makes these players better, especially at our level, I'm going to take. I just need to make (sure) I know how to read the fine print and what it actually is helping us with. But I'm for it and will continue to use it down here.

SP: The big talking point is about Colliton's age and his experience. When he was hired there, did you have any preconceived notions about him being younger or did you just get to know him before you made any judgments? Was it difficult with him coming in so young?

King: No, when he got the job and found out how young he was, I just knew I had to get in better shape to keep up with him on the ice. I think the big thing there, I interviewed for the head job after Teddy left, and not to get it, I was a little disappointed. But I understood, there's a younger guy coming in, brings a different philosophy or a different look at the game. Once I got to know and meet with Jeremy, I got to know him a lot better, it was easy to believe in what he was selling and easily adapt to it, and I think it's been a great relationship ever since. Hats off to him. There was no blood or anything. It was just, let's see what he has, and I enjoyed working with him. Who knows? Maybe down the road there's still opportunity to work with him again.

SP: What's this opportunity mean for you?

King: Well, it's great. This is something I've interviewed for with other teams and the junior level. And even when I was with Toronto, there was opportunity there, never got it. Again, disappointment, frustrating. But the opportunity's a good chance for me to show what I can do as a head coach, and it's a good test for me to see if I am a head coach. I believe I can do it. I have no questions about it. But sometimes it doesn't work out the way you want it.

SP: Was that difficult to stay on last season when they didn't hire you as the head coach?

King: No. I told them after they hired somebody else, I'm like, hey, I'm here to help. I'm a pretty loyal guy. I know my job. I think I'm good at it as an assistant. I enjoy working with these kids and developing them. I had no problems with it. I knew my role and anything I could do to help. We're all in this together. Last year I wasn't pissed off to the point where I'm not helping anymore and being like that. I'm here to help. I'm here to help Jeremy, make it easy for him and make these players better. I think that's what we did last year. I think we really did a good job of developing our players and getting them ready. We just got to keep doing that here.

SP: It seems like there's an upside between the IceHogs' and Blackhawks' coaches having a relationship and maybe just the communication lines of where players are at development-wise, who can come up and down.

King: Yeah, definitely. It's a perfect situation for Jeremy and for me. I keep in contact with him. He can contact us and talk about ... and he knows the players, so he's going to be asking like, hey, what's going on with Dylan Sikura or this player or this player, and we'll give them feedback and see where they're at. Again, he knows them, I know them. And with the system-wise, unless he makes any changes, we'll be on top of it to make the change with him at this level. Other than that, we'll be playing pretty much the same systems, same style of play that he wants to play up there we'll be doing it down here.

SP: System-wise, were you doing anything different than the Blackhawks?

King: No. They changed some D-zone coverage stuff and maybe the forecheck, but we implemented it into our daily routine in practice and made sure the guys knew what was going on and used it. As you know, for players getting called up, if they know the system already, it's an easy adjustment for them.

SP: Were there any variations on the philosophy of the penalty kill or power play with Colliton?

King: No, he allowed us to do what we wanted to do on the power play. He had suggestions, and we talked about it. Again, it goes back to having a good relationship with the whole staff with Brooky (Sheldon Brookbank), myself, Jeremy on board with everything. Whatever we were selling, we were selling it together. One wasn't going one way, one way the other way and the other wasn't fighting to get both guys to agree. We all agreed on something and stuck with it.

SP: Were you in charge of the power play and penalty kill?

King: I've done power play.

SP: I know there was a point you used five forwards last season on the power play. It seems like you've been progressive in some ways. Have you been able to push the envelope and try some new things on the power play?

King: Well, we try it. We have the two groups. It's tough too. You got to have the guys who are power play guys, helps, right? At this level, you have a couple of guys on each power play unit that are probably or should be guys at the NHL level and then the other guys won't be, but at this level they are power play guys, they can handle this. It's not always perfect. Sometimes it's a battle. There's a lot of hot



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streaks, and you try to adjust things. We've tried different things, but it really comes down to, for myself, a big believer is the players need to ... it's their power play and they need to know what's going on and they need to know how to read the game, how to react to what PK's giving you and obviously they have to be clean both flat passes and obviously get shots through. That's stuff I can't teach them. They just have to be able to do it.

SP: How do you feel about the team down there right now?

King: I feel good. Like again I was saying earlier with the media before, nothing needs to change here, same program. We just have to teach it without Jeremy, but we'll continue to plug along here, develop these players. Players that need to play have to play a lot, and they have to earn it, but, again, ice time is going to be there for these guys.

The Athletic LOADED: 11.08.2018

1114351 Detroit Red Wings

Detroit Red Wings' Frans Nielsen hoping to pass third concussion test

Helene St. James, Nov. 7, 2018

The Detroit Red Wings expect to have two forwards back for reinforcement soon.

Andreas Athanasiou and Frans Nielsen are both targeting a return Friday when the Wings host the New York Rangers (7:30 p.m., Fox Sports Detroit). Athanasiou (leg) will pretty much just have to give his own OK to return, while Nielsen will have to pass a concussion protocol test — something he appreciates, even while he feels fine, as an important step for his long-term health.

Both forwards have been injured since the Oct. 28 game against Dallas. The two skated Wednesday on a line with Gustav Nyquist. They had been getting better on a line with Thomas Vanek, who suffered a knee injury the game after Nielsen and Athanasiou were hurt, Oct. 30 at Columbus, and is out at least another week to three weeks.

Nyquist is a deft passer (he has a team high 11 assists in 15 games) and the thinking is that could be a good line as the Wings try to win for a fifth time in six games.

"If we have that line together, that was my thought process," coach Jeff Blashill said Wednesday. "Nyquist is a really smart player, similar to Vanek. I think he can help utilize AA's abilities, put pucks into spaces for him. I think it's a line you could start in the o-zone because Frans on the left side has been doing a way better job winning faceoffs on that side. It gives us a little bit of a potentially dynamic offensive line and we need more of that."

The Wings haven't started well the last two games, and needed a shootout to seal Tuesday's 3-2 victory over Vancouver. Dylan Larkin performed the heroics in the shootout, further showcasing his desire to be a go-to guy for the team (Nielsen, Vanek and Athanasiou would normally be the top three in the shootout rotation because of their history of shootout success). Larkin had the day off Wednesday, and is expected to be available Friday.

Like Larkin, Athanasiou is someone opponents have to respect because of his speed. His numbers when he got hurt weren't great (four goals, two assists in 11 games) but Athanasiou had used his speed to create scoring chances in most games, showing a commitment to consistency.

"I think he's done good job from day one of training camp of playing at a consistent level and being engaged in the game on a

consistent level," Blashill said. "When he's engaged and skating and stopping on pucks and competing, he's a really, really good player. He's done a really good job of that through the course of the first part of the year and then got hurt. I hope he can come back and play at that high level as soon as possible."

Nielsen had four assists in four games when he was hurt. He is hesitant to call what he has a concussion because he only experienced headaches for a couple days after being hit and since then, "I've been fine, I've been skating, I've been in full practices," he said. "I'm feeling normal right now on the ice and in every day life."

Still, he's taken two baseline tests and not passed. The specter of long-term damage that concussions can inflict has left Nielsen respectful of the protocol that comes with any hint of a head injury.

"Like the doctor said, this is not a shoulder where you can go and get surgery and then you are fine after a certain amount of months," Nielsen said. "This could (affect) me my whole life if you're not careful with it, so that's why they're extra careful."

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.08.2018

1114352 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings' Frans Nielsen anxious to play, but understands need to be careful

Ted Kulfan, Nov. 7, 2018

Detroit — Frans Nielsen wants to play. You can sense it in his voice and his actions.

Nielsen has been practicing for almost a week now, while being in concussion protocol.

But having tests taken earlier this week, Nielsen didn't satisfy doctors with the results. He'll take them again Thursday, and is hopeful of returning to the lineup the following night against the New York Rangers.

Still, Nielsen is going to be careful. With everyone knowing the dangers of concussions, Nielsen is on board about safety being first and foremost.

"You do argue with the doctors and you do want to come back and play," Nielsen said after Wednesday's practice, which he took part in entirely. "But I'm sure it's one of those things later in life you're probably thankful he talked you into not coming back too early."

Nielsen has missed the last four games since being hit awkwardly along the boards Oct. 28 against Dallas.

He hasn't had any concussion-related symptoms, isn't having any headaches or having any adverse affects to everyday life.

"Like the doctor said, it's not like it's a shoulder where you can go and get surgery," Nielsen said. "This is something that can keep with your whole life if you're not careful."

Nielsen has looked effective during practices.

"Guys are pushing me and I'm feeling good right now," Nielsen said. "Hopefully I can get cleared (Thursday)."

Coach Jeff Blashill is in daily communication with trainers and the medical staff, but isn't going to push any player into the lineup if he's not ready to compete.

"They understand I have their best interests," said Blashill, adding it's mainly between the medical staff and the player. "I wouldn't want



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any player to risk long term health (issues). Coaches stay out of it (decision to return player to game action), and that's the way it should be for obvious reasons."

Christoffer Ehn was excited to be back with the Wings.

Happy to be back

The Wings recalled forward Christoffer Ehn before Tuesday's game and he played seven shifts, just under 7 minutes (6:53), being credited with four hits.

Ehn made the Wings out of training camp, but was sent to Grand Rapids as the roster got healthier and it was best for Ehn to get playing time in the AHL.

Ehn understood why he was sent down.

"I'm still in development, it's all new to me, like the North American playing style," Ehn said. "I can get more minutes in GR, work on my game, and get into a bigger role, too, playing important parts of the game.

"It was fun, the first couple games down there, we had a real good weekend (three victories), so I'm real happy with that.

"(But) it's fun to be back and playing here. I just have to keep working and take it day-by-day and play my game. I try to bring a lot of skating and help the team."

When the Wings wanted to add another forward Tuesday to return to 12 forwards and six defensemen, Blashill said Ehn was the natural choice to return.

"He plays real good hockey when he's here," Blashill said. "When we need a guy, he can help us. He walks in and he plays good hockey.

"When he's not playing lots, (it's best) to play in the American league and continue to work for pushing for more offense."

On Wednesday night, Ehn was sent back to the Griffins.

Larkin held out

Dylan Larkin didn't practice Wednesday after taking a hit during Tuesday's victory over Vancouver that caused him to miss several shifts to open the second period.

Larkin returned, took a regular shift, and eventually scored the only goal in the shootout, giving the Wings' the victory.

But Blashill said after the game it wouldn't be surprising to see Larkin take a day, or two, off from practice — and that's exactly what happened Wednesday.

"We'll see (about Thursday)," Blashill said. "I expect him to practice. Obviously he left the ice (Tuesday) and he was out for a little bit. But I don't think it's anything long-term, it's just part of the grind."

Andreas Athanasiou (upper body) practiced Friday and is set to return Friday.

Detroit News LOADED: 11.08.2018

1114353 Detroit Red Wings

Jimmy Howard's strong play will earn contract extension from Red Wings

By Ansar Khan

DETROIT - Gustav Nyquist was asked if Jimmy Howard has been the Detroit Red Wings' most consistent player.

"I would say so for sure," Nyquist said following Tuesday's 3-2 shootout victory over the Vancouver Canucks at Little Caesars Arena. "It's hard to argue that, the way he's playing. Every game he's given us a chance to win, so that's huge for us."

The Red Wings (5-8-2) have rebounded from an 0-5-2 start, winning four of their past five games. Howard has been the main reason. He is 3-0-0 in his past three starts, with a 2.59 goals-against average and .925 save percentage.

Overall, his numbers aren't great (4-5-2, 2.93 GAA, .917 save percentage), but they don't tell the whole story. He has played well behind an injury-ravaged defense that started the season with four rookies.

"Jimmy's been playing great all year," Justin Abdelkader said. "He's making some big saves and bailing us out when we need him. We just got to continue to do a good job in front of him and try to be in lanes and block shots and clean up rebounds, because a lot of times he's so good at making that first save."

The Red Wings are happy with Howard, and Howard is happy in Detroit. That is why the sides are sure to agree on a contract extension this season.

Howard is in the final year of his contract (a six-year deal with a cap hit of \$5.29 million) and turns 35 in March, which has led to speculation he might be moved at the trade deadline for a draft pick. With Jonathan Quick out indefinitely following knee surgery last week, some wondered if a trade might come sooner and the Los Angeles Kings would be interested.

It doesn't matter. The Red Wings are committed to keeping Howard. He likely will receive a multiyear contract, and the tandem of Howard and Jonathan Bernier will be manning the nets in Detroit for a couple more seasons.

None of the Red Wings' goaltending prospects (Filip Larsson, Keith Petruzzelli, Joren van Pottelberghe) will be NHL-ready in at least the next several seasons. Howard is better than what they have in Grand Rapids (Harri Sateri, Patrik Rybar). And the Red Wings see no point in searching for a better alternative in July's thin free-agent market.

The Red Wings know what they have in Howard, someone who gives them solid goaltending for the most part, despite facing a lot of rubber (the Wings are being outshot by an average margin of 35-28 and have outshot their opponent only twice in 15 games).

"If you go over the course of the last couple years, I think Jimmy has been excellent," coach Jeff Blashill said. "A little bit coming out of the (All-Star) break last year he wasn't as good for a stretch and it hurt his numbers, but other than that he's been really good. It's an unreal testament to looking at yourself and saying, 'I got to get better at certain things.' He did that a number of years ago and he's just a real good goalie now on a consistent basis and he's got a real competitive fire to him. He wants us to win bad. It shows in his game."

That was apparent in the 40-save performance vs. the Canucks, in which Howard stopped all three shootout attempts. He said he wasn't aware the crowd was on its feet chanting his name as Bo Horvat was skating in for the final attempt.

"Just clear the mechanism, stick with the process," Howard said.

"I think it's just going out there and working hard for 60 minutes, realizing that this game has a lot of ups and downs and if you just continue to stick to it and keep working for 60 minutes some nights you're going to get the bounces and we were able to find a way to get two points."



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The Red Wings are rebuilding but still want to win, at least be competitive. They get that with Howard, which is why he'll be sticking around past this season.

Injury update: Dylan Larkin didn't practice Wednesday after getting hurt in the final minute of the first period Tuesday (he finished the game and scored the lone shootout goal). Blashill said it's not serious and Larkin is expected to practice Thursday.

Frans Nielsen (concussion) and Andreas Athanasiou (leg) are "trending toward returning" Friday against the Rangers at LCA, but haven't been cleared, Blashill said.

