



CAROLINA HURRICANES

NEWS CLIPPINGS • November 8, 2019

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

It's that time of year, when it's hard to tell whether the Canes are coming or going

By Luke DeCock

The seasons and the years change and, this fall, many of the players as well, but there's nothing that says Carolina Hurricanes like a bit of November navel-gazing, warranted or not.

With this franchise, perhaps more than some of its peers, there's a tendency to overreact to individual results, especially at this point of the season. Given the trouble the Hurricanes have historically had getting out of October, that's not entirely unreasonable, especially the way the NHL standings tend to ossify by mid-November.

So when you take a hot start and follow it with a bit of a muddle, as the Hurricanes have, the mood swings can be dizzying. After Thursday's 4-2 loss to the woeful New York Rangers extended the Hurricanes' losing streak to three games, all against divisional opponents, the optimism so redolent around these parts a month ago has been long forgotten.

The Hurricanes walked away with a 47-19 edge in shots on goal and zero points, but they're still a respectable 9-6-1. The sky is not falling. But it's also fair to say the Hurricanes are stumbling along at something less than their full potential. Rod Brind'Amour was thrilled with the Hurricanes' performance. Other than, you know, the goals they didn't score and the defensive breakdowns they allowed.

"That's the way it should look, for me," Brind'Amour said. "We did everything we wanted to do. We just didn't get the result."

It's entirely appropriate, desirable even, to focus on the process and not the results, but when the results aren't forthcoming, this is where you end up

This dynamic was especially acute coming off Tuesday's 4-1 loss at the Philadelphia Flyers, a game where the advanced stats disagreed with the optics. In the eternal tug of war between the analytics quants and the scouting department, the Hurricanes passed the math test and flunked the eye test on that night, losing for the sixth time in 10 games after a 5-0-0 start.

All of which left the Hurricanes at a bit of a crossroads Thursday, with the rebuilding Rangers in town, fast

and young but not equipped to grind, teams able to do the latter having given the Hurricanes the most trouble in recent days.

That's a change from last season. With all the turnover and all the injuries, the Hurricanes have had a tough time recapturing the end-to-end hustle that brought them so much success, playing more of a finesse game by necessity with Justin Williams taking his gap year and Jordan Martinook out. Brind'Amour was asked before the game if that alteration in identity was deliberate; he visibly cringed at the question.

It doesn't help that some of their best players haven't gotten off to the best of starts, or that Jake Gardiner — who turned the puck over in his own zone for the Rangers' back-breaking third goal early in the third — is going through the same difficult adjustment to Brind'Amour's system Dougie Hamilton went through a year ago.

The Hurricanes' ability to get back to that style, playing fast and aggressive, leaving the opposition gasping for air, is the real litmus test of this early going, more than the results, even. It's a work in progress, and even on nights when they take advantage of favorable circumstances — at home against a team like the Rangers — they're not always rewarded.

After getting nothing out of an overwhelmingly dominant first period on Thursday, it took them 31 shots to score on Henrik Lundqvist, and a pair of late-period defensive breakdowns left them trailing 2-1 heading into the third period, a sequence of events so deeply evocative of Bill Peters' tenure that it ought to have been sponsored by Kinetico.

"We talked after the Philly game what we need to do, and tonight was more the way we needed to play," said Warren Foegele, who was unable to finish any of his several first-class scoring chances, including a late two-on-one.

"We had a couple mistakes that cost us goals, but we kept shooting pucks, getting on top of their D and working them, and their goalie played really well tonight."

These are, it goes without saying, the kind of games good teams win, have tucked away in their pocket in



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April when the stragglers are scrambling for the playoff spots that are left.

But it also goes without saying that even a three-game losing streak — two of them at home against teams unlikely to make the playoffs — isn't cause for abject panic.

"If we play the way we played tonight," Jaccob Slavin said, "we'll win more than we'll lose."

The Hurricanes need to convert these opportunities, but it's equally important for the long term that they recapture their identity. Thursday was a step in that direction. Just not a big enough step.

Rangers' Lundqvist stymies Canes again as Rangers win 4-2

By Chip Alexander

Henrik Lundqvist was quick to call it a tough test. And, he said with a smile, a fun test.

The Carolina Hurricanes threw 47 shots at the New York Rangers goalie on Thursday, including 22 in the first period. Dougie Hamilton scored in the second period for the Canes and Sebastian Aho in the third.

But Lundqvist stopped all the rest, and from many an angle, from outside and in tight, on slapshots and tips. His season-high 45 saves were the difference as the Rangers took a 4-2 victory over the Canes at PNC Arena.

Lundqvist now has beaten the Canes 22 times in the past 26 games he has been in net against them. But no gloating or chest-thumping by the guy known as "The King" in New York.

"You've got to give them credit," Lundqvist said. "I think they're a great team. They play really fast, they're deep. They kept the puck in (the zone) so many times. They made it really difficult for us to get the puck out and get going.

"But we made some big plays at the right time. It was a fun win on the road."

Fun for Lundqvist, but not for the Canes (9-6-1), who have lost three in a row. Not for goalie Petr Mrazek, who had won 15 consecutive games on home ice, including last season's playoffs, but had his streak come to an end.

The first period could not have been more frustrating for Carolina. Thirteen players had shots for the Canes in the period, only to have Lundqvist remain calm and in control.

It was the first time this season the Canes had 20 or more shots in a period — the Canes also had eight attempts blocked and missed the net 14 times in the first. But they could get nothing past a goalie who now has 453 career wins and one day will be in the Hockey Hall of Fame.

Instead, Artemi Panarin, all but unchecked in the low slot, gave the Rangers a 1-0 lead on New York's sixth of just seven shots in the period.

"I thought we came out pretty hard," Canes forward Warren Foegele said. "The bounces didn't go our way, and a couple of key saves for them. We had so many Grade-A chances."

Lundqvist stopped everything other than Hamilton's redirection of a Jaccob Slavin shot and then Aho's shot that glanced off a defenseman's skate.

"I think we were the better team from start to finish and their goalie was great," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "I mean, it happens."

It happens a lot when Lundqvist faces the Canes. This time, he did it less than 24 hours after being in net as the Rangers (7-6-1) beat the Detroit Red Wings 5-1 in New York, arriving at their Raleigh hotel about 2:30 a.m.

But Lundqvist, 37, wanted the net again, and Rangers coach David Quinn let him have it. Lundqvist said he felt comfortable going a second night and has the numbers to prove it: he's now 54-23-8 in the second games of the 85 back-to-back sets he has played in his career.

Lundqvist also said he knew what to expect from the Canes.

"They keep coming," Lundqvist said. "They're getting their D involved in a lot of their plays, and it makes it hard for us to defend. I thought we did a pretty good job, especially in the second and third period, to make it hard for them."

Panarin's goal, his eighth of the season, was a dagger in the first. So was Brendan Lemieux's power-play goal late in the second after the Canes had tied the score 1-1 on Hamilton's goal, the defenseman redirecting a Jaccob Slavin shot.

Pavel Buchnevich converted a turnover by the Canes' Jake Gardiner into an early third-period goal and a 3-1 lead. Aho made it one-goal game at 15:58 of the third, but Rangers defenseman Adam Fox sealed the win with an empty-netter with 1:25 left in regulation.

"We battled, hard," Lundqvist said. "We improved after that first period. We were a little lucky being up



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one after the first, but then we made some corrections and special teams again were a huge part of this win.”

Forward Eetu Luostarinen made his NHL debut for the Canes, who played without center Erik Haula, out with a knee issue. Luostarinen, recalled Wednesday from the Charlotte Checkers of the AHL, forced a first-period penalty on Rangers defenseman Marc Staal

and gave the Canes some solid play in 9:21 of ice time centering the fourth line.

Brind’Amour again was left to talk about how well his team played, for the most part, without getting a good result.

“We’ve just got to play, right now, almost a perfect game, it feels like,” he said. “I’m pretty sure if we play like that we will win a lot more games.”



Lundqvist shines in 4-2 win over Hurricanes

The Rangers goalie fended off a relentless Carolina attack, making 45 saves to win for the second straight night

By Cory Lavalette

RALEIGH — Henrik Lundqvist may not be the best goalie in the NHL anymore. But for a night in Raleigh, he was impenetrable again.

The Rangers’ future Hall of Famer made 45 saves in befuddling the Carolina Hurricanes and leading New York to a 4-2 win Thursday in front of 13,878 at PNC Arena.

“I’m in result mode, but what are you going to say after that? Bad game?” Hurricanes coach Rod Brind’Amour said after being asked if he was satisfied with the effort despite the final score. “I mean, you’d be stupid.”

The Hurricanes played perhaps their best period of hockey in the opening frame, but somehow found a way to enter the locker room down 1-0 — a harbinger of what was to come.

Carolina outshot the Rangers 22-6 in the first, but no one scored until defenseman Dougie Hamilton found himself a step behind Artemi Panarin in the slot, and the New York sniper buried a pass from Ryan Strome to make it 1-0 with just over 27 seconds left in the opening period.

“You play a whole first period and pretty much every shift in their end, and they get one little break and it

kills all the momentum we gained in that period,” Carolina defenseman Jaccob Slavin said.

While Panarin got the first goal, it was Lundqvist — who won 5-1 at home over Detroit the night before — who starred for the Blueshirts. With the ice heavily tilted in the Hurricanes’ favor, Lundqvist made save after save to keep the game scoreless through much of the first.

“Getting out of that period 1-noting was unbelievable in a lot of ways,” Rangers coach David Quinn said.

The Hurricanes did finally cracked Lundqvist with just over five minutes left in the second.

Hamilton led the Hurricanes up the ice on a rush, then redirected a Slavin shot in the high slot past Lundqvist to tie the game at 14:32 of the middle frame.

The Rangers, however, regained their lead late in the period.

With Brett Pesce in the box for tripping, New York defenseman Tony DeAngelo’s point shot was tipped by Brendan Lemieux in front of Petr Mrazek (16 saves) for a power play goal and 2-1 lead with 1:56 left in the second period.

The Hurricanes entered the third down a goal but with a 34-14 shot advantage and even more staggering 60-25 shot advantage at 5 on 5.

The Rangers quickly extinguished any good vibes the Hurricanes had from their dominant first 40 minutes.



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After Jake Gardiner turned the puck over at the Carolina blue line, Pesce and Sebastian Aho misplayed a defensive zone coverage and allowed Pavel Buchnevich to walk in alone on Mrazek and make it 3-1 just 75 seconds into the final period.

"When we turn pucks over at the blue line — I think that's been the story the last couple games — that's when the other teams are getting their chances and that's where we're giving up goals," Slavin said.

The Hurricane got a glimmer of hope in the final minutes, with Aho's centering attempt hitting the Rangers' Lias Andersson and sneaking past Lundqvist to cut the lead to one with just over four minutes left.

But the final twist of the dagger came with 85 seconds left when Rangers defenseman Adam Fox — who forced a trade from Carolina to New York this offseason — got his second NHL goal into an empty net.

"These are tough ones because we played a pretty good game," Brind'Amour said. "I think we were the better team start to finish, and their goalie was great. That happens. In 82 games, your goalie steals one here and there, and that's what happened."

Brind'Amour is just hoping his team feels as good about its play as he does despite a three-game losing streak.

"As long as you believe that's the way that we need to play, then you're going to be fine," Brind'Amour said. "What you don't want to have is guys start doing their own thing and not thinking that that's the way that's going to get it done. That's what we have to guard against right now. ... That's the way it should look. The results will come if we play like that."

Notes: Mrazek's winning streak at PNC Arena was snapped at 15 games. ... With Erik Haula missing his second straight game, center Eetu Luostarinen made his NHL debut. He finished with two shots on goal and two hits, plus won 4 of 7 face-offs in 9:21 of ice time. ... Former Hurricanes center Greg McKegg made his first return to PNC Arena since signing with the Rangers this offseason. He was minus-1 in 10:30 of ice time with no shots on goal. ... For the game, the Hurricanes had 76 shot attempts at 5 on 5 to the Rangers' 31. ... Hamilton finished with seven shots on goal and 13 total shot attempts. ... New York blocked 17 shots, while Carolina blocked four. ... Despite eight shots attempts, Andrei Svechnikov did not register a shot on goal. ... Lundqvist is now 31-12-1 in his career against Carolina.



Recap: Canes Bested by Lundqvist, Rangers

Canes put 47 shots on Lundqvist but fall, 4-2

By Michael Smith

The Carolina Hurricanes threw just about everything at Henrik Lundqvist but only snuck two pucks past him in a 4-2 loss to the New York Rangers.

Dougie Hamilton and Sebastian Aho tallied for the Hurricanes, who have dropped three straight games to divisional opponents, while Lundqvist made 45 saves on 47 shots.

Here are five takeaways from Thursday night at PNC Arena.

1. Lundqvist Steals One

Henrik Lundqvist was the difference in the game, no questions asked. Starting on back-to-back nights (after a later-than-usual 8 p.m. puck drop on Wednesday, no less), Lundqvist was stellar.

And it's a pattern apparently.

Lundqvist has started both games of a back-to-back 85 times in his NHL career, and in the second game of those sets, The King is 54-23-8 with a 2.12 goals-against average, a .928 save percentage and nine shutouts.

Sometimes you just have to tip your cap and move on.

"I think we were the better team from start to finish, and their goalie was great. That happens," head



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coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "In 82 games, your goalie steals one here and there. That's what happened."

2. Trust the Process

The Hurricanes liked pretty much everything about their game except the result. That's what ultimately matters, of course, but if the process is right, the results will come more often than not.

"I'm in results mode, but what are you going to say after that? Bad game? You'd be stupid," Brind'Amour said. "I'm happy because that's the way it should look for me. I like the fact that we did pretty much everything we wanted to do. We just didn't get the result."

Trust the process. The Hurricanes are confident in that.

"That's the game I'm looking for out of our group. It looks right. It's the style of play we want to play," Brind'Amour said. "I'm pretty sure if we can play like that, we're going to win a lot more games than we lose."

"We've just got to keep doing what we did," Slavin said. "It definitely sucks to lose like that, but that's hockey."

3. A Dominant First Period

The good news: The Hurricanes dominated the first period in possession, shot attempts (44-11) and shots on goal (22-6).

The bad news: The Canes trailed the Rangers 1-0 after 20 minutes.

The Rangers converted on their sixth shot of the game when Artemi Panarin got loose in the slot for a one-timer that he rifled past Petr Mrazek, a dagger that sliced right through the Canes' momentum with 27.5 seconds left in the period.

"That was about as good a period as we could have played to start the game," Brind'Amour said. "We played flawless, really, except for one shift, and that ended up in our net."

4. A Breakthrough

It took 31 shots, but the Hurricanes finally solved Lundqvist. Jacob Slavin's point shot was redirected by Dougie Hamilton betwixt the circles, his seventh goal of the season which ties him for the league lead in goals by a defenseman.

That tied the game at one with just about five minutes left to play in the second period, but the Rangers reestablished their lead before the intermission when Brendan Lemieux tipped in Tony DeAngelo's shot on a late-period power play. Another dagger.

"We had a couple mistakes that cost us goals," Warren Foegele said.

Pavel Buchnevich put the Rangers up two goals just 75 seconds into the third period. Sebastian Aho later cut the Canes' deficit to just a goal with a shot that ricocheted in off the stick of Lias Andersson - exactly the type of bounce the Canes needed to beat Lundqvist, who was otherwise seemingly impenetrable.

Adam Fox twisted the dagger with an empty-net goal in the waning minutes of the game, sealing the victory for the Rangers.

"We dominated that game. The bounces didn't go our way. A couple key saves for them," Foegele said. "The result isn't what we wanted, but we worked really hard tonight and had so many grade-A chances."

5. Luostarinen Makes NHL Debut

Eetu Luostarinen was one of the most consistent forwards in the Charlotte Checkers' first 10 games of the season, and for that, he was rewarded with a recall. The 21-year-old Finnish center made his NHL debut, taking the customary solo lap at the start of warm-ups before his teammates joined him on the ice.

Luostarinen finished the evening with two shots, two hits, a drawn penalty and a 4-for-7 mark in the faceoff circle in 9:21 of ice time.

"Our fourth line was fine," Brind'Amour said. "We wanted to get them out there."

Up Next

The Hurricanes and Ottawa Senators will play a home-and-home set beginning Saturday in Ottawa and concluding Monday in Raleigh.

"As long as you believe that's the way we need to play, then you're going to be fine. What you don't want to have is guys doing their own thing, thinking that's the way it's going to get done. That's what we have to guard against right now, thinking we have to do something different," Brind'Amour said. "That's the way it should look. The results will come if we play like that."



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Lundqvist makes 45 saves, Rangers hold off Hurricanes

Goalie gets second consecutive win for New York; Carolina has lost three straight

By Kurt Dusterberg

RALEIGH, N.C. -- Henrik Lundqvist made 45 saves for the New York Rangers in a 4-2 win against the Carolina Hurricanes at PNC Arena on Thursday.

It was the second consecutive win for Lundqvist, who made 35 saves in a 5-1 win against the Detroit Red Wings on Wednesday after sitting the previous three games.

"It kind of carried over what I did last night," Lundqvist said. "I felt pretty comfortable going into this game. Obviously, I was tested a lot in the first, but it was a fun test."

Artemi Panarin and Pavel Buchnevich each had a goal and an assist for the Rangers (7-6-1), who have won four of their past five games.

Dougie Hamilton and Sebastian Aho scored for the Hurricanes (9-6-1), who have lost three in a row. Petr Mrazek made 15 saves.

"These are tough ones because we played a pretty good game," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "I think we were the better team from start to finish, and their goalie was great. I mean, it happens."

Brendan Lemieux gave New York a 2-1 lead at 18:04 of the second period on the power play when he skated to the net and redirected Tony DeAngelo's point shot for his first goal of the season.

Buchnevich made it 3-1 at 1:15 of the third period. After he stripped the puck from Hurricanes defenseman Jake Gardiner, Buchnevich cut across the crease and slipped a backhand past Mrazek's outstretched pad.

"We find a way to tip one in, then [Buchnevich] scores to start the third, and I think that completely changed the game," Rangers forward Ryan Strome said. "Opportunistic, gutsy effort. We didn't have our legs,

we didn't have our best night, but teams find a way to win on a tough back-to-back. That's a Hall of Fame and MVP performance by Lundqvist."

Aho cut it to 3-2 at 15:58 of the third when his shot deflected in off the stick of Rangers forward Lias Andersson, but Adam Fox scored into an empty net with 1:25 remaining to make it 4-2.

Panarin gave the Rangers a 1-0 lead with 28 seconds remaining in the first period, receiving a pass from behind the net by Strome and scoring with a one-timer from the slot.

"We talked about it before the game actually, how we should hang around the middle a bit more," Strome said. "It only takes him a split second. What a shot, right off his stick before anyone can react."

Carolina outshot New York 22-6 in the first period, which included two power-play opportunities for the Hurricanes.

"They freeze you and go side to side, and they're there for rebounds," Lundqvist said. "So the only thing I had in my head was not to be overaggressive to the shooter, and I had to be ready for the second shot. There was a couple times I got lucky. I was doing a lot of good things, but I also got some bounces."

Hamilton tied it 1-1 on a redirection of Jaccob Slavin's point shot in the slot at 14:32 of the second period.

Lundqvist preserved the lead in the third period when he squeezed Brett Pesce's shot from the slot between his left arm and body at 3:27, then moved across the crease to stop Warren Foegele trying to finish a 2-on-1 at the left post at 14:50.

"We kept shooting puck, getting on top of their [defense] and working them," Foegele said. "Their goalie played really well tonight."

They said it

"It's a pretty simple answer to what happened tonight: our goalie was unbelievable. I thought that was



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probably the best game he's played since I have been here." -- Rangers coach David Quinn on Henrik Lundqvist • 12:43 AM

"I'm in results mode, but what are you going to say after that? Bad game? You'd be stupid. That was about as good a period as we could play to start a game. We've started every game on time. We've been really good in the first period. We just haven't got goals to go in." -- Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour

Need to know

Panarin extended his point streak to seven games (four goals, six assists). ... In the second game of

back-to-back starts, Lundqvist is 54-23-8 with a 2.12 goals-against average, .928 save percentage and nine shutouts. ... Carolina had a season-high 47 shots. ... Martin Necas had an assist to extend his point streak to four games (one goal, three assists). ... Eetu Luostarinen had two shots and two hits in 9:21 of ice time in his NHL debut.

What's next

Rangers: Host the Florida Panthers on Sunday (1 p.m. ET; NHLN, MSG, FS-F, NHL.TV)

Hurricanes: At the Ottawa Senators on Saturday (7:00 p.m. ET; SN1, TVAS2, FS-CR, NHL.TV)



Buchnevich, Lundqvist lead Rangers to 4-2 win at Carolina

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist didn't want to sit out — certainly not against the Carolina Hurricanes.

Lundqvist made a season-high 45 saves, Pavel Buchnevich had a goal and an assist, and New York beat Carolina 4-2 on Thursday night.

Following a home win over Detroit on Wednesday, Lundqvist lobbied coach David Quinn to make back-to-back starts against an opponent he's long dominated.

"I was pushing him to let me play one more game," said Lundqvist, who has 31 career wins over the Hurricanes. "I have been sitting a lot. When you play more games, you get into a flow where it almost feels like an extension of the last game."

Artemi Panarin also had a goal and assist for the Rangers, who continued their recent mastery of the Hurricanes. Adam Fox added an empty-net goal in the third period.

The Rangers have won 28 of their past 34 games with Carolina, and Lundqvist has won 22 of his past 26 starts against them.

Lundqvist, who didn't play in the three games prior to his back-to-back starts, didn't know his exact 31-12-1 career record against Carolina but had an idea it was remarkable.

"I have a pretty record here," Lundqvist, 37, who is his 15th NHL season. "It must be something in the water."

Dougie Hamilton and Sebastian Aho scored for the Hurricanes, who had a 47-to-19 shot advantage. The Hurricanes, who lost for the third straight game, dominated the first period.

Lundqvist made 22 stops and staved off two Carolina power-play opportunities in the first period. Panarin scored with 27.5 seconds left in the first to give the Rangers a 1-0 lead.

"We were just hanging on for dear life," Quinn said. "To get out of that period 1-0 was unbelievable in a lot of ways."

Carolina tied it up at 14:32 in the second period with a tip-in by Hamilton off a deep shot from Jaccob Slavin.

Lemieux countered with his first goal of the season at 18:04 when he tipped in a long shot from Tony DeAngelo.

Buchnevich, who assisted on Lemieux's goal, scored on a backhand. It came just 75 seconds into the third period and after a turnover by Carolina defenseman Jake Gardiner.

The Rangers have won five of their past seven games, after going winless in the five games.

NOTES: LW Erik Haula, who leads Carolina with eight goals, missed his second straight game with a knee injury. ... The Rangers have 13 sets of back-to-back games this season. They beat Detroit 5-1 on Wednesday and the Hurricanes on Thursday. They lost both games in their first set of back-to-backs



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earlier this season. ... The 22 shots in the first period were the most for Carolina in any period this season.

UP NEXT

Hurricanes: At Ottawa on Saturday.

Rangers: At Florida on Sunday.



NHL experts on first-month surprises to buy or sell

We're a little more than one month into a 2019-20 NHL season that has included some major surprises, including the Buffalo Sabres in a playoff spot, the Edmonton Oilers leading their division, Darcy Kuemper leading all netminders in save percentage and goals-against average, and the San Jose Sharks ... well, the less said about their start the better.

To help digest some of these trends, we convened our panel to buy or sell a baker's dozen of hot takes based on the results after one month:

1. Despite the Boston Bruins' start, the Tampa Bay Lightning are still the best team in the Atlantic Division.

Emily Kaplan, national NHL reporter: Well, they aren't playing like it. The Lightning seem haunted by last season's collapse. They need to regain their confidence. Meanwhile, the Bruins are buzzing. Entering the week, they had been trailing in games only about 10% of the time. Ridiculous.

Chris Peters, hockey prospects analyst: Sell. If the Lightning were better than the Bruins, they would be handling the absence of Victor Hedman a lot better than they are. In theory, they should have the depth to minimize the negative impact, but they're bleeding goals at an even more alarming rate.

Dimitri Filipovic, hockey analytics writer: Sell. The Bruins are the best all-around team in the league right now. Their stingy defensive system and ability to split starts evenly makes life easy for goalies Tuukka Rask and Anton Khudobin, they're a top possession team at 5-on-5, no one scores more quickly and frequently than their power play does, and they have the most dominant top line in hockey in Patrice Bergeron, Brad Marchand and David Pastrnak.

Rick DiPietro, radio host and former NHL goalie: Sell. The Bruins are not only the best team in the Atlantic Division right now, but also they're playing like the best team in the NHL. They have the most versatile line in the NHL and one of the league's best goalies --

not to mention their power play is currently clicking at 31.4%. Tampa Bay has tons of talent, but right now Boston is the better team.

Victoria Matiash, fantasy hockey analyst: Buy. Boasting the best top line in the league, the Bruins are the better team right now, but the Lightning, still sporting the greater wealth of talent overall, will be the better team by late January and thereafter (it's a long season).

Ben Arledge, associate NHL editor: Sell. You can't really claim any team anywhere is better than the Bruins right now, despite the talent on the Tampa Bay roster. Injuries to the Boston lineup might be the only thing that would cause a change in the Atlantic Division winds.

Sachin Chandan, fantasy hockey editor: Sell. The Bruins have decisive advantages defensively, offensively and on special teams, and though Tampa Bay's problems are fixable, I can't look away from the Bruins, who have been the best team in the league so far.

2. The Sabres and Oilers will both make the playoffs.

Kaplan: Sell that it'll be both. I feel stronger about the Oilers than I do the Sabres. Edmonton is too dependent on their top players to score. But the production Leon Draisaitl, Connor McDavid and James Neal have put up is too absurd, and they could drag this team in.

Peters: Buy the Oilers. Sell the Sabres. The Pacific Division is so tight right now, but I'm not sure how good it is. The Oilers have enough to keep above the fray, assuming their top three scorers stay healthy. It's a precarious situation for them. The Sabres, meanwhile, have shown a few cracks lately. I don't know if they have the depth defensively to keep pace with a division I expect to improve.

Filipovic: Sell. It's scary to bet against McDavid and Draisaitl, but the early wins the Oilers have been



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piling up have regression written all over them. They've been awfully fortunate to go 6-1-2 in one-goal games, they're somehow getting top-10 goaltending out of Mike Smith and Mikko Koskinen, and I can count on one hand the number of goals they've been able to squeeze out of their bottom six.

DiPietro: Sell. Buffalo is clearly headed in the right direction, but I'm not sure this is going to be the season. The Pacific hasn't been good, and the Oilers have arguably the most dynamic offensive duo in the NHL with McDavid and Draisaitl. Mike Smith is off to a great start in net with a .931 save percentage. If the goaltending holds up, the Oilers have a good chance.

Matiash: Sell. Based on the strength of the competition in the Atlantic, the Sabres are in a tough spot. The scene in the Pacific Division isn't nearly as menacing for the Oilers.

Arledge: Sell that both will be there. I think the Oilers will slide into the postseason if the eventual Smith/Koskinen implosion doesn't completely derail them, given the weakness of the Pacific Division and their hot start. But Buffalo is still a year away in the stacked Atlantic.

Chandan: Buy Edmonton. Sell Buffalo. I expect Buffalo to have trouble in a crowded Atlantic, but Edmonton has shown that it has the firepower, and if the goalie tandem can continue to maintain enough of its performance (.890 save percentage on high-danger shots), I can see this team claiming a spot in the West.

3. The Washington Capitals should do a 50-50 timeshare in goal.

Kaplan: I don't buy it. Ilya Samsonov is the Capitals' starter of the future, and I love that the 22-year-old is already getting NHL exposure. But Braden Holtby is still the No. 1 guy right now. Let Holtby play out his contract year as the starter, and then see what happens.

Peters: Sell. Samsonov has been really strong, and his upside is immense, but this is a player in his second North American pro season who has six total NHL games under his belt. Holtby's body of work stands above his slow start, and he deserves to keep his job, but there's no harm in limiting his workload relative to previous seasons.

Filipovic: Buy. Here's how many regular-season games were started by the No. 1 goalie of every team that won a playoff round last season: 62, 61, 45, 45, 43, 40, 33, 30. Every team that doesn't need to scratch and claw for a playoff spot should be playing the long game and keeping its top guy fresh.

DiPietro: Sell. The Capitals look like a team destined for another run at the Stanley Cup, and they will lean on Holtby to get them there. Keeping him fresh for a long playoff run should be a priority, so Samsonov will play, but it won't be a 50-50 split.

Matiash: Sell. As long as Holtby continues to compete more often than not, like he has since that key slump-busting win over the New York Rangers in mid-October, we're not in 50-50 territory yet.

Arledge: Buy more of a timeshare. Holtby seems to have turned the corner a bit from his early-season struggles, but the Caps are at their best when they can look to two goalies. With a good debut from Samsonov and the Caps' four-point lead in the Metropolitan Division, I'd call for a 60-40 split between the two netminders for now -- with Holtby on the 60 side -- to keep the team's 30-year-old No. 1 fresh.

4. James Neal will score 40 goals.

Kaplan: Sell, though I say he finishes high 30s. Neal's 23.4 shooting percentage is obviously high -- in fact, it's more than double his career average. That should come down a bit. Neal is a consistent 20-something goal scorer who plays best when he's confident. He's clearly feeling it these days.

Peters: Sell. My initial thought was that he had enough of a jump-start to make it happen, but looking more at the numbers, I'm less certain. Neal is tied for seventh in the NHL with 26 individual high-danger scoring chances at all strengths this season, per Natural Stat Trick. He drops to 119th when you look solely at even-strength individual high-danger chances and 113th in even-strength individual scoring chances. I think there's too much of a reliance on the power play for him to reach 40.

Filipovic: Sell. He has been a roughly league-average 12% finisher throughout his career, and if he were doing that this season, he'd be on pace for 28 goals. Let's bake in the early goals he has already banked, and something in the range of 30 seems reasonable. But this is still a home run for the Oilers, considering what they paid to get him.

DiPietro: Sell. Neal is off to an incredible start, but eight of his 11 goals have come on the power play, and a 23.4% shooting percentage isn't sustainable. The 11 goals already put him four ahead of the seven he scored in 63 games last season in Calgary, but I don't think he gets to 40.

Matiash: Sell. Unsustainable shooting percentage aside, he won't be able to hit 40 unless he scores 30 on the power play, which I'm suggesting he most certainly will not do.



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Arledge: Sell. Eleven in 17 is a good start, and he's pacing toward 53 tallies, but Neal hasn't come close to 40 since he hit that in 2011-12 with the Penguins. Good start aside, these Oilers aren't the 2011-12 Penguins. Expect regression from a ridiculous 23.4 shooting percentage (eight points over his career high) sooner rather than later.

Chandan: Sell. I agree with Ben that Neal cannot maintain that astronomical shooting percentage, but I expect him to finish with mid-30 goals.

5. Elias Pettersson will finish in the top 10 in scoring.

Kaplan: Buy. As a team, I expect the Canucks to fall back to earth a bit. But I don't know if Pettersson will. Pettersson is building off his rookie debut -- in which he became a one-man highlight reel -- and is generating even more high-danger scoring chances. He has been especially effective at 5-on-5.

Peters: Buy. He's well on his way. Pettersson has shown marked improvement in each of his post-draft seasons from when he was in Sweden to now. He's only three points ahead of where he was at this point last season, but he has looked more dominant with the benefit of experience. The only way I think he falls out of the top 10 is if he gets injured again.

Filipovic: Buy. After a relatively slow start to the season, he has been putting up video game numbers, rattling off six goals and 14 assists in a 12-game stretch. It's almost impossible to defend him because he's such a dual threat, and he'll gladly take whatever the opposing team gives him and make them pay. Coach Travis Green feeds him all of the offensive zone starts he can handle, he gets to pass to a lethal trigger man in Brock Boeser, and he's the main man on what's looking like a dangerous power play now that Quinn Hughes is on it.

Matiash: Sell. Slight skirt-around answer, but based on his physical stature and the way he plays, I'm concerned about him not completing a full, healthy season.

Arledge: Let's go with buy -- if he stays healthy. It took 96 points to make the top 10 last season but just 89, 75 and 77 in the previous three campaigns. Pettersson's 82-game pace last season would have put him at 76, and he's pacing toward 109 this season. I think 92-95 could land him a top-10 finish.

6. A defenseman will finish in the top 15 in scoring.

Kaplan: I buy it. John Carlson is currently fifth in league scoring -- above his teammate Alex Ovechkin -- and Roman Josi and Dougie Hamilton are hovering one point outside the top 15. I think they'll stick around.

Peters: Buy. Carlson and Hamilton look like the two guys who are going to threaten, and I'm certainly not going to bet against Carlson, who has trended up offensively the past three seasons. He has been a great power-play performer, but 16 of his 23 points have come at even strength this season.

Filipovic: Buy. I'd bet against it, but for the purposes of this, let's have some fun. Carlson is off to a preposterous start, and based on the sheer volume of opportunities he's getting, there should be many more points to come. He's top-five in overall minutes and top-10 in power-play minutes, and he gets to play with a collection of tremendously gifted players.

DiPietro: Sell. John Carlson is well on his way to winning the Norris Trophy, but I think he comes up short of the top 15 in scoring. Last season, his teammate Ovechkin was 15th in the league with 89 points, and the last defenseman to reach that benchmark was Sergei Zubov in 1993-94.

Matiash: Buy. On pace for nearly 120 points, John Carlson is a legitimate threat to break 100, which should land him comfortably in the top 15, if not top the 10.

Arledge: Buy -- or at least very close. Over the past 10 seasons, the best we've seen is Brent Burns finish with 83 points in 2018-19. Carlson will reach 90 this season, thanks to an early 1.44 point-per-game pace and a spot on a talented Capitals power play.

7. The Sharks will be a lottery team.

Kaplan: Sell. I have faith that the Sharks can turn it around. They'll at least be a wild-card team. One of the issues for San Jose early is that their top defensemen are overtaxed. Getting Radim Simek back will help.

Peters: Buy. The Sharks are dead last in the NHL in even-strength save percentage, at .875, and have the third-worst team save percentage at all strengths, at .882. I don't know if they're going to be able to score enough to overcome that.

Filipovic: Sell. The early returns have certainly been quite alarming, but the Sharks still have enough star power on the roster to be better than they've shown. They also can't really afford to throw a season away at this point, both because they don't have their first-round pick and because most of their main players figure to get worse in the coming years.

DiPietro: Buy. The Sharks are currently giving up the fourth-most goals per game and are 26th in scoring. An .882 team save percentage is a glaring problem, and their inability to keep the puck out of their net will keep them out of the playoffs.



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Arledge: Buy. There will be only 82 games for the Sharkies this season. Goaltending is somehow still a glaring issue that San Jose seems content with leaving to fix itself. It won't, and even if the Sharks finally break the cycle and deal for a goalie, it'll be too little, too late in the talented West.

Chandan: Buy. Look, last season's St. Louis Blues showed that anything can happen with a coaching change and a new goalie, but San Jose's problems -- and lack of flexibility to swing big trades -- mean they will likely be gifting the Ottawa Senators a lottery pick, thanks to the Erik Karlsson trade.

8. The Arizona Coyotes will trade a goalie before the deadline.

Kaplan: Sell. This season, Arizona seems fixated on getting over the postseason hump. Unless the Coyotes get a spectacular deal for one of their netminders (a top-six scoring forward or top-pairing defenseman), I don't expect them to subtract anything from this roster. They don't want to repeat last season, when they just missed the cut.

Peters: Sell. If there is a deal out there that fills a hole for a team with eyes on taking the next step, I don't doubt GM John Chayka will explore it. The issue, however, is that the Coyotes have a young goalie just starting his pro career in Ivan Prosvetov, and I'm not sure Adin Hill is quite ready for full-time NHL backup duty.

Filipovic: Sell. In today's game, it's a tremendous asset to have two goalies you can rely on. Plus, it's worth remembering that prior to becoming a revelation last season, Darcy Kuemper's previous career high for starts in the NHL was 28. Considering that Antti Raanta has eclipsed that mark only once himself, the Coyotes are better off keeping both of them and not overtaxing either one.

DiPietro: Sell. Kuemper has seized the No. 1 duties and is establishing himself as an elite starting goalie in the NHL. Coming off what was a career-best campaign in 2018-19, he leads the league in goals-against average (1.69) and save percentage (.940). Raanta is a nice insurance policy if Kuemper gets hurt, and I'm not sure the Coyotes would be offered enough for him to make it worth messing with a position that has to be considered one of their strengths.

Matiash: Sell. As the old, grizzled GM saying suggests, sometimes the best trade is the one you don't make. I envision that Arizona's management, with a hopeful eye to playoff competition, will lean in that direction.

Arledge: I'd say sell. Expect the Coyotes to be every bit in the middle of a wild-card race, and though many teams will be asking -- and the Yotes could use upgrades elsewhere -- goaltending is a position of immense strength for them, and they won't want to disrupt that, given Raanta's injury history.

9. Mark Stone will be a Hart Trophy finalist.

Kaplan: Not quite. He might sneak into the discussion for Selke Trophy -- becoming the first winger since Jere Lehtinen in 2003 to do it -- but I don't think we're talking Stone for Hart just yet.