Ehn reassigned: The Red Wings reassigned forward Christoffer Ehn to the Grand Rapids Griffins on Wednesday, after he appeared in one game during his second stint with the team.

"We would like him, if he's not playing lots on a regular basis, to play in the American League and continue to work on pushing for more offense," Blashill said. "When he's here he's going to be more in a role where he's more of a defensive-type player and he's probably playing a little bit safe.

"He plays very good hockey when he comes here, but we'd like to get more offense out of him. So if he's not going to play tons (in Detroit), that's why we've had him down, but certainly he's a guy who can come in and help us. Plays good hockey, walks right in and helps us, played on the wing and did a great job."

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1114354 Detroit Red Wings

Joe Hicketts disappointed, determined in latest return to Griffins

By Peter J. Wallner

GRAND RAPIDS - It wasn't any easier for Joe Hicketts to go from the Detroit Red Wings to the Grand Rapids Griffins for a third time in less than a season, but it did come with its positives.

For one, the Griffins had open arms to have his presence on defense, and it showed as the team earned five of six points in three games in three days last weekend.

Individually, Hicketts returned to the AHL with some fresh hockey cred in his pocket. He had been the Red Wings since training camp - far longer than his two stints last season - that provided him valuable experience on and off the ice.

"You learn something new every day there (with the Red Wings) with the veteran guys around you like (Niklas) Kronwall, (Mike) Green and (Trevor) Daley," Hicketts said. "They've been around like 10, 15 years and there's so much you can learn from them from just watching and talking to them."

He played in eight games in Detroit without a point or penalty and a minus-six rating but was a healthy scratch for about a week and a half before sent to the Griffins on Oct. 31.

Add in two full seasons already with the Griffins and the 22-year-old is in a place where he has knowledge and experience to offer the Griffins yet has shown enough to remain a prospect with potential with the Red Wings.

Hicketts, a 5-foot-8 overachiever with a quick toothless smile and infectious personality, wants to impart his experience and attitude on the Griffins this time around.

"It was a little gloomy at some points (in Detroit) but, even when I got here, the team wasn't off to a rough start, but not the kind of start everyone thought," he said. "So, I look to bring some energy and also some laughter to the room. It's important to stay loose, too, and have some fun."

Hicketts, paired with Vili Saarijarvi, had two assists in his first three games as he looks to improve his offensive presence. The Griffins are on the road for games Thursday and Saturday at Manitoba.

Hicketts had seven goals and 34 points and a plus-15 in 73 games in 2016-17 and went 3-9-12 with a minus-10 in 67 games last season, along with five games in two stints with the Red Wings (three assists and a plus-5).

"I thought I've been playing well," he said. "I'm moving the puck and that's something I want to come down here and do. Make sure that I can make those little plays out of the defensive zone. I've found I've been in the offensive zone a little more and not just playing defense as much."

As for the disappointment, it's there. But Hicketts knows the landscape well.

"I'm not naive to the fact they had eight D up there and what the contracts and salary situations are ... It was fortunate for me but tough for the team that bunch of veteran D went down with injuries or illness to start the year," he said.

"That provided some young guys an opportunity for some NHL action. But at the end of the day, you come down here and work hard and look to earn the next call up."

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1114355 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings more resilient following rough start to season

By Ansar Khan

DETROIT - Little was going the Detroit Red Wings' way the first half of Tuesday's game against the Vancouver Canucks.

They were being outshot by a wide margin and were on their heels. They had a pair of coach's challenges go against them. They faced a two-goal deficit midway through the second period.

Earlier this season, they might have folded, or they might have come back and played just well enough to lose.

Lately, they have been more resilient. On this night, they got stronger as the game progressed, tied it early in the third period and won it 3-2 in a shootout at Little Caesars Arena.

Jimmy Howard made it possible with 40 saves in regulation and overtime and three stops in the shootout, where Dylan Larkin scored the lone goal.

Red Wings' Jeff Blashill lauds team's resiliency

The Red Wings (5-8-3) have won four of their past five and are 5-3 since their 0-5-2 start.

"We're bending, not breaking," Howard said. "Early in the season when stuff started to go wrong the body language was off and things really exploded on us, and now guys are continuing to keep working."

The turning point happened when the Red Wings killed a delay of game penalty at 11:21 of the second period. It was the result of a



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failed coach's challenge seeking to overturn a goal by Ben Hutton that made it 2-0. Replays indicated the play was not offside.

"You need guys to step up when it starts to go the wrong way and I thought Howie was a big factor," Blashill said. "If you go down 3-0, it gets way harder, especially for a team that doesn't score easy."

Gustav Nyquist talks about tying goal for Red Wings

The Red Wings gained momentum from the kill and got on the scoreboard at 13:43 of the second period when Justin Abdelkader converted on the power play. Gustav Nyquist tied it at 1:37 of the third, on a rebound of a shot by Jacob de la Rose.

De la Rose, centering Nyquist and Michael Rasmussen, have played well the past two games.

"We've built some chemistry," Nyquist said. "Those guys are two big bodies, forechecking really well. With those guys, I get to touch the puck a lot, they like to go to the net and try to just make as many plays as possible."

The Red Wings were missing their two-best shootout men in Frans Nielsen and Thomas Vanek and another good one in Andreas Athanasiou. But Larkin's goal, on the first shot against Jacob Markstrom, was all they needed.

"His shootout percentage hadn't been very good, and he had been in every coach's ears saying he had worked real hard on his shootout moves through the course of the summer and he's been excellent in the shootouts we do in practice," Blashill said. "It was a nice move and he scored. I think when you score first the goalie knows at that point if you shut them out you win the hockey game and it looked like there was no way Jimmy was losing that hockey game."

Justin Abdelkader pleased with Red Wings' resiliency

Early on, it looked like the Red Wings might lose.

Rookie Elias Pettersson, off to a sensational start (10 goals, 16 points in 10 games), ripped a shot from the top of the faceoff circle that caught the top far corner of the net at 13:39 of the first period.

"Tip your hat," Howard said. "That was an unbelievable shot. That kid, he's going to be special."

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1114356 Detroit Red Wings

What's next for Dennis Cholowski's development as a top-pair defenseman

By Max Bultman Nov 7, 2018

The Calder Memorial Trophy favorite was at Little Caesars Arena Tuesday night, doing all the things a Calder winner should do.

Elias Pettersson scored a goal on a laser of a shot and drew a Nikita Kucherov comparison from Red Wings goalie Jimmy Howard. The Canucks phenom bought himself time and space with his hands in the offensive zone. He looked, in general, far more experienced than someone playing just his 10th game in the league. For all those reasons, he's the clear early favorite for the league's rookie of the year award.

But in Detroit, the Red Wings are pretty darn happy with one of their rookies, too. And while Pettersson's early polish has almost certainly lowered the ceiling for what Dennis Cholowski could accomplish this

award season, his actual, on-ice ceiling is reaching promising territory for the Red Wings.

"I think it's a real positive that he looks like a guy who could potentially be a top-pair-type D-man," Red Wings coach Jeff Blashill said Monday. "We ultimately need young defensemen to not just be NHL defensemen but to be top-2 or top-4-type D-men. It's a huge part of the growth of this organization, so I think the fact that he's showing signs that he could move toward that is a great thing.

"Now, he's gotta keep moving in that direction. He's gotta be able to play against (Connor) McDavid and have a real good night. He's gotta be able to play against those types of players. Or, and he's done a good job of this, produce at a real high level."

As of Wednesday morning, Cholowski is tied for fourth among all NHL rookies in scoring with eight points (two goals, six assists). Two of the players he is tied with are fellow defensemen Maxime Lajoie (Ottawa) and his former Portland (WHL) teammate Henri Jokiharju (Chicago). Not too far down the list are preseason Calder contenders Rasmus Dahlin and Miro Heiskanen, of Buffalo and Dallas, with five and six points, respectively.

That Cholowski is in the same breath as the latter two is a meaningful development in itself, especially considering the Red Wings didn't quite know what they would be getting from their 2016 first-round pick coming into September's prospect camp. He was coming off a huge WHL season, but with uncertainty still lingering, it makes sense why he was thought to be on the outside looking in this year.

But since it's still early, let's avoid dwelling too much on what Cholowski has done in the Red Wings' first 15 games and start looking ahead to the next 67. And since the team seems to have hopes of him being a top-pair guy, let's set a high bar.

Here are the final-season numbers for the top defensemen in Calder voting each of the last six years:

Via Hockey-reference.com

A couple of additional top-five finishers, John Klingberg in 2015 and Olli Maatta in 2014, posted 40 and 29 points, respectively.

With the possible exception of Maatta, and accounting for stylistic differences among the group, that's about as good as you can ask for a rookie with top-pair hopes. And these are the numbers that, over the last half-decade, have been associated with establishing a player as that.

Age is going to render direct comparisons here tricky — only Charlie McAvoy was Cholowski's same age (20) in his rookie season — but generally speaking the bar has been about 40 points for a top-five Calder finisher on D. Where he actually finishes among this bunch is, realistically, irrelevant to his development, but let's go with this anyway, since it shows the bar for elite company.

Let's also add the top finisher from the previous six years, too — just for the sake of completeness (while allowing for the fact that offensive defensemen are more prized of late):

Via Hockey-reference.com

All of those players, with the exception of Jake Gardiner and Toby Enstrom (who each finished sixth) were top five in voting for the award, too.

Again, you can quibble with which of those players Cholowski actually resembles and which the Red Wings would be most pleased if he turned into, but the realistic answer for approaching this tier seems to be a nearly 40-point target for the 20-year-old. That breaks down to just under a half-point per team game the rest of the way.

That may be achievable — he's ahead of that rate 15 games in, even though it's still far too early to buy stock in "pace," and that's having missed two games with injury. One possible complication



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could be his ice time, which to this point is at nearly 21 minutes per game. In his last five games, however, he's crossed the 20-minute mark just once. That's probably due in part to the fact that Detroit rolled seven defensemen for some of those games, chipping into everyone's time on the ice, but there does seem to be a requisite TOI for serious top-five contention.

And when you look at the point shares those players racked up, each of those 12 players totaled at least 3 defensive point shares by season's end. That's an area where Cholowski is behind, at 0.3 in his 13 games played (to go with 0.6 offensive).

Approach those benchmarks, though, and Detroit's happiest surprise could soon be earning broader notoriety.

But for the Red Wings, the goal won't be for Cholowski to place high in Calder voting this year. It'll be for him to develop into a perennial top-pair defenseman. That requires a whole other consideration.

"I think, as the year's gone along, you have to continue to be consistent in your overall game," Blashill said Monday. "Like, I thought he did some real good things the other night (against Edmonton) with the puck, but he made lots of errors as well. He's just gotta learn to eliminate more and more of those errors. I would say the number one thing, though, is he's got great poise, but sometimes he wants to slow the game down and the rest of the team, we want to play fast.

"And so he's gotta make sure that he's able to shoulder check, know where he's going with the puck before he gets it and get that puck moving north as quick as possible whenever that's available. If it's not available, use his feet to create some space, maybe draw people to him, and then use that poise. But not slow the game down."

Outside of reducing his errors, these aren't the kind of traits that need to be developed tomorrow, per se. But that's Detroit's vision for its young blueliner. And this is one way to get there: by highlighting what's next even in times of success.

That is also where these two conversations diverge a bit. What could get Cholowski award votes in six months is only part of what gets him where Detroit wants long-term.

This is not to say he's particularly deficient in those other areas, mind you. Just that they're what the Red Wings are looking for him to build. And Cholowski's certainly aware of that.

"Just hitting plays quicker and gaps, I'd say, is the biggest thing," Cholowski said Tuesday morning. "Just trying to be aware of it all the time. Sometimes I do it; sometimes it's a little loose. So just be thinking about it while I'm in the game and being aware of where I am on the ice, ending plays quicker so I can get it on my stick quicker."

That means stepping up quicker to end plays farther up the ice, not allowing teams to gain various zones and put more pressure on Detroit. Those are achievable things, and being aware of them will help him. But being a rookie means things take time — even for a player who has thus far looked ahead of schedule.

Month one was great for Cholowski, who has been praised throughout the organization for his offseason efforts and has surpassed early expectations offensively. In the locker room, he has grown more and more at ease, at least with reporters, and Tuesday he easily handled a scrum packed with out-of-town media from his home Vancouver area.

Now comes the next phase. As the surprise of his early production turns into a standard, Cholowski will have to keep meeting it, all while adding new elements to his game.

It's not necessarily going to be a simple task, nor is it especially fair to place the burden of elite expectations on him so soon.

But if Cholowski wants to get where the Red Wings think he can, that's the road ahead.

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1114448 Websites

The Athletic / Thoughts on Thoughts: Senators Uber and Black Cloud Club, Nylander's situation, 'first on, last off' and more

By Justin Bourne

Nov 7, 2018

It's been a long time since I've rolled out a "Thoughts on Thoughts," so it feels really good to be back at it. For those who haven't read one of these before, the idea is pretty simple: I take a handful of notes from Elliotte Friedman's excellent "31 Thoughts" and react to them. Here's his latest, which started with — you guessed it — thoughts on the Ottawa Senators Uber-bizarre situation off the ice.

What a wild 24 hours.

How many times have you been frustrated with your boss, a co-worker, your partner, a friend, whoever and privately unloaded to someone else? (Or, at least you thought it was private.) Honestly, when you saw/heard of the video, how many of you thought, "That could have been me?"

It's almost unifying that so many people watched that video and had the initial thought, "Thank the holy heavens that when I was younger, the world wasn't papered with cameras and other recording devices." A very small percentage of the takes following the leak of the video were negative toward the players. It was mostly cringing and "Yeah I've been that person." Those moments happen with varying frequency depending on how things are going at work.

In an odd quirk, one of my favourite things as a hockey player was finding the other sarcastic, and we'll say somewhat "judgy" people, and unintentionally forming Black Cloud Club. Those people were great to have morning coffee with. I'm aware these people exist in every walk of life, but I feel like in hockey your life and future is particularly in the hands of the coaches on a daily basis, so it's really, really easy to blame them for your own failures. The job is hyper-volatile, and you can't succeed without proper opportunity, your team can't succeed without structure and discipline, and in hockey, every day and every minute the staff dictates those things.

So when things aren't going great — and there are times in every season that's the case — lord, can the conversations get hilariously nasty (as we saw). That's just part of being a coach — if you want to be the guy making the decisions, you have to live knowing how players talk about you when it's going poorly.

But truly, as a player, it's so important to be able to pour it all out like that. I swear it's therapy. Because the next day when you make about 10 high percentage plays and none work out, and you're in-game adrenaline'd up, and you get hollered at on the bench every time, you need to be in a good place to not yell back, which can be extremely detrimental to your career.

4. One note about Jeremy Colliton's coaching: opponents said AHL Rockford became much more aggressive under him. Lots of activity from the defence in the offensive zone, which is similar to what the NHL club prefers. They also aggressively held the blueline, stopping and attacking in certain cases. Previously, they tended to sag back and protect the net.

I had the privilege of playing with Jeremy in Bridgeport for a short while, and got to spend a week with him at a Leafs development camp (the Leafs often bring in young coaches from outside the organization to further relationships, pick brains, etc.). If I could use



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three words to describe Colliton as I know him, I'd go with smart, serious, open-minded (is that four words?).

Obviously it won't be easy as a young guy taking over such a storied franchise, but if anyone can it's him. During my time as his teammate, I was certain he was older than me. Not looks-wise, just maturity. Most of the on-bench advice from teammates consists of "You gotta f\*\*\*ing pass me that puck there!" He was great about explaining things in detail to me when I wasn't in the right spot, and generally making me feel comfortable off the ice.

Turns out I'm a couple years older than the guy, but I'm not worried he's too young to succeed with the Blackhawks. For those reasons, I'm confident they'll grow to take him seriously. He'll have his work cut out for him in the early going, but he's such a hard worker, I have no doubt he'll find a way to make it work as well as that roster is able to.

5. So, after a season with no coaching changes, we have two before American Thanksgiving. Right from the start, the pressure's been intense. There were a ton of rumours about Dave Tippett going back behind a bench. Reached Monday, he said, "I'm happy in Seattle, and I will be staying here."

While I get saying this, if he means it, I don't really get it. What competitive coach would choose the option of not coaching for almost two full years, then taking on a team that – hot take coming here – isn't going to be good for a long time.

I get the job security – it's years and years to work with (read: get paid). But I think another team would give him that. I'm pretty convinced everyone is so blinded by Vegas' early success that they think that's just going to be the new norm for expansion teams. I'm not buying it.

It sounds to me like NHL teams have learned from the Vegas expansion draft (our own Pierre LeBrun discussed this at a Toronto Puck Talks event). When Seattle's turn comes, nobody's overreacting and trading them the equivalent of Jonathan Marchessault to take Reilly Smith. Nobody's sending them Alex Tuch to "only" take Erik Haula. Some teams may lose a decent player; this time they'll just eat that loss and move on.

So all of that is to say: Tippett is either bluffing, or making what looks like a surprising choice to me. Would an offer from the Ducks change his mind? The Red Wings, the Blues ... somewhere? Time flies and all, but you'd think he'd want back in at some point before October of 2020, particularly if he gets the chance to coach a roster with potential after all those tough years in the desert.

22. Back when Connor McDavid was at OHL Erie, his trainer, Gary Roberts, warned him that "90-second and two-minute shifts don't work in the NHL." Yet, there was the electrifying forward blowing by Ryan Suter to score after a 79-second shift last Tuesday in Edmonton.

There's actually something in common between those two. Suter, who, in 2013-14 played the fourth-most minutes in one season since the NHL began recording ice time, is excellent at conserving energy while being out there for a long time. McDavid has that ability, too, but, as Roberts says, "He's put in the work. He's committed. In the summers, when his friends were going out or finishing for the day, he's the guy who stayed to do one more thing or work on something on his own."

23. Roberts had a great line about playing with Sidney Crosby for a year-and-a-half. "I'd see him on the ice 30 minutes before practice. I'd ask him what he was doing. He said, 'I didn't like the way my hands felt last night.'" Roberts said he laughed and replied, "Well, how do you think the rest of us feel?"

Hockey twitter (and sports Twitter in general) has its share of go-to punchlines. One justifiable one is the old preseason "he's in the best shape of his life!" This is a well-beaten joke, and justifiably – it's

everyone every preseason, apparently. A guy would basically have to show up with icing sugar and Cheetoh dust on his shirt for anyone to report anything different.

I will say though: the "first guy on, last guy off" stuff is much tougher to parse. That's simply because some guys really are, and it does make a difference. So my point here is unrelated to either McDavid or Crosby, who are all-universe talents with extreme drive – we'll never really know what's god-given gift and what's just the sheer work they've put in. But whenever someone says/writes the "first on last off" phrase, I'd always want to know what the players are doing. Because I was a first on/last off guy, but only because I love the fresh sheet of ice before practice starts, with no coaches around, and just a little time to enjoy the game before the "get it in deep"-fests would begin. And after practice I liked to play Rebound, or even just keep-away, because again, hockey is fun. But that didn't make me better, at least not much.

It's great to be first on, last off. But when we read about anyone being mythologized for those habits, it'd be great to know how that extra time is actually used. Some guys are just so much more efficient at using bonus time to truly work at getting better.

11. The speedbump for Carolina is they have business to do. Sebastian Aho needs a new contract. So do Micheal Ferland, Brock McGinn and Teuvo Teravainen. No one needs permission to speak to Nylander, who is a free agent, so you can discuss contract concepts without penalty. Aho's the internal priority as a franchise cornerstone, but his contract won't go into Auston Matthews/John Tavares territory. That helps the Hurricanes with Nylander's key issue: salary too far below teammates.

I strung together some tweets earlier today on Nylander's contract situation, which basically said that I could conceivably see him neither getting signed or traded this year. Here's that thread, starting with a link to Boss Mirtle's Leafs thoughts post:

My apologies this wasn't posted sooner. I -- like most of you watching at home, I imagine -- watched...

Short term that'd suck. (May help help future deals?) Just seems like Willy's camp is asking a TON vs what he's proven. If you can't get value back in a trade (other team has to sign him, too), can't kill your cap given other upcoming deals... maybe just "tough beans, Bill?"

What struck me about this point on Nylander earning closer to his teammates if he was in Carolina, and that being a good thing is ... say what now? If he can earn \$6.5 million in Toronto – much less than their top players – he'd be less happy than if he were making \$6.5 million in Carolina, where there aren't players earning a bunch more? I'm not great at math, but I can't imagine concerning yourself with Income Rel given \$6.5 million USD is \$6.5 million USD no matter where you are. There are arguments to be made for earning in both cities – one's cheaper, one has fewer taxes, one has opportunities to earn you wouldn't get in the other, and all that. But surely "playing with lesser players who earn less to make yourself feel better" can't be a worthwhile factor.

31. Most sports fans of my vintage (48) were Sports Illustrated readers. My first subscription was a 12th birthday present in 1982, and my favourite writer/reporter became Dr. Z, Paul Zimmerman. He looked at everything a little differently, through the eyes of both a former player and tough reporter. He created his own charts, his own method of judging effectiveness and always came up with new details you couldn't find elsewhere. I loved reading his stuff.

For one of his All-Pro Teams, he selected a Chicago Bears offensive lineman named Mark Bortz. He wrote that someone told him not to do it, because Bortz was "a butcher." Zimmerman did it anyway. When we were at Western University, old friend Scott Feschuk told me, "Paul Zimmerman doesn't think you can be great at this job." He showed me a quote where Dr. Z said (paraphrasing), "You can't be a great reporter without being a prick." (Scott always thought I was too nice.) You guys can judge how that turned out, but it was an



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excellent reminder of how we can't be afraid to step out of our comfort zones. RIP to a legend.

I consider myself extremely fortunate to be able to write about the game from an angle that rarely puts me in a position to have to confront those I'm writing about. Generally, I get to say "here's the video, here's an idiotic play," then move on with my life.

Which is to say, I thought Mark Lazerus' piece on the Blackhawks scapegoating Joel Quenneville was tremendous. He made some excellent points about Q getting hung out to dry for being handed an inferior roster, and he did it candidly, knowing he has to go in and talk to the brass face to face at some point again. When I started blogging, it was super easy – it feels like you can say whatever, whenever, about anyone. It takes some real courage to still write like that when you have to confront the people on the other end of those words. I admire reporters who can do that a great deal. Check that piece out here.

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The Athletic / Down Goes Brown: Making the case for four passed-over Hall of Fame candidates

By Sean McIndoe

Nov 7, 2018

I have to admit, I love Hockey Hall of Fame debates. That makes this a good week for me, because it's one of two times during the year that the Hall's choices are front and center. The first comes in the summer, when the inductees are announced, and the second comes now, as we get ready for induction weekend.

And I can't get enough. I love arguing over who's already in. I love arguing over players who aren't eligible. And I especially love arguing over guys who haven't made it yet, but maybe should have. Those are the really fun ones, because we can keep revisiting and refining the case for years – maybe even decades.

Over the years, I've written plenty of pieces on HHOF candidates. And you've probably read plenty just like them, because just about everyone breaks out a list from time to time. But if there's a criticism of those pieces, mine included, it's that they can be a bit wishy-washy. We end up listing a bunch of names and talking about the pros and cons of each, and maybe get into why some cases are stronger than others. But most of us try not to be too definitive. After all, you never know when the Hall will prove you wrong.

So today, I'm going to go one further. I'm going to break down the case for four names that have been eligible for a while, and that I'm willing to say should be in the Hall of Fame. No maybes or could-bes or "he has a solid case." I'm planting my flag in the ground. These four guys should be in. Period.

Will the HHOF prove me right by eventually inducting all four? Maybe, but I don't like my odds – as you'll see, some of my picks have been waiting a while. But you never know. I remember going through candidates a few years ago and slowly but surely realizing that Paul Kariya's case was a lot stronger than I thought. It took a few years, but eventually, the Hall agreed. Can I take all the credit for that? Of course not, that would be ridiculous. But most of the credit? Yes, I think that's reasonable.

So let's see if I can work that magic again. Here are the four names I'm willing to get behind as deserving a Hall of Fame plaque someday soon.

Curtis Joseph

Eligible since: 2012

The case for: The big number is 454. That's Joseph's career win total, which ranks fifth all-time.

Granted, wins aren't a great stat for measuring a goalie's worth, because they're so team dependent. The wins leaders from a single season tell us close to nothing about true talent. But when you're looking at career totals, there's at least some value in the wins column, if only because it highlights guys who were able to hold down jobs as starters on competitive teams for a long time.

And it's not like Joseph spent his career racking up wins behind loaded rosters. He spent the first 13 years of his career with the Blues, Oilers and Maple Leafs, three teams that were decidedly average (or worse) when he arrived, then got significantly better once he took over. Not all goalies are difference-makers; Joseph clearly was.

The case against: I think we can all agree that the biggest problem with Curtis Joseph is that when he writes a book it shoots straight to number one on the bestseller list and takes over entire walls of bookstores without leaving any room for lesser-known authors, right? Yes, I thought so. Stop doing that, Curtis.

(I'm kidding, of course. I'm not bitter. Joseph's book is great, and I encourage you to learn more about it right here.)

Beyond that, his wins total is at least partly a factor of longevity over success – he also ranks third in career losses, after all. His career goals-against average and save percentage aren't all that impressive, and even when you adjust for era they're good but not amazing. He never won a Vezina or was a first-team all-star.

But the big knock on Joseph seems to be that he never won a Stanley Cup. Is it possible to rank in the top five for all-time wins and still not be "a winner"? That sounds silly, but apparently, it makes sense to somebody.

Why I think he should be in: At least part of my argument in favor of Joseph is that the Hall of Fame, in general, has been too stingy with goaltenders. If you became a hockey fan in 1973 – 45 long years ago – you've only seen the debuts of five goalies that made the Hall of Fame. That's kind of ridiculous, and Joseph seems like a nice opportunity to start a course correction.

But beyond that, Joseph checks both boxes you want in a Hall of Famer: Big numbers over a long career, and a peak period where he was clearly among the very best in the league. He never won that Vezina, but he was a finalist three times and finished in the top five on two other occasions. Remember, his peak overlaps with Dominik Hasek's; that should be a factor, just like how we don't penalize guys for not winning Hart Trophies over Wayne Gretzky in the 80s or the Norris over Bobby Orr in the 70s.

Joseph wasn't Hasek, nor was he Martin Brodeur or Patrick Roy. But that can't be where the bar is, because if it is then we might as well padlock the Hall doors for goalies right now. We can debate whether a Hall of Fame should be reserved for the very best of the best, but right now hockey is using different standards for different positions. Let's fix that.

One sentence that will convince you: Everyone else in the top twelve in wins who's eligible is already in, and the three active players in the group – Roberto Luongo, Henrik Lundqvist and Marc-André Fleury – range from slam dunks to very likely inductees.

Odds he gets in: I like his chances, if only because when Luongo and Lundqvist arrive in front of voters with similar resumes – lots of wins and individual success, no Cup wins – they're both getting in.



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That's going to make Joseph's exclusion a lot harder to defend. The question is whether he has to wait for those guys, or if the Hall decides to get its goalie house in order first.

Alexander Mogilny

Eligible since: 2009

The case for: Wyatt Arndt actually laid it out pretty well last week. You can read it towards the end of this column.

The short version: Mogilny was widely considered one of the best wingers of his generation. He was a two-time postseason all-star, and his stunning 76-goal season would have earned him a share of the Rocket Richard Trophy in 1993 if the award had existed. He had another 50-goal season, and topped 30 goals eight times, most in an era where scoring had plummeted and skill players had to fight through open-field tackles to get near the net. Still, he hit the 1,000-point mark and averaged over a point-per-game, and on an adjusted goals basis he's tied with Guy Lafleur.

The case against: You could make the case that Mogilny was never the best player on his own team, and he only received Hart Trophy votes in one season. And the most straightforward argument: He's a goal-scorer who didn't reach 500 goals.

Why I think he should be in: Even beyond the numbers, which are borderline HHOF-worthy in their own right, Mogilny was a crucially important figure in NHL history. In 1989, he became the first Russian star to defect to the West. That decision, which carried plenty of risk for the then 20-year-old, helped open the NHL's doors to players from behind the Iron Curtain, reshaping the league.

One sentence that will convince you: Only six other players in NHL history have scored more than 70 goals in a season, and every one of the others – Gretzky, Mario Lemieux, Brett Hull, Phil Esposito, Jari Kurri and Teemu Selanne – was an absolute no-questions-asked Hall of Famer.\*

Odds he gets in: There's still a chance, but Mogilny's been eligible for almost a decade. We have no way of knowing if he's been close during any of those years, but he seems to get lost in the group of almost-there forwards like Jeremy Roenick, Theo Fleury, Peter Bondra and Keith Tkachuk. With those guys, plus Daniel Alfredsson and (soon) the Sedins, Patrik Elias and Pavel Datsyuk in the pipeline, Mogilny is at risk of getting lost in the shuffle. He shouldn't be.