Peters: Sell. He was my almost-off-the-board preseason pick, and a lot of that was tied to my thinking that the Golden Knights could be Presidents' Trophy contenders. He's averaging 1.13 points per game so far for a good Vegas club, but I think guys such as Connor McDavid and David Pastrnak are going to out-produce him for playoff teams, and that will edge him out.

Filipovic: Buy. He's the best player on what I still believe could be the best team in the West. He's somewhat quietly on pace for 41 goals and 92 points, and with the way Vegas is using him on the power play, he should easily be able to set career highs in both. It almost seems unfair for a player as good as he is defensively to be putting up the type of offensive numbers he is now.

DiPietro: Sell. Stone will be the MVP of the Golden Knights, but I'm not sure he'll have enough offensive production to make him the NHL's MVP.

Matiash: Sell because that means beating the odds of besting all but two of Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl, David Pastrnak, Sidney Crosby, Jack Eichel, Nathan MacKinnon and all the other elite skaters who find their strides in the coming months.

Arledge: Sell. Here's what I think happens: Stone hits 95-100 points for a playoff-bound Vegas team -- an MVP-caliber campaign -- but misses the finalist list and is considered a "snub" when the results are released.

10. The New York Islanders will finish second in the Metro.

Kaplan: Sell. A 10-game winning streak (and counting) certainly gives them a cushion. If I were them, I'd be worried about the Pittsburgh Penguins making a late push -- especially when the Pens get everyone healthy.

Peters: Sell. The Islanders have more than earned the hockey world's respect with the way they've played. There's so much to like, but I don't think their .931 team save percentage is going to be an all-



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season thing, which could see them lose their grip on a top-two spot.

Filipovic: Sell. But that isn't a knock on the Islanders, who are once again completely sucking the life out of their opponents under the watchful eyes of Barry Trotz and Mitch Korn. I rank the Capitals and Carolina Hurricanes slightly ahead of the Isles in the Metro because of the different ways they can beat you on a nightly basis.

DiPietro: Buy. The 10-game winning streak is great, but what's even more impressive is the 1.70 goals-against average in that span. Last season was not a fluke. The Islanders are again the best defensive team in the NHL, with a 2.14 goals-against average and a .931 save percentage this season. They might not have the offense to overtake the Capitals, but that kind of team defense should be enough to finish second.

Matiash: Sell. Once it all works out in the 82-game wash, they won't finish above the Penguins and/or Hurricanes, let alone the Capitals.

Arledge: Sell, but they are a playoff team. Think No. 3 in the division or a wild-card-turned-playoff-spoiler.

Chandan: Buy. The Islanders' winning streak has proven that they can get balanced scoring, the goalie play has been sharp, and they spent only 16% of time trailing during this win streak. All of that puts them in the right position to continue picking up points.

11. Mikko Rantanen's injury will have a bigger impact on the Central race than Vladimir Tarasenko's injury.

Kaplan: Buy. Aside from Thursday's onslaught, it sure has looked that way. The Blues have been scraping together wins without Tarasenko. The Colorado Avalanche have struggled without Rantanen (but are also missing Gabriel Landeskog off the top line). St. Louis simply has more depth.

Peters: Buy. I think the Blues have a deeper forward lineup than the Avs. I still like Colorado to make a lot of noise, but seeing what has happened to the Avs as injuries compound is impossible to ignore.

Filipovic: Buy. The Avalanche rely so much on their top line to do the heavy lifting offensively, and the Rantanen injury in conjunction with Landeskog's absence is a mammoth loss. Tarasenko is the best goal scorer and most dangerous offensive threat in St. Louis, but the Blues' depth and defensive structure at least give them something to fall back on in the meantime.

DiPietro: Buy. The Blues haven't skipped a beat in the six games without Tarasenko, going 5-1. The Avalanche are 2-5 without Rantanen and Nathan

MacKinnon is great, but with Rantanen, he's an MVP candidate. If this team wants to have a chance to win the Central, that's who they need MacKinnon to be.

Matiash: Buy. In comparison to the top-heavy Avalanche, the Blues have the greater depth up front to compensate for the loss of Tarasenko.

Arledge: Absolutely buy. Consider that MacKinnon has an expected goals-for percentage of 71.2 with Rantanen on his wing and just 45.4 without him, per Natural Stat Trick.

12. One of the two offseason darlings -- the Rangers and New Jersey Devils -- will make the playoffs.

Kaplan: Buy. The Devils could still make it, despite their horrible start. New Jersey has responded well ever since assistant GM Tom Fitzgerald got behind the bench, and Jack Hughes continues to look more and more comfortable out there.

Peters: Sell. I think both are going to build over the course of the season and improve, but I don't think either organization can or should make the changes that might be necessary to be a more formidable playoff contender. More patience is needed.

Filipovic: Sell. Neither one of them can manage to keep the puck out of its own net nearly often enough, albeit for different reasons. The Rangers have absolutely no idea what they're doing in their own zone defensively, and the Devils' goalies rank 30th in save percentage and haven't given us much reason to believe that'll change.

DiPietro: Sell. Both teams had really impactful offseasons and bad starts to their regular seasons. The Rangers are young and inconsistent, and the Devils are still trying to figure out their goaltending situation. Kaapo Kakko and Jack Hughes will be great, but it's going to take some time.

Matiash: Sell. Although I think the Rangers have enough pieces in play to make it interesting late, the Devils don't have the goaltending to squeak it out this season.

Arledge: Buy. It has been a slow start for the rapid-rebuild Rangers, but I like them to steal a wild-card spot with a late run once they get out of their own way. The Devils? Not so much.

Chandan: Sell. Although the Blues showed it can be done, the Devils and Rangers would have to make up ground on the Bruins, Capitals, Hurricanes, Toronto Maple Leafs, Islanders and more ahead of them.



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13. At age 37, Pekka Rinne will be a Vezina Trophy finalist, despite a rough outing on Thursday.

Kaplan: Buy. Rinne has been great so far. I know all he cares about is getting over his personal playoff hump and winning a Stanley Cup. The Predators have a decent shot this season. I love how their offense has rebounded from stagnant to super-productive in one offseason.

Peters: Buy. I am absolutely sticking with my preseason Vezina pick. Rinne leads the NHL in high-danger save percentage with a .938 mark, but he's also not facing as many high-danger shots against as some of his peers, thanks to the team in front of him.

Filipovic: Sell. He's going to pile up the wins because the Predators are going to give him plenty of goal support, but I'm skeptical that his other ratio stats will be stingy enough to warrant top-three consideration. The team in front of him has really opened things up offensively and looks like it'll be involved in more high-scoring shootouts than in seasons past. His starts have been dipping from 66 to 61 to 59 to 55 in

consecutive seasons and should drop even further, given his age and Juuse Saros' presence.

DiPietro: Buy. If you're Pekka Rinne, I'm not sure you could've asked for a better start. The Predators are well-coached and sound defensively, which will have Rinne where he needs to be in wins, goals against and save percentage.

Matiash: Buy. I had Rinne winning it in last season's early stages, too, so yeah, sure.

Arledge: Let's go with buy. Sure, Rinne will probably slow down a good deal in the second half. But just one loss in regulation through 11 starts, a pair of shutouts and solid numbers show he's still among the best when he is on his game.

Chandan: Sell. As good as Rinne has been so far this season, I expect backup Saros to pick up more starts as we get into calendar 2020, as Rinne has seen his games started total decrease the past four seasons. Moreover, Nashville has played the second-weakest schedule so far, and things will obviously get more difficult.

YAHOO! SPORTS

NHL Mailbag: What's wrong with Jets captain Blake Wheeler?

By Ryan Lambert

If there has been a prevailing theme for the season so far it has been that the unexpected keeps happening. By points percentage, the Islanders, Canucks, Oilers, Sabres, and Coyotes are all in the top 10. Meanwhile, Vegas, Toronto, Pittsburgh, Calgary, Tampa, and Dallas range from 12th to 22nd. San Jose is 28th.

For very understandable reasons, people are more fixated on the disappointments than the pleasant surprises, and that goes for both teams and individuals. So there is plenty to talk about.

Let's go:

Shawn asks: "What is wrong with Blake Wheeler? Is it fixable?"

I guess you mean that he's only got eight points through 16 games this year, but the problem really isn't offense. By expected goals (based on his own shot attempts), he should have six instead of five, but the team has actually overperformed offensively by about 2.2 goals. Maybe you chalk that up to him, Patrik Laine, and Mark Scheifele having high talent levels.

The problem has been defensively, which has never been Wheeler's or Laine's "whole thing." Interestingly, it's Scheifele — usually pretty good defensively — who appears to be the drag this season. And while Josh Morrissey is probably a good enough defenseman that he'd be fine with some help, the fact is that if he's playing this much with Neal Pionk, he doesn't have that help, y'know?

The Jets are a mess right now and everyone seems to be getting hit with that reality somewhat evenly.

But the other thing with Wheeler is, well, he's 33 and sometimes it just kinda gets away from you a bit at that age. Scheifele and Laine don't have that problem, but if Wheeler suddenly can't keep up with his linemates offensively, that's potentially not something that gets fixed.

One last thing, and you can apply this kind of thing liberally throughout the Jets' lineup as well: His PDO is under 98 right now, which always makes you look worse than you probably are.



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John asks via email: "Should the Penguins be concerned enough about Murray to look at other alternatives, and if so, who?"

Very little concern, if at all. Even if we're just going by save percentage (not the best metric for goaltender evaluation anymore but certainly a baseline), he's well above the league average at .917.

He has, however, allowed more goals than his score- and venue-adjusted expected-goals against, by a shade over 1, in all situations. Much of his problem is at 5-on-5, but he's coming off a season in which he was way above expected (plus-11.1, 10th in the league) at even strength. So given Pittsburgh's struggles in front of him and the fact that it's a very small sample skewed badly by an excellent Bruins team absolutely kicking the hell out of the guys in front of him, I'm gonna say "give it a minute."

Especially because there are plenty of other teams with serious goaltending concerns and very few who have extra would give up a goalie for something other than an astronomical price.

Jake asks: "When does Nico Hischier get Selke nominations?"

I generally agree that Hischier is underrated, but the last couple seasons he arguably wasn't even the best defensive forward on his own team. That was Kyle Palmieri. That said, the answer to your question is: When the Devils are good and he takes a step offensively.

Yup, it's a "defensive" award but as we know it usually goes to a guy with 50-plus points, minimum, whose team isn't abjectly awful, as the Devils have been. But one thing he's definitely done that voters go nuts for: He's gotten his faceoff percentage from 45.2 last year to 58.5 so far this season.

Interestingly, by WAR so far this season, Hischier has been below replacement level defensively.

He's got a ways to go yet but yeah, obviously I like the player.

WLuper asks: "What's the deal with Carolina not being dialed in? They've improved on paper. Do they miss the leadership of Justin Williams that much?"

Man, tough crowd. I guess they're "not dialed in" because they ONLY have the second-best adjusted

expected-goals difference in the league. It's due to an elite offense, which more than counterbalances a subpar defense.

It's not like it's even hurt them: They're comfortably third in their division behind two teams that are volcanically, unsustainably hot. A team with a 10-game win streak is three points ahead of them with a game in hand and we're worried about this? Okay.

Let's put it this way: The Hurricanes "should" score about 54.8% of the goals in their games. So far they have scored 53.9%. If being "dialed in" means adding 1.5 goals to the offense and stopping an extra 0.21 goals at the other end over 15 games, I dunno. It might cost them three points in the standings. And that's if they play exactly this "badly" all year.

Mitch asks: "Which of the following players who is currently leading his team in points is most likely to still be leading his team at the end of the season? John Carlson, Travis Konecny, Nick Schmaltz, or Matt Tkachuk?"

Tkachuk or Schmaltz. Probably Schmaltz. He's good and his team's long-tenured most talented players are getting up there. Tkachuk is also good — better than Schmaltz — but his team's most talented players are just going through a slump right now and should be fine.

Elliot asks: Has there been a worse free agent signing than Erik Karlsson, the \$11-million a year given to someone who looks like he doesn't like playing defense anymore?"

The thing I said earlier about PDO and stuff? Yeah, at 5-on-5, Karlsson's is currently 94. That's not to say he's been good, because he hasn't, but let's rein it in a little here.

I hate to keep banging the drum on this but Karlsson's xGF share when he plays with Vlasic is 32.5 percent; the Sharks should give up about two goals for every one they score with those two out together. When it's Karlsson without Vlasic, the number is 52.2 percent. Their real goals share is 5-1 against, or 16.7 percent.

I think I've identified the problem.

Marcus asks: "Is Toews's contract actually worse than Seabrook's right now?"

Yeah. Sure. Why not.



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SB NATION
CANES COUNTRY

Metro Roundup: Canes Struggle to Create Separation

The Canes drop two games to bottom-of-the-Metro foes, while the Isles continue to win.

By Zeke Lukow

1. Washington Capitals: 25 Points (11-2-3)

The Washington Capitals spend another week at the top of the Metropolitan Division and it's no surprise that their offense is still elite. They have only scored fewer than three goals twice and exactly three goals three times. The Caps average 3.94 goals per game, only .06 goals behind the Nashville Predators who lead the league in goal scoring. The scores are coming at even strength and on the power play, but the Caps aren't relying on their power play like in years past.

The Caps have the fourth highest shooting percentage at 9.8% at even strength, and have recorded the third most even strength goals with 38. They have 12 power play goals, which is also tied for third place with a 25.9% success rate. While everyone expects Alex Ovechkin to lead the team in goals, which he does with 11, the surprise has been Jakub Vrana who is second with nine including a hat trick on Sunday against the Flames. The Caps are just overpowering teams to victory, even with just league average goaltending from Braden Holtby and Ilya Samsonov.

2. New York Islanders: 22 Points (11-3-0)

With a win on Tuesday the Islanders now have the league's longest winning streak at 10 straight games, scoring three or more goals in nine of those wins and posting a 1-0 shutout of the Sabres in the other game. Everything is working for the Isles, even down to rookie Cole Bardeau who scored his first NHL goal on a penalty shot on Tuesday against the Ottawa Senators. They aren't relying on their power play during this period, with 31 of their 34 goals coming at even strength.

It is important to remember, though, that a long winning streak early in the season doesn't guarantee anything. The Sabres won 10 straight last November before ultimately finishing 13th in the Eastern

conference and sixth in the Atlantic last season. The Sabres, coincidentally, also ripped off their wins without much power play success, with just two more power play goals in their 10-game streak compared to the Isles streak. It is only the beginning of November and so much can happen between now and April.

3. Carolina Hurricanes: 19 Points (9-5-1)

The Hurricanes came into the season with expectations to make the playoffs and go on another run. While their October tied the best in franchise history, they have laid two eggs in a row, losing to two of the bottom three teams in the division, both of whom looked vulnerable coming into the game. While two games aren't the end of the world, if you want to compete for a top spot in the division you cannot lose to the New Jersey Devils and the Philadelphia Flyers. You must deal with the bad teams in your division to create separation.

The Canes decided to also go with 11 forwards and seven defensemen again against the Flyers, and again lost that game. Rod Brind'Amour said before the game that this is easy and that he can just play his best forwards more, but the Canes are yet to win when they deploy this group. Clearly, they still don't know what to do with Haydn Fleury. They don't feel comfortable enough to play him over Trevor van Riemsdyk in a full-time position but are worried - with good reason - they will lose him for nothing if they put him on waivers.

It seems that, by not calling up a player before Eetu Luostarinen joined the roster on Wednesday, they are trying to save as much cap as possible. This could be for two reasons. They could be holding out hope that Justin Williams will return, or they will be buyers at the deadline. The Williams situation is a lot easier because they can sign him to an incentive heavy contract which would carry a theoretical cap coverage over to next season. Buying at the deadline, on the other hand, means they would need every penny. The difference between taking a whole contract and having a team retain salary can cost an additional pick or asset.



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4. Pittsburgh Penguins: 17 Points (8-6-1)

The Penguins finally have good news on the injury front. They have Evgeni Malkin back and he is already making spectacular plays. He had a spin-orama assist earlier in the week against the Boston Bruins on Monday. The only player they now miss is Patric Hornqvist who at this point is more of a salary burden than he is a threat, so with him on LTIR it will free up more space for the Penguins moving forward who have been cap strapped.

The Penguins have lost their last two games against the Edmonton Oilers and Boston Bruins and have one more test against the Islanders before they have a streak of get right games next week. They play against the Blackhawks, Rangers and Devils, and it will give Malkin and other injured players time to get comfortable in the lineup again. The Penguins are the most dangerous when Malkin is finding the back of the net. He has just two games back from injury and has seven shots but has yet to hit the score sheet.

5. Philadelphia Flyers: 16 Points (7-5-2)

Flyers fans had two things to be excited about on Tuesday. First, it was Gritty Chia Pet giveaway night. Second, they beat the Hurricanes by a score of 4-1. They won the same way they have earned points in their last three games: on the back of their power play. They have now gone 3-for-9 on the power play in their last two games, while also being perfect on the penalty kill, a big reason why they are earning points. Their top six is clicking. Sean Couturier, Oskar Lindblom, and Claude Giroux are all averaging a point per game in their last five games.

However, their bottom six has struggled to perform consistently. Kevin Hayes, Michael Raffl and Jakub Voracek have combined for 11 goals this season but have only a single goal since October 26th. They have been rotating in and out players from the AHL Lehigh Valley Phantoms in their fourth line. The latest addition is Mikhail Vorobyev who will get his shot as German Rubtsov failed to impress the bosses in his latest three-game call up. Rubtsov had a 28% Corsi and only a single shot in three games.

6. New York Rangers: 13 Points (6-6-1)

The Rangers are no longer last in the division, but still lost to the struggling Ottawa Senators by a score of 6-2 on Monday. That game was wild, featured multiple fights and at one point saw the Rangers penalty box crammed full of four different players. Despite the Rangers being basement dwellers and everyone knowing that coming into the season, they still get national television games — even when facing another bottom-feeder in the Detroit Red Wings under

the marketing strategy of “Original Six” despite them having 20 points between them. Hockey!

Tonight, the Rangers take on the Hurricanes on the back half of a back-to-back. They are expected to start Alexandar Georgiev. Greg McKeeg also got a start last game over Lias Andersson, but the Rangers could keep him in in a rare McKeeg revenge game! The only real threat coming into tonight’s game is the top line that consists of Mika Zibanejad, Artemi Panarin, and Chris Kreider. If they can shut down that line, the Canes should be picking up two points and righting the ship after a bad loss to the Flyers.

7. Columbus Blue Jackets: 13 Points (5-7-3)

The Jackets have now lost five straight games and have a division worst -17 goal differential heading into a three-game road trip to Arizona, Colorado and Montreal, which is not what the doctor ordered. The Blue Jackets are struggling to score this season. In five of their 15 games they have scored one or zero goals and have a second worst 2.33 goals per game. It’s not for a lack of trying, though: their 33.1 shots for per game is top 10 in the league and are averaging more shots than their opponents this season.

The main issue is that their power play is scoring at just 12.5%. Canes fans know well that you have to get some of these as free goals to win games. They have a 5-2-3 record in one goal games and have no wins by two or more goals this season. Fixing the power play troubles could change their fortune in these games. The good news is that both the power play and their shooting percentage of 5.5% should both regress back to the mean.

8. New Jersey Devils: 12 Points (4-5-4)

Despite two straight wins, the New Jersey Devils are still mired at the bottom of the division. A bright spot in their struggling season is Taylor Hall who has a six-game point streak and eight total points during this streak. Hall’s impact on the team and the season has been huge over the first five weeks of the season. He has 13 points in 13 games despite only having two goals and a career low 4.8% shooting percentage. His 42 shots and five power play points also lead the team.

Much has been talked about with Hall who just wants to be on a winning team for once. Most of the Devils off season moves were likely done to attract Hall to stay. This week when the Devils head to Calgary to play the Flames, GM Ray Shero is set to meet with Hall’s agent about his future. These meetings will determine whether Hall will re-sign or want a trade at the deadline.



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Lundqvist puts on a show as Canes fall 4-2 to Rangers

It was every bit as frustrating as you might imagine.

By Brian LeBlanc

RALEIGH — Forty-four times in his Hall of Fame career, Henrik Lundqvist has taken the ice against the Carolina Hurricanes. In 21 of those games, including Thursday, the goaltender known as the King has made 30 or more saves.

Entering Thursday's game, he was 16-4 in those games. You can now make it 17-4.

Lundqvist stole the show, making 45 saves including 22 in the first period alone, almost singlehandedly leading the New York Rangers to a 4-2 win over the Carolina Hurricanes at PNC Arena.

Time after time, especially early, the Hurricanes made Lundqvist work, but he showed no apparent effects of having played the night before. The Hurricanes' first period saw them own possession to the tune of a 78% relative Corsi at even strength. They outchanced the Rangers 13-2 in high-danger opportunities. The Canes had 11 shot attempts on two first-period power plays; the Rangers had the same total in the entire period.

And none of it mattered, thanks to the brick wall in the Rangers' net.

The Hurricanes could have helped themselves, to be fair. Warren Foegele hit the post on what might have been the Canes' best chance of the game. Eetu Luostarinen, making his NHL debut, saw his first goal jump over his backhand with Lundqvist down and out.

All the missed chances were sure to come back to bite the Hurricanes, and they did just that in the final minute of the first period when Dougie Hamilton lost track of Artemi Panarin in front of the Carolina net and the Russian star made no mistake. Shots after 1: 22-7 Carolina. Score after 1: 1-0 New York.

Hamilton at least made amends late in the second period, tipping home a Jacob Slavin point shot for his seventh goal of the season to tie the game. But it only took three and a half minutes for the Rangers to take the lead again, on a Brendan Lemieux deflection with Brett Pesce in the box for tripping.

Less than a minute into the third, the Rangers doubled their lead with a backbreaking goal when Jake Gardiner turned the puck over to Pavel Buchnevich, who set up Filip Chytil for a tap-in at the goal line. The dominance of the game at one end had, yet again, resulted in leaky play at the other, and you could say few in the crowd were surprised.

From there, the spotlight again turned to shine on the ageless Swedish netminder. Lundqvist stoned Nino Niederreiter on a 2-on-0 with the Rangers caught in a line change exactly midway through the period, sending the not-insignificant contingent of Rangers fans in the building into an "M-V-P" chant.

With 4:02 left, after Rod Brind'Amour had swapped Sebastian Aho and Lucas Wallmark, the Canes pulled it to within a goal. Aho's centering pass glanced off the stick of Lias Andersson and past Lundqvist, exactly the type of excuse-me goal that the Canes needed to put into the Rangers net.

But it wasn't enough, and with Mrazek pulled for the extra attacker the Hurricanes couldn't keep old friend Adam Fox from salting the game away into the empty net. The Canes have now lost three games in a row, and what should have been a week of collecting points over teams that playoff teams should expect to beat has instead turned into a week of soul-searching and disappointment.

In other words, welcome to November, Carolina Hurricanes style.

They Said It

Rod Brind'Amour:

These are tough ones, because you played a pretty good game. I thought we were the better game from start to finish, and their goalie was great. It happens. In 82 games, your goalie steals one here and there, and that's what happened. I thought the other night we were good too. We didn't get rewarded in the first period the other night, it was the same kind of thing. It's tough, when you play like that you feel like you should score more goals than we did, for sure, but that's the way it goes sometimes. So you just have to pick the pieces up. I'm happy, because that's the way it should look, for me. I like the fact that we did pretty much everything we wanted to do, and we just didn't get the result.

You never want to get scored on anytime, but to me the early one (in the third) is the one that frustrates you, because we just kind of took a little breath there and it's in the net. The first period we played flawless, really, except for one shift, and that ended up in our net too. Right now we probably have to play almost a perfect game, it feels like. But that's the game that I'm looking for out of our group. It looks right, it's the style of play we want to play, and I'm pretty sure if we can play like that we're going to win a lot more games than we lose.

[So you're in full process-not-results mode now.] I'm in results mode, but what are you going to say after



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that? Bad game? I mean, you'd be stupid. That was about as good a period as we could have played to start a game. We've started every game on time, we've been really good in the first period, we just haven't gotten the goals to go in. It's the NHL. The other team's going to have some pushback at some point. They had a couple chances they buried, that's going to happen. We just have to find a way to hit the back of the net. If you're getting the opportunities, which tonight we certainly did, that's all you can ask.

You've got to keep believing in it. As long as you're believing that's the way we need to play, you're going to be fine. What you don't want to have is guys start doing their own thing, and thinking that's the way it's going to get done. That's what we have to guard against right now, thinking that we have to do something different. That's the way it should look. The results will come if we keep playing like that.

It was one of those games where we had a certain matchup ideology that we were trying to stick with. Our fourth line was fine, so I wanted to get them out there.

Warren Foegele:

I thought we came out pretty hard, and for the most part we dominated that game. The bounces didn't go our way, and a couple of key saves for them. The result wasn't what we wanted, but we worked really hard tonight and had so many grade-A chances.

We just keep chugging away. We talked after the Philly game about what we needed to do, and tonight was more the way we know how to play. A couple of mistakes cost us goals, but we kept shooting pucks, getting on top of their D and working them, and their goalie played really well tonight.

Jacob Slavin:

If we can continue to play like that, we'll win more games than we lose. You play the whole first period, pretty much every shift in their end, then you give them one little break and it kills all the momentum you gained in that period. We came out strong again in the second, kept it to our game, then the goal to start the third kills it. We obviously wanted to come out strong, take it to them right away. It's a dagger.

Any loss is frustrating, but when you do it the right way and catch a couple bad bounces, a couple tough breaks, it's definitely more frustrating. But there's some light in that, just playing the right way. We just

have to keep playing like that, keep getting pucks to the net from everywhere in the offensive zone, and let our forwards go to work down there. We were hemming them in down there for most of the first period, and most of the game. We just have to keep doing what we did.

Game Notes

- In a vacuum, I agree with the sentiment that the Hurricanes just need to stay the course, which was the message down the line tonight. But the "what, me worry?" vibe glosses over some serious defensive deficiencies. Mrazek wasn't great tonight, but he was done no favors. Two Rangers goals came directly off Hurricanes defensive miscues: Hamilton losing Panarin on the first goal and Gardiner turning the puck over on the third.
- Slavin and Brind'Amour are right that they'll win more games than they'll lose when they're controlling zone time the way they did tonight. But the way they'd win those games is in a track meet. This isn't a team that can win a 2-1 game right now.
- Brind'Amour clearly trusted Luostarinen, who had 9:21 of ice time and could have had more. He was a victim of circumstance more than anything as the Canes shortened their bench in the third period. The rookie acquitted himself well, and has more than earned a longer look.
- The one thing that was clearly running on all cylinders was the power play. The Canes made a slight adjustment to running more plays from behind the net, and it gave them some really good looks. That's the one spot you can point to and say that the effort will pay off without needing to caveat it.
- Quietly, Martin Necas has a four-game point streak. It's the second time he's done that this season, and we're in game 16. Kid's good.
- The Canes were scheduled to practice tomorrow, but will take the day off. They'll fly to Ottawa in the afternoon to prepare for Saturday's game.



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Henrik Lundqvist stands on head as Canes drop third straight

By Ryan Henkel

A goalie can steal a game for a team and that's exactly what happened to the Carolina Hurricanes in their 4-2 loss to the New York Rangers.

Despite facing 47 shots in the span of 60 minutes, New York netminder Henrik Lundqvist stole the game for his team with a multitude of impressive and athletic, but ultimately timely, saves.

"These are tough ones because we played a pretty good game," said head coach Rod Brind'Amour. "I think we were the better team from start to finish and their goalie was great. That happens. In 82 games, your goalie steals one or two here or there and that's what happened."

While one could say that the late period goals that the Rangers capitalized on knocked the wind out of the Hurricanes' sails, it was honestly only the goaltending that allowed them to win.

"I think that was just coincidence," said alternate captain Jaccob Slavin on the late goals. "I think it starts from play earlier in that shift which leads to an icing and then a goal. We just have to get those things out of our game. Turning pucks over at the blueline has seemed like the story the past couple of games and that's where the other teams have been getting their chances and we've been giving up goals."

The Hurricanes assaulted the Rangers through the first period, bombarding them with a barrage of shots helped along by dominant zone time and two power plays. However, Lundqvist, the Hurricanes' heel who is now 22-4-0 in his last 26 starts against Carolina, turned away every one of the 22 shots that he faced through the first period.

Feeding off of Lundqvist's energy, New York managed to pull out a dagger goal that brought the building's decibels to near-zero. With less than 30 seconds remaining, Artemi Panarin got separation and slammed home a centering feed from behind the net to give the Rangers the lead after one.

The Hurricanes broke the metaphorical ice late into the second, just like they drew it up, with defenseman

Dougie Hamilton redirecting a Slavin point shot from the slot in past Lundqvist.

However, the Rangers responded right back with another late goal, this one on the power play. Brendan Lemieux tipped the shot directly in front of Carolina netminder Petr Mrazek who had no chance at making the save.

New York extended its lead right off the gun at the start of the third period as Pavel Buchnevich stole the puck and was allowed to skate unimpeded right through the crease and stuff the puck past a sprawling Mrazek.

"You never want to get scored on any time, but to me the early one was the one that frustrates," Brind'Amour said. "We just took a breath there and they get their chance and it's in the net."

The Canes kept trying, pouring the shots and chances onto the Rangers, but it was Lundqvist who held strong.

It was only with under five to go in the third that the Canes managed to close the gap on a lucky bounce. Sebastian Aho attempted to make a centering feed, however the pass was deflected by the stick of New York's Lias Andersson and right past Lundqvist.

Carolina couldn't muster another past that though, and the Rangers put in an empty-net goal as time expired to seal the game.

"We came out pretty hard and, for the most part, we dominated that game," said Hurricanes forward Warren Foegele. "The bounces didn't go our way and there were a couple of key saves for them. The result isn't what we wanted, but we played hard tonight and had so many grade-A chances."

Now the losers of three straight, all to teams in the lower half of the Eastern Conference, the Canes are struggling to find any consistency.

The Hurricanes will head back onto the road north as they take on the Ottawa Senators Saturday, Nov. 9 in the first game of a home-and-home series.



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TriangleSportsNetwork

Hurricanes losing streak continues with 4-2 loss to Rangers

Carolina coach Rod Brind'Amour says "You gotta keep believin' in it"

By Peter Koutroumpis

RALEIGH, N.C. – They fired pucks early, often and from everywhere, but they just couldn't score enough.

That's what happened to the Carolina Hurricanes on Thursday night when they suffered their third loss in a row, a 4-2 decision to the New York Rangers.

Goaltender Henrik Lundqvist continued his career dominance over the Canes, equaling his season-high of 47 shots faced while making a season-high 45 saves to earn the win for the Rangers.

Even though Dougie Hamilton and Sebastian Aho were able to get on the score sheet, Carolina's efforts couldn't surpass chasing one and two-goal leads.

Petr Mrazek suffered his first loss at PNC Arena this season, making 15 saves on the night.

"These are tough ones – we played a pretty good game," Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour said.

"I think we were the better team from start to finish and their goalie was great. I mean it happens."

Lapsing late

Despite outshooting the Rangers by a 22-6 margin, Carolina trailed 1-0 as the first period drew to a closing following Artemi Panarin's eighth goal of the season.

Lundqvist's armor was finally chinked at the 14:32 mark of the second when Hamilton redirected fellow defenseman Jaccob Slavin's point shot.

However, just over three minutes later New York regained the lead on the power play, the result of Brendan Lemieux's redirect past Mrazek.

New York pushed its lead to two when Pavel Buchnevich's individual effort from deep in the Canes zone beat the keeper.

Aho's sixth goal of the year cut the Canes deficit to one with 4:02 remaining.

Adam Fox's empty-net goal once again pushed the margin to two goals and remained that way for the final 85 seconds of play.

"A couple of bad bounces, a couple of lapses on our side of things, and that's the game," Slavin pointed out.

"They get one little break and it kills the momentum we gained that whole (first) period. We came out strong in the second and kept it to our game. That goal (against) to start the third period – we obviously wanted to come out strong and took it to them right away – it kinda puts a dagger in – you don't have to get one, you have to get two to just tie it up."

Hitting a wall

Lundqvist extended his record in the last nine meetings against Carolina to 8-1-0, allowing two goals or less.

Overall, his dominance playing against the Hurricanes stands at a 22-4 record, winning the most games than any other opposing netminder since 2005-2006.

Once again, despite repeated Grade-A scoring opportunities, the only thing standing in Carolina's way on this night was the future Hall of Famer.

"I thought we came out pretty hard," forward Warren Foegele stated.

"For the most part we dominated that game, you know. The bounces didn't go our way, a couple key saves for them. The result wasn't what we wanted, we worked so hard, had so many Grade-A chances."

Don't stop believin'

While "pick up the pieces" has become a common sound bite from Brind'Amour following losses, the Canes bench boss wants to ensure that his players stay focused on their process of how to play to be successful.

He has stated in postgame interviews that he likes the way his team has played despite not getting the bounces in recent games to score more, win games and post more points in the standings.

The Hurricanes currently hold a 9-6-1 record, tied with Pittsburgh for third place in the Metropolitan Division with 19 points.

"You gotta keep believin' in it," Brind'Amour said.

"As long as you're believing in 'that's the way we gotta play', then you're gonna be fine. What you don't



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wanna have is guys start doin' their own thing and not thinkin' that 'that's the way it's gonna get it done'. That's what we have to guard against right now thinkin' we have to do something different. That's the way it should look – the results will come if we play like that.”

Notables: Carolina finished 0-2 on the power play, 11-51 (21.6%) overall...On the PK, the Hurricanes went 1-2, 47-59 (79.7%) overall...Hamilton's goal tied him with Washington Capitals' John Carlson for the league lead for defensemen...Forward Eetu Luostarinen made his NHL debut, earning his chance following a five-goal, two-assist start in 10 games played with the AHL's Charlotte Checkers.



Hurricanes Need to Thin Out Defensive Logjam

By Matt Cosman

Just when you thought the Carolina Hurricanes had solved their defense surplus and we could finally stop talking about it, we're back to square one.

Trading away Justin Faulk in September was a necessary move that gave the Hurricanes a balance of six NHL-proven defensemen to start the season while Trevor van Riemsdyk recovered from offseason shoulder surgery. But now that van Riemsdyk is healthy, the 'Canes are being forced to sit one of their seven blueliners when all seven should be playing regular NHL minutes.

The two men on the bottom of the totem pole are van Riemsdyk, who becomes an unrestricted free agent (UFA) at season's end, and Haydn Fleury, who has battled to earn a permanent spot in the lineup the past three seasons. Van Riemsdyk is a six-year veteran who has played 322 games for the Chicago Blackhawks and Hurricanes. Fleury has been playing the best hockey of his career this season and deserves to be in the lineup. So what's the best course of action?

7 Defensemen, 11 Forwards Needs to be Retired

The seven-defensemen, 11-forward lineup strategy is used occasionally by coaches dealing with injuries up front. Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour has turned to this tactic for three games this season with forwards Jordan Martinook and Erik Haula out of the lineup, but this configuration hasn't been working, and it's time for the experiment to be put to rest.

The Hurricanes have lost all three games in which they've run seven defensemen. Beyond the lack of success, Brind'Amour doesn't exactly use his bench advantageously in these situations. Fleury is

averaging just shy of 13 minutes per game when Carolina dresses six defensemen. But in the three 7-D games, Fleury's time-on-ice (TOI) has been drastically reduced, even resulting in a career-low of 1:30 Oct. 24 against the Columbus Blue Jackets. Fleury took just three shifts that game.

Though it hasn't worked out yet, Brind'Amour added he doesn't mind the seven-defensemen structure. "It's a little tougher to manage sometimes, but your better guys get a lot more ice time out of it," he said following Wednesday's practice.

Obviously things changed in a hurry, as later that evening the Hurricanes recalled forward Eetu Luostarinen. The recall of Luostarinen, their second-round draft choice in 2017, finally gives Brind'Amour 12 healthy forwards to his disposal, but it doesn't address the extra defenseman – Fleury – whose services are being wasted watching from the press box.

The Obvious Solution

The Hurricanes have a noticeable lack of scoring depth up front. Even when healthy, players like Brock McGinn and Warren Foegele have been filling top-six spots. And while they're both high-energy players who are effective when used to their strengths, their role is not to be a main generator of offense. If the Hurricanes encounter any more injuries to their top offensive players, it could quickly become a problem.

It's no secret Hurricanes general manager Don Waddell is seeking a top-nine forward to fatten out the forward corps. It's been especially rumored the 'Canes might have interest in the New York Islanders' Joshua Ho-Sang or Jesse Puljujarvi from the Edmonton Oilers – two players who have had fallouts



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with their respective teams. But if it was really that simple, the trade would have already happened by now, and since it hasn't, it could suggest Waddell is feeling sketchy about taking a risk on them and may be looking elsewhere.

Carolina's gap up front should have been addressed by moving Faulk, who had higher trade value than van Riemsdyk or Fleury does. But instead, Waddell settled for defenseman Joel Edmundson, and 19-year-old prospect forward Dominik Bokk, who is still several years away from being a candidate for that position.

Now, Waddell has three lower-end defensemen on expiring contracts, and one will have to go if they want to make any attempt at balancing their lineup. Edmundson and van Riemsdyk are pending UFAs, while Fleury will be a restricted free agent (RFA) this coming summer.

Which Defenseman Should Go?

Ideally, the Hurricanes should find a suitor for van Riemsdyk or Fleury, as Edmundson has become a valuable penalty killer and strong physical presence on Carolina's blue line. It's uncertain if van Riemsdyk is interested in returning next season or if he wants to test the free agent market. However, it's clear Brind'Amour prefers him in the lineup to Fleury, who has been scratched four times in the seven games since van Riemsdyk's return.