(\*Yes, fine, I used an arbitrary end point here to exclude Bernie Nicholls. He ruins everything in these discussions.)

Doug Wilson

Eligible since: 1996

The case for: You want longevity and sustained performance? Wilson played 14 years and ranks in the top 15 in all-time scoring for defensemen, ahead of guys who played longer like Borje Salming, Scott Niedermayer and Rob Blake.

You want a guy who was considered among the very best at his position at his peak? Wilson won a Norris Trophy, and had three other top-five finishes. He was a three-time postseason all-star. He even finished in the top-ten in Hart voting twice, and most Hart voters don't even know that defensemen exist.

This is an argument I found on the internet: "Here are the all-time scoring leaders among defensemen for the other five Original Six teams: Ray Bourque, Nicklas Lidstrom, Borje Salming, Brian Leetch and Larry Robinson. Those aren't just five Hall of Famers, they're five no-questions-asked Hall of Famers. And yet here's Wilson, who leads the Blackhawks all-time list by a mile, and his candidacy seems to be all but forgotten." I'm not sure who came up with that, but they seem very smart and handsome.

The case against: Apart from his Norris year, he might be a guy who fits the "Hall of Very Good" criteria more than the Hall of Fame. And while he scored 23 goals and 73 points as a 32-year-old, his numbers dipped sharply after that, and he was done by 35. Maybe another strong year or two makes him a no-brainer, but he didn't get there.

Why I think he should be in: Put simply, Wilson was one of the very best defensemen of his generation, and the only reason we don't remember him that way is that he had the misfortune of playing during the Ray Bourque/Paul Coffey era. It's basically the same sort of problem we find with Joseph vs. Hasek/Roy/Brodeur.

Maybe I'm putting too much emphasis on that Norris Trophy – after all, Randy Carlyle won it the year before, and nobody's calling him a Hall of Famer. But if you start with Wilson's win in 1981 and move forward, you don't find a single Norris winner who isn't in the HHOF until you get to the guys who aren't eligible yet. And if you go backward and skip over Carlyle, you don't get to a non-Hall Norris winner at all. They're all in. Carlyle and Wilson are two massive outliers, and with all due respect to Carlyle's playing days, Wilson was miles better. But even if you insisted on taking that Norris season out, Wilson is still a multi-time all-star with career totals that are worthy of a close look.

One sentence that will convince you: Here's the complete list of players who both won a Norris Trophy (peak) and finished in the top 25 all-time in defenseman scoring (longevity), but haven't been inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame: Doug Wilson, and that's it.

Odds he gets in: Not great. In fact, considering he's been eligible for over 20 years, it's tempting to say that his ship has sailed. But there are two factors keeping his hopes alive. The first is that the HHOF committee is kind of weird, and will occasionally induct guys after a decade or more – Mark Howe's 13-year wait would seem to offer Wilson some hope here. The second is that he's currently one of the best GMs in the league, which means his name is still top-of-mind in the hockey world. Heck, maybe he leads the Sharks to a Cup or two and gets in as a builder someday instead.

Mike Keenan

Eligible since: Not really applicable since he'd be going in as a builder and they don't have to be retired, but he hasn't coached in the NHL since 2009.

The case for: Keenan ranks in the top ten for all-time coaching wins – and unlike goaltenders, wins are a pretty decent way to evaluate a head coach. He also won a Jack Adams as coach of the year, and he made four trips to the final with three teams in a ten-year stretch. He only won one of those, but it was a big one – by ending the Rangers' 54-year drought in 1994, Keenan was behind the bench for what might be the most iconic Cup win in the NHL's modern history.

But as we're often reminded, it's the Hockey Hall of Fame, not just the NHL Hall of Fame. And Keenan won in just about every league he coached in, including championships in the OHL, AHL and (most recently) the KHL, making him the only coach to win titles in both the KHL and NHL.

And on top of all that, he also had an inspired if spotty career as a GM, making plenty of aggressive deals including one for Wayne Gretzky. He really is one of the most interesting men in hockey.

The case against: His NHL coaching career drops off sharply after that first decade; he basically bounced around the league for 15 years, coaching five teams and never getting out of the second round of the playoffs. Fans in places like Boston, Florida, Calgary and (especially) Vancouver don't have a ton of positive memories of their Mike Keenan eras.

But the bigger problem is one that we might as well just come right out and say: Keenan could be a jerk, and lots of people in the hockey world hated him back in the day. Heck, a lot of them



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probably still do. The list of players he clashed with is a long one – ironically including all three of Joseph, Mogilny and Wilson, among many others – and he had more than his share of power struggles. Remember, this is a guy who got suspended and fined \$100,000 for bailing on the Rangers just days after that historic Cup win.

Does all that matter? In theory, maybe not. But when you've got a committee full of hockey lifers in a room debating Keenan's Hall case, the odds are pretty good that at least a few are harboring a grudge. That can be all it takes to sideline a candidacy.

Why he should be in: Remember when I said the Hall of Fame was weird about goalies? They're really weird about coaches.

That's partly because there isn't a coaching category. There's a player category. There's a referee and linesmen category. There's a Hall-of-Fame-adjacent media section. But coaches get lumped in as "builders," along with owners and GMs and league presidents and various other behind-the-scenes types. That doesn't work, since a coach's job isn't really to "build" anything other than a winning season, but that's how it's always been done.

But either because of that or for some other reason, coaches tend to have a tough time getting into the Hall of Fame. We all remember the extended wait for Pat Burns, the only three-time Jack Adams winner; he died before the Hall got around to inducting him. Pat Quinn eventually got in, although he had a long career as a GM, too. Even a dual role hasn't been enough yet for Bryan Murray, although you'd hope that changes soon. Jacques Demers won a Cup in Montreal and is the only man to win the Jack Adams in back-to-back years, but that hasn't been enough. And there's been no HHOF buzz at all for longtime coaches whose bench careers appear to be over, like Ron Wilson or Jacques Martin.

That seems odd. To get in the Hall of Fame as a player, you typically just need to have been considered one of the very best at your position for a period of time. But for coaches, that's rarely enough – you have to either transcend the job by also having success as a GM, or be the subject of a groundswell of public support the way Burns was.

Keenan isn't getting that groundswell, because again, lots of people can't stand him. But at some point, the HHOF has to figure this coaching thing out. Surely we're not still going to be messing around with this stuff when it's time to talk about guys like Joel Quenneville or Ken Hitchcock or Barry Trotz. Are we?

One sentence that will convince you: He once punished Alexei Kovalev by making him stay on the ice for ten straight minutes, only to find out that Kovalev thought he was being rewarded.

Odds he gets in: Slim to none would be my guess. But here's hoping that "slim" can at least jar the door open for some other names down the line, even if Iron Mike can't make the grade.

So those are the four names that I'm saying should be in the Hall of Fame. Go ahead and tell me I'm wrong. (No really, go ahead, I know you're going to anyway.)

But to be clear, that doesn't mean these are the only guys I think should be in. Clearly, there are more recent candidates with strong cases. And there's still plenty of work to be done on the women's side, where six inductees isn't anywhere near enough.

But what about that other fringe candidate that you like? I know the Sergei Zubov truthers are out there, ready to pounce. There are strong cases for Fleury, Roenick, Tkachuk or Steve Larmar. The argument for Kevin Lowe is stronger than you might think. Daniel Alfredsson is still lurking. I'm not completely convinced we should have shut the door on Ron Hexall. You'll no doubt see other names mentioned in the leadup to Monday's ceremony. You can go on down the list. No really, there's a whole website that's nothing but a list.

Maybe some of them get in next year, when a window opens up because Vincent Lecavalier is the only major name entering eligibility. Maybe the Hall never honors any of them. Maybe some of them get the Rogie Vachon treatment and only get the call after we've all stopped thinking about their candidacy. The HHOF can be strange like that.

The point is that I'm not saying "no" to any of them. There's still room for a little bit of the wishy-washy approach here. I'm just making the case that we put these four at the front of the line. Come to think of it, this looks like a pretty decent starting point for the Class of 2019.

And for the record, if that happens, I won't even need four separate thank yous during the induction speeches. One group effort will be fine.

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1114450 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Takeaways: Mike Smith's struggles becoming all too common for Flames

Eric Francis | @EricFrancis

November 8, 2018, 2:06 AM

Calgary's Comeback Kids finally ran out of time.

For the first time in four games the Flames were unable to author a third period comeback, falling 3-2 to the Anaheim Ducks at Honda Center Wednesday.

Down 2-1 entering the final period, the Flames' bid to become just the fourth team in NHL history to win four straight games while trailing after two periods was stymied by a vintage Ryan Miller outing.

A mere 27 seconds after the Flames scored their league-leading 29th third-period goal early in the frame to tie the game, former Calgary Hitmen captain Ryan Getzlaf scored the winner.

It was a gutsy, solid effort in a building the Flames have only won once in in their last 28 visits.

Alas, the outing puts an end to a five-game point streak that saw the Flames collect nine of a possible ten points following their 9-1 setback against Pittsburgh.

They can thank Miller for that, as he turned aside 37 of 39 Flames shots to earn the win.

Here are some takeaways from the first of a three-game roadie in California.

Sportsnet NOW gives you access to over 500 NHL games this season, blackout-free, including Hockey Night in Canada, Rogers Hometown Hockey, Scotiabank Wednesday Night Hockey, the entire 2019 Stanley Cup Playoffs and more.

Mike Smith continues to be the biggest talking point of the Flames' season for all the wrong reasons.

The 36-year-old once again put the Flames in an early hole with a whiff NHL starters simply shouldn't make.

Smith had a clear view of Jakob Silfverberg's slap shot from the faceoff dot, yet found a way to turn a routine save into an adventure



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that somehow squeezed through his pads and into the net only eight minutes into the game.

Deflating, and all too common a sight for the Flames this season.

By night's end Smith finished with 19 saves on 22 shots, marking the eighth time in 11 starts his save percentage was under .900.

The man who entered the game with a ghastly 3.71 goals-against average and .871 save percentage was outplayed once again by his counterpart.

Give Smith credit, after his Flames spotted the Ducks a 2-0 lead he held the fort with a stellar second period that included key saves on Pontus Aberg and Hampus Lindholm as well as two stops on Rickard Rakell.

Yet, after his team tied the game early in the third he was unable to stop Getzlaf in tight.

The club has largely resisted the urge to start red-hot backup David Rittich more than Smith, hoping to give the veteran a chance to fight his way through the struggles that have plagued him since the late stages of last season.

How long that will last is anyone's guess.

Although he had nothing but four shots to show for it, this was James Neal's best outing as a Flame.

Wednesday's loss marked the first time this year Neal was handed a starting assignment in the Flames top six, lining up on the right side of Mikael Backlund's second unit with Matthew Tkachuk.

Neal was stymied by Miller on a great setup by Tkachuk, and made a great pass to Sean Monahan who was unable to convert during a delayed penalty call.

In short, Neal fit in. He was noticeable.

It's coming.

Coach Bill Peters said this week he likes Neal on the Backlund line, and suggested he could play there much more moving forward.

How often may largely be dictated by the opposition as Michael Frolik has been his go-to guy on Backlund's shut-down line whenever the Flames face one of the league's more formidable trios.

The problem for Neal is, most teams in the league have stellar top lines worthy of being keyed on.

But the fact is, while playing with the team's best playmakers Wednesday Neal was more noticeable than ever. All told his line accounted for 14 of the Flames' 39 shots. Backlund led the way with six and missed a wide-open net in the second period.

That also doesn't include Neal's nifty setup of Johnny Gaudreau that No. 13 rang off the post midway through the game.

Neal certainly earned a chance to see more ice time with the big guns, befitting his five-year, \$28.75 million contract signed during the summer.

Dillon Dube missed the trip as he goes through concussion protocol following the awkward hit Duncan Keith threw on him Saturday. It prompted the Flames to summon AHL tough guy Anthony Peluso from Stockton and he wasn't half bad.

Injecting a physical presence the Flames have sorely lacked this season, Peluso threw his 225-pound frame around aplenty, rocking several Ducks on a night he didn't look out of place in his 4:20 of ice time. Old school.

Austin Czarnik also drew in following a lengthy string of healthy scratches and showed plenty of rust as he was unable to bury the several good chances he had on the second power play unit, as well as Mark Jankowski's fourth line.

Jankowski picked a fine time to score his first of the year – a pretty third period shorthanded snipe that tied the game 2-2 for less than half a minute.

Don't be fooled by the fact that Gaudreau recorded no shots on goal on a night that ended his five-game point streak – he was solid. Although not quite as stellar as Elias Lindholm, he was a threat all night long.

Gaudreau was slashed on the wrist by Rakell with 1:14 left to give the Flames a great chance to tie the game with a power play unit that accounted for a Tkachuk tip in in the first. However, it may have come at a price as Gaudreau was wincing considerably following the type of slash he's been so accustomed to receiving over the years. We'll see how the wrist is on Friday when the Flames reconvene for practice.

It had nothing to do with the game but the Chicago Blackhawks firing of Joel Quenneville struck a chord with Travis Hamonic, as the new Hawks coach is his former teammate, Jeremy Colliton.

Hamonic and Colliton played together on Long Island in 2011, where Hamonic said he saw leadership qualities in his teammate that helped Colliton in his meteoric rise up the coaching ranks.

"Great guy," said Hamonic, who is five-years younger than the 33-year-old Colliton.

"You could just tell he'd be a coach. I found out he was coaching over in Sweden a few years after I played with him and I wasn't surprised. I knew a couple guys who played for him there and had success.

"I heard he got the job in (AHL) Rockford and wasn't surprised either. He's a pretty special person. It's hard to pinpoint but he's just one of those guys who carried himself in that manner."

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Sportsnet.ca / Five potential trade destinations for Maple Leafs' William Nylander

Rory Boylen | @RoryBoylen

November 7, 2018, 11:29 AM

The closer we get to Dec. 1, the more trade speculation will ramp up around William Nylander and the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Still without a contract, Nylander is less than a month away from the cut-off date when he either needs to sign a deal or will be ineligible to play in the NHL this season. And there is no indication the team and player are any closer to agreeing on terms.

"I get the sense that they've hit a real road block with Nylander, like a serious road block," Elliotte Friedman said on Sportsnet 650's The Program last Tuesday. "It can change, but as I talk to you right now I understand they're at a total standstill.

"I still lean towards [believing] they want to sign him. I believe that's their first choice, but they haven't made a lot of progress. I think both sides are getting frustrated, but the one thing about the trading is — I don't think they've decided to trade him now, but I think they've at least made the decision that they're going to have to think about it."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • November 8, 2018

Prior to the start of the season we highlighted a number of RFAs who missed training camp or the start of the season in recent years. Two of the five highlighted players who missed regular season games were traded within two years: Ryan O'Reilly and P.K. Subban, who had massive new contracts. The other three were Hampus Lindholm, Andreas Athanasiou and Jacob Trouba, and you still have to wonder what Trouba's future in Winnipeg holds.

Only one of the three players we mentioned who only missed training camp were eventually traded, so while Nylander isn't destined to be traded yet, more than a few players in his situation have eventually been moved. Most of the time that was because the new contracts they signed ended up being too rich for the teams that signed them.

So, as we crawl towards the ever-important Dec. 1 date, and with Auston Matthews back skating for the Leafs, we look at a few potential trade destinations for Nylander, if it ever gets to that point.

## CAROLINA HURRICANES

This is the most obvious fit for Nylander.

"I do think that when the time does come — if the time does come — that Toronto decides they're going to deal him I think that Carolina has made it very clear they are all in," Friedman said on Hockey Night in Canada's Headlines segment last Saturday.

Carolina needs scoring and Toronto needs defence, so naturally they look like good trade partners on paper. The Canes' offence looked to be turning a corner with 25 goals in their first seven games this season, but more than half of those (13) came in two games against the Rangers and Canucks. They've mustered only 13 goals in their past seven and a 6.5 shooting percentage on the season that ranks dead-last in the NHL.

Toronto, meanwhile, can score with the best of them, but their main challenge is defending other teams' top units. They especially need another right-shot defenceman, or two.

## LOS ANGELES KINGS

The Kings very much want to change the way they play the game. After years of dominating with a 'heavy hockey' style, Los Angeles hasn't adapted to a speedier game with as much success as other teams have. Head coach John Stevens was dismissed on Sunday, players are beginning to appear in the trade rumour mill, and as of Tuesday, the Kings sat last in the NHL with a 4-8-1 record.

With 2.15 goals per game, Los Angeles has the least-productive offence in the league. Using last year's final scoring lists, Nylander's 61 points would have been good for second (tied with Jeff Carter) on Los Angeles' roster.

The fact that Nylander could potentially become a centre one day helps the Kings, as they could move Carter back to the wing. Nylander's speed and shiftiness add an element the Kings lack. The only issue that could arise is Los Angeles' cap situation — today they already have \$76.954 million committed to 16 roster players next season.

## PHILADELPHIA FLYERS

From Feb. 1 through the end of the regular season in 2017-18, the Flyers had a top-10 record in the NHL at 18-8-6. That finish set the bar higher on expectations in 2018-19.

So it's been hard to swallow another middling 7-7-1 start through 15 games.

"You look at our team on paper, and we've got a pretty good team. But paper doesn't mean a whole lot. We need to play better," Flyers GM Ron Hextall told reporters in late October. "I'm a pretty patient guy, but things need to start going better here."

The Flyers have answered with three wins in their past four games (all on the road) and got at least a point in each one. This has probably dulled the speculation that head coach Dave Hakstol is on the hot seat, but if a Nylander-type becomes available, the Flyers would be an intriguing fit.

On last week's 31 Thoughts Podcast, Friedman noted the Flyers were a "stealth team" for Nylander and have pieces Toronto would want if they decide to move.

## MINNESOTA WILD

A hot 8-3-2 start maybe makes it less likely the Wild jump into the trade market, but with a new GM in Paul Fenton, you can bet that at some point he'll want to put his mark on this roster.

Even with a good record, though, you have to wonder if Nylander is worth shaking things up for. The Wild average 3.08 goals per game (15th in the league) and convert on 18.6 per cent of their power plays (20th) so there is room to improve in an area Nylander excels.

Consider, too, that Minnesota is one of the league's oldest teams with an average age of 29 and you can see why a flashy 22-year-old with back-to-back 60-point seasons would be an enticing target.

Eric Staal's expiring contract means it's possible there will be a hole at centre soon and Mikko Koivu will turn 36 before the playoffs start. The Wild are going to need to start skewing younger soon.

Ryan Dixon and Rory Boylen go deep on pucks with a mix of facts and fun, leaning on a varied group of hockey voices to give their take on the country's most beloved game.

Speaking of stealth teams, how about the Ducks? GM Bob Murray usually goes about his business quietly and seems like a GM who could be in the market for a player of Nylander's type.

It's no secret the Ducks are struggling. They are 6-6-3, a record improved by the outstanding netminding from John Gibson, and despite the league's worst average shot differential per game (-11.7). Last year Anaheim got off to a similarly slow start with an 11-10-4 record through Nov. 29, and then traded defenceman Sami Vatanen to New Jersey for centre Adam Henrique.

Injuries helped Murray into the trade market in November of last season and the Ducks are again hurting today. Ryan Getzlaf has been in and out of the lineup. Patrick Eaves just returned for the first time in a year. Ondrej Kase remains out with a concussion. Nick Ritchie returned from his own contract dispute and then got injured. Rookie Max Comtois recently went down, and vet Corey Perry is out for a while.

When the Ducks were swept out of the first round of last year's playoffs by San Jose, Murray spoke about the need for his team to get faster in 2018-19. There were no additions made over the summer to achieve that, which makes Nylander an intriguing option.

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Sportsnet.ca / NHL Power Rankings: How Hot Is Your Coach's Seat? Edition

Luke Fox | @lukefoxjukebox

November 7, 2018, 12:21 PM



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • November 8, 2018

But, really, aren't they all interim coaches?

So much for the anomaly that was the NHL coaching landscape of 2017-18, when all 31 head coaches survived the 82-game gauntlet.

Just over a month into 2018-19, already two modern dynasties have fired their bench boss, and other jobs are in danger early.

Chicago's Joel Quenneville, he of three Stanley Cup championships, was handed his walking papers Tuesday and immediately joins Alain Vigneault as a tempting free agent.

"It was pretty shocking," says Golden Knights coach Gerard Gallant, no stranger to the axe himself.

"That's two in two days. Joel Quenneville is at the top of the coaching pedigree. It's too bad. It's a part of our business, we all understand that, but it's real tough."

This week, we examine the security\* of all 31 head coaches in our NHL Power Rankings: How Hot Is Your Coach's Seat? Edition.

Per tradition, all 31 teams are ranked in order of their current awesomeness. The write-ups, however, zero in on the men in suits screaming expletives.

\*subject to change

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### 1. Nashville Predators

Among current NHL head coaches, Peter Laviolette is now the third longest-tenured man standing. He ranks second (to Babcock) in playoff games won (73) and first in bull's heads worn during a post-game scrum. Laviolette's Preds finished tops in the regular season last year and lead the pack in points percentage now. Judging by the video evidence, Laviolette is feeling pretty secure:

### 2. Tampa Bay Lightning

It feels like yesterday that AHL call-up Jon Cooper was the new kid on the block. Now, at age 51, the former lawyer has seized Quenneville's mantle as the NHL's longest-tenured head coach. That speaks volumes about both Cooper's abilities and the fickleness of the gig.

"He's got a lot of things on his fingers that I don't have," Cooper told reporters Tuesday of Coach Q, a mentor. "He's the envy of many coaches."

Cooper himself is in a contract year, but new GM Julien BriseBois has publicly endorsed the man behind the East's top team.

### 3. Toronto Maple Leafs

When Bodog released its rather grim odds ranking of NHL coaches most likely to get fired at the top of season, Mike Babcock's were the longest: 66/1. Toronto's coach left his previous post under his own volition and is widely believed to hold job security in a career without any. Under contract through 2022-23 at \$6.25 million per, Babcock altered the pay scale for his position. Expectations are through the roof, and he has time and space. Three straight first-round playoff exits could crank the thermostat, though.

### 4. Calgary Flames

After a shaky start, the Flames have won four straight, shot to the summit of the Pacific, and are buying in to new coach Bill Peters' demanding style of defence. Here's betting this is a legit playoff team. If not, the axe may not fall on the coach this time.

### 5. New York Islanders

In signing a five-year deal to reset the Islanders in the wake of a turbulent off-season, the Stanley Cup-winning Barry Trotz has job

security aplenty. Entering with low expectations and more Komarovs than Tavareses, Trotz has guided the Islanders to the top of the Metropolitan without a clear No. 1 goalie and only one goal from Mathew Barzal.

### 6. Minnesota Wild

When a new GM steps in and doesn't make a coaching change, as was the case in Minnesota with Paul Fenton, the theory goes that the first firing is free. Compound that with Bruce Boudreau's reputation as a brilliant regular-season coach (.654 winning percentage) whose clubs come up short in spring (.478 in the playoffs), and the seat isn't exactly icy. Boudreau does have a season beyond this one on his deal (at \$2.65 million), and the Wild have come out the gates strong.

### 7. San Jose Sharks

Under Peter DeBoer, the Sharks have been fine but unspectacular after their blockbuster off-season. Doug Wilson's franchise is all-in now, so we imagine DeBoer's job security depends on how his troops perform in a post-season they almost always make.

### 8. Boston Bruins

Bruce Cassidy rose from interim bench boss to Jack Adams finalist, and he's found a balance between the Bruins' youth and ring-bearing veterans to remain a contender in a highly competitive, top-heavy Atlantic Division. The early returns have far exceeded expectations. He's dealing with a compelling goalie controversy these days, as backup Jaroslav Halak outplays Tuukka Rask.

### 9. Winnipeg Jets

Paul Maurice is the perfect example of how a coach can survive calls for his head and thrive. After an extension many ripped in the 2017 off-season, all Maurice did was guide the Jets deeper into spring than they've gone. Maurice has a wealth of experience to draw on, and he's now the second-longest-tenured man in the biz, next to Cooper.

### 10. Colorado Avalanche

A Jack Adams Award finalist in June, Jared Bednar came into Colorado green and turned the Avs into a legitimate player in the Central Division — thanks in no small part for stacking that ridiculous top line. Bednar's work last season earned him an extension through 2019-20, and a team we thought might stake a step back has done anything but.

### 11. Montreal Canadiens

Quickly scooped from a divisional rival, Claude Julien alone failed to produce an immediate turnaround, but his work this season — the Habs look young and fast and some new faces have assimilated smoothly — is impressive. That GM Marc Bergevin has already played his fire-the-coach card and Julien is owed \$15 million for the next three seasons removed him from the hot seat. Scratching vets like Tomas Plekanec and Karl Alzner is a sign of a man comfortable in his career.

### 12. Vancouver Canucks

Travis Green — whom Vancouver has locked up for three more years at a relatively cheap \$1 million salary — is our early favourite for Coach of the Year. No one is getting more out of less, and that's a compliment. The Canucks' effort and entertainment value is suddenly of the charts.

### 13. Washington Capitals

Washington let its only Stanley Cup champion head coach, Barry Trotz, walk away in order to promote Todd Reirden. The results have been decent, if not exactly Trotzian, but to be fair, Reirden's top six has remained in flux in light of Tom Wilson's 20-game suspension. He describes his group as "definitely a work in progress."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • November 8, 2018

### 14. Edmonton Oilers

Prior to puck drop, Todd McLellan was ranked No. 1 by Vegas odds-makers as first coach fired. At worst, he'll be the third. Continually to make difficult lineup decisions, keep a superstar happy, and figure out which of his wingers can actually play, McLellan staunchly the early bleeding and has led the Oilers into playoff position. But the pressure valve will never fully be turned off.

### 15. Pittsburgh Penguins

Mike Sullivan was the man pulling the strings during the only back-to-back NHL championship run of the salary-cap era. He oversees the best one-two centre punch in hockey and has two years left on his contract, and yet his power-play is dry, his goaltending isn't where it once was, and his Penguins have recently been humbled by the Isles, Leafs and Devils. He's certainly not on the hot seat, but there is tension in that Pittsburgh room.

### 16. Dallas Stars

When a team starts with three straight seasons with a different coach, the next significant change might come elsewhere. Veteran Jason Spezza is enjoying a resurgence under NCAA grad Jim Montgomery, whom he says doesn't carry himself like a newbie to the pro game.

"He'll call you out if you're not paying attention. He commands your attention when he's speaking. You can tell he's a confident coach who knows what he's doing," Spezza says. "He has his way he wants us to play, and until we start playing that way, he's going to make sure he's driving it into us."

### 17. Columbus Blue Jackets

The Blue Jackets gave John Tortorella a two-year extension in September that carries Torts through 2020-21. We don't see why a small-market club would do such a thing if the coach was on a leash as short as some of his post-game conferences. It's the futures of Columbus's star players — Sergei Bobrovsky and Artemi Panarin — that are of greater concern.

### 18. Arizona Coyotes

Rick Tocchet's group has performed significantly better in Year 2, the Coyotes plus-8 goal differential indicating that they've deserved a better fate than their record. Compare Tocchet's roster to other in the Pacific, and it's difficult to blame him for the Coyotes' struggles. He's signed through 2019-20 at \$1.5 million per season.

### 19. Buffalo Sabres

Sabres fans are hardly convinced Phil Housley is the man to lead them back to the dance, and already this season has been a bit of a roller coaster in Buffalo. The Pegulas haven't been shy about cutting cheque if they sense an upgrade is available. On the flip side, the Sabres roster is still one in transition, Housley was GM Jason Botterill's choice, and making a coaching change every two years would show the kind of indecisiveness this club could do without.

### 20. Philadelphia Flyers

Dave Hakstol has another season beyond this one (\$2-million salary) on his deal with the Flyers, but were his tenure a video game, he'd be down to his last life. GM Ron Hextall backed his man after last year's "Fire Hakstol!" chants, but there's been no such endorsement this fall. He's in his fourth season and has yet to win a playoff round. The Flyers need to take a step.

### 21. New York Rangers

Of the three NHL bench bosses tied with the most years remaining on their deals (signed through 2022-13), David Quinn is the only one without a Cup ring. Heck, the college grad doesn't even have six weeks of NHL experience under his belt. But as the Rangers gun for a lottery reset, Quinn's pressure to win is virtually nil. His task is to

take the long view and elevate work ethic (see: Kevin Shattenkirk's healthy scratch). It's working during this four-game win streak.