Preferably, you want an equal composition of left- and right-handed defensemen and the Hurricanes have that with van Riemsdyk. He's also more experienced at 28 years old and combined with his UFA status and \$2.3-million cap hit, it dampens his value to teams seeking affordable back-end depth.

Enter Fleury. Fleury is younger at 23 years old, and as a former seventh-overall draft pick who has struggled to earn ice time with the Hurricanes, he could flourish in a fresh, new environment. But that's just one of the reasons Fleury should be the player on the trading block in Carolina.

With a higher trade value than van Riemsdyk and more potential for longevity, Fleury can offer teams – even those tight against the salary cap – a cheaper option to add to their blue line. He comes with a cap hit of only \$850,000, which is a steal as a young stay-

at-home defenseman on your bottom pair. His pending RFA status would make it easier to re-sign him at the end of the season, and he has plenty more game to offer – he just needs to be given the confidence and opportunity to let it all out.

Defensive Depth Is Not a Concern

Injury scenarios must always be considered, but the Hurricanes have a wealth of defensemen with the American Hockey League's Charlotte Checkers ready to fill a spot if need be. Gustav Forsling and Frederik Claesson, both acquired over the offseason, have over 100 games each of NHL experience.

Meanwhile, youngsters Jake Bean and Chase Priskie have gotten off to hot starts with the Checkers, most notably Priskie, who is currently tied for the lead in points among AHL rookie defensemen with eight points in 10 games.

The Hurricanes are known to stockpile defensive gems in their system and they have plenty of guys coming down the chute in the next few years. They're best off paying their dues with the Checkers for now, but they can be emergency options in the event of a Carolina blue line catastrophe.

It's been a struggle for Fleury throughout his young career. He was drafted ahead of players like William Nylander, Nikolaj Ehlers, Dylan Larkin and David Pastrnak, and has never been able to elevate his game to the expectations of a top-10 pick.

He was looking to solidify himself with the team after signing a one-year contract in July in what was supposed to be a prove-it year. He's been on the fringe of the Hurricanes' lineup since his 67-game rookie season in 2017-18, but now that the 'Canes are becoming a serious contender and the roster is filling out, the demand for talent and strength has never been higher, and he continues to be pushed down the depth chart.

It would be to the benefit of the Hurricanes and Fleury to either make space or move on, because as Fleury enters the prime of his career, there are plenty of teams that would be happy to have him on their side, and plenty of value for the Hurricanes to collect in return.



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Canes Place Alex Lintuniemi On Unconditional Waivers

By Nicholas Niedzielski

The Hurricanes today put Alex Lintuniemi on unconditional waivers for the purpose of terminating his contract.

The 24-year-old defenseman, who signed a one-year deal with Carolina over the summer, appeared in four games for the Checkers this season.

Notebook: Plain And Simple

By Nicholas Niedzielski

The Checkers are coming off a weekend to forget.

They were able to salvage a single point in the two-game set with Cleveland by forcing Friday's contest into overtime, but a blowout loss the next night left Charlotte with hardly any positive takeaways.

"We're not working hard enough, plain and simple," said head coach Ryan Warsofsky. "To be a pro you have to play at an extremely high level and we're not doing that right now."

At the 10-game mark of the season, the Checkers sit just a shade under .500. That's hardly the worst-case scenario, but in a tough division like the Atlantic every point will hold significance come playoff time.

Warsofsky hasn't minced words regarding his team's early-season performance and his message has been clear, but he understands the responsibility his staff has to get things turned around.

"At the end of the day, it's up to me to get these guys to buy in and work a little harder," said Warsofsky. "It's up to the coaches to put the game plan in place and prepare these guys to play at a high level."

Wrangling together a group heavy on new faces isn't an easy task, but Warsofsky has plenty of familiar, dependable players on his roster, and he's counting on them to pull from what made last year's team so special.

"It's also up to our leadership group to step up when things aren't going in the right direction and bring the guys together," said Warsofsky. "These are some

guys who won a championship last year. The bar has been set and it hasn't been good enough and it has to be changed."

Warsofsky has been walking the walk as well, putting the team through a tough string of practices featuring a lot of high-tempo skating.

"I think we've had a few good days of practice," he said. "We need to turn the page on last weekend and our effort needs to be way higher. Our work ethic and our compete, they need to be brought up to another level. It wasn't good enough."

In the grand scheme of things, it's still fairly early in the season and a quick winning streak could get Charlotte out of this funk and back on track. And while stringing together wins is the ultimate goal, the Checkers are taking things a step at a time.

"It would be huge but that can't be our mindset," said Warsofsky of putting together consecutive victories. "We can't win three games on Friday night. Each guy has to do their job to an extremely high level and we need to play together."

NEW LOOK

The Checkers are looking to shake things up in an effort to get on the right track, and a flurry of transactions this week seem to be forcing their hand anyway.

With Erik Haula day-to-day with an injury, the Hurricanes have recalled Eetu Luostarinen from Charlotte. That's a big blow for the Checkers, as the rookie forward has been the most consistent offensive performer on the roster.



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"This is the AHL, guys go up to the NHL, guys come up from the ECHL," said Warsofsky. "You have to deal with it."

On the flip side, the move opens up an opportunity for players to rise to the occasion.

After starting the season with Charlotte, Jacob Pritchard was sent to the ECHL's Greenville Swamp Rabbits, where he chipped in three points (2g, 1a) in five games. With some confidence on his side, the rookie jumps back up to the Checkers, as does Greenville standout Cedric Lacroix, who has two goals in his one career AHL game.

One forward the Checkers will be without for a bit is Stelio Mattheos. After making his return to the ice over the weekend after undergoing cancer treatment throughout the summer, the rookie has been sidelined once again, although not under the same circumstances.

"He's going to be out probably long term," said Warsofsky. "Nothing cancer related, just lower body."

On the defensive side, the logjam opened up a bit as Alex Lintuniemi was placed on unconditional waivers to return back to Europe. With Fredrik Claesson still a question mark – he spent the week in a yellow no-contact jersey and was absent from Thursday's skate – there is still a chunk of blueliners looking to solidify an everyday spot in the lineup, and this weekend is a great chance to showcase themselves.

"The next guy up has to step up," said Warsofsky.

That doesn't just go for the players on the fringe of the lineup either.

"I believe that every guy in this locker room can play at another level," said Warsofsky. "That's as simple as it gets. We haven't seen the best from some players, it's been very inconsistent at times. We need to raise

our focus, our awareness, our engagement in the hockey game so we're at our best."

LOOKING FOR OFFENSE

One of the Checkers' biggest struggles over the weekend was finding production offensively. They mustered just two goals over the two games in Cleveland, and now find themselves ranked in the bottom half of the league offensively.

"We'll tweak the lines a little bit," said Warsofsky. "We've introduced some new concepts this week in practice to help us score some goals."

After ramping up shot production over the previous few games, the Checkers couldn't replicate that over the weekend, logging just 21 and 23 shots in the respective contests. Granted, Cleveland stands as one of the league's top defensive squads, but the Checkers had a hard time creating the quality chances they've been successful on earlier in the season.

"There's been some times where we've had our structure and done what we need to do without the puck and things have turned out pretty well," said Warsofsky. "When we get away from that is when it ends up with us playing defense for 30 or 40 seconds. You can't sustain pressure or any zone time when you're playing defense the whole time."

That idea of Charlotte's struggles in other areas affecting the offensive production is something Warsofsky points out as one of the team's biggest issues.

"I'm not really worried about us scoring goals, that's honestly the least of my worries," he said. "I'm more worried about how hard we're going to work and how hard we're going to be to play against, the details and our habits. Because I think if we play the right way our scoring chances will go up and we have guys who can score goals."



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SportScan

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

1160337 Carolina Hurricanes

It's that time of year, when it's hard to tell whether the Canes are coming or going

BY LUKE DECOCK

NOVEMBER 07, 2019 09:37 PM

RALEIGH

The seasons and the years change and, this fall, many of the players as well, but there's nothing that says Carolina Hurricanes like a bit of November navel-gazing, warranted or not.

With this franchise, perhaps more than some of its peers, there's a tendency to overreact to individual results, especially at this point of the season. Given the trouble the Hurricanes have historically had getting out of October, that's not entirely unreasonable, especially the way the NHL standings tend to ossify by mid-November.

So when you take a hot start and follow it with a bit of a muddle, as the Hurricanes have, the mood swings can be dizzying. After Thursday's 4-2 loss to the woeful New York Rangers extended the Hurricanes' losing streak to three games, all against

divisional opponents, the optimism so redolent around these parts a month ago has been long forgotten.

The Hurricanes walked away with a 47-19 edge in shots on goal and zero points, but they're still a respectable 9-6-1. The sky is not falling. But it's also fair to say the Hurricanes are stumbling along at something less than their full potential. Rod Brind'Amour was thrilled with the Hurricanes' performance. Other than, you know, the goals they didn't score and the defensive breakdowns they allowed.

"That's the way it should look, for me," Brind'Amour said. "We did everything we wanted to do. We just didn't get the result."

This dynamic was especially acute coming off Tuesday's 4-1 loss at the Philadelphia Flyers, a game where the advanced stats disagreed with the optics. In the eternal tug of war between the analytics quants and the scouting department, the Hurricanes passed the math test and flunked the eye test on that night, losing for the sixth time in 10 games after a 5-0-0 start.

All of which left the Hurricanes at a bit of a crossroads Thursday, with the rebuilding Rangers in town, fast and young but not equipped to grind, teams able to do the latter having given the Hurricanes the most trouble in recent days.

That's a change from last season. With all the turnover and all the injuries, the Hurricanes have had a tough time recapturing the end-to-end hustle that brought them so much success, playing more of a finesse game by necessity with Justin Williams



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taking his gap year and Jordan Martinook out. Brind'Amour was asked before the game if that alteration in identity was deliberate; he visibly cringed at the question.

It doesn't help that some of their best players haven't gotten off to the best of starts, or that Jake Gardiner — who turned the puck over in his own zone for the Rangers' back-breaking third goal early in the third — is going through the same difficult adjustment to Brind'Amour's system Dougie Hamilton went through a year ago.

The Hurricanes' ability to get back to that style, playing fast and aggressive, leaving the opposition gasping for air, is the real litmus test of this early going, more than the results, even. It's a work in progress, and even on nights when they take advantage of favorable circumstances — at home against a team like the Rangers — they're not always rewarded.

After getting nothing out of an overwhelmingly dominant first period on Thursday, it took them 31 shots to score on Henrik Lundqvist, and a pair of late-period defensive breakdowns left them trailing 2-1 heading into the third period, a sequence of events so deeply evocative of Bill Peters' tenure that it ought to have been sponsored by Kinetic.

"We talked after the Philly game what we need to do, and tonight was more the way we needed to play," said Warren Foegele, who was unable to finish any of his several first-class scoring chances, including a late two-on-one.

"We had a couple mistakes that cost us goals, but we kept shooting pucks, getting on top of their D and working them, and their goalie played really well tonight."

These are, it goes without saying, the kind of games good teams win, have tucked away in their pocket in April when the stragglers are scrambling for the playoff spots that are left.

But it also goes without saying that even a three-game losing streak — two of them at home against teams unlikely to make the playoffs — isn't cause for abject panic.

"If we play the way we played tonight," Jaccob Slavin said, "we'll win more than we'll lose."

The Hurricanes need to convert these opportunities, but it's equally important for the long term that they recapture their identity. Thursday was a step in that direction. Just not a big enough step.

News Observer LOADED: 11.08.2019

1160338 Carolina Hurricanes

Rangers' Lundqvist stymies Canes again as Rangers win 4-2

BY CHIP ALEXANDER

NOVEMBER 07, 2019 09:32 PM

RALEIGH

Henrik Lundqvist was quick to call it a tough test. And, he said with a smile, a fun test.

The Carolina Hurricanes threw 47 shots at the New York Rangers goalie on Thursday, including 22 in the first period. Dougie Hamilton scored in the second period for the Canes and Sebastian Aho in the third.

But Lundqvist stopped all the rest, and from many an angle, from far away and in tight, on slapshots and tips. His season-high 45 saves were the difference as the Rangers took a 4-2 victory over the Canes at PNC Arena.

Lundqvist now has beaten the Canes 22 times in the past 26 games he has been in net against them. But no gloating or chest-thumping by the guy known as "The King" in New York.

"You've got to give them credit," Lundqvist said. "I think they're a great team. They play really fast, they're deep. They kept the pick in (the zone) so many times. They made it really difficult for us to get the puck out and get going.

"But we made some big plays at the right time. It was a fun win on the road."

Fun for Lundqvist, but not for the Canes (9-6-1), who have lost three in a row. Not for goalie Petr Mrazek, who had won 15 consecutive games on home ice, including last season's playoffs, but had his streak come to an end.

The first period could not have been more frustrating for Carolina. Thirteen players had shots for the Canes in the period, only to have Lundqvist remain calm and in control.

It was the first time this season the Canes had 20 or more shots in a period — the Canes also had eight attempts blocked and missed the net 14 times in the first. But they could get nothing past a goalie who now has 453 career wins and one day will be in the Hockey Hall of Fame.

Instead, Artemi Panarin, all but unchecked in the low slot, gave the Rangers a 1-0 lead on New York's sixth of just seven shots in the period.

"I thought we came out pretty hard," Canes forward Warren Foegele said. "The bounces didn't go our way, and a couple of key saves for them. We had so many Grade-A chances."

Lundqvist stopped everything other than Hamilton's redirection of a Jaccob Slavin shot and then Aho's shot that glanced off a defenseman's skate.

"I think we were the better team from start to finish and their goalie was great," Canes coach Rod Brind'Amour said. "I mean, it happens."

It happens a lot when Lundqvist faces the Canes. This time, he did it less than 24 hours after being in net as the Rangers (7-6-1) beat the Detroit Red Wings 5-1 in New York, arriving at their Raleigh hotel about 2:30 a.m.

But Lundqvist, 37, wanted the net again, and Rangers coach David Quinn let him have it. Lundqvist said he felt comfortable going back-to-back while also saying he knew what to expect from the Canes.

"They keep coming," Lundqvist said. "They're getting their D involved in a lot of their plays, and it makes it hard for us to



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defend. I thought we did a pretty good job, especially in the second and third period, to make it hard for them.”

Panarin’s goal, his eighth of the season, was a dagger in the first. So was Brendan Lemieux’s power-play goal late in the second after the Canes had tied the score 1-1 on Hamilton’s goal, the defenseman redirecting a Jaccob Slavin shot.

Pavel Buchnevich converted a turnover by the Canes’ Jake Gardiner into an early third-period goal and a 3-1 lead. Aho made it one-goal game at 15:58 of the third, but Rangers defenseman Adam Fox sealed the win with an empty-netter with 1:25 left in regulation.

“We battled, hard,” Lundqvist said. “We improved after that first period. We were a little lucky being up one after the first, but then we made some corrections and special teams again were a huge part of this win.”

Forward Eetu Luostarinen made his NHL debut for the Canes, who played without center Erik Haula, out with a knee issue. Luostarinen, recalled Wednesday from the Charlotte Checkers of the AHL, forced a first-period penalty on Rangers defenseman Marc Staal and gave the Canes some solid play in 9:21 of ice time centering the fourth line.

Brind’Amour again was left to talk about how well his team played, for the most part, without getting a good result.

“We’ve just got to play, right now, almost a perfect game, it feels like,” he said. “I’m pretty sure if we play like that we will win a lot more games.”

News Observer LOADED: 11.08.2019

1160425 Ottawa Senators

GARRIOCH GAME REPORT: Pageau pulls trigger in OT to give Sens well-deserved win over Kings

Bruce Garrioch

November 7, 2019 11:44 PM EST

SENATORS 3, KINGS 2 (OT)

Winter arrived early in Ottawa with snow on Thursday morning.

Jean-Gabriel Pageau arrived on the scoreboard in the nick of time on Thursday night.

The Ottawa Senators centre scored the overtime winner to vault the club to a dramatic 3-2 victory over Los Angeles Kings in front of 9,929 at the Canadian Tire Centre.

Pageau’s winner at 3:12 of the extra period saved the day after the Senators had surrendered a 2-1 lead to the Kings and looked like they were in big trouble.

Not only was it the club’s third straight victory over the Kings, it was Ottawa’s second consecutive win at home and will give the Senators a much-needed boost of confidence in a game that

turned into a pretty good goaltending battle between Anders Nilsson and Jack Campbell of the Kings.

“We’re starting to build something here,” said Pageau. “Two wins in our last three games and we played a pretty solid game overall. We had a slow start at the beginning, but after that we took over. It was unfortunate that they tied it up. It as good to grab another two points, it was good for the confidence of our team.”

Artem Anisimov and Anthony Duclair scored for the Senators in regulation while Tyler Toffoli and Dustin Brown replied for the Kings.

The Senators looked like they were home and cooled until Toffoli tied it up 2-2 with 7.2 seconds left in the third period. That goal on Nilsson came with the goaltender pulled and the Sens weren’t able to score on an empty net when Connor Brown attempted an ill-fated pass instead of shooting on net.

“I was hoping it would go in the net, but they were a little unselfish there and they were trying to pass it around,” Ottawa head coach D.J. Smith said. “We found a way to win so I’m happy about it. It’s easy to get down on yourself and it’s unfortunate there’s seven seconds to go and we’re not under a guy at the net and they end up banging it in. It hurts, but we found a way.”

Duclair said the late goal didn’t bother the bench.

“No concern,” said Duclair. “Like I said, (Nilsson) played a great game for us and we just wanted to battle it out for him in overtime and get the extra point. It happens. At the same time, we’re not going to dwell on it. We still had the extra five (minutes) and a shootout to get the extra point.”

Anisimov, who missed eight of nine games with a lower body injury before returning Tuesday against the Islanders in Brooklyn, scored his second of the season at 9:50 of the third to give the Senators the lead. That came after some good work by Tyler Ennis in the Kings zone and Anismov went to the net to beat Campbell.

The Senators outshot the Kings 33-28 and Nilsson felt the club got the result it deserved.

“We played one of our best games so far this year,” said Nilsson, who made a game-saver with the paddle of his stick in OT. “We played a solid 60-minute game and we deserved to win after 60 minutes but for the goal there late. It was nice to see we were able to win in overtime.”

Just for good measure there was a little scuffle and discussion between Ottawa winger Brady Tkachuk and Los Angeles captain Drew Doughty, whose rivalry with Tkachuk’s brother Matthew in Calgary has been well-documented. So maybe Brady was just making sure Doughty knew that he wasn’t going to get away with anything in Ottawa, either

You shouldn’t have any issues with the Senators work ethic because they’ve bought into the program under Smith and pushed the pace.

Through 40 minutes, the Senators had some terrific opportunities and finally got on the board with 2:23 left in the second. That’s when Duclair tipped Nikita Zaitsev’s shot from the point by Campbell on the 23rd shot he’d face from Ottawa in this game.



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The Senators must have been wondering if they were ever going to put one home.

The club was finally rewarded for its hard work because they were playing exactly the way Smith wants them to compete every night. That was Duclair's sixth of the season and he did a good job going to the net. The Senators outshot the Kings 24-15 after two periods and really took the play to the Kings in the second alone. They outshot the Kings 15-7 and had Los Angeles on its heels, but they weren't able to capitalize on a power play opportunity midway through the period.

It was no surprise Smith decided to go back to Nilsson after his strong effort in a 6-2 victory over the Rangers Monday on Broadway. He wasn't nearly as busy as Campbell, but made the stops when necessary and there wasn't a lot he could do on the only shot that beat him with Brown in behind the club's blueline.

The Kings opened the scoring with 13:09 left in the second. Brown took a pass behind Ottawa defenceman Thomas Chabot and beat Nilsson to give the Kings a 1-0 lead. And that's the eighth time this season the club has allowed the opening goal.

The Senators and Kings are both in rebuilds to try to get back to respectability, but Smith noted that's where the similarities between the two teams pretty much end because Los Angeles has players left from Stanley Cup wins in 2012 and 2014.

There's been no shortage of speculation about centre Jason Spezza returning to the Senators with the Toronto Maple Leafs in a cap crunch.

But don't go out and buy a Spezza jersey because it's unlikely to happen.

The Senators studied the option of bringing back the 35-year-old centre as an unrestricted free agent in the off-season but, in the end, Ottawa opted not to go that route and it's doubtful they'd pick him up this time if he's put in waivers by the Leafs or traded. Instead, he signed a one-year, \$700,000 deal with the Leafs on July 1, but could be on the outs.

While there's no question Spezza would be a good mentor in the dressing room, the reality is the Senators want their young players in the lineup. The expectation is injured centres Colin White and Logan Brown are both going to be back soon which means if Spezza were brought here, he'd be taking up a valuable roster spot.

That doesn't rule out Spezza returning to the Senators someday. The club would certainly consider the possibility of bringing him back here in a front office role when his playing career is over. He has a great eye for the game, knows talent and could be a good fit to work in the front office to see where he fits in the hockey operations.

Anyone who has spoken to Spezza will tell you he knows players and loves the game.

Bobby Ryan was scratched for the third time in the last five games after suiting up for back-to-back games against the New York Rangers and Islanders.

While the Senators brought up winger Jonathan Davidsson from Belleville to make his debut, Ryan sat in the stands with little-used veteran Mikkel Boedker. This will likely become a regular occurrence for the 32-year-old because Smith likes the game played at a high pace and that's not really Ryan's game.

The key for the club's highest-paid player at \$7.25 million to get back on a regular basis: Work hard in practice and take advantage of his opportunities when he does play.

"It's unfortunate for him," coach D.J. Smith said. "I thought he was okay (against) the Rangers but in the back-to-back our fourth line wasn't very good. It wasn't on him, just the line in general wasn't very good. At this point, he's going to have to get some traction.

"You can never say anyone's in or out every night, but he's going to have to get some traction. In his defence, he's worked hard and he's done all the things he has to but I don't think he's back to his game yet. It's a hard question to answer, I'd like him to be in every night to provide offence for us, but I don't think we're there yet."

So, how does Ryan get traction? Improve at both ends of the ice.

"He's going to have to play, skate, finish checks, track and do all the things that everyone is doing," Smith added. "The message has been here: Everyone has to work, everyone has to track and everyone has to play defence and do all these things.

"We're trying to get a little bit faster so he just has to keep pushing every day. If he gets in and gets going on the power play I think he can get some traction there."

Acquired as part of the deal that sent Matt Duchene to the Columbus Blue Jackets at last year's deadline, the 22-year-old Davidsson suited up for his first NHL game. He got the news from Belleville coach Troy Mann on Wednesday after practice and was thrilled.

"I talked to Troy and he said. We hugged a little bit and we were both very happy. It's very good," said Davidsson.

He scored his first goal of his AHL career this weekend and had three points in eight games with Belleville.

"I had a good weekend," said Davidsson. "I was just happy. I just wanted to go to work. I was happy and I was surprised. It was so exciting. I was so happy."

The call came too late for his family to get here from Sweden, but his girlfriend was with him. His family was watching on television overseas.

"It's a huge moment for me and for my family," Davidsson said.

The Senators made another roster move by sending White to on a conditioning stint because he's ready to return from his hip flexor/groin ailment.

White missed his seventh straight game Thursday, but will suit up for Belleville on Friday against the Syracuse Crunch on the road and if all goes well he could play Saturday against the Hartford Wolf Pack as well.

You have to think he won't be there long and the possibility exists he could join the club Sunday for its road trip to Raleigh and New Jersey.

"I'd like him back as soon as possible but I think he has to play a couple of games," said Smith. "For a young guy, with no practices available, other than a 12-minute skate this morning and a short practice (Friday) I don't think it's fair to put him in a situation and expect him to succeed when he hasn't played in three weeks.



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"If it's one game or two games, he'll be back shortly."

As for Brown, he's resumed skating. Winger Scott Sabourin, who suffered a concussion and has other issues after a devastating collision with David Backes last Saturday in Boston, is on the road to recovery. He's been around the dressing room and is doing well.

"He's doing a lot better," Smith said. "It's more the cuts to his nose (and near his eye) that are sore more than anything."

"There's not really a ton of symptoms outside of that but we'll be really cautious with to make sure when he comes back he'll be 100%."

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.08.2019

1160426 Ottawa Senators

Rookie Brannstrom, after learning a little something watching, returns to lineup

Ken Warren

November 7, 2019 10:23 PM EST

OTTAWA SENATORS

GARRIOCH GAME REPORT: Pageau pulls trigger in OT to give Sens well-deserved win over Kings

"You can see that you have a little more time than you usually take when you're on the ice," the rookie Ottawa Senators defenceman said of being a healthy scratch in Tuesday's 4-1 loss to the New York Islanders. "I think it was good for me to watch the game and see, too."

Brannstrom, who has only one assist in 14 games, returned to the lineup against the Los Angeles Kings on Thursday. Cody Goloubef, who replaced Brannstrom against the Islanders, was once again a healthy scratch against the Kings to make room for the rookie's return.

Brannstrom finished just short of double-digits in ice time against the Kings, checking in at 9:51, again seeing limited time in the third period as the Senators attempted to nurse a late lead.

There is mounting pressure on Brannstrom to showcase more offensive flash because he could be re-assigned to Belleville of the AHL at any point, but he's not getting down on himself.

"I'm starting to feel better out there," he said before the game. "I felt good against Boston (a 5-2 loss last Saturday) and in New York (a 6-2 win over the Rangers on Monday), but I think it can be better."

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.08.2019

1160427 Ottawa Senators

Pageau has taken on front-line presence for Senators today, but what about tomorrow?

Ken Warren

November 7, 2019 10:24 PM EST

Down the road, down the middle for the Ottawa Senators, the conversation has largely revolved around Colin White, Logan Brown, Josh Norris and maybe a name or two from the 2020 entry draft.

But what about the short- and long-term future of Thursday's game-winning goal scorer, pending unrestricted free agent Jean-Gabriel Pageau? As if seeing into the future, Senators coach D.J. Smith labelled him as "our leader up front" before the puck dropped against the Los Angeles Kings.

Pageau promptly scored the overtime game-winner, extending his goal-scoring streak to three games and adding more to his resumé.

Will the Senators re-sign or trade Pageau, who is clearly on a roll offensively, defensively and in a leadership capacity?

Pageau has a team-high seven goals, four in his past three games. His shorthanded effort against the Islanders Tuesday was his second of the season, tying him for the NHL lead. Somehow, on a team that had won only five of its first 15 games, he owns a league-leading plus/minus of plus 15.

"I'm trying to take it day-to-day," Pageau said about nearing the end of the three-year, \$9.3-million extension he signed in 2017.

"Right now, I'm a Senator. I'm trying to get better. I'm trying to help everyone who has questions. I'm not focused on that right now."

That's the boring, team-first answer to his personal situation, but Pageau has never created public relations problems for the organization.

In fact, the Gatineau native has been a solid bridge in selling the organization to fans on both sides of the Ottawa River.

But from where we sit, the uncertainty about his future is hard to ignore.

Pageau, who turns 27 on Monday, is a glue player in the dressing room, the centre that both prospects and veterans want to play with because of his reliability and responsibility.

In NHL terms, he's neither old nor young, headed into what was once considered the prime years of a player's career.

While the Senators have cemented White to the organization with a six-year extension and have high hopes for fellow first-round draft picks Brown and Norris, it says here there's a need for a more veteran presence to guide the early 20-somethings.

Which brings us to the questions surrounding general manager Pierre Dorion's mindset and owner Eugene Melnyk's wallet.

How much is too much for a player who, if things work out the way the organization dreams they will, would eventually evolve into an ideal third-line pivot?



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Players with Pageau's list of intangibles don't come cheaply on the open market.

Just ask Smith, who started the season with Pageau on a fourth line. The sparkplug has since moved from third line to second line to top line, given the club's injury situation.

"He's practising hard, he's skating hard and therefore he's skating in games," Smith said. "A player that is smart like him, he capitalizes on other team's mistakes and there's a lot to be learned there."

If Boston's Patrice Bergeron is the leader for fellow Bruins forwards to follow, Smith says Pageau is the role model for his Senators forwards to emulate. Wherever possible, Smith is using the line of Pageau, Connor Brown and Nick Paul against the opposition's best units.

If the Senators can't afford Pageau, he could become an intriguing trade-deadline pickup for a Stanley Cup contender. His set of skills are even more valuable come playoff time, as witnessed by his success with the Senators in 2017 and 2013.

At this point, Pageau is showing extra jump, fully recovered from the torn Achilles he suffered on the opening day of training camp in 2018.

Outwardly, anyway, the unknown future has been anything but a distraction.

"There are no talks right now and it's not my main focus," he said. "I barely think about it. I'm just trying to give my 100 per cent, just so I don't have regrets. I just want to leave everything out there. I take pride every night I wear a Senators jersey right now, so we'll see. I'm not too worried about it."

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.08.2019

1160428 Ottawa Senators

7 game series: 3 trends that have sparked the Senators

By Chris Stevenson

Nov 7, 2019

There are three trends (good ones) that stand out in our deep dive into the latest Ottawa Senators seven-game segment. There was progress in the quality of shots surrendered, the play of Jean-Gabriel Pageau and Connor Brown and success in the faceoff circles.

They all contributed to the Senators winning three games in the seven-game set.

We're dividing this Senators season into segments to assess the areas in which the team is trending up or down and to establish some benchmarks to check in on how the team and individual players are progressing.

This season is less about winning for the Senators, with the focus on growth and improvement in the rebuild.

Here's our latest look at seven takeaways from the season's second seven-game segment:

1. Shot attempts

One of the things we are going to constantly monitor is shot share, if for no other reason than it's been such a disaster for the Senators over the past couple of seasons.

It's interesting to me that in the first seven games, the Senators and their opponents combined for 554 shot attempts at 5-on-5. In the second seven-game segment, that declined to 485. While they are still giving up more shot attempts than they allow, the Senators allowed an average of five fewer shot attempts a game in the second seven-game segment (298 vs. 263).

Given the Senators' recent history, any progress in reducing opponent shot attempts is a good thing.

Their positive shot attempts also declined by about the same number (222 vs. 256), but there were some score effects at work there because the Senators actually led for some good chunks of games in this segment.

In the past seven games, there have been five Senators north of 50 percent in shot share, according to Natural Stat Trick, and I can't remember the last time we were able to write that:

CF	CA	CF%		
Logan Brown	44	29	60.27	
Brady Tkachuk	104	90	53.61	
Erik Brannstrom	55	50	52.38	
Tyler Ennis	72	71	50.35	
Ron Hainsey	77	76	50.33	

2. Threat

Given coach D.J. Smith's emphasis on boxing out, the Senators have been cutting down on the shots from the high danger area. According to the excellent HockeyViz (@ineffectivemath), the Senators have reduced their dangerous shots this season by five percent (which is still five percent higher than the league average) compared to last season.

Last year:

This season so far:

Hey, a step in the right direction.

3. Faceoffs

The Senators were getting schooled in the circles in the first seven games of the season.

Games 1-7:

Faceoffs Won	Faceoffs Lost	Percentage	Rank
222	226	48.5%	22

But check out how they did in the past seven games.

Games 7-14:



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Faceoffs Won Rank	Faceoffs Lost	Percentage
223 202	52.5%	5

What's been interesting is who has been winning the faceoffs for the Senators.

The workhorses, of course, are the veterans. Jean-Gabriel Pageau and Chris Tierney have taken 127 and 124 faceoffs, respectively, over the past seven games. Both have very respectable numbers: Pageau is at 52.8 percent and Tierney, 50.8 percent.

But how about Nick Paul and J.C. Beaudin in the past seven games?

Smith, of course, has been sheltering the kids. Their faceoffs have been skewed toward the offensive zone. Pageau has taken 67 defensive zone faceoffs (36-31, 53.7%) in the past seven games and Tierney 50 (29-21, 58%).

Paul has taken just 13 (7-6) and Beaudin, 12 (8-4).

But the kids have been getting the job done in the circles, helped a bit by the new rule this season which allows teams to pick which side they want the faceoff to be on after opponents ice the puck and to start power plays.

Said Smith: "I think through the NHL being able to pick your side on the PP, being able to pick your side when it's dumped in passed the red line is going to up the faceoff percentage because you're putting your best faceoff guy out there on his strong side. So I think naturally (faceoff winning percentages) are going to be up."

4. The power play

Starting shifts with the puck certainly helps to drive possession, but I think the improved performance in the faceoff circle has been particularly helpful for the Senators when it comes to the power play.

In their first seven games they were 16-24 in the faceoff circle on the power play. You know how that goes: a lost faceoff usually results in the opponent clearing the puck and costing a team upwards of 15 seconds in power play time.

In the second seven games, the Senators improved to 23-25 in faceoffs on the power play, which is one of the reasons the power play has improved (4.37 percent in the first seven games to 10.3 percent in the second seven-game segment). Also to be considered is that Ron Hainsey scored a goal one second after a penalty against the New York Rangers expired, which would have boosted the success rate a bit, too.

Stick tap to Tyler Ennis who led the Senators with two power play goals in the past seven games.

Smith made some not-so-subtle digs on a frequent basis when it came to the number of power plays the Senators were being awarded. Interesting to note they had six more power plays in the past seven-game segment compared to the opening seven games.

5. Connor Brown

When the Senators acquired the 25-year-old from the Toronto Maple Leafs, the question was how much more offence could he provide with the opportunity to move up in a lineup?

The answer: quite a bit. Brown had two goals and five assists to lead the Senators in scoring over the past seven games.

Brown led the Senators forwards in TOI over the past segment with an average of 20:53 a game, third on the team behind defencemen Thomas Chabot (26:10) and Nikita Zaitsev (23:07). Brown also led the team in shifts per game (29.4).

I don't know if you could have expected Brown to deliver much more than he has so far.

6. Arrow down: Lottery odds

For those fans rooting for the Senators to finish 31st this season and give themselves the best chance in the lottery to get the top pick, it wasn't a good seven-game segment.

The Senators ranked 21st in the NHL for their past seven games with their 3-4-0 record. The Detroit Red Wings took over 31st place by going 1-7-1 in the same time period (Oct. 20-Nov. 6) and being outscored 40-16.

The Red Wings are shaping up as a formidable foe when it comes to the battle for 31st place.

7. Arrow up: Pageau's play

Pageau tied Anthony Duclair for the goal lead in the past seven games with four and was plus-10 on a team that scored 17 5-on-5 goals and two shorthanded goals.

Pageau, who turns 27 on Remembrance Day, is in the final year of a deal that has a cap hit of \$3.1 million. As this season grinds toward the trade deadline, what to do with Pageau is going to be a good debate.

This team is going to need experience during a rebuild and I love the way Pageau plays. He punches above his weight, can play in all situations and shows up every night.

I think the Senators should sign him to a contract extension. Let me know what you think in the comments.

The Senators first seven games by the numbers:

W	L	OT	SO	GF	GA
	SAT FOR	SAT AGAINST		PP	PK
1	5	0	1	14	29
	256	298	1/23 (31)	24/30 (15)	

The Senators second seven games by the numbers:

W	L	OT	SO	GF	GA
	SAT FOR	SAT AGAINST		PP	PK
3	4	0	0	22	21
	222	263	3/29 (25)	23/29 (24)	

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Sabres Game Day: It's a Swedish showcase



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By Mike Harrington

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The NHL in Sweden: With another two-game series at hand between the Sabres and Lightning, Stockholm will be playing host to its 11th and 12th regular-season NHL games this weekend, the most among all overseas locales. All Stockholm games have been played at Ericsson Globe. Following Stockholm are Helsinki, Finland (7 games); Prague, Czech Republic (5) and Tokyo, Japan (4).

Gothenburg is the only other Swedish city to stage an NHL game, when New Jersey beat Edmonton, 5-2, in last year's season opener. Current Sabres center Marcus Johansson played for the Devils in that game.

International experience: It's the second time for each team overseas. The Sabres went 2-0 in 2011, beating Anaheim in Helsinki (4-1) and Los Angeles in Berlin (4-2). The Lightning opened their 2008-09 season by dropping a pair of 2-1 games to the New York Rangers in Prague in the NHL debut of No. 1 pick Steven Stamkos.

The Sabres and Lightning went together to Austria on a preseason tour in 1998, each beating an Austrian club team before Buffalo dropped Tampa Bay, 3-1, in a head-to-head matchup.

Buffalo's Super Swede: The Sabres' all-time leader for career appearances and points by a Swedish-born player is Stockholm native Henrik Tallinder, who tallied 22-94-116 in 532 games with the team in two stints with the team that totaled nine seasons from 2001-14.

The Sabres have six Swedes on their roster in Rasmus Dahlin, Victor Olofsson, Marcus Johansson, Johan Larsson, Linus Ullmark and Lawrence Pilut.

Long break: Did you forget that the Sabres head into today's opener of the NHL Global Series on a three-game losing streak? It's pretty easy to because they haven't played in six days but Buffalo is 0-2-1 in its last three, losing to Arizona (3-2 shootout), Washington (6-2) and the New York Islanders (1-0).

Find the offense: The Sabres have scored two goals or less for five straight games and are 1-3-1 in them.

Back-to-backs: Something will give today because the Sabres are 0-3 in the first game of back-to-backs this season this season (losing to Anaheim, the New York Rangers and Washington) while Tampa Bay is 0-2 (Florida and the Rangers).