### 22. Ottawa Senators

Dealt yet another off-ice controversy during a season in which his contract is up, Guy Boucher and his assistants are hanging by a thread. It's hard to lay the blame at the feet of the coach after the star power from the Sens' 2017 Eastern Conference finalist roster got gutted. It might also be difficult to find a willing, qualified candidate to take over at this juncture.

### 23. St. Louis Blues

Here's something Mike Yeo already said: "Heck, my job should be in question."

If we're doing Coach Q's Next Gig Power Rankings, St. Louis rises to the top. The Blues are not supposed to be rebuilding, nor are they supposed to be last in their division. Oh, and there is a website solely dedicated to tracking whether Mike Yeo has been fired. It's called [IsMikeYeoStillCoach.com](http://IsMikeYeoStillCoach.com). Harsh.

### 24. New Jersey Devils

In any other year, John Hynes would've gained considerably more Jack Adams consideration for his excellent work in 2017-18. The Devils subtracted instead of added to their young roster over the summer, Cory Schneider has been sidelined, and still Hynes has them at .500.

### 25. Chicago Blackhawks

That Chicago is eating another two years of iconic coach Joel Quenneville's salary means his Stan Bowman-picked replacement, Jeremy Colliton, should have ample berth to install his aggressive system and try to make the Blackhawks a playoff team again. Preferably, ASAP, according to CEO John McDonagh. The youngest head coach in the league will have his hands full returning a very accomplished and well-paid core back to glory.

### 26. Anaheim Ducks

Randy Carlyle finds himself in the same boat as so many Ducks: win now or else. Anaheim's championship window is closing, if not already shut. Big-name injuries and imbalanced shot clocks haven't helped matters. The heat is on.

### 27. Carolina Hurricanes

Under rookie coach Rod Brind'Amour, the Hurricanes started strong and have put up solid possession metrics, but they've fallen back to the pack and are juggling three goaltenders. Considering this team just cleaned house a few months ago, we'd expect a trade before any further off-ice shake-ups.

### 28. Vegas Golden Knights

The coach of the only team (Los Angeles) that scores less frequently than Gerard Gallant's Golden Knights has already been fired. But we certainly don't pin that on the reigning Jack Adams winner. Both of the franchise's big forward finds, Max Pacioretty and Paul Stastny, have been injured. Nate Schmidt, who drives play from the back, got suspended 20 games. And their shooting percentage is a dismal 6.8 (30th). Bad luck is real. Ask Vegas. Signed through 2020-21, Gallant won't be pushed curbside anytime soon.

### 29. Florida Panthers

After one of the NHL's better second halves, rookie coach Bob Boughner and his Cats looked ready to make noise this fall. But with Roberto Luongo going down for a month, Florida is behind the 8-ball. Boughner has three seasons left at \$1 million apiece and should be given at least two of those to mold a playoff team.

### 30. Detroit Red Wings



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • November 8, 2018

It's tough to fairly judge Jeff Blashill's work since he inherited the gig from Babcock with the Red Wings' roster the thinnest it's been in the average reader's lifetime. Blashill has a .490 win percentage, is one of the few head coaches making less than \$1 million, and he's in the final year of his deal. Ken Holland, who was extended not long ago himself, is a fan — but just look at some of the more qualified candidates now available.

"I was given this quote a while ago," Blashill told reporters Tuesday, "and I think it's a great quote for anybody in any high pressurized job where there is hirings and firings: the best soldiers are the ones that aren't afraid to die.

"I don't come here at any point at any time worried about that. I come here worried about doing the very best job I can."

## 31. Los Angeles Kings

The interim tag that prefaces Willie Desjardins' job title leads us to believe he'll need to jumpstart the Kings back into the playoff picture if he's to stick beyond June. That's a tall order when commandeering an old, slow group of forwards whose offence has run dry. P.S. Your starting goaltender, Jonathan Quick, is out until further notice.

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Sportsnet.ca / Why limited opportunity has Flames' James Neal off to terrible start

Andrew Berkshire

November 7, 2018, 2:55 PM

When he signed with the Calgary Flames in July, I wrote about how James Neal should be a decent fit with their forward group — at least in the short term — based on the fact that he remained a productive even-strength player despite some overall decline in his play entering his 30s. So far, that take hasn't been looking so great.

One of the assumptions that I made was that Neal would get a chance to play with Sean Monahan and Johnny Gaudreau, bringing a scoring and agitating presence to that line. That would complement not just that line, but the agitating presence of Matthew Tkachuk on the second line, making the Flames very frustrating to play against, on top of being tough to defend.

Unfortunately, in limited minutes (only 22), Neal has not been successful on that line at all. In fact they've been torn to shreds while together, and Elias Lindholm has stolen Neal's spot there with a career high shooting percentage and over a point per game pace. Another thing I didn't expect to happen.

Without a spot that makes sense for him to play in, Neal has been bounced around the Flames' lineup to a ridiculous degree, playing 10 minutes or more with seven different line combinations in his just 191.35 minutes of 5-vs-5 ice time, according to Corsica.Hockey's line combination tool.

The result has been a terrible start for Neal, where his minor penalties outnumber his points by a 5-4 margin over 15 games. Looking strictly at his on-ice statistics, his performance is below team average, but that's not unexpected for a player slotted on the third line of a very top-heavy team, so the question I have is whether Neal has hit a sharp decline to begin this year.

Let's look at the same statistics I presented over the summer and compare Neal's year in Vegas to his first 15 games in Calgary.

Overall, Neal is about as involved in creating scoring chances as he was last year, still at a top-six forward rate, which is a good sign for him. However, his tendencies are all backwards.

Throughout his career, Neal has been a pretty decent playmaker in getting the puck to the slot, but he's always been a shoot-first player with the playmaking being a secondary option. This year his shot rates from the slot are all down, while his passing rates are up.

In a vacuum, this is not necessarily bad, but I have noticed over the last couple years that when snipers are in a funk, this is often what's happening — they're not being selfish enough with the puck.

The issue isn't his teammates not finding him either. Neal is receiving 2.72 passes in the slot per 20 minutes played at 5-vs-5, the highest rate on the Flames, significantly ahead of Sean Monahan in second at 2.47. So not only should he be getting more scoring chances, most of them should be involving pre-shot movement as well, making them extra dangerous. But he's not getting his shots off.

A similar problem has happened with Neal's attacking off the rush. While the Flames aren't quite the rushing team that Vegas was last season, Neal ranks 12th among Flames forwards in scoring chances off the rush, where he's been preferring to pass, something he has never shown himself to be adept at before.

If this is just a struggling player in a small sample size trying to find teammates to score while feeling like he's in a rut, it's probably nothing to worry about for the Flames. But the trouble with Neal is that he has been on a shooting decline in recent years.

Going back to the lockout-shortened season of 2012-13, Neal has seen his shot rates fall since 2014-15, and while there was a rise last season, it would make sense that he benefitted from the Vegas bump that many other players did. This season's rates seem in line with the rate of decline he was seeing in Nashville.

None of this means that Neal is a useless player by any means — he has demonstrated that he's still capable of putting up a decent number of shots, and he has been a consistent 10-12 per cent shooter for the last five seasons. What it does mean, though, is that expectations should probably be lowered for his output unless he can get more shots, from better locations.

In previous years, Neal has compensated for lower shot rates by moving closer to the net, which kept him as a 30-goal threat in recent years, but this season so far we've seen his scoring chances go down with his shots.

I'm not convinced that Neal is incapable of recovering, but he's a player to watch right now, because Calgary will need to get him going once Elias Lindholm's hot streak cools off a little.

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Sportsnet.ca / Golden Knights' Schmidt maintains innocence as PED suspension concludes

Chris Johnston | @reporterchris

November 7, 2018, 6:38 PM



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • November 8, 2018

OTTAWA — For Nate Schmidt, this is still a fight worth fighting.

It's not one he can likely win in the waning days of a 20-game suspension for violating the terms of the NHL's performance-enhancing substances program — not with confidentiality rules preventing him from providing blow-by-blow details of what went down, and not in a cynical sporting world where athletes tend to be presumed guilty no matter how vehemently they deny a doping charge.

No matter.

Those things are well beyond the control of the Vegas Golden Knights defenceman, who was over the moon after finally being allowed to rejoin his teammates for practice on Wednesday afternoon, but still struggling with the idea his character was brought into question by the positive test.

"When you can look in the mirror and know you didn't do something that's all that matters," said Schmidt. "You can see the Almighty and know when it's all said and done — you can look at him in the face, myself, my family, my friends — and say that I know that wasn't something I intentionally did, or even tried to even do.

"That's not in my DNA to do something like that."

Full disclosure, before we go any further: I have no idea if he did or didn't do it. I don't even know what banned substance he tested positive for. But Schmidt is one of the great characters in our game — the sort of person you want to take at face value — and Wednesday was the first time he addressed reporters since the 20-game ban was announced on Sept. 2.

He was permitted to participate in practices during Golden Knights training camp and joined the Vienna Capitals once the regular season started. He spent a month skating in Austria before returning home last week to get some work in with the University of Minnesota.

Now he's back with the Golden Knights, inching closer to his Nov. 18 return at Edmonton, and still not entirely sure how he found himself in this situation to begin with.

"I honestly wish I could tell you. I don't know," said Schmidt. "I have theories. But at the end of the day it is what it is, it's theories. No one really knows. All of the experts you could talk to — you talk to everybody you can and everybody can offer an idea — I just don't take any more of anything. Pretty much clean all the way through.

"No supplements. I ate as much clean things as I can eat, which I try to do anyways. It's just a shitty situation. Sometimes bad things happen to people for no reason."

Schmidt was informed of his positive test long before news of it ever went public. The first phone call he made was to Golden Knights general manager George McPhee — a sign, he contends, that he didn't have anything to hide.

The 27-year-old was tested twice last season and is believed to have known about the positive result even while logging the most minutes among Vegas players during their run to the Stanley Cup final.

Without confirming that timeline, he said he simply focused on what he could control once it happened. He offered to take a lie-detector test. He had his hair analyzed by an expert, who concluded there "was no evidence of intentional use," according to the statement Schmidt released in September.

An expert in environmental contamination testified at his appeal hearing that the amount of tainted substance found in his system was "the equivalent of a pinch of salt in an Olympic-sized swimming pool."

The problem? It was still there.

"The problem is there's zero tolerance," said Schmidt.

Athletes in other sports have blamed positive tests on tainted meat. While Schmidt continues to eat meat, he says "I make sure I know where it comes from."

"You know what, I got to go hunting at home and I got myself a deer and that's where my meat will be coming from for the next foreseeable future," he added.

If he had his druthers, there's clearly more he'd like to say about a process that's stretched over several months. However, section 47.11 of the collective bargaining agreement calls for confidentiality on positive tests.

Schmidt plans to honour that.

"I've gotten fined enough in the last month and a half," he said. "So there's some things you can't talk about ... what it was, timing, all that other stuff. I don't really want to get fined anymore, to be honest."

The automatic 20-game suspension for a first offence cost Schmidt a little more than \$460,000 in salary because he went unpaid during the first 34 days of the regular season and will now earn just 60 per cent of his pay until he's eligible to play games again.

Stream over 500 NHL games blackout-free, including the Flames, Oilers, Leafs and Canucks. Plus Hockey Night in Canada, Rogers Hometown Hockey, Scotiabank Wednesday Night Hockey and more.

Should he test positive a second time in the future, he'll be slapped with a 60-game suspension.

Still, there have been moments of affirmation amid the struggle. Schmidt is blown away by the support he's received from the Golden Knights. McPhee even signed him to a \$35.7-million, six-year contract extension on Oct. 25 — putting action to the words of support he voiced when the suspension was handed down.

Now back with his teammates, he's reprised his role as the life of the dressing room. He led the stretch during practice at Canadian Tire Centre and hopes to provide a shot of energy to a team that's been hit hard by injuries and stumbled to a 6-8-1 start.

"These guys aren't going to have a whole lot of silence here the next 10 or 12 days," said Schmidt. "I texted them about a week ago and said 'I hope you guys have enjoyed the silence. I'm back in seven days.'"

Above all, Schmidt appreciates the support he's received from every corner of the hockey world and beyond. It helped on the tough days.

Even if he can't change the way he's viewed in the court of public opinion, he intends to do whatever he can to push for changes that would keep a future player in a similar situation from being suspended.

"I'm all about keeping our game clean and I told them in the beginning 'test me every day if you want to.' The whole time. It wasn't something that I was trying to shy away from," said Schmidt. "I want to be able to work with the league and the [NHL Players' Association] and put something together. I don't want this to happen to anybody else. It was hard enough.

"If I have to be the guy that it happens to in order for it to never happen again, you know what, that'll be OK with me.

"I can live with that."

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 11.08.2018

1114455 Websites



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • November 8, 2018

Sportsnet.ca / Sportsnet's 2019 NHL Draft Prospect Rankings:  
November

Sam Cosentino

November 7, 2018, 1:21 PM

There's Jack Hughes, then there's everybody else.

Hughes belongs in the conversation with those generational players that have come before him — Connor McDavid, Auston Matthews — although his game is more reminiscent of Mitch Marner.

There's plenty to like in this draft class, especially at centre. Lethbridge's Dylan Cozens and Saskatoon's Kirby Dach will slug it out to the end of the season to be the top Canadian selected, but both are currently projected to be top-seven picks.

We don't have the high-end depth at defence we had a year ago and, in fact, we may see only one blueliner go inside the top 10.

With two key events currently taking place in Europe, we're sure to have some changes in December, but for now, here's our November rankings.

1. Jack Hughes, C, USNTDP, 5-foot-10, 168 pounds: Has hit the quarter mark in quest for wire-to-wire status as this draft's top player.

2. Kaapo Kakko, RW, TPS (Liiga), 6-foot-4, 207 pounds: Adapting well at taking the same game he plays against his peer group and applying it in Finland's top league. Handles and protects the puck well at top speed.

3. Dylan Cozens, C, Lethbridge Hurricanes (WHL), 6-foot-3, 185 pounds: Adapting to a heavier workload and the attention given to top players by the opposition, yet still producing at more than a point per game rate.

4. Kirby Dach, C, Saskatoon Blades (WHL), 6-foot-3, 195 pounds: With more trust in his shooting ability, he's proving he can score (11 goals in 19 games). Extremely focused and won't allow distractions to take his eye of the prize.

5. Vasily Podkolzin, RW, SKA St. Petersburg (MHL) 6-foot-1, 183 pounds: Based on his play at the Hlinka-Gretzky Cup, he should be a dominant MHL player. Maybe he's bored, but seeing him play against stiffer competition would be helpful.