Home-ice advantage: Today counts as a Sabres home game, meaning Buffalo will have the last line change. This will be the second time in three years the Sabres will play only 40 home games in KeyBank Center instead of 41. They also did it in 2017-18, when their Winter Classic game in New York against the Rangers at Citi Field was a home game.

Buffalo is 1-3-3 in its other seven home games not held downtown, with the lone win in 2011 against Anaheim in Helsinki, Finland, during its only other overseas appearance. In addition to the games in Queens and Finland, the Sabres twice played home games in Rochester (tying New Jersey in 2003

and losing to Washington in 2005), had neutral-site losses in 1993 against Vancouver (in Hamilton) and Pittsburgh (in Sacramento), and suffered a shootout loss in 2008 to Pittsburgh at the Winter Classic in Orchard Park.

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For Sabres fans from home and around the world, Rasmus Dahlin is in the spotlight

By Mike Harrington

Published Thu, Nov 7, 2019|Updated Thu, Nov 7, 2019

STOCKHOLM – Johan Eskhult drove nearly 70 kilometers from Uppsala in the countryside to the capital of Sweden on Thursday to watch the Buffalo Sabres practice. There was largely one reason why.

Rasmus Dahlin.

Sporting his navy blue No. 26 Sabres jersey, Eskhult was pondering more purchases at a souvenir stand inside the Ericsson Globe with his 11-year-old son, Albin.

"This is huge for me, very huge," said Eskhult, 41. "I watch the highlights the morning after or European Game of the Week. I'm so happy to see him play. I think he's going to be one of the greatest."

The love for Dahlin in Sweden is real. There was big applause when he took the ice Thursday and oohs and ahhs in the crowd as Dahlin scored a goal during a drill with a nifty backhand in the slot. It's the kind of play fans here hope they see more of the next two days as the Sabres face the Tampa Bay Lightning in the NHL Global Series.

"Rasmus got the fans on their feet a couple times out there," Sabres teammate Jake McCabe said after the workout. "We're used to that. We see it every day. I'm just glad all his fans in Stockholm could see that in person."

"We just like the NHL. We like hockey," Eskhult said. "I got the tickets as soon as they went on sale (in March) and we've been very much looking forward to these games."

The games are about the NHL going around the world and showcasing young stars like Dahlin as well as established veterans like former Norris Trophy winner Victor Hedman, the 28-year-old who is the only Swede on the Tampa roster. Dahlin is the biggest international brand on the Sabres' roster and is the biggest reason the team is here, just like most observers thought would happen during his draft week.

The games are a lifetime moment for Dahlin, 19, and the five other Swedes on the Buffalo roster. Of that group, only veteran Marcus Johansson has ever played an NHL game on home soil.

"For me, when I was young, there was no opportunity for me as a kid watching NHL games," Dahlin said as yet another large



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group of reporters from his home country chronicled his words in both Swedish and English. "I think it's a very good idea to come to Sweden for them to see a real NHL game."

There were only about 3,000 fans in the 14,000-seat arena for practice, far less than the crowd rumored to be coming earlier in the week (the games have long been sold out). Swedish fans balked at paying 150 Kroner, or about \$15, for practice tickets, so there were plenty of Americans in the stands.

The crowd may have been small, but it was certainly enthusiastic. Fans leaned over the railing hoping to get autographs or sticks and pucks. The noise grew louder when a player obliged. Dahlin handed a stick into the crowd as he left the ice following practice.

Several players said it reminded them of training camp practices in previous years, when the stands have been nearly full in LECOM Harborcenter.

"There were so many kids and it's obviously such a passionate hockey country," said Buffalo captain Jack Eichel. "It was really cool. I thought it was a great experience."

Kristian Larsen, 29, came from Oslo, the capital of Norway, to see Dahlin. He had a custom-made 50th anniversary jersey with his own name on the back and quickly made friends outside the building with Mick Ridgway, a 28-year-old from Omaha, Neb., who has grandparents in East Amherst and was going old school with a classic 70s white jersey.

"I became a fan when I was about 7 years old," Larsen said. "My dad bought NHL 97 for PlayStation and I thought Buffalo Sabres had the coolest logo. I was bad at defense but I had Dominik Hasek and I loved him."

"I like to watch Dahlin play. He has a bright future. I think he can be bigger than (former Detroit star) Nicklas Lidstrom. I really do. I think Swedish people like him very much. People everywhere do."

Ridgway became a Sabres fan because of his grandparents and said he plays pickup hockey regularly with some Buffalo natives in Omaha connected with Offutt Air Force Base. Being based in the Midwest has allowed him to travel to see Sabres games in both directions of the country. But never overseas.

"You think about what this means and I imagine this is going to be huge for Dahlin," Ridgway said. "When I was a kid, I wanted to get back into hockey so, because of my grandparents, I was like, 'Buffalo is the town' and he's our guy now."

The Sabres have allowed their Swedish contingent to relish the media attention they've been getting at home this week. Coach Ralph Krueger said he's not concerned about Dahlin succumbing to hype, especially given what the native of Lidköping went through during his draft year.

"We had those conversations already and he's managing it really well," Krueger said. "He's excited to play and that's what he needs to be. He needs to have fun through these two games and just play his game. We're keeping it simple and he is too. It will be a wonderful opportunity for the people of Sweden to see him first-hand. We feel he's in a really good space here."

Eichel is a downtown neighbor of Dahlin and roommate Casey Mittelstadt, and said he makes sure to try to help Dahlin where needed on and off the ice.

"He's such a good player, such a good person and a great kid," Eichel said. "He's been everything and more we could ask for. He's an incredible hockey player but you don't get to see how good of a person, how nice he is. He's so humble, it's a pleasure to be around him every day."

Dahlin has just one goal so far, although he has compiled 11 points in 15 games. But his defensive issues have become a bit of a dirty little secret, as he's posted a minus-6 rating the last six games and had several notable struggles with the puck.

"I hope he turns his game back around some here," said Ryan Francis, 36, of Grand Island, who was wearing a Dahlin T-shirt while his father, Mark, sported an Eichel 50th anniversary sweater. "I think he's had a little bit of a sophomore slump. Offensively he's still putting up numbers but defensively he looks a mess. I'm hoping he wants to show off for the crowd and play at a level maybe we haven't seen before. That's where the hope is."

Rick Zinter, a Rochester native now living in Greenacres, Fla., had similar thoughts. He's here with his son Kyle, from Seattle, and friend Lukas Kotecki of Rochester, a season-ticket holder from Section 304 in KeyBank Center.

"He's been a little erratic but a lot of these guys on this team are young," said Zinter, combining his navy Dahlin jersey with a scarf from the Sabres' 2011 trip to Finland and Germany. "They've got a good core that's 19-23 years old. Over the next few years, I could see them doing really well."

The Sabres enter these games six points ahead of the Lightning in the Atlantic Division standings. Dahlin and Hedman are rivals now, a far cry from when Dahlin was 12 and met Hedman, then 21, during a 2012 summer hockey camp.

"To play against him in the NHL, it was pretty weird at first. But I'm here in the NHL, too, so I can't think about it too much," Dahlin said. "But it's awesome. It's really cool to play against him."

"He's a great overall guy. The talent is out of this world, and he's producing on a high level to start the season," Hedman said. "He's just going to become better, and that's pretty scary."

Eskhult was talking about Dahlin some more when Thunderbug, Tampa Bay's mascot, walked by and high-fived his son. The reason? Albin Eskhult was wearing the jersey of Lightning star Nikita Kucherov.

"He doesn't know any better," said his smiling father. "He's also a Oilers fan for Connor McDavid."

Albin's wish? A Tampa Bay win and some good play from Dahlin. The Sabres' fans in town certainly don't want that combination.

"How many years has it been since they've been out of the playoffs?" asked Larsen, the Norwegian. Told the number was 8, Larsen said, "That's a long time. I want to see them win some more."

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After long wait, it soon will be time for Sabres to play hockey in Sweden

By Mike Harrington

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STOCKHOLM – There was a lot of chatter about the trip to Sweden days before the Buffalo Sabres' plane took off on Sunday night. There's been a lot of hype and a lot of free time since it landed Monday morning.

It's finally time to play hockey. The Sabres and Tampa Bay Lightning face off for the first of two games Friday night in Ericsson Globe (2 p.m. in Buffalo) and both teams should be plenty refreshed.

The Sabres haven't played since their 1-0 loss Saturday to the New York Islanders in KeyBank Center. The Lightning, who have been on the road for nearly two weeks, have been off since last Friday's 5-2 loss to the New York Islanders capped a three-game New York metro area trip.

"The batteries are full and we're expecting a real high battle level from both teams," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said after Thursday's open practice in the Globe. "I know Tampa is certainly feeling the same thing as we are. That was our primary focus here: Let's get refreshed in our minds, refreshed in our bodies and let's use this space to really show the best Sabres hockey possible this weekend."

The Sabres practiced for an hour before a crowd of about 3,000 and it was a normal day-before-the-game hard workout.

"It's exciting now that we've gotten adjusted, had those few days of good team bonding and a couple good practices," said Sabres defenseman Jake McCabe. "Now all the publicity and the public stuff is over with and we focus on these two games, two big games. It's a really good team over there and we know the firepower they have. A divisional opponent and that makes it four crucial points on the line."

While the Sabres are just 1-3-1 in their last five games after an 8-1-1 start, it's probably the Lightning who have more urgency here this weekend. In the wake of a 132-point regular season that ended with their stunning first-round sweep at the hands of Columbus, Tampa Bay has gone just 6-5-2 thus far.

The Sabres have done a pretty good job against Tampa in recent meetings, going 3-3-1 over the last seven. Buffalo was 1-2-1 against the Lightning last season, but had the lead in the third period of all four games.

"It's huge for us," Buffalo captain Jack Eichel said. "Obviously we've had a couple tough games recently, played well against the Islanders but the Washington game (a 6-1 loss Nov. 1) wasn't up to our standard. This is a divisional game, it's always a pretty tight game with them."

"There's a lot going on around the game. It's obviously quite the production. The league does a tremendous job showcasing this series but at the end of the day, there's four points up for grabs and it's a divisional opponent. You kind of have to get back into mid-season form, that mid-season mindset of it's two big games and get ready to go."

The Sabres made only one minor change at practice Thursday as Jimmy Vesey took Evan Rodrigues' spot on the fourth line with Casey Mittelstadt and Conor Sheary. As Thursday's lineup stands, the scratches on Friday would be Rodrigues and the defense pair of John Gilmour and Lawrence Pilut.

Tampa defenseman Victor Hedman, the former Norris Trophy winner who is the Lightning's only Swede, was a full participant in practice Thursday and worked on the team's No. 1 power play. He's missed the last two games with an upper-body injury but his presence on the power play indicates he's ready to go.

A reminder on broadcast information for the series:

Friday: The game will be on NBC Sports Network at 2 p.m., with John Forslund and Pierre Maguire on the call remotely from the network's studio in Stamford, Conn. Rick Jeanneret and Rob Ray will have the radio call on WGR and will be doing the game from (716) Food and Sport.

Saturday: The game will be on MSG at 1 p.m., with Jeanneret and Ray on the call from KeyBank Center and simulcasting on WGR Radio.

For the record, the games are being played on an NHL ice surface at 200 feet by 85 and not the larger international surface. The arena can convert to either size, shifting to the smaller rink simply by leaving extra space behind the players' benches and penalty boxes.

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After 'getting my mind right,' Sabres prospect Sean Malone finding his game

By Bill Hoppe

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ROCHESTER – When Sean Malone's injury-plagued, career-worst season ended in April, the West Seneca native needed a mental break from hockey.

So for about a month, Malone, a Rochester Americans forward, said he got away from the sport and "talked to a lot of people."

"I was able to mentally step away from everything, get my mind right," Malone said.

These days, Malone, 24, sounds refreshed. Having compiled three goals and five points in his last five games, he's enjoying perhaps the best start of his career.

"It's been good," Malone said the other day in Blue Cross Arena. "I feel a lot happier right now than I did last year, and I think it's shown in my play."

Still, Malone has struggled defensively, interim Amerks coach Gord Dineen said. The Amerks have three extra forwards, so the lineup changes regularly. Malone has sat out the last two games as a healthy scratch.



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"Very hard," Dineen of scratching Malone for Friday's 4-2 win against Binghamton. "The offensive side of things are one thing, and playing a complete game is another. He ... realizes the things he's got to work on to get back into it.

"The one thing is he's healthy, he's really got a resolve this year, so when he gets the opportunity, I know he's going to change his game."

It wasn't that long ago Malone looked finished in the Sabres organization. In the span of a few months last season, he morphed from a prospect into an afterthought in the American Hockey League.

The injuries – he hurt his knee in Buffalo's first preseason game before enduring upper- and lower-body problems – stymied his development, limiting him to 38 games. Following his appearances, he often looked beaten down by the mental and physical toll.

"It's hard when you're out for a long time, and then getting back and trying to get your confidence, getting hit with another thing," Malone said. "I care too much about this game, and it (stinks) when it happens."

Then in June, the Sabres did not give Malone a qualifying offer as a restricted free agent. Instead, he signed a one-year AHL contract.

"I just wanted to get my game back to where I know I'm capable of," he said. "Obviously, it's tough not getting qualified. But I think at the same time, they saw enough in me to bring me back."

Dineen said Malone, who played one game with the Sabres in 2016-17 after leaving college, has embraced returning to Rochester on a minor-league deal.

"You're kind of wondering how a guy would feel about it, and ... he's very excited about being back and getting another opportunity and being a part of this group," he said.

The genesis of Malone's turnaround started last spring.

"I was able to see the right people to help," said Malone, who wouldn't reveal with whom he spoke to.

The long offseason also helped the former sixth-round pick get healthy.

"It's huge," said Malone, who also battled hip problems in college. "It's a mental burden that's behind me."

Malone also learned to showcase a calmer style – "Not selling out," he said – and make himself less vulnerable when he gives or receives a hit.

"Everyday body maintenance and stuff like that is so important, and I've been doing a good job of getting here early and putting in the work that needs to be done as a pro hockey player," he said. "I had a really good summer. I think it's paid for me mentally and physically."

The versatile Malone has played nine games this season, moving up and down the lineup at center and wing.

"I have that mental ability to play different areas of the ice," he said.

He began the season pivoting a checking line before moving up to left wing beside center Rasmus Asplund and Tage Thompson.

"I'm playing a little more, playing with some pretty good players – offensive players," said Malone, who compiled 12 goals and 22 points as a rookie in 2017-18. "I know that I have the ability to produce offensively. Given the opportunity, I think I can succeed."

If Malone plays on a scoring line, he could pile up more goals. A breakout offensive season might help him earn another opportunity with the Sabres.

"I've been proving myself my whole life," he said. "I just want to prove to them that I deserve to be here and hopefully work my way up someday to an NHL deal."

Forward C.J. Smith suffered a lower-body injury in first period of Saturday's game against Utica and is expected to miss "weeks," Dineen said.

Smith was hit and did not return to the ice.

"He's somebody that we gear our team around as far as making other players better," Dineen said. "That's a significant loss, and for him, too. It's a year he wants to make an impact at every level, and so when you miss periods of time, that's disappointing."

Zach Redmond missed practice early this week with a lower-body injury and his status for Friday's game vs. Binghamton is uncertain. Dineen said he hopes the injury is short term.

Also, Taylor Leier practiced Tuesday in a non-contact jersey, his first practice of the season after undergoing offseason labrum surgery. Dineen said Leier is progressing but did not have a timetable.

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NHL Global Series: Swedish stars pick their own All-Swede Team

Joe Smith

Nov 7, 2019

STOCKHOLM — When you ask a Swedish-born hockey player to build his own all-Swede team, you may get a lineup without him in it.

Perhaps it's just the polite and humble nature of the country's stars, but it still came as a bit of a surprise that when Sabres defenseman Rasmus Dahlin and Penguins veteran Patric Hornqvist were charged with creating their teams, they left themselves off.

Norris Trophy-winning defenseman Victor Hedman didn't even want to pick a lineup — he didn't want to leave anybody out.

But many other Swedes — including legends Nicklas Lidstrom and Daniel Sedin — helped me out with my latest idea for The Athletic. With the NHL's Global Series in Stockholm this week for back-to-back games between the Lightning and Sabres, I asked



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top Swedish players to create a full lineup — four lines, three defensive pairs and two goalies — with current NHLers from their country.

It's a tribute to the depth of talent from the hockey-crazed nation that many players took a few days to think about it.

"Oh, you want a full team?" Predators defenseman Mattias Ekholm asked.

"That's a tough one," Avalanche captain Gabriel Landeskog said.

There are many no-brainers, of course, and Landeskog and Ekholm are included in most of the lineups. As are Hedman and fellow Norris winner Erik Karlsson. The Canucks' Calder Trophy winner, Elias Pettersson, was another top pick. Choosing just six for the blue line might have been the group's biggest challenge.

This may not be the proverbial "golden age" for Swedish hockey, but the blend of dynamic speed, skill and experienced veterans makes the current core of players pretty special.

"It's always tough to compare to '06 when we won the Olympics and had a really good team: (Peter) Forsberg, the Sedins, (Henrik) Zetterberg and (Niklas) Kronwall were in their primes," Ekholm said. "But we're pretty strong for a small country. I feel we have a lot of impactful players on both sides of the ice."

So, without further ado, here are the top Swedish stars' picks for their All-Swede Team. (The charts have been beautifully put together by our Shayna Goldman.)

Nicklas Backstrom, the Capitals star center, was a nearly unanimous pick as the No. 1 center for the All-Swede team. The elite playmaker is one of the game's most skilled passers and has six straight 50-assist seasons. Along with Washington captain Alex Ovechkin, Backstrom has been the face of the franchise, the club leader in assists and is second all-time in points (behind Ovi). Our Scott Burnside wrote over the summer how Backstrom could be the greatest Swedish forward of all time.

Team Sweden forwards Gabriel Landeskog and Nicklas Backstrom break on a faceoff during a 2016 World Cup of Hockey game. (John E. Sokolowski / USA Today)

One player who has quickly put himself on this list was Pettersson, who took the league by storm last season with Vancouver, racking up 28 goals and 66 points in 71 games. Our late writer Jason Botchford wrote how Pettersson changed everything in the city.

"He was really good in Sweden in the playoffs and all that," Ekholm said. "But in the way he came over here, I was maybe surprised that he so quickly transitioned into an NHL player."

Dahlin may have not cracked his own lineup, but he made the cut on Backstrom's squad. Understandably, it was difficult for a lot of guys to come to a consensus on the blue line. The Hedman-Karlsson combo was common, and the Stars' John Klingberg was another regular. Coyotes captain Oliver Ekman-Larsson is someone who everyone raved about and most included in their lineups.

There were a couple of wild cards in the bottom pair, like Backstrom's pick of Alexander Edler and Dahlin picking Niklas Hjalmarsson and Erik Gustafsson.

While some decided to leave themselves off their own list, Anton Stralman didn't want to waste an opportunity to put himself back alongside Hedman, his long-time partner with Tampa Bay.

"It all depends on do you want it to be an all-offense blueline?" Stralman said. "Or a good mix?"

In goal, the Rangers' Henrik Lundqvist was a near-unanimous pick as No. 1. "Hank is still the king," Stralman said. But the Canucks' Jacob Markstrom was the starter on Hornqvist's team. Robin Lehner, a Vezina Trophy candidate last year, was a backup on a few of the lists, and Linus Ullmark was on teammate Dahlin's lineup.

Henrik Lundqvist waves to the crowd after a shutout for Team Sweden at the 2016 World Cup of Hockey. (Dan Hamilton / USA Today)

Now for the legends.

Nicklas Lidstrom, the Red Wings Hall of Famer, and Daniel Sedin, the recently retired and future Canucks Hall of Famer, were kind enough to give me their lists, too. It was good to get their perspectives, especially Lidstrom's on the blue line. Sedin has played against all of these forwards in his career, too. Sedin picked Adrian Kempe, who played for his hometown club Modo.

Goldman thought it would be fun to see if we could build a salary cap-compliant team of these Swedish stars. So she gave it a shot.

The goal was to feature as many players as possible who were featured on the above lineups. Unfortunately, there had to be some casualties of the cap.

Goldman's lineup brings us to a collective \$80.62 million cap hit. Players like Ekman-Larsson and William Karlsson were cap casualties, which opened up spots for Ekholm and Järnkrok. The ELCs of Dahlin, Rasmus Andersson, Jesper Bratt and Oscar Lindblom helped us balance costs.

We could make tweaks to fit others, of course. To fit Lundqvist and his \$8.5 million cap hit and change the forward depth, an elite defender like Erik Karlsson could be subtracted since the blue line could stay balanced without him. With some reorganization, plus a couple of additions like Hjalmarsson, costs are lowered.

Similarly, removing Elias Lindholm's \$4.85 million hit lets us spread out the forward depth differently. The below chart adds up to \$81.45 million, just below the 2019-20 salary cap.

Another option, said Goldman, would be to create a younger Team Sweden where we make the cutoff players who will be 30 or under at some point before the Stanley Cup is awarded next spring. With this lineup, the most cap space is dedicated to the forward group, with some salary subtractions on defense and in net. This is our most cost-effective iteration, coming in at \$76.65 million.

Who did we miss? These pieces always make for fun debate, so feel free to offer yours in the comment section.

The Athletic LOADED: 11.08.2019

1160333 Buffalo Sabres



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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Clint Malarchuk on the three times he almost died: 'God spared me for those that are still suffering'

By Tarik El-Bashir

Nov 7, 2019

Clint Malarchuk played 338 NHL games for the Quebec Nordiques, Washington Capitals and Buffalo Sabres in the 1980s and early 90s, and survived one of the scariest sports injuries imaginable: a severed jugular vein during a game in 1989.

Malarchuk, who has battled obsessive-compulsive disorder and anxiety for most of his life, and post-traumatic stress disorder since the gruesome injury that threatened his life 30 years ago, has become a mental health advocate, spending the past several years helping others who are struggling in silence. He's written a book, speaks publicly and, on Thursday night, will be featured in an NBC Sports Regional Networks documentary, *HeadStrong: Mental Health and Sports*. The hour-long documentary tells the story of elite athletes who have overcome mental health challenges.

Knowing what we know now, why do you think there is still a stigma attached to the words, "mental illness."

We're getting better with it. I mean, I just think it's a perception that mental illness is a mental weakness. And it's not a weakness, it's a sickness.

When I was going through some of my struggles, No. 1, when you're an NHL goalie you're supposed to be the rock, the mentally tough one. So you don't want to come out and say look, "I'm really struggling with depression or anxiety or obsessive-compulsive disorder or PTSD, because society still perceives it as a weakness. Until we get rid of that ... and we are. We're making progress but we have a long ways to go yet, too, just because of that word, "weakness."

You had a very powerful line in the documentary when, after your suicide attempt, you said, 'God spared me for a reason.' What was that reason do you think?

I've almost died three times. I wasn't sleeping, so I took a few extra painkillers and then drained a bottle of scotch. Do not drink alcohol will make you drowsy. Well, I hadn't slept in 10 days. I'm not even kidding; it was 10 days. It was to the point where I'd tried to sleep, but I do it on a chair so I wouldn't go into that deep REM sleep and have the flashbacks from the injury to my jugular, which was the first time I almost died. And then there was the self-inflicted gunshot wound. That's when I said, "You know, Clint? God has spared you for a reason, for those that are still suffering." They're suffering in silence, just like me, just like I was. And that's because of the stigma. We think we're the only ones, or it's the fear that you'll be perceived as weak.

You come out of a coma, and you've got a bullet in your head, you start to reflect on certain things. And that's one of my phrases: "God spared me for those that are still suffering." I decided that probably within 10 minutes after I came out of the coma. That's why I wrote a book. That's why I speak on the subject. That's why I do what I do.

You returned to the lineup 10 days after the skate cut your neck. Have you ever second-guessed whether that was too soon? Would that even be allowed to happen today?

No. God no, it wouldn't happen today. I just thought it was the right thing to do because, you know, I'm a cowboy and when you get bucked off a horse, what's was the first thing you're taught to do? It's to get right back on so there aren't any fears or anything. You have no time to think, you just get right back on. That was my thinking.

What happened to me, counseling wasn't brought up. I never thought of it, either. I mean, this is 30 years ago. But then I look back, 10 years ago and (another former Capital) Richard Zednik cut his jugular vein and he had counseling, his family had counseling, his teammates had counseling. Anybody involved talked to a counselor.

Do you think that counseling might have helped you avoid the downward spiral that you experienced after the injury?

Counseling probably would have helped. For me, it was just, "Push through." When you ask the question about the stigma and are we making progress, yes, for sure we are. Because when it happened to Zednik, everybody – not just him or his family – everybody was offered counseling.

You discuss your upbringing and how you've struggled with OCD and anxiety, even as a kid, and how some of it stemmed from an abusive father. At what age did you realize that your anxiety was a problem?

When you're young, you don't think that way. But I certainly didn't feel normal. I looked at other kids and how they went about their days and guys I played hockey with – and I'm talking about when I'm 10 years old. So, to answer your question, yes, it was, "I don't think I'm a normal kid." Scary shit, isn't it? I look at now, my father and the abuse, I think he was mentally ill, too.

How are you doing now?

Pretty good. It's always going to be ongoing. I have good days and bad days still. But the degree of the bad isn't sub-zero, you know? I have a lot of tools that help.

My biggest battle right now is insomnia. I don't know if that's part of the PTSD. I'll only sleep two hours. It drives you nuts. I've got a friend who's also got insomnia. She'll text me, 'This insomnia sucks.' And I'll text her back – and it might be 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning – "yep." And she'll go, "Oh, you are up." (Laughter). I feel her pain and she feels mine.

When you're having one of your bad days now, how, specifically, do you cope?

I've got a set of tools that I try to use every day. Obviously, I've got to take my medication. And another one would be meditation. People get all freaked out when you say meditation because they think you're going to sit cross-legged and go, "Om." No! My meditation is my animals. Or I'll water the lawn with a hand hose, just watching the water. Things like that. Working out. I try to do that, every day. Counseling is important, too.

About a year ago, I started to have the nightmares again, seeing that skate (come up). I would wake straight up in bed, and your heart is racing. It wasn't just a bad dream, your body is reliving that event that happened so long ago.



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I went to a therapist who knew about EMDR – eye movement desensitization and reprocessing. I did three sessions and, god dang! I haven't had a nightmare of a flashback since then. That was around 10 months ago. So counseling is important.

One more thing is being of service. When I talk about being of service, I'm referring to my public speaking, being open and honest. Because there are people who are in that dark place and they're dealing with it in silence, like I did. So if they hear my story, it might help them.

How does it make you feel when you get an email thanking you?

It's huge. Huge! It's part of what keeps me going. It's what keeps me out on the speaking circuit. You asked me, how am I doing today? Well, I'm doing a lot better than a lot of people. And I was in their shoes. For the first time, a lot of these people go, "Holy crap, this guy played in the NHL, he was a cowboy, he rodeoed, he's a tough dude." What they are going through is not a weakness.

How many times a year do you speak publicly about your struggles?

It's probably between 40 and 50 times a year, and that's not counting the charitable ones.

But I'm on the phone – sometimes for two hours – at night, not giving advice, but being supportive of people who are struggling. They've reached out to me. I can say what worked for me and what didn't work for me.

How do people get a hold of you?

Usually they read my book. I put my email at the very back page of my book for that reason. Then there's Facebook and social media. One thing I'm damn proud of, you know, I've answered every single email, every single message on Facebook. We're talking into thousands, not just a couple hundred, because my book's been out for four or five years now. When it first came out, I was getting 10-15 emails a day.

No. 1, I've got to take my medication and keep in touch with my doctor. Don't go 15 years like I did without keeping in touch with him. And when I say doctor, he is a psychiatrist. Then my meditation, working out, being of service and, if I need it, counseling.

Do you still operate that small ranch in Nevada?

Yes, sir, I am. I'm a horse dentist. I'm a horse chiropractor. So I have a horse business. But my main occupation now is public speaking.

Can I ask you a couple of hockey questions? You were only here in Washington as a player for a couple of years. How do you remember those seasons in D.C.?

We played in the old Capital Centre. The seats were dark. The lighting was dark. But I loved it. We had a really good team. We always pooped the bed in the playoffs, though. (Laughter.) We probably the goaltending. (Laughter.) It's a beautiful area.

As an alumnus of the Caps, what went through your head when you saw them hoist the Stanley Cup a couple of years ago?

I was elated. I was absolutely thrilled to see (Alex) Ovechkin and everybody win it.

About two years ago, Mitch Korn was the goalie coach there and Barry Trotz was the head coach. Mitch says, "We're going to have a goalie luncheon." So it was me, Braden Holtby, Philipp Grubauer, Mitch and some other folks, we had lunch together. Once you get that personal connection with the guys, seeing them win it all makes it so special.

The Athletic LOADED: 11.08.2019

1160388 Minnesota Wild

Wild's comeback bid vs. Sharks falls short after slashing major to Ryan Hartman

By Sarah McLellan NOVEMBER 8, 2019

SAN JOSE, CALIF. – Wild center Eric Staal has been in the NHL since 2003, racking up almost 1,200 regular-season games in 16 years.

And in his experience, the slash that winger Ryan Hartman put on the Sharks' Evander Kane didn't match the punishment — a major and misconduct in the third period that took precious attacking time away from the Wild as it tried to rally, a comeback that ultimately fell short 6-5 to the Sharks Thursday at SAP Center.

Through two games, the Wild is 1-1 on its four-game road trip.

"I've played for a long time and I played a lot of years ago, and that was a pretty common slash back in the day," Staal said. "I don't think it's a major, but it is what it is. They called it. Great job [penalty] killing. We had some chances to tie it 6. Wasn't able to get it by the net."

After the Wild scored two goals earlier in the period to get to 6-4, Hartman levied a one-handed whack with his backhand to the left leg of Kane. Before that, Kane cross-checked Hartman and was penalized for it. But the Wild received the stiffer punishment.

After the game, Hartman declined to comment.

It wasn't the deciding factor in the game, but the sequence was a pivotal moment — especially since the Wild scored a fifth once it was back to full strength.

But perhaps the team wouldn't have even been playing catch up if it wasn't for its horrendous first period.

As a division rival to the Sharks when he was behind the bench in Anaheim, coach Bruce Boudreau is quite familiar with playing in San Jose.

"They try to win the game in the first period," he said.

The Wild was aware of this, and it expected a heavy push from its hosts even with the Sharks struggling to start the season.

So when the team was tagged for four goals in the opening frame, it wasn't surprised but it was frustrated — especially since the Wild worked its way back into the game.

"We weren't ready to play," Boudreau said.



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San Jose scored four goals on 12 shots, getting the first in the first minute and adding another before the 6-minute mark. Goals 3 and 4 came with less than 5 minutes to play.

"It was a terrible start," Staal said. "I'm not going to make any excuses. Just wasn't good starting with my line. Disappointing because we talked about it. We know they like to come out fast and hard in the first period, and they did. And we just made some errors and some bonehead plays, and it cost us."

The Wild's coverage in its own end was spotty, particularly on the fourth goal when the Sharks broke in on goalie Alex Stalock at a 4-on-2 advantage.

"They played fast," Stalock said. "They came out ready. We know they come out fast here. We know what they do. They get the puck in to change sides and get the puck in the middle of the ice, and they kind of dominated the middle of the ice early on. They had chances and they scored on that."

Stalock was pulled after the first, getting replaced by Devan Dubnyk in the 500th game of his career. Dubnyk ended up taking the loss, giving up two goals in the second before making 12 stops in the third.

The Wild also finished the game shorthanded since winger Marcus Foligno didn't play after the first period, leaving with a lower-body injury.

Boudreau said he didn't know the severity of the issue, but there should be an update Friday when the team practices in San Jose before departing for Arizona.

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1160389 Minnesota Wild

Wild-San Jose game recap

SARAH McLELLAN NOVEMBER 8, 2019 — 1:33AM

STAR TRIBUNE'S THREE STARS

1. Tomas Hertl, Sharks: The center scored and set up two goals.
2. Evander Kane, Sharks: Had the game-winning goal and assisted on another.
3. Eric Staal, Wild: The center had a goal and two assists.

BY THE NUMBERS

- 2 Sharks power-play goals, both in the second period.
- 4 San Jose goals in the first period.
- 17 Saves for Devan Dubnyk in relief of Alex Stalock.

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1160390 Minnesota Wild

Sharks withstand late surge by Wild in 6-5 victory

By GIDEON RUBIN Associated Press NOVEMBER 8, 2019 — 1:50AM

SAN JOSE, Calif. — After a troubling lapse in the third period, the San Jose Sharks felt fortunate it didn't cost them.

Logan Couture had a goal and three assists, Evander Kane scored his team-leading 10th of the season and the Sharks held off the Minnesota Wild 6-5 on Thursday night.

Minnesota trailed 6-2 midway through the third before scoring three straight goals — the first two in a span of 74 seconds.

"We didn't forecheck, we didn't sustain any time in their end. We didn't get back to what we did at the start," Couture said. "Just sloppy, sloppy play really."

Tomas Hertl added a goal and two assists for the Sharks in their second consecutive win after dropping five straight and seven of eight.

Eric Staal had a goal and two assists for the Wild, who lost for the fourth time in five games.

Brad Hunt got his fifth goal and Ryan Donato his first for the Wild. Justin Zucker's fifth with 4:35 left cut it to 6-5.

"You see leads 3-0, 4-0, all the time evaporate — or at least close down," Sharks coach Peter DeBoer said. "It's tough. It's human nature to kind of sit and take a deep breath at that point, and that's not just us. That's everyone in the league. And the other team's embarrassed and (ticked) off and they're going to come out and push and I think it was a combination of those things."

Sharks goalie Martin Jones made 21 saves, highlighted by a terrific stop of a potential tying goal with just under 2:30 left, when he got his pad on Zach Parise's shot in front.

Ryan Hartman was assessed a five-minute major penalty for slashing Kane, who fell to the ice and needed help getting back to the bench with an apparent left leg injury with just under 10 minutes left in a 6-4 game.

Kane said he was hit in the back of the knee.

"Didn't feel good at all," he said.

Wild coach Bruce Boudreau, however, wasn't buying it.

"Kane did a great job of selling it," Boudreau said. "Because he went off limping, everybody thought he had a broken ankle and all he missed was one shift. So, you go figure it out. But it was a good job by him to change the momentum."

Couture scored the game's first goal, his second of the season, 52 seconds in. Timo Meier got his fourth early in the first period to make it 2-0.

The Sharks took a 4-0 lead into the first intermission after Marcus Sorensen's third goal and Radim Simek's first.

Simek was playing his second game since March 12, when the defenseman tore the ACL and MCL in his right knee.

Minnesota closed to 4-1 on Luke Kunin's third goal at 15:51 of the second — the first of four goals the teams combined to score in less than 3½ minutes.



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After Hertl got his sixth on a power play to give San Jose a 5-1 lead, Staal scored his sixth goal for Minnesota, extending his point streak to six games.

Kane scored in the last minute of the second to extend his goal-scoring streak to three games and his point streak to four. He also had an assist on Couture's goal.

Devan Dubnyk made 17 saves in the final two periods for Minnesota after replacing Alex Stalock. The former Sharks goalie gave up four goals.

"There are some situations we need to learn to handle better, but I'm not going to get picky," DeBoer said. "Wins have been hard to come by and we did enough to win a game and we'll move on to the next one."

NOTES: Wild forward Mats Zuccarello had an assist to extend his point streak to five games. ... Dubnyk played his 500th game. ... Sharks C Dylan Gambrell was back in the lineup after missing the previous three games with a hand injury. ... D Dalton Prout (upper body) and D Jacob Middleton (shoulder) wore non-contact jerseys during the morning skate. ... Melker Karlsson (upper body) is day to day. ... Kane needs one assist to reach 200.

UP NEXT

Wild: At the Arizona Coyotes on Saturday.

Sharks: Host the Nashville Predators on Saturday.

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1160391 Minnesota Wild

Wild's early deficit vs. Sharks too big to overcome

The Wild made it close late, but only after surrendering four goals in the first period.

By Sarah McLellan Star Tribune NOVEMBER 8, 2019

SAN JOSE, CALIF. – The Wild had no problem rallying from being down two goals earlier in the week, and it nearly one-upped that feat by clawing back from an even deeper deficit its next time out.

On the heels of its most impressive comeback win of the season Tuesday in Anaheim at the outset of a four-game road trip, the Wild tested its resiliency again Thursday in San Jose after falling behind by four in the first period.

And although the Wild eventually made up those goals, it never completely caught up to the Sharks in a 6-5 letdown Thursday night at SAP Center that was pockmarked by a string of what-if moments.

"We knew we could come back," winger Luke Kunin said. "You saw that. We did a lot of good things and it was too little, too late."

Despite the Wild (5-10-1 overall, 2-9 on the road) getting scored on four times in the opening period and giving up two more in the

second, coach Bruce Boudreau thought his team had a chance to close the gap going into the third trailing just 6-2.

"This isn't over," he told the players at the intermission, and they backed up his intuition.

JOHN HEFTI, AP

A fight broke out between the Sharks and Wild during the second period Thursday night, and it wasn't the final scuffle of the evening.

One-timers from defenseman Brad Hunt 8 minutes, 7 seconds into the frame and winger Ryan Donato at 9:21 — his first of the season — moved the Wild within striking distance of the Sharks at 6-4.

But that rhythm hit a snag when winger Ryan Hartman was reprimanded with a slashing major and misconduct for a one-handed whack to the back of Evander Kane's left leg.