6. Alex Turcotte, C, USNTDP, 5-foot-11, 189 pounds: Injury-plagued season has limited him to just three games. Based on past successes, however, he's still a top 10 pick.

7. Raphael Lavoie, C/RW, Halifax Mooseheads (QMJHL) 6-foot-4, 192 pounds: Great hands with the ability to work in tight spaces. Combined with acute shooting ability, he is a threat every time he crosses the blue line.

8. Alex Newhook, C, Victoria Grizzlies (BCHL) 5-foot-11, 190 pounds: Highly motivated from not making Canada's Hlinka-Gretzky team, he has taken his frustrations out against the rest of the BCHL with 34 points in 22 games.

9. Matthew Boldy, LW, USNTDP, 6-foot-1, 187 pounds: Size, skate, score, say no more.

10. Ryan Suzuki, C, Barrie Colts (OHL) 6-foot, 172 pounds: Can process the game as quickly as he moves, a major asset in today's NHL.

11. Trevor Zegras, C, USNTDP, 6-foot, 166 pounds: Makes plays, and that's a term scouts use so frequently today.

12. Bowen Byram, D, Vancouver Giants (WHL) 6-foot-1, 195 pounds: Is multi-faceted in that not only can he play a new-aged offensive game, but he's utilizing his smarts to defend as well.

13. Philip Broberg, D, AIK (Allsvenskan) 6-foot-3, 190 pounds: A big man who skates like the wind. Improving his stick skills will allow him to put more deception into his game, which will improve his output.

14. Peyton Krebs, C, Kootenay Ice (WHL) 5-foot-11, 180 pounds: Drives the play with high compete. Skates well, with excellent vision and distribution skills.

15. Cole Caufield, RW, USNTDP, 5-foot-6, 155 pounds: The snipe show has transcended every type of competition and projects to do the same at the next level.

16. Arthur Kaliyev, RW, Hamilton Bulldogs (OHL) 6-foot-1, 190 pounds: The goal scoring has always been there. He has shown other parts of his game that make you think the sky's the limit. Finding consistency in those other areas will cement him inside the top-15.

17. Matthew Robertson, D, Edmonton Oil Kings (WHL), 6-foot-3, 201 pounds: He's as steady as they come and is currently a better defender than point producer. The offensive side continues to evolve.

18. Yaroslav Likhachev, RW, Gatineau Olympiques (QMJHL) 5-foot-10, 160 pounds: The smaller ice is forcing him to think the game and make plays quicker. Stick skills are multi-dimensional.

19. Victor Soderstrom, D, Brynas (Sweden U20) 5-foot-11, 179 pounds: Not quite as dynamic as either Adam Boqvist or Nils Lundkvist — a couple of 2018 first-rounders — but he's more well-rounded at this stage.

20. Matvey Guskov, LW, London Knights (OHL) 6-foot-1, 172 pounds: There's rawness to his game. Will benefit in a variety of ways with Evan Bouchard and Alex Formenton returning to the Knights.

21. Anttoni Honka, D, JYP (Liiga) 5-foot-10, 179 pounds: Is playing top-six minutes as an 18-year-old in the highest Finnish league. While his team has struggled, he's still performing to expected levels.

22. Cam York, D, USNTDP, 5-foot-11, 171 pounds: Adept with deception in his game and always looking for offensive opportunities, be it by jumping into the rush or with deft passing ability.

23. Thomas Harley, D, Mississauga Steelheads (OHL) 6-foot-3, 188 pounds: Starting to come out of his shell. A smooth skater with excellent passing abilities. Has good reach to help him defensively.

24. Nolan Foote, LW, Kelowna Rockets (WHL) 6-foot-3, 187 pounds: A big summer put him in position to take off this season as Kelowna's go-to guy. It's hard to say which way it will go with his dad now behind the bench, but the early returns indicate he has rediscovered his goal-scoring touch with 10 in 15 games.

25. John Beecher, LW, USNTDP, 6-foot-2, 203 pounds: The type of player every team needs in that he plays the game the right way. Won't dazzle with offensive ability, but will do enough of the little things to maintain top-six minutes.

26. Jakob Pelletier, LW, Moncton Wildcats (QMJHL), 5-foot-9, 161 pounds: The hockey IQ is way too high to ignore. He makes those around him better and competes like a champ.

27. Lassi Thomson, D, Kelowna Rockets (WHL) 6-foot, 188 pounds: Playing with confidence and asserting himself offensively, he'll continue to hone his defensive game by playing for yet another long-tenured former NHL star defenceman in Adam Foote.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

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28. Alex Vlasic, D, USNTDP, 6-foot-5, 193 pounds: Because of size and skating ability, he will produce at this level. Projects more as a two-way player at the next level.

29. Samuel Poulin, LW, Sherbrooke Phoenix (QMJHL) 6-foot-1, 207 pounds: Not afraid to have a shoot-first mindset. Six of his nine goals have come at even strength.

30. Kaedan Korczak, D, Kelowna Rockets (WHL) 6-foot-2, 192 pounds: There's still plenty of room in hockey for the complementary defenceman who holds down the fort. Korczak produces well in the CHL, but that won't be his calling card at the next level.

31. Moritz Seider, D, Mannheim (DEL) 6-foot-3, 183 pounds: Minutes have increased overall, but most notably he's seeing more time in more important situations. Benefits from playing in a top-notch program loaded with developmental resources.

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Sportsnet.ca / Rangers' Henrik Lundqvist surprises cancer survivor on Good Morning America

Josh Beneteau | @jbenny15

November 7, 2018, 8:17 PM

November is Hockey Fights Cancer month and the New York Rangers are doing their part to bring a smile to one cancer survivor.

Connor McMahon, 17, is a three-time cancer survivor but has been cleared of the disease for two years. Now he helps other kids with cancer by providing them with backpacks that say the word "Hope" to teach them to never give up.

On Wednesday, McMahon appeared on Good Morning America with his parents to share his story. During the interview, he talked about how playing hockey and cheering for the New York Rangers played a part in his recovery.

"When I was diagnosed with cancer, hockey was kind of my escape," he said.

Hosts Michael Strahan and Sara Haines then brought out Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist to surprise McMahon with two signed jerseys, one signed by Lundqvist and another featuring McMahon's last name. Lundqvist also invited him to a game, including a tour of the locker room and a chance to meet other Rangers players.

"I have my own kids now and I don't know how you battled through it, but it's inspiring," Lundqvist said.

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Sportsnet.ca / Islanders GM Lamoriello on when Ho-Sang, Dal Colle could be NHL ready

Mike Johnston | @MikeyJ\_MMA

November 7, 2018, 8:54 PM

New York Islanders fans have been asking the same question since 2014: when will Joshua Ho-Sang and Michael Dal Colle be ready to make the full-time leap to the NHL?

Lou Lamoriello, in his first season as the team's general manager, doesn't have an answer at the moment but he is encouraged by what he's seeing from them this season with the AHL's Bridgeport Sound Tigers.

"Neither one of them had a great year last year and neither one had an exceptional training camp but as we speak right now I feel very good because they're both playing extremely well in Bridgeport," Lamoriello said Wednesday during an appearance on Prime Time Sports.

Dal Colle was taken fourth overall in 2014 and Ho-Sang went 28th yet neither has seen much NHL action with Dal Colle having only four regular-season NHL games on his resume, while Ho-Sang's much-ballyhooed career has resulted in him suiting up for just 43 regular-season games in an Isles uniform.

With former franchise centre John Tavares leaving in free agency, Lamoriello coming in as GM and Barry Trotz being hired on as the new head coach, the 2018-19 campaign represented a fresh start and a chance for players like the two 22-year-olds to finally crack the Islanders roster out of camp.

However, Lamoriello also acquired veteran forwards Leo Komarov, Valtteri Filppula and Matt Martin in the off-season, which meant there were fewer vacant roster spots, and both Ho-Sang and Dal Colle were sent to down Bridgeport to further their development.

Ho-Sang told the New York Post in late October he didn't like his chances of making the team out of camp, saying: "I felt like they had their minds made up on what was going to happen and what the team was going to look like. It's OK. They had the whole summer to plan that."

Ho-Sang has responded by being a point-per-game producer through 12 AHL contests this season. Dal Colle is also off to a hot start with six goals and seven assists in 10 games with the Sound Tigers.

"Both players have worked very hard at doing what's necessary to be better," Lamoriello said. "They know they didn't have a great camp. So, they'll get that opportunity because there's no excuses. It's a whole new regime here – coaches and management – so it's on them right now. We can't look to what happened last year and certainly when they're ready they'll get a chance. It's up to them."

"I have no complaints about them right now and how they've prepared themselves and worked during training camp. It didn't go as well as they would've liked it to I'm sure – they got in exhibition games – but right now they are playing well for us."

Lamoriello added that Bridgeport GM, his son Chris Lamoriello, "is in constant contact with them" and monitoring their progress.

"They both have talent, they both have skill, and that's something you cannot teach," the elder Lamoriello said. "Now you have to get everything else going."

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# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • November 8, 2018

Sportsnet.ca / Why limited opportunity has Flames' James Neal off to terrible start

Andrew Berkshire

November 7, 2018, 2:55 PM

When he signed with the Calgary Flames in July, I wrote about how James Neal should be a decent fit with their forward group — at least in the short term — based on the fact that he remained a productive even-strength player despite some overall decline in his play entering his 30s. So far, that take hasn't been looking so great.

One of the assumptions that I made was that Neal would get a chance to play with Sean Monahan and Johnny Gaudreau, bringing a scoring and agitating presence to that line. That would complement not just that line, but the agitating presence of Matthew Tkachuk on the second line, making the Flames very frustrating to play against, on top of being tough to defend.

Unfortunately, in limited minutes (only 22), Neal has not been successful on that line at all. In fact they've been torn to shreds while together, and Elias Lindholm has stolen Neal's spot there with a career high shooting percentage and over a point per game pace. Another thing I didn't expect to happen.

Without a spot that makes sense for him to play in, Neal has been bounced around the Flames' lineup to a ridiculous degree, playing 10 minutes or more with seven different line combinations in his just 191.35 minutes of 5-vs-5 ice time, according to Corsica.Hockey's line combination tool.

The result has been a terrible start for Neal, where his minor penalties outnumber his points by a 5-4 margin over 15 games. Looking strictly at his on-ice statistics, his performance is below team average, but that's not unexpected for a player slotted on the third line of a very top-heavy team, so the question I have is whether Neal has hit a sharp decline to begin this year.

Let's look at the same statistics I presented over the summer and compare Neal's year in Vegas to his first 15 games in Calgary.

Overall, Neal is about as involved in creating scoring chances as he was last year, still at a top-six forward rate, which is a good sign for him. However, his tendencies are all backwards.

Throughout his career, Neal has been a pretty decent playmaker in getting the puck to the slot, but he's always been a shoot-first player with the playmaking being a secondary option. This year his shot rates from the slot are all down, while his passing rates are up.

In a vacuum, this is not necessarily bad, but I have noticed over the last couple years that when snipers are in a funk, this is often what's happening — they're not being selfish enough with the puck.

The issue isn't his teammates not finding him either. Neal is receiving 2.72 passes in the slot per 20 minutes played at 5-vs-5, the highest rate on the Flames, significantly ahead of Sean Monahan in second at 2.47. So not only should he be getting more scoring chances, most of them should be involving pre-shot movement as well, making them extra dangerous. But he's not getting his shots off.

A similar problem has happened with Neal's attacking off the rush. While the Flames aren't quite the rushing team that Vegas was last season, Neal ranks 12th among Flames forwards in scoring chances off the rush, where he's been preferring to pass, something he has never shown himself to be adept at before.

If this is just a struggling player in a small sample size trying to find teammates to score while feeling like he's in a rut, it's probably

nothing to worry about for the Flames. But the trouble with Neal is that he has been on a shooting decline in recent years.

Going back to the lockout-shortened season of 2012-13, Neal has seen his shot rates fall since 2014-15, and while there was a rise last season, it would make sense that he benefitted from the Vegas bump that many other players did. This season's rates seem in line with the rate of decline he was seeing in Nashville.

None of this means that Neal is a useless player by any means — he has demonstrated that he's still capable of putting up a decent number of shots, and he has been a consistent 10-12 per cent shooter for the last five seasons. What it does mean, though, is that expectations should probably be lowered for his output unless he can get more shots, from better locations.

In previous years, Neal has compensated for lower shot rates by moving closer to the net, which kept him as a 30-goal threat in recent years, but this season so far we've seen his scoring chances go down with his shots.

I'm not convinced that Neal is incapable of recovering, but he's a player to watch right now, because Calgary will need to get him going once Elias Lindholm's hot streak cools off a little.

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Sportsnet.ca / Q&A: 'In Search of Greatness' director talks Gretzky, Pele, creativity

Donnovan Bennett

What do superior athletes have in common? Is athletic greatness a result of creativity, or simply winning the genetic lottery?

In Search of Greatness, a documentary film by Gabe Polsky, attempts to answer these and other questions.

The film examines the importance of creativity in athletic ability and the roles "nature" and "nurture" play in an athlete's development.

Sports legends Wayne Gretzky, Jerry Rice and Pelé explain in the film how their own athletic genius was nurtured.

"If they had me at the combine they'd have me at the lowest because I couldn't bench 195 (pounds) once," Gretzky reveals in the film. "Jumping wasn't something I was good at. My cardio was my forte so I'd do well at the anaerobic part of it, but that doesn't make you a hockey player."

Other interview subjects who are thought leaders on the subject, such as New York Times best-selling author Sir Ken Robinson and investigative reporter at ProPublica, David Epstein, explain that the environments young athletes currently develop in don't promote creative behaviours.

The film explores theories that elite athletes have both "a rage to master" and an ability to learn quickly and studies that show today's children have less free time to play than the average prisoner because their lives are so structured with school and activities.

In just over an hour the film exposes how, unlike in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, modern day parents and coaches can be slaves to measurable analytical data, drills and sport specific training rather than allowing young athletes to play freely in whichever way they are passionate.



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • November 8, 2018

The documentary has already been mentioned in early Oscar buzz and opens in Canada with a debut screening in Toronto on Nov. 9, screening in 12 major markets in North America.

Polsky is also the executive producer of the Emmy-nominated National Geographic anthology series, *Genius*. He also directed, *Red Army*, one of the most critically acclaimed films of 2014.

I recently caught up with with Polsky to discuss the film and the idea that sports greatness is a result of enhanced creativity and not physical ability.