Kane was also penalized for the cross-check that preceded Hartman's slash, but defenseman Brent Burns wasn't after he tussled with Hartman. So the Sharks were set up to earn three minutes of power play action, which arrived sooner when the Wild was called for a too-many men penalty while play was at 4-on-4.

"Kane did a great job of selling it because he went off limping," Boudreau said. "Everyone thought he had a broken ankle, and he missed one shift. So you go figure it out. But that's a good job by him to change the momentum."

Those lost minutes to the penalty kill were costly because when it was back at full strength, the Wild picked up where it left off before the slashing sequence. Winger Jason Zucker tallied a fifth at 15:25, the closest the Wild would get even though it continued to earn glorious opportunities.

Winger Zach Parise skated in alone on goalie Martin Jones, who spread out his pads to make the stop with less than 3 minutes to go. And defenseman Ryan Suter hit the post in the waning seconds.

"We had plenty of chances to tie the game," center Eric Staal said.

The Wild was in chase mode most of the game because of its horrendous start, a jarring drop-off after it closed out the 4-2 victory over the Ducks Tuesday.

Only 52 seconds into the first, the Sharks pounced when captain Logan Couture buried a Kane pass by goalie Alex Stalock.

By 5:55, it was 2-0 — a wrist shot by Timo Meier after he accepted a Tomas Hertl backhander and cut into the Wild zone with speed.

A breakaway save by Stalock on Kane and Wild power play later in the first seemed to even up the feel of the game, but two more Sharks goals in 1:52 reasserted San Jose's control.

Marcus Sorensen's deflection made it 3-0 at 16:40, and a 4-on-2 rush tacked on a fourth after a give-and-go passing sequence by Hertl and Meier handed off to Radim Simek for the finish at 18:32.



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Overall, the Sharks totaled four goals on 12 shots. It was the fourth game this season the Wild has surrendered four or more in a period but just the first time it's happened in the first.

Stalock, who made his second straight start after posting 29 stops in that victory against the Ducks, was replaced by Devan Dubnyk after the period. He exited with eight saves.

"You never want to not finish a game," Stalock said. "Like I always say, you want to give your team a chance and it's 4-0 after the first period. That's obviously not giving them a chance."

The Wild also was shorthanded the rest of the way, as winger Marcus Foligno didn't return for the second due to a lower-body injury.

Wild goaltender Alex Stalock deflected a shot by Sharks winger Evander Kane (9) during the first period late Thursday night, but he didn't get a piece of many others. Stalock gave up four goals on 12 shots and was replaced by Devan Dubnyk for the start of the second period.

With 4:09 to go in that period, the Wild finally cut into its deficit on a shot by winger Luke Kunin.

The Sharks reinstated their four-goal lead on a wrister by Hertl at 17:04 on the power play but just 55 seconds later, Staal capitalized on a redirect to extend his point streak to six games — a span in which he has nine points. In his past nine games, Staal has recorded six goals and seven assists.

Yet again, though, San Jose had a retort.

This time, Kane served up another power play tally at 19:15 while winger Jordan Greenway was in the penalty box for a delay of game minor after sending the puck over the glass.

The Sharks finished 2-for-4 with the man advantage, while the Wild went 0-for-3.

Dubnyk ended up with 17 saves. Jones totaled 21 for the Sharks.

"After the first period," Boudreau said, "we deserved [a] better fate."

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1160392 Minnesota Wild

Jordan Greenway credited with turning tide in Wild victory on Tuesday

By Sarah McLellan Star Tribune NOVEMBER 8, 2019 — 1:36AM

SAN JOSE, CALIF. — The save goalie Alex Stalock made Tuesday night on the Ducks' Max Jones was clutch, a stop that kept the Wild's deficit at two instead of it ballooning to three.

And winger Kevin Fiala's second-period goal to finally chip away at that hole was important since it made the climb in the third period less steep.

But in coach Bruce Boudreau's mind, the sequence that kick-started the Wild to rally for a 4-2 victory in Anaheim was a

wrecking-ball shift by winger Jordan Greenway soon after the Ducks went up 2-0.

"From that point on," Boudreau said, "the game turned."

Greenway hit defenseman Cam Fowler in the corner, one of a career-high six registered hits the 22-year-old rang up in his 100th career game.

His intent wasn't to ignite a comeback — he was frustrated and figured by running into someone he could improve — but that's what ended up happening, a domino effect that reminded Greenway that he can make a difference by being a physical presence on the ice.

"I've got to find ways to use it more," Greenway said. "Not just to change momentum when things are bad [but] even when things are going well, I've got to find a way to have that spark. I did it when we needed it most and going forward, I've got to find a way to do that from the drop of the puck. That goes back to consistency."

Being reliable isn't just a challenge for rookies; it's also a pursuit that headlines Year 2 when players try to ward off the proverbial sophomore slump.

Although Greenway finished Tuesday's game still seeking his first goal of the season, he's sure he'll heat up offensively if he continues to play the right way — which includes leveraging his 6-6, 225-pound frame more frequently. But that's been an adjustment for Greenway.

Before reaching the NHL, Greenway never really had to be physical since he was bigger than his peers.

Now, though, his size can help him compete. And even though he recognizes he shies away from the physical side of the game occasionally because it's new for him, Greenway understands it's his ticket to having success.

Games such as Tuesday only reinforce that point.

"As I've seen in the past, when I do use my body and play very physical and initiate contact, I have way more of an impact for the team and for myself," Greenway said. "We end up creating a lot more space and I think we have the puck a lot more, which is always positive. I've got to do it much more. That's been something I have to work on."

Stalock's short start

After making 29 saves vs. the Ducks, Stalock was back in net Thursday against the Sharks — getting the nod for a second consecutive game over No. 1 Devan Dubnyk.

"He's earned it," Boudreau said. "It's never an easy decision when you're playing your backup a little bit more than normal. But he's earned this spot."

Thursday's start didn't go as well. Stalock gave up four goals on 12 shots in the first period and was replaced by Dubnyk to start the second in the 6-5 loss.

Finding consistency up front

The Wild started Thursday's game rolling out the same forward lines it relied upon the previous two outings, a consistency that's been tough to achieve so far this season amid injuries and uneven production.



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And it's made sense to keep these units intact since they've been contributing; three of the four lines scored in the first two games the Wild debuted this new look, and the top six was responsible for six of the seven goals.

"This is what you're looking for," Boudreau said.

Star Tribune LOADED: 11.08.2019

1160393 Minnesota Wild

Alex Stalock back in net for Wild vs. Sharks

By Sarah McLellan NOVEMBER 7, 2019 — 3:12PM

SAN JOSE, Calif. — After opening its four-game road trip Tuesday with a win, the Wild is sticking with the same lineup Thursday in San Jose.

And that includes the goalie.

Backup Alex Stalock will be back between the pipes against the Sharks after a 29-save effort in the 4-2 win over the Ducks in Anaheim.

"He's earned it," coach Bruce Boudreau said. "It's never an easy decision when you're playing your backup a little bit more than normal. But he's earned this spot. His numbers indicate that he's earned it. We need the wins, so we're going to go with what we think gives us the best chance to win."

This will be just Stalock's second career game vs. the Sharks, whom he played for before joining the Wild.

That previous game was a 4-3 overtime win for the Wild on Dec. 10, 2017.

"Obviously every time coming back here puts a smile on my face with a lot of the friendships I made when I was here," Stalock said. "You look back starting back in Worcester and the friendships I built there, like, with Logan [Couture] being here now and kind of growing up through pro hockey with him. Obviously, he's wearing the 'C' over there now. Just looking back on stuff like that is fun to think about."

Although it's early November, Boudreau expects Thursday's game to have a desperate vibe to it since both teams are coming off wins that ended losing streaks.

"Both teams need to advance, and both teams have come from losing a couple to finally winning a game and making them feel a little better," Boudreau said. "I guarantee [Sharks coach Pete DeBoer's] saying the same thing, 'You gotta build off that. It can't be a one-and-done or you don't advance in the standings.' From that point of view, I think it's going to be a real competitive game."

Projected lineup:

Jason Zucker-Eric Staal-Mats Zuccarello

Zach Parise-Mikko Koivu-Kevin Fiala

Marcus Foligno-Joel Eriksson Ek-Jordan Greenway

Ryan Donato-Luke Kunin-Ryan Hartman

Ryan Suter-Jared Spurgeon

Jonas Brodin-Matt Dumba

Carson Soucy-Brad Hunt

Alex Stalock

Key numbers:

4: Wins for the Wild during its previous six trips to San Jose.

6: Points for center Eric Staal during a five-game point streak.

5: Points for winger Mats Zuccarello during his four-game point streak.

3: Goals for Zuccarello in his past three games.

33: Points by Wild defensemen this season.

About the Sharks:

Like the Wild, the Sharks are off to a rough start this season. They're 5-10-1 after starting 0-4 and snapped a five-game losing streak Tuesday with a 4-2 win over the Blackhawks. A silver lining for San Jose has been its penalty kill, which is tops in the NHL at 90.2 percent. Starter Martin Jones is 3-7-1 with a 3.38 goals-against average and .889 save percentage. Winger Evander Kane has a team-best nine goals, while center Tomas Hertl and defenseman Brent Burns pace the Sharks in points with 14.

Star Tribune LOADED: 11.08.2019

1160394 Minnesota Wild

Furious rally comes up short as Wild fall 6-5 to Sharks

By DANE MIZUTANI | PUBLISHED: November 8, 2019 at 12:09 am | UPDATED: November 8, 2019 at 1:35 am

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Wild star Zach Parise sat alone at his locker for more than 15 minutes after the final buzzer sounded on Thursday night at SAP Center.

Most of his teammates had already showered and changed into their street clothes by the time Parise completely geared down, and while a myriad of emotions were likely going through his head in that moment in time, chief among them had to be the fact that he couldn't elevate a puck in the final minutes of a 6-5 loss to the San Jose Sharks.

Despite a furious rally by the Wild in the final frame, the comeback came up just short, with Parise's missed opportunity from point-blank range serving as the final nail in the coffin.

Zach Parise nearly ties it, but Martin Jones makes the massive save. pic.twitter.com/15UclAv49E

— Hockey Wilderness (@hockeywildernes) November 8, 2019

A frustrated Parise declined comment after the loss, as did teammates Jason Zucker and Ryan Hartman.



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Even though Parise will likely put a lot of the blame on himself for not scoring the game-tying goal, to put the blame solely on him for not cashing in would be letting everyone else off the hook easy.

The fact of the matter is the Wild as a whole were dreadful for 40 minutes and that ended up overshadowing an incredible effort over the final 20 minutes.

Never mind the fact that coach Bruce Boudreau spent the better part of 48 hours warning that the comeback win over the Anaheim Ducks a couple of days earlier didn't mean anything unless the Wild followed it up with a solid effort against the Sharks.

As soon as the puck dropped, it was clear that message had fallen on deaf ears.

"We weren't ready to play," Boudreau said. "That's all I can say."

Needless to say, the team that mounted the near-comeback down the stretch looked much different than the team that started the game.

After inexcusably taking icing less than 10 seconds into the game, the Wild responded with a couple of dreadful shifts, and the Sharks took advantage as center Logan Couture lifted a shot into the back of the net to make it 1-0.

That was only the beginning as winger Timo Meier made it 2-0 later in the frame, skating untouched into the offensive zone before finishing with a wrist shot in front.

"It was a terrible start," Eric Staal said. "I'm not going to make any excuses. Just wasn't good starting with my line. It's disappointing because we talked about it. We know they like to come out fast and hard in the first period and they did."

While the Wild responded with some solid play after that, winger Marcus Sorenson ended any thoughts of a potential comeback with a deflection in front to push the lead to 3-0, and defenseman Radim Simek finished off an odd-man rush shortly after that as the lead reached 4-0.

"It was embarrassing to be honest," Luke Kunin said. "We weren't happy with that at all."

That offensive explosion from the Sharks was enough to chase Alex Stalock from the crease as Devan Dubnyk led the Wild out of the tunnel at the start of the second period. That relief appearance marked 500 career games for Dubnyk, a milestone moment that clearly came under less-than-ideal circumstances.

As for the rest of the game, the Wild tried to make things interesting late in the second period with a goal from Kunin to make it 4-1 only to immediately allow winger Tomas Hertl to net an easy power-play goal to push the lead back to 5-2.

That same scenario played out less than a minute later as Staal cut the deficit to 5-2 only to have winger Evander Kane immediately respond with a power-play goal to make it 6-2.

That said, the Wild didn't give up, and everyone on the bench truly felt that they had a chance to comeback despite the score.

"I thought there was a chance," Boudreau said. "I told them in between the second period and third period, 'This isn't over.'"

It wasn't. The rally started with a goal from Brad Hunt to make it 6-3, then Ryan Donato almost immediately followed it up with his first goal of the season to make it 6-4.

"It's almost more disappointing to show that we can play that way against a team like that," Stalock said of the comeback. "It was a tough start and obviously take a lot of blame for that."

Things got really interesting down the stretch when Jason Zucker made it 6-5, and as much as the Wild pressured down the stretch, the Sharks ultimately held on for the win.

"You've got to keep playing," Staal said. "We had all the momentum. We had plenty of chances to tie the game. We hit a post. We just didn't get that last goal."

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1160395 Minnesota Wild

Wild winger Jordan Greenway makes an impact by embracing his size

By DANE MIZUTANI | PUBLISHED: November 7, 2019 at 5:18 pm | UPDATED: November 7, 2019 at 5:18 PM

SAN JOSE, Calif. — While growing up, Jordan Greenway was always the biggest kid on the ice. So much so that nobody ever messed with him.

"I didn't really have to initiate contact because guys wouldn't even try me," he said. "It was much easier to get away with not using my body."

Perhaps that's the biggest reason the 22-year-old winger sometimes shies away from the physical part of his game despite his 6-foot-6, 225-pound frame.

"That's something I have to work on," Greenway said. "As I've seen in the past, when I do use my body and play very physical and initiate contact, I have way more of an impact."

Like earlier this week when Greenway used his body to spark the Wild to a comeback win over the Ducks in Anaheim.

"He was the guy that started it for us," coach Bruce Boudreau said. "He was mad on the bench, and the next shift was in and he hit a couple of guys deep in their corner."

Asked about the sequence a couple of days later, Greenway explained that he was frustrated at that moment and simply took it out on the first person he saw.

"We started to get into a little bit of a flow and started to play well after that," Greenway said. "I've got to find ways to do that more, not just to change momentum when things are bad. Even when things are going well, I've got to find a way to bring that spark."

In a perfect world, that physical play will result in some offense, as well. Greenway entered Thursday's game against the San Jose Sharks still searching for his first goal of the season.

"I think I've been playing well whether the goals are coming or not," he said. "If I keep doing the right things, I'm confident they'll come. That's all I'm really focusing on."



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That, and continuing to embrace the physical part of his game

"I just have to incorporate it into my game much more than I've had to in the past," Greenway said. "I did it when we needed it most the other night, and going forward I've got to find a way to do that from the drop of the puck."

STALOCK STARTS AGAIN

Looking to get on a hot streak, the Wild went with the hot hand for Thursday's game, starting Alex Stalock over the struggling Devan Dubnyk for the second straight game.

"He's earned this spot," Boudreau said. "We need the wins, so we're going to go with what we think gives us the best chance to win."

It's hard to argue with that logic right now; Stalock entered Thursday's game with a 3-3-0 record, a 2.42 goals-against average, and a .917 save percentage. In comparison, Dubnyk has struggled to a 2-6-1 record, a 3.68 goals-against average, and a .883 save percentage.

"Obviously, when I'm playing in consecutive games it's a little bit easier to get into a rhythm and feel a little more comfortable," Stalock said. "That's been an advantage for me."

ZUCCA-ROLL-O

After a slow start, Mats Zuccarello has caught fire. He entered Thursday's matchup riding a three-game goal streak and has started to develop some chemistry alongside Eric Staal and opposite Jason Zucker.

"I feel more poised and more comfortable right now," said Zuccarello, who signed a five-year, \$30 million contract this offseason. "It took some time to get into a new group. I wanted to take some time to find my place on the team and get to know my teammates and have them get to know me."

"Hopefully, it's going to keep getting better and better."

Pioneer Press LOADED: 11.08.2019

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The Athletic / NHL Global Series: Swedish stars pick their own All-Swede Team

Joe Smith Nov 7, 2019

STOCKHOLM — When you ask a Swedish-born hockey player to build his own all-Swede team, you may get a lineup without him in it.

Perhaps it's just the polite and humble nature of the country's stars, but it still came as a bit of a surprise that when Sabres defenseman Rasmus Dahlin and Penguins veteran Patric Hornqvist were charged with creating their teams, they left themselves off.

Norris Trophy-winning defenseman Victor Hedman didn't even want to pick a lineup — he didn't want to leave anybody out.

But many other Swedes — including legends Nicklas Lidstrom and Daniel Sedin — helped me out with my latest idea for The Athletic. With the NHL's Global Series in Stockholm this week for back-to-back games between the Lightning and Sabres, I asked top Swedish players to create a full lineup — four lines, three defensive pairs and two goalies — with current NHLers from their country.

It's a tribute to the depth of talent from the hockey-crazed nation that many players took a few days to think about it.

"Oh, you want a full team?" Predators defenseman Mattias Ekholm asked.

"That's a tough one," Avalanche captain Gabriel Landeskog said.

There are many no-brainers, of course, and Landeskog and Ekholm are included in most of the lineups. As are Hedman and fellow Norris winner Erik Karlsson. The Canucks' Calder Trophy winner, Elias Pettersson, was another top pick. Choosing just six for the blue line might have been the group's biggest challenge.

This may not be the proverbial "golden age" for Swedish hockey, but the blend of dynamic speed, skill and experienced veterans makes the current core of players pretty special.

"It's always tough to compare to '06 when we won the Olympics and had a really good team: (Peter) Forsberg, the Sedins, (Henrik) Zetterberg and (Niklas) Kronwall were in their primes," Ekholm said. "But we're pretty strong for a small country. I feel we have a lot of impactful players on both sides of the ice."

So, without further ado, here are the top Swedish stars' picks for their All-Swede Team. (The charts have been beautifully put together by our Shayna Goldman.)

Nicklas Backstrom, the Capitals star center, was a nearly unanimous pick as the No. 1 center for the All-Swede team. The elite playmaker is one of the game's most skilled passers and has six straight 50-assist seasons. Along with Washington captain Alex Ovechkin, Backstrom has been the face of the franchise, the club leader in assists and is second all-time in points (behind Ovi). Our Scott Burnside wrote over the summer how Backstrom could be the greatest Swedish forward of all time.

Team Sweden forwards Gabriel Landeskog and Nicklas Backstrom break on a faceoff during a 2016 World Cup of Hockey game. (John E. Sokolowski / USA Today)

One player who has quickly put himself on this list was Pettersson, who took the league by storm last season with Vancouver, racking up 28 goals and 66 points in 71 games. Our late writer Jason Botchford wrote how Pettersson changed everything in the city.

"He was really good in Sweden in the playoffs and all that," Ekholm said. "But in the way he came over here, I was maybe surprised that he so quickly transitioned into an NHL player."

Dahlin may have not cracked his own lineup, but he made the cut on Backstrom's squad. Understandably, it was difficult for a lot of guys to come to a consensus on the blue line. The Hedman-Karlsson combo was common, and the Stars' John Klingberg was another regular. Coyotes captain Oliver Ekman-Larsson is someone who everyone raved about and most included in their lineups.



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There were a couple of wild cards in the bottom pair, like Backstrom's pick of Alexander Edler and Dahlin picking Niklas Hjalmarsson and Erik Gustafsson.

While some decided to leave themselves off their own list, Anton Stralman didn't want to waste an opportunity to put himself back alongside Hedman, his long-time partner with Tampa Bay.

"It all depends on do you want it to be an all-offense blueline?" Stralman said. "Or a good mix?"

In goal, the Rangers' Henrik Lundqvist was a near-unanimous pick as No. 1. "Hank is still the king," Stralman said. But the Canucks' Jacob Markstrom was the starter on Hornqvist's team. Robin Lehner, a Vezina Trophy candidate last year, was a backup on a few of the lists, and Linus Ullmark was on teammate Dahlin's lineup.

Henrik Lundqvist waves to the crowd after a shutout for Team Sweden at the 2016 World Cup of Hockey. (Dan Hamilton / USA Today)

Now for the legends.

Nicklas Lidstrom, the Red Wings Hall of Famer, and Daniel Sedin, the recently retired and future Canucks Hall of Famer, were kind enough to give me their lists, too. It was good to get their perspectives, especially Lidstrom's on the blue line. Sedin has played against all of these forwards in his career, too. Sedin picked Adrian Kempe, who played for his hometown club Modo.

Goldman thought it would be fun to see if we could build a salary cap-compliant team of these Swedish stars. So she gave it a shot.

The goal was to feature as many players as possible who were featured on the above lineups. Unfortunately, there had to be some casualties of the cap.

Goldman's lineup brings us to a collective \$80.62 million cap hit. Players like Ekman-Larsson and William Karlsson were cap casualties, which opened up spots for Ekholm and Järnkrok. The ELCs of Dahlin, Rasmus Andersson, Jesper Bratt and Oscar Lindblom helped us balance costs.

We could make tweaks to fit others, of course. To fit Lundqvist and his \$8.5 million cap hit and change the forward depth, an elite defender like Erik Karlsson could be subtracted since the blue line could stay balanced without him. With some reorganization, plus a couple of additions like Hjalmarsson, costs are lowered.

Similarly, removing Elias Lindholm's \$4.85 million hit lets us spread out the forward depth differently. The below chart adds up to \$81.45 million, just below the 2019-20 salary cap.

Another option, said Goldman, would be to create a younger Team Sweden where we make the cutoff players who will be 30 or under at some point before the Stanley Cup is awarded next spring. With this lineup, the most cap space is dedicated to the forward group, with some salary subtractions on defense and in net. This is our most cost-effective iteration, coming in at \$76.65 million.

Who did we miss? These pieces always make for fun debate, so feel free to offer yours in the comment section.

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The Athletic / Inside the strange, weird world of hockey slang

By Katie Strang Nov 7, 2019

The 2019-20 Harvard men's hockey squad is a tight one, so it's not unusual to see a large group of players gathered together for lunch at the Eliot House dining hall during the course of a normal weekday on campus.

Once they start chatting, riffing off each other about practice, school, whatever, that's when they sense people begin to stare. Sometimes it's students sitting at the same table who suddenly jerk their heads in the players' direction. The reactions range from befuddled to petrified.

It's because often those who are within eavesdropping distance have absolutely no clue what they're saying.

"People look at us like we're from a different planet," said Jack Donato, a junior forward from Scituate, Mass.

Most times, the group doesn't even realize they have reverted into their own team-specific coded language. When they try to synthesize what certain words mean and translate those terms for an interloper, it can get dicey.

Describing what they mean when they call a player a "bot" — someone who goes through the motions similar to a computer-generated robot from the video games they play — or referring to just about anything as "dust" — a drag, a bummer, something you're dreading.

Sometimes, it's easier just to put it in the form of a sentence for the uninitiated:

Man, that eight-hour bus ride from Clarkson is gonna be such a dust.

This need to explain and contextualize is not uncommon for hockey players of any ilk. Defenseman Mike Green had to break down for his wife that "the show," meant "the NHL." One AHL coach had to be educated that his players no longer warm up before a game, they "activate." Ducks forward Adam Henrique said he's often learning new lingo from his linemate, 22-year-old Troy Terry.

Whether it's the more time-honored slang terms like apple (assist), celly (post-goal celebration), sauce (aerial pass), gino (goal) and bender (weak skater whose ankles "bend" in), or new iterations, such as the aforementioned "dust" and "bot," a "non" (a non-factor, a non-entity), and a "sweat" (a player who tries hard), hockey seems to be a Mecca for this sort of super-specific vocabulary among players and fans alike. It's one of the more endearing quirks of the hockey world, a language that reveals a sort of subculture that is zealous, passionate and a bit underground.

The vernacular is simply the password to get through the door.

Former Princeton standout Ryan Kuffner, currently playing for the AHL's Grand Rapids Griffins, said his team used to watch TSN's Jay Onrait and Dan O'Toole show every morning, which



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influenced their exposure to the sport's unique verbiage. Other media members have also shaped the landscape with their linguistic stylings, like ESPN's John Buccigross ("twisted wrister," "Bar Down, Hands Up, Mama Cries") and pop culture has played a role too, particularly Canadian sitcoms like CBC's Mr. D and Letterkenny, which now airs on Hulu.

Those shows often provided caricatures of the way hockey players speak; in reality, Kuffner said, it's more subdued. But he acknowledged that every team he's played on has eventually developed its own nomenclature.

"Whoever the talkative guys are (inside the dressing room), that's how it starts to build," Kuffner said.

John King parlayed his own grasp of the hockey parlance to become a local legend in his home state of Minnesota, and among dedicated hockey fans everywhere, for his annual video on the greatest hockey hair of the Minnesota state high school hockey tournament.

It's not just his hysterical nicknames ("Malted Milk Ball," "Rapuckzel," "Peroxide Jesus") or the crafty commentary he provides on each player's "salad" ("Two minutes for embellishment," he notes for one player's luscious locks. "He was ending."), it's also his low-rent production and deadpan delivery.

"The thing that always cracks me up is people think it's a shtick. They're like, 'I love how you talk all slow with that goofy accent,'" King wrote in an email. "And then they meet me, and I talk all slow with a goofy accent. I'm always like, 'yep, that's just how I talk.'"

Like the leaves turning in autumn or the tulips coming up each spring, you know that hockey tourney season was drawing near once you start hearing compliments like "that's a strong salad," or "killer kale, boys."

"I'm not sure when it went all leafy green," King wrote in the email. "Maybe we needed more roughage in our diets. But generally, hair was considered your 'salad.' So obviously anyone with hockey hair had 'strong salad.' And things got weirder from there. A lot weirder."

Hockey is like any other sport in that certain jargon — point, slot, crease — has endured to effectively communicate and collaborate by those who play the game, and to those who watch it. That is not dissimilar from other workgroups — from restaurants and opera houses to corporate offices. All of those places have their own language idiosyncrasies.

But slang is different from jargon and it comes from a different etymological source.

"It indirectly allows someone to express their membership in the group," said Robert Kennedy, a professor of linguistics at University of California, Santa Barbara who teaches a course on the linguistics of sports. "If you know the word to use, you are signaling an indirect demonstration of knowledge."

That also may help explain why slang seems to be much more prevalent at the younger levels of hockey, particularly in college and junior hockey. Think about it: for many players, this is their first time living away from home, and their teammates are their lifeline. They depend on this kinship and sense of community.

Not to mention that among those who billet in the same household or live together in the dorms, these young players are spending an inordinate amount of time together.

"It's almost like a universal language," said Jack Badini, a junior forward from Greenwich, Conn., who rooms with Donato at Harvard.

Badini described the bond among teammates he's had on two junior teams and now at Harvard: "You're with each other 24-7 and the season is so long. It kind of becomes a brotherhood."

It would be an oversight not to mention, however, that for all of the positive, community-building and bond-strengthening elements that this inside hockey lingo has, there is also a more nefarious bent to some of its usage.

All it takes is a cursory stroll through any online junior hockey bible of slang to find that there are an abundance of terms that are sexist, misogynist, crude and derogatory in nature. There's also a tendency toward isolationism and "othering" in some of this language.

And not just among players. The media itself can be the biggest culprit.

A thought exercise: How many times have you heard or read the term "enigmatic Russian?" Now, how many times have you heard a player from Red Deer, Alberta, described the same way? Now, do the same with "mercurial."

A recent Lexis-Nexis search found that the phrase "enigmatic Russian" was used 223 times in newspaper articles since 2008. During that same span, the phrase "enigmatic Canadian" was deployed just 56 times, and never in a sports context.

"To be honest, it is kind of a prejudice. It's, in a sense you can't call it racist but it's the same mentality," said Kennedy, who grew up a hockey fan in Ottawa. "It's sort of an Us versus Them thing, and it probably converges with a particular type of ideology of hockey."

Language is one way a group can define itself and differentiate itself from other sports, to confer a sense of intimacy and ownership. Sometimes the hockey community balks at any suggestion that it is a niche sport, and other times this seems to be a designation it embraces. With language, it often seems to be the latter.

When it's weaponized as a way to insulate the game, it's noxious. When it's used to draw people in and to serve as a welcome mat for the casual fan or athlete, it can be among the more endearing elements of the game.

Badini finds it to be the latter, and particularly helpful on game days. Tossing around inside jokes, a little bit of slang keeps the mood light and mitigates some nerves. And even though some of the language is team-specific, it's a tie that binds among anyone who has played the game at any level, he feels.

"Most hockey players have some sort of bond," Badini said. "The game has a way of bringing the players and people together."

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The Athletic / Sip shot? No longer beer swillers, hockey players embrace wine as drink of choice

By Joe McDonald Nov 7, 2019

Ask any hockey player about his sophisticated wine palate, and his tooth-less smile will say it all.

Over the last 20 years, hockey culture has shifted from one of beer drinkers to one of wine connoisseurs. In one of those strange-but-true phenomena, the toughest sport in the world now prefers a good cab over a Bud Light.

"That's all we could afford was beer," Bruins president and NHL Hall of Famer Cam Neely said with a laugh about the drink of choice during his era.

Times have changed. Now making more money and possessing more refined tastes, the days of swilling beers after practice or a game have come and gone, replaced by sips from expensive bottles at pricey road dinners. A popular destination for traveling players during the season is Barberian's Steak House in Toronto. The family-owned restaurant boasts one of Canada's largest wine cellars, with over 15,000 bottles. Owner Arron Barberian is a huge sports fan and has witnessed the cultural change in the hockey world.

"With bigger contracts players can afford finer things, and they started eating at finer restaurants, and all of a sudden fine wine became a thing," Barberian said, adding that the influx of players from all over the world has made the scene more cosmopolitan as well.

Social media has changed the landscape, too. Players would rather be "seen" in public with a glass of wine rather than pounding beers. Fitness also plays a role. They would rather drink lesser amounts of higher-quality libations than chug pints of empty-calorie beer during the season.

Barberian also believes there's an on-ice reason for the shift.

"I don't see many players drinking to get drunk anymore," Barberian said. "When there was fighting in the NHL, and the injuries were different, I think some of the guys drank away their pain. We used to see some players come in here and get hammered. It wasn't pretty."

Some of it is a change witnessed across the larger culture. Just as the three-martini business lunch has become a relic of a bygone era, so has the three (to-six) beer hockey lunch. It used to be that players would finish morning or early afternoon practice and go straight to a local bar. Now, players have all the amenities at the rink. They'll eat as a team, before home and road games, and the meals are prepared under the watchful eyes of the team nutritionist.

"We used to go to the Ground Round or Fridays," said former NHL player and current scout Kevin Stevens, who is sober now after grappling with substance abuse issues. "There would be 15 of us and we would have lunch, but the whole culture has changed. It's all good. It's more of a business now. They still have their fun, but we were making \$150- \$200,000 and thought we were doing pretty good."

The Montreal Canadiens' Jeff Petry is your typical hockey player, a grinder from Ann Arbor, Michigan. He never thought of himself as a wine guy, but that changed when he began his NHL career with the Edmonton Oilers. When he went to dinner with some older teammates, they'd order a bottle; Petry would politely decline a glass. But once he tried it, he was hooked, by the drink as well as by the production process. In fact, during the 2010 Olympic break, he took his wife to Napa for the first time.

"I've been back two times since then," he said. "It's just my happy place out there. Good food, good wine, I find the end product great, obviously, but when you go to the smaller wineries and you talk to the winemaker and owner you start to learn a lot about what actually goes into it. It's actually amazing."

In that regard, west coast teams are spoiled. Not only for the terrific weather, but many of the world's best wineries are a saucer pass away, as San Jose Sharks forward Logan Couture can attest.

"I wasn't a wine guy before (coming to San Jose), but when you do, you kind of have to," he chuckled. "Napa's right there and every team comes through at least once a year, right? We do a wine event, our team does, and we get to meet a lot of people who own wineries. (Brent Burns) has a lot of great connections up in Napa, whenever we get a couple of days off a lot of guys make the drive; it's only two hours."

Many former players are known for their taste in wine. Once a hobby, retired goalie Cam Ward now owns a winery, as does Wayne Gretzky. But, if there was a Stanley Cup for wine connoisseurs, one player would raise it each year.

"Mario Lemieux comes to mind," Barberian said. "He's one of the great collectors. The most sophisticated guy in sport, as far as wine, is (former MLB pitcher) Orel Hershiser. He really knows his great wines and is a great wine connoisseur. In hockey, it's Mario. He stands head and shoulders above everybody else. Marty Brodeur is a great wine drinker and great guy, too. Wayne drinks some good stuff."

Stevens was a longtime teammate of Lemieux's during their respective careers with the Pittsburgh Penguins in the late 80s and early 90s.

"He has a huge wine cellar," Stevens said. "He would have a beer, but he liked wine. The best thing about (today's game) is you go out of town, hang at the best restaurants, eat, have a couple of glasses of wine, go to bed and then play a game. It's pretty good. It was different back then but this is a good life for these guys."

That more measured style isn't just a generational shift. It's a result of a hockey culture that prioritizes taking care of one's body at all times. Players put extreme effort into maximizing their bodies as performance machines; why wreck that work with a 12-pack of Natty Lite?

Players are tested often for their body fat index, so sporting a beer belly is not exactly conducive to a long career.

"Beer is way fatter than wine, so you've got to watch out," said Bruins forward David Pastrnak.

"I go with a lot more wine in the summer because that's when you don't burn so much, so the beer is way heavier for you in the summer," Pastrnak said. "During the season I definitely have a



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couple of beers (rather) than a glass of wine, but in the summer I have wine with sparkling water because it's way lighter."

Mark Recchi, a three-time Stanley Cup champion with the Penguins, Hurricanes and Bruins, told Patrice Bergeron if he wanted to extend his career then he should start drinking more wine.

"Absolutely," Recchi said with a laugh. "I've been telling him that for 10 years."

Many of the players today drink popular wines, or label wines, as Barberian explained, but their knowledge doesn't always get an A-plus.

"They love the big California wines, but their level of sophistication isn't there around Burgundy and Bordeaux. They tend to drink some fancy Italian wines, the labels that are well known, the premium Napa wines," he said.

The most expensive bottle Barberian sold to a player cost \$4,000, which was a '61 Bordeaux to honor his father's birth year.

"That name will remain anonymous," Barberian said.

Barberian remembers once a non-English speaking Maple Leaf rookie accidentally purchased a \$900 bottle of wine while dining at the restaurant because he couldn't read the menu.

"My staff was excited to open this fancy bottle of wine," Barberian remembers. "He kind of gulped and paid the bill and it wasn't until seven or eight years later when he told me the story. He said, 'I was pointing to the \$50 bottle of wine.' His English is much better now and I've bought him many great bottles of wine since."

That kind of mixup is by no means a unique situation. Pastrnak recalled, somewhat sheepishly, that most he's spent on a bottle of wine was at an auction for fellow Czech NHL player Jakub Voracek of the Flyers, whose sister has Multiple Sclerosis.

Pastrnak began bidding on an expensive item, one he believed was a high-end bottle of champagne. It was only after he won the bid that he realized he'd spent \$3,000 on a 13-liter bottle of wine.

"I was like, 'Oh, my God. I thought it was champagne.' It was kind of by mistake but it was for a good cause," Pastrnak said with a smile.

How did that \$3,000 bottle taste? Pastrnak will never know. He didn't get the chance to drink it, to share it with friends, to tell fellow hockey-playing wine aficionados how good it was; the cork was accidentally opened, and the wine went bad before Pastrnak could get a sip.

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The Athletic / The beauty of the pregame nap: 'It's the best part of the day'

By Scott Burnside Nov 7, 2019

"A nap, a nap, my kingdom for a nap."

Wait. No. That was a horse the king laments not having in "Richard III." Sorry.

But, it would have made perfect sense nonetheless had William Shakespeare written about the pregame nap in such longing terms given how important it is to the fabric of being a pro hockey player.

Think of it this way:

The very young and the very old embrace the nap. It is a fixture in hockey culture, woven into the players' psyches.

Just ask Columbus captain Nick Foligno, who has seen the circle of life through the pregame nap.

He grew up watching his father, NHLer Mike Foligno, enjoy a big pasta meal and then go down for his pregame nap at home in the middle of the afternoon.

"So it was ingrained in me at an early age," Nick Foligno said.

Foligno recalled the kids relishing having the same pregame meal as their dad and then following the well-established nap rules in the house: Tip-toes if they were inside and, if the weather was at all nice, playing outside.

"Sometimes we'd try and nap with him," added Foligno, whose younger brother Marcus plays for the Minnesota Wild.

Now the circle is complete as Foligno's three young children, ages 2, 4 and 6, are getting used to dad's gameday routines. There was a short-lived experiment that involved having the kids actually take their nap with dad, which seemed like a good idea in theory.

"We tried that with my kids recently and it does not go well," Foligno said with a laugh.

Now the two youngest and dad all nap at the same time. Just in different rooms.

While there is no such official designation, Foligno might have been the king of the nappers earlier in his career, regularly sleeping up to three hours on game day.

"It was crazy," he said. "It was like going back to bed."

Time may not have mellowed Foligno, who is closing in on 900 NHL games, but it has modified his pre-game habits. Now he eats around noon, has a 20-minute nap, then has a quick snack that will hold him until his postgame meal.

Because Columbus coach John Tortorella has more or less eschewed the morning skate, Foligno might also go for a walk and then join his teammates at the hotel for brief meetings. Then, instead of the monster nap, he'll stretch and begin his preparations for the game.

"I tend to nap a little bit more on the road, I think," said Foligno who describes it as a function of there being a little bit more stimulation with three kids at home.

"Might as well catch up on some sleep when you're away, right?"

Still, no matter the length of the nap, he doesn't even use an alarm to wake up.



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"We're creatures of habit," he said.

And that habit helps both the mental and physical preparation for the games.

All naps are not created equal.

A home pregame nap can be vastly different than a road pregame nap.

Each has its own set of challenges and dynamics.

As Nashville veteran defenseman Dan Hamhuis pointed out, the daytime is when most stuff gets done in a hotel or nearby. Construction. Vacuuming. Cleaning. Doors opening and banging shut. All conspiring to wreck the best-laid nap plans.

Carolina defenseman Brett Pesce noted that having a hotel with good, solid blackout curtains is key.

Truth. What's worse than trying to nap when the curtains don't come completely together and there's that one killer beam of sunlight poking through?

Hamhuis is top 10 in games-played by active NHLers, so he's had lots of practice at the pregame nap routine.

"I've never been a real long-nap guy," he said.

Thirty minutes. That's it. Always been that way, otherwise he wakes up groggy

Hamhuis sets an alarm for every pregame nap even though his body understands him pretty well at this point and about 80 percent of the time he wakes up just before his alarm goes off.

NHL players can thank the NHLPA for negotiating roommates out of the picture, but for many players coming through the ranks, having a roommate on the road always added to the challenge of pregame naps.

Hamhuis recalled when he broke into the NHL with the Predators in 2003, his roommate was Mark Eaton.

"He would take the longest nap possible," Hamhuis said.

Eaton would eat as quickly as possible and then take the second bus to the rink – most teams run two buses from the team hotel to the rink before games – to maximize his napping potential.

"He was a Nick Foligno type of guy," Hamhuis said.

The veteran defenseman explained that meant laying his clothes out and packing his suitcase if the team was flying out of town after the game before his nap, and then getting up from his tiny by comparison nap, dressing as quietly as possible and then hanging out in the lobby or the team snack room until the first bus left.

Later Hamhuis and Ryan Suter roomed together. They were simpatico when it came to pregame nap rituals.

Both loved white noise in the room.

On the road they would always order a portable room fan as soon as they checked in to help move the air and to provide that nice background hum for sleeping both at night and during the nap.

One night in Detroit there was no fan. Neither slept well in the dead silence.

Later the two invested in a portable white noise machine. And when apps became a thing, they employed the white noise apps on their phones.

Heaven.

"I still use it now," Hamhuis said.

A pet peeve?

How about hotel rooms whose heating/cooling systems use a sensor. Hamhuis likes his room cool. Better for sleeping regardless of the time of day. But if the sensor automatically shuts off the cooling system and the room starts to get hot, that sucks.

Of course, the nap at home is a different beast entirely.

Sure there are creature comforts.

Like the blackout curtains that Pesce has at his home.

But there are also other factors, like kids.

Hamhuis is the father of three very active kids, ages 7, 9 and 11.

During the week, the kids are at school, "but on the weekend it can be a little bit more challenging," Hamhuis acknowledged.

Kids coming home and transitioning from basketball to soccer or vice versa can come at nap times. Hamhuis' wife is very understanding – even if she does rib him about his nap rituals.

"They know how important naps are to me," Hamhuis said. "They're pretty respectful."

So, it can't just be stuff you pick up along the way, right? There has to be more to it? Maybe. Maybe not.

Jason Ong is an associate professor of neurology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and is the principal investigator of the Behavioral Sleep Medicine Lab. He's also an avid sports fan, so the intersection of his two passions is intriguing.

In general, naps have been somewhat controversial in the sleep field, Ong explained. If someone suffers from insomnia, a sleep disorder wherein people have difficulty falling or staying asleep, naps are generally frowned upon.

Makes sense. If you're having trouble sleeping during normal nighttime hours, sleeping during the day can exacerbate the problem.

If people are getting the proper amount of sleep at night – and that varies from person to person depending on their age and other factors – they probably shouldn't need a nap.

Ong isn't aware of any studies that connect pregame naps to enhanced physical performance. But one area where the nap might be of value for athletes, and specifically hockey players, is if they aren't getting sufficient sleep at night.

That has long been a subject of much debate in the hockey world and many teams have employed sleep specialists to try and ameliorate the effects of long travel across time zones mostly at night.

Both Ong and Cheri Mah, a sleep specialist who was a research fellow at the University of California San Francisco's Human



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Performance Center, agree there is evidence that a nap can increase alertness and performance for a short period of time.

"So, if timed appropriately, (it) can provide a boost for games," Mah wrote to The Athletic in an email.

Along with catching up on sleep — essentially putting more fuel in the tank— is the impact of the circadian rhythm that impacts a wide variety of organisms from plants and fungi to humans. Basically, that is the human's internal clock. There is a natural period of time during the middle of the day where the circadian rhythm is at a low ebb. Historically, many societies have responded to this natural occurring dip in energy and alertness with the siesta.

That most hockey players take a pregame nap during that time isn't coincidental, Ong suggested.

As for the pattern that seems to see younger players napping longer, well, that makes sense, too.

Do they need it more? That's debatable, said Ong, but they certainly are built for it.

"Younger people are capable of sleeping longer," he said.

The older you get, the easier it is for sleep to be interrupted and there is less deep sleep.

And regardless of the science, there is an adjustment period for young players when they step into professional hockey. Sometimes young players don't realize how hard the competition is and how taxing the travel can be.

And so the nap appears to be a hybrid of learned behavior and the physiological need for the body to recuperate and regenerate.

"You've been doing it so long now, now it's nap time and your body just realizes it's rest time," explained Washington center Nicklas Backstrom.

"I'm usually tired around that time anyways," he added. "It's just easier to fall asleep the longer the season goes."

Especially if you're in the Western Conference like Hamhuis, who has spent his entire NHL career there, playing three games in four nights and sometimes not getting to sleep until 3 a.m. after games; the onerous travel schedule can wear players down if they're not cognizant of their body's need to bank up on sleep.

"When you go through a cycle where you have a lot of those days, those naps in the afternoons I think they are really important," Hamhuis said.

That mental feeling of freshness after a proper nap — whatever form that takes — is huge.

The nap environment varies from player to player. Backstrom watches a little television to lead up to the nap. Others listen to music as a way of telling the body it's time to shut down for a bit. Pesce employs earplugs.

If things go awry, like too much light in a hotel room, or other bits of flotsam and jetsam life throws at a player as he tries to prepare for a game, it registers.

"You definitely feel a bit off," he said. "Anything that breaks the routine."

Dreams? Pesce said he was just talking about the nap dream situation with some of his teammates and it's a pretty common occurrence.

"I feel like I have the most vivid dreams from my nap every time almost," Pesce said. "They're very vivid."

At night? He remembers nothing.

Does Pesce look forward to it regardless of where he is?

"Oh, yeah, it's the best part of the day," Pesce said. "I'm just kidding actually. But it's definitely good to just relax and unwind for a few hours before you get ready to ramp it up."

Maybe he's kidding, maybe not. But when Hamhuis talks to players who have retired, the nap is one of the touchstones they miss most about the game.

Despite this broad love of the nap, there is one prominent player who is only just now coming to the nap table — Tampa Bay star defenseman Victor Hedman.

As a young man playing in Sweden, Hedman was still going to school so the nap never became part of his routine.

When he came to the NHL in 2009, he never got into the habit.

Before his first NHL game, he went to a mall and walked around.

"And then I thought, oh, maybe I shouldn't do this on a game day," Hedman said.

So he would stretch out on a couch or bed but not nap.

However, as he's gotten older — he'll turn 29 in December — Hedman has found himself occasionally employing the nap as a way of restoring some energy, recharging the mental and physical battery.

"When you have the chance to rest and sleep a little bit, you've got to take it," he explained.

This nod to age or evolution or maturity or just plain weariness began last season. It's still not an everyday thing for Hedman and he never naps longer than 45 minutes.

He admitted that until he joined the nap brigade he was definitely in the minority among his teammates and peers in the NHL. One of the reasons was that he was simply one of those guys who could go to sleep after a game regardless of how it unfolded.

Now that he's doing some napping, Hedman has been cautious to make sure he regulates the process. "If I sleep too long I'm very, very sluggish," he said. "It feels like the body thinks it's gone to sleep for the night."

The elite defenseman admits that he is more than a little superstitious, so the nap has to be factored into the bigger picture of his game day rituals. Like driving the same way to the rink every day. Unless the Bolts have lost, in which case he takes another way (there are actually only two ways to get to Amalie Arena for Hedman).

"I always park in the same spot," he added. "I always back my car in."

And he speaks to the same people at the arena when he's at home.



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"I love game days. It's fun," Hedman said. "You have your own stuff and you look forward to it."

Now that includes, at least on some days, a pre-game nap for Hedman and his French bulldog, Harry. Harry's familiar with Hedman's routine.

"We'll go to the couch in one of the rooms," he said. "And he goes in there and he sits there with you. He's got his own pre-game thing."

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1160508 Websites

The Athletic / Book nerds unite! 100 book recommendations from players, coaches, execs and the hockey world

Craig Custance Nov 7, 2019

There is often a lot of time to kill in the world of hockey. Especially on the road. You've probably read about the intense video game showdowns between teammates. And the fantasy teams. And the poker games in the back of the plane.

There's also another subset in the hockey world: The voracious book reader. These are my people.

"A book is easier to pack than a PlayStation," explained Ducks defenseman Korbinian Holzer. "When you have some down time in the hotel and the weather is not as nice, you start reading."

Sidney Crosby is passionate about World War II books. Lou Lamoriello often makes book recommendations to people in his organization. When asked to name the best book he's read in the last year, Newport founder Don Meehan asked for time to consider because he was currently reading seven or eight. Eight!

And there's nothing the passionate book reader likes better than a good book recommendation. So when asked to contribute to our Culture Blitz this week, I decide to start collecting some of the best book recommendations by asking the same simple question: What's the best book you've read in the last year?

The answers were pretty amazing. And the list kept growing until it hit triple digits. So let's dive in, leading off with the guy who wrote the best hockey book ever printed and then sorted alphabetically by category:

1. and 2. Ken Dryden, Hall of Famer and author

"The Underground Railroad" and "The Nickel Boys," by Colson Whitehead

Dryden: "They should be on every U.S. high school kid's curriculum the way "To Kill a Mockingbird" has been for decades. There's "awareness" about racism and the racial divide, and there's "AWARENESS."

Players and former players

3. Jay Beagle, Vancouver Canucks forward

"The Bible"

Beagle: "I try to read it every day. I would be lying if I said I do it every day. I'm not much of a book reader but I've been reading that for the last two or three years. Not like a book, I don't read it from front to back. But if I'm going to read, that's what I usually read at night."

4. Daniel Carcillo, former NHL forward and current mental health advocate

"The Rise Of Superman" by Steven Kotler

Carcillo: "After reading this book, I had an epiphany as to why the transition out of sport can be so difficult. The book explains in depth what chemicals are present in our brain when athletes achieve a 'flow state.' And the only time these five chemicals show up at once is when we achieve flow (which happens every shift once the puck is dropped for hockey players). There are several ways to get to a flow state, but sport is the most common."

5. Kacey Bellamy, Team USA Olympic gold medalist

"Mind Gym: An Athlete's Guide to Inner Excellence" by Gary Mack

Bellamy: "I was first introduced to this book by Mike Boyle and it was the beginning of getting my mental game on track. I use it to strengthen my brain. There are so many different stories and concepts that are relatable to any athlete and the mental side of the game. I always go to it whether I need a refresher or want to try new techniques on and off the ice."

6. Jennifer Botterill, three-time Olympic gold medalist for Hockey Canada and TV analyst

"Perspective: The Key to Life," by Cal Botterill and Tom Patrick

Jennifer Botterill: "This is a book that helped me to be a better person and a better performer. It taught me to prepare for moments in my life in many ways – physically, mentally, and emotionally. The tools that I learned through the book helped me to be a sustainable high performance athlete."

Cal Botterill is Jennifer's father.

7. Brent Burns, San Jose Sharks defenseman

"Thank You for My Service," by Mat Best

Burns: "Not only has he become a buddy and I have had the opportunity to see how much good Mat and the boys do for our service members, but the book is a great read. It's fast and keeps you laughing and shows that not only are these guys tough as nails but smart and hardworking too! Love seeing that other side of them getting through the tough times and laughing through it, and how afterwards they have created a whole new community to be a part of in the successful business of Black Rifle Coffee Company! I'd still like to throw a big recommendation into Harry Potter, Game of Thrones and Percy Jackson books! Enjoyed those as well!"

8. Dennis Cholowski, Detroit Red Wings

"Make Your Bed: Little Things That Can Change Your Life... and Maybe the World" by William H. McRaven

Cholowski: "It's just cool. All the little things that can pile up and make a huge difference, like making your bed in the morning. I thought it was really cool."



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9. Kendall Coyne Schofield, Team USA Olympic gold medalist

"Beating the Odds in Hockey and in Life" by Eddie Olczyk

Coyne Schofield: "Eddie and I both grew up in the small town of Palos Heights, Illinois. He has always been someone I've looked up to. His family is one of the greatest families I've met through hockey. To have the courage to write a book for the world to read about the most challenging time of your life speaks volumes to the character of Eddie Olczyk. He shares his story with the hopes of helping others. He will always be the greatest Olympian to come out of Palos Heights."

10. Sidney Crosby, Pittsburgh Penguins captain

"Spearhead" by Adam Makos

Crosby: "I like a lot of World War II books. I've always been into history. I did some stuff as a kid, I interviewed some WWII veterans when I was in school. My aunt used to work at a veterans' hospital. Through those interviews I got introduced to it pretty early. ... Spearhead is about a tank crew during WWII. You know 'Fury' the movie? It's kind of a similar feel to that."

11. Jack Drury, Harvard center and Carolina Hurricanes prospect

"Meditations" by Marcus Aurelius

Drury: "The ancient Roman Emperor gives timeless advice on mental tranquility and happiness. I think the ideas provided are extremely useful for hockey; really helping find that line between internal confidence/focus and external uncontrollable."

12. Meghan Duggan, captain of the 2018 gold-medal-winning U.S. Olympic team

"Grit" by Angela Duckworth

Duggan: "A book about what it truly takes to succeed, in any and all industries, and how to find and capture what that is. I learned a lot about myself and who I wanted to be when reading it."

13. Renata Fast, Hockey Canada Olympian

"Legacy" by James Kerr

Fast: "A great read that takes you through the culture and legacy set by the All Blacks that has made them highly successful. The All Blacks are an example of how important creating the right culture is to success in sport, business and everyday life. This book has a great mix of telling a powerful success story as well as providing insights from highly successful coaches in the sports world."

14. Nick Foligno, Columbus Blues Jackets captain

"The Captain Class" by Sam Walker

Foligno: "(GM) Jarmo (Kekalainen) gave it to me and I really enjoyed it. It's about leadership but delves into what sets apart great teams from legendary teams and the one constant was a player or a few that set the culture of the team in the time they were there and created this standard that was elite beyond all other teams. Sometimes these players weren't even the best on their teams but they had an ability to do the little things that allowed the rest of the team to excel. I really enjoyed it first for the leadership aspects but then I learned about teams in other parts of the world that I had never heard of that were incredible. Really fun read with the stories within the story."

15. Sam Gagner, Edmonton Oilers

"The Obstacle is the Way" by Ryan Holiday

Gagner: "It was the real life examples he showed of people turning what seemed to be obstacles into springboards for their success – the stories were really interesting. ... I find myself in some of the challenges I go through in my life referencing that book a lot. It comes up a lot."

16. Erik Gudbranson, Anaheim Ducks

"Into Thin Air" by Jon Krakauer

Gudbranson: "It's just a crazy story. It's a crazy story. It's one of the ones you can't put down. I'm almost done with (another Krakauer book) 'Into the Wild.' I've got about a third of it left, I'll be done with it by the end of the weekend."

17. Korbinian Holzer, Anaheim Ducks

"Can't Hurt Me: Master Your Mind and Defy the Odds" by David Goggins

Holzer: "It was about the mental side of everything in life. There's so much more to it. He explains that people are way more capable of things than they think they are. There is so much more beyond the limit you think is your limit. It's an easy read but it's a tough story. It goes pretty deep. He explains what he went through as a kid. He hits pretty deep but it's a really good story."

18. Max Jones, Anaheim Ducks

"Legacy," by James Kerr

Jones: "Hands down. I've been a diehard rugby fan my whole life. I have a New Zealand All Blacks jersey. It was right up my alley to read the book. Knowing in-depth more about who they are as a team, it's more of a lifestyle. I play on the edge and trying to control my mental toughness, being able to control that. ... Reading that book it put a lot of things into perspective for me. I'd definitely recommend that."

19. Ryan Kuffner, Grand Rapids Griffins

"The Big Miss: My Years Coaching Tiger Woods" by Hank Haney

Kuffner: "The best swimmers are always in the pool. That was the theme. The best players are always doing something to help themselves. In hockey, it's a bit tougher than golf or maybe even basketball where you're doing something where you're not getting tired. ... It's about finding a good time between actually living a life and when you come to the rink, making sure you're excited to be there."

20. Sam Lafferty, Pittsburgh Penguins forward

"Iron Ambition: My Life with Cus D'Amato" by Mike Tyson

Lafferty: "It's a really cool story of someone who came from a really tough upbringing and worked his way to being the best in the world. He faced a lot of obstacles once he made it, too. It's a fascinating story. It talks a lot about the history – it even goes back into the history of the different arenas in the U.S. The hockey arenas, they were really affiliated with boxing – Joe Louis Arena, the old arena in Chicago. James Norris, the guy the Norris trophy is named after, was a huge boxing tycoon. He ran the entire thing. That was unexpected."



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21. Nicklas Lidstrom, Detroit Red Wings Hall of Fame defenseman

"The Russian Five" by Keith Gave

Lidstrom: "I found it both interesting and fascinating hearing the story about how my old teammates were able to come over and make it in the NHL."

22. Jeff LoVecchio, retired player and owner of RIPT Hockey

"Advances In Functional Training," by Mike Boyle

LoVecchio: "Yes, this book is a little older, but I try to constantly re-read it because it has so much information in it that is extremely useful. If I could only recommend one book to a hockey coach or organization looking to add on-ice training without spending tons of money on a trainer, I would have EVERY COACH read this book. Instead of holding 'dry land' sessions that are just tiring your teams out and opening them up to injuries, just read and apply!"

23. and 24. Kyle Okposo, Buffalo Sabres ("Two books, one for enrichment one for pleasure.")

"Mindset: The New Psychology of Success" by Carol S. Dweck

Okposo: "I got a ton out of this book. It has a lot of great information in it about living in a growth mindset. It applies in business, sports, parenting, etc."

"American Assassin" by Vince Flynn

Okposo: "This is my series I read for pleasure. Mitch Rapp is an awesome character. There are many books in this series but this one is Mitch's backstory and the story is great if you like spy thrillers."

25. Josh Pauls, motivational speaker and U.S. Sled Hockey Player

"Start with Why" by Simon Sinek

Pauls: "Behind any successful person is the reason they do what they do. The book not only analyzes the 'why' behind leaders like Steve Jobs, but it gives inspiration for readers to find their own why. You can't just do or create something for the sake of doing it or making money, you need to find your internal drive and it helped me understand, at the most basic level, why I'm a speaker and why I still want to compete with the U.S. National Team."

26. Sean Pronger, former NHL center and author of "Journeyman"

"Extreme Ownership: How Navy Seals Lead and Win" by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin

Pronger: "He talks about different strategies used in battles during war, and then explains how they can apply in business and life. Preaches accountability."

27. Jordan Samuels-Thomas, pro hockey player and contributor to The Athletic

"The Real Win" by Colt McCoy and Matt Carter

Samuels-Thomas: "The drive to win – especially in our profession – is something that can consume us every day. It's neither bad or good but rather a mindset required for success. I

really enjoyed this book because it highlights the many other ways that we can 'win' and make an impact in the lives around us that society doesn't always celebrate. Thriving for authentic success isn't about championships, but it's being a truly present friend, or a loving husband, and leading by example."

28. Florence Schelling, four-time Olympic goalie for Swiss national team

"Mindset" by Dr. Carol S. Dweck

Schnelling: "A book that opened my eyes about the two different mindsets (open and fixed mindset) that can be applied not only to sports, but to business, school, relationships and beyond. It really cultivated me to thrive on challenges!"

29. John Scott, retired enforcer, 2016 All-Star Game MVP

"The Boys in the Boat" by Daniel James Brown

Scott: "It's a really inspirational book, I love non-fiction books and WWII era books so this one checked both of those boxes. It's a great story about a group of kids who basically work their tail off to upend the whole rowing community. They first have to gain respect in the collegiate ranks; once that's done they have to overcome the German juggernaut at the Olympics. It's such a good book."

30. Haley Skarupa, 2018 Olympic gold medal winner, hockey ambassador for Washington Capitals

"My Fight / Your Fight" by Ronda Rousey

Skarupa: "As a hockey player, it is always so fascinating to learn about individual sport athletes and the mental strength that goes into it. In (Rousey's book) the reader can fully dive into her world and use each challenge and triumph from her perspective as a tool to improve their own approach for success. The book and her journey gave me a larger appreciation for all of my teammates over the years, as well as a higher sense of accountability for myself. Her story is captivating, motivating and really makes you think about your own journey as well."

31. Andrei Svechnikov, Carolina Hurricanes forward

"Molly's Game" by Molly Bloom

Svechnikov: "It was a real page turner and very hard to put this book down. Great suspense and also very interesting how she created the poker games and would invite different famous people to attend. Great for a long flight to/from the West Coast."

Executives

32. Brad Alberts, Dallas Stars president

"This Kind of War" by T.R. Fehrenbach

Alberts: "It's a book about the Korean War. It really walks you through the heroism, strategy/tactics, and the brutality of that war. It obviously has great relevance today explaining how North and South Korea came about, and the politics and history of the region."

33. Mike Barwis, Detroit Red Wings director of sports science and human performance

"The Bible"



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Barwis: "It helps me to remain humble, stay grounded in focus and maintains my direction of purpose. Every great leader must be a great servant. If the people we work with each day mean more to us than we do to ourselves we will always be good at our jobs."

34. Gary Bettman, NHL commissioner

"Grant," by Ron Chernow

Bettman: "(It's) about a leader with tremendous responsibilities, confronting difficult tasks and who was frequently misunderstood."

35. Julien BriseBois, Tampa Bay Lightning general manager

"The Black Swan," by Nassim Nicholas Taleb

BriseBois: "It is a book about how we fool ourselves into thinking that we know more than we actually do. How we underestimate the probability of highly improbable events when we assess risk and how the occurrence of events that have a truly major impact are usually unpredictable. I chose this book because it is the most thought-provoking book I read this year and because even though the subject matter is heavy, Taleb has a witty writing style that makes this an enjoyable read."

36. John Chayka, Arizona Coyotes general manager

"AlphaBrain: How a Group of Iconoclasts Are Using Cognitive Science to Advance the Business of Alpha Generation" by Stephen Duneier

Chayka: "Perhaps the most valuable life skill is our ability to make efficient and effective decisions. The book does a great job of analyzing the process of decision-making and provides insight into how to optimize your decisions. Whether you're trying to be the GM of a sports team, or a manager in everyday life, I would highly recommend the book."

37. Meghan Chayka, Co-founder Stathletes, Inc.

"Shoe Dog" by Phil Knight

Chayka: "You'd think I'd suggest Moneyball but a recent read that resonated with me is 'Shoe Dog'. The quote – 'The cowards never started and the weak died along the way – that leaves us' – is on my desk at work. I think it's an inspiring read that transcends sports and entrepreneurship."

38. Ahron Cohen, President and CEO of the Arizona Coyotes

"Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World" by David Epstein

Cohen: "As the father of two young sons under 3 years old, I'm often thinking of all the things I can do as a parent to put them in the best possible position to one day walk across the NHL draft podium. Range does a great job of exploring how perhaps the best strategy for the future is to have no strategy at all. Range articulates that the breadth of one's experiences is actually better for enhancing development than a hyper-deliberate approach in great depth."

39. Kyle Dubas, Maple Leafs general manager

"Loonshots: How to nurture the crazy ideas that win wars, cure diseases, and transform industries" by Safi Bahcall

Dubas: "The book was recommended in a podcast I was listening to with Daniel Kahneman and it forced me to really look at how I make decisions about the various ideas and strategies that are in action or proposed within our program. The book takes a look at how the structure and ideology of a company can nurture or thwart ideas and strategies, which can create massive change within the company and change the world, in some cases. It focuses on how some of the greatest ideas in business history were ridiculed as crazy by many and how the people behind those ideas needed to endure heavy doubt and criticism to bring them to fruition over many intricate phases."

40. Don Fehr, NHLPA executive director

"To Hell and Back: Europe 1914-1949" by Ian Kershaw

Fehr: "Effectively a series of essays tracing and explaining the social and political history of Europe during the WWI-WWII period. Particularly good elucidating the many fascist, militaristic movements that dominated the politics in central and Eastern Europe in the period between the wars. It was not just in Germany and Italy. Reminds us of what can be if we don't defend and protect the institutions we have. All can change in a hurry."

41. Josh Fenton, National Collegiate Hockey Conference commissioner

"The Club: How the English Premier League Became the Wildest, Richest, Most Disruptive Force in Sports" by Joshua Robinson and Jonathan Clegg

Fenton: "For someone who was a part of a conference formation, this book provided me great insight into the evolution of a sports league and the need to think bigger. In today's crazy world of sports media rights, it was amazing to see how the 'thinking big mindset' of a few people turned a somewhat local league into the world's most profitable sports entity."

42. Josh Flynn, Columbus Blue Jackets assistant general manager

"Peak" by Anders Ericsson and Robert Pool

Flynn: "Ericsson has studied how people develop expertise in a field – sport to mathematics to music, to driving a cab in London – through deliberate practice. The lessons he shares have stuck with me thinking about how players reach the top of the sport, how we as evaluators and executives get better at we do, and also have made me think about how deliberate practice plays into all areas of life. I read it last November, and I haven't stopped thinking about it since."

43. Trevor Georgie, Saint John Sea Dogs president and general manager

"Cubs Way" Tom Verducci

Georgie: "As a young sports executive, I admire Theo Epstein's work. While I don't follow baseball religiously, best practices and innovation usually come from outside your industry. I found it particularly interesting reading about Theo's 'The Cubs Way' manual as we have our own 'Sea Dogs Blueprint.' There are different formulas to winning, but in a data-driven, 'Moneyball' world, Theo focused his energy on the most important asset – people."

44. Cammi Granato, Hockey Hall of Famer and Seattle pro scout



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"The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho

Granato: "I read this book 20 years ago when I was training for the 2002 Olympics and it's still one of the most inspiring books I've read. The book is about following your dreams and listening to your heart."

45. Jason Karmanos, Pittsburgh Penguins vice president of hockey operations

"Sapiens" by Yuval Noah Harari

Karmanos: "It's a bestseller so it's not like it's a secret but it's a truly incredible book in terms of its scope. I spend so much time, as we all do, on day-to-day work/family responsibilities, and it takes a book like Sapiens to force me to stop and consider some of the bigger questions of our world. I'm a history and science geek so I'm especially receptive to a book like Sapiens that weaves both disciplines together so eloquently. I'm sure there are people that would question some of the conclusions of this book, but I found it to be truly fascinating and incredibly entertaining."

46. Jarmo Kekalainen, Columbus Blue Jackets general manager

"The Captain Class" by Sam Walker

Kekalainen: "I thought this was a great book because of the massive research done on it. It confirms all the values we believe in as a TEAM: it takes everyone to buy in if you want to win. It digs into leadership and what it means on a practical level. Leading by example, the selflessness and sacrifice, not so much about being "polished" and well-spoken or even well-mannered at times.

47. Dr. Aimee Kimball, New Jersey Devils director of player and team development

"The Culture Code" by Daniel Coyle

Kimball: "It talks a lot about how important the environment is. If you don't bring in the right people, as talented as they are, it's not going to work. So the culture of whether it's a business organization, a sports organization, is really important."

48. Lou Lamoriello, New York Islanders president and general manager

"Principles" by Ray Dalio

Lamoriello: "This is one of the better leadership books I have read. Easy to read, right to the point and creates questions for the reader to answer about oneself in making decisions. It is a book that prompts one to discover their own principles, which allows oneself to deal with the processes that take place prior to making decisions. "

49. Brian MacLellan, Washington Capitals general manager

"The Obstacle Is the Way" by Ryan Holiday

MacLellan: "Stoicism philosophy about the distinction between what you can control and what you can't – obstacles – bad games, slumps, poor calls ... The hardest part of pro sports is to detach yourself from the day-to-day emotion about losing a game ... how do we keep focus on our process – what we do and execute it."

50. Alexandra Mandrycky, director of hockey strategy and research for NHL Seattle

"Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking" by Susan Cain

Mandrycky: "Cain provides an overview on what exactly an introvert is (and no, it doesn't mean someone is shy or quiet!). As a self-proclaimed introvert living in an often extroverted world and industry, Cain's suggestions for how to adapt and use your introversion as a strength along with her recommendations for how to make the workplace and collaboration process more introvert-friendly have proven to be helpful."

51. George McPhee, Vegas Golden Knights president

"A Gentleman in Moscow" Amor Towles

McPhee: "The author has a phenomenal mind and writing style. He spun historical fiction together with a diverse cast of characters to produce a splendid novel. I liked it because it's so different from the 'find an edge' books most of us sports guys consider required reading."

52. Nirva Milord, NHL's senior director of corporate communications

"A Higher Loyalty: Truth, Lies and Leadership" by James Comey

Milord: "While on vacation in New Zealand this summer, I went searching for a good memoir and picked (this) up. It's not exactly your typical summer beach read but neither is New Zealand in July. While the stories he shared of his time in public service were captivating, I found his examinations about ethics and leadership the most enjoyable and thought-provoking."

53. Anya Packer, executive director of National Women's Hockey League Players Association

"Girl, Stop Apologizing" by Rachel Hollis

Packer: "I really enjoy books that leave me empowered by my work with the NWHPLA, and 'Girl, Stop Apologizing' definitely left me feeling really empowered. As I read her book, I was able to feel empowered by my biggest dreams and aspirations for women in sport, as opposed to feeling suffocated by them. This is a great hands-on book that allows for reflection and growth, and I felt like it was a light and easy read. I really enjoyed the feelings I had post-read, and although every message didn't completely resonate with me, I really enjoyed the book!"

54. David Poile, Predators president and general manager

"Finish first" by Scott Hamilton

Poile: "Scott's story is a triumph. He reminds us that life is a constant competition, and that the benefits derived from competing for every inch and measuring yourself against the best, far outweigh the risks of failure. It's a great lesson in perseverance that's sorely needed in today's world. And with Scott being a Smashville local and avid Preds fan, it gives it a little extra meaning for me personally. All in all, a great read."

55. Frank Provenzano, former Dallas Stars and Washington Capitals assistant GM, current executive for Power Play Agency

"Thanks A Thousand: A Gratitude Journey" by A.J. Jacobs

Provenzano: "He decides to literally thank everyone who was involved with his morning cup of coffee. There's a lot of people involved in our everyday lives. We're all in the routines of our lives and jobs and you think it's bound together with a concrete



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foundation. It's really bound together with string. I think it's interesting to take time to look at the string that holds it together and the people who are critical to putting together, in this case, something we love and need – our morning cup of coffee."

56. Don Sweeney, Boston Bruins general manager

"Legacy" by James Kerr

Sweeney: "My go-to book since reading it has been Legacy. My most recent read was 'MVP Machine' by Ben Lindbergh and Travis Sawchik – interesting because of the technology being tied to 'defined skill development/practice.'"

57. Bill Zito, Columbus Blue Jackets assistant GM

"The Power of Habit" Charles Duhigg

Zito: "Fascinating examination of habits, what they are, how to change them and the remarkable power (good and bad) they have over us. Strange how many behaviors we think are rational decisions are really habits. He observed the importance of 'habit' in military application and applied it across daily life. Then he examines the collective habits as they apply to groups (teams, workplaces). Very interesting, fun read."

Coaches

58. Bruce Cassidy, Boston Bruins coach

"Beartown" by Fredrik Backman

Cassidy: "Small, hard working and prideful hockey town and how they deal with and react to a sexual assault. Author does a great job with character development and paints a very real picture of what would develop. Emotionally intense for anybody."

59. Dallas Eakins, Anaheim Ducks coach

"Can't Hurt Me" by David Goggins

Eakins: "He's like a unicorn when it comes to mental toughness and his story and what he's done through his military career and what he does now. If you want to really challenge yourself on how you don't have time, read David Goggin's book or follow him on Instagram."

60. Rikard Gronborg, ZSC Lions coach

"The Culture Code" by Daniel Coyle

Gronborg: "He is looking into different successful organizations around the world and in particular the culture they've created. Since he has worked in professional sports he does have an understanding into our world as well, which gives the writing even more relevance. He explains in the book – 'culture is not something you are, it's something you do.'"

61. Jared Nightingale, Saginaw Spirit associate coach

"Good to Great" by Jim Collins

Nightingale: "I enjoyed learning the differences between good and great businesses or teams are not based on fancy analytics or stats. Humble leaders and team-first people are hard to come by."

62. Greg Powers, Arizona State University hockey coach

"The Obstacle Is The Way" by Ryan Holiday

Powers: "The principles of this book have really guided our players and staff through how to turn adversity into advantage while we've built our program from scratch in a sub-par facility. The book has reinforced our culture of focusing on what we do have and not what we don't have."

63. Jay Woodcroft, Bakersfield Condors coach

"It's Your Ship" by Captain Michael Abrashoff

Woodcroft: "This book helped re-define words like empowerment and performance for me. It reinforced my belief that leadership is the art of doing the simple things extremely well, that the best leaders create an architecture of execution, and that the difference between top teams and underperforming ones comes from paying attention to details and experiences."

64. Todd Woodcroft, Winnipeg Jets assistant coach

"The Culture Code" by Daniel Coyle

Woodcroft: "It's so germane to hockey and really any team sport. Of course, it is relevant to the corporate world/business world and even for the dynamics of families. I'm paraphrasing but I love the idea that culture is essentially a feeling of possibility. The notion (for players and myself as an assistant coach) that we will respond to what leaders feel is important. To me that means the head coach and veteran players. I see that every single day."

Agents

65. George Bazos, Edge Sports Management

"Tossing Heat" by Ken Ryan Sr.

Bazos: "It is the story of a young, unheralded baseball Player (Ken Ryan Jr.) through the eyes of his father. It talks about Ken all the way back to Little League tryouts and details his path to finally pitching in the major leagues for his hometown team, the Boston Red Sox. Ken Ryan was one of the first professional athletes that I ever represented, and the story really reminded me of why I got into this business to begin with."

66. Brant Feldman, agent for Olympic and Paralympic athletes

"Athletes Are Brands Too: How Brand Marketing Can Save Today's Athlete" by Jeremy Darlow

Feldman: "I want to convey (to athletes) that they are growing their social media platforms and what they can do not only now but when they retire and go on how they can use their own persona for business, demonstrate their own voice, make their own statement and showcase what and who they are beyond their wins and victories on the field for what's next. This is a book that relays this message."

67. Darren Ferris, Quartexx

"Ice Capades: A Memoir of Fast Living Living and Tough Hockey" by Sean Avery

Ferris: "It was really entertaining – just how real it was, how it was in the room. Nothing was sugar-coated. Nobody wants to say things to offend people but Avery wasn't worried. You were getting the unvarnished version of an experience of a hockey (player). "

68. Igor Larionov, Hockey Hall of Famer and player agent at The Will Sports Group



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"My Turn" by Johan Cruyff

Larionov: "It was an insight into his philosophy of the game of football (very much related to modern game of hockey). Skill, creativity and entertainment were a reminder to all of us how the game should be played. His thoughts and ideas have been followed by many top European clubs and, also, around the globe. Must read for many youth and professional teams coaches."

69. Mike Liut, Octagon Hockey managing director

"Grant" by Ron Chernow

Liut: "A quiet, humble leader Walt Whitman described as 'Nothing heroic, as the authorities put it – and yet the greatest hero.' History knows his failures, but not the man who commanded a million man army, who had the insight to preserve the 'Great Experiment' during Reconstruction and the humanity to recognize Black Suffrage. True leaders seek to make those around them better. They do not insult, degrade or vilify others in a sad attempt to put themselves on a pedestal."

70. Rand Simon, Newport Sports Management

"Heart of the Game: Life, Death and Mercy in Minor League America" by S.L. Price

Simon: "The way the author tied everything together just made for a remarkable story. It was a book about baseball, it was a book about life. ... As a baseball fan you'd heard the story of the coach getting hit and getting killed. You read the articles about it the day after it happened and then the book comes out with incredible detail and circumstance that led to it. It was quite amazing."