Gabe Polsky: I played college hockey and the coach was so bad and so structured that I wanted to create a manual for other coaches to allow their players to be creative. The players want this. They need this, they just cannot say as much as they don't want to be benched. Coaches try to control everything so it validates their importance. I did this to give the players a voice. If Gretzky and Jerry Rice and Pele are saying it, clearly it's true.

SN: I played university football here in Canada. I remember there was a sign just above the door when you left the locker room that people tapped. It read: "dare to be great." I always loved that saying because in order to dare to be great you have to risk failing spectacularly.

Who are the athletes now with that daring aspect of creativity?

GP: These guys are magicians. The Muhammad Alis, the Golden State Warriors and Stephen Curry. Golden State's coaches watched the film and they told me Steph Curry is the only person who will try to throw a behind the back pass in Game 7 of the Finals and throw it out of bounds. But you can't say anything to him because that's what makes him, him. It's the same with Odell Beckham Jr. and the one-handed catch. They are innovative and leading so everybody loves watching them because of what they create and it's just beautiful and they're having a lot of fun and that's what it's all about.

You know, often times they start doing something that no one's seen before and there's a lot of people who have fear that think they won't be any good or who just aren't open-minded.

You get yelled at for that kind of experimentation and failure sometimes, but otherwise how would you produce a great thing?

SN: Watching the film, when Gretzky was talking, the person who I thought of in my head the entire time, was Steph Curry. What Gretzky was saying about necessity being the genesis for his invention and creativity is similar to Curry. For Gretzky it was playing behind the net to protect himself. For Curry, it's how you get him taking 40-footers with a quick release because at his size if he depended on shooting from closer his shot would get blocked. So, he comes along and changes the game.

GP: It's not like people be creative for the hell of it. You got to figure out a way to do things better than everybody else, so you can't do exactly what they're doing because everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses. You have to find your advantage as sort of survival.

SN: I remember years ago football coaches would scream at receivers to catch the ball with two hands. Now go to a game and watch warm-ups and everyone is practicing one-handed catches. It is just part of the game and every week you see a one-handed catch in a game. How long do you think that lag is from someone who is a paradigm shifter like Odell Beckham Jr. to it then becoming, some form of consensus?

GP: People start doing it right away. What you need is people with enough power that aren't afraid of the consequences. Are you going to bench Odell Beckham Jr. if he tries something and it doesn't work? He doesn't care. And ultimately you have to win. What these coaches don't get is nobody is coming to watch you. People pay money to watch these athletes be great so let them be great. Much of the way we coach athletes is about ego.

SP: I was talking to Joe Carter about the lack of minority baseball players and why he thinks the numbers have gone down. Even before I finished the question, he said it was because they are forced to play on travel teams. How is creativity impacted by the way that youth sports have been, administered and socialized where you now need to specialize at such a young age?

GP: That takes away from the dream of playing other sports and that just takes away from play, period. This is going to sound politically incorrect but you know why inner-city kids are so good? Because they play pick up. They play for fun, to entertain with flair and style. It isn't tactically perfect. But it's good. Then they get to the NBA and they've built all of these skills and ways to play with expression and crush all the rich white kids who shoot technically sound and all play the same way. Nobody wants to see that. It's not good. If that's what you want just get a bunch of robots to play.

I had a coach at Yale who was like, 'I want you to play systems, the tactical way, defensive, neutral zone trap. I want you to play in a way that makes you replaceable.' Who wants to do that? What NHL scout wants to draft a player that's replaceable? They want a player that brings something to the table, not just a cog in the system.

SN: A fascinating part of your doc was to see what drives people. You included the famous Michael Jordan Hall of Fame speech in which he lists everyone who has doubted him.

GP: If people don't feel you're in their favour and get in your way and they reject you, it's beyond painful because you want to show your skill. I'm sure you feel the same way. So, it could be really motivating and all these guys have that because they are really confident. They know what they can do and they know they can be better than other people. It's very painful, but that pain could be transformed into motivation.

SN: Is there anyone that you didn't talk to for the film that you wanted to?

GP: Michael Jordan and Serena Williams, although I was able to include their stories in other ways. I wasn't able to figure out a way to get Willie Mays, although we were close three times.

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1114460 Websites

TSN.CA / Andersen sparks Leafs past Golden Knights with stellar performance

Kristen Shilton

TORONTO – Lately, the Toronto Maple Leafs have lamented not earning better results at home when their play dictated they probably could have. But in Tuesday's 3-1 victory over the Vegas Golden Knights, the Leafs were on the other side of the equation - being outplayed by their opponent but ultimately saved by a terrific 35-stop performance from Frederik Andersen.

It's the circle of life in hockey, when ebbs and flows sometimes have a funny way of evening out.

"[Andersen] played real well. We expect him every once in a while to win us a game," said Mike Babcock. "When we play real well and don't give up anything he gets the win and sometimes he gets the shutout. That's a bonus for him. So it goes both ways. We're all in it together and I thought Freddie was really strong for us tonight."



# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## NEWS CLIPPINGS • November 8, 2018

Tuesday's performance was the most recent in a string of successful outings for Andersen. He's started eight consecutive games now for Toronto, posting two or fewer goals against in seven of those contests. Including his .973 save percentage versus Vegas, the 29-year-old now boasts a .929 save percentage on the season, third-best in the NHL among goalies with at least 10 starts, and his eight wins is tops in the league.

"It seems like he's got no pressure on him, it just seems like he goes out there and has fun with it," said Mitch Marner, who scored Tuesday's game-winning goal for Toronto (10-5-0). "When he gets to the rink, he's a very serious guy, he focuses, he gets ready for the games. He's a pro; he knows how to get it done right."

Against the Golden Knights (6-8-1), Andersen saw some goal support early when Connor Brown buried his second of the season early in the opening frame to put Toronto up 1-0. It was the first time the Leafs had scored a goal in the first or second period at home since Oct. 15, and reflected how well not only Brown's line with Par Lindholm and Andreas Johnsson played out of the gate, but the team as a whole.

Marner kept the momentum in Toronto's hands with a goal nine seconds into the second period, but once the 2-0 lead was in hand, the Leafs completely fell apart in front of Andersen. Toronto was pummeled in puck possession in the middle frame at only 28 per cent, and it was only Andersen keeping them ahead. While Toronto frantically chased play around him, the goalie stayed cool and collected himself in the crease as Vegas hit the 30-shot mark with more than two minutes still remaining in the second period. Through three periods, Toronto was outshot 37-21 by Vegas.

"I think we stopped playing," Marner said in his assessment of the second. "We didn't forecheck, we didn't get on the forecheck at all and help out our D. We weren't slowing people down at all. I think everyone sees every night that Freddie Andersen has been unbelievable for us here every single game, and he's the reason we stole one tonight."

A season ago around this time, it wasn't a given Andersen could be counted upon to do that. He's spoken frequently about his slow starts the previous two years (his save percentage through 13 games last season, for example, was .895), and credits a more focused off-season training regime with helping him get off to a hotter start this time around.

"I personally feel good," Andersen said. "I think we're keeping it a little bit more to the outside, which is helping me out seeing the puck better and clearing the shooting lanes so I don't have to fight through traffic and that makes my job easier."

It was bodies in front of the net that led to the Golden Knights' lone goal on Tuesday, a second period score tipped in by Cody Eakin in front of Andersen's crease. Vegas beat Andersen on a couple other opportunities as well, but hit the post and crossbar to preserve Toronto's advantage.

But the Leafs would never balk at a few lucky bounces, especially after their last home game ended in outperforming, but still losing to, the Dallas Stars. When Toronto needed a difference-maker this time around, it came not in the form of an offensive weapon, but between the pipes.

"I thought we started real good the first 10 minutes and then we got fooling around with the puck. We were lucky to get out of the second," said Babcock. "In the end we will look at this game like with Dallas...you felt like you did enough to win and you didn't. Sometimes the shoe is on the other foot. We'll take it, but maybe now we can loosen up at home."

Happy to be home

Tuesday's win on home ice was just the second for Toronto since Oct. 15, and put them at 4-5-0 on the season in their building. The

Leafs had pledged before facing the Golden Knights to finally put together a strong performance at home, and while it wasn't the same free-wheeling, confidence-laced outing they're partial to on the road (where Toronto is a perfect 6-0-0), it was a step in the right direction to getting their home record more in line with what it is away from Scotiabank Arena.

Secondary scoring about to rise?

When Brown got on the board early in the first, it marked the first even-strength goal by any skater on the Leafs' bottom two lines since Oct. 24. In total, those players (Brown, Lindholm, Johnsson, and Toronto's fourth line of Tyler Ennis, Frederik Gauthier and Josh Leivo) have combined for only five goals (at 5-on-5 and on the power play). It's not enough to sustain the Leafs, especially with Auston Matthews out, and they know it. That's what made Brown's goal so important. It not only helped the Leafs get off to good start, but propelled his line to their best game since becoming a unit after Matthews' injury on Oct. 27.

Johnsson in particular has struggled out of the gate this year, but with a bigger opportunity on the third line he's started to resemble that dangerous offensive threat Toronto hopes he can eventually be more consistently at the NHL level. Through two periods, Johnsson was tied for most shots on goal (three) with Brown, one of which came after he battled for a breakaway chance late in the second period that was thwarted by a sprawled-out Marc-Andre Fleury. Brown had also generated a near breakaway in that period, but couldn't get enough on his shot to fool Vegas' goaltender. Going forward, the more pressure the Leafs' bottom-six can take off the top performers with contributions, the better. Lindholm's line finished with a team-best 50 per cent possession against Vegas.

Marner taking his shot

Before his second period score on Tuesday, it had been eight games since Marner last lit the lamp for Toronto, a stretch where he recorded seven assists. For the last two years, the 21-year-old has spoken frequently about improving his shot so he isn't underestimated as a one-dimensional threat on the ice, but there have been several instances already this season where Marner has passed up scoring opportunities to make a pass instead. His goal on Fleury was an example of how Marner's scoring acumen continues to grow when he's patient enough to let the play evolve and be the guy with the puck on his stick. It's not that he doesn't put shots on net – Marner has the Leafs' second-most shots on net this season with 48 – but he doesn't also fight to the middle of the ice like he's doing more and more frequently, and taking the opportunities available for himself instead of deferring to his linemate John Tavares or, less often, Zach Hyman. Marner finished Tuesday's game with a team-leading four shots on net in 20:27 time on ice.

Penalty kill picking up steam

After going through a dip in late October where the penalty kill gave up four goals in five games, the Leafs have started to turn the corner shorthanded. Toronto is now 10-for-10 on shorthanded chances over its last three games, thanks to an aggressive kill like the one that challenged the Golden Knights and prevented them from getting set up in the offensive zone. The Leafs now sit sixth in the league on the penalty kill (83.7 per cent).

"It seemed like a normal hit. I was rubbing him out after he dumped the puck in and I turned to go to the bench and I heard the whistle go after that, turned around and he was on the ice. I just hope he's okay."

– Patrick Marleau, reacting to his hit on Erik Haula in the third period that forced the Golden Knights winger to be stretchered off the ice with what appeared to be a leg injury.



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USA TODAY / Flyers' big, goofy rookie, Gritty, a monster performer on and off the ice

Kevin Allen, USA TODAY

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Philadelphia Flyers executive Paul Holmgren, a former hard-nosed player, once joked that the franchise had such a history of gritty players that the team should have a mascot named Gritty with "sandpaper hands."

"That name kind of stuck," said Joe Heller, the Flyers' vice president of marketing. "When we got something on paper, coupled it with the name, it all started to take shape from there."

What the Flyers ended up with is the most talked-about character in the NHL this season.

Many people are buzzing about Canucks rookie Elias Pettersson, but Gritty's notoriety has extended beyond the bounds of the hockey world.

The googly-eyed, orange and fuzzy mascot debuted on Sept. 24. He has been on "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon" and was the subject of a skit on "Conan." Gritty also was mentioned on "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver" and "Saturday Night Live."

Homemade Gritty costumes, for children, adults and dogs, were hot in and around Philadelphia on Halloween. Gritty-carved pumpkins were also in style.

"It hasn't died down," said Sarah Schwab, the Flyers' director of marketing. "I remember in the first couple of days after we unveiled him, it blew up. It was an onslaught. And it really hasn't slowed."

Gritty videos abound on YouTube, including one in which he shows off his dance moves with the Phillie Phanatic, the Phillies' mascot.

Schwab said she just received a request from an outlet that wanted Gritty to show up so they could carve his form into a block of cheese.

"There was always hope that he would be well-embraced but obviously this is bigger than we would have guessed," Heller said.

Gritty mania started when he was born, bolstered by two unscripted falls as he skated for the first time on the Philadelphia ice. People seem to relate to his rough opening night.

Heller was in the press box and noted the tumble.

"I said to someone, 'Does that look like a real fall?'" Heller said. "He landed on his upper back. And then he shot someone in the back with a T-shirt cannon and he fell a second time. And I said, 'OK, it's him wiping out for sure.'"

Heller said Gritty showing "his clumsy side" won over fans. His Instagram and Twitter posts also have resonated. "It was the perfect storm," Heller said.

The Gritty project was a couple of years in the making, launched because Flyers officials recognized they were missing out on a marketing opportunity. Mascots are popular, usually making about 250 appearances per year.

The Flyers originally consulted David Raymond, the original Phillie Phanatic, about their desire to have a mascot. But the Flyers ended up with a design from Brian Allen of Flyland Designs.

The Flyers considered animals, a variety of creatures, monsters and fictional characters, aviation offerings and human portrayals before deciding on the 7-foot orange Gritty.

"We just figured a monster-like creature defines the tough ruggedness of the team and the Philly sports landscape," Heller said.

Heller said the objective was to have Gritty connect with fans as one of their own. He is supposed to be the ultimate Flyers fan, but also someone who is defensive about standing up for his city.

Only one person plays the Gritty character, but the mascot code is that the person does so in anonymity. The Flyers don't reveal who's behind the mask.

"We've learned a lot of the mascot code over the past couple of months," Schwab said. "When we are asked who he is, he's just 'Gritty.'"

Gritty doesn't talk, but both hands and belly button squeak. The Flyers had a discussion about how sensitive the belly button squeaker needed to be to ensure it squeaked when kids hugged Gritty.

"We gave him googly eyes because it gives him another way to emote," Schwab said.

No sign whatsoever that Gritty's popularity is subsiding. Based on requests, Schwab said Gritty could be booked solid for multiple events a day if that is what the Flyers wanted.

Said Heller: "A day doesn't go by that we don't see that costume go past our doors."

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