71. Allan Walsh, Octagon Hockey co-managing director

"The Game" by Ken Dryden

Walsh: "The best book I've read in the past year is a book that I re-read at least once a year since it was first published: Ken Dryden's 'The Game.' It's more than just a hockey book, it's more than just a chronicle of the last year of a NHL players' career. Ken Dryden captured lightning in a bottle. There are kernels of truth insight and revelation on literally every page. It's about youthful and innocent exuberance, ambition, success, self doubt, self loathing and ultimately a struggle for control of life's randomness. The book begins with a quote – 'I leave before being left, I decide.' While it explains his decision to retire at the pinnacle of his career, his yearning to control his own destiny is what we all struggle with in our daily lives. 'The Game' is the story of our lives."

Media, influencers and prominent contributors to the game

72. Bruce Arthur, Toronto Star columnist

"Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World" by David Epstein

Arthur: "I would also add that 'Before the Lights Go Out' by Sean Fitz-Gerald is really good. It's basically Canadian Friday Night Lights. It's beautiful. 'Range' blew my mind in about 15 different ways. It blew my mind in terms of how my kids are getting educated, in terms of how we learn things. It was fascinating. Epstein goes to places you'd never imagine."

73 and 74. Jamie Baker, former NHL player and current Sharks broadcaster

"The Daily Stoic" by Ryan Holiday

Baker: "It's an easy read, one page a day of Stoic philosophy. It's the second year I've read the book and it's awesome."

"A New Earth" by Eckhart Tolle

Baker: "It's about consciousness, and understanding our ego and it's negative effects, and transforming ourselves to our true self. I'm running out of highlighter there are so many good points in this book."

75. Katie Baker, staff writer at The Ringer

"The Mark and the Void" by Paul Murray

Baker: "It's a satirical novel set in Ireland during the late-aughts financial crisis, which my Kindle tells me I downloaded in 2015 but which I finally got around to this year. Finger on the pulse. Between its eye-rolling at the powerful and its vivid cast of characters (a banker in a band called Gephardt and the Mergers; a failing, flailing writer in cahoots with a violent lug named Igor, etc.) this book had me straight-up giggling on the regular, when I wasn't busy gulping over its hard truths. (As a bonus, rule-breaking recommendation: Murray also wrote 'Skippy Dies,' an all-time favorite. He's so good.)"

76. Amalie Benjamin, NHL.com senior writer

"Good Morning, Midnight" by Lily Brooks-Dalton

Benjamin: "I read a lot of good books this year – 'Educated,' 'Bad Blood' and 'The Hate U Give,' among them – but the one that stood out was 'Good Morning, Midnight,' a beautifully written vision of the end of the world, as experienced by two sets of people left. It's a story of connection and humanity, set in a time when most of humanity is gone. Dystopian/post-apocalyptic isn't my typical genre of choice, but this quiet, thoughtful book held onto me throughout – and still does, long after I finished the last page."

77. Craig Button, former Flames GM and current TSN analyst

"She Said" by Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey

Button: "A significant social change took place because of the brave efforts of many who shared their experiences of prevalent workplace sexual harassment. It was unlawful but the actions of the perpetrators was also sinister in the way they intimidated their accusers, and often to great extents. Because of the courage of so many in telling their stories, not only was the act up, there would no longer be, acceptance for this type of behavior and one could expect not only legal repercussions for these types of actions but social ones as well."

78. Ryan Carter, Minnesota Wild television analyst and former NHL player

"Rework" by David Heinemeier Hansson and Jason Fried

Carter: "As I finished my playing days, I had some anxiety about where and what to do next. The title of this book caught me as I was facing, and in need of, a midlife rebuild. Though this book more references entrepreneurial processes in the business world, the concepts were applicable and paralleled situations I faced at the time of the read in terms of decision-making, time



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management and risk-taking. It's a quick, no-nonsense read that helped me get the ball rolling on life after playing."

79. Linda Cohn, ESPN SportsCenter and In the Crease

"Me" by Elton John

Cohn: "I've seen him multiple times. I grew up with his music. Besides sports, I loved classic rock growing up and I continue to be fascinated with these musicians as they look back on their incredible yet challenging and sometimes heartbreaking lives in autobiographies. I'm just glad Elton was still alive to write this."

80. Ken Daniels, Detroit Red Wings broadcaster

"Howard Stern Comes Again" by Howard Stern

Daniels: "Having been enveloped with the opioid crisis the past three years, I have spent most of my reading time digging deep into that, from Beth Macy's 'Dopesick' to Ryan Hampton's 'American Fix'. Disturbing reads of greed in America, and the shame and stigma that precludes recovery. Yet, helping us to be understanding in so many different ways. But beyond the heavy and to just escape, Howard Stern's compilation of conversations from the past three decades is fascinating. In part due to his impeccable research and interviewing skills that take the listener/reader way beyond the surface of celebrity, to Howard's own revelation of how HE no longer needed to be the story; his evolution from insecurity to security."

81. Rachel Doerrie, York Lions director of advanced performance

"Extreme Ownership: How Navy Seals Lead and Win" by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin

Doerrie: "This book gave me a new perspective on owning situations I had put myself in – looking in the mirror. The book uses military situations to demonstrate how introspection is key to removing blame from others and stop looking for excuses. That is transferable to life, and to sport, and gave me a better understanding of how I needed to change my thinking and habits in order to succeed."

82. Michael Farber, Sports Illustrated special contributor and TSN essayist

"Patrimony" and "American Pastoral" by Philip Roth

Farber: "When Philip Roth died in May 2018, I experienced a pang of regret. I had read Roth, and adored him, but I hadn't read enough Roth. You could have driven a Zamboni through the gaps of my familiarity with his work. So last fall I started with Patrimony, non-fiction, an artful, funny, sometimes chilling account of his father's failing last year or two, a subject close to all of us who get 20 percent discounts at the pharmacy on Thursdays. I then – finally – took on American Pastoral, his muscular Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about the breakdown of a country, troubled water beneath a placid surface."

83. Ray Ferraro, longtime NHL player and current TSN analyst

"Team of Rivals" by Doris Kearns Goodwin

Ferraro: "An amazing book about Abraham Lincoln. Incredible research and I've learned so much history. Lincoln was an unbelievable leader, great feel for what was needed. One of my favorite books ever. I liked that Lincoln was able to overlook people's agendas to do what he thought was best for the bigger

cause, even if it meant he had to take an unpopular public position. His inner strength under pressure from all sides was remarkable."

84. Jermain Franklin, TSN reporter based in Calgary

"Born a Crime" by Trevor Noah

Franklin: "It's just a phenomenal read: Insightful, educational and incredibly funny. Noah describes growing up during and after apartheid in such an entertaining and informative way. I loved it."

85. Elliotte Friedman, Sportsnet insider

"Directorate S: The CIA and America's Secret Wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan" by Steve Coll

Friedman: "Great reporting. I'm very interested in the Middle East, and he explains what happened in those countries after 9/11. All the hopes and goals going on, and the realities those of us in North America didn't understand."

86. Renee Hess, executive director of the Black Girl Hockey Club

"Barracoon: The Last Black Cargo" by Zora Neale Hurston

Hess: "(It) sat unpublished in the Alain Locke Collection at Howard University's Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, since it was written in 1927, and was only released to the public in 2018. Barracoon is a first-person intimate narrative on slavery, racism and Antebellum (post-Civil War) America and how America's past affects our present and our future. It's a hard but necessary read that I highly recommend."

87. Prashanth Iyer, clinical pharmacist and co-creator of MetaHockey

"When Breath Becomes Air" by Paul Kalanithi

Iyer: "It details the story of a neurosurgery resident who is diagnosed with stage IV pancreatic cancer during the last few months of his training and his journey figuring out how to live what life he has remaining. It's a powerful story that details what it means to live one's life with purpose. It carries significant weight for me as a medical professional whose entire career has been built on years of training, often neglecting life outside of the hospital. Hockey has been something that has helped me find joy and passion outside of the hospital."

88. and 89. Madison Koekkoek, Hockey Canada social media coordinator

Hockey-related: "Game Change" by Ken Dryden

Koekkoek: "Growing up a) a Canadian and b) in the game, I thought I knew hockey. But 'Game Change' painted the picture so much more fully. Ken Dryden weaves the evolution of hockey into the game we all know – the good, the bad, and the downright ugly – through Steve Montador's story, finding balance between authentic truth and genuine compassion. I particularly loved this book because Ken makes the reader feel like one of the lucky few who got to call themselves Steve's teammate."

Wellness: "The Weekend Effect" by Katrina Onstad

Koekkoek: "Sports media never sleeps. Those of us who choose this path know all too well what we're in for and, while no sleep, never turning off, press box pizza for dinner is how we typically thrive, it can quickly catch up to us. Onstad points to the troubles



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with a society that's always 'on' and opened my eyes as to how we went from a five-day workweek with two consecutive days off to here. This book changed my perception of the hustle that is our business and really helped me see the importance of drawing boundaries for my health, my wellness, the fullness of my life, my career, and my relationships. I recommend it to anyone who shares in the (former) guilt that arose from taking a break. To anyone who can't remember the last time they had a day off. To anyone whose daily screen time exceeds sleep time by hours."

90. Mike McKenna, retired goalie and Vegas television analyst

"Timber Rattlesnakes in Vermont & New York" by Jon Furman

McKenna: "Fascinating stuff on a vilified species on the brink of extinction in most of its historical range."

91. Bob McKenzie, TSN insider

"Stillness is the Key" by Ryan Holiday

McKenzie: "For anyone who follows me on Twitter, they will know I never miss an opportunity to extol the virtues of Ryan Holiday's work, specifically 'The Obstacle is the Way' and 'Ego is the Enemy.' The third volume of what amounts to his trilogy — 'Stillness is the Key' — was just recently released and, in the interest of full disclosure, I haven't yet had a chance to read it but I am so looking forward to it. I don't think Holiday ever could have imagined these books steeped in ancient philosophy would resonate as much as they have in today's pro sports community, yet here we are. Memento mori, baby."

92. Ian Mendes, TSN radio host

"Success & Luck" by Robert. H Frank

Mendes: "It's a book that looks at some of the socio-economic disparities in North America, with a focus on how luck and fortune often plays a bigger hand than we think. There are some interesting sports analogies included in the book too, analyzing how luck could be a factor in things such as the amateur draft in sports and Usain Bolt's success on the track. As journalists and reporters, I think we're often hesitant to give credence to luck as a factor in success — largely because we cannot account for it in a meaningful or quantifiable manner. But this book has certainly opened my eyes to the idea that external factors that are completely out of our control play a much bigger role in our lives than we'd ever like to admit."

93. Sai Okabayashi, former New Jersey Devils data scientist and founder of ShiftChart.com

"Shoe Dog" by Phil Knight

Okabayashi: "I remember watching players puck handle around obstacles in training camp next to skills coach Pertti Hasanen in 2016 and asked him how skill translates to being a better NHL player. He then launched into a story about Chris Drury, and how he was — gently put — not the most skilled or best skater. 'But he loves hockey. Every player thinks he loves hockey. But he really loves hockey.' What does that kind of passion look like in paths other than hockey? I think it would look a lot like Phil Knight's journey in Shoe Dog where Knight immerses us in an inspiring journey driven by passion, perseverance, and humility."

94. Jay Onrait, TSN anchor, personality and author

"Hard to Handle: The Life and Death of The Black Crowes" by Steve Gorman and Steven Hyden

Onrait: "Gorman was the drummer for the Black Crowes. Book is fascinating to me because this was a band that straddled the Hair Metal era of the late 80s and grunge or the early 90s ... for a split second it looked like they would be a huge legacy band. America's next great rock 'n' roll band. But the band self-sabotaged everything and eventually fell apart. As the drummer Gorman had a front row seat. It's great writing for any rock fan even if you're not a Crowes fan."

95. Sara Orlesky, Winnipeg-based reporter for TSN

"Beartown" by Fredrik Blackman

Orlesky: "This book was recommended to me by one of the Winnipeg Jets coaches and I've probably suggested it to a dozen people since. I found that the book captivated me from the beginning with characters that were so realistic and well developed. It might center around a junior hockey team in a small Swedish town, but it is a book about so much more."

96. Topher Scott, former Cornell captain and Hockey Think Tank founder

"Never Die Easy" by Walter Payton

Scott: "This was the most inspirational book I've ever read. What started as an autobiography became a mix of Payton's words and those of his friends, family, and teammates when his health took a turn for the worst. It taps every emotion and inspired me to want to be a better man."

97. Paul Stewart, former NHL player and referee, author of "You Wanna Go?"

"Patton: A Biography" by Alan Axelrod

Stewart: "I enjoy books about history, and biographies on leaders (from both the sports world and outside sports), whether it's someone I admire or am simply interested in learning more about. I found 'Patton: A Biography' fascinating for all of the many seeming contradictions that made up its subject."

98. Katie Strang, The Athletic senior enterprise and investigative reporter

"Catch and Kill" by Ronan Farrow

Strang: "An incisive, illuminating look at the reporting process that led to the fall of powerful Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein. Farrow provided great insight on the many people and institutions that surrounded Weinstein and enabled his predatory behavior for decades, as well as the systemic barriers within Farrow's own workplace that thwarted his attempts to bring this information into the public sphere. Made me think of a story I've been pursuing for a while now, and how difficult it can be for people to speak up about hard truths. Will be thinking about the last line for quite some time: 'And stories — the big ones, the true ones — can be caught but never killed.' A good reminder that sometimes all it takes is one courageous person to effect serious change."

99: Steve Valiquette, former NHL goalie and current MSG analyst

"Astroball: The New Way to Win it All" by Ben Reiter



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"Inside the Empire: The True Power Behind the New York Yankees" by Bob Klapisch and Paul Solotaroff

Valiquette: "Fascinating to read how two of the top teams in baseball use analytics. The Astros actually take analytics on their own scouts to better understand their own bias and use that to make calculated decisions in player development, roster decisions and game planning. The best book I've read for anyone in player development is 'The Talent Code.' I read it back in 2009. Great for parents, too!"

100. Kevin Weekes, NHL Network analyst and former NHL goalie

"Shut Up And Listen" by Tillman Fertitta

Weekes: "1. It started with one restaurant in Katy, Texas. 2. Largest independently owned restaurant owner in the world. 3. DETAILS ALWAYS matter! 4. Persistence and over delivery allowed him to build his empire, and add owning the NBA Houston Rockets and Toyota Center to his portfolio 5. Houston IS an NHL worthy city."

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The Athletic / How NHL players navigate the real estate market in the New York City metro area

By Corey Masisak Nov 7, 2019

Damon Severson spent one summer during his junior hockey career living with a couple of friends in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

It was a nice place — two bedrooms plus a den and a balcony. Nothing fancy, but Severson and the two brothers he stayed with had plenty of space and enjoyed their time in Saskatchewan's largest city. They also enjoyed the cost: \$1,200 per month plus utilities. Not per person. For the entire apartment.

"Including utilities it was like \$1,400 Canadian dollars, so that's like just over \$1,000 U.S.," Severson said, before shaking his head. "It's a lot different here."

"Here" is northern New Jersey. Severson is in his sixth season with the Devils. He's also in the third season of a six-year, \$25 million contract.

Until Nico Hischier inked a seven-year, \$50 million deal in mid-October, Severson was the only player on the roster under contract through 2022-23. Even with that type of security, Severson has yet to venture into the crazy New York City metro area real estate market.

He opts to rent instead of looking for a place to buy and call his own.

"I don't even bother," Severson said. "If I had a family, I would definitely buy something and have it so I would not have to worry about moving everything when you come back (every season). But it's me, my girlfriend and a little dog, and we don't have a problem moving in and out of it all time."

Players with the Devils, Rangers and Islanders recognize they live in one of the greatest cities in the world. It's also one of the most expensive, particularly when it comes to housing.

In its Global Living 2019 study, CBRE listed New York as the seventh-most expensive city in the world based on average property price. It's actually third among NHL cities, behind Vancouver (fourth) and Los Angeles (sixth). But when it comes to rental prices, New York tops them all, checking in with an average cost of \$2,844 per month.

"The best way I can put it is a guy who plays for the Calgary Flames could rent a penthouse with an unbelievable panoramic view of Calgary right by the rink, five minutes away, walk if you want to, in a prime area, for the price of a one-bedroom apartment here," Severson said. "There are nice views here, but yeah, a one-bedroom. It's definitely different."

Based on which New York City Metro-area team they play for, players will have different logistics to consider before deciding which neighborhood or town is the one for them.

The Rangers' home, Madison Square Garden, is in Midtown Manhattan, one of the most congested neighborhoods in the world. Driving to MSG isn't much fun, regardless of the day of the week you're traveling or the direction you're coming from.

It sits on top of Penn Station, which is one of two major transportation hubs in the middle of the island. That does make the arena accessible by subway from many neighborhoods.

"It was great to live in New York," said Coyotes goaltender Antti Ranta, who spent two seasons with the Rangers and lived on the Upper West Side. "I was only there once before, when I was with the Blackhawks, so when you started to look for the apartment, it was kind of overwhelming a little bit and you weren't sure where to go, where to look, but the team helped a lot.

"At that time, my wife and I had a dog so we wanted to be close to the park. We were only two blocks away from Central Park and two blocks away from the Riverside Park, so we were right in there. I think the location was great. The 72nd Street subway was there, so I always took the subway to the game. Some of those small things ... after the first year, you start to realize how big those small things are."

The second part of the Rangers' logistical puzzle is the practice facility. Madison Square Garden Training Center is in Tarrytown, about 25 miles north of the arena along NY-9A. The particular route is better known as the West Side Highway in the lower half of Manhattan, the Henry Hudson Parkway in the upper half and eventually the Saw Mill River Parkway closer to the facility.

For many NHL players, living near the practice facility is the top priority. They spend more time there than they do at the arena.

For players on the Rangers, it's not that simple. The allure of living in Manhattan is strong. The location of the practice facility makes it a long drive, but living on the west side of the island is key.

"Seven seasons — I spent five in the city and two out in the suburbs," said Coyotes forward Derek Stepan, who played for the Rangers from 2010-17. "You kind of just follow the other guys on the team. At the time, there were a lot of guys on the Upper West Side, so that's where I lived. My wife and I really liked it there, so we stayed there for five years. We tried Tribeca, but it wasn't for us, so we moved back up there."



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"We were right off the highway. You get on at 72nd and there's basically no stoplights all the way to practice."

The Rangers roster essentially gets split into two groups. Younger players tend to live in the city, while those with families gravitate toward the practice facility. Where players cluster has changed over time.

In recent years, Raanta and Stepan were on the Upper East Side with a few other teammates. Derick Brassard started out in Hell's Kitchen, but eventually bought a place in Tribeca.

"I think playing for the Rangers might be a little different from any other team," said Brassard, who spent three-plus years with the Rangers and is in his first year with the Islanders, his seventh NHL club. "It's probably the only place where you've really got to live there one or two years to kind of figure out where you want to be. Going to the game on game days, like at 4:00 or 5:00, the traffic's really bad so you have to take the subways."

Stepan was a part of the Rangers core that grew up together with the organization and moved out toward the practice facility.

"When we were looking, the Staals were in Greenwich, (Conn.) and the Girardis were in Rye, (N.Y.)," Stepan said. "We looked at both, but we found a house that we really liked in Rye. I think we would have been comfortable with either place, but we chose the house and it happened to be Rye."

Henrik Lundqvist has always lived in the city, but the rest of that group, other than Staal, is gone. The Rangers are a much younger team now and the hub has shifted to lower Manhattan, either in Tribeca or the West Village.

Raanta and his wife, Anna, welcomed their first baby in February of 2017, his second season with the Rangers. He had one more year left on his contract at the time, but the few months they spent with a newborn in Manhattan was enough for the couple to start thinking about a move to the suburbs.

The Rangers ultimately traded Raanta to the Coyotes that summer. Living in Arizona, he says, is at least closer to what he remembers from growing up in Finland.

"You're seeing all these cars and you see the ambulance going and everybody's honking their horns and it's just a busy city," Raanta said of Manhattan. "The first year we lived on the seventh floor and our window was right next to Broadway. It just felt like we could never sleep with the noise because it was so loud outside. We really liked the building, so the second year we stayed there but went to the 17th floor and it calmed down a bit."

When Raanta returns to New York now as part of the visiting team, he tries to explain to his teammates why it takes so long to go a few blocks through the congestion around MSG.

"I'm like, 'I never had that problem because I was always using the subway. I was always underground,'" Raanta said. "Then they're like, 'Did you drive your car in the city?' I was like, 'No, never. Never. You don't want to do that.' Because even if you can get somewhere with your car, you're never gonna find a parking spot, you know?"

Devils forward Blake Coleman and his fiancée at the time, Jordan Daigle, were interested in buying their first home together in the summer of 2018, but were unsure where it was going to be. Both are from Plano, Tex., a northern Dallas suburb.

Coleman had a successful 2017-18 season, his first full year in the NHL, but he was also a restricted free agent and wasn't exactly sure where he fit into the Devils' long-term plans. When he agreed to a three-year contract, the couple decided to buy in New Jersey instead of downtown Dallas.

They picked a condo along the Hudson River in West New York, N.J.

"Once we were able to get a little security, we wanted to plan for the future and for a family. We ended up looking all over the place. There are so many nice waterfront spots that aren't cheap, but you can find deals," Coleman said.

"Let's just say, for what I got our condo in Jersey, we could have gotten a very nice house in Dallas. It's just different. Obviously you pay for different things. You have access to New York here and the views in that area. In Dallas, you're paying for good schools and being close to downtown. It's a different set-up, with a lot of more houses and a lot less people packed into a tight area."

Devils players do not have to make a housing decision based on the practice facility. RWJ Barnabas Health Hockey House is connected to Prudential Center in Newark. The biggest question is whether they'd rather live near the big city or out in the suburbs.

The players generally gather in two places — the younger ones in Hoboken or Jersey City, and the veterans with families in the suburbs west of Newark.

"We started in Hoboken for the first two years when I first got traded here (in 2013)," Devils goaltender Cory Schneider said. "No kids, and I had two years left on my deal. It was great and we had a great time. I mean, it was a huge shift. When I first got here, we had a much older team — (Dainius) Zubrus and (Jaromir) Jagr and (Marek) Zidlicky and Patty (Elias) and Marty (Brodeur). So they're all out in the suburbs. So me, Greenie (Andy Greene), Rico (Adam Henrique) and Mark Fayne were, like, the only guys in the Hoboken area."

"I signed my contract (a seven-year deal through 2022) and my wife got pregnant, and probably the biggest reason was the dog. My wife, she's like, 'What if I have the baby and we're on the eighth floor of an apartment and the dog needs to go to the bathroom?' So I was like, 'Alright, good enough for me.' We bought in the suburbs, and our son was born and I think that was the year Ray (Shero) came in. We got younger real fast, and all of a sudden everybody was in Hoboken and Jersey City. We missed the boat on that one."

Hoboken and Jersey City, two of the fastest-growing places in New Jersey, offer views of the city landscape, a deep and diverse collection of restaurants and bars, younger crowds and easy access to lower Manhattan.

The suburbs offer an escape from the "rat race," as Schneider called it. Several Devils used to live in West Orange, N.J., when the team practiced at South Mountain Recreation Center. Now that they practice and play in Newark, most of the veterans are in Short Hills or Summit, N.J.

"Anywhere off 280 and 78 that's easy to get to the rink," Schneider said. "It's really nice once you're off the highway. It is beautiful in some of these areas."



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Deciding whether to rent or buy in the area can be difficult. Travis Zajac and Greene are the longest-tenured players on the Devils. Zajac grew up in Winnipeg, but lives in New Jersey full-time now; Greene still goes home to Michigan with his family during the offseason.

Many of the players choose to rent here and buy at home. Connor Carrick has a place in the Lincoln Park neighborhood in Chicago. Sami Vatanen just moved into a new home in Finland this offseason.

Severson has a house in Kelowna, B.C., where he played for the Rockets in the WHL.

"I've been in a different place (in New Jersey) every year. That's something I've actually enjoyed doing," Severson said. "So I've lived in Jersey City the last couple years. I lived in West Orange my first couple years, I lived in Union a couple of years. The last two years were my favorite. Lots of the younger guys are there. I guess I'm not considered a younger guy anymore after six years, but I like Jersey City a lot."

The Colemans, now married, are expecting their first child in March. Blake has another year left on his contract and has become what coach John Hynes often refers to as an "identity player" for the Devils. If he re-signs with the franchise, they'll likely make the jump.

"Yeah, I will be a suburbs guy," Coleman said. "Ideally, I'll have a yard for the rugrats and for the dogs. But, while we're still able to really live the city life and enjoy it, I think we'd regret it if we just skipped forward and passed that step."

Brassard is playing for his second team in the area in 2019-20. Michael Grabner is one of 11 players who's suited up for all three local teams.

Grabner spent five years with the Islanders from 2010-15, then (after a year in Toronto) one-and-a-half seasons with the Rangers before being traded to the Devils just before the deadline in 2018.

He kept his place in Rye after the trade. His family stayed there the rest of the season so the kids could finish the year at the same school, while he moved into an apartment in Hoboken. After 21 games with the Devils, he signed with the Coyotes.

"I was in Winnipeg before (in the AHL), so this was a little different," Grabner said of joining the Islanders. "Obviously I made a lot more money, but you can't change it. It depends on what you're looking for, maybe a single-bedroom apartment or a three-bedroom house. A couple of the younger guys moved in together to split the cost. I've played in some expensive cities, so it's been all the same to me in some places.

"I bought a house in Arizona. It is tough to rent there where we wanted to live. Everyone lives there in the winter. Obviously it's a lot cheaper. I don't know how much this house would be in New York, but we probably couldn't afford it."

From the outside, the Islanders' housing situation might seem like one of the most volatile. The club moved to Barclays Center in Brooklyn at the start of the 2015-16 season. Since last season, they've split their games between Brooklyn and Nassau Coliseum, their old home that's newly refurbished.

The Islanders are expected to move to a new, permanent arena at Belmont Park by the 2021-22 season.

Through all of the commotion in recent years, the players decided to stay put.

"I remember my first year in Brooklyn, a couple guys kicked around the idea of maybe moving out that way," said Islanders forward Josh Bailey, "but with practice here, you're still doing the commute and probably even more. I feel the great thing about (Long Island) is there's plenty options to fit your needs. A lot of beautiful areas to live in. And for the most part, we all are pretty close to each other. So it's pretty convenient."

Most of the Islanders live in Garden City, which is just west of Nassau Coliseum, or in Manhasset, which is northwest and closer to the water. While they shuffled between home venues, the players kept their home addresses mostly because of Northwell Health Ice Center, the practice facility, which is about a mile from the Coliseum. In 2017, the new ownership group unveiled upgrades to the facility, with two indoor sheets and an outdoor rink, making it one of the nicest in the NHL.

Johnny Boychuk, traded from the Bruins to the Islanders in 2014, remembers the challenges of finding a place to live on Long Island.

"I tried to find something where I live currently, but there wasn't really anything there," Boychuk said. "Then I went further out and moved into a place, but moved out a month later because there was black mold everywhere. That wasn't a great experience for housing. We had a house for a month. We moved into a hotel until we could find a rental to live in because we weren't under contract yet. We were living in a hotel with twin girls and a dog. That wasn't ideal.

"We eventually found a place in Garden City, and we liked the town so much, we ended up just building a house."

Having a residential home base, he said, has given the Islanders some stability during the recent years of uncertainty.

"It's been good," Boychuk said. "Where my family lives and a lot of other guys are, it's close to downtown. The kids' school is down the block. The practice rink is five minutes away. The game rink (the Coliseum) is five minutes away. I think Belmont is going to be 14 minutes away, so that's pretty good."

Navigating the New York City-area housing market is never easy, but especially when a player gets traded in the middle of the season. The Devils organization will help new players find temporary housing.

Once they're here, there's something of a secret weapon waiting for them. Schneider's wife, Jill, is a real estate agent. She's licensed in Massachusetts, so she doesn't broker any deals for her husband's teammates, but she can be a valuable resource.

"She gives a lot of advice," Schneider said. "The concepts are the same. She has steered a lot of guys, to certain areas or certain kinds of houses or 'Look for this, don't look for that' kind of stuff. We try to help as much as we can."

For players of each local team, the housing search is a multi-layered puzzle. Do you want to be close to the city (or in it, if you're a Ranger) or in the suburbs, closer to the practice facility or further away, rent or buy?

"Everything I find here is 20 minutes away, which means it's actually 40 minutes away," Carrick said. "You want to go conquer New York City or East Coast traffic ... it is undefeated."



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And regardless of which team you play for and which housing criteria you choose, the prices will probably take some getting used to.

"It's tricky whether to rent, whether to buy, there's a lot of logistics that go into it," Schneider said. "A lot of it is what's left on your contract, how much money you're making. I've learned about property taxes, the hard way, as I've gotten older.

"(My wife and I) came here and you think, 'Oh it's New Jersey, it won't be New York prices,' but it is not far off."

The Athletic LOADED: 11.08.2019

1160510 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Frederik Andersen buying Maple Leafs time to get shaky act together

Luke Fox | November 8, 2019, 12:07 AM

TORONTO – Want to scare the bejesus out of any card-carrying member of Leafs Nation?

Here's a frightening exercise: Imagine the Toronto Maple Leafs but without Frederik Andersen.

Since getting pulled and embarrassed during Toronto's 7-2 shellacking on Oct. 10 by the Tampa Bay Lightning, the great Dane has settled all the way down, posting a remarkable 7-0-2 record.

With Andersen's performance seizing centre stage in Thursday night's 2-1 overtime victory over an organized and pressing Vegas Golden Knights group, he has been the backbone of the Leafs' perfect November (3-0), a stabilizing force allowing an inconsistent, unfamiliar roster to find its footing and compile its first three-game winning streak of the season.

Andersen's save percentages since the calendar flipped months: .925, .960, .974.

"He's been getting better just like each year. He kind of gets through October and seems to kick it into gear and gets feeling good," said head coach Mike Babcock of the only goalie he can trust. "He's an important player for us, a good leader for us. We need him to make big saves."

That he did, and Andersen acted as mellow as an Ed Sheeran song doing so.

Fred Sheeran

(: @f_andersen30) pic.twitter.com/R9bRX5tdai

— Toronto Maple Leafs (@MapleLeafs) October 31, 2019

Poised kick saves, quick flashes of the glove, nary a rebound or bobbled puck-handle.

"It definitely felt like the puck was following me a little bit around, so it's a good feeling," said Andersen, projecting calm before, during and after.

On this evening we counted, oh, about four enthusiastic rounds of the familiar "Fred-die! Fred-die! Fred-die!" chants from a home throng given little else to rally around as the Knights restricted the Leafs' attempts to the perimeter and killed five consecutive Toronto power plays before Auston Matthews finally found twine on the sixth.

We also watched a grinning Matthews hop the bench and make a bee line to embrace his goalie once John Tavares converted a sharp-angle 2-on-1 OT rush to ruin poor Malcolm Subban's first start in his hometown.

"By far our best player on the ice tonight," Matthews said. "He just kept us in it with the penalty kill obviously at the end of the game."

Tavares said Andersen (37 saves) deserved all three stars of the game, noting his stopping all 12 Knights arrows on the penalty kill, which dipped into overtime due to what could've been a costly too-many-men foul.

"Hell of a night by Fred," Tavares said.

Vegas coach Gerard Gallant opted to give at least one star to his own netminder.

"The two goalies were the first stars," Gallant said. "Great goaltending."

Subban deserves credit for his role in securing the Knights a standings point and surely cannot be faulted for either of the Leafs' strikes.

"Both goalies are in the same situation. You gotta battle and compete and find a way to make saves. He did at the other end, and I came up short," said Subban. "It's tough when you get outplayed by the other goaltender."

Max Pacioretty, too, had no choice but tip his cap.

"He's one of the best in the league for a reason — the timeliness of the saves," said Pacioretty, the only one to solve Andersen Thursday. "Ultimately we have to do a better job probably taking away his eyes and bearing down on the very good chances, but you can't take away credit that he's a very strong goaltender."

Andersen's excellence is biding time for Toronto to get its shaky act together. The Leafs rank in the bottom third of the league in such important categories as giveaways, power play, penalty kill, and shots allowed.

But superior goaltending masks so much. And just ask the Kings, Devils, Red Wings or Sharks (the bottom four clubs in save percentage) where poor goaltending leaves you.

Of course, any conversation around Andersen — the NHL's saves leader since he arrived in this city in 2016 — would not be complete without acknowledging workload.

It's worth noting that Vegas gave Marc-Andre-Fleury a night off Thursday, even though the Knights weren't in a back-to-back situation.

In terms of usage, Fleury is a fantastic comparable to Andersen. Since the beginning of last season, Fleury has made 74 starts. Andersen has 73.

The differences here are that Vegas is making a conscious, public effort to cut down on riding a single goalie, and the



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Knights believe their 25-year-old backup has what it takes to develop into an NHL starter.

"Fleury plays a lot of big games for us, but this kid [Subban] is gonna have to take some of those games," Gallant said. "You can't play a guy 70-80 games a year, so we have all the confidence in the world in Malcolm. We think we got the best goalie in the league in Fleury, and then Malcolm is going to get some more games than he got in the past.

"If you're going to go anywhere in the NHL, you need two good goaltenders — and we believe we do."

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1160511 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Flames' Noah Hanifin's breakthrough vs. Devils a long time coming

Eric Francis | November 8, 2019, 1:39 AM

CALGARY — For the entirety of their time here together, Noah Hanifin and Travis Hamonic have been joined at the hip.

So inextricable, they're listed consecutively in the NHL's Official Guide and Record Book.

Patrolling the Flames' second unit night in and night out, they were gaining the reputation as the Will and Jada, the Goldie and Kurt, the Johnny and Monny of the Flames' back end.

So when their inevitable breakup came midway through their last game, teammates saw it as open season.

"All the guys were giving it to us, calling us The Inseparables, and tonight we were separated," said Hanifin, looking longingly across the dressing room where Hamonic sits.

"Thing is, we know we can get back together at any given point. It's alright. Me and Travis are fine — we're still good friends."

Unlike two nights earlier when the splitting of all three defensive pairings was part of coach Bill Peters' fury, the dressing room was far more conducive to jocular Thursday.

A 5-2 win over New Jersey proved to be the perfect bounce-back for a squad that had deserved a solid kick in the rear by the boss 48 hours earlier.

Johnny Gaudreau and Sean Monahan were back in the scoring column for the first time since Game 2, Elias Lindholm extended his point streak to nine games, David Rittich was steady as always and Derek Ryan's fourth line provided energy (and a goal) to pace the hosts.

But it was a three-point effort from Hanifin that was the talk of the town.

Make no mistake, you could see this coming.

The 22-year-old first rounder has been exhibiting increased comfort in carrying the puck and using his deft skating ability to create some offence.

He's had the green light to go all season and Thursday night he fully embraced it.

With his first full-time gig on the second powerplay unit alongside his new partner Rasmus Andersson adding to his mojo, the big man was rewarded in spades.

Midway through a tight game he found himself with the puck behind the net, delivering a crisp pass on Monahan's tape to tie it 2-2.

A Hanifin assist on Mikael Backlund's power play goal put the Flames up five minutes later, before a power play strike of his own from the point beat MacKenzie Blackwood to break the game open.

"I think I've been skating better this year and the chances have been there," said Hanifin, taken fifth overall in 2015.

"I feel I'm best when I'm skating and trying to create offence. That's my game. That's something I've been trying to get to this year. My skating ability I feel is one of my strongest assets."

Sure is, and it was on full display throughout an evening in which the man who'd been dedicated to shutting down opponents the last year also ripped one off the post.

"That's definitely a lot of the Hani I'm used to seeing, especially in Carolina," said Derek Ryan, who has played alongside Hanifin for four years.

"I felt like he had the confidence to play like that. You saw it out there tonight, he had the puck on his stick a lot and making skilled plays and he had that confidence."

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With the ever-confident Andersson playing well alongside him, it was a glimpse of what may be the future top pairing for the club.

"Me and him same draft year, same age, both young guys and I think we both feed off each other pretty well," said the six-foot-three, 215-pound Hanifin who notched the fourth three-point game of his career.

"You don't want to look too long into the future though. It was a good night all around for us. I thought we had a lot of success as a group. I think it's good to freshen things up a bit and play with someone new. Things ran a little stale for a bit, so that helped tonight."

Hamonic played well alongside Mark Giordano on a night in which the Flames pieced together their most complete outing in a young season full of peaks and valleys.

Yet, there sit the Flames at 10-7-2, tied for tops in the Pacific Division with Edmonton, albeit with a few games in hand on the pack.

For all the concern about inconsistency, the group has won four of five and has done a good job progressing.

"I liked everybody tonight to be honest with you," said Peters, who was happy to single out Hanifin for an effort that included



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four shots on goal and three hits from a former 10-goal scorer in Carolina who established a career high with 33 points last year.

"Hani skated and he was involved. He's dynamic and he's getting a little bit of juice off the power play. It's something we'll probably stay with here and allow him to expand his game even further."

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1160512 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Maple Leafs' power play woes nearly cost them win vs. Golden Knights

Chris Johnston | November 7, 2019, 9:52 PM

TORONTO — Enough was finally enough.

The Toronto Maple Leafs power play should be a source of strength given the enviable array of scoring talent at its disposal, not an energy-zapping drag that draws boos on home ice.

That's why it was so important that the Leafs found themselves with a television timeout immediately before their sixth crack at the man advantage on Thursday. It bought a group stuck in a 2-for-32 rut another 90-plus seconds to catch their breath and clear their minds. It gave them a chance to adjust on the fly.

When the five players on the \$42-million top unit huddled together at the bench — Auston Matthews, John Tavares, Mitch Marner, Morgan Rielly and Andreas Johnsson — they basically decided to throw caution to the wind.

"We pretty much said 'What do we have to lose? Let's move around, let's get the penalty kill kind of thinking more' and I thought we did a really good job of that," said Matthews.

"Different guys going into different areas and just reacting and playing off our instincts. Not just drawing up plays, but reacting off one another and then using each other."

It's basically came down to the difference between doing and thinking.

Reacting, rather than reading from a script.

The primary goal of Toronto's top unit is to create open looks for Matthews, but there are many ways to accomplish that. Matthews felt they had grown a little too stagnant with him basically camped out on the right flank during their first five power plays against Vegas, which is why he and Tavares briefly swapped spots once they established offensive zone possession on the sixth one.

Matthews then floated into the left circle, held the puck in at the left point, zipped around behind the goal and had two shots at Golden Knights goaltender Malcolm Subban before he tucked a shot off the crossbar and in.

All of that freelancing crossed up the Vegas penalty killers — which entered the night with the NHL's second most effective unit. It gave the Leafs the window they needed to tie the score on another night where they appeared destined to squander a tight game.

"A little bit's reading off one another, create some movement and cause [some doubt on] those split-second decisions. They got caught kind of in-between and that's when you're able to isolate someone or get someone open," said Tavares. "Especially Matty's the guy we want to get the puck to, obviously."

"Glad it worked out and a hell of a shot."

It was the second straight game where Matthews delivered a big goal after scoring the winner against Los Angeles late in the third period on Tuesday. His laser beam over Subban's shoulder came at 8:14 of the final frame and set the stage for a Tavares overtime winner in a 2-1 final against the Golden Knights.

This was a tightly played affair between teams with big aspirations, and the Leafs leaned heavily on goaltender Frederik Andersen.

For a time, it appeared as if their ongoing power-play struggles were going to be the story. Toronto enjoyed some good puck movement during two first-period opportunities with the man advantage, but lost its way on the two it received in the middle frame.

Simply entering the zone — normally a power-play strength for the Leafs, according to data tracked by SportLogiq — became difficult.

Some fans grew restless and even booed.

"We had some real good looks, we had some real good power plays that didn't score," said Mike Babcock. "And then we had a couple that were hard to watch."

The Leafs coach had maintained that they'd be OK in that department even though they entered the game sitting 20th in power play efficiency at 17.3 per cent. He didn't see the need for a massive overhaul or change in approach.

A big part of that confidence had to come from having a healthy Tavares.

The captain missed eight of the nine games where Toronto went on a 2-for-27 run with the man advantage because of a broken finger and shot high on a wide open net during a power play in his return on Tuesday.

In fact, the SportLogiq data shows that the Tavares/Marner/Matthews/Johnsson/Rielly unit is the NHL's fourth most effective in goals per 20 minutes played this season.

Still, they needed a breakthrough moment to restore some confidence on a night where Golden Knights coach Gerard Gallant felt there were too many penalties called on both sides. The Matthews goal seemed to stem some frustration and offer a path forward for that talent-rich top unit.

"With the skill we have, I think if we move around in the O-zone when we have a power-play chance it's going to screw a lot of penalty kills up," said Marner. "I think that's what kind of gave us our opportunity there, is we had guys kind of running all over the place."

"We were moving the puck well and we were moving bodies around and it resulted in a goal."

Credit the extra break they had before with an extra assist on the goal. The pressure had been mounting.



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"That's what we said before the power play there, 'C'mon, lighten up here fellas. Let's just go out there and breathe a little bit and do what we're supposed to do,'" said Babcock.

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1160513 Websites

TSN.CA / Five Takeaways: Canucks vs Blackhawks

Jeff Paterson

TAKEAWAYS

1) In their 16th game of the season, it finally happened to the Vancouver Canucks. They came up with something far from their best effort and as a result fell 5-2 to the Blackhawks in Chicago. It's a credit to the team -- and says much about the group -- that it took this long to have an off-night. And give the Hawks credit, while you're at it. They were putplayed badly in San Jose in their last game on Tuesday, but were ready from the drop of the puck and raced out to a 15-3 edge on the shot clock. That was perhaps the biggest surprise of the night simply because the Canucks have spent so much time in the attacking zone on so many nights and the tables have rarely been turned on them especially early in hockey games. And for the 11th time in their 16 games -- and sixth in the past eight -- the Canucks surrendered the opening goal. It's just too tough a league to constantly be spotting opponents a 1-0 lead. It's playing with fire and on Thursday the Canucks got burned.

2) While the final shot clock showed the Canucks holding a 38-37 advantage, it's hard to recall more than two or three really good scoring chances for the visitors. The night seemed like a series of one and done forays into the offensive zone with very little sustained pressure. And facing Corey Crawford, who entered the night with just one win on the season and a saver percentage of 89.2%, the Canucks made life far too easy on the veteran netminder. This is a team that has been lauded for getting to the net and staying there on many nights this season, but not on Thursday. Jake Virtanen scored on a deflection in mop up time, but the team needed more of that kind of net front presence earlier in the contest. For the first time this season, Travis Green had harsh words for his hockey club in his post-game address to the media: 'I just don't think we were very good. We didn't look sharp. We didn't handle the puck very well.' He then caught himself as he added 'I thought we had some players that just didn't...we just weren't very good tonight'

3) For the third time in four games, the Canucks were forced to play the final 40 minutes with just five defensemen. Chris Tanev left the game with what the team is calling an upper body injury. His final shift came on the Hawks 2-0 power play goal. He didn't come out for the start of the second period and has to be considered doubtful for Friday in Winnipeg although Travis Green did not offer any substantive update post-game. With Tanev sidelined, Alex Edler was once again forced to log huge minutes -- 27:15 -- which is hardly ideal for the veteran blueliner on the first night of back to back games and with an early start on Sunday looming, too. Tanev was spotted strolling through the Canucks locker room postgame looking no worse for wear and with no visible sign of damage, so his injury remains a mystery. If

Tanev can't play, Oscar Fantenberg will almost certainly draw in and make his Canuck and season debut. He'd probably play the left side with Jordie Benn sliding over to the right side. That could quite possibly mean a second pairing of Quinn Hughes and Troy Stecher -- something many Canucks fans have called for.

4) For the first time all season, the Canucks are facing some adversity. Sure they dropped their first two games in Alberta, but had a three-game homestand against beatable opponents and took care of business to get their season headed in the right direction. After falling to the Hawks, they have one win in their past four games (1-1-2) and have struggled to generate offense in three of those four. With their first outright loss since October 19th, they have earned the benefit of the doubt that Thursday's game was an outlier and that they can and will be better in Winnipeg. One of the team's downfalls last season was its inability to get out of funks. It's hard to call a four game stretch in which they've managed to get points in three of those games any kind of slump, but they need more from their top end players to ensure that they can regain their winning ways. Bo Horvat continues to struggle to generate even-strength offense and has just one goal in his past six games and only one 5-on-5 goal on the season. Tanner Pearson, who had one of the Canucks best chances on the night in the first period, has now gone a dozen games without a goal and has just one in 15 games since opening night. Those two combined for eight shots on Thursday, so it's impossible to say they played poorly. But it is a bottom line business and both play significant roles on the hockey club and more is expected and needed in terms of production. It was probably time on Thursday to insert Sven Baertschi on that line to give those other two some offensive support. It's definitely time to give that a shot on Friday in Winnipeg. Adam Gaudette had just three third period shifts in Chicago and only one in the first 14 minutes when the game was still on the line.

5) The Canucks power play delivered one of the team's two goals against the Blackhawks, but to the eye test it just doesn't look as sharp right now as it has in recent weeks. Elias Pettersson showed remarkable poise and patience waiting for a passing lane to feather a pass in front that JT Miller was able to convert to get the Canucks on the board early in the second period. At 2-1 and with nearly two periods remaining, it seemed like the stage was set for yet another Canuck comeback. Obviously that didn't happen. The Hawks were the team that won the special teams battle with a pair of power play goals of their own (plus a short-handed goal into an empty). The Canucks power play has reverted to being too static and with too many players over-handling the puck. The Blackhawks 2-0 goal was a text book example of quick puck movement with Patrick Kane sliding the puck down low to Dylan Strome who immediately found Andrew Shaw in front and he buried the puck past Jacob Markstrom. The Canucks seem to be hesitating with the puck and taking three touches per player before moving it on. Those delays allow defenders to pressure and force the Canucks into mistakes and plays they don't want to make. Over the past four games, the Canucks are 2 for 17 (11.8%) with the man-advantage. They need to regain their mojo with the man advantage and they have to hope it happens in a hurry.

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TSN.CA / Matthews, Andersen carry Leafs to first three-game win streak of season

Kristen Shilton

TORONTO – The Maple Leafs were 0-for-5 on the power play and trailing the Vegas Golden Knights 1-0 late in Thursday's game when Auston Matthews had finally seen enough.

So, during a timeout before the Leafs' sixth power play of the night, Matthews convened with Toronto's top unit and put in motion a new plan that spawned during the second intermission. And it worked to perfection – Matthews potted the game-tying goal for Toronto to help force overtime, and the Leafs went on to top the Golden Knights 2-1 on John Tavares' game-winner from Mitch Marner.

"We were a bit stagnant [on the power play]," Matthews explained afterwards. "So in the third, I pretty much said, 'what do we have to lose? Let's move around, let's get their penalty kill thinking more.' And I thought we did a really good job, having different guys going into different areas and just reacting and playing off our instincts. Not just drawing up plays but reacting off one another and then using each other and making plays to spread them out a little bit and we were able to score."

The victory was Toronto's third straight, marking their longest win streak of the season and potentially a turning point in what's been a difficult run on special teams. Before Matthews scored, the Leafs were 1-for-24 on the power play over six games, but a bit more improvisation could go a long way in turning those numbers around.

"We went through a little drought there; it was tough throughout the middle," said Marner, who finished the game at plus-1 with an assist. "I think with the skill we have, if we move around the o-zone when we have a chance, it's going to screw a lot of PKs up. I think that's what kind of gave us our opportunity there ... making guys run around all over the place."

But while Matthews' goal was a major factor in the Leafs' end result, they wouldn't have been in a position to reach overtime if not for the stellar goaltending of Frederik Andersen.

For most of regulation, Andersen was the Leafs' only star. He matched Malcolm Subban at the other end by turning aside all comers in the first two periods, the second of which was particularly rough for Toronto. While the Leafs were the better team in the opening 20 minutes, Vegas held Toronto without a shot until nearly 15 minutes had gone by in the middle frame, a stretch that included a woefully ineffective two-minute power play.

And that wasn't the only poor man advantage Toronto produced, either. Before Matthews broke through, the Leafs' power play rarely looked like the weapon it should be, marred by sloppy drop passes, limited shooting threats and slow puck movement.

Things were so bad after Toronto's third unsuccessful try that audible boos rained down from fans at Scotiabank Arena.

"At times I think our execution wasn't great," admitted Tavares. "But I think we also had a lot of looks on net, we put a lot of pucks there and sometimes it's just getting those second and

third opportunities and I think on the last power play [when Matthews scored] that's what happened, we got some pucks to the net, got some looks, and we kept retrieving and retrieving them and then finally able to wear them down."

But before that, Vegas had snatched a lead off Max Pacioretty's ice breaker early in the third period, a gift of a goal created by Cody Ceci's turnover directly in front of Andersen. That would end up being the only blemish on an otherwise terrific outing for the goaltender, who was also the Leafs' best penalty killer as they went 3-for-3 shorthanded against Vegas' seventh-ranked power play.

"The amount of saves he made in key moments, he gave us a chance to win it," Tavares said. "It was a hell of a night by Fred."

Indeed, even after Matthews' big goal, it was Andersen who ultimately secured his team at least a point. When the Golden Knights went to a late power play in the third, Andersen made two massive saves on Jonathan Marchessault to get Toronto to the buzzer, and then added a couple more big stops as the power play ended in overtime, finishing the night with 37 saves.

"Those were some big saves from Freddie there, probably by far our best player on the ice tonight," Matthews said. "He just kept us in it."

"I felt like the puck was following me a little bit around so it was a good feeling," Andersen added. "Obviously, you're going to have different nights where the puck seems to bounce your way, so it feels good."

Now Toronto would like to keep the good times rolling. Players credited their recent Halloween party as an important bonding experience – they're undefeated ever since – and building that crucial chemistry off the ice is starting to spill over and pay positive dividends on the ice for Toronto, too.

"I think the biggest thing is we're getting to know each other," said coach Mike Babcock. "I don't know if anyone believes it, but it's easier to play with people you know. It appears that the guys are starting to have more fun, interacting more. I see more abuse, and I think that's a great thing, once you have fun having fun together. That's once you get to know each other."

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TSN.CA / Auston Matthews says Toronto Maple Leafs have to simplify things on power play

Mark Masters

TSN Toronto reporter Mark Masters checks in daily with news and notes on the Maple Leafs. The Leafs (optional) and Golden Knights skated at Scotiabank Arena ahead of Thursday's game.

Toronto's power play is just 2-for-27 in the last nine games, ranking 30th in the NHL in that stretch (since Oct. 15). What's wrong with the talent-rich group?

"We're talking about that every day, that's for sure," said William Nylander. "I mean, we got to dial that up."



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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The personnel on the top unit is similar to last season when the Leafs finished eighth in power play percentage (21.8 per cent), but there's a new assistant coach overseeing things in Paul McFarland.

"There's always an adjustment period, but Paul does a real good job," said coach Mike Babcock. "I mean, all you got to do is look at Florida last year and that job he did on the power play. So I'm not concerned about that."

With McFarland authoring the game plan, the Panthers struck on 26.8 per cent of their chances a year ago, second best in the NHL. This season, the Leafs rank 20th at 17.3 per cent.

One significant change McFarland made was flipping Auston Matthews and Mitch Marner to their one-timer sides. The early returns were positive as the Leafs went 7 for 25 (28 per cent) out of the gate. But when John Tavares, who plays in the middle/bumper spot, got hurt, teams could focus more on taking away the Matthews shot and things stalled, Babcock noted previously.

Tavares returned on Tuesday and should have scored a man-advantage goal, but missed a wide-open net. The Leafs finished 0 for 4 against the Kings' 29th-ranked penalty kill, registering just three shots.

"Simplifying it can always help," said Matthews, who leads the way for the Leafs with three power-play goals. "I think those Grade-A opportunities that we found the other night versus L.A. just came off of shooting the puck, kind of spreading out their penalty kill."

"I think you'll see our power play get rolling," Babcock said. "We have a good scheme, we get good opportunity and I think over a period of time that'll work itself out."

Andreas Johnsson, the net-front presence on the top unit, believes the group has lost a bit of its swagger.

"I feel like that's one of the (areas) where if you really have confidence you really play good and if it goes a little bit worse it goes down pretty hard," Johnsson said. "Last game was a better performance for us. I feel like the only thing that was missing was to put the puck in the net."

"Scorers, that's where you get your puck touches," observed Babcock, "that's where you get your confidence, that's where you get feeling good, and so it's an important part of the game when you're talking about the power play, for your scorers."

With Tavares returning, Nylander has shifted back to the second unit, which is quarterbacked by Tyson Barrie.

"Getting the chemistry back with the unit that you're going to play with is also big," said Nylander, who has one power-play tally.

"Our second group has good, good players on it," Babcock said, "and whoever scores is going out there next. So, it's real simple: you score, you get to go."

The Knights have the second-best penalty kill in the NHL this season (89.8 per cent) and lead the league with five shorthanded goals, so Toronto's margin for error is slim tonight.

"Up-ice pressure has been real good," said Vegas coach Gerard Gallant. "When (Reilly) Smith and those guys put pressure up ice it makes a big difference. Obviously, when your PK's good your goaltending's good and that's a big factor with it."

Smith has a pair of shorthanded goals this season.

Marc-Andre Fleury leads the NHL in shorthanded save percentage (.965).

Nylander on slumping Leafs PP: 'We're talking about that every day'

Special teams have been a weak point for the Leafs this season, with the team ranking in the bottom-half of the league on both the power play and penalty kill. William Nylander, who has been a mainstay on the Leafs' second power play unit, assured reporters that the team is actively discussing the issue every day. TSN's Mark Masters has more.

But Fleury, who is tied for the league lead among goalies with 14 games played, is getting a rare night off in Toronto as Malcolm Subban makes his first NHL start in his hometown.

"Marc can't play every game," Gallant explained. "He's been outstanding and he's a great goalie for us, but Malcolm's from Toronto. He's played real good lately, so it's a good opportunity for him. We've got a lot of confidence in him. If you're going to go anywhere in the NHL, you need (to have) two good goaltenders and we believe we do."

Subban, who returned from an injury on Saturday in Winnipeg, is 0-1-1 on the season with an .887 save percentage.

"We want some quality starts from him and that's why he's playing tonight's game," said Gallant. "I'm not much of a goaltending guy, but (goalie coach) Dave Prior likes him a lot and thinks he'll be a helluva No. 1 goalie some day ... He's a character guy."

While Fleury is off to a great start this season (9-3-1, .924 save percentage), he's struggled historically against the Leafs with an .897 career save percentage. He's lost four straight starts to Toronto, including two last season.

Subban, meanwhile, won his only previous game against the Leafs.

Leafs Ice Chips: Subban gets first hometown start

Toronto native Malcolm Subban will make the start in goal tonight for the Golden Knights, in what will be a homecoming for the young goaltender. Subban has started two games this season with a record of 0-1-1 and is 1-0 against the Maple Leafs in his career. TSN's Mark Masters has more.

The Leafs and Knights both had promising campaigns come to a crushing end in Game 7 on the same day – April 23 – last season. And both are off to sluggish starts this year as they face high expectations.

"We've been okay so far," said Gallant. "I'm not trying to sound cocky with our team, we're 9-5-2, it's a pretty good record, but I don't think we've played our best hockey by no means. Getting Nate Schmidt back last week was huge for us and (Alex) Tuch had a little setback, (but) he shouldn't be too long. When we get a full roster I like our team real good and we can throw guys over the boards and they all know their roles pretty good. So, I like our group, but we haven't played our best hockey yet."



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The return of Tavares and the imminent return of Zach Hyman has Babcock feeling similarly optimistic.

"We all got to breathe a little bit," Babcock said. "Our team's doing pretty good. If I'm not mistaken, we're 3-1-1 in our last five. We seem to be getting some traction. The guys seem to be getting to know each other better and there seems to be more juice in our group, which is positive."

Babcock on Leafs' progress: 'There seems to be more juice in our group'

Despite both the Maple Leafs and Golden Knights owning solid records to start the season, coaches Mike Babcock and Gerard Gallant explained that they think their teams have not reached their full potential.

Projected Leafs lineup for tonight's game:

Johnsson - Matthews - Nylander

Moore - Tavares - Marner

Mikheyev - Kerfoot - Kapanen

Timashov - Shore - Gauthier

Rielly - Ceci

Muzzin - Barrie

Dermott - Holl

Andersen starts

Hutchinson

Projected Leafs power-play units for tonight's game:

Rielly

Marner - Tavares - Matthews

Johnsson

Barrie

Kapanen - Kerfoot - Nylander

Moore

Lines at Knights morning skate:

Marchessault - Karlsson - Smith

Pacioretty - Stastny - Stone

Pirri - Eakin -Glass

Carrier - Nosek - Reaves

Roy

McNabb - Schmidt

Hague - Theodore

Merrill - Engelland

Subban starts

Fleury

Nick Holden (flu) missed the Knights morning skate and his status for tonight's game is up in the air.

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1160516 Websites

TSN.CA / Travis Dermott finding his game after delayed start to season

Kristen Shilton

TORONTO – Travis Dermott hasn't dealt with many major injuries in his career, so nothing could really prepare him for how tough it would be to step back into the Maple Leafs' lineup after spending six months rehabbing a shoulder injury.

"You don't lose [your game] but you kind of forget about it," Dermott said after the Leafs' optional morning skate on Thursday, ahead of facing the Vegas Golden Knights. "You forget what it's like to be out there in the games. It's easy enough to work as hard as you can in practice, but it's never going to be the same. You're out there for 45 seconds but it's a hard 45, and it can get you pretty tired pretty quick. The first games are always a nice wake-up call."

Dermott missed all of training camp and 13 regular-season games before returning for the Leafs' last three tilts. While keeping his conditioning high was the defenceman's focus following his shoulder surgery last May, he conceded it's never enough to make for a totally seamless transition back to game action.

Fortunately, he's had partner Justin Holl to lean on through it all.

"Holl'sy has been taking care of me," Dermott said. "He's been great for me, giving me the confidence to come out here and play my game and not worry about a D-partner that's not playing as well as I'd like him to. He's far beyond that, so I'm playing catch-up, trying to keep up with him and he's setting a great benchmark for me to come back to and get my feet under me."

Dermott has yet to tally a point, but he is a plus-5 over three games, due in part to the number of offensive zone starts (80 per cent) he and Holl have been getting.

When they are in the defensive zone, Dermott finds working with Holl easy because of their shared history. Not only were they teammates from 2016-18 with the American Hockey League's Toronto Marlies, Dermott and Holl were also partnered when Holl made his NHL debut on Jan. 31, 2018. Both players scored their first NHL goals in the outing.

The depth of that relationship is invaluable to Dermott now, and it's something he didn't have this time last season with his then-partner, KHL import Igor Ozhiganov.

"Last year with Ozi I had some times where it's tough to communicate," Dermott admitted. "But Holl'sy and I have been buddies for a while now. I have a good feel of what he's going to do. I've seen him go back for pucks a million times already, so I have a pretty good feel, better than the forechecker, of what he's



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going to do. We just keep learning from each other like we have been and I think it can only be a positive.”

An established rapport with Holl has already encouraged Dermott to try and flex his offensive muscles too, like he did with a beautiful end-to-end rush in Tuesday's 3-1 win over Los Angeles. The play didn't result in a goal, but seeing Dermott trust himself again is a trend head coach Mike Babcock can get behind, so long as it doesn't distract from more important responsibilities.

“If you've got skill to support it, you can make plays on the offensive blueline and get it by good shot-blockers and get it to the net. Those are all skills he has,” Babcock said. “But as a young player, no different than [Morgan Rielly] when Mo was coming up, it's also figuring out how to play in your own zone so it's not going in. I think you saw his edges and his puck play last game. The big thing is sorting it out in the D-zone. When we analyze the game at the end, were you involved in scoring chances for or against? How does the math add up? Simple.”

Simplicity will be a top priority for Dermott and the rest of the Leafs as they try and establish a season-long three-game win streak against the visiting Golden Knights on Thursday.

Much of Toronto's focus going into the game is on snapping out of an early-season funk on special teams, where after 16 games both their power play (17.3 per cent, 20th overall) and penalty kill (75.4 per cent, 26th overall) have underachieved.

The Golden Knights, on the other hand, have terrific special teams, boasting the seventh-best power play (23.6 per cent) and second-best kill (89.8 per cent) in the NHL. The Leafs have been especially generous in giving up power-play chances this season, allowing at least one in every game so far, while the penalty kill has only held a man advantage off the scoresheet twice in the last 10 games.

Dermott believes that with the talent Toronto has on its special teams, “soon we'll be looking at it the other way where it's, 'what are we doing so well that it's working so well?'" And that can start on Thursday.

“Vegas has a good team. They're going to be excited to be in here and they're going to play well so we have to come together,” Dermott said. “We can ride off a little momentum we have now and try to build off our positives that we've had lately, try to figure out the stuff we still want to figure out, and try to have a good game, work hard and see what happens.”

Maple Leafs projected lineup against Vegas:

Moore-Tavares-Marner

Johnsson-Matthews-Nylander

Mikheyev-Kerfoot-Kapanen

Timashov-Shore-Gauthier

Rielly-Ceci

Muzzin-Barrie

Dermott-Holl

Andersen

Hutchinson

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1160517 Websites

TSN.CA / All silent on the Jean-Gabriel Pageau contract front

Ian Mendes

Jean-Gabriel Pageau is off to the best statistical start of his NHL career.

The centreman is currently leading the Ottawa Senators with six goals and sports the best plus/minus rating of any player in the NHL with a whopping plus-15.

The impressive start couldn't have come at a better time for Pageau, who is eligible to become an unrestricted free agent at the end of this season. But Pageau hasn't been able to use any of his stats as leverage so far, as it appears his camp hasn't engaged in any meaningful contract talks with the club.

“No. No talks right now,” Pageau said Thursday when asked if there are any ongoing negotiations with the Senators. “It's not in my main focus to be honest. I barely think about it. I'm taking it day-to-day here, trying to give my 100 per cent just so I don't have regrets. I want to leave everything out there. I take pride every night that I wear a Sens jersey right now, so we'll see. I'm not too worried about it.”

Based on that answer, it's clear Pageau wants to hold his cards close to his vest – not publicly tipping his hand if he wants to stay with a rebuilding Ottawa club or be traded to a contender.

“I'm trying to take day-to-day right now. I'm a Senator. I'm going day-to-day, trying to get better,” he added. “That's not something I can control and I'm not focusing on right now.”

Pageau, who turns 27 next week, has quickly morphed into one of D.J. Smith's most reliable forwards. The Senators' head coach heaped a healthy amount of praise towards his centre on Thursday, noting that Pageau is the heartbeat for the Senators' forward core – in a similar fashion to what Boston superstar centre Patrice Bergeron does for his group.

“I think you'd be crazy not to look at their mould with Bergeron and their leadership and not try and go with that. And I think Pageau is our leader up front,” Smith said.

Pageau, who serves as an alternate captain, seems to embrace his role as a mentor to a roster chock full of young and impressionable players.

“We want to build something here, try and create a culture and an identity for this team. There so many good young players here and trying to build something together,” Pageau explained.

It remains to be seen if Pageau is willing to be in this rebuild for the long haul. Realistically, the Senators are still likely two or three years away from being a legitimately competitive team.

Would Pageau be willing to sign up for a couple more years of this – or would he prefer to land with an immediate playoff contender?



CAROLINA HURRICANES

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While he's not answering that question publicly right now, the Senators will have to evaluate if Pageau fits into the grand scheme of their rebuild.

The club has already signed Colin White to a six-year contract with an AAV of \$4.75 million. That would appear to be a contract to fulfill the club's need for a No. 2 centre for the foreseeable future. Could they afford to pay Pageau something similar to be a No. 3 centre – or will their salary structure dictate that he would need to stay more in line with his current deal in the \$3 million range?

General manager Pierre Dorion will also have to wrestle with the idea of another club offering him a handsome return for Pageau's services as a rental around the trade deadline.

Pageau has a reputation of elevating his game to another level in the postseason, as evidenced by his two career playoff hat tricks. Considering the Senators were able to fetch a first-round pick and a blue-chip goalie prospect for Derick Brassard at the 2018 trade deadline from Pittsburgh, it's not out of the realm of possibility that Dorion could land a similar package for Pageau in the months ahead.

And if that return makes more sense for the rebuilding Senators, it could be a win-win scenario for both the player and the club.

In any event, Pageau's fast start to the season is greatly enhancing his value. After missing half of last season with a ruptured Achilles tendon, he has looked more explosive and dynamic this year.

He had extended conversations with Erik Karlsson and other players who experienced that type of injury, and was told it would take about a calendar year to feel like his old self.

"There's no pain in my ankle," Pageau now says.

On Monday evening in Madison Square Garden, Pageau blocked a shot at his own blueline and then won a 120-foot race to the puck against a pair of Rangers defenders before picking the corner to beat Alexander Georgiev for a highlight-reel goal.

"I'm feeling good on the ice right now and feel confident in my abilities," said Pageau. "Obviously I've never been that big a goal scorer. You need that lucky bounces and the confidence to be on your side and I think that's what's happening right now. Obviously there is a lot of hockey to be played and I want to keep going the same way."

That Pageau is leading the NHL in plus/minus is a staggering statistic, considering the Senators are languishing at the bottom of the standings and are still giving up a high number of shots and quality scoring chances against each night.

"It's good for him that he's plus (15) considering we don't score many goals," Smith said. "He has played great."

"I'm happy. It's something that I always take pride in defending against the other team," Pageau said.

Perhaps there is a little fatigue in this marketplace when it comes to popular players potentially being pushed out the door before they cash in as free agents. While Pageau doesn't have the superstar status of the likes of Karlsson, Mark Stone or Matt Duchene, he has carved out a reputation of being a fan favourite in the nation's capital.

Pageau is in a stratosphere of popularity that probably falls somewhere around a player like Mike Fisher in his prime. Not exactly a superstar or offensive threat, but wildly popular with the fan base. But like Fisher, he's also a little bit of a "tweener" – someone who could either be a second- or third-line centre.

Whether the Senators decide to pay him as a second or third-line centre could very well determine his future in this market.

But if he doesn't fit with the rebuild here in Ottawa, his terrific start to the 2019-20 season means that Dorion may once again have one of the most valuable chips to play at the trade deadline.

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1160518 Websites

TSN.CA / Travis Dermott finding his game after delayed start to season

Kristen Shilton

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"Holly has been taking care of me," Dermott said. "He's been great for me, giving me the confidence to come out here and play my game and not worry about a D-partner that's not playing as well as I'd like him to. He's far beyond that, so I'm playing catch-up, trying to keep up with him and he's setting a great benchmark for me to come back to and get my feet under me."

Dermott has yet to tally a point, but he is a plus-5 over three games, due in part to the number of offensive zone starts (80 per cent) he and Holl have been getting.

When they are in the defensive zone, Dermott finds working with Holl easy because of their shared history. Not only were they teammates from 2016-18 with the American Hockey League's Toronto Marlies, Dermott and Holl were also partnered when Holl made his NHL debut on Jan. 31, 2018. Both players scored their first NHL goals in the outing.



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The depth of that relationship is invaluable to Dermott now, and it's something he didn't have this time last season with his then-partner, KHL import Igor Ozhiganov.

"Last year with Ozi I had some times where it's tough to communicate," Dermott admitted. "But Hollis and I have been buddies for a while now. I have a good feel of what he's going to do. I've seen him go back for pucks a million times already, so I have a pretty good feel, better than the forechecker, of what he's going to do. We just keep learning from each other like we have been and I think it can only be a positive."

An established rapport with Holl has already encouraged Dermott to try and flex his offensive muscles too, like he did with a beautiful end-to-end rush in Tuesday's 3-1 win over Los Angeles. The play didn't result in a goal, but seeing Dermott trust himself again is a trend head coach Mike Babcock can get behind, so long as it doesn't distract from more important responsibilities.

"If you've got skill to support it, you can make plays on the offensive blueline and get it by good shot-blockers and get it to the net. Those are all skills he has," Babcock said. "But as a young player, no different than [Morgan Rielly] when Mo was coming up, it's also figuring out how to play in your own zone so it's not going in. I think you saw his edges and his puck play last game. The big thing is sorting it out in the D-zone. When we analyze the game at the end, were you involved in scoring chances for or against? How does the math add up? Simple."

Simplicity will be a top priority for Dermott and the rest of the Leafs as they try and establish a season-long three-game win streak against the visiting Golden Knights on Thursday.

Much of Toronto's focus going into the game is on snapping out of an early-season funk on special teams, where after 16 games both their power play (17.3 per cent, 20th overall) and penalty kill (75.4 per cent, 26th overall) have underachieved.

The Golden Knights, on the other hand, have terrific special teams, boasting the seventh-best power play (23.6 per cent) and second-best kill (89.8 per cent) in the NHL. The Leafs have been especially generous in giving up power-play chances this season, allowing at least one in every game so far, while the penalty kill has only held a man advantage off the scoresheet twice in the last 10 games.

Dermott believes that with the talent Toronto has on its special teams, "soon we'll be looking at it the other way where it's, 'what are we doing so well that it's working so well?'" And that can start on Thursday.

"Vegas has a good team. They're going to be excited to be in here and they're going to play well so we have to come together," Dermott said. "We can ride off a little momentum we have now and try to build off our positives that we've had lately, try to figure out the stuff we still want to figure out, and try to have a good game, work hard and see what happens."

Maple Leafs projected lineup against Vegas:

Moore-Tavares-Marner

Johnsson-Matthews-Nylander

Mikheyev-Kerfoot-Kapanen

Timashov-Shore-Gauthier

Rielly-Ceci

Muzzin-Barrie

Dermott-Holl

Andersen

Hutchinson

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TSN.CA / Vegas Golden Knights arrive in Toronto with the NHL's most lethal power play

Travis Yost

One month into the NHL regular season, we are seeing teams around the league establish their identity. For the Vegas Golden Knights, that means carrying the league's most lethal power play.

Thursday's game between two Stanley Cup contenders offers a highly intriguing matchup on this front – the aforementioned Vegas power play taking on a Toronto Maple Leafs team that has become undisciplined when it comes to avoiding shorthanded situations and ineffective when it comes to killing penalties.

Consider just the year-over-year change for Toronto: The Maple Leafs have gone from killing off 2.5 penalties per game in 2018-19 to 3.6 (21st in the NHL) this season, and have watched their goals-against rate increase from 7.0 to 8.1 (24th in the NHL) per 60 minutes of play.

As for the Golden Knights power play, the million-dollar question is what makes them so special. Most elite power-play groups we have seen over the last decade fit into two buckets. The first bucket would contain those power-play units featuring an elite triggerman – think the Washington Capitals with Alexander Ovechkin – and their ability to turn medium-grade scoring chances into high-grade ones because of the velocity and accuracy with which that elite triggerman shoots the puck. The other bucket would include those power plays that sustain offensive zone pressure at exceptional rates, like the San Jose Sharks of yesteryear.

Vegas' power-play units fit into the latter group. The Golden Knights' power-play units, both of which run the non-traditional four-forward, one-defenceman set, have been well-defined and tend to mirror what the team runs with at even strength.

The first unit is the team's top line (Max Pacioretty, Paul Stastny and Mark Stone) with Cody Glass absorbing the additional forward spot, and the second unit is the team's second line (Jonathan Marchessault, William Karlsson and Reilly Smith) with a rotating depth forward (sometimes Cody Eakin, sometimes Brandon Pirri) absorbing their additional forward spot. In both cases, Shea Theodore – who leads the league in power-play ice time – is walking the blueline:



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I'm sure there is something to be said from a chemistry standpoint of the same lines playing in different situations – real familiarity with the playing styles of other offensive-minded players is obviously beneficial, and on the power play, the creative plays that may not exist when playing 5-on-5 suddenly appear.

By the numbers, the two power-play units are white hot. They are first in the NHL in shots generated per 60 minutes, second in goals scored per 60 minutes, and second in expected goals per 60 minutes. Compared to their peers – well, right now, there is an awful lot of daylight between them and the field:

The point here is that the underlying numbers are indicative of a power play that hasn't fluked their way into 13 power-play goals on 13 per cent shooting to start the year, and the guys driving the goal scoring are precisely who you would expect. The playmaking duo of Stone and Stastny has already combined for eight goals in the opening month up a man – those eight goals alone are more than 11 teams have scored on the power play the entire season.

It's a stunning shift considering what we saw from a Vegas team last year that really struggled on the man advantage, but I do think their evolution is somewhat a byproduct of the personnel available to head coach Gerard Gallant and company this season.

Stastny (the sixth-most used forward for Vegas on the power play in 2018-19) and Stone (only acquired at last year's trade deadline) were essentially non-factors for this group last season, and have been huge difference makers in 2019-20.

Add that to the fact that the team has moved away from a rotating guard of defencemen – gone are the Colin Miller power-play minutes, and it's hard to believe Nate Schmidt (who saw significant power-play minutes last year) will see similar usage with the way Theodore has played this season – and you have a clear shift in personnel.

If this Vegas power play does sustain itself, it only furthers the notion that the Golden Knights are one of the teams to beat out of the Western Conference.

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USA TODAY / Jets' Bryan Little gets 25-30 stitches to close laceration after errant shot to head

Chris Bumbaca

Winnipeg Jets winger Bryan Little received 25-30 stitches to close a laceration near his ear after being hit with a shot against the New Jersey Devils on Tuesday.

Little was behind the side of the Devils' net when Nikolaj Ehlers ripped a shot wide that struck Little directly in the head. The

referee immediately signaled for the training staff to attend to him on the ice. Little got up to skate off but was in obvious pain.

The Jets said Wednesday that Little was taken to nearby St. Boniface Hospital to receive stitches and then went to the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg for further observation in the neurological unit. The team said he has been alert and was in "good spirits this morning."

"Little was alert at all times and is in good spirits this morning," the team said. "Further updates will be provided when available."

Little, who missed the first nine games of the season with a concussion, was a first-round pick in 2006 when the organization was still the Atlanta Thrashers.

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1160521 Websites

USA TODAY / Sharks' Evander Kane sued for \$500K by casino claiming he failed to pay back gambling markers

Mike Brehm

San Jose Sharks forward Evander Kane, who was suspended for the first three games this season for abuse of officials, has another potential headache on his hands.

The Cosmopolitan casino in Las Vegas is suing him for \$500,000, claiming he failed to pay back gambling markers, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported.

The lawsuit, which was filed Monday in Clark County District Court, alleges that Kane took out eight markers of between \$20,000 and \$100,000 around April 15. The Sharks were in town that week for a first-round NHL playoff series against the Vegas Golden Knights that was won by San Jose after a controversial Game 7.

The lawsuit also seeks repayment of legal fees, the paper reported.

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Kane, 28, makes \$8 million this season as part of a seven-year, \$49 million contract he signed in 2018.

Before the NHL suspended him, Kane complained that he was ejected from a preseason game for being "jumped from behind by a referee."

He lost nearly \$113,000 in pay.

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